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NO IMMINENT DEAL DESPITE  
BIDEN'S GAZA CEASEFIRE SIGNAL

**MONEY 10**  
BENGALURU TAX PAYERS ARE  
GIVING US BUOYANCY: FM

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RAHUL STILL  
FEELING SORE WHILE  
BATTING IN NETS  
12 SPORTS

## Congress Faces Himachal Freeze

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

A worried Congress hurried on Wednesday to save its Government in Himachal Pradesh amid dramatic developments, including a resignation announcement by high-profile Minister Vikramaditya Singh and the suspension of 15 BJP MLAs by the Speaker. The party engaged in a damage control exercise to prevent the possible loss of a State ruled by the party just weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge despatched three observers — Bhupesh Baghel, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and D K Shivakumar — to Shimla, indicating that the party could take some “tough steps”. The crisis was triggered by Tuesday’s cross-voting by six Congress MLAs in the Rajya Sabha election for the lone seat from Himachal Pradesh. The party has now sought the disqualification of these MLAs from the Assembly, and the matter was heard by Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania who reserved his order. The suspended BJP MLAs, including the Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, initially refused to leave the House, apparently to stall the Assembly from passing Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh



Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla during a meeting with Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Jai Ram Thakur and BJP MLAs, at Raj Bhavan, in Shimla, on Wednesday

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Sukhu’s Budget through voice vote. The BJP demanded voting on the Budget, believing it would reveal that the Congress had lost its majority in the State Assembly. The House later passed the Finance Bill by voice vote with no BJP member present. The Speaker then adjourned the Session sine die. Chief Minister Sukhu dismissed speculation that he was resigning, stating, “Neither the high command, nor anyone else has asked me for resignation,” Sukhu said. Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi was defeated by BJP’s Harsh Mahajan on

Tuesday through a draw of lots, after the two candidates bagged 34 votes each. The result meant that the Congress, which had come into power in the State just 14 months ago, winning 40 seats in the Assembly, had failed to reach the halfway mark. The BJP won 25 seats in the House of 68 in 2022. There are three Independent MLAs, who were believed to be with the ruling Congress until the cross-voting crisis erupted. Early morning, Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur led a delegation to Raj Bhavan to meet Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla to ensure that the

Finance Bill was passed only through a division. Late in the evening, the Congress observers began their interaction with party MLAs. Congress general secretary Jai Ram Ramesh said Kharge had asked the observers and AICC in-charge for the State Rajeev Shukla to speak to all MLAs, including those who are disgruntled, and submit a comprehensive report to him soon. “The Congress will not hesitate to take tough steps as the party is our priority and will not let the people’s mandate be betrayed in

Himachal Pradesh,” Ramesh said at the AICC Press conference in the national Capital. Earlier in the morning, Himachal Pradesh Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh announced he was quitting the council of ministers and would submit his resignation to the chief minister and the Governor. It was not immediately clear whether he had done so. Singh, whose mother is Himachal Congress president Pratibha Singh, said, “There have been attempts to humiliate and undermine me from some quarters, and despite reservations, I supported the Government.” He is the son of Virbhadra Singh, a former Chief Minister who died in 2021. The family has in the past hinted that Virbhadra Singh’s legacy has not been honored by the party. Pratibha Singh has also expressed disgruntlement with the manner in which Sukhu has run the State. Vikramaditya Singh said the 2022 Congress campaign was run in his father’s name. “There was no poster, or hoarding or banner which did not carry his picture,” he said. But after the victory, when the matter of putting up his statue came up, the Government failed to decide the location. “It is not a political but an emotional thing for a son,” he said.

## BJP in Election Mode, Selects 100 Candidates

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday brainstormed over the party’s probable candidates in several States for the Lok Sabha elections, a day before its Central Election Committee is expected to meet to finalise the names for the first list of about 100 party nominees. The list will have names of candidates from seats in States like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Sources said Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda held separate meetings with party leaders from several States, including Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand among others. Similar meetings with leaders from Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana have been held so far. While the lists of names in 2019 were released only after the Election Commission had announced the election schedule, it is going to be different this time as the BJP looks to follow the template seen during the latest round of Assembly polls in five States when it named its candidates, especially in the seats the party had lost five years earlier, before the announcement of dates. The first list, party sources



said, is expected to be 100 candidates which include the names of heavyweights like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shah, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Smriti Irani, Nirmala Sitharaman, S Jaishankar and Bollywood super star Akshay Kumar about whom grapevine in the party has it that he may be fielded from the prestigious New Delhi Parliamentary constituency. Other candidates from the spheres of sports and education sector are also doing the rounds and the party is completely tight lipped to reveal names being discussed as of now. Party sources also said to keep the NDA constituents in good humour

and a few minority candidates could also be fielded. Modi is the MP from Varanasi, a constituency he has won twice and is likely to contest for third consecutive time. He was elected with a huge margin of 3.37 lakh votes in 2014 and had increased it to 4.8 lakh in 2019. Amit Shah had contested the 2019 election from Gandhinagar, a seat that had been held by BJP veteran LK Advani until then. The first list for the 2019 elections had also included Modi and Shah, who was then the party’s national president and had made his Lok Sabha poll debut from Gandhinagar.



## NEWS BREAK CBI summons Akhilesh

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has summoned Samajwadi Party president and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav as a “witness” to record his statement on Thursday in illegal mining cases registered five years ago. The cases pertain to the issuance of mining leases in alleged violation of e-tendering process.

## Modi slams DMK, Congress for dynastic politics

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■  
CHENNAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday literally tore into allegations made by the DMK-led Tamil Nadu Government that the Central Government was not offering any welfare measures to the people in the State and was putting spokes on the Dravidian land’s progress. The DMK Government is blocking all welfare projects being introduced by the Central Government for Tamil Nadu. What the DMK and its alliance partners

including the Congress were doing is creating rift among the people, said the Prime Minister while addressing a mammoth rally organised by the BJP at Thoothukudi. “In the past we saw a Chief Minister struggling hard to coronate his son as Chief Minister. Now we are seeing the son working to anoint his son as the Chief Minister of the State,” said Modi without naming the late patriarch M Karunanidhi, his son and present Chief Minister M K Stalin and the latter’s son Udhayanidhi. “The DMK and the Congress have only one



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated during a public meeting in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, on Wednesday

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agenda and that is to perpetrate dynastic politics,” said the Prime Minister. The DMK had committed a faux pas by putting pictures of Chinese rockets in the billboards erected across the venue to make the people know that the space center coming up at Kulasekharapattinam was a project initiated by the State. “They do not know that India has mastered the design and development of high power

launch vehicles which would be launched from the new space station,” lambasted the Prime Minister. Modi listed various development and infrastructure projects implemented by the Center for the welfare of Tamil Nadu. “Five years ago, only 21 lakh people had drinking water connection at their homes in Tamil Nadu. However, this count has increased to one crore now.



## Largest ever offshore drug seized



Indian Navy personnel show 3300 kgs contraband (3089 kg charas, 158 kg Methamphetamine, 25 kg Morphine) seized from a vessel in a joint operation with Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

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PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Indian security agencies have seized the largest-ever offshore consignment of drugs, weighing 3,300 kilos, and arrested five foreigners

from a dhow in the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast. The joint operation, codenamed ‘Sagarmanthan-1’, was carried out by the Navy, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), and the Gujarat Police.

The boat reportedly sailed from an Iranian port. The value of the contraband was estimated to be between ₹1,300 crore and ₹2,000 crore in the international market. Union Home Minister Amit

Shah hailed the operation as a “historic success” and a testament to his Government’s “unwavering commitment to making our nation drug-free.” “Pursuing PM Modi’s vision of a drug-free Bharat, our agencies today achieved the grand success of making the biggest offshore seizure of drugs in the nation. In a joint operation carried out by the NCB, the Navy, and the Gujarat Police, a gigantic consignment of 3,132 kg of drugs was seized. This historic success is a testament to our Government’s unwavering commitment to making our nation drug-free. “On this occasion, I congratulate the NCB, the Navy, and the Gujarat Police,” he said.

## Unwavering support for Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A vast majority in Wayanad, Kerala, wants Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to contest from the Lok Sabha constituency in the upcoming poll. In 2019, Rahul won from the constituency with an impressive margin of 4.32 lakh votes, polling 64.94 per cent of the total votes cast in the election. All his challengers were left humbled, losing their security deposits in a one-sided contest. Wayanad, situated atop the



Western Ghats, is a traditional Congress bastion, leaving no doubt about Rahul’s prospects in the upcoming election. Despite his commitments as the party’s top national leader, he has remained active in the

constituency. Interestingly, none of the voters with whom The Pioneer interacted could recall the names of the two candidates who had contested against Rahul in the 2019 polls. Even hardcore CPI (M) supporters want Rahul to run from Wayanad in this election. “The constituency gained international attention because of Rahul’s decision to contest from here. Although the constituency is yet to receive any major projects, it has faced discrimination under the CPI (M)-led Government in Kerala. Moreover, whenever there was an emergency, Rahul promptly attended to the constituency,” said Rajendran, a CPI (M) supporter.



## India bears brunt of climate change wrath

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The year 2023 brought forth a concerning reality for India, as every State and Union Territory experienced extreme weather events at least once, disrupting life, livelihoods, and the economy as resources were diverted to tackle flooding or extreme heat, volatile conditions driven by climate change. These occurrences were not sporadic; rather, they persisted for approximately 318 out of 365 days, revealing

a disturbingly recurrent pattern of climatic disruptions. In what should be considered a climate change warning to India, the toll on human life was grave, with 3,287 recorded deaths attributed to these extreme weather events. Additionally, the devastation extended to the animal kingdom, with a staggering 1.24 lakh animal deaths reported. The agricultural sector, vital for the nation’s food security, bore a heavy brunt, with 2.21

million hectares of crop area suffering damage, leading to significant economic losses. This widespread impact, detailed in the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment’s “State of Environment 2024” report, underscores the severity of the challenges posed by climate change. The report said the climate-vulnerable country experienced extreme weather on 86 percent of days from January to September. State-wise, Himachal Pradesh emerged



File Photo

as the most heavily affected zone, enduring extreme weather conditions for 149 days, closely followed by Madhya Pradesh with 141 days. Kerala and Uttar Pradesh also faced prolonged periods of extreme weather, each recording 119 days of such events. The widespread nature of these occurrences is further underscored by the fact that eight States experienced over 100 days of extreme weather. The temperature increase

was driven by human-caused climate change and boosted by the natural El Niño weather phenomenon. The types of extreme weather varied, with heavy rains, floods, and landslides occurring on 208 days, while lightning and storms were prevalent for 202 days. Heatwaves persisted for 49 days, cold waves for 29 days, and cloudbursts were recorded on nine days, contributing to localised instances of intense precipitation.



# Classifieds

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**We, Kamal Kant** S/o Late Sham Lal & Sita W/o Kamal Kant R/o Village-Barwala, Distt. Panchkula (Haryana) declare that our son Vikrant & his wife Alisha are out of our control. So, we disown them from our all movable/immovable properties. If anybody deals with them shall do their own risk in future.

**We, Nanak Chand** S/o Piyare Lal, Kusum Lata W/o Nanak Chand R/o 975, Khera Bazar, Jagadhri, Distt Yamunanagar declare that our son Gaurav Mittal and his wife Nidhi Mittal are out of our control. We disown them from our movable and immovable properties. In future we and our family will not be responsible for their any act.

**I, Nirmila Devi** W/o Sh. Balvir R/o H.No. 2844, Gali No. 3, Kanhehl Road, Ambedkar Colony Rohtak declare that my son Sandeep and his wife Soniya are out of my control. So I disown them from my all moveable/immoveable properties. Any body dealing with them at their own risk. I or my family are not responsible for any type of their acts.

**I, Gurbachan Kaur** w/o Gurnam Singh R/o Kot Budha PO Dehrwal Daroga Distt Gurdaspur declare that my son Serving as No.156128908 HAV Kol Singh in Army. In his service record, my name written as Gurbachan Kaur. My correct name is Gurbachan Kaur. Concerned note.

**I, Madan Mohan Sharma** S/o Shambhu Nath Sharma R/o H.No. 64, Shastri Nagar, Amritsar, Punjab declare that my father was known by two names Shambhu Nath and Shambhu Nath Sharma. Shambhu Nath and Shambhu Nath Sharma is one and the same person.

**I, No. 4480027 P.** Rank Hav. Gurcharan Singh S/O Kewal Singh. VPO- Bandhtheri Tehsil Nangal District Rupnagar, Punjab, declare that in my Army record my wife's name Harjit Kaur is written wrongly on my Relationship certificate whereas my wife's correct name is Harjeet Kaur for all purposes.

**I, Pyar Kaur** W/o Sh. Bagicha Singh R/o Vill. Mamu Majra, Tehsil Shahabad (M.), Distt. Kurukshetra, declare that my son Indrajit Singh and his wife Nirmal Kaur and my grandson Prince and my daughters Gurnej Kaur, Kulwant Kaur and Vir Kaur are out of my control. So I disinherit them from my all moveable/ immoveable Properties. If anybody deals with them in any manner, they will deal on his own responsibility.

**We, Satish Kumar** S/o Kali Ram and Ishwanti Devi W/o Satish Kumar, R/o Plot No. 3, SCC Area, Nilokheri, District Karnal, have evicted my son Deepak Ranga-his wife Poonam, from all our movable -immovable properties, as they our of our control. Anybody dealing with them at their own risk.

**I, Pusppa Devi** (Existing Name Of Daughter As Per Nok In Record) Adult Daughter Of Bhim Singh (Name Of Father), Resident Of Village Hassanpur, Tehsil And District Sonapat (Hr) Have Changed My Name And Date Of Birth From Pusppa Devi & Dob 30-03-1980(Existing Name And Dob As Per Nok In Record) To Pushpa Khatri & Dob 30-04-1980(Proposed/Accepted New Name And Dob Of Daughter) Vide Affidavit Dated 28-02-2024 At Sonapat.

**I, Bhupinder Singh** Saggu S/O Mukhtiyar Singh R/O H No 1341/132/C, Shaheed Karnail Singh Nagar, Phase -3, Pakhowal Road, Ludhiana Declared That My Son Arshvinder Singh Saggu (Australia) Is Out Of My Control. So I Disown Him From All My Movable Or Immovable Properties. Anybody Dealing With Him On Their Own Risk.I And My Family Have No Responsibility.

**I, Gurmuk Singh** S/O S. Gurcharan Singh R/O House No.12.A, Near Sigma City Chowk, Sharma Estate, Distt.SAS Nagar (Mohali) Punjab-140603, Do Heraby Solemnly States That My Father's Name In All The Documents Has Been Erroneously Written As Chanan Singh Whereas My Father's Correct Name Is Gurcharan Singh.

**I Balvir Singh** S/O Late S.Baldev Singh R/O House No.- # 1374/3, Mig Phase-11, District S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali) Declares That My Wife Narinder Kaur W/O Balvir Singh And My Son Kamaljit Singh And His Wife Jagnandan Kaur (Pinky) Are Out Of My Control Outside My Name Who Are Living In Canada. I Disown Them From All My Moveable And Immovable Property. Anybody Dealing With Them Will Do So At Their Own Risk.

**I Hardish Kalyan** S/o Late Bansil Lal R/o # 59/1, Adarsh Nagar, Nayagaon, Near Arun Palace, SAS Nagar Mohali, My son Munish Kalyan and his wife Darshna Kumari and Vinay Kalyan and his wife Anita are out of my control. I disowned my movable immovable properties. In the future any type anybody deals with him. they will be self responsible.

**I, Baldev Raj Ahuja,** son of Shri Bhola Ram, resident of House No. 18/177 New Char Chaman Kamal, declare that My son Sunil Ahuja and his wife Anita are beyond my ear. I evict both of them from my movable and immovable property. If either of them do any wrong thing like quarrelling with someone or having a fight etc. then they themselves will be responsible for it. These two will not have any responsibility towards my family.

**I, Smt. Triveni** Wd/o Ishwar Singh R/o village Nahar, Sub-Tehsil Nahar, Distt Rewari, declare that my son Pardeep Kumar and daughter-in-law Partima Kumari are beyond my control and do whatever they want. Therefore I evict them from my movable and immovable property. I, along with other family members, will not have any responsibility for any kind of transaction or dealings with them in the future.

**I, Manmohan Singh** S/o Hardial Singh R/O Ward No-18, Singh Avenue, Khanna (Ludhiana) declare that my daughter Simranjit Kaur is out of my control. I disown my above said daughter Simranjit Kaur from my moveable and immovable property. I and my any family member will not be responsible for her acts and conducts.

**I am Gulnawaz** S/o Shakeel R/o Gali No:6 Baba Wall Gali Bath Road Malia Khurd Tam Taran That My Name Is Gulnawaz Qureshi S/o Shakeel Rafique Qureshi My Names Are Correct In The Document.

**I, Miss Shobha** Popat Madane Wife Of Army No 6499469P Rank Nk Name Jadhav Sahebrao Umaji Resident Of Village – Khanapur, Post – Kanapur, Tehsil – Khanapur, Distt – Sangli, State – Maharashtra, Pin – 415307, Declared Vide Affidavit No ln-Pb90876328252552w That My Correct Name Is Shobha Sahebrao Jadhav As Per My Aadhar, Pan Cards Instead Of Miss Shobha Popat Madane. Please Correct it.

**I Ranjit Singh** Son Of S. Kewal Singh Resident Of Village– Warrich, Distt. Amritsar-143204 Have Changed My Name From Ranjeet Singh To Ranjit Singh Vide Affidavit Dated 11/10/2023 And Affidavit Attested By Notary Jalandhar. All Please Note.

## CHANGE OF NAME

**मैं अनिता** पत्नी स्वर्गीय राजेंद्र निवासी पाना दुहन बुयियाणा तहसील सपौला जिला रोहतक हरियाणा ने अपना नाम सुनीता से बदलकर अनिता रख लिया है। भविष्य में मुझे अनिता पत्नी राजेंद्र के नाम से जाना जाए।

**I, Aastha Kamboj** D/o Parmod Kumar R/o House No. K/47/3, TBRL Colony, Ramgarh (232), Panchkula, Haryana-134118, my father name Parmod Kumar entered in my birth certificate and my matriculation certificate my father name entered as Parmod Kamboj. That Parmod Kumar and Parmod Kamboj is one and the same person i.e. my father. In future he will be known as Parmod Kumar.

**I, Jyoti Rani** W/o Sachin Kukreja R/O H.No. 607, Sector-15, Sonipat have changed my name to Jyoti Rani Kukreja for all future purposes.

**I, Kamaljeet** S/o Sukhdev Singh R/o #2, Rampur Seuri, Kalka, BCW Surajpur, Panchkula (Haryana) have changed my name from Kamaljeet to Kamaljeet Singh. In future my name will be Kamaljeet Singh.

**I, Army No.15788400L** Rank Hav (DMT) Name Seshadri Gedela Unit-142 AD Regt (SP) do hereby affirm that my mother date of birth 01-07-1957 has wrongly entered in my service record. Her correct date of birth is 01-07-1955. Hence it my be entered accordingly.

**I, Army No.15788400L** Rank Hav (DMT) Name Seshadri Gedela Unit-142 AD Regt (SP) do hereby affirm that my mother name Saraswati wrongly entered in my service record. Her correct name is Gedela Sarawatamma. Hence it my be entered accordingly.

**I, Army No.15788400L** Rank Hav (DMT) Name Seshadri Gedela Unit-142 AD Regt (SP) do hereby affirm that my mother date of birth 01-07-1955 has wrongly entered in my service record. Her correct date of birth is 01-01-1946. Hence it my be entered accordingly.

**I, Ramesh Chander** Bhimaniya S/o Singh Ram R/O No. 55, Bhuria Colony, Kansapur, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Ramesh Chander Bhimaniya to Ramesh Chander. In future I shall be known as Ramesh Chander.

**I, Veena Rani** W/o Sudershan Chawla R/O 1134, Ward No. 23, DLF Colony, Rohtak declare that I have changed my name from Veena Kumari to Veena Rani, for future all purposes.

**I, Baljeet Kaur** D/o No 3167646P Rank Hav. (H/Nb Sub) Rampal R/O Village Titram, District Kaithal, in my father army record mentioned my name Baljeeto, DOB 28.04.1993 and Mother name is Patasho Devi but my other documents, my name is Baljeet Kaur DOB 15.5.1993 and mother name is Pataso Devi which is actual.

**I, Sandeep Kumar** Chauhan S/o Chander Bose Chauhan R/O H.No 39 Uttam Nagar, Jalbera Road, Ambala City have Changed my name from Sandeep Kumar Chauhan to Sandeep Chauhan.

**I, Shashi Bala** W/o Ravi Bhushan R/O H.No 1759-60 Old Anaj Mandi Gali Jattan Ambala City have changed my name from Bala Rani to Shashi Bala.

**I, Sudershan Kumar** s/o Ram Parkash r/o H.No. 134, Onkar Nagar, Gurdaspur (Punjab) have changed my name from Sudershan Kumar to Sudarshan Kumar. Concerned note.

**I, Malook Singh** Sohail s/o Nirmal Singh r/o VPO Sohail Distt Gurdaspur , Punjab (India) have changed my name from Malook Singh Sohail to Malook Singh. Concerned note.

**I, Gayatri Doley** w/o Service No. 14927639L HAV Padmadhar Doley, Unit 25 Mech. Inf. R&S WH c/o 56 APO. s/o Hemahdhor Singh r/o Vill Kathal Guri. PO Pipal Guri, Distt Dhemaji (Assam) PIN- 786110 declare that in my husband's army service record my name wrongly recorded as Gayatri Pegu. My correct name is Gayatri Doley. Concerned note.

**I, Padmavathi G** Mother of V N S Sai Kumar Grandhri R/o #3609, Sector 31-D, Chandigarh have changed my name from Padmavathi G to Grandhi Padmavathi vide Affidavit Dated 28-02-2024 before Notary, Distt. Court Chandigarh.

**I, Ranjita Barad** Spouse of Brahmananda Barad R/O #2818, Sector 47-C, Chandigarh have changed my name from Ranjita Barad to Ranjita Jena vide Affidavit Dated 28-02-2024 before Notary, Distt. Court Chandigarh.

**I, No.1083802W** NK Lakhwinder Singh (Retd.) R/o Village Hassanpur, P.O. Lukhi, Tehsil Thanesar District Kurukshetra declare that in my service record my daughter's name & D.O.B. is wrongly written as Rajwinder Kaur instead of Rajwinder Kaur & D.O.B. 10.08.1994 instead of 05.12.1994. Note all concerns.

**I, Lal Kour** w/o Daya Singh & M/o JC 701515Y Subedar Rajbinder Singh r/o Village Dhanani, PO Lakhmari, Distt. Kurukshetra, Haryana-136156 have changed my name from Lal Kour to Lal Kaur reference vide district notary on affidavit No 5047 dt 27.02.2024.

**I, Rajeev** S/O Ram Parkash R/O F7/375, Near Batala Road, Lavanya School, Kashmir Avenue, Amritsar have changed my name from Rajeev to Rajeev Umat. Concerned please note.

**I Amit Bhushan** Tewari S/O Sh. Vijay Bhushan Tewari R/O H.No. 1078, Sector 37b, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Amit Tewari.

**I, Shefali** W/o Sh. Navleen Chalanra R/O 272, Old MC Market, Ward No. 03, Sirsa (Haryana). That I have changed my name from Shefali to Shefali Chalanra , in future my name is to be called as Shefali Chalanra.

**I, Janak** wife of Shri Surjit Lal resident of House No. 4006, Sector 46-D, Chandigarh, aged 77 years, have changed my name from Janak to Janak Rani wife of Shri Surjit Lal for all purposes and intents.

**I, Shelly** W/o Sh. Bhupen Mehta R/o H.No. 96/1, Near Anand Vatika, C-Block, Sirsa (Haryana). That I have changed my name from Shelly to Shelly Mehta , in future my name is to be called as Shelly Mehta.

**I Gulab** Singh S/o late Sh. Makhan Singh R/o 464P, Sector 27,Panchkula.have changed my Name from Gulab Singh Jammu To Gulab Singh for all future purpose. This is for the information of General Public.

**I Harpreet Kaur** W/o Gulab Singh R/o 464P, Sector 27,Panchkula.have changed my Name from Harpreet Kaur Jammu To Harpreet Kaur for all future purpose. This is for the information of General Public.

**I, Sushma** W/o Raman R/O H.No. 608, Karhans (69), Panipat declare that I have changed my name from Sushma to Sushma Kumari. In future I should be known as Sushma Kumari.

**I, Vikramjeet Singh** S/o Dilbag Singh R/o 653, Near Mall Mandi, New Golden Avenue, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Vikramjeet Singh to Vikramjeet Singh Dhillon.

**I, Dilbag Singh** Dhillon S/o Vir Singh R/O 653, Near Mall Mandi, New Golden Avenue, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Dilbag Singh Dhillon to Dilbag Singh.

**I, Robin** S/o Sham Lal R/O H.No. T16/776, Gali Gossain, Beri Gate, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Robin to Robin Mehra.

**I Mamta Rani** W/o Mukesh Kumar Goel R/O Gali No. 01, Desraj Colony, Panipat, I have changed my name to Mamta Goyal to Mamta Rani for all future purposes.

**I, Jaspreet Kaur** w/o Harjeet Singh r/o Village Bighar, Tehsil & District Fatehabad have changed my name from Jaspreet Kour to Jaspreet Kaur for all future purposes.

**I, Sunita Devi** Widow of No. 13692871P Rank L/NK Name Mohinder Singh R/O VPO Gorakhpur, Tehsil & District Fatehabad State Haryana 125047 in my spouse army service record my daughter's name & date of birth wrongly mentioned as Kumari Jyoti & 22.11.1997. While her actual name & date of birth is Jyoti & date of birth 23.11.1997 as per her other documents. Now I want to make it correct in my spouse army service record as Jyoti and date of birth 23.11.1997 vide affidavit 22.02.2024 before Notary Public Fatehabad.

**I, Urja Devi** D/O. Sh. Ram Singh R/O. #284, Phase-2, Ram Darbar, U.T., Chandigarh. I Have Changed My Name From Urja Devi To Urja.

**I, Rajesh Kumar** Chawla S/o Ram Lal Chawla R/o 1723, N.H.B.C Panipat declare that Rajesh Kumar Chawla and Rajesh Chawla both have the same parson name. All Concerned notes.

It Is For General Information That I Dharan Pal S/O Ram Kaur R/O Vpo Amin, Thanesar, Distt. Kurukshetra, Haryana-136118 Declare That Name Of My Wife Has Been Wrongly Written As Paramjit Devi In My Passport No. M3642236. The Actual Name Of My Wife Is Baby Which May Be Amended Accordingly.

**I, Ashok Kumar** Sardana S/o Ram Chander R/O H.No. 628 Salarpur Road, Gobindgarh, Thanesar District Kurukshetra, have changed my name to Ashok Kumar.

**I, Sangeeta** W/o Ashok Kumar S/o Ram Chander R/O H.No. 628 Salarpur Road, Gobindgarh, Thanesar District Kurukshetra, have changed my name to Sangeeta Kapoor.

**I, Anita** W/o Kreshan R/o Village Barsana, Tehsil Pundri, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Anita to Neeta Devi. In future, I will be known by the name of Neeta Devi. All concerned please note.

**I Gopal Singh** S/o Sh. Rashpal R/o Village Machhilli Kalan Khara, SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab declare that in My daughter Priya,s school record her mother name is incorrectly mentioned as Neeraj Rana instead of Neeraj Rani due to spelling mistake. Her mothers correct name is Neeraj Rani.

**I, Kolekar Mahesh** Manohar R/O Vill & Post Khodshi, Teh Karad, Dist Satara, Maharashtra, Pin-415124 have changed my mother's name from Mandakini to Mandakini Manohar Kolekar in my service record vide affidavit No 08AA901357 dated 14 Feb 2024. Dist Court Rampur Bsr (HP).

**I, Satywan** S/O Rishi Ram R/o Thua Tehsil Alewa (Jind), have change my name to Satywan.

**I, Angoori** W/o Satyawan R/O Thua Tehsil Alewa (Jind). Have changed my name to Angury Devi.

**I, Anil Kumar** S/o Kali Ram R/o Bhatia Nagar, Tohana (Fatehabad), have changed my Name. That Anil is my name and Kumar is my Surname.

**I, Nanhu Ram** S/o Prbhu Dayal R/o VPO Kachhwa Distt Karnal , Haryana, have changed my name from Nannu Ram to Nanhu Ram.

**I Kamlesh** W/O Pawan Kumar R/O #3375, 2nd Floor Sector 23D Chandigarh -160023 Have Changed My Name To Kamlesh Teshwar

**I Sunita Rani** W/O Vijay Singh R/O #2401 Sector 24-C, Chandigarh 160023 Have Changed My Name To Sunita

**I Rajni Chandel** W/O Amit Kanwar R/O #179, Tribune Society Kansal Mohali (Punjab) Have Changed My Name To Ranji Kanwar

**I Amit Singh** S/O Satpal Singla R/O 859p Second Floor Sector- 12 Panchkula, Have Changed My Name From Amit Singla To Amit Kumar Singla.

**I Sushil Kumar** S/O Chuni Lal R/O Village Mustafabad, Tehsil Jagadhri Distt Yamuna Nagar Have Changed My Name From Sushil Kumar To Sushil Oberoi.

**I Aarti Devi** W/O Jyot Parkash R/O Village Latipur Po Kshanpur Tehsil Mukerian Distt Hoshiarpur Have Changed The Spelling Of My Name From Aarti Devi To Arti Devi.

**I, Jasvir Singh** Sidhu S/O Rashem Singh R/O Shah Abu Bakkar, (Ferozepur) Have Changed My Name To Jasvir Singh

**I Mani** D/O Nihal Singh R/O Near Patrol Pump Thathi Bhai (Moga) Have Changed My Name To Mani Gill

**I Khushwinder Kaur** Wife Of Dilbag Brar R/O H.No.145 Patti Pujari Near Chota Talra Sii Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name Khushwinder Brar.

**I Preeti** W/O Harmohinder Pal Singh Bedi R/O Flat No.3, Guru Angad Nagar, Gali No.4, Kk Road, Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name To Preeti Bedi

**I Harmohinder** Pal Singh S/O Mangal Singh R/O Flat No.3, Guru Angad Nagar, Gali No.4, Kk Road, Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name To Harmohinder Pal Singh Bedi

**I, Gurwinder Singh,** S/O Rajinder Singh, Resident Of House No. 13 A Vpo. Chhapa, Barnala, Pin: 148104, Punjab, India (Full Address In India), And Presently Residing At 1477 Ravelston Avenue West Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3w On7 (Full Address In Canada) Do Heraby Change My Name From Gurwinder Singh To Gurwinder Singh Deol, With Immediate Effect,

**I Gagandeep Kaur,** Daughter Of Sikander Singh, Resident Of House No. 13 A, Vpo. Chhapa, Barnala, Punjab, India. Pin: 148104 (Full Address In India), And Presently Residing At 1477 Ravelston Avenue West Winnipeg Manitoba Canada R3w On7 (Full Address In Canada) Do Heraby Change My Name From Gagandeep Kaur To Gagandeep Kaur Deol, With Immediate Effect.

**I, Priyanka Mahesh** Kolekar W/O Kolekar Mahesh Manohar presently residing at village - Khodshi, Teh-Karad, Dist-Satara, Maharashtra, Pin-415124. I have changed my name from Priyanka Kolekar to Priyanka Mahesh Kolekar vide affidavit no 08AA 901356 Dated 27 FEB 2024. Dist Court Rampur Bsr (HP)

**I, Kolekar Mahesh** Manohar R/O Vill Khodshi, Teh Karad, Dist Satara, Maharashtra, Pin-415124 have changed my father's name from Manohar to Manohar Jagannath Kolekar in my service record vide affidavit No 08AA901358 dated 14 Feb 2024. Dist Court Rampur Bsr (HP)

**I,** Hitherto Known As Harpreet Singh Johal Son Of Mohinder Singh Residing At H.No.373, Akash Avenue, Fatehgarh Churian Road, Amritsar, Punjab-143001 Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Harpreet Singh

**I,** Hitherto Known As Lakha Singh S/O Balwinder Singh R/O 404/19, (Old), K24/341 (New), Gali Gopal Dass Ahata No.100, Ghas Mandi, Ram Bagh, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Lakhwinder Singh

**I,** Hitherto Known As Kaka Alias Kanish Son Of Kamal Kishore Residing At H.No.149, Ward No.20, Mohalla Islamabad, Tehsil And District Gurdaspur 143521 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Kanish

**I,** Hitherto Known As Dalbir Kaur Wife Of Satnam Singh Residing At Vpo Cheema Kalan Tehsil Tarn Taran District Tarn Taran Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Daljit Kaur

**I,** Hitherto Known As Sita Tuteja Daughter Of Prem Chand Tuteja Wife Of Krishan Bajaj Residing At H.No.429, Medical Enclave, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Shri Radha

**I, Amarjit Kaur** W/O Gurmukh Singh R/O H.No.1949, Street No.4, Indra Puri Tajpur Road, Ludhiana Have Changed My Name From Amarjit Kaur To Amarjit

**I, Parkash Kaur** Alias Pinky W/O Kuldeep Singh R/O H.No.609/27-C, Street No.5, Sham Nagar Ludhiana Have Changed My Name From Parkash Kaur Alias Pinky To Parkash Kaur

**I, Kavita** W/O Rakesh Kumar R/O H.No.34/281/20a, Street No.3, Azad Gas Agency 22ft Road, Naseeb Enclave, Halibawal Ludhiana Have Changed My Name Minor Daughter's Name From Himanshi To Himanshi Garg

**I Vipandeep Kaur** Tiwana D/O Paramjit Singh Mann Ex W/O Harmander Singh Tiwana R/O Village Sheikhpur Kalan, Post Office Jaitnipur, Batala Ditrict Gurdaspur I Got Divorced From My Husband Vide Court Decree No. Hma No37/04 Dated 16-11-2022 Further Remarried With Yatanpal Singh On 17-01-2024 Have Changed My Name To Vipandeep Kaur.

CONTINUITY PG NO. 11

## PUBLICNOTICE

I Mohit Jindal Partner of M/s AM Agrovet hereby give notice that M/s AM Agrovet, Khanna Kalan, Tehsil Khanna, Dist. Ludhiana is the absolute owner of the property i.e land measuring 7K of Village Bulepur, Tehsil Khanna Distt. Ludhiana has applied for taking loan from the Bank. The previous Original sale deed bearing Wasika No. 1165 dt. 23.06.2000 in favour of Shashi Grover and Kamlesh Kumar and original sale deed bearing wasika No.2064 dt.26-07-2005 in favour of Atam Manohar Industries forming the part of chain of the title documents have been misplaced and same is not traceable. We have lodged Lost information report vide LR No.0439297/2024 dt.26-02-2024 and LR No.0439292/2024 dt.26-02-2024 with Punjab community Policing Wing, FSOIC City Khanna. I, Mohit Jindal Partner of AM Agrovet, intend to mortgage the above said property in the loan account of M/s SK Minerals and Additives Pvt Ltd with Union Bank of India, UMFB, Cheema Chowk Branch, Ludhiana. If anybody, bank or financial institution etc. has any objection qua the mortgage of said property and supplementary title deed bearing wasika no. 2064 dt.26-07-2005 and 1165 dt.23-06-2000 shall inform me at AM Agrovet Near Khalsa Petrol pump, Satkarta Building Khanna-141401, Ludhiana, Punjab in writing with acknowledgement within 15 days from the date of publication and thereafter no claim of any kind whatsoever shall be entertained.

## PublicNotice

Through this public notice, the general public is informed that the applicant M. Balwinder Singh, son of Mr. Gurbaksh Singh, resident of M. O. An application has been received in this office for issuing the report of the legal heir of Late Gurbaksh Singh, son of Shri Sant Singh, resident of 12051 Bhari Lal Building Railway Road, Ambala Cantt. According to the application form of the applicant and the attached affidavit and report of the Councillor/Numberdar/Patwari, the following are the legal heirs of the deceased Late Gurbaksh Singh, son of Shri Sant Singh:-  
1. Balwinder (son)  
2. Satinder Singh (son)  
3. Jaswinder Singh (Grandson)  
4. Harjeet Singh (Grandson)  
If any person has any objection regarding this then he can lodge the objection in the office of Tehsildar Ambala Cantonment within 15 days of the publication. If the information given by the applicant is found incorrect at any time, then the applicant will be liable to punishment under Section 177 of the Indian Penal Code and other related laws.

**कायावत नगर निगम सोनीपत**  
नगर निगम सोनीपत को सौचित्यक शाखा के लिस्टेड असुरफ प्रॉपर्टी आइ डी नं 10024207 जो कि फिज कलैनी, सोनीपत नई नगर-1 में स्थित है। सौचित्यक को असुरफ सौचित्यक लिस्ट में बदलकर कायावत लिस्ट में डालने के लिए सौचित्यक शाखा का नाम दर्द न होना/नाम बदल दर्द होना/मुद्रा दिर्लक 04.11.2012 उपरान्त आदेशक द्वारा प्रस्तुत की गई प्रॉपर्टी आइ.डी. नं नाम लखवीर व नाम दर्द को कायावतकलैनी दुस्ती के लिए सौचित्य 6453 दिर्लक 12.03.1999 असुरफ प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं। निम्नके असुरफ लिस्ट निचो की व्यक्तिको जो इस कायावत में सम्मिलित की गई अपरिणो हो तो शास्त्री प्रदा देनिक राष्ट्रीय समाचार पत्र में विवरण देने को तथिक के 30 दिन के अंदर अंदर स्थितिक नगर नं नगर निगम के सौचित्यक शाखा में अपरिण दर्द कायावत अनसुरफ सौचित्य कर शासन में प्रस्तुत किए गए दस्तावेजों के असुरफ नमान दर्द,सुनिर्त,नगर,पिंकी, प्रीति कुशपुत्री/पत्नी सुदर्श नगर नं दर्द कर किया जाएगा। निम्नके लिस्ट नगर निगम कायावत विनियमन नही होगा।

**क्षेत्रीय कायावत अधिकारी**  
**नगर निगम,सोनीपत**

## Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Punjab National Bank B.O, SUS Nagar, Jalandhar intends to create equitable mortgage of property measuring 22 marlas situated at Cantt road, Near Defence Colony, Jalandhar as House No. 25 in the name of Sh. Suman Puri S/o Sh. J.K. Puri Alias Jatinder Kumar Puri and Sale Deed No. 7556 dated 12.09.1996 having Khassra No. 19136513 to 5621, 19137 /5618 to 5621, 18108/5620 to 5625, 5627, 5628, 2948/5625 is lost and DDR with Police has been Lodged. Any Person having interest or objection can make representation to the Bank within 7 days of such notice.

## Name Change

**I, Army No. 30006209N LNK/CLK** **Rajesh Kumar Tiwari P/o Unit- 137 CETF BN (TA) 39 GR, have changed my father name from Bam Dev Tiwari to Bam Dev Tiwari & my son's name from Naman Kumar Tiwari to Naman Tiwari in my Army Service Record vide affidavit dt. 29.02.2024 before Distt. Session Court, Hisra. Deponent**

## COURTNOTICEP

**(UgriRule) hRPC)**  
IN THE COURT OF MsRinkyt AgnihotriCivilRudgeRJuniorDivision)HoshiarpurP

Bhupinder Kumar son of Ram Parkash through attorney Vishay Bandhu & Anr

...DecreeHolder(s)

**Vsf**  
A.K. Visa Consultant, 31 Mohan Singh Place Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001 Near VFS Delhi & Anr.

...JudgmentDebtor(s)  
CNR No.:PBHOjh dhi hnpg hj k Next Date:- i kshkq hj i P

**Execution**  
**PUBLICATIONRSEDUEP**  
1 A.K. Visa Consultant, 31 Mohan Singh Place Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001 Near VFS Delhi.

2 Aradhana Sharma Director/Proprietor of A.K. Visa Consultant, Mohan Singh Place Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001 Near VFS Delhi at present Near Singh Sabha Gurdwara Sahib, Railway Road, Hoshiarpur.

In above titled Case, the defendant (s)/ respondent (s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant (s) /respondent (s) should appear in person or through counsel on i kshkq hj i Rtf i hshhmfP

For details logon to <https://ghighcourtchhofgovfngtrns=districtnoticeP WP district=F Hoshiarpur>



# Himachal CM Sukhu says ‘will run govt for 5 years’; Crisis deepens after cross voting in RS Polls

## POLITICAL CRISIS IN HIMACHAL

PNS ■ SHIMLA

In the backdrop of a political crisis in Himachal Pradesh after the defeat of the Congress candidate in the Rajya Sabha elections, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday asserted that they will run the government for five years.

"Neither the high command has asked me nor anyone else for resignation and there is no such thing," Sukhu said. In a stunning upset for the ruling Congress in Himachal Pradesh, the BJP on Tuesday won the state's lone Rajya Sabha seat with its candidate Harsh Mahajan defeating Congress stalwart Abhishek Manu Singhvi and apparently setting the stage for a no-trust motion in the assembly.

"But I want to say one thing that the people of Himachal are with us and MLAs are with us and I can definitely say that we will run the Himachal government for five years," said Sukhu.

Asked whether it was because of the "Operation Lotus" or "own people" that led to the current situation, the chief minister said, "Some mistakes may have been made and because of those mistakes, there may have been some deficiencies." But he also said, "The kind of 'tantar-lantar' used in the Operation Lotus that had bigger (role) in it." The voting on Tuesday was a tie with both the Congress and the BJP candidates getting 34 votes, indicating that at least six Congress MLAs voted against the party.

The result was then declared on the basis of a draw of lots.

Meanwhile, as the Congress government faces a threat, the party high command said it was weighing all options and would not hesitate in taking "tough decisions" to ensure that the people's mandate given to it is

respected.

Six Congress MLAs voted in favour of the BJP candidate in the Rajya Sabha polls in Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday, with sources claiming they are "disappointed" with the working style of Chief Minister Sukhu.

The party has dispatched three senior observers -- Bhupesh Baghel, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and D K Shivakumar -- to Shimla. AICC in-charge of state Rajeev Shukla is also in the hill state.

Congress president Kharge has asked observers and Shukla to speak with all MLAs, including those disgruntled, hear their point of view, and submit a comprehensive report to him soon. The future course of action will be decided after that.

The BJP was trying to come to power in Himachal Pradesh through the "backdoor", AICC General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said in Delhi, adding that the BJP did so in Goa, Madhya Pradesh and the latest attempt is in Himachal Pradesh. He also said that accountability will be fixed for cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha poll in the state, which the Congress nominee Abhishek Singhvi lost.

Our priority is to save the Congress government, he said, adding that all options are open and the mandate that the Congress got has to be respected. The Congress leader said the report that will be submitted to Kharge will have two parts -- why did cross-voting happen and the other is what steps are needed to save people's mandate in the state. The BJP cannot take away the mandate of the people of Himachal Pradesh through its 'Operation Lotus' and the Congress will take all steps necessary to protect it, Ramesh said.

"The Congress will not hesitate in taking tough decisions as the party is our priority and we will not let people's mandate be betrayed in Himachal Pradesh," Ramesh told reporters.

The Congress rebels are seeking to install a person of

their choice as the new chief minister of the state.

**Minister Vikramaditya Singh resigns from Sukhu cabinet, Speaker suspends 15 BJP MLAs; Budget passed**

In a day of dramatic developments, high-profile minister Vikramaditya Singh, the son of former chief minister Virbhadra Singh, resigned as a Minister from the Sukhu Cabinet. His mother Pratibha Singh is the state Congress President and was a candidate for chief ministership when the Congress won the elections in December 2022.

The crisis was triggered by Tuesday's cross-voting by six Congress MLAs in the Rajya Sabha election for the lone seat from Himachal Pradesh. Singh, who sent his resignation to the Governor as well as the chief minister said, "There have been attempts to humiliate and undermine me from some quarters and in spite of reservations, I supported the government."

The family has in the past thrown hints that Virbhadra Singh's legacy has not been honoured by the party. Pratibha Singh has also expressed disgruntlement with the manner in which Sukhu has run the state. Vikramaditya Singh said the 2022 Congress campaign was run in his father's name. "There was no poster, or hoarding or banner which did not carry his picture," he said.

But after the victory when the matter of putting up his state came up, the government failed to decide the location. "It is not a political but an emotional thing for a son," he said.

"The Congress party had made promises to the people and we owe the responsibility to fulfil those promises and I would decide my future course of action after consulting my supporters," he added.

Meanwhile, in the ongoing Budget session of the Assembly, the Speaker suspended 15 BJP MLAs. The suspended BJP MLAs, which included the

leader of the opposition Jai Ram Thakur, stayed put in the House for a long time -- in an apparent bid to stop the House from passing Sukhu government's Budget through voice vote.

The BJP wanted voting on the Budget, which they felt would reveal that the Congress has lost its majority in the state assembly.

But in the afternoon, the crisis was staved off as the Finance Bill was passed by voice vote with no Bharatiya Janata Party member being present. Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania then adjourned the House sine die.

In the assembly, there was chaos when the House met in the morning with passing the Budget on its list of business for the day. Speaker Pathania suspended 15 BJP MLAs. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan moved the motion, seeking their suspension for allegedly disrespecting the Speaker. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

The BJP members, however, refused to leave. The Speaker then adjourned the House till 12 pm.

Apart from Thakur, the suspended MLAs are Vipin Parmar, Vinod Kumar, Hans Raj, Janak Raj, Balbir Verma, Trilok Jamwal, Deep Raj, Surinder Shouri, Puran Thakur, Inder Singh Gandhi, Dilip Thakur, Randhir Sharma, Lokender Kumar and Ranvir Singh.

Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur told reporters that the Rajya Sabha election had made it clear that the Congress government was in a minority and demanded the resignation of CM Sukhu.

A group of six Congress and three independent MLAs, who had spent Tuesday night at a guesthouse at Panchkula in BJP-run Haryana after voting against the Congress candidate, too were back in the House. They were flown back in a helicopter. As these MLAs entered the House, BJP mem-

bers greeted them by thumping their desks. They also raised the slogan, "Jai Shri Ram, Ban Gaya Kaam". On Tuesday, Sukhu had claimed that the MLAs had been "abducted" by the Haryana Police and the CRPF.

**Speaker reserves order on Congress petition to disqualify 6 rebel MLAs**

Himachal Pradesh Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania on Wednesday reserved his order on a Congress petition seeking disqualification of six party MLAs who cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election. The six MLAs also face the possibility of disqualification on another count.

Speaking in the assembly, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said a whip was issued to the party MLAs to be present in the House during voting on Wednesday on the budget. But these MLAs defied it by staying away, he added. The minister asked the Speaker to take note of it. The Speaker said the matter is in his knowledge and he will take cognisance of it.

The MLAs had cross-voted for BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan during the Rajya Sabha elections on Tuesday, leading to the defeat of their party candidate Abhishek Manu Singhvi. The Congress has accused the six MLAs of defying the earlier whip on the Rajya Sabha polls.

Senior advocate Satya Pal Jain, who represented the six MLAs before the Speaker on Wednesday, has asserted that a party whip does not apply in the case of Rajya Sabha polls. Jain also argued that the MLAs were only given the notice and the copy of the Congress' petition while other annexures were not supplied to them. He said according to rules, seven days' time has to be given to the MLAs for filing the reply. He said there are five or six conditions under the anti-defection law, including seven days' time for reply, which have to be complied with.

## STF under Anti-Corruption Bureau to be formed to investigate irregularities in cooperative societies: Hry CM

**BUDGET SESSION: HARYANA ASSEMBLY**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH



On the last day of the Budget Session of the Vidhan Sabha, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday announced that a Special Task Force under the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) would be formed to investigate irregularities in cooperative societies established in all districts. The Task Force will investigate irregularities in Cooperative Societies starting from 1992 to till date. Strict action will be taken against whoever is found guilty in the investigation, he assured the house, he added.

Khattar said that so far, Rs. 328 crore has been allocated to these societies, out of which Rs 259 crore has been utilized, and the remaining amount is lying in banks. The present state government had conducted audits of these societies, and upon discovering discrepancies, the government has taken suo motto and the matter was handed over to the Anti-Corruption Bureau for investigation. ACB has filed 9 FIRs in this case, and irregularities amounting to Rs. 8.80 crore have been found in the investigation of societies in 4 districts. Action has been taken against the involved officials.

Divulging further details, the Chief Minister informed that properties of various officers and employees have also been attached for the recovery of funds.

He said that house and flat located in Mohali, 29 kanals 5 marlas of land, and bank account of Anu Kaushish one of the accused has been attached. Furthermore, the properties and bank accounts of other accused namely Ram Kumar, Yogendra Agrawal, Sumit Agrawal, and Nitin Sharma has also been attached. The list includes, a residential plot belonging to Ramkumar in Kurukshetra, a flat belonging to Yogendra Agrawal in Mohali and a flat located in Zirakpur belonging to Nitin Sharma. The bank account of Sumit Agrawal's wife has also been attached. He said that officers who have been suspended in such cases recently will also be dismissed if found guilty in the investigation.

Moreover, Khattar announced that Transmission Companies who have installed the poles on the roads will now have to pay the expenses occurring during the removal of these poles during the reconstruction, strengthening and widening of roads.

Making another announcement, he said that the government had made a provision in the excise policy that from March 1, distilleries will supply liquor in glass bottles instead of plastic bottles. But now the government has made this mandatory provision optional till the policy period, so that the distilleries do not face any difficulty.

The Chief Minister said that the Central Government has appreciated the property ID initiative being implemented by the Urban Local Bodies Department and to take this system forward, the Central Government has given a grant of Rs 150 crore. Khattar expressed gratitude to the Vidhan Sabha Speaker, Deputy Speaker, officers and employees for the smooth conduct of the session.

**Haryana Registration and Regulation of Travel Agents Bill among 9 Bills passed**

The Haryana Assembly passed nine bills. These include the Haryana Registration and

Regulation of Travel Agents Bill, 2024, The Haryana Metropolitan Development Authority Bill, 2024, The Haryana Registration and Regulation of Private Coaching Institutes Bill, 2024, The Haryana Backward Classes (Reservation in Services and Admission in Educational Institutions) Amendment Bill, 2024, the Haryana Honourable Disposal of Dead Body Bill, 2024, The Haryana State Sports Associations (Registration and Regulation) Bill, 2024, The Haryana Consolidation of Project Land (Special Provisions) Amendment Bill, 2024, said an official spokesperson.

He said that to establish a framework to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity of travel agents, and to investigate and regulate their illegal and fraudulent activities to protect the interests of the residents of the State, the Government has passed Haryana Registration and Regulation of Travel Agents Bill, 2024. Moreover, to safeguard student interests, reduce stress, and provide better academic support, the Haryana Registration and Regulation of Private Coaching Institutes Bill, 2024 has been passed. Any institute in Haryana providing coaching for competitive examinations must now furnish complete details of fees, student numbers, academic credentials of teachers, institute facilities and engage at least one full-time counselor to address student mental health and stress issues. These institutes are required to register with district-level committees to operate, with a three-month grace period for existing institutes to comply, the spokesperson added.

**Nursing Colleges will be established in every Medical College in future, says Anil Vij**

Haryana Health, Medical Education and Research Minister Anil Vij on Wednesday said that Nursing Colleges will be built in all the medical colleges by the state government in future.

**Oppn walks out of House against signing of a MoU between Hry and Rajasthan Govts over sharing of excess rainwater of Yamuna river during monsoon**

Heated arguments broke out between the opposition and treasury benches over the issue of signing of a MoU between Haryana and Rajasthan over sharing of excess rainwater of the Yamuna river during the budget session.

During zero hour, the former speaker and senior Congress MLA Ragubir Singh Kadian registered a strong protest over this. "This is the same Rajasthan which had blocked the flow of water meant for Haryana by constructing a dam. And, here the state Government under pressure is signing a MoU to supply Yamuna water to Rajasthan. We have no objection in case water is taken to parched southern districts of Haryana. The government should review its decision," he added. Other Congress leaders including Kiran Choudhry supported Kadian.

Later Congress leaders raised slogans and stormed into the Well of the House. Later, Congress leaders staged a walk-

out from the House to express displeasure over this issue. Talking to media persons, Kiran Choudhry said that famers of the State will protest across the State if the Government does not withdraw this agreement.

**Internet suspension to continue till March 1 in Punjab's 2 districts**

Govt kept running away from Oppn's questions and its responsibilities in Budget session, alleges Hooda

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Wednesday accused BJP-JJP government of running away from the Opposition's questions and its responsibilities, during the budget session of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha. "The government was neither able to give any suitable answer on MSP of farmers, compensation for damages, old pension of employees, employment of youth, safety of citizens, relief from inflation, nor was it able to present a budget which could raise any hope," he stated and added that the government did not extend the duration of the budget session despite repeated demands. He further alleged that the government has proved to be a complete failure in curbing crime, miscreants and gangsters. Incidents like murder, robbery, dacoity, ransom, kidnapping and rape have become common in Haryana. Instead of seriously discussing this, the government was busy shifting blame inside the House," he said.

**Nursing Colleges will be established in every Medical College in future, says Anil Vij**

Haryana Health, Medical Education and Research Minister Anil Vij on Wednesday said that Nursing Colleges will be built in all the medical colleges by the state government in future. Instruction regarding the same has been given, he added. Responding to a question raised during the budget session, Vij said that there is a great demand for nurses in the country and abroad, highlighting a crucial gap in producing high-quality nursing professionals. In this regard, approval has been granted to establish 6 nursing colleges in government hospitals.

**11 expressways and 35 national highways passing through Haryana: Dy CM**

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala said that Haryana has the best road connectivity in the country, with 11 expressways and 35 national highways passing through the state. Responding to a question during the budget session, Chautala said that although the population of Haryana is only 2 percent, the state government is striving to improve the road network in the state. At present, there are about a dozen expressways and three dozen national highways in the state, but efforts are underway to increase their number further.

# Punjab Cong organizes tractor rallies in support of farmers

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) on Wednesday held tractor rallies known as the 'Kisaani Bachao March' in support of the ongoing farmers' protest at the borders of Haryana.

The 'Kisaani Bachao March' was organized, with all party workers, office bearers, and citizens of the State becoming a part of the statewide movement to show solidarity with the farmers protesting for their rights at the borders of Haryana.

The collective strength of the state of Punjab was evident

with a huge number of people coming forward to peacefully demonstrate their unwavering support to the farming community of the state, said a party spokesperson.

"I extend my gratitude to all those who have united today to advocate for the farmers of Punjab. Agriculture and the farming community constitute the bedrock of Punjab's economy, necessitating our unequivocal support for our farmers," said PPCC chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring addressing the attendees of the tractor march in Jandiala.

He said: "It is disconcerting that despite Punjab's historical allegiance to the nation, the

Central Government persists in actions contrary to the interests of the State and its populace, particularly the farming community."

Warring emphasized that the impediment of Punjab farmers' passage to the capital, where they merely seek to assert their rights, is "untenable".

"Punjab sustains the nation, yet the policies of the BJP-led Central Government threaten our very livelihoods. Hence, it is imperative that we persist in our peaceful demonstrations, ensuring our solidarity with Punjab's farmers while upholding law and order," he added.

## Internet suspension to continue till March 1 in Punjab's 2 districts

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has extended the suspension of internet services in certain areas of Punjab's Patiala and Sangrur districts until March 1, 2024, amid the ongoing farmers' protest.

The affected areas include those under the jurisdiction of police stations Shambhu, Patran, and Shutrana in Patiala district, as well as Khanauri in Sangrur district. The decision comes as the Government continues to grapple with the farmers' agitation.

This is not the first time that internet services have been suspended in the region. Previously, on February 11, the MHA had

initiated a suspension of internet services in several police station areas bordering Haryana, citing intelligence reports regarding the farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' program. The suspension lasted until February 16, 2024.

Subsequently, on February 12, 2024, revised orders were issued, expanding the scope of the internet suspension to additional police station areas in Punjab, including parts of Sangrur and Fatehgarh Sahib districts.

Despite the expiration of the initial order on February 16, 2024, the MHA extended the suspension of internet services in 20 police stations across seven districts of Punjab bordering Haryana until February 24, 2024.

# CM bolsters Punjab Police with 410 new hi-tech vehicles

PNS ■ PHILLLAUR (JALANDHAR)

In a move aimed at modernizing Punjab's law enforcement apparatus, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday unveiled sweeping upgrades to the state's police force, emphasizing efficiency, responsiveness, and effectiveness.

Mann, speaking at a ceremonial event before flagging off 410 new hi-tech vehicles designated for Station House Officers (SHOs), underscored the critical importance of equipping frontline officers with modern resources to enhance their operational capabilities and better serve the community.

He emphasized that for the first time, new vehicles are being allocated directly to SHOs, signifying a departure from previous practices where priority was often given to high-ranking officers. By prioritizing resources for those at the grassroots level, the Chief Minister aimed at empowering the SHOs, who serve as the primary interface between law enforcement agencies and the public. By providing them with cutting-edge tools and equipment, Mann hoped to bolster their effectiveness in maintaining law and order and addressing community concerns promptly.

Acknowledging the pressing need for enhanced road safety measures, Mann announced the establishment



of the 'Sadak Surakhya Force' — a specialized unit tasked with reducing fatalities from road accidents and streamlining traffic management across Punjab. Equipped with state-of-the-art gadgets and comprehensive medical kits, vehicles deployed by this force at regular intervals along Punjab's thoroughfares aim to provide immediate assistance to accident victims and ensure smoother traffic flow.

The Chief Minister expressed satisfaction at the early success of the Sadak Surakhya Force, citing a noticeable reduction in the daily death toll from road accidents within a fortnight of its inception. He lauded the proactive efforts of this specialized unit in mitigating road accidents and enhancing the overall efficiency of district police forces. Mann reaffirmed the Government's commitment to further strengthening the Sadak Surakhya Force and

expanding its reach to cover more areas across the state.

Recognizing the unique security challenges posed by Punjab's border location, Mann reiterated the government's resolve to modernize the police force by incorporating advanced embracing technologies and technological innovations. He emphasized the importance of equipping law enforcement agencies with the requisite tools and training to effectively combat emerging threats and maintain peace and stability in the region. Mann pledged to uphold the rich legacy of Punjab Police's unwavering commitment to serving the nation and protecting its citizens.

In line with the government's steadfast commitment to promoting women's safety and empowerment, Mann highlighted the establishment of eight exclusive police stations dedicated to addressing

women's security concerns. He also noted the appointment of female officers to senior positions across various districts, underscoring the government's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity in law enforcement. Mann reaffirmed the government's determination to create a safe and supportive environment for women and girls in Punjab.

Turning to other key initiatives, Mann emphasized the government's focus on job creation, youth empowerment, and drug eradication. He announced plans to recruit additional police personnel over the next four years, aiming to address staffing shortages and enhance law enforcement capabilities. Mann stressed the importance of providing meaningful employment opportunities to youth as a crucial strategy for combating drug abuse and promoting social cohesion.

As a gesture of appreciation for the sacrifices made by police personnel and their families, Mann presided over a Guldasta function, where financial assistance was provided to the families of fallen officers. He underscored the government's unwavering support for police personnel and their families, acknowledging their invaluable contributions to maintaining law and order in the state. Mann reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the welfare and well-being of police personnel and their families in Punjab.

**410 Hi-Tech Vehicles to**

**Enhance Police's Efficiency**

Punjab Chief Minister on Wednesday flagged off 410 new vehicles to upscale the efficiency of the Punjab Police to maintain law and order. Out of these, 274 are Mahindra Scorpios, 41 Isuzu Highlanders apart from 71 KIA Carens vehicles are being issued for PCR and dial 112, and TATA Tiago EV (electric vehicles) are being issued for the safety of women.

With the arrival of these vehicles, the promptness and mobility of the police stations will increase, and the response time of the police will be improved. It has happened for the first time in the history of the Punjab Police that Rs 150 crore rupees have been spent on the purchase of vehicles in a single financial year.

Under the same series, 1195 vehicles that have completed their 15 years of life are being scraped, and new vehicles are being purchased in place of these condemned vehicles. In the first phase, 508 vehicles are being purchased at a cost of Rs 94.15 crore. In the second phase, 851 vehicles will be purchased in FY 2024–25 at a cost of Rs 75.42 crore.

Punjab Government has issued Rs 40 crore to the Punjab Police to strengthen the security of the border areas, of which Rs 10 crore has been given for the renovation of police stations and Rs 10 crore for the purchase of modern vehicles.

## BRIEFS

### KULDEEP KUMAR ASSUMES CHARGE AS CHANDIGARH MAYOR

**Chandigarh:** Kuldeep Kumar on Wednesday assumed charge as Chandigarh mayor at the Municipal Corporation office. The AAP leader was welcomed with beats of dhool. All senior AAP and Congress leaders including former Union Minister Pawan Bansal were present. Meanwhile, councillors Gurpreet Singh Gabi and Nirmala Devi filed nominations for the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor, respectively. A few days ago, Kuldeep Kumar was to take oath as the mayor, but the event was postponed as he had been unavailable citing "personal reasons". The Supreme Court had declared Kuldeep Kumar the winner after watching the videos of the mayoral polls that had led to a controversy after the BJP candidate had been elected mayor as the presiding officer had been accused of malpractice. The mayor will be the presiding officer for the election to the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor to be held on March 4.

### HRY CM APPROVES IMPROVEMENT OF 10 ODR ROADS IN ASSANDH, KARNAL, WORTH RS 25 CRORE

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday granted administrative sanction for the special repair and improvement of 10 ODR roads in Assandh, Karnal District. This project will cost over Rs. 25 crore. The roads serving rural areas of production and providing them with outlet to market centres, tehsil headquarters, block development headquarters, railway stations etc. are known as Other District Roads (ODRs), said the government official spokesperson.

### HARYANA CM MEDIA ADVISOR RAJIV JAITLEY ESCAPES UNHURT IN ROAD ACCIDENT; VEHICLE DAMAGED

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Chief Minister media advisor Rajiv Jaitley's car met with an accident on the Chandigarh-Yamunanagar road on Wednesday. The government vehicle in which he was commuting was damaged. Members of the BJP said the media advisor escaped any injury. He was on his way to Delhi when the accident took place and resumed the journey soon after.



# Videograph LS voting process, BJP urges EC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday urged the Election Commission to videograph the voting process at all polling stations during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and set up booths in complexes housing high-rise buildings.

In a memorandum, the BJP also urged the poll panel to consider reforming the

approval process for political parties' media content to make it faster, allowing them adequate time to plan their campaign.

It also requested the Election Commission to ensure there is no ambiguity in the rule pertaining to putting flags and making wall paintings by party workers at their homes during polls. "There should be clarity on this," they demanded.

A BJP delegation comprising

Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and party national general secretary Arun Singh met the poll panel with the demands.

"The BJP keeps making efforts to see how the entire poll process could be made more and more transparent and the voters' involvement in the elections be further increased.

Our delegation made some requests to the EC (in this regard)," Vaishnaw told



reporters after the meeting at the Election Commission.

He said the BJP delegation urged the poll panel to set up booths at high-rise apartment complexes in urban areas as much as possible so that maximum eligible voters at such residential buildings could exercise their franchise.

"Our second request was that video recordings be done at 100 per cent polling booths (during the elections)," Vaishnaw said.

At present, videography is done at 50 per cent polling booths only, he said, adding that 100 percent coverage of the polling booths will ensure proper documentation of everything happening there and it will increase people's faith in the country's vibrant democracy.

Over 12 lakh polling stations will be set up across the country for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, according to the Election Commission.

Vaishnaw said the BJP delegation also made some request with regards to operational issues.

"We requested for beginning reforms in the process of granting approval to the media content of political parties.

The approval process should be made faster so that every political party gets enough time to present their views and mould their campaign," he told reporters.

## BJP led NDA likely to get RS majority in April

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is likely to get a majority in the Rajya Sabha in April this year once the remaining six vacancies under the nominated category are filled and those newly elected take oath.

According to data available with the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, the BJP, which currently has 94 members, gained two seats in the Upper House in the just concluded elections, pushing its own strength to 96.

The strength of NDA, which at present has 113 members, will cross the half-way mark of 123 in the 245-member House in April this year once all nominated members take oath.

At present, there are only six MPs who have been nominated by the President of India as members in the Rajya



Sabha, with some having joined the BJP later. There are a total of 12 nominated members in the House.

The data shows that with the support of some independents and nominated members, the NDA which did not have a majority in the Upper House so far will finally achieve the magic figure this April, helping it get crucial legislations passed in the Council of States.

Elections were held on 56 Rajya Sabha seats in 15 states,

in which the BJP won 30 seats, the Congress nine, SP 2, TMC 4, YSRCP 3, RJD 2, BJD 2, and NCP, Shiv Sena, BRS, and JD(U) one seat each.

With the Congress strength going down to 30 seats, the joint Opposition has less than 100 MPs in the Upper House.

Having a majority in the Upper House is very crucial for the ruling dispensation as several key legislations have been stuck in the past due to lack of strength.

## Nationwide free genetic testing announced

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

In a groundbreaking move to tackle rare diseases, India's ICMR-National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (ICMR-NIR-RCH) on Wednesday announced free genetic testing and counselling services nationwide.

The new Genetic Research Centre (GRC) will assess clinically abnormal cases of rare paediatric diseases as well as track origins of undiagnosed genetic disorders. It also aims to facilitate timely therapeutic interventions and provide critical support for both patients and their families.

Rare diseases are typically chronic and progressive medical conditions that pose life-threatening risks to those affected. Out of the 350 million patients suffering from rare disease globally, India alone is home to approximately 72-96 million patients, according to the data Ministry of Health and



Family Welfare (MoHFW).

In India's urban areas, congenital malformations and genetic disorders are the third most common cause of mortality in newborns. With a very large population and high birth rate, and consanguineous marriage favored in many communities, the prevalence of genetic disorders is high in India.

The Department of Biotechnology had launched in 2019, the UMMID initiative with an aim to establish NIDAN Kendras to provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, man-

agement, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more, to produce skilled clinicians in human genetics, and to undertake screening of pregnant women and newborn babies for inherited genetic diseases in hospitals at aspirational districts.

Under the ICMR project, NIR-RCH centre with approval under the PCPNDT Act based in Maharashtra, plans nationwide services.

Dr. Geetanjali Sachdeva, Director, highlights the trans-

formative impact on vulnerable sections of society. Dr. Shailesh Pande, Head of GRC, stresses raising awareness and enhancing testing accessibility to alleviate the societal burden of rare diseases, aligning with the national goal of universal healthcare access.

While the GRC is currently offering its services in Maharashtra, people with rare diseases from other parts of the country can avail the services, ICMR-NIRRCH said.

"Strengthening access to genetic testing and counselling for rare diseases will pave the way for their early diagnosis and timely intervention, helping improve the health and well-being of some of the most vulnerable sections of society. This is a revolutionary step that can transform several lives, especially young lives in the country," said Dr. Geetanjali Sachdeva, Director, ICMR-NIRRCH, in a statement.

With no approved treatment for 95 per cent of rare diseases, the diagnosis of rare diseases is

challenging. While early genetic testing is key, diagnosis is conducted through a distinctive blend of clinical and laboratory methods, including cytogenetic, biochemical, and molecular approaches.

At present, the centre is providing its services to around 570 families yearly, covering genetic conditions during infancy, childhood, and adolescence, as well as for reproductive difficulties faced by couples.

"Our centre is working to address a critical public health concern. By reaching out to special schools, hospitals and the public, we are striving to raise awareness around rare diseases and enhance uptake of essential testing and counselling. In doing so, we aim to mitigate the societal burden of these diseases and realise the national goal of a healthy society, with universal access to healthcare services," said Dr. Shailesh Pande, Medical Geneticist and Head GRC, in the statement.

## Law panel may propose simultaneous polls in 2029

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Law Commission is likely to recommend adding a new chapter to the Constitution on 'one nation, one election' and holding the gigantic democratic exercise of simultaneous polls for Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and local bodies across the country by mid-2029, sources said on Wednesday.

The Commission, under Justice (ret'd) Ritu Raj Awasthi, would recommend an amendment to the Constitution to add the "new chapter or part" on simultaneous elections, the sources said.

The panel would also recommend synchronising the terms of legislative assemblies in "three phases" in the next five years so that the first simultaneous polls could be held in May-June 2029 when elections for the 19th Lok



Sabha are due.

The new chapter in the Constitution would include issues related to "simultaneous election," "sustainability of simultaneous elections" and "common electoral roll" for Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, panchayats and municipalities so that the three-tier simultaneous polls could be held together "in one go," they explained. The new

chapter being recommended will have power of non-extant" to override other provisions in the Constitution dealing with terms of assemblies.

The five-year period in which the terms of assemblies will be synchronised will be spread over three phases. The Commission would recommend that the first phase may deal with state assemblies

whose period will have to be curtailed by a few months -- three or six months.

In case a government falls due to no confidence or if there is a hung House, the Commission would recommend constitution of a "unity government" with representatives from various political parties.

In case the unity government formula does not work, the law panel would recommend holding fresh elections for the remainder of the term of the House.

"Suppose fresh elections are called for and the government still has three years, then polls should be for the remainder of the term -- three years -- to ensure sustainability," a source explained.

Besides the Law Commission, a high-level committee under former president Ram Nath Kovind is also working on a report on how simultaneous polls to

the Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, municipalities and panchayats can be held by tweaking the Constitution and the existing legal framework.

Along with the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, expected in April-May this year, elections for at least five assemblies are likely to take place, while state polls for Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand are expected later this year.

Bihar and Delhi are scheduled for assembly polls next year, while Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala are scheduled for 2026, and Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Manipur in 2027. As many as nine states may have assembly polls scheduled for 2028 -- Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Karnataka, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

## India, Germany to cooperate on high technology for military use

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

India and Germany have resolved to closely collaborate on high-technology for military use in line with a broader aim to develop defence cooperation as a key pillar of the bilateral strategic partnership.

Besides this issue, ways to further bolster strategic cooperation figured prominently at a meeting of the India-Germany high defence committee that was held in Berlin on Tuesday, defence ministry said here on Wednesday.

Giving details, officials said both the countries are set to carry out joint military exercises in the Indo-Pacific, in reflection of their growing defence ties.

The Indian delegation at the talks was headed by Defence



Secretary Giridhar Aramane while the German side was led by State Secretary at German defence ministry Benedikt Zimmer.

"Both sides discussed a range of bilateral security and defence issues, with a focus on developing defence cooperation as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between India and Germany," the defence ministry said.

"They exchanged views on the

regional security situation, discussed likely joint exercises with Germany in the Indo-Pacific, and deliberated on potential defence industrial projects and proposals.

It said both sides emphasised on the need for a closer defence partnership and connecting the defence industries from both sides together.

"Of particular focus was the collaboration in high technology in defence," the ministry said in a statement. The high defence committee meeting follows the visit of German Federal Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius to India last year.

Aramane also interacted with prominent think tank German Institute of International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) in Berlin.

## Authorities to comply with guidelines on not requisitioning forest staff for election duty: NGT

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has observed that it expects the authorities to comply with instructions regarding not requisitioning forest officers or vehicles for election duty during the Lok Sabha polls.

The green panel was hearing a plea seeking directions to all states and Union Territories for implementing the instructions issued by the Election Commission of India, exempting territorial staff of the Forest department and forest vehicles from being requisitioned in the elections.

Noting the government-issued documents, a bench of National Green Tribunal Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said, "We find that the circulars in regards to the relief claimed have already been issued by the competent authorities and, unless something contrary exists, these circulars need to be complied with by the concerned authorities."

The bench, also comprising Expert Member A Senthil Vel, underlined that the tribunal's jurisdiction is limited to civil cases raising a substantial question about environmental issues and those for implementing the National Green Tribunal's scheduled acts.

The National Green Tribunal Act provides jurisdiction to



the body over several acts, including the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, Forest (Conservation) Act, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, Environment (Protection) Act, Public Liability Insurance Act, and the Biological Diversity Act.

"Since requisite instructions and guidelines have already been issued and concerned authorities are expected to comply with the same while ensuring the smooth holding of the election..." the tribunal said in an order passed on Tuesday.

"Hence, we are of the view that, at this stage, no further direction by the tribunal is required," it added.

The plea, filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal, underlined that a shortage of manpower could destroy the "precious natural resources" of forests.

The Election Commission of

India had issued circulars dated February 8 and June 7 last year that exempted certain categories of vehicles, including forest vehicles, and some categories of personnel, including senior forest officials and territorial staff of the Forest department, from being requisitioned for election duty, respectively, the tribunal noted.

It also noted a circular of the Central Empowered Committee dated February 2 that requested all chief secretaries not to requisition for election duty vehicles of wildlife sanctuaries, national sanctuaries and national games parks.

Additionally, a communication was issued by the Uttarakhand government the following day, exempting from the Lok Sabha elections duty Forest department vehicles allotted in various circles and personnel posted at the field level because of forest fires, the bench noted.

## Heed WHO warning, Mothers against vaping group urges nations to act

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Mothers Against Vaping, a coalition of proactive and concerned mothers, has issued a call to action for South-East Asian nations to heed the World Health Organization's (WHO) warning regarding the rising use of new-age gateway devices like e-cigarettes and vapes, especially among children and youth.

This collective effort aims to combat what they describe as the "escalating vaping crisis" affecting young people.

The WHO's caution against the proliferation of vaping in the region underscores the urgent need to control the spread of e-cigarettes and similar products. Notably, India has taken a proactive stance by enacting the PECA 2019 legislation, which bans all aspects of electronic cigarette products, including production, manufacturing, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage, and advertisement, deeming them illegal within the country.

Dr. Rajesh Gupta, additional director of Pulmonology and Critical Care at Fortis Healthcare, emphasized that claiming e-cigarettes can eliminate nicotine addiction is scientifically inaccurate, given their nicotine content. Furthermore, the use of e-cigarettes can deliver higher doses of nicotine and other



harmful chemicals, posing additional risks to users, especially young people.

Dr. Bhavna Barmi, a Clinical Psychologist and Founder of Happiness Studio, highlights the mental health impacts associated with vaping, including mood and anxiety disorders, suicidal thoughts, and depressive symptoms.

Mothers Against Vaping also drew attention to a survey conducted by the American Heart Association, presented in February 2023.

The findings of the survey revealed a concerning correlation between vaping nicotine and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychoactive component in marijuana and self-reported symptoms of depression and anxiety.

"The long-term consequences of e-cigarettes remain unknown, but studies have already demonstrated serious lung injuries and adverse health effects associated with

their use. Without effective control measures, the widespread prevalence of these new-age devices poses a genuine risk, potentially leaving our future generation with lasting health impairments.

"From causing chemical poisoning in users to jeopardising maternal and foetal health, vaping presents a myriad of physical health risks," said Dr Varuna Pathak, former Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Gandhi Medical College. According to a new study, vapers are susceptible to infection by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that spreads COVID-19 and continues to infect people around the world. The researchers from University of California, Riverside said the liquid used in electronic cigarettes, called e-liquid, typically contains nicotine, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and flavor chemicals.

## India, Nepal foreign secretaries hold talks, review bilateral ties



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra and his Nepalese counterpart Sewa Lamsal on Wednesday reviewed various key aspects of India-Nepal bilateral ties.

Lamsal is in India in her first foreign visit after assuming charge as Nepal's foreign secretary recently.

"The two foreign secretaries held discussions on the entire range of multifaceted cooperation between India and Nepal and also followed up on the seventh-India-Nepal joint commission meeting," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. The joint commission meeting was co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Nepalese counterpart N P Saud in Kathmandu last month. "The visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges

between the two countries and the priority India attaches to its relations with Nepal under its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, and provides an opportunity to further advance our bilateral ties," the MEA said on Lamsal's visit.

Foreign Secretary Lamsal is visiting India to participate in the eighth Asia Economic Dialogue being jointly convened by the MEA and Pune International Centre on Thursday in Pune.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

The country shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states -- Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Landlocked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services.











FIRST COLUMN

BUILDING BRIDGES WITH EMPATHY

It is incumbent upon us to ensure that every student receives vital lessons in empathy



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

After being constantly taunted for her height, skin colour and academic performance by her fellow students for months, a 12-year-old girl cut her wrists in an attempt to end her mental agony. Fortunately, she was saved. But a 16-year-old student of Class 10, who jumped off the top floor of the apartment building he was living in, did not survive. It was his letter to his mother in which he wrote that the school had killed him, that revealed the shocking details of bullying he was subjected to and the school's failure to stop it. While several steps have been taken to put an end to bullying, penal action can only be a temporary deterrent and not a long-term solution especially in the present milieu of hyped social media, freely available toxic content and, peer pressure.

If children are taught to engage empathetically, can it inculcate feelings of respect, dignity and compassion for all? Project Empathy, an endeavour to bring empathy education into school curricula, believes being empathetic can nurture emotionally and mentally strong human beings. When young students understand the importance of living in harmony with one another, the 'walls of division' between them transform into 'walls of friendship'. Contrary to popular belief, empathy can be taught. While 50% of our empathic capacities are genetically inherited, research shows that the rest can be learnt. This is the biggest reason why empathy must be taught at a young age. Over the last five years, Project Empathy led by educationist Vibha Lakhera, introduced this concept and developed activities and stories that acknowledge, recognize and identify emotions and broaden the discussion around emotional health and well-being of every student.



Empathy education helps to enrich the emotional vocabulary of students and build their emotional and mental resilience. Introduced in about six schools mainly army schools like the Army Rifles Public Schools in North India and Kashmir and Alok Bharati Public School in Delhi, the project has been able to reach out to over 1500 students. Importantly, teachers, who lay the foundation for their values, have been recognized as critical to the success of teaching empathy.

This resource book for teachers draws from the education system and best practices in schools in Denmark and Finland, two countries among the top three happiest countries in the world according to the United National Happiness Report. Put together by Lakhera and veteran development journalist Usha Rai, the interesting manual explains the neuroscience of empathy with the help of psychologists and brain scientists sans any jargon. The mirror neurons, which light up when a person feels an emotion like sadness or joy, respond in the same way when this person sees another person also demonstrating the same kind of feelings or actions. This empathic reaction helps to understand and share experiences.

The manual also explains the types of empathy-cognitive, emotional and compassionate while differentiating between sympathy and empathy. Stories centred on children and their emotions have been innovatively used to provide practical guidelines on how to diffuse tensions, reduce stress, and strengthen understanding of each other's differences. At present, empathy is not included in teacher training programmes. Only a handful of schools have taken the initiative to introduce the concept of empathy education. There is a need to encourage all students to consider different perspectives and viewpoints. Only by being empathetic, can they understand and acknowledge differences of opinion and resolve conflict situations.

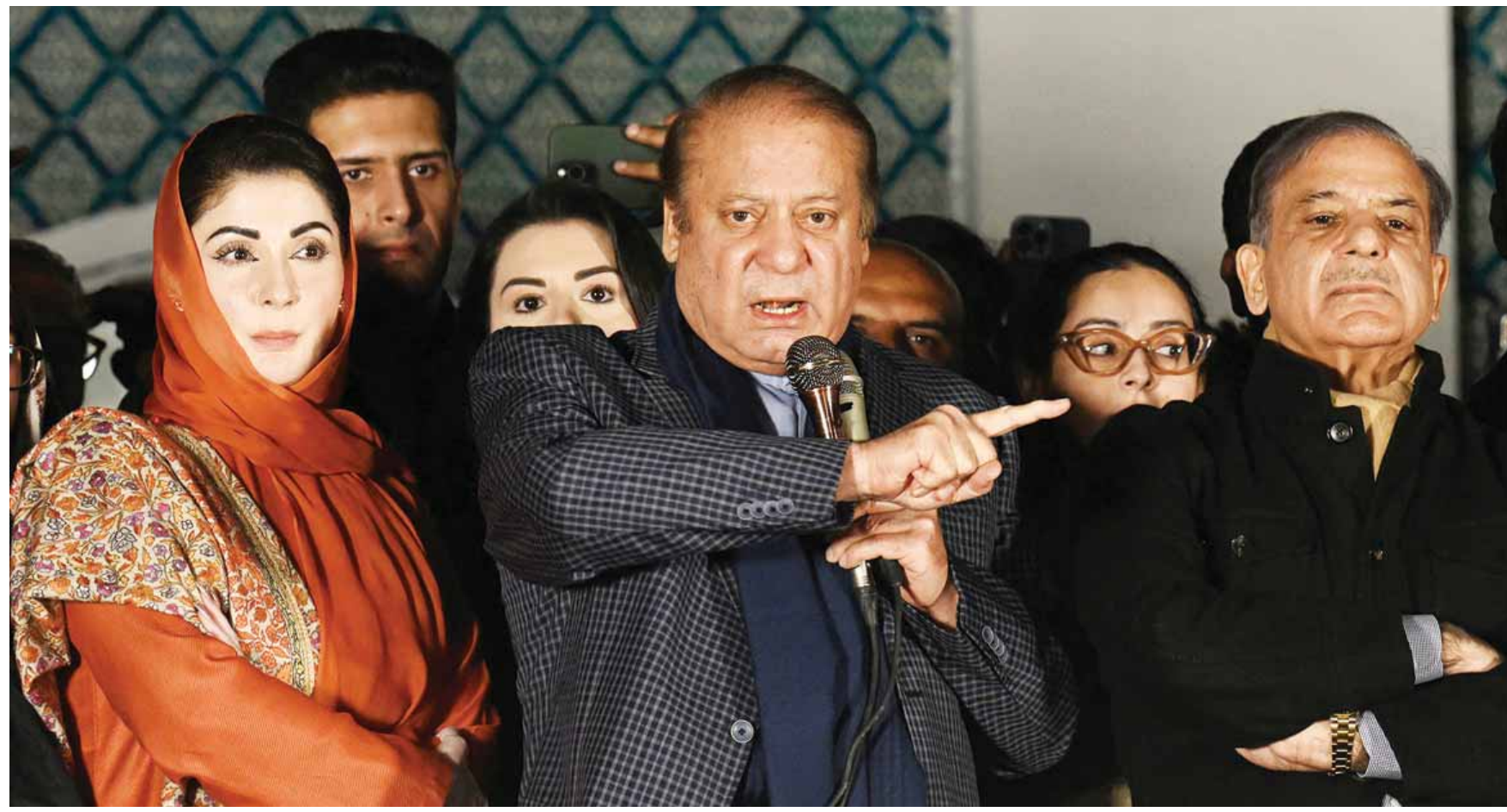
*(Swapna Majumdar is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are expressed are personal)*

# Nawaz Sharif's strategic move or military script?



KS TOMAR

Nawaz's decision to step aside from the race for premiership in Pakistan and nominate his brother Shehbaz instead has sparked intense debate



Alively and geo-political issue is being debated worldwide, especially in Pakistan which pertains to the 'mysterious' decision of three-time prime minister, Nawaz Sharif to Suo moto opt out of the race for premiership and subsequently nominate his younger brother, Shehbaz Sharif for the top slot though he was a favourite of powerful military, obviously current army chief, Asim Munir, who had scripted the entire episode to enthrone him.

Foreign policy experts say that it was on the analogy of former PM, Imran Khan who was saddled in the chair due to the open patronage of Ex-Army chief, Qamar Javed Bajwa but both fell apart owing to fighting for supremacy. It was a paradox and a typical case of a "servant" challenging the authority of the "Master" which may happen in this dispensation also but Nawaz as a "shadow PM" may not permit it as he has had the bitter experience of being ousted by the army from the post in 2018.

Analysts are convinced that owing to compelling circumstances, Ex PM, Nawaz played his cards well hence the choice fell on his brother which will also ensure the continuity of "Family Rule" in Pakistan. Yet, another addition will be Maryam Nawaz who is poised to become chief minister of the most important province of Punjab.

2nd, the army had meticulously planned to keep Imran Khan out of the political process hence more than 150 cases were registered against him by the previous regime and courts handed him the punishment in three cases which exceeded 24 years.

3rd, due to Imran's tirade against the army, Nawaz was brought to Pakistan last year from self-exile in London which preceded the Supreme Court's decision in 2018 to sentence him to ten -years



NAWAZ'S CRITICS ALLEGE THAT THE STAGE WAS SET FOR 'MASS SCALE RIGGING' TO HELP HIM BECOME PM, BUT THE GAME PLAN WENT HAYWIRE AS INDEPENDENTS SUPPORTED BY IMRAN FROM JAIL WON A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS AND NAWAZ'S PARTY PML-N COULD NOT GET EVEN A SIMPLE MAJORITY, WHICH SHATTERED THE DREAM OF NAWAZ

imprisonment and a fine of \$10.6 million in a corruption case related to Panama papers of illegal properties abroad. He was disqualified and hence fled to London to fight his battle. Nawaz's brother Shahbaz headed the government in Pakistan which ensured the adoption of a bill in parliament on June 25, 2023, which limited the lifetime disqualification of lawmakers to 5 years.

It was meant to pave the way for the return of his elder brother to resume his political activities in Pakistan.4th, Nawaz's critics allege that the stage was set for "mass scale rigging" to help him to become PM but the game plan went haywire as independents supported by Imran from jail won a majority of the seats and Nawaz's party PML-N could not get even simple majority which shattered the dream of Nawaz who was averse to heading a minority government.

5th, Nawaz nominated Shehbaz because he had experience in heading coalition governments and was a flexible politician who could take partners along .6th, Nawaz would have found it difficult in parliament as Imran's loyalists were ready with a lot of ammunition to put him on the mat on corruption whereas Shehbaz is better placed so far. Finally, Nawaz and the army chief are on the same page which may help the new government to appease the sentiments and fulfil the aspirations of the people who are facing the problem of survival.

It will be the most difficult task

of the Shehbaz government to implement the harsh preconditions of IMF which had released USD 710 million second tranche of a USD 3 billion loan to the cash-strapped country to stabilize its debt-ridden economy. Shehbaz's previous government had successfully negotiated with the IMF to procure the "bailout Package" which needs to be clinched. The IMF had saved Pakistan from economic collapse as Pakistan's reserves stood at \$7.8 billion as of Nov. 18, 2023, barely enough to cover imports for a month.

The people are reeling under inflation which has touched to the level of 30% and prices of essential commodities are beyond the capacity of consumers. The floods had caused losses of billions and thousands of lives were lost hence the new PM will have to take care of rehabilitation tasks which are in disarray.

The floods had caused tremendous losses of USD 3.3. trillion in June-October,2022 besides killing 1839 people which must be uppermost in the priorities of the new government as victims are still craving relief and rehabilitation tasks which seem to be in disarray.

China has treaded cautiously and did not touch the sensitive issue of rigging whereas the United States and EU demanded an investigation into the allegations. China has come to the rescue of Pakistan several times but the cost has been beyond the imagination of this poor country. China's debt policy has entrapped Pakistan which has procured a heavy loan and the Chinese

investment has risen \$65 billion in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by 2022. China has already acquired control of Gwadar Port on 16 May 2013 which may be retained instead of a lease guarantee in future.

Originally valued at \$46 billion, the value of China Pakistan Economic Corridor had been worth \$62 billion as of 2020. India and the US are opposed to BRI hence Nawaz will have to tread cautiously to keep China in check to save his country from the debt trap policy.

China will be looking for the security protection of its projects in Pakistan hence it may develop cordial relations with the Shehbaz government. Experts say that the United States wanted to see the back of Imran who had accused it of conspiring with the army to oust him from power. It has got history of having direct ties with army generals hence it may find it easy to deal with the new government. India can expect Nawaz to influence Shehbaz to take the initiative to start dialogue with India which has already created its space in the world arena and economic ties can help the beleaguered people of this poor country.

The new coalition government is bound to be weak hence delivery expectations on domestic and international fronts must be based on logical conclusions and limitations of new dispensation in Pakistan.

*(The writer is a journalist and political analyst, views are personal)*

# A roadmap for comprehensive socio-economic inclusion

The interim Budget for 2024 emerges as a crucial instrument for steering the nation towards inclusive development

As is the case with multiple developing economies across the world, India is faced with wealth inequality, unemployment, existing and persisting gaps in healthcare infrastructure and delivery, and environmental concerns. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index based on data from 2021/22 finds that 16.4 % of India's population lives in poverty with 4.2% facing severe poverty.

The Regional Human Development Report 2024 by UNDP finds that the top 10% of the population controls 65% of the nation's total wealth, underlining stark wealth inequality. The consequences are multi-dimensional – it negatively impacts upward intergenerational mobility and



NAGHMA MULLA

lowers the rate of economic growth. Lack of jobs has been an area of concern for the country for decades now. While the current unemployment rate for January 2024 is 6.8, unemployment amongst educated youth is concerning. The State of Working India 2023 by Azim Premji University reveals that over 42% of India's graduates under 25 were unemployed in 2021-22.

Marked by a distinct urban-rural divide, gaps in healthcare services and infrastructure are a major obstacle for people in small towns and rural areas. A large part of India's population suffers from inaccessibility to quality healthcare – leading to delayed treatments and high out-of-pocket expenditure.

A United Nations report emphasises that approximately 75% of healthcare infrastructure, medical personnel, and other health resources are predominantly located in urban regions, home to merely 27% of the overall population. The impact of climate change and disasters on both people and the economy has been devastating. India experienced unenviable losses of \$32.94 billion from natural disasters between 2018 and 2022. The

ramifications of human loss are even more grave and are evident in the 55.9 million displacements from 237 disasters mapped between 2018 – 2022. The interim budget addresses these issues in a big way.

It presents a comprehensive roadmap for national progress, meticulously designed to touch upon critical facets of development such as women empowerment, job creation, environmental conservation, and poverty alleviation. It aims to address the needs and aspirations of diverse social groups—'Garib' (the poor), 'Mahilayen' (women), 'Yuva' (youth), and 'Annadata' (farmers). This inclusion is notable as it envisages the significance of marginalised social groups in achieving a Viksit Bharat – a developed India by 2047 –

marking a century of India's independence. The budget prioritises support for the 'Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises' (MSME) sector with necessary finances, technologies, and training to enhance global competitiveness. The rooftop solarization policy is set to offer employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in technical and supply sectors.

Additionally, the establishment of a separate Department for Fisheries and the expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) underscore efforts to double production and exports in the fisheries sector, aiming to create 55 lakh new jobs and drive inclusive economic progress. A significant step is the focus on provisions for the inclusion

of low-income groups and women. Initiatives like the disbursement of 30 crore Mudra Yojana loans to women entrepreneurs and financial support to 78 lakh street vendors under PM-SVANidhi emphasise the government's focus on enhancing work-force participation and providing earning avenues that drive upward mobility.

The SHG model of development has also proved to be successful – enabling nearly 10 million women to achieve annual incomes of over INR 1 lakh. Capitalising on this success, the goal has been expanded to elevate the target from 2 crore to 3 crore 'lakhpati didis', showcasing a commitment to women's economic empowerment. The budget made notable health sector

announcements. The focus on preventive healthcare through the provision of cervical cancer vaccinations for young girls and the integration of various maternal and child health schemes indicate a push towards addressing the specific health needs of vulnerable groups.

The expansion of the Ayushman Bharat scheme to extend healthcare benefits to approximately 1.5 million ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers acknowledges the crucial contribution of these frontline health workers to primary healthcare services. Leverage existing hospital structures for the establishment of more medical colleges, addresses both – the healthcare professional shortage and the surging demand

for medical education. This builds on the initiative from April 2023, when the government approved the establishment of 157 nursing colleges, allocating INR 1,570 crore, with the central government contributing INR 1,016 crore. The budget also provides a concrete pathway to achieving a net-zero economy by 2070. Key measures include funding for offshore wind energy, coal gasification projects to lessen reliance on fossil fuels, support for the electric vehicle ecosystem, and incentives for bio-mass collection. The budget also promotes bio-manufacturing for eco-friendly materials and climate resilience in the blue economy.

*(The author is a prominent voice on social issues; views are personal)*



# Trump defeats Nikki in Michigan primary

## Biden wins Democratic primary

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Voters handed decisive victories to US President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump in their respective parties' presidential primaries in Michigan on Tuesday, increasing the chances of a 2020 rematch between the two leaders in the race for the White House in 2024.

Trump easily defeated his main rival, Indian-American Nikki Haley, winning yet another early contest and additional delegates - bringing him one step closer to being able to formally secure the Republican Party's nomination in November.

When the last reports came in, Haley had received 26.5 per cent of the votes as against Trump's massive 68.2 per cent. US media outlets projected



that 77-year-old Trump would sweep the Michigan primary with more than 40 per cent of the votes against 52-year-old Haley. Trump's win further shuts the door on former South Carolina Governor Haley's hopes of building momentum ahead of next week's Super Tuesday contests, when more than one-third of the Republican Party's delegates are at stake.

Trump has previously won the Iowa caucuses, New Hampshire primary, caucuses in Nevada and the U.S. Virgin

Islands, and South Carolina primary. He needs 1,215 delegates to formally secure the nomination.

Trump reached the Michigan Republican Watch Party Tuesday night shortly after the race was called in his favour.

"I just want to thank everybody. This was a great day," he said, pointing to the state's autoworkers, saying Democrats "destroyed the autowork business," but vowed to "bring it all back into Michigan" if elected.

"I can tell you this

November cannot come fast enough," Trump said. "We have the worst president in history—the most incompetent and the most corrupt president, and we can't let this continue," Trump said, attacking his Democratic Party rival.

"So that day, November 5th, and January 20th is when we take over," Trump said, referring to Election Day and Inauguration Day. "We're going to make America great again, greater than ever before," Trump said, amidst applause from his supporters.

Trump has won 119 delegates while Haley has just 22. To receive the Republican Party's presidential nomination, one should get the backing of 1,215 delegates.

Meanwhile, Biden, 81, coasted to another victory in the state, marking his fourth primary victory in four tries. He has won 177 delegates from the four victories. Biden, who does not have any known rivals, has to win 1,968 delegates to get the Democratic Party's nomination.

Reacting to his victory, Biden said, "I want to thank

every Michigander who made their voice heard today. Exercising the right to vote and participating in our democracy is what makes America great.

"Four years ago, it was Michigan's diverse coalition that came together to reject Donald Trump's MAGA (Make America Great Again) extremism and sent me and Kamala to the White House," he said in a statement.

"For all of this progress, there is so much left to do. Donald Trump is threatening to drag us even further into the past as he pursues revenge and retribution," Biden said.

Meanwhile, the results in Michigan further solidified the positions of Trump and Biden as frontrunners in their respective parties.

Republicans will formally name their presidential candidate during a national convention in July. Democrats will have their convention in August.

However, a key feature of the Democratic primary in Michigan, which has a significant Muslim population, as

around 13.25 per cent of Biden's Democratic voters cast ballots for the "uncommitted" as part of their protest against the president for his handling of the Israel-Palestine war.

Strong opposition to Biden's support for Israel's war in Gaza against Hamas militants led some Democrats to call for voters to select "uncommitted" instead of casting a vote for the incumbent president.

Supporters of the effort for "uncommitted" ballots in Michigan said they were hoping for 10,000 such votes, a level that was easily surpassed. With nearly 99 per cent of the ballots counted, there were already more than one lakh "uncommitted" votes.

The movement picked up the support of Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who announced her public opposition to supporting Biden ahead of her home state's primary. "I was proud today to walk in and pull a Democratic ballot and vote uncommitted. We must protect our democracy. We must make sure that our government is about us, about the people," Tlaib said in a video.

# Turkish drones kill three in Syria

**Beirut(AP):** Turkish drone strikes in northeastern Syria on Wednesday killed at least three members of a local Christian force and wounded others, including civilians, a Kurdish official and a Syrian opposition war monitor said. Also on Wednesday, in the southern Syrian city of Sweida, security forces opened fire at protesters angry over the country's worsening economy as they tried to break into the offices of President Bashar Assad's ruling Baath Party. A 52-year-old man was shot in the chest and later died of his wounds.

There was no immediate comment from Ankara on Wednesday's airstrikes. Turkey has been attacking Kurdish fighters in Syria for years but attacks on the fighters from the country's Christian minority have been rare.

The force that was targeted, the local Christian Syriac police known as Sutoro, works under the US-backed and Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration

of North and East Syria.

Siamand Ali of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces told The Associated Press that the Turkish drones initially hit three Sutoro vehicles near the northeastern town of Malikiyah. When a fourth vehicle, a pick-up truck, arrived at the scene to retrieve the casualties from the strike, it also came under attack, he said.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said three Sutoro police members were killed, as well as one civilian. The Observatory said the attack was the latest of 65 such strikes so far this year in northeastern Syria that have killed 18 people, mostly Kurdish fighters. Turkey often launches strikes against targets in Syria and Iraq it believes to be affiliated with the

Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK — a banned Kurdish separatist group that has waged an insurgency against Turkey since the 1980s.

# Israel-Hamas war: No imminent deal despite Biden's Gaza ceasefire signal

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel and Hamas on Tuesday played down chances of an imminent breakthrough in talks for a cease-fire in Gaza, after US President Joe Biden said Israel has agreed to pause its offensive during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan if a deal is reached to release some hostages. The president's remarks came on the eve of the Michigan primary, where he faces pressure from the state's large Arab American population over his staunch support for Israel's offensive. Biden said he had been briefed on the status of talks by his national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, but said his comments reflected his optimism for a deal, not that all the remaining hurdles had been overcome.

In the wake of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, Israel's air, sea and ground campaign in Gaza has killed tens of thousands of people, obliterated large swaths of

the urban landscape and displaced 80% of the battered enclave's population.

Israel's seal on the territory, which allows in only a trickle of food and other aid, has sparked alarm that a famine could be imminent, according to the United Nations.

With UN truck deliveries of aid hampered by the lack of safe corridors, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and France conducted an airdrop of food, medical supplies and other aid into Gaza on Tuesday. At a beach in southern Gaza, boxes of supplies dropped from military aircraft drifted down on parachutes as thousands of Palestinians ran along the sand to retrieve them.

But alarm is growing over worsening hunger among Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians.

Two infants died from dehydration and malnutrition at Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza City, said the spokesman

for Gaza's Health Ministry, Ashraf al-Qidra. He warned that infant mortality threatens to surge.

Dehydration and malnutrition will kill thousands of children and pregnant women in the Gaza Strip," he said.

The UN Population Fund said the Al Helal Al Emirati maternity hospital in Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah reported that newborns were dying because mothers were unable to get prenatal or postnatal care. Premature births are also rising, forcing staff to put four or five newborns in a single incubator.

Most of them do not survive, it said, without giving figures on the numbers of deaths. Now the prospect of an invasion of Rafah has prompted global alarm over the fate of around 1.4 million civilians trapped there. Talks to pause the fighting have gained momentum recently and were underway Tuesday. Negotiators from the United States, Egypt

and Qatar have been working to broker a cease-fire that would see Hamas free some of the dozens of hostages it holds in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners, a six-week halt in fighting and an increase in aid deliveries to Gaza.

The start of Ramadan, which is expected to be around March 10, is seen as an unofficial deadline for a deal. The month is a time of heightened religious observance and dawn-to-dusk fasting for hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world. Israeli-Palestinian tensions have flared in the past during the holy month.

"Ramadan's coming up, and there has been an agreement by the Israelis that they would not engage in activities during Ramadan as well, in order to give us time to get all the hostages out," Biden said in an appearance on NBC's "Late Night With Seth Meyers" that was recorded Monday.

# Houthi rebels suspected in new rocket attack off Yemen coast

AP ■ DUBAI

A rocket exploded late Tuesday night off the side of a ship travelling through the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen, authorities said, the latest suspected attack to be carried out by Yemen's Houthi rebels. The attack comes as the Houthis continue a series of assaults at sea over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and as the US and its allies launch airstrikes trying to stop them.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, which oversees shipping in the Mideast, reported the attack happened about 110 kilometres off the coast of the Houthi-held port city of Hodeida. The rocket exploded several miles off the bow of the vessel, it said.

"The crew and vessel are reported to be safe and are proceeding to next port of call," the UKMTO said.

The private security firm Ambrey reported that the ves-

sel targeted appeared to be a Marshall Islands-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier in the area at the time. Another ship, a Panama-flagged, Emirati-owned chemical tanker was nearby as well, Ambrey said.

The Associated Press could not immediately identify the vessels involved.

The Houthis typically take several hours to claim their assaults and have not yet done so for the assault late Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the US military's Central Command said an American and an allied warship shot down five Houthi bomb-carrying drones in the Red Sea on Tuesday night.

The drones originated "from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and (it was) determined they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the US Navy and coalition ships in the region," Central Command said in a statement.

Since November, the rebels

have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea and surrounding waters over the Israel-Hamas war. Those vessels have included at least one with cargo for Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, and an aid ship later bound for Houthi-controlled territory.

Despite over a month of US-led airstrikes, Houthi rebels remain capable of launching significant attacks. Last week, they severely damaged a ship in a crucial strait and downed an American drone worth tens of millions of dollars. The Houthis insist their attacks will continue until Israel stops its combat operations in the Gaza Strip, which have enraged the wider Arab world and seen the Houthis gain international recognition.

The Houthis, a Zaydi Shiite group, seized Yemen's capital in 2014 and have battled a Saudi-led coalition since 2015. Their Zaydi people ran a 1,000-year kingdom in Yemen up until 1962.

# Wildfires scorch Texas Panhandle and briefly shut down nukes facility

AP ■ CANADIAN

A series of wildfires swept across the Texas Panhandle early Wednesday, prompting evacuations, cutting off power to thousands, and forcing the brief shutdown of a nuclear weapons facility as strong winds, dry grass and unseasonably warm temperatures fed the blazes. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration for 60 counties as the main blaze, the Smokehouse Creek Fire, swelled into the second-largest wildfire in the state's history.

The main facility that disassembles America's nuclear arsenal paused operations Tuesday night but said it was open for normal work on Wednesday.

Authorities have not said what might have caused the blaze, which tore through sparsely populated counties set amid vast, high plains punctuated by cattle ranches and oil rigs. In Borger, a community of about



Wildland Team members depart to operate amid the spread of fire.

Agencies

13,000 in Hutchinson County, Adrianna Hill said she and her family were terrified as fire encircled the entire town until the winds shifted. "It was like a ring of fire around Borger, there was no way out... all four main roads were closed," Hill, 28, said. The flames came within about 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) of the home she shares with her husband and 20-month-old son. "What saved

our butts was that northern wind ... it blew it the opposite direction," Hill said. "We were scared, but every night I pray ... and that's all I can do." The weather forecast provided some hope for firefighters — cooler temperatures, less wind and possibly rain on Thursday. But for now, the situation was dire in some areas.

The Smokehouse Creek Fire in Hutchinson County burned

# UK stepping up lawmakers' security as tensions flare over Israel-Hamas war

AP ■ LONDON

The British government said on Wednesday that it is stepping up security for lawmakers after politicians reported threats and intimidation connected to the Israel-Hamas war. The Home Office said a 31 million-pound (USD 40 million) fund will give every lawmaker a "dedicated named police contact" and provide money for those facing threats to pay for private security protection.

The government said some of the money will go more broadly to protecting Britain's "democratic processes from intimidation, disruption or subversion" ahead of a general election later this year. The fund includes money for extra police patrols in areas where tensions are high.

Divisions over the conflict in Gaza have convulsed British politics, with some lawmakers saying they fear for their safety after receiving threats over their positions on the war. Reports of both antisemitic and anti-Muslim abuse in Britain have soared since Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, which triggered Israel's invasion of Gaza.

A debate last week in the House of Commons on whether to call for a cease-fire descended into chaos amid allegations the speaker of the house had bent parliamentary rules in response to pressure from pro-Palestinian activists.

Conservative lawmaker Mike Freer has announced he is stepping down because of abuse and death threats linked to his support for Israel. Freer said an arson attack on his office in December was the "final straw". He said the money announced on Wednesday was only "dealing with the symptom" rather than "going to the root cause" of why people feel emboldened to attack politicians. "Security is welcome," Freer told Times Radio. "But frankly, unless you get to the root cause, then you're just going to have a ring of steel around MPs. And our whole style of democracy changes." British lawmakers have a tradition of meeting regularly with constituents in

their local communities, but security has been tightened after several attacks in the last decade. In 2016, Labour lawmaker Jo Cox was killed by a far-right extremist, and Conservative David Amess was murdered in 2021 by an attacker inspired by the Islamic State group.

In 2017 an Islamic State-inspired extremist killed four people with a vehicle on Westminster Bridge before stabbing a police officer to death at the gates of Parliament. Two years later, in 2019, a neo-Nazi pleaded guilty to plotting to kill a Labour lawmaker. Anti-war activists claimed the government was trying to stifle protest and lumping peaceful demonstrators in with violent extremists.

Home Secretary James Cleverly called on pro-Palestinian demonstrators to halt the mass protests that have drawn hundreds of thousands of people to central London almost weekly to call for a cease-fire in a conflict that has killed close to 30,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Israel says Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and abducted roughly 250, in the October 7 attack. The protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful, though there have been dozens of arrests over signs and chants allegedly supporting Hamas, a banned organization in Britain. Jewish organisations and many lawmakers say the mass marches have created an intimidating atmosphere for Jewish Londoners — though members of the Jewish community have been among those on pro-cessa-fire marches. "I genuinely don't know what these regular protests are seeking to achieve," Cleverly told the Times of London.

"They have made their position clear, we recognise that there are many people in the UK that hold that position. We respect that, but the UK government's position is a disagreement with that for very practical, well thought-out reasons".

# Prince Harry loses legal challenge over security level in UK

**London (PTI):** Prince Harry on Wednesday lost a legal challenge against the British government over the level of his security protection when he is in the UK, with a High Court judge in London ruling that the decision to remove police protection was not "unlawful or irrational".

The 39-year-old, younger son of King Charles III, who relocated with his family to the US after stepping back as a frontline royal, had argued that he was treated wrongly in the government's decision to change the level of his UK taxpayer-funded personal security. His lawyers told the court that it was "unlawful and unfair" to take such an approach to his protection while he is in his home country. However, Judge Sir Peter Lane ruled that the decision to remove police protection was not "unlawful or irrational". "Even if such procedural unfairness occurred, the court would in any event be prevented from granting the claimant [Prince Harry — the Duke of Sussex] relief," said Lane. "This is because, leaving aside any such unlawfulness, it is highly likely that the outcome for the claimant would not have been substantially different," he said. The bulk of the court proceedings were held in private because of the confidential nature of evidence over security measures. The case goes back to February 2020, following a decision by the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures (RAVEC) — delegated by the UK Home Office on security — to review the senior royal's security profile. The UK government had told the court the case should be dismissed because RAVEC was entitled to conclude that Prince Harry's protection should be "bespoke" and considered on a "case-by-case" basis given his lack of full-time royal duties in the country.

# South Korean, US troops to begin major exercises next week

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean and US troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said on Wednesday, a move that will likely enrage North Korea because it views its rivals' joint training as an invasion rehearsal.

In recent months, North Korea has inflamed animosities on the Korean Peninsula with fiery rhetoric and continued missile tests. While it's unlikely for North Korea to launch full-blown attacks against South Korea and the US, observers say the North could still stage limited provocations along the tense

border with South Korea. On Wednesday, the South Korea and US militaries jointly announced that the allies will conduct the Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, and a variety of separate field training, from March 4-14.

Col. Lee, Sung-Jun, a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the allies' drills are designed to bolster their joint capabilities to prevent North Korea from using its nuclear weapons. He said the allies are to carry out 48 field exercises this spring, twice the number conducted last year, and that this year's drills would involve air assault, live-firing and bombing

training. "Our military is ready to punish North Korea immediately, strongly and to the end in the event of its provocation, and we'll further strengthen our firm readiness through the upcoming drills," Lee said.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the drills' announcement. North Korea has reacted to previous major South Korea-US military drills with its own missile tests.

North Korea has sharply intensified its weapons testing activities since 2022 in part of its efforts to expand its nuclear and missile arsenals. This year, the North already conducted six rounds of missile tests — five of them

reportedly involving cruise missiles — and other weapons launches. Experts say North Korea believes a bigger weapons arsenal would allow it to pressure the US and South Korea more effectively to make concessions like sanctions relief when diplomacy resumes. They expect North Korea to ramp up its testing activities and other provocations this year as both the US and South Korea head into major elections. South Korea and the US have responded to the North's testing spree with expansions of their bilateral military drills and trilateral exercises involving Japan. US and South Korean officials have repeatedly warned that any nuclear attack by North

# Bharti Enterprises chief Sunil Bharti Mittal knighted by King Charles III

PTI ■ LONDON

Bharti Enterprises Founder and Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal on Wednesday became the first Indian citizen to be conferred an honorary Knighthood by Britain's King Charles III "for services to UK and India business relations". In a list of honorary British awards unveiled by the UK Cabinet Office, Mittal receives a KBE under the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire — one of the highest honours conferred by a British monarch.

The 66-year-old entrepreneur said in a statement that he was "deeply humbled" by the gracious recognition from King Charles.

"The UK and India have historical relations, which are

now entering a new era of increased cooperation and collaboration. I remain committed to working towards strengthening the economic and bilateral trade relationships between our two great nations," Mittal said. "I am thankful to the government of the UK, whose support and keen attention to the needs of business has been critical in making the country an attractive investment destination," he said. The KBE, conferred for a pre-eminent contribution in any field of activity, is awarded in an honorary capacity to foreign nationals. While the Knighthood conferred on UK nationals gives them the title of Sir or Dame, non-UK nationals awarded the honour add KBE (or DBE for women) after

their name.Previous Indian recipients of the Honorary KBE include Ratan Tata (2009), Ravi Shankar (2001) and Jamshed Irani (1997), conferred by the late Queen Elizabeth II. The investiture ceremony will be conducted by the British High Commissioner to India at a later date, when he will formally hand over the royal insignia to Mittal.The honour recognises Bharti Enterprises' work within the India-UK space, including with the UK government in the field of satellites. Sunil Bharti Mittal led the revival of OneWeb (now Eutelsat), leading a consortium with the UK government and other strategic investors to offer satellite broadband services globally, a company statement notes.



# New Pak govt’s first priority is to fix economy: Nawaz Sharif

AP ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Pakistan’s former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday said the priority of the upcoming government led by his party will be to “fix” the ailing economy as all the problems plaguing the cash-strapped nation were linked to the economic woes.

“The government will try to fix the economy which would in turn fix everything,” Sharif, the supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) told the media after arriving at the Parliament House for the first time since the February 8 elections.

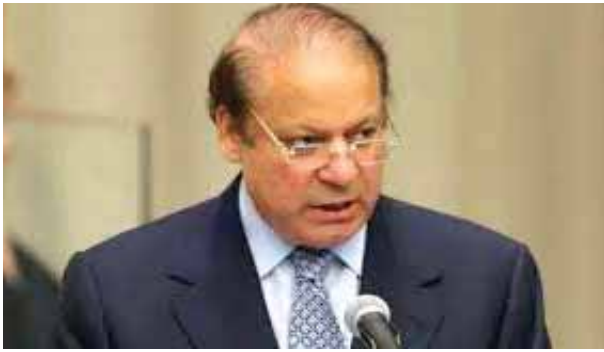
Sharif, who surprisingly nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif to be the prime minister of a coalition government, also said that he wishes every National Assembly, Senate and Prime Minister to complete their constitutional term.

No prime minister in coup-prone Pakistan has completed his/her five-year term. Sharif became prime minister thrice but was removed on all three occasions in mid-term.

Earlier, he was welcomed by prime minister candidate Shehbaz Sharif and other members of his party upon his arrival at the National Assembly for the PML-N’s parliamentary meeting. The meeting, chaired by party supremo Nawaz Sharif, will mull over the PML-N’s strategy about matters after the NA’s inaugural session slated for tomorrow, Geo News reported. Pakistan has avoided potential default with the help of international donors and friendly countries but its economy is still under clouds. It is believed that another IMF program would be needed after the ongoing package.

The country’s economy has been in a free fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation, making it almost impossible for a vast number of people to make both ends meet.

## NAWAZ NOMINATES



### SHEHBAZ FOR PM’S POST

The parliamentary party of the PML-N headed by three-time former Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday formally nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif for the post of prime minister to head a coalition government. The parliamentary members’ meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was held in Islamabad with party supremo Nawaz Sharif, 74, in the chair.

Shehbaz, 72, had led a coalition government for 16 months till August 2023 before the caretaker government took over following the announcement of general elections.

“Nawaz officially nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif and party loyalist Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for the posts of prime minister and speaker of the National Assembly. The parliamentary party endorsed Shehbaz’s name and also reposed its full confidence in the leadership of Nawaz,” PML-N central deputy secretary Attaullah Tarar said in a statement after the meeting. The nomination of Shehbaz Sharif as the next prime minister by the elder brother, who himself was eyeing the plum post for a record fourth time, had surprised many within and outside the party. Outgoing National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has called the National Assembly session on Thursday after President Dr Arif Alvi, known for his closeness to jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), refused to do so.

The President is of the

view that Parliament is not complete because the Election Com-m-ission of Pakistan (ECP) is yet to clear the air over the allocation of reserved seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), following the PTI-SIC ‘merger’ for this very purpose.

Khan’s PTI-backed independents have emerged as the largest number of winners followed by PML-N and PPP. However, Khan has alleged that the February 8 elections were the most controversial and rigged polls in the country’s history.

He has accused the PML-N-Pakistan Peoples Party post-poll alliance, which also has four other parties, as “mandate thieves” set to form the government in the Centre.

The PML-N has the full backing of the military establishment to form the government both in the Centre and Punjab province.

As per the Constitution, a party must win 133 out of 265 contested seats in the 266-member National Assembly to form a government. Independent candidates – a majority backed by 71-year-old Khan’s PTI party – won 93 National Assembly seats. The PML-N won 75 seats while the PPP came third with 54 seats. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has 17 seats.

As part of the PML-N-PPP alliance deal, it was decided that Nawaz Sharif’s daughter Maryam Nawaz would be the chief minister of Punjab province.

Maryam, the political heir of Nawaz, took oath on Monday and became the first woman chief minister of any province in the country.

## ‘Pakistan Prez may face legal consequences’

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan President Dr Arif Alvi’s refusal to summon the newly-elected National Assembly for its first session may lead to “legal consequences”, senior leaders of the PML-N and PPP have warned. On Monday, Alvi rejected a move from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the first session of the newly elected National Assembly on February 29.

Alvi, known for his closeness to jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, has maintained that all reserved seats be allocated before the summoning of the session in which newly-elected members of the National Assembly will take oath.

The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) on Tuesday rejected the objections raised by Alvi, stating that constitutionally, the first National Assembly session should take place within 21 days after the elections, and the president could summon the session before the expiry of the deadline, the Dawn newspaper reported. Under Article 91 of the Constitution, the mandated date for the first session of the National Assembly is February 29.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday warned that several cases will be made against Alvi for “abrogating the Constitution”, the report said.

Bilawal said that two cases would be filed against Alvi. The first would be for dissolving the National Assembly when a no-confidence motion was moved against the then-prime minister Imran Khan in 2022, and the second would be for abrogating the Constitution by not convening the National Assembly session. He, however, asserted that his party had no plans to impeach the president, the report said.

# ‘Navalny’s funeral on Friday’

AP ■ MOSCOW

The funeral of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died earlier this month in a remote Arctic penal colony, will take place on Friday in Moscow after several locations declined to host the service, his spokesperson said. His funeral will be held at a church in Moscow’s southeast Maryino district on Friday afternoon, Kira Yarmysh said on ednesday. The burial is to be at a nearby cemetery. Navalny died in mid-February in one of Russia’s harshest penal facilities. Russian authorities said the cause of his death at age 47 is still unknown, and the results of any investigation are likely to be questioned abroad. Many Western leaders have already said they hold Russian President Vladimir Putin responsible for his death. Yarmysh spoke of the difficulties his team encountered in trying to find a site for a “farewell event” for Navalny. Writing on X, formerly known as Twitter, she said most venues said they were fully booked, with some “refusing when we



Yulia Navalnaya, widow of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny addresses the European Union’s parliament on Wednesday.

or whether police will arrest those who have come to say goodbye to my husband,” she said.

At some points appearing tearful amid applause from lawmakers but largely resolute, Navalnaya said her husband’s death “showed everyone that Putin is capable of anything, and that you cannot negotiate with him”.

She appealed to the European Parliament to be “innovative” in its approach to the Russian president and those close to him. “You cannot hurt Putin with another resolution or another set of sanctions,” she said, urging lawmakers instead to “apply the methods of fighting organised crime, not political competition”. She asked the parliament to investigate “financial machinations” and “mafia associates” in their countries and “discreet lawyers and financiers who are helping Putin and his friends to hide money”. In introducing Navalnaya, the president of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, paid tribute to Navalny.

# Wickremesinghe stresses reconciliation issues under 13<sup>th</sup> Amendemnt

PTI ■ COLOMBO

President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday said the fate of the missing persons and the ongoing land disputes were posing a major political challenge for the reconciliation of the Tamil minority under the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Agreements have been reached to release more land and provide a pathway forward, the President said.

India has been pressing Sri Lanka to implement the 13th Amendment (13A), which was brought in after the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987 and provides for the devolution of power to the Tamil community. “The primary concern at present revolves around the fate of the missing persons. To address this issue, we’ve presented and successfully passed

a bill in Parliament to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),” Wickremesinghe told a reconciliation seminar here as he outlined the steps taken so far.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had run a military campaign for a separate Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces of the island nation for nearly 30 years before its collapse in 2009 after the Sri Lankan Army killed its supreme leader V Prabhakaran. Wickremesinghe also expressed his intent to tackle other related issues as he said, the TRC has received the pledges of assistance from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa with similar cooperation being extended by other nations as well.

Wickremesinghe further said the ongoing land disputes in the north were a major

political challenge for reconciliation.

“We aim to address these issues through inclusive dialogue, involving all concerned parties. Furthermore, I have instructed proceeding in accordance with the 1985 map,” he said.

Additionally, the President said, he will be meeting with Tamil MPs in Parliament next week to discuss these matters further.

Following consultations with the security forces, agreements have been reached to “release more land, providing a pathway forward in our efforts.” On devolution of power under the 13A, Wickremesinghe said, the granting of police powers to the provinces could be held back for future discussions.

In late 2022, Wickremesinghe initiated a

dialogue with Tamil parties on the full implementation of the 13A without the police powers to the provinces. However, the powerful Buddhist clergy opposition suggested putting it on hold.

To devolve powers to the provinces outlined in the current reserved list, it was imperative to reach an all-party consensus to gain a two-thirds majority, Wickremesinghe said. He also said discussions are underway regarding the implementation of the Provincial Board of Education. Proposals have been made to establish provincial professional training institutes in each province.

Additionally, plans are underway to appoint provincial-level committees to lead the modernisation of agriculture, establish a tourism board, and undertake related initiatives.

# Small drone flies into Fukushima N-reactor

Tokyo (AP): A drone small enough to fit in one’s hand flew inside one of the damaged reactors at Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on Wednesday in hopes it can examine some of the molten fuel debris in areas where earlier robots failed to reach. Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings also began releasing the fourth batch of the plant’s treated and diluted radioactive wastewater into the sea on Wednesday. The government and TEPCO, the plant’s operator, say the water is safe and the process is being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, but the discharges have faced strong opposition by fishing groups and a Chinese ban on Japanese seafood.

A magnitude 9.0 quake and tsunami in March 2011 destroyed the plant’s power supply and cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt down. The government and

TEPCO plan to remove the massive amount of fatally radioactive melted nuclear fuel that remains inside each reactor — a daunting decontamination process that’s been delayed for years and mired by technical hurdles and a lack of data. To help on data, a fleet of four drones were set to fly one at a time into the hardest-hit No. 1 reactor’s primary containment vessel.

TEPCO plans to probe a new area Thursday.

TEPCO has sent a number of probes — including a crawling robot and an underwater vehicle — inside each reactor but was hindered by debris, high radiation and the inability to navigate through the rubble, though they were able to gather some data. In 2015, the first robot to go inside got stuck on a grate.

Wednesday’s drone flight comes after months of preparations that began in July at a nearby mock facility.

# ‘Chinese research ship departs from Maldives’

PTI ■ MALE

A 4,500-tonne high-tech Chinese research vessel which made a port call here last week has left the shores of the Maldives, local media reports said on Wednesday. Officially, the Chinese vessel Xiang Yang Hong 3 was here to “make a port call, for the rotation of its personnel and replenishment.” “Xiang Yang Hong 03 has returned to the boundary of the Maldives’ Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) after docking in Male on February 22. However, despite departing from the Male harbour, tracking sites have shown the vessel’s last signal near Hulhumale’ two days ago,” news portal Adhathu.com said.

Hulhumale is less than 10 kms northeast of Male. The vessel had docked on February 23 in Thilafushi, about 7.5 kms to the west of Male.

“The vessel is expected to have turned off tracking systems, which it also did en route to Male’ on January 22 when



it was in the Java Sea off the coast of Indonesia,” it reported. The news portal also provided some details about the type of vessel Xiang Yang Hong 03. The 100-metre-long vessel was added to the fleet of China’s State Oceanic Administration (SOA) in 2016. This is the only 4,500-tonne vessel currently in China. Since 2019, China has also been using the vessel to conduct ‘distant water’ and ‘deep sea’ surveys at China’s Pilot Ocean Laboratory, it said.

The vessel can also be used for studies on salinity,

microbial genetic studies, underwater mineral exploration, and underwater life and environmental studies, it said. It has data buoys that can measure ocean currents, waves, and important environmental information. These buoys will provide real-time satellite information to the Chinese government, the report said.

On January 5, Sri Lanka, while denying entry to the Xiang Yang Hong 03, said it has declared a moratorium on foreign research ships entering its waters for a year

amid concerns from India over Chinese research vessels docking in its neighbourhood.

Incidentally, the Chinese vessel was present near the India-Maldives-Sri Lanka trilateral Dosti-16 exercise that took place in the ocean near Male between February 22 and 25. Earlier on January 23, the new China-friendly Maldives government said it had permitted the research vessel, equipped to carry research and surveys, to dock at Male port, saying the halt was for replenishment and that it would “not be conducting any research while in the Maldivian waters.”

An American think-tank has alleged that a vast fleet of China’s “scientific research” ships is collecting data from the oceans, including in the Indian Ocean Region, for military purposes, especially for submarine operations, a charge denied by Beijing, which said the Chinese vessels operations are in line with the UN Convention on Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).

# Ukraine President co-hosts summit in Albania

AP ■ TIRANA

Ukraine’s president co-hosted a summit with Albania’s government on Wednesday that is meant to encourage further support for Kyiv by southeastern European countries, as signs of fatigue grow two years after Russia’s full-scale invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived before midnight Tuesday on the latest stop in an international tour that saw him in Saudi Arabia earlier Tuesday to push for a peace plan and the return of prisoners of war from Russia.

Zelenskyy on Wednesday called Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama “Ukraine’s unwavering friend” in a message on X, formerly Twitter, adding the two would “discuss defence and political cooperation, support for the Peace Formula, and security agreements.” “I will propose sup-



Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, right, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy laugh as they wait other officials for the summit of Southeastern European countries on peace in Tirana, Albania, Wednesday.

porting Ukraine’s efforts to achieve just and lasting peace, as well as organising the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland,” he said, referring to the summit.

Zelenskyy and Rama also signed a friendship and cooperation agreement “to strengthen our cooperation with Albania and Ukraine’s position in the Balkans.” Zelenskyy also awarded Rama with the “Yaroslav the Wise” medal for his contribution to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy is accompanied by Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. Rama wrote on Facebook that he was proud to welcome Zelenskyy for “a solidarity meeting and to further the commitment of our democracies against Russian aggression.”

Securing further support is key to Ukraine’s leader while his country faces battlefield challenges. Zelenskyy on Sunday announced that 31,000

Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action since Russia’s invasion — the first time that Kyiv had confirmed the number of its losses. Ukraine has urged Western leaders to increase the joint production of weapons and ammunition, improve Ukrainian air defences and put new pressure on Russia via expanded sanctions. The head of NATO has said the US-led military alliance has no plans to send troops to Ukraine, and Germany, Poland and other countries this week have said the same.

Eleven countries from southeastern Europe, including some of Ukraine’s neighbours, attended the Albania summit, three of them with online messages, along with officials from the European Union and other international institutions.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Albania earlier this month.

But not all the countries are in full support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. Kremlin ally Serbia is the only European country that has refused to align with EU sanctions following Russia’s invasion. It continues signing cooperation agreements with Moscow.

Albania, a NATO member since 2009 and a candidate for EU membership, has voiced its full support for Kyiv against Russia’s invasion. It has provided military assistance in the form of ammunition and training of Ukrainian military. It was among the first countries offering shelter to Ukrainian refugees. It has joined international sanctions against Russian officials and institutions.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in the last two years, Albania joined the US in initiating resolutions against Russia’s invasion.

# Norway’s King warded in hospital at Malaysia’s resort island of Langkawi

Langkawi (Malaysia (AP): Europe’s oldest monarch, King Harald V of Norway, remained hospitalised in Malaysia on Wednesday, in the country’s northern resort island of Langkawi, after falling ill while on vacation.

Malaysian national news agency Bernama said the 87-year-old monarch was undergoing treatment at the Sultanah Mahliha Hospital in Langkawi. The report cited unnamed sources as saying he was staying at the hospital’s Royal Suite.

Norwegian TV 2 said the king’s condition is stable, citing the hospital. The hospital declined to comment when contacted by The Associated Press. Malaysia’s health ministry told the media to wait for a possible statement.

The royal palace in Oslo said on Tuesday that the king was hospitalised with an infection but did not give further details. The palace said it may send a statement out later Wednesday.

Two days before his birthday last week, Norwegian news agency NTB said that the king would be undertaking a private trip abroad together with his wife Queen Sonja, without specifying the destination or dates.

The monarch, who has been seen using crutches in recent years, has been repeat-

edly ill over the past months, raising concern about the head of state’s health. In January, the palace said he was on sick leave until February 2 because of a respiratory infection.

In December, he was admitted to a hospital with an infection and was treated with intravenous antibiotics. He also was hospitalised last August with a fever.

Still, Harald has repeatedly said he has no plans to abdicate, unlike his second cousin Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, who stunned Danes when she announced her step in a New Year’s speech. Each time the king was reported ill, his 50-year-old son, Crown Prince Haakon, has taken over his duties in line with the protocol.

The palace in Oslo told NTB said there were no plans to alter a planned trip by Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit on Wednesday and Thursday to southern Norway.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
HARBOUR WORKS DIVISION NO.1  
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE  
e-TCN No. CE/HWD/ACCTS/22/162, dtd: 20.02.2024  
Name of the work: Cleaning of debris from Roads, berms, backup space & disposal of dredged materials from Port area i.e. from Gate No.4 area to MPB junction to NO-1 via CQ, SQ and EQ area, connecting Road from T-Junction to New IOB in IOHP area and 3-B road (4 lane) leading from IOHP area to Wagon Tippler (one year). Put to tender value: Rs.1,27,11,447.66 plus GST as applicable. Last date & time of submission of tender through online bidding is 18.03.2024 up to 11.15 Hrs. For details, please log on to the Website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Harbour Works Division No.1, Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/S/1/2023-2024 dtd: 27.02.2024

**कार्यालय नगर निगम, ऋषिकेश**  
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Ph : 0135-2430015, 18003135229

**निविदा शुद्धि-पत्र**

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगर निगम ऋषिकेश क्षेत्रांतर्गत आई-एनएसबी0टी0 की पार्किंग हेतु इच्छुक एवं अनुमोदी कम्पनी / फर्मों से ई-निविदा दिनांक-16.02.2024 से 29.02.2024 सांय 3:00 बजे तक दोहरी निविदा प्रणाली (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय) के अन्तर्गत नगर निगम ऋषिकेश के कार्यालय पत्रांक सं०- 3802 / कर0अनु० / 2023-24 दिनांक 15.02.2024 को ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गई थी, जिसकी प्री-बिड पृच्छाएं यथोचित शुद्धियों/संशोधनों सहित निस्तारित कर दी गई है, जो निविदा पोर्टल [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर देखी जा सकती हैं। साथ ही उक्त निविदा की अन्तिम तिथि दिनांक-29.02.2024 से विस्तारित करते हुये दिनांक - 02.03.2024 अपराह्न 03 बजे तक की जाती है।  
पत्रांक: 3937 / कर0अनु० / 2023-24  
दिनांक : 28.02.2024

**सहायक नगर आयुक्त**  
नगर निगम, ऋषिकेश



# Semiconductor manufacturing in India next big space: MeitY Secy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic manufacturing of semiconductors is the next big space and many companies are expected to venture into this segment, a senior MeitY official said on Wednesday adding that a USD 2 billion digital economy is what India seriously needs. S Krishnan, Secretary of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), while speaking virtually at the India Digital Summit (IDS) 2024 said the digital economy is expected to grow at a faster pace in the next few years. "Semiconductors is the other big space. More companies are likely to come into the space...Our interest in semiconductors is open," he said adding that in the next 5-10 years semiconductor manufacturing in the country is expected to come up in a big way. About 20 lakh people are employed in the electronics manufacturing sector in the country and the government would like these jobs to go up to about 45 lakh, he added. "We expect the digital



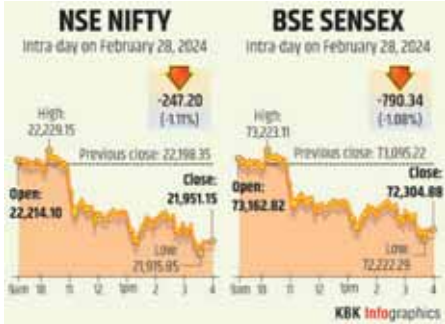
economy to really grow at an increasing pace in the next few years. A USD 2 billion digital economy is what India seriously needs," Krishnan said. When asked about governance, hygiene and compliance with law for digital economies, Krishnan pointed out that regulators, much like the public, recognized the necessity of regulation. While balancing consumer protection and diverse requirements, regulations are thoroughly examined to ensure safeguarding of user information, he said. In the tech sphere, consistent collaboration among regulators was crucial, he added.

Similarly, maintaining ongoing dialogue with companies on various IT aspects is essential, Krishnan stated adding that the second key aspect involves formulating regulations to ensure compliance. On the proposed Digital India legislation, he said efforts were being made to enhance it with additional elements. The ministry is exploring ways to address a significant issue related to the idea and understanding of ideas, where different forms of control are in place, he said. Some of these controls occasionally generate issues, emphasizing the need for regulation, Krishnan said.

# Markets tumble due to selling in Reliance, banks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex tanked more than 1 per cent while Nifty declined below the 22,000 level on Wednesday due to selling in index heavyweight Reliance Industries and bank stocks amid weak global market trends. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 790.34 points or 1.08 per cent to settle at 72,304.88 with 26 of its constituents ending in the red and four in the green. During the day, it tanked 872.93 points or 1.19 per cent to a low of 72,222.29. The Nifty slumped 247.20 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 21,951.15. As many as 46 Nifty shares closed with losses while four advanced. Among the Sensex firms, Power Grid fell the most by 4.43 per cent due to profit booking by investors. Reliance Industries dropped around 2 per cent, contributing 185.59 points to the slide. IndusInd Bank, Maruti, Wipro, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra and UltraTech Cement were the biggest laggards. Hindustan Unilever, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services and Bharti Airtel were the gainers. "Indian markets were jittery mirroring weak global markets. Global investors are awaiting the key US economic data like personal consumption expenditure, in anticipation of good forecast there is a fear that Fed rate cut maybe delayed. Turmoil in China's property sector further impacted the Asian market trend," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined by 1.94 per cent and midcap index went lower by 1.82 per cent. All the indices ended lower. Utilities fell by 2.82 per cent, oil & gas declined 2.19 per cent, realty tanked 2.12 per cent, telecommunication



dipped 1.92 per cent, services (1.89 per cent) and commodities (1.85 per cent). Shares of debt-laden Vodafone Idea plummeted around 14 per cent after the fundraising announcement by the company failed to lift investors' sentiment. Shares of One97 Communications Ltd, the owner of the Paytm brand, fell 5 per cent to hit a lower circuit limit. A total of 2,963 stocks declined while 881 advanced and 77 remained unchanged. In Asian markets, Seoul settled with gains while Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended mostly higher on Tuesday. The BSE benchmark climbed 305.09 points or 0.42 per cent to settle at 73,095.22 on Tuesday. The Nifty ended 76.30 points or 0.34 per cent up at 22,198.35. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.90 per cent to USD 82.90 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,509.16 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses during the 'Bhoomi Pujan' and foundation stone laying ceremony of residential complex 'Hongirana' for the Income Tax officers and staffers, in Bengaluru

# Bengaluru tax payers are giving us buoyancy: FM

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday hailed Bengaluru tax payers for their contributions in building a strong and 'Viksit Bharat', and said the Department of Revenue is running its entire national faceless income tax assessment scheme from Karnataka's capital city. Speaking after laying the foundation stone for the upcoming complex "HONGIRANA" for Income Tax officers and staff here, she said the tax payers of Bengaluru have been absolutely giving us the buoyancy, and thanked all individual and corporate taxpayers in this region for making sure for building a strong and 'Viksit Bharat'. "Your contribution is relentless. There has never been a dip. So thank you very much Bengaluru for keeping that momentum up", she said. Sitharaman also emphasised the investments that the Central government is making in Bengaluru. She noted that the Government has brought about the entire faceless system for income tax assessment and ease of doing business to ensure that tax assessees are not harassed and do not have

the perception that discretion of the officer who they have to go and sit and talk to will make their tax payment difficult. She said the Department's entire central processing centre — the digital processing unit which governs the entire country — is located in Bengaluru, driving the income tax system for the whole nation. The faceless system was a big step forward in ease of doing business. "So money doesn't go away from Karnataka. It comes back as well and comes back not just like that...Yes it comes back for roads, it comes back for connectivity, it comes back for metro, it comes back for rail, it comes back for the suburban railway system, It comes back for Mangaluru port, it comes back for the 'Kalyana' Karnataka (region) and so on", Sitharaman said. "But specifically, I want to highlight the fact that Department of Revenue's entire national faceless scheme runs from Bengaluru and you can imagine therefore, the scale of investment which would have happened for that...I am very happy and proud the manpower is also from Bengaluru and they run the whole system for the country," the Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka said.



# Vodafone Idea shares tumble 14 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of debt-laden Vodafone Idea Ltd on Wednesday plummeted 14 per cent after the company's fundraising announcement failed to lift investors' sentiment. The stock plunged 13.99 per cent to settle at Rs 13.65 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 14.93 per cent to Rs 13.50. It fell 13.88 per cent to settle at Rs 13.65 on the NSE. During the day, it slumped 14.82 per cent to Rs 13.50 — its lower circuit limit. The company's market capitalisation (mcap) eroded by Rs 10,806.71 crore to Rs 66,447.95 crore. Struggling telecom firm Vodafone Idea on Tuesday said its board has approved raising up to Rs 20,000 crore in equity from promoters and other investors by June as it looks to shore up finances for the much-delayed 5G rollout and strengthening 4G services. The debt-laden firm, where the government also holds just over 33 per cent equity stake, plans to raise Rs 45,000 crore through a mix of equity and debt with hopes of matching services offered by rivals Jio and Bharti Airtel that could arrest subscriber churn. The fundraising, when it happens, will also arm Vodafone Idea with firepower to improve competitive positioning in the Indian telecom market, where it trails larger rivals Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, by a wide margin. Vodafone Idea has been fighting a desperate battle for survival -- it has a debt of Rs 2.1 lakh crore, is reporting quarterly losses, and is haemorrhaging subscribers month after month.

# AI Express aims 40 per cent increase in flights

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Low cost carrier Air India Express plans to operate 40 per cent more flights in the next financial year as well as start services to Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, sources said on Wednesday. The Tata Group-owned airline — which is in the process of merging AirAsia India, now rebranded AIX Connect — is expanding its fleet and expects to complete the acquisition of 50 white tail Boeing 737 Max aircraft by December this year, the sources close to the development said. At least 13 of these 50 planes have already been inducted

into its fleet. Currently, it operates 350 flights daily and has a fleet of 69 planes. Generally, a white tail aircraft means that it was actually meant to be delivered to another carrier by the manufacturer. In this case, another source in the know said the planes that are being taken by Air India Express were originally for a foreign carrier, which decided not to go ahead with the order amid pandemic woes. Going forward, the sources said the airline will focus more on consolidating its operations on the domestic routes and will not be adding many



destinations locally. Services will be introduced in few international routes, including Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In the next fiscal, the carrier plans to operate 40 per cent more flights as the fleet will also be expanded, the sources

said. More number of flights and services to new destinations will be introduced during the upcoming summer and winter schedules. Summer schedule starts from late March to late October and winter schedule commences from late October to late

March. At present, the airline has around 1,300 pilots, including 400 from AirAsia India. About 400 pilots are under training, they added. Regarding the progress on merging AIX Connect with Air India Express, the sources said the merger is expected to be completed by the second quarter of the next financial year. Once the merger is fully complete then all the planes of AIX Connect will be under the air operator permit of Air India Express. Currently, three A320neo planes of AIX Connect are under Air India Express' air operator permit.

# India super rich allocate 32 per cent of their wealth in housing properties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's super rich have allocated 32 per cent of their wealth in residential properties in the country and overseas, Knight Frank said in a report on Wednesday. As per real estate consultant Knight Frank's The Wealth Report 2024, 32 per cent of India's Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individuals' (UHNWIs) wealth is allocated towards residential real estate asset class. Nearly 14 per cent of their residential portfolio is allocated outside India. UHNWIs are individuals with a net worth of USD 30 million and above. On an average, an Indian UHNWI owns 2.57 homes while a sizable 28 per cent have rented out their second homes during 2023, the report said. According to Knight Frank, about 12 per cent of the country's UHNWIs plan to buy a new home in 2024. A similar percentage of wealthy individuals in India purchased a new home last year. Globally, 22 per cent of the ultra-wealthy are expected to purchase a home in 2024. Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said, "The prime residential assets continue to be the



mainstream investment avenue for ultra-wealthy individuals in the country." Separately, the report noted that Mumbai ranked 8th on Knight Frank's Prime International Residential Index (PIRI) index in 2023 as compared to the 37th rank in 2022, driven by 10 per cent year-on-year growth in terms of annual luxury residential price rise. This jump has marked a place for Mumbai in the top 10 leading luxury residential markets. Manila (26 per cent growth) leads the rankings while last year's frontrunner Dubai (16 per cent) slipped one spot. The Bahamas (15 per cent) comes in the third place with Algarve and Cape Town (both 12.3 per cent) completing the top five. Among other Indian cities, Delhi ranked 37th and show-

cased a rise of 4.2 per cent year-on-year in 2023 as compared to the 77th rank in 2022. Bengaluru stands at the 59th rank compared to 63rd in 2022 recording a 2.2 per cent year-on-year increase in 2023. "The outlook for 2024 remains bright as Mumbai with a 5.5 per cent prime price growth forecast, ranks second among the 25 cities globally. As we navigate the complexities of the global market, India's emergence as a prime destination for luxury real estate investment is undeniable," Bajjal said. Of the 100 luxury residential markets tracked, 80 recorded positive to neutral annual price growth. Asia-Pacific (3.8 per cent) pipped the Americas (3.6 per cent) to the title of the strongest-performing world region, with Europe, the Middle East, and Africa trailing (2.6 per cent).

# India retail sector to reach USD 2 trillion in next decade: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's retail sector is expected to grow at 9-10 per cent to reach USD 2 trillion in the next decade with the country's consumption story continuing to remain strong with steady growth, according to a report. Yet, organised retailers would need to sustain performance and continue to grow shares as the sector is going through key shifts impacting the pace and shape of growth, said the report by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Retailers Association of India (RAI).



While income growth remains steady, and consumers are optimistic about personal income outlook, consumers are increasingly looking to spend on "experiences" or save more through newer or nascent vehicles, it said. "The Indian retail sector will more than double in size to USD 2 trillion in the next decade —

across categories and formats — and the successful retailers are the ones who continue to challenge the perceived growth profitability trade-off," BCG Managing Director and Senior Partner Abheek Singh said. The report said, "India retail (is) expected to grow at 9-10 per cent to reach USD 2 trillion in the next decade." Historically, it added organised retail has outperformed underlying category growth but a slowdown was seen in 2023. The slowdown in growth was reflected across segments in the recent quarters, it noted.

# Airtel switches to recycled PVC SIM cards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel, one of India's leading telecommunications service providers, in partnership with IDEMIA Secure Transactions, today announced that it has switched from virgin plastic to recycled PVC SIM cards. This is in line with the company's commitment to encouraging the adoption of circular business practices. IDEMIA Secure Transactions, a division of IDEMIA Group, is a leading provider of payment and connectivity solutions for financial institutions, mobile network operators and automotive manufacturers. An industry first in India, Airtel is the only telecommunications service provider to switch to recycled plastic SIM cards. With this migration, the generation of over 165 tonnes of virgin plastic will be limited which will further reduce the generation of over 690 tonnes of CO2 equivalent in one year. Pankaj Miglani, Director — Supply Chain, Bharti Airtel, said, "We are delighted to announce yet another first as we continue to lead the Indian telecom industry.

# Tata firm Agratas to set up UK biggest EV battery factory

PTI ■ LONDON

Agratas, Tata Group's global battery business, on Wednesday confirmed that it will build Britain's biggest electric vehicle battery manufacturing facility in Somerset, south-west England. The so-called "gigafactory", announced last year, will be built on the Gravity Smart Campus near Bridgwater in Somerset with a community-first approach, involving locals to learn more about and be a part of the project. The company said the 40 GWh factory is set to contribute almost half of the projected battery manufacturing capacity required for the UK automotive sector by the early 2030s. "Our multi-billion-pound investment will bring state-of-the-art technology to



Somerset, helping to supercharge Britain's transition to electric mobility whilst creating thousands of jobs in the process," said Tom Flack, CEO of Agratas. "We care deeply about the communities we operate in, so it's imperative to us that we work with, and listen to, our new neighbours

as we build our factory in Somerset. That's why we'll be holding an event for local residents very soon, so we can share more about our plans and introduce our team to the community," he said. Agratas said it will work closely with local and regional partners, including Somerset Council, Bridgwater and Taunton College, and the wider Gravity Smart Campus, to deliver bespoke education and training programmes in the region, creating local jobs for local people. The factory itself will create up to 4,000 new high-skilled green tech jobs in the area, with thousands more expected to be created in the UK supply chain. Residents living near the site of the future gigafactory campus are set to receive a leaflet through the post this week followed by regular updates on the site's progress. Preliminary works on the site are in progress, with piling to establish the factory's foundations set to start in the coming months. Construction will be completed in phases, with battery production set to begin in 2026.

# Disney, Reliance to merge India media operations

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Walt Disney Co and Reliance Industries on Wednesday announced signing of binding pacts to merge their media operations in India to create a Rs 70,000 crore behemoth. Reliance and its affiliates will hold a 63.16 per cent stake in the combined entity that will house two streaming services and 120 television channels. Disney will hold the remaining 36.84 per cent stake, the companies said in a statement. Reliance has also agreed to invest at closing Rs 11,500 crore into the joint venture to give it muscles to fight rivals such as Japan's Sony and Netflix.

Disney+Hotstar has seen its paid subscriber base decline from around 55 million to about 40 million in the first quarter of this financial year because of Reliance's Jio Cinemas winning exclusive rights for live sports. The combined entity will have the largest OTT subscriber base and close to 120 channels in the country. Media ventures of Reliance are currently housed in Network 18, which owns TV18 news channels as well as a plethora of entertainment (under the 'Colors' brand) and sports channels. Besides, NW18 has stakes in moneycontrol.Com, bookmyshow and also publishes

magazines. It also owns the news channels CNBC/CNN. Reliance separately owns a movie production arm - JioStudios - and majority stakes in two listed cable distribution companies, Den and Hathway. Disney+Hotstar was launched in India in 2020, post the acquisition of the entertainment assets of 21st Century Fox at a valuation of USD 71.3 billion, thereby taking over the operations of Star India and Hotstar. It housed entertainment and cinema channels such as StarPlus and StarGold as well as sports channels like Star Sports. While Disney+Hotstar rapidly increased their subscriber base initially with the streaming

rights of cricket matches (IPL, World Cup), it lost the bid for the digital streaming rights in 2023-27 cycle, which was won by Reliance-backed Viacom18 for USD 720 billion, 12.92 per cent higher than what Star India had paid on an average per match value. Nita Ambani will head the joint venture while Uday Shankar will be the vice chairperson. "Reliance Industries Ltd (and its affiliate) Viacom 18 Media Pvt Ltd and The Walt Disney Company today announced the signing of binding definitive agreements to form a joint venture that will combine the businesses of Viacom18 and Star India," the statement said.



# Turmoil in Indian hockey

## HI head Turkey, secretary Bhola deny rift in joint statement



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India president Dilip Turkey and secretary general Bhola Nath Singh on Wednesday denied outgoing CEO Elena Norman's assertion of a rift between them, saying that they are "united" and working in the best interest of the sport. Norman resigned on Tuesday and in an interview to PTI she alleged that there was factionalism in the body. The 49-year-old Australian suggested that Turkey and Singh were at loggerheads and also complained of a difficult work environment. In a joint statement, Turkey and Singh rejected Norman's claims. "Recently there have been statements by outgoing officials published in the media, claiming that there are divisions within the organisation. This is not correct. We remain united in working together, and as always in the best interest of the sport," the two said. "Hockey India is an autonomous and professional body dedicated to the development of Indian hockey. Our primary objective as an organisation has been and continues to remain the welfare and progress of the sport of hockey and our athletes." Norman's resignation was the second blow to HI in the last few days after the Indian women's hockey team coach Janneke Schopman resigned, also complaining of a difficult work environment. Schopman had accused HI of giving step-motherly treatment to women's hockey. Turkey and Singh said HI has always treated all teams and players equally and also claimed to have built an environment of equality in the organisation. "We have built our ethos

around equity and equal opportunities right from the grassroots levels across states as well as on a national level," their statement read. "In this spirit, our entire focus remains on growing our talent, ensuring all hosted events are conducted with utmost professionalism and our national teams are receiving the best support to support their performance at the global stage." Norman began her tenure as the federation's first CEO back in 2011 with Narinder Batra as the head. After resigning, she stated that it was difficult for her to continue given the bickering inside HI. "There are two factions in Hockey India. There is (President) Dilip Turkey and I and there is (Secretary) Bholanath Singh, (Executive Director) Cdr. R K Srivastava and (Treasurer) Sekar J Manoharan," she said. "There are guys who want power and then there is (HI President) Dilip (Turkey) who is a nice guy, only after betterment of Indian hockey," she explained. Turkey and Singh said their focus is now on rebuilding the women's team, which failed to qualify for the Olympics, and helping the men's side that is due to compete in the quadrennial showpiece in Paris this year. "We will continue in this pursuit of excellence and rebuild the women's team with a fresh approach to providing the right infrastructure and training to enhance their performance," they stated. "In addition to this, we are cognisant of this being an Olympic year and are dedicated to aide the National Men's Team with the required support to stand on the podium yet again in the forthcoming Olympic Games in Paris this year."

## OLYMPICS

## Anju says Parul among ones to watch out for

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Athletics Federation of India vice-president Anju Bobby George on Wednesday said Asian Games gold-winning steeplechase runner Parul Chaudhary is among the ones to watch out for at this year's Paris Olympics where she expecting more than one medal in javelin throw. So far, nine Indian track-and-field athletes have qualified for the Games in July-August with defending gold-medallist Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Jena making the cut in javelin throw. Chaudhary shot into limelight with a gold in the 5000m and a silver in 3000m steeplechase events of the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. The 28-year-old is the first Indian to clock less than nine minutes in the 3000m women's steeplechase. "A bunch of athletes are performing really well in the international arena from athletics. We are aiming for three (medals) in javelin," she told PTI. Video on the sidelines of Bharat Sports Science Conclave in New Delhi on Wednesday. "Then we have long jumpers, we have triple jumpers, steeplechase runner Parul Chaudhary is among the ones to watch out for but a lot cannot be predicted about the Olympics," she added.

A legend in her own right, who won a trailblazing world championship bronze in long jump, George said she is mighty pleased with how technology has been incorporated to improve training of athletes. "A game-changer I can say, nothing was like this in our time, the changes that are happening in Indian sports, and sports science is playing a big role in every athlete's career. "Every athlete is challenging his body, he needs recovery and treatment, and it was not there in India (in the past), but now we are aiming for the Olympics. We are talking about sports science, doping issues, recovery and training, so it is a game changer I can say," she said. The other Indian athletes to have qualified for the Paris Games so far are Avinash Sable (men's 3000m steeplechase), Akashdeep Singh, Vikas Singh and Paramjeet Singh Bisht (men's 20km walk), Priyanka Goswami (women's 20km walk), and Murali Sreesankar (men's long jump).

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I Arun Chopra** S/O Madan Lal R/O H.No.63 Gali Krishna Nehru Colony Majitha Road Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Arun Kumar Chopra

**I, Harwinder Singh** S/O Balwant Singh R/O H.No.118, Sharma Colony Village Naushera Khurd, Majitha Road, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Harwinder Singh To Harvinder Singh

**I, Bhupinder Singh** S/O Baljit Singh R/O Vpo Gumanpura District Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Bhupinder Singh To Bhinderjeet Singh

**I, Sakshi** W/O Raminder Pal R/O Pati Puhle Ki Vpo - Sarhali Kalan Teh & Distt Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name Sakshi To Sakshi

**I Amarjeetsinh** Son Of Jagjir Singh Sandhu R/O Near Dana Mandi Guru Ramdas Colony Patti Distt. Tarn Taran Punjab. Have Changed My Name To Avtar Singh Sandhu.

**I Harwinder Singh** S/O Joginder Singh R/O 42-A, Gali No.6, Guru Amar Dass Avenue, Ajnala Road, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Harwinder Singh To Harwinder Singh Bhatia.

**I, Sukhwinder Kaur** Johal W/O Joginder Singh R/O Vpo Kasel District Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name From Sukhwinder Kaur Johal To Sukhwinder Kaur

**I, Nishan Singh** S/O Dayal Singh R/O H.No.195-C, New Partap Nagar, Gurlal Bazar Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Nishan Singh To Nishan Singh Gill.

**I, Bimla** W/O Jaipal Singh R/O Vill. Rawalwas Khurd, Distt Hisar (Haryana) hereby changed my name from Bimla to Bimla Devi for all future purposes. In future my name be called written and known as Bimla Devi

**I, Vikas Jangra** (Vikas) S/o Krishan Singh R/o Madan Heri, Tehsil Baas, Distt. Hisar declare that my names are Vikas Jangra and Vikas in my all documents. Vikas Jangra and Vikas, both are my names i.e. same person.

**I, Surender** S/O Sh.Hari Chand R/O 184, Sant Nagar, Old Bus Stand, Ward No.- 8 Teh Gohana, Distt Sonapat have changed my name from Surender to Surrender Bazed for all future purposes.

**I, Sakshi Garg** W/O Hemant Jain R/O H.No 894 Krishna Nagar Kath Mandi, Sonapat Have Changed My Name To Sakshi Jain For All Purposes.

**I, Arya Ajith** Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of No. 17016806h Rank Hmt Name Ajith P T R/O Village Ranni - Perunad, Po - Koonamkara, Tehsil - Ranni, District - Pathanamthitta, State - Kerala - 689711, Have Changed My Name From Arya Ajith To Arya Muralleedharan In My Spouse Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Savitri Devi** Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of Jc-423572f Rank Sub Name - Hari Ram R/O Village - Dhani Charan, Po - Kallyasar, Tehsil - Malsisar, District - Jhunjhunu, State - Rajasthan - 331026, Have Changed My Name From Savitri Devi To Savitri And Changed My Date Of Birth From 10/09/1978 To 20/06/1980 In My Spouse Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Annamma K A** Is Mother Of No. 14685637m Rank Cfn Name Aneesh N M R/O Village - Koodal, Po - Muriinjakkal, Tehsil - Konni, District - Pathanamthitta, State - Kerala - 689693, Have Changed My Date Of Birth From 13/02/1963 To 02/09/1959 In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Paramjit Kaur** Is Mother Of 14946781k Rank Nk Name Inderjit Singh R/O Vpo Mahla Kalan, Tehsil - Baghapurana, District - Moga, State - Punjab - 142038, Have Changed My Name From Paramjit Kaur To Parmjit Kaur And Changed My Date Of Birth From 01/07/1973 To 15/09/1968 In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Subramanyam N** Is Father Of No. 14928718m Rank Hav Name Bairaapa N R/O Vpo 197 Ramapuram, Tehsil - Gudipala, District - Chittoor, State - A.P. - 517403, Have Changed My Name From Subramanyam N To N Subramanyam In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Kannama** Is Mother Of No. 14928718m Rank Hav Name - Bairaapa N R/O Vpo 197 Ramapuram, Tehsil - Gudipala, District - Chittoor, State - A.P. - 517403, Have Changed My Name From Kannama To N Kannemma In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Rajinder Kaur** Is Mother Of 14945133p Rank Nk Name Manjinder Singh R/O Vpo Bhagowal, Tehsil - Batala, District - Gurdaspur, State - Punjab - 143511, Have Changed My Date Of Birth From 05/04/1965 To 01/01/1965 In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Nishan Singh** Is Father Of 14945133p Rank Nk Name Manjinder Singh R/O Vpo - Bhagowal, Tehsil - Batala, District - Gurdaspur, State - Punjab - 143511, Have Changed My Date Of Birth From 04/07/1963 To 01/01/1965 In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Shraddha Edake** Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of No. 18013392m Rank Nk Name Honmane Abhijeet Dilip R/O Village - Devrashtre, Tehsil - Kadegaon, District - Sangli, State - Maharashtra, Po - 415303, Have Changed My Name From Shraddha Edake To Shraddha Abhijeet Honmane In My Spouse Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Sunita Devi** Is Legally Wedded Spouse Of 14673863x Rank Hav Name Pardeep Kumar R/O Village - Pichpocha Khurd, Po - Pichpocha Kalan, Tehsil - Charkhi Dadri, District - Bhiwani, State - Haryana - 127310, Have Changed My Date Of Birth From 08/05/1986 To 06/05/1988 In My Spouse Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Kusumbai** Is Mother Of No. 15707453m Rank Signm Name Sonawane Yogesh Ramdas R/O Village - Ankute, Po - Dhamode, Tehsil - Yeola, District - Nashik, State - Maharashtra - 423403, Have Changed My Name From Kusumbai To Kusum Ramdas Sonawane In My Son's Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 27.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Gulfam** S/o Abdul Latif R/O Alampura-1, Saharanpur-247001 UP have changed my name from Gulfam to Gulfam Ahamad.

**I, Bharti Rani** W/o Jagmohan R/O 1169, Durga Colony, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Bharti Rani to Sonia.

**I, Rajesh Kumar** S/o Chaman Lal R/O H.No.B-1/191, Raviddas Nagar, Maqsudn, Jalandhar-1 have chnaged my daughter's name from Beronika to Beronika Kumar.

**I, Laxmi Kaur** W/o Harnek Singh R/O Village Kailon Tehsil & Distt SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab declare that Laxmi Kaur and Lachmi Devi is the one and the same person, now let me be known as Laxmi Kaur.

**I Kashish Kumar** @ Krishan Narang R/O H.No.1348 - A, Near NTC, School Rajpura distt Patiala declare that in some documents my father's name is written Krishan Narang. So Krishan Kumar @ Krishan Narang is the same person. Please Note

**I, A Ranemma** is legally Mother of Service No. 15323210X Rank: HAV Name: Somasekhar A residing at Village Bettahalli Layout Post Vidyananyapura, Taluk Bengaluru North, Distt. Bengaluru (Urban) (State) Karnataka Pin code-560097, have changed my name from A Ranamma to A Ranemma.

**I, A Purushotham** is legally Father of Service No. 15323210X Rank: HAV Name: Somasekhar A residing at Village Bettahalli Layout Post Vidyananyapura, Taluk Bengaluru North, Distt. Bengaluru (Urban) (State) Karnataka Pin code-560097, have changed my name from Purushotham A to A Purushotham.

**I, Army No. 17005721M** Rank: NK, Name: Sanad Kumar Unit: 2C2W C/o 56 APO Pin 906302 R/O Tiwaripur Sarh, Bhitargaon, P.O. B.B.Gaon, Dist. Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-209209 have change my father's Name from Mahesh Shukla to Mahesh.

**I Sanjay Gupta** S/o Sh. Om Parkash Gupta R/O House No. 667, First Floor, U/E, Near Mangal Bazar, Sector-5, Karnal have changed my name from Sanjay Mittal to Sanjay Gupta for all future purposes.

**I, Arjun** s/o Bishan Dass r/o Flat No. 601, E-Block, Village Chohak, Infinity Heights G-3S, Jalandhar-144005, Punjab have changed my name from Arjun to Arjun Kaushal.

**I, Karan** S/o Ashok Kumar R/O B-11-0566, Shekwan Khooh, Kartarpur (Rural), Jalandhar, Punjab- 144801, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Karan Bhatti.

**I, Nishi Anthony** W/o Avishek Kumar Roy R/O Flat No. 1501, Tower C, Mahindra Luminare, Sector-59, Opposite Ireo Grand Arch, Gurugram, Gurgaon, Haryana- 122011. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Balkar Singh.

**I, Balkar Singh** Rana S/o Kartar Singh R/o Safdarpur, Safdarpur, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-144205, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Balkar Singh.

**I, Lakshay** S/o Devender Kumar R/o House no 36 Weavers colony, Panipat, Haryana- 132103. Declare that Name of My Father and My Mother has been wrongly written as Devinder and Kavita in my 10 Class Certificate and 12th Class Certificate. The actual name of My Father and My Mother are Devender kumar and kavita Rani, which may be amended accordingly.

**I, Musarf Husain** S/o Shafik Ahmed R/o H.No. EQ-142, Pacca Bagh, Near Rainak Bazar, Jalandhar-144001, Punjab have changed my name as Musarrarf Hussain.

**I, hitherto known as** Karan Singh S/o Harbhajan Singh residing at VPO. Gakkhal, Distt.Jalandhar, Punjab-144002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Singh Karan.

**I Ankush Kumar** Pabbi s/o Sukhjitt Kumar r/o VPO Baghana, Tehsil Phagwara, Distt. Kapurthala have changed my minor daughter's name from Shivani to Shivani Pabbi.

**I Manish Trehan** S/o Surinder Trehan R/o # 744, First Floor, Sector 40-A, Chandigarh declare that after marriage my wife has changed her name from Amita Sugand to Amita Trehan.

**I, Satwinder Kaur** W/o Arvinder Singh R/o Kila Farm, Usmanpur, Pehowa, Kurukshetra has changed My Minor Daughter Name Gurhans Kaur to Given Name Gurhans And Surname Kaur.

**I, Kulwant Singh** S/o Hazara Singh Vill Malikpur, Pehowa, Kulukshetra Have Changed My Name Kulwant Singh.

**I, Sukhbir Singh** S/o Mahango Singh R/o Gandhi Nagar, Gau Charand Ward No.1, Pehowa, Kurukshetra have changed my given name Sukhbir Surname Singh.

**I, Kamaljeet Kaur** W/o Sukhbir Singh R/o Gandhi Nagar, Gau Charand Ward No.2, Pehowa, Kurukshetra have changed my given name Kamaljeet Surname Kaur.

**I, Ranjot Singh** S/o Gurpreet Singh R/o Bhatthal Bhatthlan, Patiala, Punjab have changed my name Singh Ranjot.

**I, Gurbinder Singh** S/O Amarjit Singh R/O 110 Parshu Ram Nagar Near Jalbera Road Ambala City have changed my name To Gurbinder Singh Sandhu

**I, Monika Kalra** W/o Deepak Kumar R/o 148-b Ward No.8 Mohalla Kazian, Sadaura, Yamuna Nagar have changed my name Monika Kalra to Monika Adlakha

**I, Ranjit Kaur** W/o Jasbir Singh R/o Jurasi Khurd, Pehowa, Kurukshetra have changed my name Ranjit Kaur to Ranjeet Kaur.

**I, Poonam** W/o Jaidev Sharma R/o 17/3, Chatravas Road Ward No.12,Kaithal have changed my name Poonam Sharma.

**I, Narinder Kaur** W/o Jasbir Singh R/o Saini Majra, Tho, Kurukshetra have changed my name Narender Kaur.

**I, Satya Wan** S/o Ramdiya R/o Majra Nand Karan, Kaithal have changed my name Satyawan.

**I Ranjna Sharma** W/o Amit Kumar R/o LIG Flat 117, Sector 57, SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab have changed my name from Ranjna Sharma to Neha Sharma.

**I Lukesh Sharma** W/o Tarun Kaushal R/o House No. 1438, Pushpac Complex, Sector 49-B, Chandigarh have changed my name from Lukesh Sharma to Lukesh Kaushal.

**I Shubham** S/o Gurmukh Singh R/o House No 2522, Mariwala Town Manimajra Chandigarh have changed my name from Shubham to Subham.

**I Savatri** wife Kartar Singh, village Aleva tehsil Aleva district. Jind, Haryana, I would like to inform that I have changed my name from Savitri Devi to Savitri so that in future I should be known by this name.

**I, Makhan Lal** S/o Sh. Banwari Lal Swamy r/o H.No.-14/40, Street mandir, Ram Colony, Barnala Road, Sirsa have changed my name to Makhan Lal Swamy.

**I, Santosh Swamy** W/o Sh. Makhan Lal Swamy r/o H.No.-14/40, Street mandir, Ram Colony, Barnala Road, Sirsa have changed my name to Santosh Swami.

**I Paramjit Kaur** W/O Surjit Singh R/O Village Darvesh Pind, Tehsil Phagwara, District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Paramjit Kaur To Baljit Kaur.

**I Amanjot** W/O Sukhpreet Singh R/O Vpo. Samundra Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Kaur Amanjot.

**I Sulakhn Singh** S/O Gurdit Singh R/O Village Mankayana Bal Kalan Amritsar Punjab India Have Chnged My Name From Salakhn Singh To Sulakhn Singh.

**I Sikanderjit Singh** S/O Gurdeep Singh R/O Vpo. Chand Purana District Moga Have Changed My Name To Sikanderjit Singh Gill.

**I Jasvir Singh** S/O Gurbakhsh Singh R/O Vpo. Kalie Wala Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name From Jasvir Singh To Jasveer Singh.

**I Paramjeet Kaur** W/O Jasveer Singh R/O Vpo. Kalie Wala Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name From Paramjeet Kaur To Paramjit Kaur.

**I Sandeep Singh** Toor S/O Maghar Singh R/O Vpo. Khosa Pando Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name To Sandeep Singh.

**I Gursewak Singh** Kingara S/O Gurcharn Singh R/O Vpo. Bhodipura Distt. Bathinda Have Changed My Name To Gursewak Singh.

**I Raj Kali** S/O Kaur Muhannad R/O Vpo. Sukhanand Distt. Moga Have Changed My Name To Raj Ali.

**I Kamaljit Singh** S/O Manmeet Singh R/O H.No.-29 Guru Angad Dev Nagar Basant Avenue Distt. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To To Kamaljeet Singh.

**I Bindu Gera** W/O Chander Parkash R/O H.No.-1304/4 Azad Nagar Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Bindu Batra.

**I Tejinder Pal Singh** Kainth S/O Jawsant Singh R/O Patti Bhagu Ki Vpo. Galib Kalan Tehsil Jagraon (Ludhiana) Have Changed My Name To Tejinderpal Singh.

**I Parminder Kaur** Kainth W/O Tejinderpal Singh R/O Patti Bhagu Ki Vpo. Galib Kalan Tehsil Jagraon (Ludhiana) Have Changed My Name To Parminder Kaur.

**I Balkar Singh** Bassi S/O Bhag Singh R/O Village Kalampura Tehsil Jagraon Distt. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Balkar Singh.

**I, No. 3214348m** Rank Sep Name Dharmendra Singh R/O Vpo - Ajan, Tehsil - Kumerh, District - Bharatpur, State - Rajasthan - 321025, In My Army Service Record My Mother's Name Wrongly Mentioned As Dharmvati Devi While Her Actual Name Is Dharmvati As Per All Her Government Documents. Now, I Want To Make It Correct As Dharmvati In My Army Service Record Vide Affidavit 28.02.2024 Before Notary Public Hisar.

**I, Bhagwan Dass** Gupta s/o Krishan Chand r/o 112 Sainik Board Road, Industrial Area, Fatehabad, Haryana 125050 have changed my name from Bhagwan Dass to Bhagwan Dass Gupta for all future purposes

**I, Salochna Rani** w/o Bhagwan Dass Gupta r/o 112 Sainik Board Road, Industrial Area, Fatehabad, Haryana 125050 have changed my name from Slochna Rani Gupta to Salochna Rani for all future purposes

**I, Krishan Kumar** S/o Sh. Balbir Singh r/o Village Bangoan Tehsil & District Fatehabad declares that in my daughter Divya's 10th certificate my wife's name wrongly mention Geeta. But her correct name is Geeta Kumari. I want to update her correct name in my daughter Divya's 10th certificate.

**I, No.15615138w** Hav Ajit Singh Chauhan Resident Of Village- Nagda, Post- Nagda, Tehsil- Khachrod, District- State- Mp, Pin- 456331, Have Changed My Son Name From Priyansh To Priyansh Singh Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb86934699177133w Dated 17 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I, No.15615138w** Hav Ajit Singh Chauhan Resident Of Village- Nagda, Post- Nagda, Tehsil- Khachrod, District- State- Mp, Pin- 456331, Have Changed My Name From Sonu To Sonu Kanwar Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb86935562535241w Dated 17 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I, Sonu** Spouse Of No.15615138w Hav Ajit Singh Chauhan Resident Of Village- Nagda, Post- Nagda, Tehsil- Khachrod, District- State- Mp, Pin- 456331, Have Changed My Name From Sonu To Sonu Kanwar Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb86935562535241w Dated 17 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot.

**I, Manoj Kumar** Resident Of Village- Sakrauli, Post- Marhapur, Tehsil- Bangmau, District- Unnao, State- Up, Pin- 209868, Have Changed My Father Name From Shrivnath Singh To Shrivnath Yadav Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb86831177700480w Dated 17 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I Mukesh Kumari** Spouse Of No 15614879f Hav Surender Singh Resident Of Village - Bhainsali, Post - Rampura Beri, Tehsil - Rajgarh, District - Churu, State - Rajasthan, Pin - 331301 Have Change My Name From Mukesh Kumari To Mukesh Devi Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb90662611647791w Dated 28 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I, No.14447231L** Hav Shinde Sachin Jalindar Resident Of Village- Kharda, Post- Kharda, Tehsil- Jamkhed, District- Ahmadnagar, State- Maharashtra, Pin- 413204, Have Changed My Son Name From Sanket To Sanket Sachin Shinde Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb90668552618562w Dated 28 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I, No.14447231L** Hav Shinde Sachin Jalindar Resident Of Village- Kharda, Post- Kharda, Tehsil- Jamkhed, District- Ahmadnagar, State- Maharashtra, Pin- 413204, Have Changed My Son Name From Sujal To Sujal Sachin Shinde Vide Affidavit No.In-Pb90668514707722w Dated 28 Feb 2024 Before Notary Public Pathankot

**I, Preeti** D/O Gumam Singh R/O Village Mubarakpur, Tehsil Derabassi, Sas Nagar, Mohali, Have Changed My Name From Preeti To Preeti Kaur.

**I Vijay Kumar** Son Of Sh. Anand Kumar R/O Village - Kami, Po - Tharu, Teh. & District - Sonipat (Haryana) Have Changed My Name From Vijay Kumar To Vijay Vide Affidavit Dated 28 Feb 2024 Before Sonipat (Haryana) Court. In Future I Should Be Known As Vijay.

**I Divyajot Kaur** W/O Amardeep Singh R/O Ward No 9 Mohalla Bhag Mata Una Declare That I have changed My Name From Divyajot Kaur Bhatia To Divyajot Kaur..

**I, Asha Devi** W/O Rughuveer Lal Aged 52 Yrs R/O Vpo Rattangarh Tehsil & Distt. Pathankot (Punjab) Declare That My Name Is Wrongly Written As Asha Devi W/O Rughuveer Lal In My Aadhar & Voter Card But In My Son's 10th Certificate And His Dob Certificate My Correct Name Is Saroj Kumari W/O Rughuveer Lal.I Want To Change/Correction My Name From Asha Devi W/O Rughuveer Lal To Saroj Kumari W/O Rughuveer Lal.

**I Husanpreet Singh** S/o Mandeep Singh R/O Vill. Sahina Teh. Tapa Distt. Barnala have changed my name Husanpreet Singh Alias Preet Singh Samra.

**I Pushpinder Kaur** W/o Mandeep Singh R/O Vill. Sahina Teh. Tapa Distt. Barnala have changed my name Pushpinder Kaur Alias Kulwant kaur Samra.

**I Swaran Singh** S/o Hansa Singh R/o Village Aulia, PO. Umarpur, Tehsil Mukerian, Distt. Hoshiarpur have changed my name from Swaran Singh to Sawarn Singh.

**I, Pardip Singh** S/o Lal Singh R/O Vpo. Chaminda (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Pardeep Singh.

**I Lovepreet Rani** W/o Jagmit Singh R/O Dayal Colony, Bajwara Hoshiarpur, Punjab That Lovepreet Rani and Love Preet Rani both names are of a same person concerned note.

**I, Jasmel Kaur** Baring W/o Surinder Singh R/O 1055/1 W.No. 5 Malekottla Road Raikot (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Jasmel Kaur.

**I, Surinder Singh** Baring S/o Surmukh Singh R/O 1055/1 W.No. 5 Malekottla Road Raikot (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Surinder Singh.

**I, Harbans Kaur** Aluna W/o Hardev Singh R/o Vpo. Bhaini Baringan (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Harbans Kaur.

**I, Lakhwinder Singh** Sran S/o Buta Singh Sran R/o Sarawan (Faridkot) have changed my minor son name from Vishivejeet Singh Sran to Vishavejeet Singh Sran.

**I, Sudarshna Devi** Legally Spouse of No 6879247N Ex Hav/Skt late Sohan Lal resident of H. No 335/4 Old Kairon Road Gali Khooh Wali Patti Teh, Patti Distt. Tarn Taran (Pb) I have changed my name from Sudarshna Devi to Darshna Kumari vide Affidavit date 28/02/2024 Before Distt. Court Tarn Taran.

**I, Sarabjit Kaur** Legally Spouse No 01087463Y Ex NK (TS) Kulwinder Singh R/o VPO, Jama Rai Tehsil & Distt. Tarn Taran Punjab. I have changed my name from Sarabjit Kaur to Sarabjeet Kaur vide Affidavit date 28/02/2024 before Distt. Court Tarn Taran.

**I Lovepreet Singh** Khokhar S/o Amrik Singh R/o Duwareana Road, Kotkapura (Faridkot) have changed my name to Lovepreet Singh.

**I Surinderbir Singh** S/O Satnam Singh R/O H.No 124 Vill BUGHA Tehsil & District Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name From Surinderbir Singh To Singh Is My Surname And Surinderbir Is My Given Name.

**I Paramjit Singh** R/O Ward No 3 Village Bagian Kalan Tehsil & District Tarn Taran Have Changed My Minor Son Name Simrandip Singh To Harsimrandeep Singh.

**I, Jaswinder Kaur** W/o Harbans Singh R/o St.No.5, Jagat Colony, Khanna (Ludhiana) also known as Jaswinder Kaur @ Jasminder Kaur, these both names are mine, one & same lady.

**I, Gaurisha Soni** D/o Mukesh Kumar R/O H.No.24, New Friends Colony, Barewal Road, Rajguru Nagar, Ludhiana (Punjab) have changed my name to Gaurisha.

**I, Mukesh Soni** S/o Pishori Lal R/O H.No.24, New Friends Colony, Barewal Road, Rajguru Nagar, Ludhiana (Punjab) have changed my name to Mukesh Kumar.

**I, Neeru Soni** W/o Mukesh Kumar R/o H.No.24, New Friends Colony, Barewal Road, Rajguru Nagar, Ludhiana (Punjab) have changed my name to Neeru.

**I, Meharbaan Kaur** D/O Sh



# RAHUL STILL FEELING SORE WHILE BATTING IN NETS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior India batter K L Rahul is unlikely to feature in the fifth and final Test against England in Dharamsala as he continues to feel sore in his right quadriceps. Rahul became unavailable after the series-opener in Hyderabad in January but as per BCCI, he was 90 per cent fit before the third Test in Rajkot earlier this month. Rahul has now travelled to London to get an expert opinion on his injury and with the series in the bag, the Indian team management will not take the risk of playing him in the Dharamsala Test beginning March 7. He needs to be fully fit before the IPL where he will lead Lucknow Super Giants and is expected to bat in the middle order to bolster his chances of making the India squad for the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean. "It is more to get an expert opinion (travel to London). He experiences a bit of pain (right quadriceps) while batting. It is to ensure that he recovers fully as he is a player that team needs long-term. "There is so much competition coming his way -- IPL, he could also be in the T20 World Cup mix. Then we have some important Test series against New Zealand, and Australia later in the year.

## UNLIKELY FOR DHARAMSALA TEST



So, it is better to give him time to recover properly than rushing him," an IPL source told PTI. It is the same quadriceps injury that had sidelined Rahul for almost four months last year. Having got injured during the IPL, Rahul returned to action with the Asia Cup in September and made instant impact. In the more recent Test tour of South Africa, Rahul was the only century maker from India in the drawn series. His absence from the final Test means Rajat Patidar will remain with the squad but the MP batter can't be sure of his place in the playing eleven, having aggregated only 63 runs in six innings. There is a possibility that Patidar will make away for Devdutt Padikkal in Dharamsala. **BUMRAH SET TO RETURN:** India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah, who was rested for the Ranchi Test, is expected to lead the attack at the HPCA Stadium. The series is sealed but every Test match offers crucial World Test Championship points and Bumrah can play a big part in the cooler climes of Dharamsala. India are second in the standings with five wins, two losses and a draw. New Zealand lead the table with a winning percentage of 75 but they have only played four Tests.



## Jaiswal rises to 12th in ICC Test rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's latest batting sensation Yashasvi Jaiswal advanced towards a top-10 spot in the ICC rankings for Test batters by climbing three spots to 12th while his compatriot Dhruv Jurel leapfrogged 31 places to 69th on Wednesday. Jaiswal, who started the series in 69th position, continues his ascent to the top after scores of 73 and 37 in the fourth match of India's ICC World Test Championship series against England in Ranchi. Player of the Match Jurel's scores of 90 and 39 has jumped a whopping 31 places while former England captain Joe Root is back in the top three. Root, a formerly top-ranked batter, struck an unbeaten 122 in the first innings in Ranchi to move up two places to third position. He also moved up three spots to fourth among all-rounders. Senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's five-wicket haul in the second innings has helped him narrow the gap with top-ranked Jasprit Bumrah to 21 rating points at 846 after the fast bowler was rested for the Ranchi Test. Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav moved up 10 places to the 32nd spot and England's

Shoaib Bashir, who climbed 38 places to 80th, have also attained career bests. Opener Zak Crawley entered the top 20 for the first time after scores of 42 and 60, while a bunch of spinners have also prospered in the latest weekly update. The T20I Rankings see Australia batter Travis Head move into the top 20 for the first time after scores of 24, 45 and 33 in the series against New Zealand. Tim David's quickfire 31 off just 10 balls in the first match see him move up six places to 22nd and past the 600-point barrier for the first time in his career. The top six bowlers are unchanged, with Josh Hazlewood the only new one in the top 10 after finishing with figures of 4-1-12-1 in Auckland. In the ODI rankings, the biggest mover has been Namibia's Bernard Scholtz, whose hauls of four for 31 against Nepal and two for 15 against the Netherlands in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 Tri-Series in Kirtipur have lifted him to 11th position and 642 ratings points, the highest position and points tally ever achieved by a Namibia player in ODI cricket.

## Muzumdar looks to create fast bowlers pool from WPL

PTI ■ BENGALURU

With just seven months left for the Women's T20 World Cup to begin in Bangladesh, India head coach Amol Muzumdar is keen to identify and build a pool of fast bowlers from the on-going Women's Premier League. The Indian pace unit looks a bit thin after the retirement of legendary Jhulan Goswami and moving on from veteran Shikha Pandey. Currently, the Indian pace bowling is marshalled by Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar, Titas Sadhu and Amanjot Kaur. "Four fast bowlers played the last series (against Australia). I want to create a pool of fast bowlers (from the WPL). It makes a lot of difference if you strengthen the bowling attack," Muzumdar was quoted as saying ESPNcricinfo. "I would want another pool of 20-25 players to create a bench



strength for the Indian team," he added. The ninth edition of the Women's T20 World Cup will be held in September-October in Bangladesh.

Muzumdar had taken over as India coach last year ahead of home series against England and Australia. While India won the Tests against the visitors, they lost the T20I and ODI series. Muzumdar was also delighted to see front-line Indian batters such as Shafali Verma, S Meghana and Richa Ghosh among runs ahead of the marquee event later this year. "There is an upscale movement in India's batters. The confidence from those two series against England and Australia is on display (here) because of how they performed there." The former Mumbai batsman was also chuffed to see the presence of mind Sajana Sajeevan showed while carrying Mumbai Indians to a victory over Delhi Capitals with a last-ball six. "Sajana's six gives you an idea of the depth in Indian cricket," said Muzumdar.

## Renuka set tone for RCB by controlling Powerplay: Molineux

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Renuka Singh has managed to control the Powerplay period by providing early breakthroughs and stopping run-flow with her swing bowling which played a significant role in RCB winning both its games, says team spin all-rounder Sophie Molineux. Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) are sitting on top of the table with four points. Mumbai Indians (+0.488) also have four points but they are placed second behind RCB who have better NRR of +1.665. RCB had restricted Gujarat Giants to 107 for seven on Tuesday night with Renuka

returning impressive figures of 4-0-14-2. RCB then overhauled the target in 12.3 overs to log their second win on the trot. "Renuka has been incredible in both games and playing against her for India, she's just so reliable and it's great to be on the same team as her. She swings the ball beautifully at the front and I think she's really set the tone for us in both games," Molineux said. In their opening game against UP Warriorz, Renuka did not dismiss any batter but conceded only 14 runs in her 3 overs. RCB had edged UPW by just two runs to begin the tournament with a thrilling win.

## Conway out, Ravindra in for New Zealand ahead of 1st test against Australia

AP ■ WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND)

Devon Conway has been ruled out but Rachin Ravindra has been cleared to play for New Zealand in the first cricket test against Australia starting at the Basin Reserve on Thursday. Conway suffered a thumb injury while keeping wicket in the second Twenty20 international between the teams on Friday last week. While initial scans suggested there was no fracture, additional tests in Wellington in recent days have found there is damage to Conway's left thumb. Conway will have further tests later in the week. Meantime, Will Young open the batting with Tom Latham in Conway's place. Henry Nicholls, who was dropped from the New Zealand team ahead of its two



recent tests against South Africa - both victories - has been recalled to provide reinforcement for the batting lineup. "It's disappointing for Devon to be ruled out on the eve of an important match," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said. "He's a class player batting at the top of the order for us and I know he was really looking forward to this series." Ravindra missed the second and third Twenty20s against

Australia with a slight knee injury but is fit to play from Thursday. He scored a maiden double century in the first innings of the first test against South Africa. Daryl Mitchell is also available after missing the South Africa series with a foot injury. Captain Tim Southee said New Zealand will settle on its match lineup after assessing conditions at the Basin Reserve where the pitch usually is green at first but good for batting. New Zealand will decide whether to go into the match with four seamers or to include spin-bowling allrounder Mitchell Santner. New Zealand left Santner out of its lineup for the second test against South Africa at Hamilton, using four seamers. "I think in hindsight, we probably got that wrong the way that the pitch did behave," Stead said. "We've certainly got Mitch Santner here as that

option and we'll certainly consider him as well." Australia captain Pat Cummins has named an unchanged starting XI for the test.



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As the loan account became NPA therefore the Authorized officer under section 13(2) of "The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002" had issued 60 days demand notice to the borrowers/co-borrowers/ Mortgagees/Guarantors (collectively referred as "Borrowers") as given in the table. According to the notice if the borrowers do not deposit the entire amount within 60 days, the amount will be recovered from auction of the mortgage properties/secured assets as given below. Therefore you the borrowers are informed to deposit the entire loan amount along with future interest and expenses within 60 days from the date of demand notice, otherwise under the provisions of 13(4) and 14 of the said Act, the Authorized officer is free to take possession for sale of the mortgage properties/Secured assets as given below. Borrowers to note that after receipt of this notice, in terms of Section 13(13) of the Act, 2002, you are prohibited and restrained from transferring any of the secured assets by way of sale, lease or otherwise, without prior written consent of the secured creditor. Borrowers attention are attracted towards Section 13(8) /w Rule 3(5) of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Act that the borrowers shall be entitled to redeem their secured asset upon the payment of the complete outstanding dues as mentioned below before the publication of auction notice, which thereafter shall cease to exist.			
Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower /Mortgagor/Guarantor/ Loan A/c No.	Date and Amount of Demand Notice Under Sec. 13(2)	Description of Mortgaged Property	
(A/c No.) 19001060116692269 Chander Shekhar (Borrower), Smt.Ratan Wati (Co-Borrower), Gajender Singh (Co-Borrower)	06-Dec-23 Rs. 2136993/- Rs. Twenty-One Lac Thirty-Six Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Three Only As on 05-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Plot No- 1129, Vill- Sihi, Tehsil- Ballabgarh, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 180 SqYds</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060120320770 R B Jewellers Through Its Proprietor Aminudeen Khan(Borrower), Aminudin Khan (Co-Borrower), Smt.Rubinal Yasmin (Co-Borrower)	12-Dec-23 Rs. 1658376/- Rs. Sixteen Lac Fifty-Eight Thousand Three Hundred Seventy-Six Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At First Floor House No. 1532, Ward No 5, Railway Road Rohtak, Dist- Rohtak Haryana <b>Admeasuring 110 Square Yard</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060124993057 Inder Singh (Borrower), Smt.Manju (Co-Borrower), Tejveer (Co-Borrower)	12-Dec-23 Rs. 744650/- Rs. Seven Lac Forty-Four Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Khewat/Khata- 168/179, Mustail No- 96, Killa No- 23, Mustil No- 121, Killa No- 02, Village- Andua Patti Hodel, Dist- Palwal, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 150 Sq.Yds</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060125365704 Prince (Borrower), Smt.Premwati (Co-Borrower), Ram Niwas (Co-Borrower)	13-Dec-23 Rs. 1193824/- Rs. Eleven Lac Ninety-Three Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Four Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Khewat/Khata No 451/435, Khatoni No 502, Waka Mauja Pali Badkhal, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 210 Sq. Yds</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060831166020 Prince (Borrower), Devraj Bhadana (Co-Borrower), Smt.Premwati (Co-Borrower), Ram Niwas (Co-Borrower)	13-Dec-23 Rs. 527816/- Rs. Five Lac Twenty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixteen Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Freehold - Within Municipal Limit-Khewat/Khata No 451/435, Khatoni No 502, Badkhal, Waka Mauja Pali Badkhal, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana-121004 <b>Admeasuring 210 Square Yard</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060125209331 Rk Tailor (Borrower), Lali (Co-Borrower), Rakesh Kumar (Co-Borrower), Smt.Lalita Devi (Co-Borrower)	14-Dec-23 Rs. 547496/- Rs. Five Lac Forty-Seven Thousand Four Hundred Ninety-Six Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Freehold - Within Municipal Limit-Khewat No 89 Khatoni No 143 Kh On 107/1/1, Niyampur Road Nangal Choudhary, Narnaul, Dist-Mahendragarh-Haryana-123023 <b>Admeasuring 15.9 Square Yard</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060730201058 Harmukh (Borrower), Smt.Meena (Co-Borrower)	14-Dec-23 Rs. 1142121/- Rs. Eleven Lac Forty-Two Thousand One Hundred Twenty-One Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Khewat No 53/50 Khatoni No 64/65 Mu No 20 Killa No 3 4 5 6/1 Mu No 13 Killa No 6 7/2 13 18 23 26 Mu No 14/10/2 20/7/2 8/1 15/1, Plot No 22 23 25 29 59 66 75 77 79 81 82 85 91 92, Waka Mauja Baselva, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 30 SqYds.</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060130765069 Bablia Genral Store (Borrower), Gajraj Singh (Co-Borrower), Smt.Suvidha Gajraj Singh (Co-Borrower)	14-Dec-23 Rs. 1144532/- Rs. Eleven Lac Forty-Four Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-Two Only As on 11-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Mustail/Killa No 48/7/2/2 1-18, 8/2/2 1-18, 9/2 4-00, 12 8-00, 13/1/1 4-2, 13/2/1 3-2, 14/1/1 1-2-9, 17/2 3-16, 18/1/2 3-14, 18/2/2 2-11, 19/1/1 3-7, 19/2/2 2-13, 21/2 7-2, 22 8-00, 23/1 3-16, 23/2 4-4, 24/1 3-16, 49/25/2/2 3-11, Khewat No 58, Khatuani No 63, Village Sundrah, Dist- Mahendragarh, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 723 Sq.Yds</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060118378365 Govind Ram (Borrower),	19-Dec-23 Rs. 591972/- Rs. Five Lac Ninety-One Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy-Two Only As on 18-Dec-23	Property Situated At Vill.- Dhingsara (30), Te. & Dist.- Fatehabad, Haryana <b>Admeasuring 4598 Sq. Ft.</b>	
(A/c No.) 19001060826368233 & 19001060123059121 Deepak All In One Store (Borrower), Kuldeep Kumar (Co-Borrower)	20-Dec-23 Rs. 228927/- Rs. Two Lac Twenty-Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty-Seven Only & Rs. 314491/- Rs. Three Lac Fourteen Thousand Four Hundred Ninety-One Only As on 19-Dec-23	Property Situated At- Property No Mcf/B03/0159/1/4/12, House No 4, Thakar Basti, Dist- Fatehabad, Haryana. <b>Admeasuring 18 Sq.Yds</b>	
Place: Haryana		Date : 28-02-2024	
Authorised Officer AU Small Finance Bank Limited			