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Congress taxed on inheritance as Modi rips into Sam Pitroda remark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

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

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

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



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

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

from the comments of the US-based lies," Congress chief spokesman president of party's overseas wing and asserting that it has no plan to tax.

introduce such a "Sensationalising his comments now and tearing them out of context are deliberate and desperate attempts at diverting attention simply unreal, he added.

Congress, however, swung into damage control, distancing itself away from Modi's malicious and mischievous election campaign; that is anchored only in lies and more advisor to the shehzada's father, said

Jairam Ramesh said on a statement.

t an election rally in Chhattisgarh's Ambikapur, Modi said the dangerous intentions of the Congress are coming to the fore one by one and now "it says it will impose inheritance tax". "The

loot 'zindagi ke saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi' (Congress' mantra is looting

people when they are alive and afterwards too)," Modi said taking a cue from LIC tagline. "Till you are alive, the Congress will impose more tax and after your life ends, it will impose the burden of inheritance tax on you. They (Congress) want to snatch your assets and rights of your children," the prime minister alleged. He spoke on similar lines in his rallies in Madhya Pradesh.

that more tax should be imposed on

the middle class and those who earn by toiling hard," Modi said,

apparently referring to Rahul Gandhi and Pitroda.

"The Congress will impose a tax on the assets inherited by people from their parents and the "panja" (Congress' poll symbol) will snatch

the assets from their children.

Congress ka mantra hei Congress ki

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

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

Continued on Page 8

LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE 2 SEATS 2024 LS voting concludes for States marked in red NO. OF CONSTITUENCY STATES **KERALA** Kasaragod, Kannur, Vatakara, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ponnani, Palakkad, Alathur, Thrissur, Chalakudy, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Mavelikkara, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Attingal, Thiruvananthapuram Udupi Chikamagalur, Hassan, Karnataka Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mandya, Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Bangalore Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South, Chikballapur, Kolar **RAJASTHAN** 13 Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Pali, Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Udaipur, Banswara, Chittorgarh, Rajsamand, Bhilwara, Kota, Jhalawar-Baran Buldhana, Akola, Amravati (SC), Maharashtra Wardha, Yavatmal-Washim, Hingoli, Nanded, Parbhani Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Aligarh, Mathura, Bulandshahar Tikamgarh, Damoh, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh Satna, Rewa, Hoshangabad, Betul Karimganj, Silchar, Mangaldoi, Nawgong, Kaliabor Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Bihar Bhagalpur, Banka West Bengal Darjeeling, Raiganj, Balurghat Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund, Kanker Chhattisgarh Jammu & Kashmir Outer Manipur Manipur **TRIPURA** Tripura East

Campaign for Phase II LS poll ends

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

fter whirlwind roadshows, political Atit-for-tats, and a fresh cycle of controversies on redistribution of wealth, inheritance tax and reducing the quota for SCs, STs and OBCs to favour Muslims, the curtains came down on Wednesday evening on a high-voltage campaigning for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls in

89 seats across 13 States on April 26. The upcoming second phase polls will where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is seeking re-election

Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), which will witness a high-profile showdown between Shashi Tharoor and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Meerut where Arun Govil who played Ram in the hit Ramayan TV series of the 1980s, Mathura



where Hema Malini is seeking reelection, cover several important constituencies Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK such as Wayanad (Kerala), from Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh from Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituency and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy (JDS) from

Mandva. Polling is scheduled in all 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar

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

Amid heat wave conditions, the poll body on Wednesday extended the poll timings by two hours in some Assembly segment Banka, Madhepura, Khagaria and Munger Lok Sabha constituencies was from 7 am to 6 pm to ensure enhanced voter participation. In other polling stations in Bihar, under these constituencies, the poll timings remain 7 am to 4 pm.

Staggered over seven stages, the first phase of the elections held last Friday for 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories saw a voter turnout of around 65.5 per cent. After Friday's phase, polling will be over in Kerala, Rajasthan and

Continued on Page 8



Nodia readies for triangular contest

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Sabha elections, the electoral contest will primarily feature the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Samajwadi Party (SP)-led INDIA Bloc and the BSP. As many as 15 candidates are in the fray to secure the seat with BJP MP Mahesh Sharma, a two-time winner from this seat in Uttar Pradesh, in the battle

new

for the third time.

This

constituency covers Bulandshahar and Gautam Buddha Nagar districts and comprises five Vidhan constituencies: Sabha Noida, Iewar, Dadri, Sikandrabad, and Khurja. The SP, which is part of the Opposition INDIA Bloc, has fielded Mahendra Singh Nagar, a seasoned politician who served as the Congress district president from 1999 to 2016 before joining the SP in 2022. On the other hand, representing the BSP is Rajendra Singh Solanki, who

recently joined the party.

Continued on Page 8

eyeing win for consecutive time.

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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

position in constituency. The Ghaziabad Lok Sabha seat will

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



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

Continued on Page 8

IED explosion damages bridge on NH 2 in Manipur

PTI IMPHAL

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

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

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

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

the results.

The court said it cannot change the thought process



advantages

reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), after taking note of the answers to queries it had posed to the Election Commission.

It sought answers from an official of the poll panel to five questions related to the functioning of EVMs including whether the microcontrollers fitted in them are reprogrammable.

Continued on Page 8 In the upcoming 2024 Lok

Churn in Congress over Delhi candidates

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

Disrespect on part of the party high command representative who used 'Get Out' on a three time Minister and biggest Dalit leader, Rai Kumar Chauhan, resigned Congress' from the Congress after committee. serving the party for nearly

Brewing dissatisfaction in Delhi Congress over distribution of tickets to 'outsiders', for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in the national capital next month, prominent Dalit leader and three time former minister in the Sheila

three decades.

Dikshit cabinet, Chauhan, resigned from the grand old accusing appointed to oversee the Lok Sabha elections in the city of disrespecting him publicly, a day after the meeting of Delhi disciplinary

Chauhan was under fire for allegedly mobilising a section of Congress workers against its North West Delhi candidate, Udit Rai.

On Monday, when its Delhi unit was officially introducing its three Lok Sabha candidates to the media, the protesters raised slogans of "Bahari



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

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

government). We have done so

much development work for Delhi. An outsider was telling me to get out. That's why I was angry and sent my resignation to DPCC chief Arvinder Singh

Lovely," Chauhan said.
"I have resigned because a meeting was called...to the discuss candidates...some 20 to 25 main leaders from North East Delhi, including Arvinder Singh Lovely, were a part of that meeting. During the meeting, we were trying to put our side forward but we were not allowed to," Chauhan alleged.

Continued on Page 8

Khanna and Dipankar Datta The Supreme Court said on

Wednesday it cannot "control the elections" or issue directions simply because doubts have been raised about the efficacy of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), as it reserved its judgement on a clutch of petitions claiming the polling devices can be tinkered with to manipulate

of those doubting the

racking down on repeated

onboarding new customers through its online and mobile

"serious

non-compliance of IT norms, the RBI on

Wednesday barred Kotak

Mahindra Bank from

banking channels and

regulator found

risk management.

issuing fresh credit cards with

immediate effect after the

deficiencies" in the lender's IT

These actions, the RBI said, are

RBI bars Kotak Mahindra Bank

from onboarding customers online

necessitated

going back to ballot papers.
A bench of Justices Sanjiv

significant concerns arising out

examination of the bank for the

timely

IT systems.

Meanwhile,

Reserve Bank's IT

years 2022 and 2023 and

the continued failure on

part of the bank to

address these concerns

in a comprehensive and

Continued on Page 8

Mahindra Bank said in a

statement that it has taken

measures for adoption of new

technologies to strengthen its

manner.

Kotak

machines and advocating

Voters to get real-time

It's Brajwasi versus Pravasi in Mathura

BISWAJEET BANERJEE MATHURA

As the election date looms closer, Hema Malini, the iconic actress-turned politician and incumbent Member of Parliament from Mathura, ramps up her campaign amidst growing criticism and chal-lenges. Seeking a third consec-utive term under the Bharatiya Janata Party banner, Malini finds herself under fire, labeled as a 'Missing MP' and an out-sider in her own constituency. The opposition, led by Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance candidate Mukesh Dhangar, has championed the narrative of 'Brajwasi versus Pravasi', painting Malini as disconnected from local issues. Despite her two-term tenure since 2014, doubts linger about her presence during crucial moments, such as the 2016 Mathura riots, with reports suggesting she was away shooting in Mumbai.

"Mathura needed her the most during the 2016 riots, but she was nowhere to be found. When contacted, she cited law and order as a state subject,

the pioneer

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Subodh Kumar Rai, R/o 3/63,

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changed my name to Manju

NOTICE

I Rajeev S/o Sri Ram Prakash

aged 64 years R/o 449,

Ksheer Sagar, Raebareli

Road, Haiwatmau Mawaiya Uttaratia, Lucknow (UP)-

226025 have changed my

name to Rajeeva Khare for all

NOTICE

I hereby declare that in my CBSE

Board's High School and Intermediate marksheet/certificate

the name of my father and mother

is wrongly registered as

SUKHBEER SINGH SALUJA and

RANJEET KAUR SALUJA which

is incorrect while the correct name

of my father and mother is

SUKHBEER SINGH and

RANJEET KAUR. Hence, in all my

documents the correct name of

my father and mother will be

written and known.Gurpreet Kaur

Saluja D/O Sukhbeer Singh R/O

249, Vijay Laxmi Nagar, Tehseel

NOTICE

NOTICE

and District-Sitapur

future purposes.

Rai for all future purposes.

Manju Singh w/o Mr.

SWARUP

CENTRE

SWARUP

CENTRE

VIRENDRA

VIRENDRA

EDUCATION

pass certificate

EDUCATION

shifting responsibility on Akhilesh Yadav," remarked Manish Sharma, an activist with a local NGO, invoking a line from one of her famous film songs to underscore the community's longing for her support during crisis.

Critics highlight multiple areas where Malini's performance has purportedly fallen short, particularly in addressing environmental concerns like the pollution of the river Yamuna. Despite symbolic gestures such as Yamuna puja ceremonies, the river remains polluted, sparking frustration among locals who depend on it for drinking water.

'Our leaders should remember that the Yamuna is the lifeline for thousands. If we neglect the river, what future are we leaving for ourselves?" asked local activist Madhu Mangal Shukla. Furthermore, Malini's recent photo-op while harvesting wheat has drawn sharp criticism, with detractors accusing her of prioritising optics over genuine engagement with local

"Instead of indulging in photo



Actress and BJP candidate Hema Malini during a roadshow for Lok Sabha elections in Mathura on Wednesday

opportunities, she should have focused on preserving Mathura's rich heritage," lamented Anil Yadav, general secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee.

The upcoming election has transformed into a battleground of contrasting visions for Mathura's representation. While the opposition stresses the significance of local roots

and accountability, Malini's camp relies on her celebrity status and ties with prominent political figures like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Aapne BJP ko vote nahin diya to desh mein andhkar ho jayega, andhere se kya fayda?" warned Malini, highlighting the Modi government's accomplishments in her campaign speeches.

Despite the opposition's attempts to frame the election as 'Brajwasi versus Pravasi', BIP leaders exude confidence

in Malini's prospects.

"Congress is not even in the competition and has failed to field a suitable candidate, resorting to importing one," asserted Shyam Bhadoria, BJP's election in-charge for the Mathura constituency.

With polling scheduled for April 26, the contest in Mathura escalates, fueled by debates over local representation, environmental stewards in the contest of ship and the role of celebrity in politics. As voters deliberate their choices, the outcome of this election will not only shape Mathura's future but also reflect broader trends in Indian politics. In the electoral arena, Hema Malini (Bharatiya Janata Party) faces Mukesh Dhangar (Congress) and Suresh Singh (Bahujan Samaj Party).

booths and display it on the portal. If there are 40 people in the queue then a voter will get a is available to the voter, it will

chance to cast his vote in 15-20 minutes. If this information be convenient for him or her to find out when he/she should step out of the house. Sometimes people assume that there is going to be a huge crowd at the polling booth and do not venture out of the house," he said.

He said that these were the arrangements which the administration was making at the local level apart from the arrangements made by the Election Commission of

Gangwar said that the voters could visit booth location.in and also find out the details of their polling booths.

who can locate their polling stations through this portal. When you click on the portal it will give the Google location of the polling booth and at what distance it is located. In this portal the parliamentary constituency is selected first then the Vidhan Sabha con-

information on queue at their polling booths stituency and then the booth number after which the location

To reduce the voters' wait-Ing time, the district administration is providing a facility to the Lucknow voters through which the voters can check whether the queue is long at their polling booth or not and in accordance cast their vote.

This facility will be displayed on May 20 on the portal 'booth location.in' created by the district administration.

District Magistrate and District Election Officer Surya Pal Gangwar gave this information at a press conference organised at the Lucknow Development Authority office on Wednesday.

He said that for providing this facility they collect data and get the details of the queue length from the presiding officer of the respective

There are several new voters

pops up. This can be done conveniently on one's mobile phone. The entire voter list will also be displayed here," he added. Addressing the press, he said that

the voting exercise would take place on May 20 from 7 am to 6 pm. He said that they organised a meeting with the resident welfare associations of the city to increase the voting percentage of Lucknow. We held discussions with these

RWAs on how the voters have to be made aware and motivated. We are taking their suggestions," he said.

He said that the district administration was making all efforts to see that the voting percentage increases in both the rural and the urban areas of the Lucknow

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY SHORT E-TENDER CALL NOTICE TD/TM/GEN-225 (Vol-V)/2024/721, dtd.23.04.2024

Name of the work: "Allotment of 06 (Six) nos. of Manual Iron Ore plots." License Fees: Rs.1,18,10,502/-. Wharfage Fees: Rs.7,78,435/-. Last date & time of Submission of bid: 29.04.2024 up to 15.00 hrs. Date and time of opening (technical bid) 29.04.2024 up to 15:00 hrs.

Refer our website for details https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app& http://paradipport.gov.in/. Sd/- Traffic Manager Paradip Port Authority

PA/PR/02/2024-2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that, Sri Shailendra Srivastava S/o Sri Ramesh Chandra Srivastava R/o House No. 171, 84/63 Tejab Mill Campus, Anwarganj, Kanpur Nagar has informed that the Original sale deed dated 16.07.2002 registered at Serial No. 3562 on 17.07.2002 of the property i.e. House No. 171 situated at Premises No. 84/63 Tejab Mill Campus, Anwarganj, Kanpur Nagar admeasuring 83.61 Sq. Mtr. has been lost somewhere and is not traceable. He is intended to sell the said property to Sri intended to sell the said property to Sr hetan Chak S/o Sri Ram Shankar Chak and he will mortgage the said property in favour of PNB Civil Lines Branch. As the PNB Civil Lines Branch is going to grant finance facility o said Sri Chetan Chak S/o Sri Ram Shanka to said Sri Chetan Chak S/o Sri Ram Shankar Chak collaterally securing this finance by creation of Equitable Mortgage over property. The Punjab National Bank Civil Lines Branch Kanpur Nagar to intend to create Equitable Mortgage in respect of the above mentioned properties, details which are given in the notice. Any person claiming any interest or title in the property or otherwise having any objection can make representation to the Bank within seven days of such notice. Vivek Awasthi Advocate (Panel advocate of Punjab National Bank) Chamber Opposite New Hanuman Temple, Gate No. 4 Near Registrar Office, Civil Court Compound, Kanpur Nagar-208001 Mobile: 7007568625

Another 50 lakh homes to get tap water supply

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has set a target to provide tap water to the remaining 50 lakh of the 2.67 crore households of the state under the Jal Jeevan Mission in the financial year 2024-25 itself.

Within a span of 18 days of the new financial year, connections have been provided to more than two lakh houses, constituting 40 per cent of the first quarter target of over five lakh.

It is noteworthy that tap water connections have been provided to more than 2.17 crore houses of UP till April 18, 2024, under the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme of the Central government. As per the action plan for 2024-25, the government has set the target to provide 5.29 lakh connections each in the first and second quarters.

Furthermore, the government plans to achieve 40 lakh remaining connections in the last two quarters of the financial year with more than 10.5 lakh connections in the third quarter and 30 lakh connections in the fourth and final quarter.

In the initial 18 days of the financial year 2024-25, more than two lakh connections have been provided, indicating a strong possibility that the government will achieve this goal ahead of schedule. Previously, in 2023-24, the target was to provide 85 lakh connections, and nearly 140 per cent or approximately 1.19 crore connections were distributed relative to that target.

Posters supporting Robert Vadra surface in Amethi

Amethi (UP) (PTI): As suspense continues on whether Congress leader Rahul Gandhi would fight the Lok Sabha elections from Amethi, posters supporting his brother-in-law Robert Vadra's candidature have surfaced in the constituency that was once regarded as a Gandhi family bastion.

On Tuesday night, posters in support of Vadra, the husband of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, were seen at many places, including the Amethi Congress office, with the slogan "Amethi Ki Janata Kare Pukar, Robert Vadra Abki Baar". Roughly translated, it says the people of Amethi want Robert Vadra this time. While the local unit of the Congress blamed its opponents for putting up the posters to create confusion, the district administration has started removing them. Congress is yet to declare its candidate for the Amethi seat and there is still doubt over Rahul Gandhi's candidature from the parliamentary constituency. Vadra has recently thrown hints that he is keen to contest the Lok Sabha election from Amethi. He told reporters in Mathura earlier this month that the people of Amethi want him to represent them. They want me to represent them, go to their

area and listen to their problems so that they can progress. I am also interested in joining politics...," he had said then.

The Congress' Amethi unit spokesperson Anil Singh said the posters were part of a conspiracy by opponents. "It is just an attempt to create confusion and spread the wrong message among the public," he said. Superintendent of Police (SP), Amethi, Anup Kumar Singh said the matter would be investigated and action taken as per the law. "Putting up such posters at gov-ernment places violates the code of conduct," he

The filing of the nomination papers for the election to the Amethi Lok Sabha seat starts on April 26 and will continue till May 3. Voting will take place on May 20.The BJP has declared Smriti Irani as its candidate from Amethi for the third time. In the 2019 general election, Irani defeated Rahul Gandhi from the Amethi seat.

Realtor ends life in city

PNS LUCKNOW

depression following the untimely death of his son, shot himself with his licensed pistol in the morning on Wednesday. His nephew informed the police

about the death. A police team visited the spot and recovered the licensed pistol and a shell. Police sent the body for post-mortem. The realtor was identified as Abdul Khalid Malik (65) alias Kallu of Baba Hazarabagh of Thakurganj. His wife died a few vears back and he was staying with his nephew Junaid and his wife Ruhi, his brothers Sahil and Khairul presently. Sahil told police that Khalid had dined with them on Tuesday night and was resting in his room.

Around 8 in the morning, Ruhi went to the room to serve tea to Khalid and found him sitting in a chair outside the room and blood oozing from the wound. His licensed pistol was lying in his lap.

(PNS):

Ramswaroop Memorial College of

Engineering and Management,

Lucknow inaugurated 'Abhiyyakti

2K24', a mega fest commemorat-

Shri

gating the case and were waiting for the post-mortem report. "Finger print experts and FSL

team have collected samples from the incident site and sent them for testing," a police spokesman said. Khalid's son Ahmed Nawaz (18) had died five years ago due to heart disease. Meanwhile, a 55- year old ayah

(hospital maid) was found hanging in a room at the Gandhi ward of King George's Medical University hospital on Wednesday morning. The police claimed that the woman was depressed. The woman was identified as

Bittan of Balaganj locality under Thakurganj police station. In a separate incident, the body of a 37-year-old woman was found lying beside a railway tracks in Amethiya-Salempur village under Dubagga police station area on

Abhivyakti kicks-off at Ramswaroop Engineering College

Wednesday.

ing its Foundation Day on

tor, Prof (Dr) BK Chauhan said

that it was important to mix fun

In his welcome address, direc-

According to the police, Junaid told them that the elderly man was the woman was hit by some movthe woman was hit by some mov-An elderly realtor, suffering from suffering from depression and he ing train and died. She was idenwas also undergoing treatment.
The police said they were investiSalempur village and she had left for her fields to harvest wheat crop on Tuesday evening but did not return home.

ARRESTED The Ashiyana police on Wednesday arrested Bharatiya Janata Party corporator form Ibrahimpur Ward, Brij Mohan Sharma, for revelry firing in a marriage function a year back, the video of which went viral on social media on Tuesday.

In the video, the corporator is seen firing in the air even though there is a complete ban on celebratory firing in functions.

DCP (East) Prabal Pratap Singh said the video was one year old and someone made it viral after retrieving it from the Instagram account of the corporator. He said the police had seized the

pistol and had also recommended cancellation of its licence.

with education to rejuvenate the

youth minds. The event would last

for three days. The programme

will include both on stage and off

Yogi expresses grief at death of Raiveer Diler

PNS LUCKNOW

hief Minister Yogi Adityanath, On Wednesday, expressed deep grief over the untimely death of Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, Rajveer Singh Diler.

Diler died of cardiac arrest on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Yogi expressed his condolences to the bereaved family members, describing Rajveer Singh Diler's sad demise as a "personal loss". The chief minister offered heartfelt prayers for the peace of the departed soul.

According to information received here, Rajveer Singh Diler was undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Aligarh, where he breathed his last late on Wednesday evening. Rajveer Singh Diler had won from Hathras Lok Sabha seat in 2019 by 2.60 lakh votes. He recently appeared on stage alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi during an election rally in Aligarh, displaying unwavering dedication to the party. His father, Kishanlal Diler, a revered BJP leader, left behind a legacy of service, having served as MLA for five consecutive terms and MP four

Can Fin Homes Ltd

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.

63/3, Ground Floor, Potdar Tower, Mall Road, Kanpur (UP) - Mob: 7625079219 E-mail: kanpur@canfinhomes.com CIN: L85110LA1987PLC008699

POSSESSION NOTICE [(Rule 8 (1)] (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security InterestAct 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice on the below mentioned dates calling upon the following borrower(s)/co-borrowers/guarantors to repay the amoun mentioned in the notice with further interest at contractual rates till date of realization within 60 days from the date

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below, against each borrower, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

	DESCRIPTION OF ININIOVABLE PROPERTY				
SI. Name of Borrower/Guaranto		Description of Property	Date of Demand Notice	Outstanding Amount	Date of Possession
1	Borrower: Mr. Shyam Sunder Co-Borrower- Roshni Devi	258/6 Ambedkar Puram Arazi No. 258 at Gambhirpur Dakshin Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Bounded on the: East: Plot of Rakesh Chandra, West: Plot of Dileep Pal, North: 15 Ft. Wide Kachha Rasta, South: Digger Plot (Gas Godam)		4,35,677.00	19.04.2024
2	Borrower: Pankaj Kumar Co-Borrower- Purnima	264 P Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh,		18,15,899.00	19.04.2024
3	Borrower: Gayasiddin Co-Borrower- Afsan Jabeen	Private Plot NO. 02 Arazi NO. 1148 Bhudpur Machharia, Kanpur Uttar Pradesh, Bounded on the: East: 3.96 Mt. Road, West: Part of Aforesaid, North: Part of Aforesaid Arazi, South: Plot No. 01		11,11,718.00	19.04.2024

The borrower's attention is inv'ted to provisions of sub-sec ion (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowe s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for the amount mentioned against each property along with further interest thereon till the date of realisa

Date: 24.04.2024 Authorised Officer, CAN FIN HOMES LTD.

Regional Office, बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ोदा

72 manholes repaired, agency blacklisted

Lucknow

Wednesday blacklisted SK Constructions, the company given the charge of maintaining the manholes in the city. The municipal commissioner, while taking a serious note of the tragic accident in which a child lost his life after falling in an open manhole in Jankipuram, issued strict guidelines to all the depart-

It is informed to all general that I guideli Kalimuddin S/O Najmuddin declare that ments. in all my educational records, aadhar card, pan card and other government been instructed to inspect been instructed to inspect zone wise every day and mentioned as cover all the broken or open Kaleemuddin in the High school and manholes and a certificate marksheet of my has been sought in three days that no manhole in any zone

documents my name is Kalimuddin which is correct. By mistake my name intermediate son Arsalanuddin (CBSE board roll number : 23216503(2020) and 23691992(2022) which is wrong R/o-H.No.15, chota qaziyana, Tiloi jais, ken cover. H.No.15, chota qaziyana, Tiloi jais, Kasimpur Jais, Amethi, Uttar Pradesh
The municipal commissionexecutive engineer Manoj

ate action.

action against Jal Kal supervisor Achhe Lal, junior engidaily," he said.

stage events.

of Municipal Commissioner Indrajit Singh, strict action is being taken against a lekhpal for being involved in illegal activities in collusion with

A senior official from the LMC said that an illegal market was being constructed by Salikram, son of Balwant, on the municipal corporation

land (Gatta No. 660) on the main road Narauna in municipal corporation land in village Salempur Patira. The construction of the illegal market was stopped in

and a notice was issued for the same. In the investigation found that the present accountant Anupam Kumar was getting the construction work done in connivance with the encroachers," he

He said that the investigations revealed that Kumar had violated his official duties by mishandling the municipal corporation land, hiding facts in the report, misleading the senior officials and entering into a conspiracy with the



Kanpur Metro Region: 118/330, 1st Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpuri, Kanpur - 12 Possession Notice

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules. The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with

the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time

available to redeem the secured assets. Branch: M-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date

Borrower: M/s Sanjay Enterprises, Proprietor: Shri Sanjay Singh S/o Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh R/o: House No. A-590, Gujaini, Kanpur, Guarantor: Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Solanki S/o Shri Mathura Singh, R/o: House No. F-883, Gujaini, Kanpur Nagar. Demand Notice Date: 04-07-2015 • Date of Constructive Possession: 23-04-2024 Property: Residential Property Situated at Plot No. 590, Block-A, (KUDP) Gujaini, Kanpur Nagar in

the name of Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Solanki S/o Shri Mathura Singh. Area: 36.75 Sq. Mtr. Bounded-North: Plot No. 579, South: 3.5 Mtr. Road, East: Plot No. 589, West: Plot No. 591 Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 20,95,147.00 + Intt. + Others Charges

Date: 25-04-2024 Place: Kanpur Nagar **Authorised Officer**

PNS LUCKNOW er said that the supervisor Shukla. and junior engineer would "To ensure that no tragic regularly make a register and record it and take appropri-Municipal accident occurs due to any ucknow Lucknow Corporation departmental negligence in on

He also instructed the street lighting department to cover and tape the open junction boxes on street lighting poles of the entire area in the next seven days and the repair of junction boxes and earthing. He said that in view of the gross negligence of the department after conducting a fact-based investigation of the accident, the working institution SK Construction was being blacklisted and an investigation report was being sent to the government for strict departmental

future, the responsibility of various departments has been fixed. In this sequence, after the guidelines given to all the departments today, a total of 72 sewer manholes have been repaired and replaced in the municipal corporation area and this action will continue Meanwhile, on the direction

encroachers.

September 2023 by the former lekhpal Mridul Mishra, which was carried out it was

said.

illegal encroachers.

In Varanasi, Shah gives tips to party workers for Modi's historic win

nion Home Minister Amit Shah gave tips to the Bharativa Janata Party workers, especially the booth and panna presidents, so that the victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi parliamentary seat should be historic.

Modi will seek his third consecutive win from this constituency in this election. In both previous polls in 2014 and 2019, Shah had played an important role in mobilising the party electioneering and boosting the spirits of party workers.

Shah was addressing the party workers of the five assembly segments of Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency in the grounds of

Wednesday evening. Prior to this, Shah inaugurated the party's cen-tral election office of Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency at Tulsi Udyan

(Mahmoorganj). Shah arrived at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Babatpur around 6:40 pm on his two-day visit. He was accorded a warm welcome by senior party leaders. After a few minutes, Shah's convoy left for Mahmoorganj in Varanasi Cantonment assembly segment of Varanasi parliamentary constituen-

At several places, carrying the party flags, the BJP workers welcomed Shah amidst the beat of drums and couch shells and showered petals. He was welcomed by

(Jaunpur) sitting MP and party candidate BP Saroj, along with Pindra MLA Dr Awadhesh Singh. Pindra is an assembly segment of Machhalishahar Lok Sabha (SC) seat. Shah was welcomed by Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, who will seek his third consecutive win from Chandauli Lok Sabha seat.

Two assembly segments of Varanasi (Shivpur and Ajgara) are part of Chandauli seat. Shah was also welcomed at another place in Shivpur area by UP Minister and Shivpur MLA Anil Rajbhar. By reaching Mahmoorganj, Shah touched three Lok Sabha seats.

At both the functions in Mahmoorganj, senior party lead-

ers, including Kashi regional president Dilip Patel, Varanasi Lok Sabha region in-charge Satish Dwivedi, Lok Sabha region convener Surendra Narayan Singh Odhe, UP Ministers of State (Independent Charges) Ravindra Jaiswal and Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', MLAs Dr Neelkanth Tiwari and Saurabh Srivastava, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, MLC and district-city in-charge Arun Pathak, MLC and district chief Hansraj Vishwakarma, city president Vidyasagar Rai, MLĆ Dharmendra Singh, former MLA Jagdish Patel, state BJP secretary Archana Mishra, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi,co-incharge Santosh Solapurkar and many others were also present.

Polling staff to get medical kits

Tn view of the soaring temperatures in Uttar Pradesh, medical kits, particularly to deal with heatstroke cases, will be provided to the polling personnel for the voting scheduled on April 26 in eight Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in the second phase.

Directions have also been issued to ensure all necessary facilities for polling personnel and voters at polling stations.

The polling parties will depart for polling stations on April 25 to ensure fair and peaceful elections in the state. The eight constituencies of UP that are going to polls in the second phase include Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh and Mathura. These eight Lok Sabha seats fall in nine districts of the state, namely, Amroha, Hapur, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh and Mathura.

UP's Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said that instructions had been given to all the district election officers to send polling parties as scheduled for the second phase of voting in eight Lok Sabha constituencies. He said that directions had been issued to all the district election officers concerned to ensure necessary facilities for voters and polling personnel at polling centres

and polling booths.

Prior to the departure of polling parties, the polling personnel will be provided with medical kits to address health conditions such as heatstroke. In view of the heat, tents, sheds, drinking water arrangements and other necessary facilities will be installed at polling centres as per the guidelines issued earlier.

The CEO said in compliance with

the directives of the Election Commission of India, continuous operations were being carried out across UP by the police, income tax, excise, narcotics and other departments. For thorough inspection, 480 inter-state check posts and 1,836 check posts within the state are operational, he added.

From March 16 to April 23, 2024, the state police have seized 495 licensed weapons whereas licences for 4,553 weapons have been revoked and deposited. Notices have been issued under the Criminal Procedure Code to 2,532,068 individuals over concerns of peace disruption, of which 2,061,166 have already been restricted. Additionally, the police have seized 7,650 unlicensed weapons, 7,753 cartridges, 2,900 kilograms of explosives and 411 bombs. Besides, raids were conducted on 3,153 illegal weapon manufacturing centres, while 148 were busted.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated at the inauguration ceremony of a

Yogi defies soaring mercury to campaign for BJP, allies

PNS LUCKNOW

Despite the soaring mercury, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has held over 67 rallies, roadshows and Prabuddhjan Sammelans within a span of 25 days during his campaign for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections, rallying support for candidates of Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies.

For the second phase, Yogi Adityanath covered all eight Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh, underscoring that the 80 seats of the state would form the foundation to secure over 400 seats (400 paar mein 80 hi aadhaar banega)) across the country in the Lok Sabha elections 2024. He has also campaigned in six other states, where he promoted the saffron

Beginning his campaign trail with a Prabuddhjan Sammelan in Mathura, Yogi Adityanath concluded this phase with a grand roadshow in Meerut on Hanuman Jayanti. The overwhelming response evoked by Chief Minister Yogi's rallies and roadshows has on the one hand elevated the spirit of BJP cadre and supporters, and on the other, dampened the chances of the opposition parties.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is widely recognised for his transformative impact on law and order in the state, earning him the title of 'Bulldozer Baba'. His leadership is often associated with prosperity and positive change.

लखानऊ विकास प्राधिकरण

(ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001 : 2008 प्रमाणित संस्था) गोमती नगर, लखनऊ (उ०प्र०)। टोल-फ्री: 1800 1800 5000, वेबसाइट:

–: सार्वजनिक सूचना :–

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण की आवासीय / व्यावसायिक / रेन्ट / नजूल / इम्प्रूवमेन्ट ट्रस्ट योजनाओं के निम्नलिखित आवेदकों द्वारा उनके नाम के सामने अंकित सम्पत्ति का हस्तानान्तरण / नामान्तरण किये जाने हेतु प्राधिकरण में प्रार्थना-पत्र प्रस्तुत किया गया है:-क्र. मूल आवंटी भवन/ योजना का मृत्यु मूल आवंटी के उत्तराधिकारी उत्तराधिकारी के पक्ष मूल आवंटी

सं.	का नाम	भूखण्ड संख्या	नाम	दिनांक	अर्थ आवेदक		में अनापत्तिकर्ताओं के नाम	से (मृतक) का सम्बन्ध
1.	श्रीमती इन्दु पाण्डेय	भवन सं० सी-1	लॉरेस टॉरेस कालोनी	20.04.2021	श्रीमती अंजू पाण् कुमार पाण्डेय, श्री			पुत्रवधू, पुत्र एवं पौत्र
2.	श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार रस्तोगी	भवन सं० बी-4/83	विवेक खण्ड गोमती नगर योजना	25.05.2021	श्रीमती अंजू रस्तोगी, श्री हिमांशु रस्तोगी, श्रीमती उर्विजा रस्तोगी			पत्नी पुत्र एवं पुत्री
3.	श्री इन्द्रदेव दुबे (मृतक)	भू०सं० सी-1/404	सेक्टर-एफ जानकीपुरम योजना	24.08.2001	श्री बसन्त कुर	गार दुबे (पुत्र)		पुत्र
4.	स्व० श्री सुरेन्द्र भान सिंह	भू०सं० ई-III/389	सेक्टर-जे अलीगंज योजना	27.08.2009	श्री सतेन्द्र प्रताप सिंह (पुत्र)		श्रीमती रनेह लता सिंह, श्री दीपेन्द्र प्रताप सिंह	पत्नी एवं पुत्र
5.	स्व० हरिदत्त जोशी	भ०सं० MM-194	सेक्टर-डी अलीगंज योजना	24.05.2002	श्री योगेश कुमार जोशी (पुत्र)	(1) श्रीमती प्रेमा जोशी (पत्नी), (2) श्रीमती विनीता कर्नाटक (3) श्रीमती भारतीय उपाध्याय , (4) श्रीमती आभा पाण्डेय, (5) श्रीमती संगीता पाण्डेय (विवाहित पुत्रियाँ),		
_			120 200 2			(-)	3	7"

उपर्यक्त नामान्तरण के आवेदन के सम्बन्ध में यदि किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई आपत्ति हो तो वह साक्ष्य सहित प्रकाशन तिथि से 30 दिनों के अन्दर अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में प्राप्त करा दें। निर्धारित तिथि तक कोई आपत्ति प्राप्त न होने पर प्राधिकरण अभिलेखों में कालम-6 पर लिखित व्यक्ति का नाम दर्ज कर लिया जायेगा तथा उसके बाद किसी आपत्ति पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

RLD sure of trouncing **INDIA** bloc in west UP

PRABHA SHANKER LUCKNOW

 $T^{\text{he Rashtriya Lok Dal, while}}_{\text{riding the waves of farmers}}$ and Jat support and aided with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brand value and his charisma, is sure of trouncing the INDIA bloc candidates in the constituencies of its dominance in west Uttar Pradesh.

RLD's claim does not seem exaggerated in view of its performance in the parliamentary election in 2019 in alliance with Samajwadi Party when it bagged six seats but lost Baghpat, the RLD's stronghold.

A senior RLD leader leaders of the party were camping in west UP constituencies in the wake of the Lok Sabha elections and were holding door-todoor meetings with the voters. "PM Narenďra Modi is a big name in the poll scenario at present and he is on our side this time. The farmers and Jats are with the RLD due to their ageold allegiance and loyalty with the party since the days of Bhartiya Kisan Dal, founded by late prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh," he said.

He said the RLD's hold over Jats. Muslim, youths and farmers and the brand value of PM Modi would rout the INDIA bloc in west UP.

But issues like Agniveer scheme, unemployment and farmers' agitation are hounding the National Democratic Alliance leaders in west UP where the youths' first

front, saying the law and order is in a good state in UP in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's regime.

'The voters have a checklist of their expectations and they are happy to find that many of these expectations have been addressed in the double-engine government of Bharatiya Janata Party. They also tally this checklist with the claims made by previous governments and their suffering then. On the law and order front the BJP government in UP is far ahead of others and they seldom will catch us or match with us," Mishra said. He claimed that RLD was winning the Baghpat seat with a margin of more than five lakh votes. But the ongoing electoral show of the RLD is not without incidents of showdown among its local/state level leaders. In Mathura, one of the RLD's statelevel office-bearers alleged that he was disgraced by not being towards a total win in west UP obviously any seating arrangements made goes in disarray. "It



choice of government job is said to be recruitment in army for the valour and patriotism it has or for agriculture for self-dependency.

RLD national secretary Anupam Mishra denies reports that Agniveer scheme and law and order are among the big issues that had plagued the contestants of NDA with. "There is no such issue. We are getting such posers by the young voters and their parents but not many. But the voters do understand that the opposition leaders' claim on providing jobs and prosperity to all holds no water as they have no vision. We are counseling the voters on the lollipops that the opposition leaders are offering just for the sake of harming NDA prospects because they know that they are not winning," he said.

Mishra praised the present government on the law and order

allowed to sit at dais from where RLD chief and PM Narendra Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath addressed public rallies in the west UP. This shows a difference is cropping up among the RLD leaders also and the show is not without infighting. The RLD leaders find it an opposition ploy, saying the NDA is marching Anupam Mishra says that there is a huge surge of voters in the meetings of NDA leaders and

is possible that some of us are not getting seats on dais but we are going to get '400 paar' (above 400) seats in Parliament for sure," he said.

He said RLD leaders were traveling, camping while braving the scorching heat but our mojo has not withered. Mishra said the INDIA bloc torchbearers, Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav had failed to get public support in west UP. "In their meetings, there are empty chairs. In the absence of an adequate crowd INDIA bloc leaders are holding press conferences in place of public meetings," he claimed. He said it was RLD which had infused energy in Samajwadi Party to bag parliamentary seats in west UP in the 2019 election. "This time, they will not even open their accounts in west UP. The INDIA

bloc's so-called 'blockbuster film'

will fail at the box office in the pub-

lic parliament," he said.

इंडियन बेंक (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)

Indian Bank

ALLAHABAD

03.01.2024

20.04.2024

Rs. 27.86,523,00

and interest

thereon

03.01.2024

20.04.2024

Rs. 35,68,013,00

and interest

thereon

thereon

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property) [Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is bereby equitioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing:

with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank.

The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues.

Details as under:

	Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount
3	ranch: Gauriganj		
		property consisting of Plot No 271 Area 234 Sqmftr. Village Basupur Pargana Amethi Tehseal Gauriganj Dist Amethi In the Name Of Mrs Savitri Pandey within the Registration sub-district Gauriganj And District Amethi, Bounded by: North: Land Of Seller, South: Land Of Seller, East: Gauriganj To Jamo Road Wast: Jand Of Seller	Rs. 34,94,958.00 and interest and other charges thereon

, Yahiyaganj, Lucknow 226003, Area: 271 Sq Ft, **Boundaries:** I North: Rest Part of Property, South: Road 6 ft wide, **East**:

Common Passage and stairs West: Property 250/10 Ka

Registered at Sub Registrar

Lucknow vide bahi no. 1, zild No. 10629, Pages 83-130, Serial No. 4758 Dated 10/07/2014

nunnu,JC Bose Ward ghasiya

mandi, naya Gaon East, Lucknow, 226018 Area: 544 Sq Ft in the name of Mrs Haseena Khatoon

nohd Sharif, South: House of

Mujid Niyazi, East: House of JP

Registered at Sub Registrar \

icknow vide bahi no. 1, zild No 81, Pages 373-388, Serial No

26004 in the name of Pawar hukla, Area: 4.55 Sq Mtr

Boundaries: North: Shop No. 8, South: Shop of Lalit Sharma, East: Property of Seller, West: 7 ft

ide rasta

egistered at Sub Registrar

Lucknow vide bahi no. 1, zild No. 6885, Pages 231-252, Serial No. 549 Dated 29/01/2009

2. Shop No. 6, H no 244/76, ground

5314, Pages 01-22, Serial No. 805

Supta, West: 10 ft Wide Road

23208 Dated 11/09/1991

1. M/s Bazzaz Agencies Through Proprietor Mr. Mohammad Shuaib (Borrower), Address: Shop No. JGF 250/10, Chamar Toliya, Yahiyaganj, Lucknow Mohammad Shuaib S/o Noor Ahmad (Borrower/Mortgager), Residential Address: H No 250/11, 2nd Floor, Bheem Nagar, Yahiyaganj, Lucknov

Branch: FODS

Residential Address: H No 160/50, mashaiGan kashidera, PS Wazirganj, Lucknow 226003 Residential Address: H no 228/41, Raja Bazar, Luckno Property Address1: Shop No. 1, UGF 250/10, Cham

Foliya, Yahiyaganj, Lucknow ,226003 3. Mr. Noor Alam S/o Noor Ahmad, (Guaranto Residential Address: H No 160/50, Kashi Dera Wazerganj, Lucknow 226018

1. M/s Gharana Jewellers Through Proprietor Mr. Imran All part and parcel of property of H Mohammad Ahmad (Borrower), Address: Shop on H No. No 115/17 ka (115/020) Bagh 108/155, Ground Floor, Talab Gagni Shukl, Lucknow 2. Mr. Imran Mohammad Ahmad S/o Late Mohd, Usmai

W/o Late mohd Usman Khan Boundaries: North: House of (115/020), Bagh munnu, JC Bose Ward ghasiyari mandi naya Gaon East, Lucknow ,226018 Mrs. Haseena Khatoon W/o Late Mohd. Usman Ahmad (Mortgager/ Guarantor), Residential Address: H No 115/17 ka (115/020) Bagh munnu, JC Bose Wa ghasiyari mandi, naya Gaon East, Lucknow, 226018 Residential Address: H No 114/8, naya Gaon Wes

Ahmad (Borrower), Residential Address: H No 115/17 ka

Lucknow, 226018 Property Address: H No 115/17 ka (115/020), Bagi nunnu, JC Bose Ward ghasiyari mandi, naya Gaon Easi

1. M/s Pawan Garments Through Proprietor Mr. Pawan Mortgaged Assets:

Shukla (Borrower) Address: Shop No. 6, Krishna 1, Shop No. 9, H no 244/76, ground Floor, Area 4.55 Square Metre, Loha Bazar, Yahiyaganj, Lucknow 2 Mr. Pawan Shukla (Borrower/Mortgager/Guarantor), 2000/4 in the pame of Pawar. Residential Address: H No 536/206, New Madaigan

Property Address1: Shop No. 9, H no 244/76, ground Floor, Area 4.55 Square Metre, Yahiyaganj, Lucknov

Property Address 2: Shop No. 6, H no 244/76, ground Floor, Area 70 Square feet, Yahiyaganj, Lucknow 226004 3. Anamika Shukla W/o Pawan Shukla Mortgagor/Guarantor), Residential Address: H No Sa6/206, New Madaiganj, Sitapur Road, Lucknow 226020
Property Address: Plot No. 20, Part of Khasra no. 1428.
54, area 83.643 sq mtr, Faizullahganj, Lucknow 226013

Sq. Table Standards St 536/206, New Madaiganj, Sitapur Road, Lucknow 226020

5. 1. M/s MODERN SYSTEMS (Prop.Firm/ Borrower), Room No. 305-306 3RD Floor Building No. 10A Murl Bhawan Ashok Marg Raja Ram Mohan Rai Lucknow

2. Mr. Vidhan Kr BhattacharyaS/o Late Niranjar Bhattacharya (Prop) Add-1: Room No.305-306 3RD Floor Building No.10A Murli Bhawan Ashok Marg Raja Ram Mohan Rai Lucknow-226001 Add-2: 109/120 Model House, Laxmi Sahay Road Nea Nayar Clinic Lucknow UP.

3. Mr. Ashish Saxena s/o Siya Saran Saxena (Guarantor), K 17 Sanjay Gandhi Puram Faizabad Road

4. Mrs Alpana Bhatacharya (Guarantor), Room No. 305-306 3RD Floor Building No. 10A Murli Bhawan Ashok Març Raja Ram Mohan Rai Lucknow-226001

5. Mr. Vidhan Kr Bhattacharya S/o Late Niranjar Bhattacharya (Mortgagor), Add-1: Room No.305-306 3RD Floor Building No.10A Murli Bhawan Ashok Marg Raja Ram Mohan Rai Lucknow-226001

Add-2: 109/120 Model House,Laxmi Sahay Road Nea Navar Clinic Lucknow UP.

6. Mrs Alpana Bhatacharya (Mortgagor), Room No.305-306 3RD Floor Building No.10A Murli Bhawan Ashok Marg Raja Ram Mohan Rai Lucknow-226001

1. Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh S/o Mr. Roop Singh (Borrower) All that part and parcel of the 09.11.2023 Address: Flat No. B-1006 Sopan Apartr Priyadarshini Scheme, Lucknow-226010. 2. Mrs. Deepika Singh W/o Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh (Co

Borrower) Address: Flat No. B-1006 Sopan Apartment ector-C, Priyadarshini Scheme, Lucknow-226010 3. Mr. Anui Kumar Singh S/o Mr. Roop Singh (Borrow Mortgagor) Address: B-1006 Sopan Apartment, Sector-C

rivadarshini Scheme, Lucknow-226010 . Mrs. Deepika Singh W/o Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh (Co-

Borrower/ Mortgagor) Address: B-1006 Sopan Apartment, Sector-C, Priyadarshini Scheme, Lucknow

property situated at Flat No. B-1006, Block-B, Type of Flat Two Bed Room, bearing Super Area of 100.20 sq mtr, with built up area 85.90 sq mtr. located in Sopar Enclave, Sector-C, Priyadarshin Scheme, Sitapur Road, Lucknow n the name of Mr. Anuj Kuma ingh and Mrs. Deepika Singh Boundary as per deed: On Top Flat No. B-806/2BHK/Type-2 (08th Floor), On Bottom: Flat No. B-606/2BHK/Type-2 (06th Floor), Adjoining: Flat No. B-

704/2BHK/Type-2 (07th Floor).

Draupadi Bihar, Second phase, Lakshmanpuri, Vill- Shekhpuri, Kasaila, Ward- Gomti Nagar,

ucknow, Sale deed registered or

05/03/2001 with sub registral Lucknow-2 at book no-1, zild no-

A property at office space room no-305 area-277 sq fit(25.743 sq mtr) at III floor building no-10A murti Bhawan Ashok Marg Lucknow at Raja ram Mohan rai

ward, having registered sale deed dated 26.6.2009 at vahi no-1 Zild

dated 26.5.2009 at vani no-1 Zilo no-8688 pages 1-22 Sr No-6474 in name of Mr Vidhan kumar Bhattacharya, Boundaries-East-Office space no-304, North- Gallery

South-Other property 2. A property at office space room no-306 area-358 sq fit (33.271 sq

mtr) at III floor building no-10A murli Bhawan Ashok Marg Lucknow at Raja ram Mohan rai

ward,having registered sale deed dated 12.09.2008 at vahi no-1 Zild

no-7844 pages 277-306 Sr No-9930 in name of Mrs Alpana Bhatta Charya w/o Vidhan kumar Bhattacharya, **Boundaries- East-**

Other property, West- Office space no-305, North- Gallery

South-Other property

and interest thereon

22.11.2023

22.04.2024

and Interest

 M/s Yash Car Bazar Pvt Ltd (Borrower), Add-1: 10, All that part and parcel of Plot Draupadi Vihar, Laxman Puri, Faizabad Road Lucknow-no.10, Part of Khasra no.-149 Add-2: 2, Mount Carmel School Road, opp Hanuma Mandir, Badshahnagar crossing, Mahanagar, Lucknow
2. Smt Reshma Waseem w/o Mohd Waseem

(Guarantor), 10, Draupadi Vihar, Laxman Puri, Faizaba Road Lucknow-226016 3. Mohd Waseem (Guarantor and Mortgagor), 10,

Draupadi Vihar, Laxman Puri, Faizabad Road Lucknow

 Rabab Fatima w/o Sri Murtuza Husnain
 (Borrower/Mortgagor), Add-1: 144 Karbala Abbas Bagh, consisting of House No. 44A/A-355
 Near Idel School Balaganj Hardoi Road Lucknow Pin Plot No. SS-355 Area 36.75 Sq.Mt. Add-2: House No. 44A/A-355, Plot No. SS-355 Area 36.75 Sq Mt. Sec A Azad Nagar Pargana Gadhipeer Khan

Lucknow Add-3: Shop No. 2, Atik Market, Akhara Chauraha Nea SDN School, Wazir Bagh Lucknow Pin 226001 2. Murtuza Husnain s/o Mohd Wasi (Co-Borrower), Add1: 144 Karbala Abbas Bagh, Near Idel School Balaga Hardoi Road Lucknow Pin 226003

Add-2: House No. 44A/A-355, Plot No. SS-355 Area 36.75 Sq Mt. Sec A Azad Nagar Pargana Gadhipeer Khan Lucknow Add-3: 223, 2nd Floor Ganj Plazza Opp Leela Cinem

Jal Nigam Road, Balaganj Lucknow Lucknow. (b). E-4110, Awas Vikas Colony, Rajajipuram, Lucknow

Jal Nigam Road, Balaganj Lucknow (b) E-4110,AwasVikas Colony Rajajipuram, Lucknow

2. Mrs. Saumya Rastogi W/o Mudit Rastogi (Borrow

Mortgagor & Guarantor) (a) 441/RC/51, Railway Colon

20152 on pages 23 to 46 at serial no-1595/01, **Bounded by- East-**Plot no.09, **West-** Road 40 ft wide, North- Road 40 ft wide, South Sec A Azad Nagar Pargana Gadhipeer Khan Lucknow. Vide Sale Deed dated 31.12.2018 bahi No.1 Zild No. 13426 Pg 273-352 SI No. 1 2lid No. 13426 Pg 273-332 S) 11393, Boundaries: East:- Road 4.5 MT Wide, West:- H.No. SS-350, North:- H.No.SS-356, South:-H.No.SS-354

20.04.2024 and interest thereon

22.04.2024

Rs. 51,72,518.00

thereon

Hazaratganj Lucknow Pin 226001 03.01.2024 ranch: Jankipuram 20.04.2024 1. Mr Mudit Rastogi S/o Girraj Dharan Rastogi All that part and parcel of the (Borrower & Guarantor) (a). 441/RC/51, Railway Colony, residential house property no. E-

residential house property no. E-4110 measuring area 36.75 sq. mtrs situated at ward KunwarJyot Prasad, MohallaRajajipuram District Lucknow registered in the office of sub registrar –V , Lucknow n Book No. 1, Khand no. 9037 pages no 319 to 356 at serial no 11841 dated 24.10.2013 in the name of Smt. SaumyaRastogi W/c Shri Mudit Rastogi, Bounded by:-North: Road 6 mtr wide, South: House No E-4014, East: House No

-4108, West: House No E-4112

All that part and parcel of the

residential house property No. 264/14, situated at Billochpura, Ward Kundri Rakabganj, Lucknow,

area 1300 sq.ft. Sale deed

Registered on Book No. 01 Khano No. 4654, Pages No.295/326 a

serial no. 4360 dated 12.07.2004

02.11.2023

Rs. 12,86,614.00

and interest

02.11.2023

23.04.2024

Rs. 8.81,215.00

thereon

10. 1. Mr. Shahabuddin S/o Mohammad Siddig (Borrower & Mortgagor) (a). 264/20, Billochpura Bazar Khala, Rajendra Nagar, Lucknow. (b). 264/14, Billochpura, Ward Kundri Rakabganj, Nea Sunni Inter College, Lucknow 2. Mrs. Uzma W/o Shahabuddin (Co-Borrower (a). 264/20, BillochpuraBazar Khala, Rajendra Nagar,

3. Mr. Ilham Hussain alias Ikaham Hussain S/o Amtiyaj Hussain alias Mirza Imtiyaz Hussain (Guarantor), R/o

5314, Pages 01-22, Serial No. 805 Dated 08.02.2006 3. Plot No. 20, Part of Khasra no. 142& 54 Minzumla, area 83.643 sq mtr, Faizullahganj, Lucknow 226013 in the name of Anamika Shukla, Area: 83.643 sq mtr, Boundaries: North: House of Babbu Singh, South: House of Naumi Lal, East: House of Gupta ji West: 15ft Wide Road West: 15 ft Wide Road Registered at Sub Registrar 4 Lucknow vide bahi no. 1, zild No. 12582, Pages 165-202, Serial No. 3911/15 Dated 31.03.2015

(b), 264/11 Billouchpura Lucknow

Date: 25.04.2024

(b). 264/14, Billochpura, Ward Kundri Rakabgani, Nea Sunni Inter College, Lucknow 446/126, Musahib Ganj, Lucknow. 4. Mr. Allemuddin S/o Kamaluddin (Guarantor), (a). 1 Villauchpura, Lucknow

Bounded by:- North: Main Billochpura market's metalled road at entrance, South: House Idris East: Partly house Mateem 8 Partly 10ft wide road, West: House Zia-ul & then almost 75-m away i

Authorised Officer Indian Bank

BHU approves proposals to institute 14 new scholarships, a gold medal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The meeting of Academic Council (AC) of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), chaired by Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain on Tuesday, deliberated in detail on various issues pertaining to academic and research activities in the university and steps to further improve the overall performance and productivity. The V-C informed the house about the newly constituted Project Monitoring Unit which has been mandated to work for further improvement in the academic and research ecosystem of the university. Prof Jain said the unit will work to resolve issues that have the potential of adversely affecting the teaching-learning activities. He informed that the initiative will start with faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, and gradually its scope of functioning will be expanded. He underlined that all the bodies and members of the university must work in coherence to ensure a smooth campus life for students, paving the way for their holistic development.

The AC has approved the proposals to institute 14 new merit-cum-means scholarships and one gold medal. The university receives donations from various persons and organisations to start scholarships under its Pratidana initiative, proposals for which are placed for approval before the AC, the university's apex policy making body on academic matters. The council approved the

Akshaibar & Jogeshwari Giri Gold Medal to be presented to Faculty of SVDV (effective a second Year MBA student securing highest CGPA. This will come into effect from the academic session 2023-24.

Besides, proposals to start various other scholarships were also approved by the council. These are: Mahamana Malaviya Biotechnology Scholarship for the 2nd Year MSc Biotechnology student at the School of Biotechnology (from academic session 2024-25); Biswanath & Meera Bhattacharya Scholarship for a 2nd year student of MA Sanskrit in Faculty of Arts (from academic session 2025-26); Jhingan Sahu Memorial Scholarship for a 1st year student of MFA (Textile Design) in Faculty of Visual Arts (from academic session 2024-25); two CNR Rao Scholarships for the students of final year students of BPA (Vocal Music and Instrumental Music each) in the Faculty of Performing Arts (from academic session 2025-26); Uday Pratap Scholarship for a 2nd year student of MSc (Agriculture) – Mycology and Plant Pathology in the Institute of Agricultural Sciences (from academic session 2025-26); JN Gupta and Savitri Devi Scholarship for a 2nd Year Student of MSc (Physics), Institute of Science (from academic session 2024-25); Ramswaro op Jamnadevi Maheshwari Scholarship for a 1st Year student of MBA in the Institute of Management Studies (from academic session 2024-25); five SGVP Swaminarayan ated colleges will be allowed to enroll in such programmes.

from academic session 2023-24). A proposal to set up a merit-cum-means scholarship for Central Hindu Girls School has also been approved. The Awadh Raj Kumar Scholarship for a class IX student will be effective from the academic session 2024-25. The AC also accepted the proposals to add new programmes and courses to the various affiliated colleges of the university. The Arya Mahila PG College has been permitted to teach Statistics, Mathematics, and Geography as minor courses. Similarly, the Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya has been allowed to teach Statistics and Mathematics as minor courses. The Vasanta College for Women, Rajghat, has been granted nod to start the UG Diploma course in Computer Application. The AC also gave its nod to the new guidelines for admission to full time and part time diploma courses, in order to ensure that the courses are availed by those who actually need them for professional and academic growth and the university's facilities are not misused. As per the new guidelines, full-time diploma courses will have a minimum academic requirement and well-defined credits and fixed number of hours of the course. In case of part-time diploma or certificate courses, only regular UG & PG students of the university and its affiliThe Academic Council also approved the nomination of 10 distinguished academicians as its external members. These include Prof MM Chaturvedi (University of Delhi), Prof Prithvish Nag (Director, SHEPA), Prof Manisha Proyam (NIEPA, Delhi), Prof Suman Sharma (Principal, Suman Sharma (Principal, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi), Prof Dhananjay Singh (JNU), Prof Neera Agnimitra (University of Delhi), Prof Shrinivasa Varakhedi (Vice Chancellor, Central Sanskrit University), Prof Panchanan Mohanty (Nalanda University), Monanty (Naianda University), Prof Anup Thakar (Director, Institute of Teaching & Research in Ayurveda), and Prof BR Mittal (PGI, Chandigarh). Controller of Examinations, Prof NK Mishra briefed the house regarding the progress of the admission process for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. He said that all measures are being taken in order to ensure that the interest of students is not compromised. Additional Controller of Examinations Prof GP Singh said that the university is in the process of finalizing the PhD admission results which will be released very soon.

Prof Maya Shankar Singh and Prof DS Pandey made presentations on various agenda items of the meeting. Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh conducted the proceedings of the AC. He delivered the vote of thanks at the conclusion

Six die in separate accidents

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Six persons were killed and eight others seriously injured in separate accidents in Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday.

In the first incident three persons were killed and two others, including the driver, seriously were injured when a truck collided head on with a DCM on Mughal Road under Moosanagar police station area early on Wednesday morning. The police sent the bodies for an autopsy. The incident took place when an uncontrolled truck coming from Ghatampur collided head on with the DCM coming from Bhognipur. as a result of which Sulkhan (46) of Ward No.1, Ghatampur, Rahul (22) of Ward No.17 and Ajay of Chhattapurwa, Vidhnu, who were on the DCM were killed. The injured Rambabu and DCM driver Nizam of



The overturned car in Pukhrayan, Bhognipur, Kanpur Dehat, early on Wednesday

Ward No1 were admitted to Punkhravan community health centre (CHC). The truck and DCM were separated with the help of the JCB.

In another incident three persons died and six others were seriously injured when an uncontrolled car, returning from a marriage party, overturned on the Jhansi-Kanpur highway in Pukhrayan of Kanpur Dehat early on Wednesday morning. The injured were admitted to the CHC. The 'barat' of Rakesh of Iaraila, Gainer, Kanpur Dehat, had gone to Kurara, Hamirpur. Early on Wednesday morning, when the car was returning

from the marriage party, it suddenly overturned near Patel Chowk of the Pukhrayan bypass under the Bhognipur Kotwali police station area. In the incident Kunwarlal (60) of the incident Kunwariai (60) of Jaraila, Gajner, Raghunath (40) of Nandana, Ghatampur, Chhotelai (55) of Muridpur, Akbarpur, Ravi Shanker, Akshansh, Rachit, Kartik, Arjun of Jaraila and driver Sushil of Nasarpur, Akbarpur, were injured. They were sent to the CHC wherefrom after the first aid, six of them were referred to the district hospital. In the district hospital, Kunwarpal, Raghunath and Chhotelal were declared dead by the doctors. Kotwali incharge Anjan Kumar Singh said all the injured were undergoing treatment at the district hospital. On receipt of complaint, a first information reprot (FIR) will be lodged, he said.

Woman hangs self PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ house and hanged herself. As a result she died. When her husband returned home from a

A⁴⁰-year-old woman hanged herself from a mango tree in Saitapur Barethi village under Utraon police station on Tuesday night. As a result she died on the spot. On being informed by her husband the police took the body into custody and sent it to the mortuary for the post-mortem examination.

Reports received here said that Rajesh of Saitapur Barethi under Utraon police station worked as a mason to support his family. His wife was alone at home. Around 9 pm she went to the garden located 100 metres away from her

marriage procession at night, he looked for her but failed to trace her. In the morning he found her hanging from a mango tree in the garden. On getting information the police reached the spot and sent the body for the post-mortem examination. Her family members are inconsolable.

Meanwhile on receiving information from the Railway Headquarters Cyber Cell, the RPF sleuths arrested a tout Azad Hussain of Dakshin Nababpur Malikpara, under Chanditala police station of Hooghly (West Bengal).

Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi inspects OPF products

Vice-Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi inspected the products of Ordnance Parachute Factory (OPF), a unit of Gliders India Limited, on Tuesday. He said there had been high level improvement in the products of GIL. Earlier, he was extended a rousing welcome at the OPF. He also inspected exhibition hall, workshops and lab and praised the products being manufactured there. He said his much-awaited visit to OPF

was fulfilled on Tuesday. The high level improvement in quality of the products is indeed praiseworthy, he said. CMD, Gliders India Ltd, Vijay Kumar Tewari said the entire team of GIL was committed and dedicated to produce quality and durable products. Director (Operations & Personnel) Sunil Date, Director (Finance) Surendra Dhapodkar, GIL's GM (HR) SK Singh, OPF GM MC Balasubramanium, Joint GMs S Banerjee and Ms Pratiksha Saini were present.

Significant decrease in malaria patients in Varanasi: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that the district is continuously moving towards eradicating malaria by the year 2030. "The Health department is taking effective strategies and actions to prevent malaria. The result of this is that the number of malaria tests has increased year after year in the district and the effective control and prevention number of patients has of malaria, ASHA workers are decreased significantly," he going door-to-door to create said on the eve of World awareness among the people as

He said that seminars, awareness rallies and health camps will be organised at Community/ Primary Health Centres (CHCs/PHCs) on the occasion of World Malaria Day on Thursday. According to the CMO, in 2017, 406 malaria patients were found in the dis-

trict but only 27 patients were found last year. "Awareness ACMO and I about malaria is increasing in the district due to various activities and publicity along with communicable and mosquito-borne disease control campaigns," he said, adding that this time, the theme of the day has been 'Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world'.

Dr Chaudhary said for of malaria, ASHA workers are well as testing for malaria through Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kits. "During OPD, all patients suffering from fever are being tested for malaria. Malaria patients are also being identified through health camps. Apart from this, emphasis is also being laid on contract tracing in hot spot

ACMO and Nodal Officer Dr SS Kanojia said all CHCs, PHCs and CHOs of Ayushman Arogya Mandir have been directed to test and identify malaria on time and provide treatment to the patients within the stipulated time. "For this, all 212 CHOs and 2,633 ASHA workers have been trained. Apart from the district headquarters, the facili-ty of testing and treatment of malaria is available at all urban and rural CHCs, PHCs, Ayushman Arogya Mandir," ne said, adding that wit timely diagnosis and treat-

ment, the patient becomes completely healthy.

District Malaria Officer (DMO) Sharad Chand Pandey said the lower the density of mosquitoes according to the population, the dis-trict will be more safe from

malaria. "Currently the house index in all the hot spots is less than one which is normal but the house index starts increasing during the rainy season and normal cold, because the larvae grow more in these seasons. Action is being taken at every level to ensure that the larvae do not flourish," he said, adding that in this direction, along with the Health department, Nagar Nigam, Panchayati Raj, Jal Nigam, Jalkal and Irrigation department are taking action in coordination. Pandey said the breeding sources of mosquitoes are being destroyed in urban and rural areas.

'Special attention is being given to 27 rural and 34 urban hot spot areas previous-ly identified for malaria and dengue. Anti-larva spraying and fogging is also being done,"

IIT-K introduces new cohort of eMasters in sustainable construction practices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

To prepare professionals for careers in the construction industry as project managers, construction managers and sustainability consultants, IIT Kanpur (IIT-K) has introduced the new cohort of its eMasters in Sustainable Construction Practices and Project Management. This comprehensive programme will help professionals gain the expertise to build and manage sustainable construction projects. It will also talk about environmental management, legal and regulatory frameworks and sustainability consulting. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of green building materials, energy-efficient design, renewable energy systems, project planning, sched-uling, budgeting, quality con-trol, risk and contract manage-

ment. Head of Department, Civil Engineering, IIT Kanpur, Prof Priyanka Ghosh, said, 'With our commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship, this eMasters course caters to a future ready industry and will educate the next generation of construction professionals to lead the way in sustainable building practices to make a lasting impact on our world."

The eMasters programme stands out for its flexibility. allowing participants to complete it within a timeframe of one to three years, catering per fectly to the schedules of working professionals.

Notably, unlike many other programmes, admission doesn't hinge on a GATE score, making it accessible to a broader range of candidates. Delivered by renowned faculty and experts from IIT Kanpur

and other organisations, the 60credit, 12-module curriculum is meticulously designed to align with industry needs, ensuring participants receive cutting-edge insights and knowledge. The inclusion of weekend-only live interactive classes, complemented by selfpaced learning, further enhances the programme's appeal, offering a balanced and engaging learning experi-

ence.

The immersive learning format of the programme not duable insights but also grants access to IIT Kanpur's placement and incubation cells, along with its extensive alumni network. This facilitates significant career advancement opportunities and fosters valuable networking experiences. Moreover, participants have the unique chance to visit the

IIT Kanpur campus, engaging with peers and esteemed faculty members directly.

By enrolling in these pro-

grammes, professionals gain a distinct advantage in their careers, staying ahead of the competition. Applications for the July 2024 batch are open until April 30.

KARATE CHAMPI-**ONSHIP:** Vanya Tomar of The Sportz Hub (TSH) won the bronze medal in the state karate championship held at the Chowk Stadium of Lucknow. only provides professionals Over 500 players from different districts of the state tool part in it. A quarterly member of TSH, Vanva won the medal in Kata event of the senior category. TSH Board of Directors and Coach Sunil Kumar have hailed the achievement of Vanya in the state championship and wished her a bright

Technique developed for long-term conservation of bathua

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Dr Sunil Meena, Assistant Professor, Department of Dairy Science and Food Technology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Vice-Chancellor of BRA Bihar University Prof DC Rai, and their team have developed a technique for long-term conservation of the underutilised agriculture crop Chenopodium album (bathua). It contains abundant nutrients but the crop does not last long. Now it can be preserved and used even in the off-season.

Dr Sunil explained that by using proper conservation techniques, plant species rich in nutrients, like *bathua*, can play an important role in helping people suffering from poverty, hunger and malnutrition. At the same time, it also helps in ensuring production and food security. *Bathua* and other leafy vegetables are grown during the winter season. Due to the high amount of water in it, the high amount of water in it, it gets spoiled quickly. These seasonal vegetables suffer huge waste during the winter due to high production and adequate storage, transportation and processing capacity. It is extremely important to use and explore the preservation and explore the preservation techniques that preserve these seasonal vegetables so that they can be used in the off-season. Drying is an ancient technique that can preserve food when it is available in abundance and can be stored and used for long non-primed barley.

time as well. The research team led by Dr Meena and Prof Rai included Keerthi Reddy of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences, BHU, Dr Kamlesh Kumar from MPUAT, Udaipur, and Dr Priyae Gautam from SHUATS, Prayagraj. The findings of the study have been published in the globally reputed Microchemical Journal. Dr Meena said food insecurity has emerged as a global challenge due to climate change and an increase in urbanisation. Several efforts have been made to tackle the global food security problem. Dr Meena said that the study has focused on preserving bathua and maintaining the storage conditions.

STUDY: Dr Prashant

Singh and his research team, from the Department of Botany, BHU, has led a ground-breaking study published in the esteemed journal Environmental and Environmental Botany, known for its impact factor of 5.7 in the field of plant science. The research delves into the pressing issue of climate change and its detrimental effects on agroecosystems and crop productivity, particularly focusing on the impact of drought stress on barley plants. The study investigates the use of Trichoderma-mediated defence priming in barley under drought stress conditions. The results of the study are significant, revealing that Trichoderma-primed barley exhibits heightened tolerance to drought stress compared to

Prepare action plan for flood, depts told

Asteering of the Flood Steering Committee was held in the Commissioner's Auditorium on Tuesday under the chairmanship of District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam regarding the preparations to be made to prevent possible floods. While instructing all the departments to prepare an action plan for flood, the DM said there is a possibility of monsoon arriving from June 15, now all the departments have enough time to complete

their preparations.

He directed the Executive Engineer of Bandhi Block that if any scheme of his department is being implemented, then in every case, that work should be completed before June 15. "The rates for boats used in floods should be redetermined. The capacity of the boat must be considered while determining the rate. Check the equipment available with the departments and if any equipment is required in any department, it should be demanded

immediately," he said.

He said that all the basic facilities must be provided in the relief camps to be established in the district. "If anything is needed, prepare for it now and solar lights must be installed in all relief camps. The place should be marked in the PA system to be installed for early warning," he said, adding that while identifying the place, flood affected areas and relief camps will definitely be identified. He said arrangements for straw for animals should be

made in advance and adequate quantities of chlorine and antisnake venom will be kept by the Health department. "Adequate provision of food grains should also be ensured for the flood affected people. It should be ensured that no person affected by the flood faces any shortage of anything and there should be no loss of life due to the flood under any circumstances," he said.

The DM also directed the entire department to take precautions from the current heat. "Sufficient quantity of tankers should be installed for drinking water. If a tanker is required, demand for the tanker should be made immediately without any delay. Along with this, proper arrangement of water should also be made for the animals," he said. He directed the Fire department to remain alert to reduce the incidents of fire. Earlier in the meeting, ADM (Finance/Revenue) Vandita Srivastava gave details of the main rivers (Ganga, Gomti and Varuna) flowing in the district. On the water gauge installed by the Central Water Commission at Rajghat, details about the warnings and danger points of Ganga as well as when floods occurred in the past years etc were explained in detail. Giving information about the villages/localities affected by floods in the district, she said a total of 195 villages of the district are heavily and partially affected by floods, out of which 76 villages and 27 localities of Sadar tehsil

are highly affected by floods.

Assumes charge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Prof Satyendra Kumar Tiwary from the Department of Surgery, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) assumed the responsibility of professor in-charge of the workshop (IMS Workshop) of the IMS-BHU. The newly appointed full-time Director, Prof Satya Narayan Shankhwar entrusted this responsibility to Dr Tiwary in the direction of improving the institute.

Dr Tiwary is the author of 156 research articles in journals, 18 chapters in books and edited six books, including four international books.

Fire breaks out in restaurant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A massive fire broke out in a Arestaurant located at Maharana Pratap Crossing here on Wednesday afternoon. On getting information, six fire brigade vehicles also reached the spot. Its two employees who were trapped were brought down safely by the fire brigade personnel. After about two hours of tireless efforts, the fire brigade personnel succeeded in extinguishing the fire. District Fire Officer RK Pandey said the fire was caused by a short circuit. Six fire tenders were deployed to extinguish it. The fire could be controlled after 2 hours. There was no information about any loss of life, but

the restaurant suffered losses worth lakhs.

CAMPAIGN: Municipal Corporation has started removing encroachments to clear the road tracks of the city before the event of Mahakumbh. On the first day of the campaign on Wednesday, vehicle repairing shops were removed from the tracks on Nawab Yusuf Road. The enforcement team started the operation simultaneously from both sides of the road (Fire Brigade intersection and High Court Pani Ki Tanki). During the operation, items kept on the roadside were confiscated. The

building near the vending zone. Even after this, when the razed portion on the road track was not broken, the Municipal Corporation demolished it with a JCB. An auto parts businessman asked for two days' time to remove the goods from the roadside. The enforcement team in charge directed to remove all the items within two days. In the action that lasted for three hours, a fine of ₹34,000 was collected from street vendors and four trucks of goods were seized. Encroachment on MG Marg will be removed on Thursday. The enforcement team in charge said in the conalready given notice to remove encroachment in front of a

Interactive session on strategies for managing stress conducted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU) conducted an interactive session on Strategies for Managing Stress and Promoting Self-Care under the leadership of their student well-being initiative committee here on Wednesday. Renowned mental health advocate and founder of the Little Umbrella Foundation Prity Banerjee was the guest speaker of the session organised under the guidance and sup-port of Director of IM-BHU Prof Ashish Bajpai and DeanProf HP Mathur and aatended by the members of Student Well-being Committee



care being held at IM-BHU in Varanasi

Shashi (Chairman), Dr Vishal Laheri, Dr Ram Shankar Uraon, and Dr Abhijeet Biswas.

The session covered a range of topics, including burnout, stress, trauma response, affirmation and mental health well-being. She delved into the factors that contribute to mental health well-

being, emphasising the importance of acknowledging mental health and fostering empa-thy. She also discussed the difference between sympathy and empathy, highlighting the crucial role that communication plays in understanding and supporting those struggling with mental health issues.

The session continued with addressing the causes of stress, including environmental issues, unemployment, inflation, gender disorientation, taboos and stigma surrounding mental health. Prity also discussed child abuse prevention campaigns and the issues surrounding self-harm, self-care, and self-love. She also touched topics of PTSD (Post-

Traumatic Stress Disorder), its symptoms and how it can be managed, the symptoms of depression and PTSD, such as fever, shivering, heart strokes, tension, bodily pains, shaking, gut health issues, crying without reason, and anxiety. Mindfulness was a key focus of the session, with the speaker discussing how it can help manage stress and anxiety. She also provided practical tips for attendees to incorporate mindfulness into their daily lives. The interactive session focussed to equip attendees with the knowledge and tools to recognise the signs of men-tal health issues and provide support to those who may be

Nations must invest in resilient infrastructure for better tomorrow: Modi

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

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

part of post-disaster rebuilding after disasters." "As we all have witnessed, more frequent and more severe. The damage they cause is usually reported in dollars, but their true impact on

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

He said nature and disasters Resilient have no borders and disasters disruption said, widespread impact in a highly interconnected world.

The world can be resilient collectively only when each country individually. Shared resilience is important because of the shared risks. CDRI and this conference help us come together for this collective natural disasters are becoming mission," the prime minister

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



most vulnerable to achieve shared resilience.

"CDRI has a programme which is funding projects across 13 such places. Resilient housing in Dominica, resilient transport networks in Papua New Guinea and enhanced early burning systems in the Dominican Republic and Fiji are some examples," Modi said. It is heartening that CDRI also has a focus on the global south, he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Navy official freed from Qatar

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

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

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

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

Congress manifesto influenced by foreign forces, claims BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

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

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

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

he charged.

as their savings and even those who are poor say there should be gold. And you want to impose 45 per cent tax on them (gold)," Trivedi added. The Congress distanced itself from Pitroda's remarks, alleging that sensationalising them are attempts at diverting attention from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "malicious" poll campaign.

By doing an X-ray of the Congress' manifesto, their high tech guru Pitroda has made it clear that both the lives and wealth of the people of the country are in danger. You want to take away the wealth of people from them," the BJP spokesperson hit back, saying the Congress can hide its "nefarious intentions" now. He also alleged that the

Congress' manifesto was influenced by foreign forces. 'Understand how big the danger is. The Communist party, a prominent constituent of INDI alliance, says it will dismantle India's nuclear weapons and Congress says it will stanch away from you the little 'dhan and anna (wealth and food) that you have at home,' Trivedi charged,

With his remarks triggering a row, Pitroda said on X that "It is unfortunate that what I said an individual inheritance tax in the US is twisted by Godi media to divert attention from what lies the PM is spreading about the Congress manifesto. PM's on Mangal Sutra

exhorting people to seriously

ponder over the issue.

and gold snatching is simply

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

Attacking the Congress over

Pitroda's remarks, Modi said at a rally in Chhattisgarh, "The Congress party's dangerous intentions have come to fore yet again. Now these people are saying they will impose inheritance tax on properties bequeathed to children by their parents." Home Minister Amit Shah also flaved Pitroda's remarks, saying "The appeasement politics of the Congress stand exposed today with Sam Pitroda's statement on wealth redistribution. He reaffirmed the party's intention to seize the property of the majority and distribute it among the

पंचायत

Modi greets people on Panchayati Raj Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

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

Raj observes April 24 as National Panchayati Raj Day, marking the enactment of the Constitution Amendment) Act, 1992, which came into force on this day in 1993 and paved the way for empowering of local

bodies. Modi said on X, "On Panchayati Raj Day, greetings to all those working at grassroots to transform rural India and ensure a better quality of life for the people. Government will continue to work to strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions and give wings to people's

prison, father thanks Modi PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Captain Saurabh Vashisht, one of the eight imprisoned former Indian Navy personnel released by

Qatar following India's diplomatic efforts, and his father have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convey their heartfelt thanks and laud his leadership. Vashisht said his heart is

eight

brimming with appreciation and reverence, as he praised Modi for his unwavering support and tireless efforts during one of the most challenging phases of his life, officials noted on Wednesday. He said in the letter to the prime minister that, "In the

face of seemingly insurmountable odds, you emerged as a steadfast beacon of hope and resilience, transcending the realms of politics to embody a guiding unparalleled force of significance."

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



the capital punishment by Qatar on reportedly espionage charges which was later

committed. However, India's persistent intervention ensured their release in February and they returned home.

Vashisht said in his solitary confinement in a Qatar prison, he was sustained by the hope that no stone will be left unturned to ensure his release as he observed the prime minister's major diplomatic engagements such as being the State guest of the United States government, Chief Guest of Honour at Bastille's Day parade in France and hosting the G20 summit, in India.

He said, "Witnessing your auspicious inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Avodhva, I felt that our Lord Ram was also blessing us to attain our freedom. I remain eternally to you for restoring

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

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

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

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



DRDO builds lightest bullet proof jacket

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

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

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

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

operation. The areal density of ICW Hard Armour Panel (HAP) and standalone HAP is less than 40 kg/m2 and 43 kg/m2 respectively.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

rmy Chief General Manoj Army Chief General Pande said here on as the "sole driver" of success

In his address at a seminar here, he also said technologies "revolutionising and establishing a 'new normal' in different fields". General Pande further said technology has also emerged as the "new plays and is being leveraged for weaponisation of domains, ranging The Army Technology Empowering the Soldier" organised by a defence think-

Wednesday evolution of technology has impacted warfare but technological advantage may just be reduced to a tactical level when it is taken away from the larger strategic context and regarded

tank at Manekshaw Centre at

warfare in a profound manner,"

are emerging in new unchartered domains, and strategic arena of competition, driving geo-political power many information to supply chains". chief was addressing a gathering during a seminar on "Year of Absorption:

Delhi Cantonment. Technology from a warfighting

arena of competition: Army Chief perspective, has undergone significant evolution over the centuries, and has "impacted

Pande cited the General examples of rifles, railroads, telegraphs and ironclad ships in the 19th-century wars; the machine gun, tank, aeroplane, aircraft carriers and atomic weapons in the 20th-century wars; to the niche technologies that have today permeated into the military domain. They "all highlight examples of how technologies change the face of wars and influence their outcomes", he said.

History shows that armies that have managed to adopt and integrate new technologies have gained advantage on the battlefield and achieved success, he underlined. Infusion of technologies such as computers, radars, code-

while in the early years of the War, it was Germany and Japan leveraged industrial and technological capacities to "accrue advantages of scale," over the Allies, the Army chief added. "On the other hand, technological advantage may just be reduced to a tactical breaking and aircraft level, when it is taken away production by the Allies in from the larger strategic World War II was instrumental context and regarded as the

in securing victory for them,

Technologies emerge as strategic

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

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

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

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

Warfare has transcended into new domains, such as space, electromagnetic spectrum and information.

The scope of grey zone warfare too, has "enhanced" due to technological advancements. Consequent these developments, the battle space has become "more complex,

contested and lethal, and shall remain so in the future," the Army chief said. The impact of external dependency on critical

components, supply chain disruptions 'weaponisation of denial regimes" came to the fore, during the pandemic and also from the lessons of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, he said. "We need to recognise that, even if we were to import some warfighting systems, no country will share the latest, advanced and critical technology. Being importdependent for critical technologies hence entails the risk of remaining one technological cycle behind, in niche areas," the Army chief

said. Therefore, the need to be selfreliant in warfighting platforms and systems and achieving self-sufficiency in critical technologies through indigenous research and development,



India, Japan discuss developments in nuclear non proliferation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Top officials of India and Japan on Wednesday exchanged views developments in the areas of disarmament and nonproliferation relating to nuclear, chemical biological domains.

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

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

said in a statement.

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

WHO for doubling efforts to beat More Indian youths enrolling for challenges posed by malaria

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

On the eve of the World Malaria Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday emphasised on the need for heightened focus on addressing the obstacles to health equity, gender equality and human rights in malaria

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

by malaria and ensure all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic status or geographical location, have access to prevention, theme 'Accelerating the fight diagnosis and treatment against malaria for a more services for the disease.

"Moreover, by leveraging digital technology, we can better understand the diverse health needs of populations, collect and analyse data and monitor progress in real-time, enabling us to identify and address health inequities both proven

interventions and innovation in service delivery," Wazed said. "On World Malaria Day 2024, we unite under the against malaria for a more equitable world," she said. This theme, which is in sync with this year's World Health

Day theme — "My Health, My Right" — underscores the urgent need to address the Data reflects this growing stark inequities that persist in access to malaria prevention, detection and treatment

Korean language, Taekwondo PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Extending beyond the world of K-Drama and K-Beauty, Indian youth interest towards Korean culture is expanding to also include learning the Korean language and Taekwondo, a great tradition of Korean martial

enthusiasm towards these two streams. The demand for learning Taekwondo can be Likewise, the demand of at 32 local secondary schools. Department, it added.

student enrollment for Taekwondo classes which has doubled this year. In 2023, there were 1,530 students enrolled in 31 schools, which has reached to 3,536 students enrolled in 47 local schools of Delhi this year, according to a statement by the Korean Cultural Centre of India (KCCI) which had partnered with local associations like the Delhi Taekwondo

Association.

felt by comparing last year's learning Korean language student enrollment for across India has increased tremendously. There has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in Korean language classes, which grew from 1,535 in 20 schools last year to 2,572 students in 32 schools this Also, KCCI distributed 2,000

newly designed Korean language textbooks developed by National Institute of Korean Language to students

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Turncoats

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

he pervasive trend of politicians of all hues switching parties, for better career prospects or in pursuit of election tickets especially ahead of Assembly or Lok Sabha polls, is nothing new. This phenomenon, commonly known as party-hopping, has now been flagged by former Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu as particularly damaging to our democracy. It also raises questions about the efficiency of the antidefection law in curbing such practices. The law, enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, was introduced to deter elected representatives from switching allegiance to other political parties after being elected. The law aims to maintain stability and integrity within the political system by penalising defections and preserving the sanctity of electoral mandates. However, despite its existence, party-hopping remains a disturbing trend in Indian politics. Politicians often defect from their original party to join another for a ticket, ministerial position or personal ambitions. Additionally, the anti-



defection law is limited in its scope and does not address the broader issues of political morality and ethics. Politicians often exploit legal loopholes and engage in prolonged legal battles to circumvent disqualification, thereby escaping accountability for their actions. This not only undermines the democratic process but also erodes public trust in the political system. However, the toothlessness of the anti-defection law and the failure to effectively address this issue reflect deeper systemic challenges within the politi-

So, why is the anti-defection law still toothless in addressing this issue? One of the primary reasons

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



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

Graft dominates election discourse



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

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

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

Not less interesting is the ED mounting fresh money laundering probe into the Chhattisgarh liquor scam and the ED linking Kerala CPM leaders to bank fraud. Could there be more arrests even after Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Kavita of BRS?

Will prices take a backseat to politics and court rulings, or will they remain pressing concerns alongside these factors? Voters, though reticent, are far from oblivious. Whether attending rallies of prominent leaders or not, they are keenly aware of every development that influences their lifestyle. Conversations range from questioning why individuals with questionable backgrounds align themselves with the BJP to analysing defections from BJP to Congress factions. Both voters and party members evaluate the potential implications of each unfolding event, particularly returning officers of Chandigarh municipal polls and Himachal defections.

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



address corruption.

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

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



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

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

Likewise, the court's rejection of Patanjali's apology in a contempt case, stemming from misleading advertisements contravening its order, serves as a stark example of how the rule of law can rectify corrupt practices, unveil false brand mages, and maintain price stability. The court's warning to be prepared for consequences, along with its criticism of the Uttarakhand Government, underscores the power of legal intervention.

Erratic power bills and trary demands in UP and many States are also potential issues. Each of these cases, people realise, are instances of political linkages affecting price rises and profiteering. The glaring lapses on the part

of the executive and administration add to the woes of the people and the breakdown of the law-and-order machinery. The judiciary is uncovering corrupt practices that impact economic and administrative systems, consequently rising cost of living.

Dainik Bhaskar has done a

study on prices in Rajasthan.

It finds that compared to 2019, prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas increased by 42 per cent; food items cost 34 per cent more; medicine prices for diabetes and heart diseases rose by 54 per cent and people's dining outside has been reduced by 40 per cent. Pulses have become costlier by 20 per cent, vegetables by 233 per cent; taxi fares by 67 per cent, edible oil 100 per cent, and FMCG rose by 60 per cent. Salaries during the period for different classes have risen by 11 per cent to 26 per cent. Price concerns persist, with numerous unnecessary infra, road airport and metro projects shocking even political workers. However, this doesn't diminish the significance of religious fervour surrounding the Ram temple and Modi's assurances, which remain potent issues in certain regions albeit overshadowed by economic factors and caste considerations. Amethi and

(The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

Raebareli, however, remain in

focus, more than Varanasi.

Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity



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

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

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



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

Respectful Workplaces: Establishing psychologically safe environments mandates clear policies, including Codes of Business Conduct, Grievance Redressal protocols and Workplace Harassment guidelines (including Prevention of Sexual Harassment). Additionally, address issues promptly while proactively working on prevention initiatives. Diversity and Inclusion: To

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

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

dedicated committees should toward self-actualisation, the pinnacle of Maslow's theory, counteracting toxicity and promoting inclusivity. Training and Development:

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

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

(The writer is founder Kelp; views are personal)

EMBRACING NANO INFLUENCE

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

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

Meera Iyer | Bhopal

PHULE'S PROGRESSIVE LEGACY

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

Unveiling historical wounds



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

ership, blurring the lines of justice. The roots of this conflict delve deep into history, where Aurangzeb's divisive legacy still casts its shad-Reverend Sherring's accounts vividly depict the systematic desecration of Hindu temples

ly matched, yet the essence of the dispute is

far from symmetric. One side defends worship

rights, while the other asserts property own-

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

Divya Menon | Chennai

Samaj provided a platform for empowerment and caste equality, echoing the need for grassroots movements in contemporary times.

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

Kavita Mehra | Jaipur

ETERNAL QUEST FOR LIBERATION

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

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

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

Naina Kapoor | Chandigarh

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FIRST COLUMN

NAVIGATING WORKPLACE ANXIETY

The pressure to consistently perform and deliver causes stress and anxiety



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

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



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

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

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

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

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

The democratic status of India under scanner



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

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

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

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

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

In 2021 and 2022, India's civil liberties score was 6.18 and by 2023 it had fallen again to 5.88, the score of Ghana, Thailand, Ecuador and Guatemala, all of which have lower Democracy index scores than India. While the civil liberties scores of developed

countries have not improved over this peri-

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

eral projects and initiatives.

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

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

lenges posed by the Covid-19 pan-

demic. However, one can understand the situation in China. Then China can be ahead of India in terms of the happiness index. In the report, experts from fields

such as economics, psychology, survey analysis and national statis-tics discuss how well-being mea-sures can effectively measure national progress and address other related topics. Each report is structured into chapters that address the issue, delving deeper into topics related to happiness such as mental health, the tangible benefits of happiness, the role of ethics, political implications and links to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (ÖECD) approach to measuring subjective well-being and other international and national initia-

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

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

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

The Committee to Protect Journalists' attempt is to provide support and assistance to journalists in exile. Since 2021, Afghan journalists have become one of the largest groups of journalists in exile receiving annual grants from CPJ, contributing to a 227 per cent jump in the CPJ grants to journalists in exile over the three years 2020-2022. It received increasing reports of Afghan journalists in exile who were targeted in immigrationrelated incidents. Afghan journalists seeking asylum in Pakistan told us they have been arrested and blackmailed for overstaying their visas and many are living in hiding and in fear. Then how India can be put below Pakistan and Afghanistan's press freedom index on the scale of press freedom?

The importance of methodology in any study remains vital. Research methodology is a way of explaining how the researcher intends to conduct his research. It is a logical, systematic plan for solving a research problem.

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

(The writer is an associate profesviews are personal)



REPORTERS

WITHOUT

BORDERS (RSF) REPORT SAYS INDIA'S RANKING IN THE 2023 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX HAS FALLEN TO 161 OUT OF 180 COUNTRIES. IN COMPARISON, PAKISTAN FARED BETTER IN TERMS OF MEDIA FREEDOM, RANKING 150TH, AN IMPROVEMENT

FROM 157TH

LAST YEAR

sor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bengaluru;

Determining the limits of corruption, the Indian way

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

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



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

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

vate sector. There is some might be providing some and refrain from breaching other type of remedy in such

cases. It is not just that the corruption is not confined to the Government sector, rather monetary is also not the only type of corruption that exists. Other forms of corruption do exist in this country that usually go unnoticed or unchecked.

Arrogance in people in power, delaying even genuine work and harassing, or humiliating ordinary people unnecessarily should amount to corruption. Public functionaries take oaths before assuming office and vow to remain honest in their duties, they hold public offices as the trustees for people, who have faith in them and it is their primary duty to serve the common people

people's faith. Scores of people throughout the country face tremendous challenges, harassment and humiliation in getting work done in the Government departments at every level but public memory is short-lived and people easily forget such issues as time passes.

There is no doubt that corruption is not in the interest of the society or the State. Therefore, to curb the menace of corruption, the subsequent Governments have adopted numerous legal measures including the enactment of laws and the establishment of enforcement machinery. However, as is evident from the recent incidents of corruption, all such measures do not seem to deter people from

involving in acts of corruption. Does it mean that the laws have failed to curb corruption or is it that the laws per se cannot provide a solution to this problem? Does one need to look beyond the legal measures to get rid of this menace that is eating into the vitals of this country?

Can this country do away with the menace of corruption through law and its enforcement? If that was true, then this country would have become corruption-free long back. Does it mean that corruption inherently exists in ourselves and has acquired the status of an accepted norm and it is not possible to get rid of corruption in this country? The question that arises is whether corruption has become a way of life in this

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

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

Professor at the Faculty of Law, the University of Delhi; views are personal)

Bengal moves SC against court order sacking 26,000 school staff

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

Aday after a Division Bench of Calcutta High Court quashed the entire panel of 2016 SSC tests throwing about 26,000 teaching and non-teaching school staff out of their respective jobs alleging corruption in appointment the process, Bengal Government on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking reversal of the High Court order.

Alleging that the Court had cancelled the entire selection process without giving sufficient time to the government to deal with the issue State pleaded that the findings of the CBI - based on whose investiga-

tion the entire recruitment process was cancelled — did not indicate that the entire process was tainted and hence, all the appointments were



based on conjecture and sur-

mises and not supported by any

cogent material on record,

the State said in its plea even as

the teachers who lost their

jobs hit the streets with many

of them threatening to commit

mass suicides if they were not

reinstated. "Out of the 26,000 candidates many had got their jobs honestly ... many of us had cleared other tests also earlier and had been working as teachers as sole bread-winners of our families with our parents children to take care of ... if we lose job now after eight years then we will have to commit mass suicide an agitating candidate said. Meanwhile, lambasting the BJP and the CPI(M) for hatching the "entire gameplan to embarrass the State Government" Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that the way the BJP was dictating orders adding "I will not leave them and fight it out in the Supreme Court so that the jobs can be saved."

The BJP would not give jobs but would take them she said. "At a time when the job market is so sluggish, when the people cannot find jobs these people are serving their own narrow political interests by getting the courts to chuck people out," she said.

Five MLAs including two ministers and several top functionaries including Board chairpersons and sitting Vice-Chancellors were presently in jail on charges of recruitment

Mamata attacks Modi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA BURDWAN

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday warned the people against voting the BJP saying if Narendra Modi returned to power then there would be no democracy left in India and no elections would take place after that as India

would be a dictatorship. Notwithstanding, Mamata's leniency towards other senior BJP leaders like Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari was worth noticing, particularly during election times even as she wondered why the BJP's would not fall on "better leaders like Gadkari and Singh who too were senior," and equally effi-

Launching a scathing attack on Modi, Mamata said, "If this an election to elect Modi babu to power then rest assured there will be no election after this if he returns and India will turn into a dictatorship where the ED and CBI and NIA will reign supreme and where everything will be sold out from government concerns to

your culture to your food and

Addressing two rallies in Birbhum and Burdwan Banerjee said how Rajnath Singh had raised his concern about the TMC's objections to the implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act. "My question is Rajnath ji is a good and decent person and a senior too then why did the BJP not make him the Prime Minister or for that matter Nitin Gadkadi ji ... instead of these decent people the rioters whose hands are red with blood are ruling the country today," she said.

Questioning the alleged dictation on food habits in BJPruled states she said, "in Madhya Pradesh they have stopped eating fish and in Rajasthan they are not letting people eat eggs ... my question is I too like vegetarian and Dhokla but can you force me to eat that ... remember 80 percent of Indians are non-vegetarians ... then how can you dictate their food habits ... even we do not take non-veg during our pujas but you cannot dictate us regarding what we will eat and what we will **Gateway to UP** party spokesperson. She was earlier associated with her own

Ghaziabad: BJP eyes

4th straight win in

From Page 1

The Ghaziabad parliamentary seat this time has 14 candidates in the fray and Garg, a Vaish, has a major fight on his hands from Congress candidate Dolly Sharma, a Brahmin, and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)'s Nandkishor Pundhir, a Thakur. Interestingly, two relatives of Pundhir also in the electoral fray as independent candidates

The opposition is trying hard to get Kshatriya discontent in their favour against the ruling party in western Uttar Pradesh when hundreds from the community from Ghaziabad, Hapur, Meerut, Bulandshahr and Gautam Budh Nagar participated in a "Kshatirya Swabhiman Mahasammelan" in Dhaulana in Hapur district last week. The Dhaulana area is part of Satha-Chaurasi belt which has 60 villages belonging to Shishodia Rajputs while 84 belong to Tomar Rajputs and these villages fall under different parliamentary constituencies of Ghaziabad, Meerut and Gautam Budh

The BSP first named Anshay Kalra as its candidate from Ghaziabad but the party took a U-turn on Monday last and named Thakur Nandkishor Pundhir as its candidate. The BSP on March 29 announced Kalra's candidacy in the presence of its senior party leaders. According to BSP leaders, Kalra could not fulfill documentary formalities and the party leadership decided to offer the ticket to Pundhir. Meanwhile, change of candidate has provided a weapon to opposition BJP and Congress to criticize the BSP. The Congress, a part of the

National Indian Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc, has given a chance to Sharma, a local candidate. Sharma, an MBA by qualification, is a member of All India Congress business but joined politics in Ghaziabad, was established as a

Lok Sabha constituency in

2008 as part of the delimitation

of parliamentary constituencies based on the recommendations the Delimitation Commission of India, which was constituted in 2002.The Ghaziabad constituency comprises five assembly seats namely Loni, Muradnagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad and Dholana with more than 27 lakh voters during 2019 Lok Sabha elections, this seat comes among the highest number of voters category in the state. The Hapur Lok Sabha seat was renamed as Ghaziabad in 2008. Ghaziabad constituency is a

Scheduled Tribes (STs). There were 27,28,978 voters in the Ghaziabad constituency during the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections. Out of this, 15,19,938 voters were male and 12,08,931 were female voters. 109 voters belonged to the third gender. 2,564 were postal votes in the constituency. The number of service voters in Ghaziabad in 2019 was 2,846 (2,662 were

general seat and not reserved

for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and

men and 184 were women). In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Ghaziabad witnessed a 55.78% voter turnout in the year 2019. BJP's VK Singh won with a victory margin of 5,01,500 votes, securing 9,44,503 votes. Singh defeated Suresh Bansal of the SP, who got 4,43,003 votes.

In 2014, the total number of voters in the Ghaziabad constituency was 23,57,553. Out of this, 13,33,055 voters were male and 10,24,455 were female voters. 43 voters in this constituency belonged to the 'others' category. There were 653 postal votes in the

constituency. The number of service voters in Ghaziabad in 2014 was 1,959 (1,307 were men and 652 were

Campaign for...

From Page 1

In phase 2, Kerala has a maximum of 500 nominations from 20 Parliamentary Constituencies, followed nominations from 14 PCs in Karnataka. Minimum of 14 nominations were received from one PC in Tripura. 16-Nanded Parliamentary Constituency in Maharashtra received a maximum of 92 nominations.

According to the Election Commission (EC), 1206 candidates from 12 States /UTs along with four candidates from Outer Manipur PC to contest elections in phase two Lok Sabha polls.

Kerala bore witness to a series of extraordinary scenes and unprecedented campaign maneuvers orchestrated by candidates and party workers on the final day. A total of 194 candidates are vying for the 20 seats in the state, making the April 26 Lok Sabha polls a crucial battleground for the LDF, the UDF, and the NDA. Two union ministers and three actors are among the total candidates who try their political luck this time. Diverse issues ranging from the implementation of the CAA, the alleged existence of 'love jihad', controversies surrounding 'The Kerala Story' movie, the Manipur violence, Rahul Gandhi's candidature in Wayanad, as well as alleged appeasement of minorities by various political parties, dominated the high-decibel public campaigns.

Kerala is expected to witness fierce battles in several constituencies, including Wayanad, where former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi is taking on CPI's Annie Raja. While Kerala has been ruled alternatively by Congress and the Left parties, the grand old party virtually swept the state in the last general elections when it secured 15 of 20 seats. Rahul is contesting from the Wayanad seat, which he had won in 2019 by over 4 lakh votes. This time, he is up against CPI's Annie Raja and Kerala BJP chief K Surendran. Interestingly, the Congress and CPI are part of the INDIA bloc nationally. The CPI has targeted Rahul Gandhi for his decision to contest from Kerala, where the ruling party says the saffron party does not pose any threat.

In Kerala, the main contest is expected to be between the Congress and the Left but the BJP is also making efforts to put up a fight in some constituencies like Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram. In Thrissur, the BJP has fielded actor-turned-politician Suresh Gopi, who is facing off against Congress' K Muraleedharan, and CPI's V S Sunilkumar. Muraleedharan won from Vatakara in the general elections. Thiruvananthapuram is also a high profile

seat here with Congress leader Shashi Tharoor hoping to retain the seat for the fourth time.

The BJP which has never won a Lok Sabha seat in Kerala, has fielded Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar. Even the final day of presence of various national leaders in the state, including Home Minister Amit Shah, AICC Chief Mallikarjun Kharge, and Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, who addressed public meetings in various constituencies.

The eight constituencies of Uttar Pradesh which is going to polls are Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh and Mathura. Prominent among the total of 91 candidates whose future will be decided in the second phase of polling are actor Hema Malini, who is seeking a third term from Mathura; and Arun Govil, who played the role of Lord Rama in the famed TV serial Ramayan. He has been fielded by the saffron party from his native place Meerut. He criss-crossed the constituency to seek support of the people. The Congress' Danish Ali from Amroha and the BJP's Atul Garg from Ghaziabad and Mahesh Sharma from Gautam Buddha Nagar toured their constituencies seeking the people's support.

In Karnataka, a total of 247 candidates --226 men and 21 women -- are in the fray for the first round of voting in most of the southern and coastal districts, where an estimated over 2.88 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in 30,602 polling stations. It is a straight electoral contest between the ruling Congress and the BJP-Janata Dal (Secular) combine in the state. While the Congress is contesting in all 14 seats, BJP has fielded nominees in 11, and its alliance partner JD(S) in three -- Hassan, Mandya and Kolar. Besides the three, the segments where elections will be held on Friday are: Udupi-Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mysore, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South and Chikkballapur.

Union minister Virendra Kumar and Madhya Pradesh BJP chief VD Sharma are among 80 candidates in the fray from six constituencies- Tikamgarh (SC), Damoh, Khajuraho, Satna, Rewa and Hoshangabad constituencies, which cover 55 assembly segments, in the second phase.

In Rajasthan, other than the Banswara parliamentary constituency, Barmer-Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Jalore, Chittorgarh and Kota-Bundi are the hot seats in this phase. The other constituencies going to polls are Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Pali, Udaipur, Rajsamand, Kota and Jhalawar-Baran. On the last day of campaigning, Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut held a roadshow in Jaisalmer in support of BJP candidate Kailash Chaudhary. Located along the India-Pakistan border, Barmer-Jaisalmer is the largest Lok Sabha constituency of Rajasthan. It is witnessing a triangular contest among Independent candidate Ravindra Singh Bhati, the Congress' Ummedaram and the BIP's Kailash Chaudhary.

As many as 204 candidates will battle it out for eight Lok Sabha seats- Buldhana, Akola, Amravati, Wardha, Yavatmal-Washim in western Vidarbha, Hingoli, Nanded and election campaign was marked by the Parbhani in Maharashtra.

Modi rebukes Congress for Pitroda's remark

From Page 1

Sinha, then a junior finance minister, had publicly said in 2014 that he wanted to introduce inheritance tax while the then finance minister Arun Jaitley had praised the concept in 2018, saying it is a source of big endowment to hospitals and educational institutions in the western countries, Ramesh claimed, sharing screenshots of related reports.

Home Minister Amit Shah also flayed Pitroda's remarks, saying 'The appeasement politics of the Congress stands exposed today with Sam Pitroda's statement on wealth redistribution. He reaffirmed the party's intention to seize the property of the majority and distribute it among the minority. It yet again brings to the fore that the empowerment of India's poor, Dalits, youth, tribes, and backward classes was never on Congress's agenda," he said on social media.

Campaigns ends for Jammu LS elections

MOHIT KANDHARI ■

ith the second round of campaigning V of campaigning ending, the stage is set for another close contest between the Bharatiya Janta Party and the Congress party on the Jammu-Reasi Lok Sabha seat on April 26.

The Congress party candidate Raman Bhalla is locked in a close contest with the two-time sitting BJP MP Jugal Kishore Sharma. Ankur Sharma of Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal is also in the fray.

Over 17.80 lakh voters will decide the fate of 22 candidates from the seat spread over 18 Assembly segments in four districts including Reasi, Samba, Jammu, and Rajouri.

On the last day of campaigning the congress party demonstrated its strength by taking out a massive road show. The BJP on

the other hand focused on reaching out to the voters on ground zero. Several senior party leaders and BJP star campaigners, camping in Jammu addressed a series of street corner meetings in a last-minute effort to woo the electorate. Jammu district with over 11.89

lakh voters and 11 Assembly constituencies is turning out to be the hot spot as all the contesting candidates are trying to woo the majority of voters to romp home safely. The border belt of Samba and

RS Pura form a sizable voter base to tilt the balance in support of the winning candidate. Reasi district with three Assembly Constituencies, is going to play a significant role in the final tally of voters.

The Election Commission has made elaborate security arrangements to instill confidence among the electorate to improve the total voter turnout. Committee besides being a

Gautam Buddha Nagar gears...

Solanki, a former MLA from Bulandshahr, brings substantial political experience, having been associated with both the BJP and the Congress in the past. Gautam Buddha Nagar has witnessed three Lok Sabha elections so far. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) won the inaugural elections in 2009, followed by consecutive victories for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 and 2019, establishing it as their stronghold.

BJP's Sharma, who has also served as a Minister of State for Culture and Tourism and Civil Aviation, emerged victorious in both 2019 and 2014. Additionally, he is the richest candidate in the contest with assets worth Rs 83.82 crore as per his filed affidavit. SP candidate has declared assets of Rs 8.76 crore and BSP candidate

lakh out of 19.86 lakh in 2014. The upper expenditure limit for candidates is Rs 95 lakh, as per Election Commission

guidelines. While there were initially a total of 34 contenders, which includes 25 Independents, only 15 are still contesting following the rejection of 19 applications post-scrutiny. No candidate withdrew their nomination by the deadline. It is said that the Gujjar community in Noida has a political influence, especially in Greater Noida.

Unhappy over the issue of pending registries, homebuyers and residents of several group housing societies in Noida and Greater Noida West have launched a "No Registry, No Vote" campaign ahead of these elections.

The number of voters in the constituency has gone significantly up compared to Solanki has declared assets of Rs 8.44 crore. Voter turnout stood at 13.89 lakh out of the last election cycle. According to officials, a stood at 13.89 lakh out of total of 26,20,040 voters will

from 22.97 lakh in 2019, which is a considerable increase of over 3 Lakh voters. The Gautam Buddh Nagar constituency comprises five Assembly constituencies include Noida, Dadri, Jewar, Khurja, and Sikandrabad. Khurja and Sikandrabad, even though they are located adjoining Bulandshahr district, form a part of the Gautam Buddh Lok constituency.

The total number of voters as of March 15 in Noida is 7,59,418 voters, which comprises 4,25,521 males, 3,33,885 female and 12 third gender. The election process started with the issuance of notification on March 28, in which candidates had until April 4 to file their nominations. Withdrawals could be made until April 8. The number of voters is 7,04,502 in Dadri and 3,67,046 in Jewar. Additionally, Sikandrabad has community centre Sector turnout.

22.97 lakh in 2019 and 11.94 the casting votes this time up. 3.97.500 voters, and Khuria 122 club house. Prateek 3,91,574. The total number of voters in Gautam Buddh Nagar district stands at 18,30,966 barring parts of Bulandshahr. This diverse electorate includes 102 thirdgender voters, 10,08,345 men, and 8,22,519 women. The seat comprises 10,502 differentlyabled voters, 24,223 first-time voters, 26,353 individuals aged 80 years or above, and 2,906 service voters.

There are a total of 1,826 polling booths in Gautam Buddh Nagar, out of which 51 have been designated as model booths', with seven being managed entirely by women, and four by divyangs (persons with disabilities). Additionally, young officers and personnel will be in charge of five booths. Moreover, seven additional polling booths, in Sector 78 The Manthan School, Kidzee PreSchool Sector 116, community centre Sector 72, Our Little Wonder Sector 116,

Laurel Sector 120 and club house Jaypee Wish Town Sector 128, will be set up in Noida constituency.

In a bid to conduct smooth elections, the district has been divided into 120 sectors and 26 zones of which 342 sensitive booths have been identified for special attention. Additionally, more than 5,000 police personnel from the commissionerate will be deployed for election duty, along with personnel from paramilitary forces, Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), civil police, home guards, and local security guards.

To monitor expenditure, nine static surveillance teams, nine flying squads, three video surveillance teams, three video-viewing teams, and three assistance expenditure observers will be deployed across Noida, Dadri, and Jewar. Authorities will ensure free, fair, and incident-free polls with maximum voter

It said it will continue to work with RBI to swiftly resolve balance

In an almost similar action, the RBI in December 2020 had barred HDFC Bank from issuing new cards and launching new digital initiatives after repeated instances of technological outages at the lender. The restrictions were later lifted in March 2022.

In a statement regarding the supervisory action against Kotak Mahindra Bank, the RBI said: "Serious deficiencies and noncompliances were observed in the areas of IT inventory management, patch and change management, user access management, vendor risk management, data security and data leak prevention strategy, business continuity and disaster recovery rigour and drill, etc."

The Kotak Mahindra Bank has been directed "to cease and desist", with immediate effect, from onboarding of new customers through its online and mobile banking channels and issuing fresh credit cards.

'The bank shall, however, continue to provide services to its existing customers, including its credit card customers," RBI said. For two consecutive years, the bank was assessed to be deficient in its IT Risk and Information Security Governance, contrary to requirements under Regulatory guidelines, the RBI added.

"During the subsequent assessments, the bank was found to be significantly non-compliant with the Corrective Action Plans issued by the Reserve Bank for the years 2022 and 2023, as the compliances submitted by the bank were found to be either inadequate, incorrect or not sustained," the RBI said.

RBI bars Kotak Mahindra... Churn in Congress over **Delhi candidates**

'We were shouted at and asked to get out of the room. If we cannot express our opinion even in a closed room, where can we?" he demanded.

Chauhan said in writing that the Congress is going to lose all three seats in Delhi. They made blunders when the party decided to tie up with the AAP. Now they gave tickets to outsiders. Thirdly, they brought people like Babaria who cannot win a Councillor election," he added. On Tuesday, Delhi Congress' disciplinary committee held a meeting and left it to the AICC to decide on whether to take any action on complaints against Chauhan. During a meeting held on Sunday at the residence of AICC Delhi incharge Babria, a heated argument had erupted between Babria and

Chauhan, sources in the party said.

It was also decided in the Upadhyay Marg and raised slogans disciplinary meeting that the committee will identify those who shouted slogans when the three Congress candidates for the Lok Sabha elections were being introduced to the media at a press conference by the Delhi Congress chief and issue show cause notice to them to maintain discipline in the party. The disciplinary committee of Delhi Congress, under the chairmanship of Narendra Nath, unanimously decided that the AICC should decide on the complaint against Chauhan.

On Monday, a section of Congress workers also held a protest against the nomination of former BJP MP Udit Raj as the party's Lok Sabha poll candidate from North West Delhi.

The protesters gathered outside the Congress office at Deen Dayal against "outsiders" fielded by the party in the elections.

Sources in the Congress said that there are over a dozen former MLAs and councilors who are upset with giving tickets to Kanhaiya Kumar and Udit Raj for the Lok Sabha elections. A Congress leader said on the condition of anonymity that top party leadership have been conveyed their resentment of giving tickets to outsiders in Delhi.

A four-time MLA from Mangolpuri assembly segment, Chauhan was a minister in Sheila Dikshit's cabinet for 13 years and held several important portfolios, including PWD and urban development. He had lost the 2013 and 2015 polls to AAP's Rakhi Birla. Chauhan had resigned from the party in 2019 and joined the BJP but within a month he returned to the Congress.

SC tells EVM critics it cannot ...

From Page 1

Deputy Election Commissioner Nitesh Kumar Vyas, who had earlier made a presentation to the court on the functioning of EVMs, was summoned by the bench to appear at 2 pm to answer the queries.

Vyas, while responding to the question about microcontrollers, they one-time are programmable at the time of manufacture and installed in all the three units of EVMs-the balloting unit, VVPAT and the control unit. They cannot be reprogrammed thereafter, he asserted.

An advocate, appearing for petitioner NGO, claimed the EC official's statement was not fully correct. He cited a report by a private body to back his contention. The report says the kind of memory used in these three units can be reprogrammed. A malicious programme can easily be uploaded at the time of symbol loading," he votes have been recorded correctly.

claimed, adding efforts should be made to remove the doubts about the transparency of EVMs.

Justice Khanna told the advocate the court has to rely on the data and information provided by the EC, a constitutional body, which says the programme in the memory of an EVM can be written only once.

"If you are prejudiced or predisposed about something, then we cannot help it. We cannot change your thought process," the bench

Justice Datta said, "Can we issue a mandamus (directions) on the basis of a suspicion? The report you are relying on goes on to say that there is no incident of manipulation yet. We can't control the elections. We are not the controlling authority of another constitutional authority.

The bench recalled that the top court had in the past issued two orders on VVPAT, an independent vote verification system which enables electors to see whether their

Campaigning ends for Friday Lok Sabha polls in Kerala

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

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

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

What stood out in the three weeks long campaign was the claims by the sitting MPs about the number of development programs and infrastructure development measures implemented by them during the last five years



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

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

claimed that the UDF led by the Congress would sweep all the 20 seats at stake, M V Govindan, the CPI(M) state secretary claimed that there was no doubt about the LDF's victory in any of the constituencies. If Govindan's claim is to be believed, the Malappuram and Ponnani (popularly known as Kerala's Pakistan) would see the two constituencies ditching E T Mohammed Basheer and Abdussamad Samadani, an unlikely proposition. Though previous Lok Sabha polls were fought between the two fronts led by the CPI(M)

and the Congress, what makes the 2024 polls unique is the challenge thrown at both the fronts by the BJP. There is a strong Narendra Modi wave in most constituencies though one may not be able to forecast whether this wave would turn into seats. If public perception is any indication, the BJP has emerged as a force to reckon with in four to five constituencies. Harikiran Muraleedharan, a young lawyer and keen follower of

view that the 19 April disruption of Thrissur Pooram at the instance of a CPI(M) MLA, a powerful minister in the Pinarayi Vijayan Government have played havoc with the prospectus of both the Congress and the CPI candidates.

"Please remember that this district has two ministers and they failed miserably to ensure the smooth conduct of the Pooram. This has not gone down well with the devotees," said Harikiran. Sujathan, who has no love lost for the BJP, is of the view that were seven constituencies which is witnessing tough fight between the three fronts. "In earlier elections, the BJP competed as also rans but not

anymore. Don't be surprised

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

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

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

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

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

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, addressing a press conference at the Bharatiya Janata Party state office here on Wednesday, accused the Indi Alliance, particularly the Congress, of plotting to undermine the reservation system for

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

He expressed concern over the alleged intention of Congress to encroach upon the rights of SCs and STs, stating, "The Congress party even intends to encroach upon the rights of SCs and STs. The report of the Sachar Committee commissioned by the United Progressive Alliance government, which had to be withdrawn in the face of stiff opposition from the BJP, bears testimony to this."

On this occasion, Chief Minister Yogi inaugurated the party's media center and addressed various issues pertaining to the upcoming elections.

Yogi Adityanath criticised the Congress manifesto, particularly its mention of conducting property surveys, which he interpreted as a move towards arbitrary redistribution of properties. He remarked, "Congress has talaq". surveys as one of its age its manifesto. Eventually, they will distribute the properties arbitrarily among themselves."

Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi referenced former prime

minister Manmohan Singh's statements regarding resource allocation during the UPA regime, highlighting what he perceived as preferential treatment towards Muslims.

In contrast, he reiterated BJP's commitment to addressing the concerns of all segments of society without discrimination based on caste, creed or religion.

He emphasised, "The Congress party's desperate pursuit of power poses a grave threat to the nation's interests. Intending to enforce Sharia law in the country, the party has clearly demonstrated its predilection for the Talibani approach, which allows atrocities on women and carries out destruction."

Chief Minister Yogi raised concerns about Congress' alleged support for implementing Sharia law, likening it to the Taliban's approach and citing examples such as the support for 'triple

mentioned conducting property He argued that Congress' manifesto posed a risk of denigrating a significant portion of the population and posing a threat to national security and sovereign-

He alleged, "Congress espouses Dubey.

cating for the implementation of Sharia law. The Congress manifesto intends to denigrate half the population."
Drawing parallels to historical events, Chief Minister Yogi cautioned against a return to divisive politics and emphasised the importance

of performance-based governance over mere rhetoric. He criticised the lack of tangible outcomes from past promises to eradicate poverty, citing corruption and favouritism in scheme

implementation. He lamented, "Despite governing for 65 years, their politics needed a foundation of performance as they encouraged selective implementation of schemes based on personal connections." Highlighting the significance of the ongoing elections, Chief Minister Yogi urged voters to recognise the power of their ballots in shaping the nation's future.

He positioned the BJP as the party of security, effective gover-nance and national sovereignty, urging voters to support its vision for the development of India. He asserted, "Each vote cast in favour of the BJP is a vote for security, effective governance, and national sovereignty."

The event was attended by notable figures including BJP state president Bhupendra Chaudhary, minister Asim Arun, media in-charge Manish Dixit, general secretary Anoop Gupta, Harish Srivastava and Himanshu

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

for major violations under the

Model Code of Conduct

(MCC), they said. Addressing Addressing a press conference, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena said 1.4 lakh polling officials will be on duty at the 30,602 polling stations across the 14 constituencies which are going for polls in the first phase on Friday. Besides them, 5,000 micro

observers, 50,000 civil police personnel, 65 companies of Central Parliamentary Force



and State Armed Police force of other states will also be deployed for security at these polling stations, he said. "All the 2,829 polling stations of Bangalore Rural parliamentary constituency will be 100 percent webcast. This is as per the request of our returning officers and observers; so we have given more than double central parliamentary force for the Bangalore Rural Constituency. Seven

of companies central paramilitary forces have been inducted at the constituency since April 22," he said. The 14 segments facing polls in the first phase are: Udupi-Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mandva. Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Bangalore Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore

South, Chikkballapur and

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

Akhilesh ends suspense, to contest from Kannauj

PNS LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav is contesting the Lok Sabha election from Kannauj constituency i1n Uttar Pradesh. SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav

said that Akhilesh Yaday would file his nomination papers on Thursday.
This will be the fifth Lok Sabha

election to be contested by Akhilesh Yadav. Ram Gopal Yadav said that there was no confusion regarding Akhilesh Yadav's candidature from the Kannauj Lok

Sabha seat. Farlier in Akhilesh Yadav was asked about speculations on his nomination, the SP chief said, "When nomination happens then you will come to know.



The question is of Kannauj's historic victory... The people have made up their minds that the INDIA bloc is coming as the future and Bharatiya Janata Party will be consigned to the dustbin of history in this elec-

comes just days after the party declared Tej Pratap Yadav as its candidate from Kannauj on April 22. There were also reports of a local party unit urging the former chief minis-

ter of Uttar Pradesh to reconsider the decision of fielding his nephew from the SP bastion. SP workers in Kannauj were reluctant to accept Tej Pratap's candidacy, and they believed that without Akhilesh Yadav, the BJP would have an edge over them. Akhilesh Yadav had then said that he would do what the party decides. Tej Pratap Singh Yadav, the

grand-nephew of late Mulayam Singh Yadav and son-in-law of Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Lalu Prasad Yadav, represented the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat from 2014 to 19. In 2014, The SP leader's statement Mulayam Singh Yadav had contested from Azamgarh and Mainpuri and won both the Lok Sabha seats but later left the Mainpuri seat from where Tej Pratap Yadav was fielded. BJP MP Subrat Pathak won the

Kannauj seat in the 2019 poll, and had stated that Kannauj was no longer an SP stronghold. Subrata Pathak had won the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat against Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav in 2019. It was only the second time ever that the BJP had won the Kannauj seat; the first was in 1996. Before BJP's Subrat Pathak sprung the surprise in Kannauj in 2019, the SP had won every election from the constituency since 1998.

SP leaders underline that even when Subrat Pathak won the seat in 2019 by defeating Dimple Yadav, the margin of victory was very narrow Pathak won by a margin of 12,000 votes, securing 5,63,087 votes against Dimple Yadav's

This will be the fifth Lok Sabha

PTI ■ TUMAKURU (KARNATAKA)

elections.

in Karnataka where they

will win in the Lok Sabha

He also asserted that his

party along with alliance partner JD(S) will be victorious in all the 28 Lok

about the cordial bonding

between Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and JD(S)

patriarch and former PM H

D Deve Gowda. As BJP and JD(S) are in alliance, they

(Congress) have realised the

alliance will win every seat

with a huge margin, so Congress leaders are saying whatever they want," he

BJP veteran Yediyurappa

challenges Congress to

election to be contested by Akhilesh Yadav. He made debut in politics from Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency in 1999. He also won from this constituency in 2004. In 2009, he contested from two Lok Sabha constituencies, Kannauj and Firozabad, and won both but he retained Kannauj. In 2019, he contested the Lok Sabha election from Azamgarh and won. He resigned from the Lok Sabha in March 2022 after he won the UP assembly election from Karhal assembly constituency in Mainpuri district. Apart from Akhilesh Yadav, the other Yadav family members contesting the Lok tions are Dimple Yadav (Mainpuri), Akshay Yadav (Firozabad), Aditya Yadav (Budaun) and Dharmendra Yadav (Azamgarh).

Sampla will continue to support BJP, says Rupani

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

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

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

Rupani, who is the BJP's Punjab in-charge, after the meeting said that he came

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

On the farmers opposing the BIP candidates in villages, Rupani stated that he has no such information.

Deve Gowda slams Rahul over wealth redistribution promise

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister H PD Deve Gowda on Wednesday slammed Rahul Gandhi's "wealth Gandhi's wearm redistribution promise", stating that only someone with no practical knowledge

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

He claimed the Congress

"upside down" and the promises made by it indicated that it wants to come to power "at any cost".
"Rahul Gandhi wants to do a wealth survey and redistribute the wealth. Does he think he is a maoist leader," Deve Gowda said. "Is he dreaming of a revolution? By talking about wealth redistribution, Rahul Gandhi has insulted and humiliated Congress Ministers who brought market reforms and increased the wealth of the nation," he added, recalling the contribution of P V Rao and Singh in Narasimha Manmohan liberalisation. economic Accusing Gandhi of indirectly trying to say that



what the two Congress Prime Ministers did was wrong, Gowda said, "He (Rahul Gandhi) has torn up their economic reforms like he had torn up an ordinance

(which sought to overturn the rule that disqualifies convicted MPs and MLAs) issued by (the Manmohan

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

"Only someone with no practical knowledge can speak like this. Chidambaram was manifesto committee chairman. Does he agree with Rahul Gandhi's immature economic ideas," Gowda said.

Sabha constituencies in the Yediyurappa, member of BJP's Parliamentary Board and former Chief Minister, Campaign ends for five Bihar Lok was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the campaign for party candidate from Tumkur V Somanna. "Everyone knows"

PTI PATNA

contested by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U). Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressed his first

"My question to Congress is — name your prime ministerial candidate, and secondly say the name of three to four constituencies where you will win. They are unable to reveal it so far. Defeat is certain for them.



We (BJP-JD(S)) will win all the 28 seats," he added.

A total of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka will go for polls in two phases. While 14 segments in the southern part of the state will vote on April 26, in the second phase covering remaining constituencies, mostly northern districts, will go for election on May seven. Rejecting Congress' allegations that BJP on coming to power once again will change the Constitution, Yediyurappa termed it a "foolish statement."

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

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

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

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Lok Sabha polls will mark the rise of the BJP in Punjab where the ruling AAP's "downfall" has begun, a senior BJP leader claimed on Wednesday.

Punjab BJP general secretary Subhash Sharma said his party is getting immense support from people in the state for the elections polling for which will be held in the last phase on June 1.

The BJP is contesting the Lok Sabha polls on its own for the first time since 1996. The Shiromani Akali Dal had



2020 over the now-repealed farm laws.

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

Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Fatehgarh Sahib — this week. The BJP has already announced its candidates for nine Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab.

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

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

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

Replying to a question on farmers protesting against BIP candidates in the state, Sharma dubbed it as "politically motivated".

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

Notably, to register their protest over their unmet demands, farmers of Punjab have been holding protests against the BJP candidates and showing them black flags when they campaign for the Lok Sabha polls.

Sabha seats

Campaigning ended on Wednesday for five Lok Sabha seats in Bihar where electors will decide the fate of 50 candidates in the second phase of polling on April 26. Leading the NDA charge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Purnea, a seat which is being

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

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

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

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

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

The bill passed on Tuesday by the House of Representatives earlier now heads to the White House for President Joe Biden to sign it into law.

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

Ukraine this week," Biden said in expand defence industrial base a statement.

"The need is urgent: for Ukraine, facing unrelenting bombardment from Russia; for Israel, which just faced unprecedented attacks from Iran; for refugees and those impacted by conflicts and natural disasters around the world, including in Gaza, Sudan, and Haiti; and for our partners seeking security and stability in the Indo-Pacific," he said. The bill broadly has four parts: First, a USD 60.8 billion

Ukraine aid measure, a USD 26.4 billion bill for Israel and humanitarian relief, a USD 8.1 billion package for Taiwan and other Indo-Pacific region allies and a "sidecar" bill dealing with issues ranging from TikTok to frozen Russian assets.

The bill gives USD 23.2 billion to replenish stocks of US weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine through presidential drawdown authority and to and it allocates USD 13.8 billion in direct support for the

Ukrainian military. It directs the president to transfer long-range tactical missiles, known as ATACMS, to the Ukrainian Army, unless the president determines that doing so would be detrimental to US security interests. The bill gives USD 5.4 billion to replenish stocks of US weapons and equipment deliv-ered to Israel and to expand the defence industrial base, USD 5.2 billion for Iron Dome, David's Sling and Iron Beam defence systems and USD2.4 billion for US Central Command operations in

the Middle East. It also allocates USD 9.2 billion for humanitarian assistance in Gaza, Haiti, Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo and other conflict zones. However, no funds can be transferred to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; certification is required that no fund-

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

allies to purchase US weapons and equipment.

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

on ways to combat terrorism

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

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

"Recognising that terrorism posed a common threat to regional peace and stability and presented a major impediment to the development of the region," the two neighbours agreed to "adopt a collaborative approach to confront this menapproach to coniton this field ace ... while fully upholding the principles of the UN Charter," a joint statement issued by the two countries The Pakistan government has complained regularly to Iran and Afghanistan, with which it shares a border, to rein in the militants belonging to the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other splinter groups who cross the border and carry out strikes in

The joint statement said, both

Pakistan.

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

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

The statement further said that both sides "stressed the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy." Tehran and Islamabad also

agreed to "expeditiously finalise" a Free Trade Agreement (FTA as the two sides signed eight MoUs while vowing to increase trade to USD 10 billion in the coming years. Raisi said Tehran was ready to exchange its prowess in industry, science, and technology with Pakistan while showing his resolve to remove trade barriers between the two neighbours.

According to the Foreign Office, the two sides held productive talks during the visit. "The two sides held productive discussions and agreement to advance bilateral cooperation in multiple domains including and people-to-people contacts, the FO said in a statement.

Raisi arrived on Monday with a large delegation to promote ties about three months after the relationship suffered a setback due to tit-for-tat air strikes against each other, apparently to hit terrorists.

In Islamabad, he held detailed talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir focussing on key security and economic issues. The two sides agreed to eradicate the threat of terrorism which caused a fissure in ties in January when they resorted to air strikes against alleged militant hide-outs on each other's soil. The two countries voiced their support for the people of Palestine as they demanded Israel to halt attacking Gaza. On Tuesday in Lahore, Raisi was received by Punjab chief minister Maryam

Aus police arrest 7 teens for extremism, linked to recent stabbing of bishop

AP SYDNEY

ustralian police arrested Australian police arrested seven teenagers accused of following a violent extremist ideology in raids across Sydney on Wednesday to pro-tect the community from a potential attack, officials said. The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy accused of the stabbing of a bishop in a Sydney church on April 15, police said.

Five other teenagers were still being questioned late Wednesday by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, which includes federal and state police as well as the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, the nation's main domestic spy agency, and the New South Wales Crime Commission, which specialises in extremists and organised crime. More than 400 police officers executed 13 search warrants at properties across southwest Sydney because the suspects were considered an immediate threat, New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner David Hudson

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

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

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

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

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

a maximum penalty of life in prison, following the knife attack in which an Assyrian Orthodox bishop and priest were injured.

An Australian Federal Court judge on Wednesday extended an order banning social media platform X from showing videos of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel being repeatedly stabbed. Justice Geoffrey Kennett extended the ban, which the court put in place on Monday, until May 10.

X, formerly called Twitter, announced last week it would fight in court Australian orders to take down posts relating to the attack. Australia's eSafety Commission, which describes itself as the world's first government agency dedicated to keeping people safer online, applied to the court for the temporary global ban.

Hovne, a lawyer for X, told the judge on Wednesday that the bishop didn't want the video banned. Emmanuel recently signed an affidavit "stating that he is strongly of the view that the material should be available," Hoyne said.
Hoyne said the eSafety

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

ban on the video "might be "It appears that this material is

now appearing in lots of different places," Hoyne added. The commission's lawyer Christoher Tran said X had not

complied with Monday's order. Hovne said he did not "have instructions about that one way or the other".

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

Columbia University progresses post-Gaza protester arrests

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

Student protesters "have committed to dismantling and removing a significant number of tents," the university said in a statement. A smaller encampment remained on campus Wednesday morning.Across the country, protesters at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, some 480 kilometers north of San Francisco, started using furniture, tents, chains and zip ties to block the building's entrances Monday evening. Both campuses are part of intensifying demonstrations over Israel's war with Hamas by university students demanding that schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies that are enabling its



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

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

sity said that there was "con-

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

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

Student protesters also will comply with city fire department requirements and "have

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

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

Earlier on Tuesday night, police arrested more than 200 protesters blocking traffic during a non-college demonstration demanding a permanent cease-fire in Gaza at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, near the home of Sen. Chuck Schumer. The protest was organized by Jewish Voice for Peace on the second night of Passover, and protesters lay down a large circular banner depicting the food on a Seder plate. At Cal Poly Humboldt, protest-

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

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

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

University of Rochester officials said in a statement that the protesters must follow ground rules, including presenting university identification if asked. The upwelling of demonstrations has left universities struggling to balance campus safe-ty with free speech rights.

Blast near ship off Yemen may

Many long tolerated the protests, which largely demanded that schools condemn Israel's assault on Gaza and divest from companies that sell weapons to Israel.

Now, universities are doling out more heavy-handed discipline, citing safety concerns as some Jewish students say criticism of Israel has veered into antisemitism.

Protests had been bubbling for months but kicked into a higher gear after more than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out at Columbia were arrested Thursday.

By late Monday at New York University, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges. In Connecticut, police arrested 60 protesters, including 47 students, at Yale after they refused to leave an encampment on a plaza at the center of campus. Yale President Peter Salovey said protesters had declined an offer to end the demonstration and meet with

China blasts US military aid to Taiwan

hina on Wednesday blasted the latest package of US military assistance to Taiwan on Wednesday, saying that such funding was pushing the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation." The US Senate late Tuesday passed USD 95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars. China claims the entire island of Taiwan as its own territory and has threatened to take it by force if necessary.

The mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said the aid "seriously violates" US commitments to China and "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces." Office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian added that Taiwan's ruling proindependence Democratic Progressive Party, which won a third four-year presidential term in January, is willing to "become a pawn for external forces to use Taiwan to contain China, bringing Taiwan into a ing US Congressional delega-tion that the aid package would "strengthen the deterrence against authoritarianism in the West Pacific ally chain" and "help ensure peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and also boost confidence in the region."

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

dangerous situation." On Tuesday, Taiwan's Presidentelect Lai Ching-te told a visit- defense industry, building sub marines and trainer jets. Next month, it plans to commission its third and fourth domestically designed and built stealth corvettes to counter the Chinese navy as part of a strategy of asymmetrical warfare, in which a smaller force counters its larger opponent by using cutting edge or nonconventional tactics and weaponry. China launches daily incursions into waters and airspace around Taiwan by navy ships and war-planes. It has also sought to pick away Taiwan's few remaining formal diplomatic partners. However, only two People's Liberation Army Air Force planes and seven navy vessels were found operating in areas around Taiwan between Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, possibly as a result of heavy rainstorms and low visibility overnight along the island's west coast facing China.

At times of heightened tensions, China has launched dozens of such missions over a 24 hour period, many of them

mark new attack by Houthi rebels **AP** JERUSALEM

A ship near the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait saw an explosion in the distance Wednesday, marking what may be a new attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels through the crucial waterway for international trade. The explosion, reported by the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, comes after a relative lull from the Houthis after they launched dozens of attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongo-

Strip.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the blast, but suspicion fell on the group as they've repeatedly targeted ships in the same area. It typically takes the Houthis several hours before acknowledging their assaults. The explosion happened some 130 km (80 miles) southeast of Djibouti in the

ing war on Hamas in the Gaza

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

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

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

The Houthis have said they would continue their attacks until Israel ends its war in Gaza. which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others

hostage.

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

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

Microsoft, Amazon face scrutiny from UK competition watchdog

AP ■ LONDON

British competition regulators said Wednesday they'll scrutinise recent artificial intelligence deals by Microsoft and Amazon over concerns that the moves could thwart competi-

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

Big Tech companies have been pouring money into generative AI startups amid growing public and business interest in the technology, but the investments have also drawn attention from antitrust authorities. The UK watchdog said it was

seeking comments from "interested third parties," before deciding whether to carry out an in-depth antitrust investiga-"We will assess, objectively and

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

Microsoft said it will provide the watchdog with the information it needs to carry out its inquiries. We remain confident that common business practices such as the hiring of talent or making a fractional investment in an AI start-up promote competition and are not the same as a merger," the company said.

Microsoft last month hired Mustafa Suleyman, who cofounded Google's DeepMind AI research lab, to head up its consumer artificial intelligence business, along with the chief scientist and several top engineers and researchers from Inflection, his AI startup.

Microsoft also teamed up earlier this year with Mistral, which has become France's AI darling after being founded only last year. That followed Microsoft's previous existing partnership with ChatGPT maker OpenAI which is also facing scrutiny from the CMA.

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

Ex- Japanese PM Taro Aso meets Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Ex-Japanese prime minister Taro Aso has met former president Donald Trump and both the leaders discussed the enduring importance of the US-Japan alliance to their physical and economic security in the strategic Indo-Pacific

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

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

"They also discussed challenges posed by China and



North Korea. President Trump praised Japan's increased defence spending," the press release said after the meeting. "He's a highly respected man in

Japan and beyond and somebody that I've liked and I've known through our very dear friend Shinzo," Trump, the 77-year-old presumptive nomi-

nee of the Republican Party in the 2024 US presidential race, told reporters in New York. The Trump-Aso meeting comes after US President Joe Biden hosted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida earlier this month at the White House for a state visit, during which the president touted the US-Japan alliance as being "stronger than it's ever been" and announced new plans for military cooperation with the country.

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

Smoke seen as ANA flight carrying 200 lands safely

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

engines stopped, it said. In January, a Japan Airlines flight and a coast guard plane collided and burst into flames at Tokyo's Haneda Airport.

All 379 passengers and crew members were evacuated from the JAL plane and survived.

Indian golfers Aditi, Diksha set to participate in Paris Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

the Olympics came from Aditi who finished fourth in the Tokyo Games 2020. The Olympic entries are sent by the Indian Golf

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



OWGR are eligible for the Olympics with a maximum limit of four golfers allowed

from a single country.
The Olympic Golf
Rankings (OGR) after the top 15 players consists of up to two top eligible players per country, as long as it does not have at least The top 15 players in the two golfers in the top 15.

Meanwhile, Theegala and Akshay Bhatia, the two Indian-Americans making waves on the PGA Tour, have both reached career-high

rankings this week.
Theegala, who logged a second runner-up finish in 2024 and Bhatia, who won his second PGA Tour title been a runner-up at the season-opener the Sentry and at the RBC Heritage and was fifth at WM Phoenix Open and tiedsixth at the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Bhatia, in his 12 starts, has

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

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

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

section, Aditi, despite a modest 2024 so far, stays on in top 50.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contingent of 33 to represent India in **South Asian**

PTI NEW DELHI

The experienced duo of Adarsh Muralidharan Sinimol and Pragnya Mohan will spearhead a 33-strong Indian challenge at the South Asian Triathlon Championship to be held alongside the Asia Triathlon Cup

in Pokhara, Nepal on April 27.
Pragnya had won her third straight South Asian title in the last edition while also taking the ninth spot in the women's overall category.

Maharashtra duo of Sanjana Joshi and Mansi Mohite, who bagged silver and bronze respectively behind Gujarat's Pragnya last year, are a part of 13 Indian athletes in the women's field.

Services' Muralidharan Sinimol, who finished third last year and was the winner in 2022, will headline a 20-member strong Indian challenge in the men's field that includes the Manipur duo of Telheiba Soram and Kshetrimayum Kabidash Singh. The competition is a sprint race comprising 750m swim, 20km cycling and a 5km run.

Indians in fray:

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



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

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



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

AP ■ ROME

A late goal that Timothy Weah set up for Arkadiusz Milik earned Juventus a spot in the Italian Cup final - keeping alive the Turin squad's chances of winning its first trophy in

three years. While Lazio won the second leg of their semifinal 2-1, Juventus advanced 3-2 on

aggregate. Weah sent in a cross seven minutes from time that Milik tapped in. Taty Castellanos scored a

goal in each half for Lazio. Juventus won the first leg 2-0 with goals from Federico Chiesa and Dusan Vlahovic. In the May 15 final back in Rome, Juventus will face Atalanta Fiorentina. Fiorentina takes

a 1-0 advantage into the second leg of the other semifinal on Wednesday. Iuventus has won the Italian

Cup a record 14 times, with its title in 2021 the most recent trophy the Bianconeri have claimed.

By reaching the final, Juventus also qualified for next season's four-team Italian Super Cup.

Castellanos is no stranger to coming up big in important matches, having scored four against Real Madrid last April while with Girona. His first goal came 12 minutes in at the Stadio Olimpico when he leapt over

Alex Sandro to head in a corner. Then shortly after the break, he muscled off Gleison Bremer to finish off a counterattack. Iuventus midfielder and

United States international Weston McKennie limped off with an apparent left ankle issue after Castellanos' second goal but then came back on before eventually substituted being

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

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

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

qualified for the

12 and No 33

Masters, are now ranked

However, neither Theegala

nor Bhatia have a

possibility of making an

Olympic appearance since

the top 15 in the world

rankings have as many as

respectively.

from the north-east region to have an AFC 'A' License coaching badge. The recommendation is as

good as an appointment given that the AIFF executive committee will approve it in its next meeting.
The technical committee meet, chaired by Vijayan, was



attended by Pinky Bompal Magar, Shabbir Ali, Victor Amalraj, Santosh Singh, and Climax Lawrence.

Syed Sabir Pasha, the Technical Director of AIFF, was also present.

committee recommended Priya PV and recommended Priya PV and Ronibala Chanu as the assistant and goalkeeping coaches respectively for the team. All three coaches recommended by the Technical Committee did duty for the team during the Turkish Women's Cup in Alanya, Turkey, in February

The committee also discussed

the appointments of the coaches for the men's U-16 and U-19 teams. After going through the applications received, the committee recommended the following

U16 Men's National Team: Head Coach: Ishfaq Ahmed, Assistant Coach: Yan Cheng Law, Goalkeeping Coach: Mohammed Zakeer Hussain U19 Men's National Team: Head Coach: Ranjan Chaudhuri, Goalkeeping Coach: Sandip Nandy.

ARCHERY

Indian men, women compound teams eye gold in Shanghai

PTI SHANGHAI

The Indian men's and women's compound archery teams assured the country of a podium finish by nailing down final berths in the season-opening Hyundai Archery World Cup here on Wednesday.

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

The Indian women, who are the reigning world champions and seeded No.1 here, set up a title clash with Italy, defeating Turkey and Estonia to confirm their status as the defeating Korea by just two



leading side in the category. The trio of reigning U-18 and champion Aditi senior Swami, Asian Games goldmedallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Parneet Kaur dropped just 10 points through the two matches to confirm their superiority. The Indian men's team created a major upset

points at 235-233. Tied at even after two ends, the Indians grabbed a point after the third and finished with a 59 to secure the final spot. "Our coordination was good

today and we read the wind well," said Abhishek after the nerve-wracking semifinal contest against the Koreans. "The semifinals are always tight matches. We were

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

An elated Priyansh said after the match against Korea that he was thrilled to be competing against the strong opponents, who he had so far seen only on social media. We played alongside players

that we used to watch on YouTube," said Priyansh, who trains with Abhishek in Delhi. 'We could have shot even better," he added.

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

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

"I hope we can repeat the success of the World Cup in Paris last year where both the Indian men and women won the team gold medals."

Sreeshankar undergoes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian long jumper Murali Sreeshankar has undergone a surgery on his injured knee that ruled him out of the Paris Olympics in July-August.

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

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

Dr Olory is a French orthopaedic surgeon. Sreeshankar had injured his left knee while training in Palakkad earlier this month. He had made the cut for the Paris Olympics as early as July 2023 when he secured a silver at the Asian Championship in

Bangkok with a 8.37m jump

(Olympic entry standard



In June last year, Sreeshankar had become only the third Indian to finish in the top three in a Diamond League Meeting with a third-place finish.

"Life writes strange scripts, and some times there is courage in accepting it and moving on. That's what I will do. My journey to a comeback began the minute I injured my knee.

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

Olympic bound boxer Preeti to spearhead India's challenge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

and

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

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

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

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



Akansha (70kg) will lead the Women: Annu (48kg), Laxmi country's challenge in the youth women's section along with the Asian youth champion Nikita Chand (60kg).

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

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

SOUAD Youth

Men: Brijesh Tamta (48kg), Aryan Men: Brijesh Tamta (46kg), Aryan (51kg), Jitesh (54kg), Jatin (57kg), Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg), Sumit (67kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Sahil (80kg), Hemant Sangwan (86kg), Aryan (92kg), Lakshay Rathi (+92kg).

(50kg), Nisha (52kg), Tamanna (54kg), Yatri Patel (57kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Parthavi Grewal (66kg), Akansha Phalaswal (70kg), Rudrika (75kg), Khushi Pooniya (81kg), Nirjhara Bana (+81kg).

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

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

PANT SHINES AS DC SURVIVES LAST-BALL SCARE, STEALS 4-RUN WIN OVER GT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant virtually sealed his spot as India's first choice wicketkeeper for the T20 World Cup with a belligerent unbeaten half-century in Delhi Capitals' narrow four-run win over Gujarat Titans in the Indian League here on Premier Wednesday.

Skipper Pant and Axar Patel forged a blistering stand of 113 runs off 68 balls en route to quickfire individual half-centuries to power DC to 224 for 4 in their must-win

In reply, Sai Sudarshan (65 off 29) and David Miller (55 off 23) scored fifties, while Rashid Khan hit a 11-ball 21 not out but still couldn't take GT over the line, finishing at 220 for 8 in their 20

Sent in to bat, Pant led from the front, remaining unbeaten on 88 off 43 balls (5X4s, 8X6s), his innings proving to be a timely reminder to the national selectors, who are likely to pick him in India's first XI against Pakistan in the World T20 match in New York, barring fitness issues.

Pant's maturity showed as he Needing 19 runs off the last over,

paced his innings brilliantly in company of Axar, who made 66 off 43 balls after being promoted to the third spot. His innings was studded with five fours and four

Chasing 225, GT lost skipper Shubman Gill in the second over but Wriddhiman Saha (39) played some delightful shots and together with Impact Sub Sai Sudharsan shared 82 runs for the second wicket to keep GT in the hunt.
But once Saha departed,
Azmatullah Omarzai too was

brilliantly caught by Jake Fraser-McGurk at deep midwicket off Axar soon.

But Sudharsan, who got a reprieve in the fifth over, used his long handle to great effect to notch up his fifty off 29 balls.

But with the asking rate constantly creeping up, Sudharsan had to go for his shots which eventually led to his downfall as he was caught by Axar off Salam at long-off. He hit seven fours and two sixes.

Miller (55 off 23, 6X4s, 3X6s) then put up a show to take them closer to the target and once he was out, Rashid gave GT hope with a 11ball 21-run unbeaten cameo.



Rashid hit Mukesh Kumar for two consecutive fours in the first two balls and then sent the pacer over the fence in the penultimate ball to reduce the deficit to 5 off the last

But Mukesh kept his calm as Rashid failed to clear the fence as GT fell short.

But Wednesday's game was all about Pant as he squashed all doubts about his World T20 Cup

chances with a magnificent innings. The flamboyant keeper batter was also brilliant behind the stumps grabbing two sharp catches.

Earlier, Jake Fraser-McGurk and

blistering 18-ball 65 in their last match, looked at his ominous best the fence. as he elegantly pulled GT bowlers over the fence but his knock was cut short by Sandeep Warrier as the young Australian was holed out at square-leg by Noor Ahmed. It was double blow for DC in the It was double blow for DC in the fourth over as Shaw was caught by Noor off Warrier two balls later with a good diving effort at the deep backward square leg as the batter went for a maximum. DC's problems were further compounded when Warrier accounted for his second scalp of the day in the form of Shai Hope, who was latched on by a diving Rashid at cover boundary as DC

Rashid at cover boundary as DC slumped to 44 for 3 in the powerplay. With three wickets down, Pant and

Axar initially played sensibly and tried to forge a partnership but once they were set, they unleashed their brutal attack.

Pant started slowly but gained in confidence as time progressed and unleashed his trademark pick up shots of his legs, cuts and pulls to

Prithvi Shaw got DC off to a flying start, racing to 34 in 3 overs.
Fraser-McGurk, who smashed a played the second fiddle but didn't after getting his groove, Axar played the second fiddle but didn't falter to dispatch the bad balls to

But Axar upped his tempo as the innings progressed and notched up his fifty off 37 balls with a boundary off Rashid in the last ball of the 15th over.

Pant attacked anything which was pitched on his legs as he effortlessly flicked Mohit Sharma for a six over midwicket in the 16th over. He then clobbered Mohit over long-off in the same over to prop up DC's run rate.

Axar matched his skipper stroke-

for-stroke as he dispatched Noor for huge back-to-back sixes in the 17th over.

But in search of one too many, Axar perished in the next ball, caught by Sai Kishore at long-on. Pant brought up his fifty with a hit over the long-on fence off Mohit. Tristan Stubbs' late seven-ball 26run cameo and Pant's pyrotechnics towards the end took DC beyond the 200-run mark.

Pant unleashed havoc on Mohit in the last over, hitting the veteran bowler for four sixes and one four to pick up 31 runs.

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



PTI CHENNAI

Despite missing out on Cricket Australia's central contract for the 2024-25 season, all-rounder Marcus Stoinis wants to use the impact hundred against Chennai Super Kings as a leverage to extend his white ball career beyond the upcoming T20 World Cup. Stoinis, who was not included

in the 23-player central contract list, made an unbeaten 124 off 63 balls for Lucknow Super Giants here on Tuesday.

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

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

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

win over CSK.

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

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

The Perth-born player was omitted from Australia's ODIs against the West Indies in January, but he is set to be part of the country's T20I World Cup campaign in the West Indies and the USA in June. Stoinis is most likely to be slotted into No. 5 in the Australian line-up during the

marquee event. Stoinis is eligible for Australian selection for the tournament because his current contract for the 2023-24 season will run its course only on June 30. However, Stoinis was clear that he wanted to play for Australia in the white ball series against England (away) in September and against Pakistan at home

Rampant Sunrisers Hyderabad eye another run fest

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

While Mumbai Indians were

the first victim of SRH's newfound batting strength this season, RCB bore the maximum brunt when the Travis Head-led batting lineup powered the 2016 winners to IPL's highest-ever total of

to IPLs nighest-ever total of 287/3 in Bengaluru.

If this was not enough, SRH's carnage against Delhi Capitals - which included a record 125/0 being scored in the powerplay - brought forth the possibility of the 200 mm and possibility of the 300-run mark being breached for the first time ever in the IPL. And it won't be surprising if

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

RCB batters have worked hard

shortcomings in bowling, but for such a lopsided squad in terms of balance, the task to scored 379 runs to keep the all-round produce an performance looks nearly împossible. To their credit, RCB fought

lost to Kolkata Knight Riders by a mere one run after conceding 222/6. Moreover, a collective batting effort must have pleased the RCB management to a large extent. RCB batters have worked hard He was a victim of a to make up for their severe contentious call but Virat Kohli

incredibly hard with the bat

but were unfortunate to have

Orange Cap in possession. But hot on his heels are a few others including SRH's Head, who is making most of his

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

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

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

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

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

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

Voges agreed and said while the rule makes for entertaining cricket, it

hurts all-rounders. "The scores have been going up, and

the teams have got genuine batters coming in at number seven or eight, while the batters have gone hard right from the start," the Australian said after the six-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings here on Tuesday night. "Certainly makes for entertaining cricket, but it takes the all-rounders out of the game for a little bit and

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

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

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

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

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

WITH BOTH HANDS: Marcus Stoinis' unbeaten 124 ensured that Lucknow Super Giants pulled off a double over defending champion the Big Bash League.



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

Voges said the decision was easy given his successful outing as a toporder batter for Melbourne Stars in

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

"He has certainly made the most of it.

He has been hitting the ball well the whole tournament and has always

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

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

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

"It was a tremendous game of cricket. The batting from both sides was outstanding," he continued.
"CSK did put us under pressure with

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

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

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

"It's a mixture of trying to find that (combination) and also form. We're a little bit and get him up the order

areas, so we're trying to find not a quick fix, but the right combination where players are going to contribute for the back end of this tournament," said Fleming after first loss of

Rs 14 crore at the auction, has totalled 146 runs in seven innings. Fleming insisted that number

Mitchell, who was bought for

the season at home.

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

three is the ideal spot for the

"So, we've looked to rectify that

where he has had his best performances internationally. That might take a little time, but the top three need to contribute the majority of

"Ruturaj did that today, so hopefully, he can continue his form, and the others can pick that up... We're not firing on all cylinders by any means, but we're in each game asking teams to play well to beat us. We just got to get a little bit better," he said referring to skipper's unbeaten hundred in

a losing cause.
While Mitchell's promotion did not yield the desired result, LSG sending Marcus Stoinis to number three proved to be a game changer as singlehandedly pulled off a



Trying to find batting combination that does

for us at back end of IPL: Fleming

memorable win for his team with an unbeaten 124 off 63

Fleming, who has worked alongside the Aussie allrounder in the Big Bash League for Melbourne Stars, recalled how impactful he had been at the top, especially as an opener.
"He's got power, but he's also

got good batsmanship. For Stars, we got him to open the batting, and he was quite prolific," he remembered. Today, we saw the quality of his work. His 50 came up in about mid-20 balls (26), and then he just controlled the innings.

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

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

The World Cup winning captain is batting like the Dhoni of old this season, finding sixes and fours at will. Fleming considers himself among the lucky ones to witness fans' unparalleled admiration for Dhoni across venues.

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

the world is a testimony to the

way he has played the game. People talk about MS as a person, but he is also a great player, and he has done some great things for India and Chennai (Super Kings). "People take time to appreciate

it, and we do that every day. We are lucky to have him in our side for so long. So, it's not lost on us, and we enjoy every moment." The CSK-LSG clash witnessed

a huge amount of dew coming and Fleming and his team had anticipated it.

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

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