OPINION 6

CHINA'S DRIVE TO

WORLD 8

BIDEN AND TRUMP MARCHING

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR

Late City Vol.34 Issue 58 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

Published From



NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3 the plant 1864 the stablished 1864 the plant of the stablished 1864 the stablished 186 Established 1864

STATE UNITS AGREE WITH ROHIT **HUNGER COMMENT**

RNI No. 53466/91. REGD. No. DL (C)-05/1219/2021-23 Posted at DRMS Delhi 6

www.dailypioneer.com

RAJYA SABHA HIT BY CROSS VOTING Union Ministers to

NEW DELHI

The Congress suffered a major setback in the Rajya Sabha elections held in three States on Tuesday, with party legislators in Himachal Pradesh ensuring victory for BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan, leading to the embarrassing loss of senior Congress leader and two-time Upper House member Abhishek Manu Singhvi. There was a tie with 34 votes

each for Mahajan and Singhvi, but a lottery proved lucky for the BJP nominee. Other States, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, also reported large-scale decisive crossvoting in favour of the BJP in UP and in favour of the Congress in Karnataka, which sent three Congress MPs and one BJP member to the council of States. Polling was held for 10 seats in

Uttar Pradesh, four in Karnataka, and one seat in On Himachal Pradesh. February 20, 41 candidates, including BJP chief JP Nadda, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, and Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw and L Murugan, were elected unopposed to the Upper House. The elections for one vacant seat from HP through a large number of cross-voting on Tuesday now indicate troubles ahead for the majority Congress Government in the State.

Large scale cross-voting in favour of BIP saw the saffron party winning eight seats in

Uttar Pradesh, while the Samajwadi Party (SP) could win only two seats.

For the BJP, the winners included Choudhary Tejveer Singh, Amarpal Maurya, Sangeeta Balwant, Sudhanshu Trivedi, Sadhna Singh, Nadeem Jain, RPN Singh and Sanjay Seth. Jaya Bachchan and Ramji Lal

Suman were winners from the SP. The third SP nominee Alok Ranian lost the poll.

Earlier, the SP chief whip in

the Assembly Manoj Pandey resigned from his post and declared his support for the BJP. The other SP legislators, who voted for the BJP nominees, included Rakesh Pandey, Abhay Singh, Vinod Chaturvedi, Pooja Pal, Rakesh Pratap Singh and Ashutosh Maurya. Those who made it to the Upper House from Karnataka are former Union Minister Ajay Maken, G C by cross-voting. The BJP suffered a setback when one of its MLAs — S T Somashekar — voted for Maken, the other Shivaram Hebbar –

abstained. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu before the poll alleged that five to six Congress MLAs were "kidnapped" and whisked away by the CRPF and the Harvana Police.

There is a buzz now after that



According to the numbers in Assembly, seven candidates of the BJP and two (BJP). from the SP were certain to win. The contest was mainly former Chief Minister and between BJP's eighth nominee Sanjay Seth and SP's third leader candidate Alok Ranjan.

As many as seven SP MLAs voted for the BJP candidates. The saffron party also received support from the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, RLD, the lone BSP MLA and one of the two Congress

Weeding out physical files,

Centre shreds paper work

Affairs (25734) and Ministry

Department

Administrative Reforms and

Public Grievances (DARPG)

report showed that a total

Central Government offices

during the cleanliness drive

conducted at 4563 offices and

17.02 lakh square feet space

The Government generated

mentioned that 1,54,319

The

freed this year January.

disposal.

82176 physical files have the Ministry of Railway was been weeded out from the top in the list with ₹5.29

₹5.11 crore.

of Personnel (3363).

Chandrasekhar and Syed Naseer Hussain (all Congress) and Narayanasa K Bhandage The Congress took a dig at

Kumaraswamy for fielding the fifth candidate D Kupendra Reddy. Karnataka has a Congress Government with a decisive mandate of 134 seats in the 224-member Assembly. Five candidates were in the fray for the four seats in the

if Congress nominee failed to make it to the Rajya Sabha, the BJP could move a no-trust motion against the Sukhu Government in the State Assembly.

In the 68-member State Assembly, the Congress has a clear majority with 40 MLAs and the support of three independent MLAs. The Opposition BJP has 25 MLAs. The BJP had won 20 seats unopposed on February 20, followed by the Congress (6),

Trinamool Congress (4), YSR Congress (3), RJD (2), BJD (2) and NCP, Shiv Sena, BRS and ID(U) one each.

Rajasthan, Sonia From Gandhi was unopposed so were BJP's Chunnilal Garasiya and Madan Rathore.

All the six candidates from Maharashtra — BJP's Chavan, who joined the party only last Tuesday after quitting the Congress, Medha Kulkarni and Ajit Gopchhade; Shiv Sena's Milind Deora, who also resigned from the Congress last month, Praful Patel (NCP) and Chandrakant Handore (Congress) were elected unopposed.

In Bihar, JD(U)'s Sanjav Kumar Jha, BJP's Dharmshila Gupta and Bhim Singh, Manoj Kumar Jha and Sanjay Yadav (both RJD) and Akhilesh Prasad Singh (Congress) were declared winners. TMC's Sushmita

Sagarika Ghose, Mamata Thakur and Md Nadimul Haque and Samik Bhattacharya (BJP) were declared winners from West Bengal.

Union Minister Murugan, Valmiki Dham Ashram head Umesh Nath Maharaj, Kisan Morcha's national vice president Banshilal Gurjar, and Madhya Pradesh BJP's women wing president Maya Naroliya bagged four seats for the BJP in Madhya Pradesh while Ashok Singh of the Congress also got elected unopposed.

contest 2024 Lok Sabha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Minister Union Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday hinted that Nirmala Sitharaman and S Jaishankar may contest the Ĺok upcoming elections.

Sitharaman and Jaishankar are two of the most eloquent Ministers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet. Presently, Sitharaman is a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, and Jaishankar from Gujarat. However, it has not been decided yet as to where they will contest from, he added. "More or less it is final that

(Sitharaman and Jaishankar) will contest the Lok Sabha elections. It has not been decided vet from where they will fight, whether it is in Karnataka or some other state," Joshi, who holds the and Mines Coal portfolio, said.

When questioned if the Union Ministers will contest from Bengaluru, Joshi said he cannot answer it since nothing has been finalised vet. Sitharaman joined the BJP

in 2008 and served as the osed. national spokesperson of the party till 2014. She became a

iunior Minister after Modi became the Prime Minister of the country. The same year she became a

member of the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh. Sitharaman served as the

Defence Minister of the country between 2017 and 2019. Jaishankar is a career diplomat. In 2015, he served Foreign the

Secretary. In 2019, he was inducted into Modi's Cabinet. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Over the years, he has attained popularity on social media due to his staunch defense of the Indian foreign policy on international forums.On Saturday, the BJP held the core group meeting of five States at the party headquarters in New Delhi.

The meeting was led by BJP

National President JP Nadda,

in the presence of Home

Minister, Amit Shah and

General

Organisation

Secretary, BL Santosh. The meeting was held in phases, which saw discussion for the preparations of Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal,

Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.





Physical files were reviewed

MHA was top in the list

which freed space up to 14.55

lakh sq ft, followed by Ministry of Coal (77614 sq ft). Of the total revenue

earned from scrap disposal,

crore, followed by MHI of

As per data, the Ministry of

Railway and Department of

Post were among the top two

AAP announces Delhi SC lashes out Lok Sabha candidates at Patanjali





Gambhir.



The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) took the lead on Tuesday to announce four Lok Sabha candidates from Delhi, including three sitting MLAs, while the major partner Congress of the INDIA alliance is mulling over the candidature for the remaining three constituencies of the total of seven, which not very long ago were held all by the Congress. Delhi Jal Board (DJB) vice

chairman and MLA from Malviya Nagar, Somnath Bharti, has been named from the New Delhi parliamentary seat, currently represented by Meenakshi Lekhi from the The AAP has nominated

Mahabal Mishra, a former Ministries where maximum ₹18.18 crore through scrap number of premises were Congress MP, for the West Delhi seat. He unsuccessfully Continued on Page 2 contested the 2014 and 2019

Lok Sabha elections against BIP's Parvesh Verma. The 70year-old leader had quit the Congress years ago and will be contesting the seat with a high number of Purvanchali voters. Son of a safai karmachari, Kuldeep Kumar, sitting MLA from Kondli, will be AAP's candidate from East Delhi. The constituency is currently represented by BJP's Gautam

The AAP has fielded Tughlakabad MLA Sahi Ram Pahalwan from the South Delhi seat. The constituency

currently represented by BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri. In Harvana, the AAP has fielded former Sabha MP Sushil Gupta from Kurukshetra. The AAP had already announced its three candidates for Assam and two for Gujarat.

The names were announced

days after the party finalised its seat-sharing pact with the Congress for five States. The candidates' names declared after AAP's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Tuesday. The committee is the highest decision-making body of the party, headed by AAP supremo Keiriwal. AAP national general

s e c r e t a r y (Organisation) Pathak Sandeep announced candidates' names Press a conference.

Continued on Page 2

he entire country has been Titaken for a ride, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday orders Pataniali A pany co-founded yoga guru Ramdev and dealing in herbal products, from advertising or branding products meant for treating diseases.

Issuing notices to Patanjali Ayurved and managing director Acharya Balkrishna, the SC asked why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them for prima facie violating the firm's undertaking given in the court about advertising of its products and their medicinal efficacy. A bench of justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah also cautioned the company and its officers against making any media statements, both in print and electronic, against any system of medicine in any form as stated in their undertaking on November 21 last year.

'The entire country has been taken for a ride," the bench observed, while questioning the Centre as to what action it has taken against Patanjali Ayurved for the alleged incorrect assertions and

community that India would

soon have its own Space

Station, and the country's

target was to reach Venus by

2035. In an announcement that

drew a thundering ovation, Modi said the day is not far off

when Indian astronauts would

'The next Chandrayaan

Mission will see the Indian

land on the Moon.

advertisements about its medicines as cure of several

diseases. The top court is hearing a plea while restraining till further of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) smear campaign by Ramdev against the vaccination drive

and modern medicines.

On November 21 last year, the counsel representing the company had assured the court that "henceforth there shall not be any violation of any law(s), especially relating advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in

any form". The top court had then cautioned the company against making "false" "misleading" claims in advertisements about its medicines as cure of several diseases. During the hearing on Tuesday, the top court referred to the statement given by the counsel representing Patanjali Ayurved before it in November last year and said it was "bound down" to such assurance by the court.

Continued on Page 2

institutes in Russia and India

announcement of the names

of the astronauts, the Prime

for the last four years.

Along

Quartet to reignite Indian Space Odyssey after 40 years

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has been

L able to free up a huge 372

lakh sq feet space by weeding

out millions of old files from its

offices and in turn earned a

revenue of ₹1181 crore in the

last three years ever since Prime

Minister Narendra Modi has

urged the Ministries to do so as

part of the massive cleaniliness

Of the total files weeded out,

the maximum number of

physical files was weeded out

in the Ministry of Home

Affairs (40500), followed by

roup Captains Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan and Wing Commander Shubanshu Shukla have been designated as the astronauts of India's manned mission to space Gaganyaan, scheduled for next year. They were presented before the nation and "winged" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a special function held at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. Before being introduced to

the nation, the Prime Minister held a review meeting with the scientists and engineers of ISRO about India's preparedness for the country's first-ever manned

'They are not just four names or four human beings; they are the four powers that are going to take the aspirations of 140 crore Indians to space. An Indian is going to space after 40 years. This time, the time is ours, the countdown is ours, and the rocket is also said Modi while addressing Team ISRO after giving astronaut wings to the four Test Pilots. The Prime Minister made a

special request to the media in the country. "These astronauts are still undergoing rigorous training and physical exercises. We have to ensure that their preparations do not get disturbed or disrupted because of publicity, hence please leave them alone until more than 500 women



their mission is accomplished," said the Prime Minister. Paying glowing tributes to ISRO, Modi disclosed that



programme.

working positions in the nation's space

He

mentioned that more than 50

also



ANGAD PRATAP used in the Gaganyaan mission bore the mark "Made In India." Additionally, he



Commerce Hub.

stated that India is all set to it known to the global

astronauts were selected after a series of strenuous physical The Prime Minister also made tests and have

space vehicle bringing samples of rock, sand, etc., collected from the lunar surface," said Modi. The Prime Minister said the last ten years saw ISRO

launching 400 satellites and the number of space startups surpassing 200. The four

Minister dedicated to the nation the country's first semi-cryogenic integrated engine and stage test facility, giving a boost to ISRO's semicryogenic stage development. "It is a dream come true for ISRO as the GenNext semicryogenic engine stage would bring down the cost of space accessibility and also power the Mark-III Launch Vehicles deploy Geosynchronous

heavy communication satellites into which is 36,000 km away from Earth's surface," said Dr been R Purushothaman undergoing training at space former ISRO scientist.

Modi: BJP to cross double digits in LS polls in Kerala

The CPI(M) and Congress The CPI(IVI) and Conglished fronts in Kerala were in for a shock on Tuesday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would cross double digit mark in the State in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. "The BJP's vote share in Kerala has increased from 11 per cent in 2014 to almost 14 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The BJP would cross double digit in the ensuing Lok Sabha polls. Kerala will have a representation in the 400 seats to be bagged by the NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha election," declared Narendra Modi while addressing a mammoth public rally at Thiruvananthapuram' on Tuesday.

Tearing into the allegations made by the CPI(M) that his government was discriminating against Kerala, the Prime Minister churned out facts and figures to prove the Marxists wrong. "My Government has not discriminated the BJP ruled States and



non-BJP ruled States. Despite the negative campaigning by the CPI(M) and the Congress, the Centre has given the State more than what was asked by them," said Modi.

The Prime Minister said that the last decade (2014-2024) has seen massive investments by the Centre in Kerala for infrastructure development and social justice and inclusive

More than 4 million farmers in Kerala have benefited by the Kisan Insurance scheme of the Union Government. More than five million Mudra Loans

have been disbursed by the Centre to beneficiaries," said

The Prime Minister pointed out that the Congress and the CPI(M) which have been ruling the State alternatively and blaming each other for corruption and nepotism were fooling the people of the State. "While they act in the State as if they are rivals, they are friends once they cross the Kerala borders.

end of charges and allegations that his daughter has Both the parties are constituents of the INDI alliance. been collecting hefty amount While they fight it out in the as bribes from corporates engaged in illegal sand mining. State, they sit together and

Bose sets 72 hours deadline for Sandeshkhali don arrest they are out of the State," lambasted the Prime Minister. Seven time legislator P C George, film actor-turnedpolitician Suresh Gopi, Anil Antony (son of veteran Congress leader A K Antony) shared the stage with the Prime Minister. This was the Prime Minister's third visit to

Kerala in a short span of two Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has asked Chief Minister Mamata months. Modi blasted the Kerala Government for destroying the education sec-Banerjee to arrest fugitive Trinamool Congress don of tor in the State. "Our sons and Sandeshkhali, Sheikh Shahjahan, within 72 hours or daughters are forced to leave Kerala for higher studies because the Communists have explain her Government's faildestroyed the education system in the State," said the "In the light of the decision of Prime Minister. He said the

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

the Calcutta High Court, the prime accused in the Sandeshkhali incidents, Shahjahan Sheikh, may be arrested immediately, failing which reasons for the same may be reported within 72 hours," Bose on Monday night wrote to the Government seeking to know as well the veracity of an alleged incident that a child was thrown away by the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hands over wings to astronauts designate Shubanshu Shukla, Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap and Ajit Krishnan who have been selected to be the astronauts on India's first crewed mission to space 'Gaganyaan Mission', at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), in Thiruvananthapuram

PROFILE **FOUR ASTRONAUTS** Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair was born in Thiruvazhiyad, Kerala on August 26, 1976. He is alumnus of National Defence Academy (NDA) and recipient of Sword of Honour

at Air Force Academy. He was commissioned in 1998 in the fighter stream of IAF. He is a Category A Flying Instructor and a Test Pilot with approximately 3,000 hours of flying experience. He has flown Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Hawk, Dornier, An-32. He is also the alumnus of United States Staff College and a DS at DSSC, Wellington and FIS, Tambaram. He has commanded a premier fighter

Su-30 Squadron.

Group Captain Krishnan was born in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on April 19, 1982. He is alumnus of NDA and recipient of President's Gold Medal and Sword of Honour at Air Force Academy. He was commissioned on 2003 in the fighter stream of IAF. He is Flying Instructor and a Test Pilot with approximately 2,900 hours of flying experience. He has flown variety of ac including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-21, Mig-29, Jaguar, Dornier, An-32...

Wellington. Group Captain Angad Pratap was born in Prayagraj on July 17, 1982. He is alumnus of NDA and was commissioned in December

He is also alumnus of DSSC,

2004 in the fighter stream of IAF. He is a Flying Instructor and a Test Pilot with approximately 2,000 hours of flying experience. He has flown variety of aircraft including Su-30MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, An-32.

Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla was born in Lucknow on October 10, 1985. He is alumnus of NDA and was commissioned in 2006 in the fighter stream

He is a Fighter Combat Leader and a Test Pilot with approximately 2,000 hours of flying experience.

He has flown variety of aircraft including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, An-32.

Mamata again attacks Centre over State dues

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

 $B_{\text{Mamata Banerjee attacked}}^{\text{engal Chief Minister}}$ the BJP Government for depriving the people of Bengal of their rightful dues and reminded that if the Centre failed to clear their dues then the State would start making the payments.

Banerjee who was presently visiting Jangalmahal told a crowd how the Centre had stopped payment of MNREGA funds for 100 days' work. "This is the money of the poor workers who have given their labour ... but the Centre is not paying that money for the past two years," she said. Banerjee also alleged that the Centre was not clearing the funds meant for the rural housing schemes. She said "we will wait till April 1 if the Centre does not clear the dues of the Awash Yojana by April 1, then we will start building the 11 lakh houses for

the poor people." Regarding MNREGA funds she said "earlier we said that we clearing the dues of the 21 lakh people ... but we had calculated this as per the Centre's reports ... but now we have found that about 50 lakh people have not been paid their dues and so we will start making their payment if the Centre does not clear the

Rules for CAA likely before Model Code of Conduct for 2024 LS polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The rules for the implementation of the con-Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA) for fast-tracking citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan are likely to be issued before the Model Code of Conduct for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections comes into effect.

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) gets enforced immediately after election schedule is announced, which is likely in next fortnight.
The rules for the CAA is

likely to be issued before the MCC comes into effect, sources privy to the development said.

When the rules for the CAA are issued, the Modi government will start granting Indian citizenship to persecuted non-Muslim migrants -Hindus, Sikhs, Jains,

Parsis Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who had come to India till December 31, 2014. The CAA was passed in December 2019 and it got president's assent subse-

quently. However, the law could not be implemented so far as rules are a must for its implemen-

There were massive protests in some parts of the country after the CAA was passed by Parliament. Over a hundred people lost their lives during the protests or police action. The Ministry of Home Affairs has readied a portal for the convenience of the applicants as the entire process will be

The applicants will have to declare the year when they entered India without travel documents. No document will be sought from the applicants, an official said.

According to the law, the benefits under the CAA will be given to the undocumented minorities from the three neighbouring countries.

On December 27, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said that no one can stop the implementation of the CAA as it is the law of the land and accused the West Mamata Banerjee of misleading people on the issue.

Addressing a party meeting in Kolkata, Shah said it is the BJP's commitment to implement the CAA.

The TMC, led by Mamata Banerjee, has been opposing the CAA since beginning.

CVC suggests delayering to avoid delay in clearing cases
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ments, chief executives of pub-

dynasty politics which has

been the hallmark of the

Congress has spread to the

Though he did not name any-

one in particular, the target

was Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan who is at the receiving

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), in an effort to avoid delay in deciding corruption cases, has suggested "delayering" by limiting the levels of processing and speeding up decision making. The CVC has issued guidelines from time to time, prescribing the time limit for completion of different stages of actions in vigilance related matters.

"It has been observed that there are occasions when action in vigilance matters has been unduly delayed. One of the reasons for such delay has been found to be that the levels of examination/processing of vigilance matters are more than the required levels. The levels of processing of vigilance matters in different organisations also lacks uniformity," the CVC said in an order. It said in order to avoid delay in vigilance matters, the organisations concerned should review the levels of proshould bring down the levels to

a maximum of four. "The limit of four levels would be applicable to each administrative unit separately, in the hierarchy of the organisation concerned," the CVC said in the order issued to secretaries of all central government depart-

lic sector banks and insurance companies among others. It suggested "delayering", "adoption of desk officer system in vigilance wing" and "delegation of powers, wherever possible

(with due approval), to ensure

limiting the steps/layers for

decision making to four, including merger of levels" to the organisations. In this regard, the CVC cited guidelines issued by the Department of Administration Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) that reads "each ministry/ department shall review the instructions on levels of disposal and channels of submission keeping in view that the number of levels shall not

exceed four by delegating powers to lower formation" The CVC has also issued a separate order on "considering petition of bias" by the charged officers. "It is seen that in many cases, there is considerable delay, beyond the prescribed time limit, in bringing the disconclusion. One of the reasons noticed for such delay is that, the charged officers during the course of departmental inquiry, raise issues of bias against the Inquiry Officer and the inquiry proceedings are stayed till the disposal of bias petition by the competent authority," it said.

Pradhan directs institutions for voter awareness activities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday directed all higher education institutions (HEIs) to conduct voter awareness activities on their campuses from Wednesday till March 6.

The directive comes following a clarion call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the first time voters to exercise their franchise in large numbers.

"The upcoming 18th Lok Sabha elections is going to be special, particularly for our youth who are turning 18. It will bring them an opportuni-ty to make their voices heard as well as shape today's and tomorrow's politics. Hon. PM @narendramodi ji has given a clarion call to our youth and first-time voters to exercise their franchise in large numbers," Pradhan wrote on X. "In pursuance to PM Modi's appeal, I have directed all HEIs in the country to conduct comprehensive voter awareness from 28th February to 6th

March," he added. Pradhan said these activities will galvanise the youth and emphasise upon them the value of voting, making informed choices and participating in electoral processes for a more representative democracy.

India, France review ties in meet PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Rajasthan. He will also be vis-

India and France on Tuesday here reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties during talks between Army Chief General Manoj Pande and his counterpart General Pierre Schill. He is on a visit to India from February 27-29. Giving details, Army officials said the two chiefs exchanged ideas and held constructive discussions on various contemporary issues, including strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two

armies. During the visit, the

General officer will be inter-

acting with defence industry

representatives and also witness

Pinaka firing demonstration in

at the prestigious National Defence College (NDC). The visit by General Pierre Schill highlights the shared commitment of France and India to strengthen their strategic collaboration across defence, security, and technol-

iting Sapta Shakti Command in

Jaipur and interact with senior

military commanders. On

February 29, General Pierre

Schill will address the officers

Such bilateral visits and various exercises between the militaries of both the nations epitomise the longstanding bond between the armed forces and reinforce their dedication to promoting regional stability and international security.

Rajya Sabha hit by...

The YSR Congress won all the three seats in Andhra Pradesh — G Babu Rao, YV Subba Reddy and M Raghunath Reddy while in neighbouring Telangana, the ruling Congress bagged two seats —Renuka Chowdhury and Anil Kumar Yadav — and BRS one seat — V Ravichandra. BJP nominees in Uttarakhand (Mahendra Bhatt), Subhash Barala (Haryana), Devendra Pratap Singh Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP saying democracy would be "destroyed" if the Centre's ruling party continues to bring down elected Governments. Kharge said they would challenge the election as both the candidates got 34 votes each and the decision was taken on the basis of a lottery." If the Government breaks an elected Government, what democracy is it. It has happened earlier in Karnataka, Manipur, Goa. When they do not get elected, they take measures, intimidate them and break the Government. Is this democracy?" Kharge stated.

and

BJP to field new faces in 2024 LS polls in JK

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

 $B^{
m haratiya}$ Janta Party is gearing up to field new faces in the coming Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

The election committee of the I&K unit Tuesday discussed the list of probable candidates from all five Lok Sabha seats before submitting the same to the Parliamentary board for final approval in the coming

The Election Committee meeting was chaired by the National General Secretary and incharge of J&K Tarun Chugh, co-in-charge Ashish Sood along with J&K unit Chief Ravinder Raina and state organisation secretary Ashok Koul and General Secretary (J&K) Sunil Sharma. During the meeting, the com-

mittee members deliberated on the names of the party candidates who are likely to be given the mandate by the highest decision-making body to contest the Lok Sabha polls. After completing the marathon exercise the election committee is expected to submit the list of two to three candidates

for approval. At present Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh is a sitting MP from Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat and Jugal Kishore Sharma is a sitting MP from Jammu-Poonch

Parliamentary seat.

on all the five Lok Sabha seats

to the Parliamentary board

tacted confirmed the party is keen on introducing new faces in the coming elections to ensure victory of party candi-

The performance of both the sitting MPs and their report cards is expected to be reviewed before finalizing the names of the candidates. The local unit of the BJP is

banking heavily on the charisma of central party leaders and hoping star campaigners to bolster the party's poll campaign in the region. Compared to Kashmir Valley the party position in the Jammu region is much better and the party is expected to repeat its past performance of winning both the Lok Sabha seats from Jammu province. The party is expected to give a tough fight to their opponents on the newly carved Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat. The party is expected to reap rich political dividends in the wake of granting Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari Ethnic group. Around 12 lakh Paharispeaking population is spread out in the Pir Panjal region and consolidation of votes in support of a party candidate can help maximise the victory

candidate. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address a public rally in Anantnag district ahead of the start of the poll campaign.

margin from the nearest rival

Weeding out old files...

The report further stated that following comprehensive delayering, the number of levels for file disposal has come down from 7.19 in January 2021 to 4.58 in January 2024. "Inter-Ministerial movement of files on e-Office witnessed jump- from 3808 files in December 2023 to 4470 in January 2024," according to the report.

The report of January 2024 lays special focus on "Maintenance of Record Rooms" as best practices in Department of Posts, Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Mines and Department of Biotechnology. The monthly progress was reviewed by V Srinivas, Secretary, DARPG in a monthly meeting with all nodal officers, all Ministries and Departments were requested to sustain the momentum achieved under the campaign into the month of February 2024.

The Government report released in December says nearly Rs 1,163 crore have been earned by selling scrap since October 2021, including a whopping Rs 557 crore earned during a onemonth-long campaign in October.

An astounding number of 96 lakh physical files have been weeded out in Central Government offices since October 2021 and nearly 355 lakh square feet of space has been freed in Government offices in all. This has led to cleaned-up corridors in offices, utilisation of freed space as recreation centers and for

SC lashes out at...

From Page 1

It said that till further orders, Patanjali Ayurved will be restrained from advertising or branding of products which are specified as diseases, disorders or conditions in the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954.

The bench asked Additional Solicitor General (ASG) K M Nataraj, who was appearing for the Centre, as to what action they have taken. It referred to the November last year order which noted the ASG had submitted that he may be permitted to obtain instructions, after full and effective consultation with the authorities concerned insofar checking of alleged

incorrect assertions or misrepresentation for various products with regard to their purported medicinal efficacy was concerned.

"For two years, you wait for this when the Act itself says it is prohibited," the bench said, adding, the Centre has to do

something urgently.
The ASG said it is for the state governments to take action under the Act. The bench also took exception

to one of the advertisements published by Pataniali after the November last year order of the apex court.

"You (Patanjali) have flouted this order (of November 2023)," it said. "You have this courage and guts to come up with this advertisement even after the Supreme Court's order... We are going to pass a very strict order. You are tempting the court". The counsel appearing for the

referred

advertisement transcription of a press conference by the company, in which certain statements were made allegedly medicinal efficacy of their

last vear order.

The counsel claimed this amply demonstrates that Patanjali Ayurved continuing to make "incorrect

products, after the November

assertions misrepresentation" in respect of its various products in the market by describing them as permanent solution to such ailments which have been specifically listed in the schedule appended to the 1954

"Prima facie, this court is of the opinion that respondent no.5 (Patanjali Ayurved) is in violation of the undertaking given and recorded in order passed on November 21, 2023," the bench observed. "Issue notice as to why

contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against the respondent no. 5, its managing director," it said.

The counsel appearing for Patanjali sought time to file a response to the notice. The bench, while granting time to file response, posted the matter for hearing on March

During the hearing, the bench asked the ASG about what consultations had taken place after the last hearing and whether it was verified that there were incorrect assertions and representations regarding medicinal efficacy.

The ASG said consultation of different agencies required in the matter.

"Under this Act, the power or the duty is also cast that you have to keep monitoring and you can't or should not wait for a complaint to come," the bench said, while terming it

votes. Lovely was the

Congress candidate from the

East Delhi constituency in

2019 but lost to cricketer-

turned-politician Gautam

Gambhir of the BJP by a

record margin of 3,91,222

AAP leads in announcing...

From Page 1

After the PAC meeting, Kejriwal released a video on 'X' (erstwhile Twitter) and said today the AAP has announced tickets for some Lok Sabha seats for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

"No party had ever fielded a candidate from the SC community on a general category seat before. The AAP does not believe in casteism.

The AAP believes that everyone is equal, and if someone is capable, they can be fielded from that seat," said Kejriwal. AÁP state unit convener

Gopal Rai said the party took a historic decision in the PAC meeting today. "It has been decided to field an SC [Scheduled Caste] candidate from the East Delhi seat, which is a general category seat...Kondli MLA Kuldeep Kumar will fight...," Rai said, adding that this may be the first time that a party has decided to field an SC candidate from East Delhi. Speculation arose that Delhi

mayor Shelly Oberoi could be fielded from New Delhi, but the party announced Malviya Nagar MLA Somnath for the constituency. There is no woman among the 10 candidates announced by AAP so far for Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, Gujarat, Assam, and Harvana.

As per the agreement between the AAP and the Congress for Delhi's seven seats, the former will contest four: New Delhi, South Delhi, West Delhi, and East Delhi. The Congress will contest three: Chandni Chowk, Northwest Delhi, and Northeast Delhi.

The decision on candidates

for Delhi seats is crucial for the AAP as the BJP had won all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi in the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In 2019, the BJP clinched all seven seats in the Capital in a rout for the AAP and Congress, who together secured fewer than 50 per cent of the votes polled. Meanwhile, the Congress is considering giving a ticket to its Delhi unit president Arvinder Singh Lovely to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls from the Northeast Delhi constituency, party sources said on Tuesday. Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit, the son of former

Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit who fought from the seat in 2019, is also a probable candidate from the Northeast Delhi seat, party sources said. Party leaders Alka Lamba and Jai Prakash Aggarwal are being considered for the Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha constituency, and former MP Udit Raj and former Delhi minister Raj Kumar Chauhan are probable candidates for Northwest Delhi, they said. BJP's Manoj Tiwari had clinched the Northeast Delhi seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha

polls, defeating three-time

Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit

by a record margin of 3,66,102

For the Chandni Chowk seat,

votes.

the Congress could either field its Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba or party leader Jai Parkash Aggarwal, sources said. Aggarwal, contesting from the Chandni Chowk constituency in 2019, had received the highest number of votes with 29.67 per cent votes among all other Congress candidates.

Fire breaks out at LNJP | ED issues eighth hospital, 50 evacuated

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Around 50 people, including patients and staff members, at the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narain (LNJP) Hospital in Central Delhi were evacuated after a fire broke out in the seven-storey emergency block building, an official said on Tuesday. No one was injured.

Chief of Delhi Fire Services Atul Garg said they received a call about the blaze from the hospital at around 10.18 pm on Monday. A total of 10 fire engines were immediately pressed into service. The fire broke out due to a short circuit in the OPD main casualty ward. It took almost an hour to extinguish the blaze completely, he said.

Around 50 people, including patients and hospital staff, were evacuated, Garg said.

According to police, the fire broke out on the third-floor emergency ward. They rushed to the spot and flames were



found in a shaft of cables on the third and fourth floors.

Fire tenders were provided a clear passage up to the emergency ward. Police and hospital staff evacuated the patients from the ground floor. The fire was soon extinguished. No one was injured, a senior police officer said. A senior doctor at the LNJP Hospital said, "It would have been a major accident had our staff not been alert."

'The fire broke out on the third floor of the seven-storey emergency block building, and our staff responded to the fire immediately and also alerted the Delhi Fire authorities," the doctor said

As hospital staff are trained to respond in such a situation and mock drills have been held in the past, many of them used fire extinguishers themselves to douse the flames before the fire tenders reached, the hospital officials said.

The cause of the fire is suspected to be a short circuit in a part of the emergency block, which houses the OPD ward and the casualty ward adjoin-

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena

on Tuesday inaugurated a Delhi

Development Authority(DDA)

sports complex at Qutab Garh

village, which has been adopt-

ed by him to develop as a

The foundation stone of the

sports complex was laid in

October last year and the entire

project has been completed at a

cost of Rs 2.5 crore, an official

The DDDA, in a post on X, said,

statement said.

model village, officials said.

summons to Kejriwal

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued summons to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the eighth time for questioning in the excise policy-linked money laundering case. Kejriwal, the national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has now been asked to depose at the agency's headquarters here on March 4, they

Kejriwal on Monday skipped the seventh summons issued to him in the case, saying he would appear before the agency if a court ordered him to do so. A city court, approached by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over Kejriwal skipping its summonses, has listed this matter for further hearing on March

The ED, while issuing the eighth summons, rejected the contention that a fresh notice for Kejriwal's attendance was wrong as the matter was subjudice. The agency believes



that the local court has prima facie held Kejriwal guilty of "disobeying" the earlier notices issued to him in this case, warranting the eighth sum-

BJP leader Manoj Tiwari on Tuesday reacted to the summons issued to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal under the excise policy case, saying that he was surprised as to why the Enforcement Directorate was giving so many chances to the AAP national convener.

'If someone is questioned in a case, and the one who is accused thinks that they cannot give answers, it proves that they are guilty and is accepting

Sports complex at Qutab Garh village inaugurated

tioned multiple times in the charge sheets filed by the ED in the case.

Kejriwal and his party have alleged that the summonses issued by the ED were "illegal". They want us to break the alliance. Their message basically is that we should quit the alliance," he said, claiming there were informal messages to that effect from different quarters.

AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh apart from communications in-charge of the party Vijay Nair have been arrested in this case by the ED till now The ED had claimed in its

charge sheet that the AAP used "proceeds of crime" to the tune of about Rs 45 crore in its Goa election campaign. The agency is also expected to

file a fresh supplementary charge sheet in the case and may name the AAP as a "beneficiary" of the alleged kick backs that were generated through the excise policy.

Traffic cops to get beat areas to tackle road congestion

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The traffic police in Delhi is planning to convert the duty-point areas of its personnel into beat areas in an he traffic police in Delhi attempt to reduce congestion on roads, officials said on Tuesday. A senior police offi-cer said they are planning to try it out as a pilot project at some important road intersections of the city. A duty point is a specific area

assigned to a traffic police personnel, whereas the area under a beat is wider. "We are planning to change the dutypoint areas of the traffic personnel into beat areas. We are planning to introduce it as a pilot project. We will first target the main areas or places where traffic congestion is an issue. With this, the traffic police personnel can go to any area in their beat, which is wider than the duty point, in order to remove traffic congestion as and when required," the officer said. Traffic is one of the major issues Delhiites face everyday. Since the force is busy at Delhi's border points in view of an ongoing farmers' protest, the plan is likely to be launched next month, the officer said.

The officer further said this is being done for a better management of the traffic system in the national capital and ensure a smooth flow of vehicular movement. In 2022, the Delhi Police had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with FM radio stations to air live updates about traffic congestions and diversions to commuters in the national capital. Under the MoU, information regarding traffic is taken from the ranges and forwarded to the public relations officer to further pass it on to the FM

Flight delayed for five hours after IGIA receives hoax threat

A Kolkata-bound Spicejet flight was delayed for more than five hours on Tuesday after the Delhi airport received a threat message about explosives being hidden in the passengers' luggage, official sources said.

A woman carrying an infant has been detained by security agencies for questioning in the case, the sources said.

The flight, SG-8263, was scheduled to depart around 5:40 am but it was allowed to leave only after 11:30 am after the security agencies completed an anti-sabotage check and repeat frisking of check-in and cabin baggage of the travellers and crew, they said.

The airport duty manager at Gandhi Indira International (IGI) Airport received an email around 5:20 am that "there is a safety issue" on the said flight and that "somebody was taking explosion goods in bags and luggage" onboard, a senior official said.

The message was immediately flashed across and a bomb threat assessment committee comprising various security agencies and airport officials was convened.

The aircraft was sent to be parked at an isolation bay at the airport, the official said and added that after a complete re-check and scanning of luggage, the said message was declared a hoax and the flight was allowed to depart. A woman passenger along with a infant was later intercepted at the terminal area and the security agencies have detained them for questioning. Someone linked to them is suspected to have sent the email, the sources said.

"Hon'ble @LtGovDelhi, Sh. VK Saxena inaugurated #DDA Sports Complex in Qutubgarh Model Village, Delhi along with Hon'ble @hansrajhansHRH. The complex has extensive amenities like volleyball, badminton, & kabaddi courts for male & female, an open gym & jogging tracks," it

The sports complex also includes an extended air-conditioned multipurpose hall of about 216 square metres, the statement said.



"Sports play an important role to keep us fit. Realising this, the prime minister launched the 'Fit India' movement in 2019 so that fitness becomes an integral part of our daily life. The movement has become a huge success. I am confident that many players from Qutubgarh will represent India at the international level and bring laurels and medals for our country," Saxena said.

Appreciating the role of DDA in transforming Qutubgarh, the LG said that he aims to build a

sports complex in every village in Delhi."I want children to get advanced training in various sports facilities, and both Indian Oil and Indian Army have agreed to provide experienced coaches and soon we will get to see advanced coaching facilities as well," the LG said.

The DDA has played a pivotal role in building sports infrastructure and promotion of sports in the national capital. At present, DDA has 16 sports complexes, three mini sports complexes, two public golf courses, 17 swimming pools and 40 multi-gyms, an official statement said.

Meanwhile, centres of excellence are also in progress in many sports like wrestling, weightlifting, boxing, judo, kabaddi, tennis, shooting, football, and hockey in various sectors of Dwarka along with a centre of excellence in aquatics in Sector 33 Rohini. A public golf course is also being developed at Sector 24 Dwarka, it said.

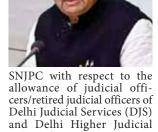
LG gives nod to revision of allowances of judicial officers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lt Governor (LG)Vinai Kumar Saxena has given his nod for implementation of the Supreme Court direction for revision of allowances for judicial officers in Delhi on the basis of the recommendations of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission (SNJPC). Saxena approved the propos-

al of the Law Department in this regard and it has now been sent to the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, for its concurrence as per laid down rules, officials said here on Tuesday. The Supreme Court in its

judgment dated 04.01.2024 in writ petition (C-643/2015) titled – All India Judges Association vs Union of India & Others -- had accepted the recommendations of the



Service (DHJS). The apex court in its judgment had set the deadline of February 29, 2024 for all States and Union Territories for disbursements on account of arrears of salary, pension and allowances due and payable to judicial officers, retired judicial officers and

family pensioners.

Three days Dilli Durbar 2024 held at Rajghat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sufi Syed Riyazuddin Chishty, Gaddi Nahsin -Dargah Ajmer Sharif and Founder Chairman of Ajmer Global Sufi Foundation, also the Patron-in-Chief, Dilli Durbar festival, has expressed gratitude to the Government of India for their unwavering support towards the Dilli Durbar 2024 held at Gandhi Darshan Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi on February 23, 24 and 25.

During this three-day celebration of Sprituality and Love, the launch of the book "The Divine Light" authored by Syed Adil Husain Chishty marked a significant moment. The book encapsulates the teachings and life of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz (HA), an apostle of peace and harmony, emphasising the value of serv ing all with unconditional love, peace, and understanding across different faiths and cultures

This festival, aimed at reflecting the spirituality of India, has garnered widespread acclaim and serves as a beacon of communal harmony and interfaith dialogue.

This initiative aligns strong ly with the vision of "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat" envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Dilli Durbar initiative, fostered by the spirit of communal harmony and interfaith dialogue, has seen participation from various religious leaders representing diverse faiths and

traditions. It is a profound journey that celebrates the rich spiritual ethos of our nation, drawing inspiration from the teachings and philosophy of the great SufiBhakti spiritual traditions, thereby exemplifying the unity in diversity that is intrinsic to India.









Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Government of India

First come, First Serve

3000 flats already sold, including 1200 in vibrant Narela area

Prime opportunity in burgeoning educational hubs like Narela

MIG, EWS Flats are also available in

Diverse range of flats catering to all income groups: EWS, LIG, MIG & HIG

Online End-to-End process







Follow us on ② official_dda ④ ddaofficial ⑤ official_dda ⑥ Official_dda

Choose from prime locations in

Last chance to grab these

Hurry, before they're all gone!

28.02.2024

Last date for

EMD for E-Auction of

ector 19B and Sector 14, Dwarka

For detailed Terms & Conditions, eligibility criteria and for applying in the scheme, please visit DDA's website: www.dda.gov.in or dial Toll Free No.: 1800110332





EAM calls for reforms of outdated global structures

 $T^{\text{he conflict in Gaza is of}}_{\text{``great concern''}} \text{ and the humanitarian crises arising}$ out of it require a sustainable solution that gives immediate relief to those most affected, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday while calling for reforms of "outdated" global structures to effectively address geopo-

litical challenges. In a virtual statement at the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Jaishankar called for urgently making multilateral frameworks fit to respond to current global realities by fixing systemic flaws in the current institutions.

He said it would be in collective interest and responsibility to work together in the UN and outside to find lasting solutions to geopolitical chal-

"For this to happen, it is vital that we first recognise that for multilateralism to be credible, effective and responsive, it is now high time to reform outdated structures and fix systemic flaws, and urgently make multilateral frameworks fit for the purpose, reflecting current global realities," the external affairs minister said.

India has been pressing for reforms in the UN, especially the UN Security Council. In his remarks, Jaishankar expressed deep concern over the situation in Gaza. At the same time, referring to the October 7 terror attack on Israel by Hamas, he asserted that "terrorism and hostage taking" are unacceptable.

'The conflict in Gaza is of great concern to us all. The humanitarian crises arising from conflicts require a sustainable solution that gives immediate relief to those most

"At the same time, we must be clear that terrorism and hostage taking are unacceptable. It also goes without saying that international humanitarian law must always be respected," he added.

Jaishankar said it is vital that the conflict does not spread within or beyond the region. "And efforts must also focus on seeking a two-State solution where Palestinian people can live within secure borders," he

Israel has been continuing with its military offensive in Gaza as part of its retaliation to the unprecedented attack on Israeli cities by Hamas on October 7 last year.

Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel and abducted more than 220, some of whom were released during a brief

More than 27,000 people have been killed in Gaza in the



Israeli offensive, according to the Hamas-run authorities in

In his remarks at the UNHRC, Jaishankar said India's civilisational values emphasise that the world shares "one earth, we are one family and we have one

This Indian approach is defined more by how much we are alike than by our differences" and that many are

impacted by the choices made by even a few, he said, adding that this interconnectedness means that genuine dialogue as the only way to find solutions is not just an imperative, but in fact, inevitable.

"It is, therefore, in our collective interest, and responsibility, to work together in the UN and outside to find lasting solutions to geopolitical chalrights is rooted in its democratic principles and pluralistic

"Our Constitution guarantees protection of civil and political rights and provides for progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights," he said.

"Our society and polity are anchored by our institutional strengths of an independent judiciary, robust media and vibrant civil society," Jaishankar

He said these values have continued to inform India's policies, domestically and globally. "And therefore, I believe, we have much to contribute," he

Referring to the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the external affairs minister said 2024 is an important year for India's democracy, with nearly 96 crore voters gearing up to

"This is not merely a political exercise but a celebration of democracy, a festival where every voice resonates and every vote counts," he said.

"In a world where the principles of democracy are constantly tested, India stands as a beacon of hope and resilience, showcasing the power of the people to shape their collective future," he said. Jaishankar said the multiple crises facing the world have highlighted the glaring global inequities. "Naturally then, it was with a sense of exceptional responsibility that we took up G20's presidency last year. On India's initiative, the African Union became a permanent member of the G20,"

The external affairs minister said the G20 New Delhi leaders' declaration put forth solutions on a range of domains, such as digital public infra-

he said.

reforming international financial institutions, women-led development, education and AI (artificial intelligence), to name a few.

"As the world's most populous nation and fifth-largest economy, India always stands ready to share our experiences and

expertise with those who wish to benefit from it," he said. Jaishankar said India's development cooperation that spans the globe is guided by the pri-orities of its partners and it creates local capacities and adheres to fiscal responsibility and transparency.

India has been at the forefront of lending a helping hand when it is most needed. We demonstrated this during the Covid pandemic, also as first responders in disaster emergencies like in Turkiye and Syria last year, and when Sri Lanka experienced a severe

Campaign to encourage first | Task force formed to tackle health time voters to vote launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Centre on Tuesday launched a national campaign to encourage firsttime voters to exercise their franchise and make the poll process more participative. The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Union Ministry of Education launched a jingle — "Banega Desh Mahan, Jab Vote Karenge Hum" — aimed at about 1.85 crore first-time voters in the country who are eligible to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha

"Let us make our electoral process even more participative. I call upon people from all walks of life to spread the message, in their own style, among first time voters," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X, using the #MeraPehlaVoteDeshKeLiye hashtag. "As the nation gears up for its biggest festival of democracy, I urge all of you to join the #MeraPehlaVoteDeshKeLiye campaign and encourage young voters to exercise their democratic right," Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said he has directed all higher education institutions in the country their campuses from February official said.



28 to March 6 to galvanise youth power, emphasise the value of voting and make informed choices. The prime minister, in his "Mann Ki Baat" radio address, had said the campaign focused on encouraging first-time voters to participate in the electoral process in large numbers.

"Bharat is proud of its youth power that is full of passion and energy and the more the youth participate in the electoral process, the better the results will be for the country," the prime minister had said.

Îndia has nearly 1.85 crore first-time voters in the 18-19 age group who are eligible to vote in the Lok Sabha elections, likely to be held in April-May. "The main objective of the initiative is to engage and encourage young voters to come out voter awareness activities on larger good of the nation," an

Designated spaces shall be identified in universities/colleges/higher education institutions where activities related to voter awareness will be undertaken by respective institutions. The initiative will witness both on-ground physical events and online competitions on the MyGov platform, an official statement said.

Various activities, including competitions on blog writing, podcasts, debate, essay writing, quizzes, extempore and Battle of Bands, will be conducted to show creativity in content creation. Interactive workshops and seminars emphasising the value of voting and understanding the electoral process, etc, will also be organised at the institutions. The National Service Scheme and its volunteers will lead the programme and vote and to convey the in educational institutions, with MyGov portal for wider dis-

challenges faced by medical students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n response to the growing Loncern surrounding the mental health challenges faced by medical students, particularly depression and suicide, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has finally formed a national task force comprised of 15 members. It is headed by Dr BM Suresh, a distinguished Professor specialising in Psychiatry at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS).

"Recognising the urgent need for intervention, an office order was issued on February 21 to establish the task force in the wake of concerning prevalence of depression and suicide among medical students," said an official from the NMC.

Terming the much-awaited move a need of the hour, Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA)FORDA general secretary Dr Sarvesh Pandey said we have been drawing the attention of the government towards this disturbing trend which doesn't behove well for the health of our health system. He cited the

National Medical Commission(NMC) data spanning from 2018 to 2022 which shows a staggering 64 MBBS students and 58 PG students tragically lost their nificant number who left their



this period. Dr. Šmita Deshpande, senior

psychiatrist and former head of the Centre of Excellence in Mental Health, ABVIMS- Dr. RML Hospital, Delhi hoped that the penal will take holistic approach in the matter. The consequences of untreated mental health issues among medical students are far-reaching. "Not only mental health issues impact the individual's personal well-being and quality of life, but they can also affect academic performance, clinical competence, and professional development.

'Moreover, untreated mental health issues can have longterm implications for the future healthcare workforce, potentially leading to decreased job satisfaction, increased rates of burnout, and even attrition from the profession," she said. The NMC official said that all the issues concerning the intensely. "The scope of the task force involves a comprehensive

review of existing literature and data pertaining to mental health and suicides among medical students, aiming to identify underlying factors and trends. Furthermore, the task force is mandated to propose evidence-based strategies aimed at enhancing mental health support systems and preventing suicides within the medical student population. The task force will also conduct field visits to medical colleges where incidents of suicides have been reported to study challenges faced by medical students at the ground level, allowing the task force to tailor its recommendations

accordingly.
The panel will submit its recommendations by May 31, 2024. It will serve as a roadmap for policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals to implement targeted interventions and systemic reforms tal health of medical students,

Driverless train incident: Both driver, station master at fault, says probe report was video recorded and found

A preliminary probe into the incident of the driverless running of a freight train for about 70 km from Kathua (Jammu) to Ucchi Bassi Station (Punjab) in Jammu Tawi-Pathankot section has suggested that both the driver as well as the station master failed to fulfil their responsibilities.

The joint probe report, signed by five senior railway officials, has recorded the statements of various persons involved in the incident and described the turn of events which point to dereliction of duties on the part of the driver and the station master of Kathua. Divisional Railway Manager

of the Firozpur division, under which the Kathua-Jammu Tavi section comes, has suspended six railway officials based on the preliminary probe and ordered a detailed investigation.

The report said the loco pilot in his statement submitted that besides stabilising the engine and three wagons of the train by applying hand brakes, he also placed two wooden wedges before the wheels of the loco so that it couldn't move.

The report added that, however, when the train was train remained unmanned concerned station master car- it started moving on its own ried out an inspection which due to a down gradient.

that the wagons' handbrakes were not in applied position. It further noted that the station master of Kathua, who was on duty, did not stabilise the train properly from 6.05 am to 7.10 am. Railway officials said that as per norms, the station master has to check if the brakes are properly applied and take other measures to ensure that it would not move.

According to the report, it was a divisional material train (DMT) which is used to carry railway materials for construction and other purposes. It was stationed at Kathua junction with 53 wagons and it had no brake van (guard's

The report said that at 5:20 am, the control room told the station master to tell the driver to take the train to Jammu but the driver refused as the train didn't have any guard's coach as well as a guard.

The control room, as per the report, asked the driver to shut down the train, be relieved of his duties and take a train to go to Jammu. The driver handed over the keys to the station master around 6 am and left for Jammu.

The report suggested that the

Army inducts desi modular bridge to boost capability

The Indian Army on Tuesday here inducted a 46-metre indigenously designed and manufactured modular bridge thereby giving a boost to bridging capability of the force's engineers.

The induction ceremony took place at the Manekshaw Centre here in the presence of Army chief General Manoj Pande and senior officials of the Army and Larsen and Toubro

"Over the next four years, a total of 41 sets, valued at Rs 2,585 crore, will be progressively inducted. The first set was inducted on Tuesday," a senior official said.

These "game-changing bridges" have been designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced by L&T as a DRDOnominated production agency. The modular bridge is a "mechanically-launched single-span, fully-decked 46metre assault bridge, enabling the Army to overcome obstacles, such as canals and ditches, with ease.

It will augment the crucial bridging capability of the Indian Army's engineers as these bridges are highly mobile, rugged, and designed for quick deployment and retrieval, aligning with the fast-paced nature of mechanised operations," the official said. The induction of the modular

bridge also highlights India's "prowess in designing and developing advanced military equipment" and underscores the country's commitment to "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" and self-reliance in defence production the Army said The contract for the procure-

ment of the modular bridges was signed with L&T in February 2023. Each set of the modular bridge consists of "seven carrier vehicles based on 8x8 heavy mobility vehicles and two launcher vehicles based on 10x10 heavy mobility vehicles", the Army said. These bridges can be employed over various types of obstacles like canals and ditches with quick launching and retrieval capabilities. The equipment is highly mobile, versatile, rugged and capable of keeping pace with wheeled and tracked mechanised vehicles, it added. The modular bridges will replace the manually-launched medium girder bridges (MGBs) that are currently being used in the Army. The indigenously designed and manufactured modular bridges shall have many advantages over the MGBs, such as an increased span, less time for construction and mechanical

bility, officials said. The acquisition of these bridges not only enhances the Army's operational effectiveness, but also showcases India's growing prominence in defence technology and manufacturing, they said.

launching with retrieval capa-

Household expenditure survey election inspired document: Congress PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Targeting the Centre for releasing an "election-inspired" Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday demanded a census be conducted soon for accurate information, insisting it should also incorporate a caste survey. The Opposition party's reaction came after the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), functioning under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released data on household consumption expenditure for 2022-23 on Saturday.

Kharge said that after 10 years of "deep sleep", the Modi Government has finally come out with an "election-inspired" survey on public expenditure and income. "The Modi government has made an unsuccessful attempt to pat itself on the back in the survey. We have only one demand, for correct information, the Census of 2021 should be done as soon as possible and a caste census should be a part of it. The Congress party will definitely get it done as soon as its gov-ernment is formed," the

Congress chief added. Kharge said if everything in the country was so shiny as is being shown in the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, why the poorest five per cent of rural India was spending only Rs 46 daily.



"Why did the poorest five per

According to Kharge, experts

cent of families get the least benefit from government schemes - only Rs 68/month? Did the capitalist friends get the remaining benefits? "Why is the monthly income of

farmers less than the average income of rural India? Why has the fuel expenditure of rural families reduced by only 1.5 per cent while the Modi government continues to boast of the success of the Ujjwala scheme," the Congress leader

say the government can change the criteria for measuring food inflation data from this survey. 'Is this not an attempt to hide back-breaking inflation with fake data," he asked. Kharge claimed that the sur-

prising thing is that the nomination of this Household Consumption Expenditure Survey should have been the 69th Round or the 70th Round, but which round is this survey named after, that has deliberately been kept ambigu-

This has been done so that manipulation of data goes undetected, he alleged.

Former SC judge appointed chairperson of Lokpal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Fa M Khanwilkar was appointed as the chairperson of the anti-corruption ombuds-man Lokpal on Tuesday, nearly two years after the post fell

vacant. The Lokpal has been working without its regular chief after Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose completed his term on May 27,

Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, a judicial member of the Lokpal, is currently the acting chairperson.

President Droupadi Murmu is pleased to appoint Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar as the chairperson of the Lokpal, according to a communique issued by the Rashtrapati

Justice Khanwilkar retired from the Supreme Court in July 2022. Retired justices Lingappa Narayana Swamy, Sanjay Yadav and Ritu Raj Awasthi have been appointed as judicial members of the anti-corruption ombudsman, it said. Sushil Chandra, Pankaj Kumar

and Ajay Tirkey will be non-judicial members, the communique stated. These appointments will take effect from the dates they assume charge of their respective offices, it added.

The chairperson and members of the Lokpal are appointed by the President after obtaining the recommendations of a Selection Committee having the prime minister as its chair-

Covid impacted lungs more severely in Indians: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Once energetic and vibrant, Pradeep Tewari, a sea-soned journalist never anticipated that the Covid virus, which has partially damaged his lung, could be so profound and life-altering. Despite eventually recovering from the acute phase of the illness, Tewari continues to grapple with debilitating scars in the lung tissue and persistent res-

piratory symptoms.
As a result, he finds himself feeling trapped by his own body, unable to fully participate in family gatherings or official events or even complete simple tasks like climbing stairs or taking a short walk without gasping for breath.

But the inability to lift his small daughter in his arms due to his weakened lungs is one of the most distressing feelings he experiences. Tewari shares that it's heartbreaking to see her reach out, expecting to be held, only to be met with his physical limitations.

Tewari's case serves as a poignant example that reflects in the findings of a recent study conducted by doctors from the Christian Medical College, (CMC) Vellore to Covid-19 on lung function.

investigate the impact of The researchers examined 207 individuals, showcasing substantial impairment in lung function, exercise capacity, and quality of life among recovered individuals. It revealed a high prevalence of respiratory symptoms among Indians who recovered, even after a mean of

over two months following



acute illness, with shortness of breath reported in 49.3 per cent and cough in 27.1 per cent of the cohort. The study is published in the journal PLOS Global Public Health.

'It is clear from the study that lung function is affected more in the Indian population compared to data from other countries across every category of disease severity," said study lead researcher D Christopher, professor of pul-monary medicine at CMC Vellore, while comparing data from Europe and China.

An Italy-based study, for instance, found dyspnoea or shortness of breath present in 43 per cent and cough in less than 20 per cent of the subjects. The corresponding figures from a Chinese study were also lower than those seen in the Indian study. In terms of co-morbidities, Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore researchers found 72.5 per cent of individuals reporting underlying health conditions such as diabetes mellitus, systemic hypertension, and chronic lung

However, Christopher said none of the study subjects had features of active TB at the time of recruitment to the study.

"This study underscores the

urgent need for comprehensive

post-recovery care and pre-

ventive measures to address the long-term health implications of Covid-19 on lung health and overall well-being. This also indicates that there is an anticipated rise in respiratory diseases, including interstitial lung disease (ILD) and lung cancer, among Covid-19 survivors. As he battles with Long Covid impacts which have partially damaged his lungs and left him disabled in many ways, Tewari now hopes that the study will serve as a wake-up call for the Government to focus its attention to the plight of the patients suffering with Long Covid-19. There is a need for comprehensive post-recovery care and monitoring as essential services

to address these long-term

health challenges being faced

by patients like us. There is a

need to mitigate the risk of last-

ing lung function impairment,"

North, south divide created for narrow political gains: Rajnath

¬he BJP is not a north-centric party and the northsouth binary has been created by the opposition parties for "narrow" political gains, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday, asserting that such efforts to discredit the party also put a question mark on national integrity.

In an address at an event, Singh said the BJP was the ruling party across various states in the country including in the southern state of Karnataka and the allegation that it is only a part of north India is "factually wrong". "An allegation is often levelled against us that BJP is only a party of north India. You all must have heard this. They also make this allegation against us that we are only a party of the Hindi belt. We have formed a government with absolute majority twice in Assam. Assam is not a Hindi belt state," he said.

The senior BJP leader said the party has been registering its effective presence in states like Rajasthan and Gujarat for about three-four decades and that it received maximum seats in western India in the last Lok Sabha elections.

"In Gujarat, we have a government for almost 30 years. If we talk about the states of southern India, we have had our government in Karnataka for a long time. Presently we are the sec ond largest party in West Bengal, Odisha and Karnataka. Our vote share is continuously increasing in Andhra Pradesh Tamil Nadu and Kerala," Singh

"Therefore, the allegation that BJP is only a party of north Indians is factually completely wrong. For narrow political

The general public is hereby informed that my client Sanjay Kumar Khanna s/o late shri Ved prakash Khanna Address C-491 Sarita Vihar New Delhi-110076 any form in any of their activity financial dealing in future also with Arun Porter (Jijaji) and Arunima Porter (Niece). I Totally dispwned them and any of my funds and legal documents also with immediate effect and anyone dealing with them shall do so at his/her nwn risk and consequences. Vikas Sharma & Associates

Supreme court of India & Delhi High Court



• CHANGE OF NAME

I, Gaurav S/oVijay Chaudhary R/o H.No. 128, Ram Rattan Farm, Main Road, Asola, Fatehpur Beri, South Delhi-110074, have changed my Budhsingh name to Chaudhary for all purpose. PD(288)C

PUBLIC NOTICE The general public is informed that the cars with the following car numbers which have completed their life Petrol Cars 15 Years Diesel Cars 10 Years. The MCD drive was confiscated by Pine View Technology Pvt Ltd and has not been claimed by anyone till now. All these vehicle owners are informed to come to the company's office and claim the scrap value of the vehicle. Otherwise,

all these vehicles will be scrapped in the				
	an these vehicles will be scrapped in the next three days.			
DL4CAV1926,	DL8CNB2982,	Ini neunazz		
		DL9SU8477,		
DL7CL8954,	DL9SX1465,	MH12BZ5408,		
HR29T8157,	DL6SZ5256,	DL1SQ3999,		
FIAT103C1	DL4SBC3045,	DL9SL5772,		
PA056448,	DL4SAQ9252,	DL7SBA6070,		
DL3CBE0714,	KA41L0115,	DL4SBB6031,		
DL9SU5367,	DL9SL6215,	HR01X8025,		
UP14AQ6147,	PB02AY0783,	DL9SX1490,		
DL6SAA1530,	DL4SBB9276,	DL9SL9437,		
DL9SL7769,	DL9SU7441,	DL9SL8351,		
DL3SCX3878,	DL8CS4196,	DL7SAB0125,		
DL9SQ8896,	MAKGD852	DL7SX3036,		
PB35G2114,	C6N343177,	DL5SY5285,		
DL2SM1707,	HR34C3501,	HR03C0024,		
DL4CAS2187,	DL4CAV8111,	DL5SK4927,		
DL3CBF4044,	DL8SAB5567,	DL7SAY7418,		
DL4CAP3883,	UP53AJ6862,	DL7SBC4272,		
DL7CC8714,	DL9SX2775,	DL7SAQ9350,		
DL3CBL0236,	DL6SU5274,	DL7CC4391,		
DL3CAC9587,	DL3SAP5894,	DL4CNC3441,		
DL7S4122,	HR55P5469,	DL3CBJ0568,		
DL7SAZ7767,	RJ025M9170,	RJ1452M5757		
DL5SQ6911,	HR36H9993,	JH09K2849,		
DL7SK4055,	DL4SBH9141,	HR22E0259,		
DL4SBJ6793,	DL9SL6348,	UK07V3593,		
UP13E0262,	KA19W4223,	DL5CD3059,		
DL9SZ0257,	DL3CBJ0370,	DL1CL6079,		
DL4SBC3132,	DL9CS7707,	DL3CAZ5593,		
DL10CC3491,	DL4CAH5866,	DL8CNB2031,		
DL8CR0598,	DL12CA2335,	DL10CF2434,		
DL7CK0640,	DL4SBE8669,	HR14D2430.		
DL7SAK7545,	DL3CBF4515,	DNM5511,		
DL8SAP3535,	DL3SAE5720,	MH12CG402,		
DL8SAM3908,	HR26AV1142,	AP31AS4158,		
DL7SBC8561,	RJ18SC6848,	DL9SB4828,		
DL7SAR8111,	DL5CD5136,	CH03X0295,		
JF08E5551874,	DL7SAD9200,	DL7SAD6401,		
DL7SAQ9815,	DL1K5005,	DL8SAB2381,		
DL7SAR6756,	DL8CR2563,	UP25L8212,		
DL8SAM3897,	DL4SAJ4911,	UP16J7032,		
DL6SU5060,	DL4SBF9058,	DL3CAY8825,		
DL8SND0788,	DL9SU2947,	DL8SAN6293,		
DL4SBF8393,	DL4SBL2463,	DL5SE0345,		
DL6SAC1035,	OR14L3893,	DL8SU2712,		
DL9SN1671,	DL4SBG8466,	JK010730,		

AP31N7105

RJ14SL9207.

HR27E5588



gains and immediate electoral gains, these people, in the name of discrediting BJP, also put a question mark on the national integrity of India," he said.

'By showing prosperity figures of south India, our opposition colleagues many times try to show animosity between north Indians and south Indians, Singh said.

He noted that there are "some different structural issues in the country is no longer a weak

NR-HRKR01-004069-2023

on her behalf filed.

Nisha Vs. Sonu

Present: Petitioner with Shri Amar Singh Rana, Advocate.

The petitioner has put in appearance and has moved an application u/s 13 of the Family Courts Act, 1984 for engaging fresh counsel, Heard, Allowed, Fresh Power of Attorney

2. Registered notice issued to the respondent received back unserved with the report of 'not met'. The learned

counsel for the petitioner submits that the

respondent is deliberately avoiding

service and he be permitted to serve him through substituted means. This Court is fully satisfied that service upon the respondent cannot be effected through

ordinary means. Therefore, he is ordered

to be summoned by way of publication in the newspaper "The Pioneer" for

31.01.2024 free of costs. Dasti notice be also issued as per rules, if required.

Registration

No.

north India and south India.", adding "our effort should be that we can do something good, something big by combining both?

"Our effort should be to connect both more, and not to break both in the name of language and prosperity," he said.

The defence minister said today India's credibility has increased on international platforms and

2024_SIDC_899066_1 26.02.2024

Gurgaon, Haryana through Allotment letter and Builder Buyer Agreement dated 06.05.2023

The above said owners have misplaced the

Agreement, right to using parking, Payment Plan, and receipt. Anyone who finds the

Mr. Nagesh Mahaian is currently in the process of

mortgaging the aforementioned unit with Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited. Any objections or

raised within a period of 15 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 15-days period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 15-days period by contacting Law Verifas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesb-201301: Landlingels: 91101203101683.

Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +9101203101683

Model

2011

2011

2011

2011

2011

2011

Earnest

Money

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

10000.00

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, NOIDA-201301 (U.P.

TENDER FOR SALE OF VEHICLE

Sealed tenders are invited on behalf of Chief Executive

Officer, Noida for sale of following Vehicle "as where is basis"

on date 15.03.2024 between 11:00 am to 3:00 pm & same

will be opened on 3:30 pm in the office of the Sr. Manager

(E/M) I. The vehicle may be inspected during the office hours.

Type of

Vehicle

UP 16 AT-6052 | Hydraulic Ladder |

UP 16 AT-6053 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-6054 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-6055 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-6056 | Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4179 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4180 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4181 | Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4182 | Hydraulic Ladder UP 16 AT-4183 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4763 | Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4768 Hydraulic Ladder

UP 16 AT-4769 | Hydraulic Ladder

1. Enclosed the D.D./FDR of value as shown against the

2. The earnest money will be forfeited in favour of NOIDA if

tenderer makes any changes or refuses after receiving of tender. The earnest money will be also forfeited in favour of

NOIDA if success for tenderer fails to take over the vehicle

4. The right for acceptance/rejection of any tender is reserved to accepting authority without assigning any reason.

5. The GST/other taxes which are applicable has to be

6. The responsibility will be of the tenderer for transfer of

8. According to the order date 20.07.2016 of the Honorable

National Green Tribunal, the running of diesel powered 10

years old Machines/Vehicles is prohibited in the districts of

vehicle of any scheduled bank in favour of NOIDA.

11 UP 16 AT-4184 Hydraulic Ladder

13 UP 16 AT-4766 Hydraulic Ladder

14 UP 16 AT-4767 Hydraulic Ladder

17 UP 16 AT-4770 Hydraulic Ladder

18 UP 16 AT-3843 Hydraulic Ladder

within 10 days after acceptance letter. 3. Conditional tenders will not be entertained.

7. The Tenders are valid for three months.

Term & Conditions:

Vehicle in his name.

OFFICE: SECTOR-39, NOIDA

NCR region.

15

उ०प्र० राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण गारानिक भवन, सेक्टर बी-३, ट्रांस दिली सिम्नेचर सिटी, लोनी, गाजियाबाद, E-Mail-ed2@upsida.co.i

उपरोक्त निविदायें दिनाँक 28.02.2024 को प्रातः 11:00 खोली जानी थी परन्तु अपरिहा कारणों से अब उक्त आमंत्रित निविदा दिनोंक 05.03.2024 की साय 6:00 बजे तक निविद प्रपत्र अपलोड़ किए जाने हेतु विस्तारित किया जाता है, जिन्हें दिनोंक 07.03.2024 को प्रात

निविदाये आमंत्रित की गयी है, जिनका विवरण निम्नवत है

कार्य का नाम

11:00 बजे खोली जायेगी। शेष नियम व शर्ते यथावत रहेंगी।

HMA/380/2023

"It has now become a powerful country in the world. Now if anyone dares to target India in a wrong way, India will not shy away from giving a befitting reply. Now heads of state of many countries also believe that the 21st century is going to belong to India," he said.

"Our prime minister has so much goodwill abroad that eight

Singh also spoke about the difference between BJP-ruled governments and those by other

PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that my client Mr. Pradeep Kumar s/o Mr. Kamal Singh owner of Single Story House admeasuring area 54 Ag. Vd. or say 46 Sq. Mt., situated in Village Barouli Vasdevpur, Pragana & Jehsil Siyana, Distt. Bulandshahr, U.P., above Menion Property Document Sale deed executed hy Pragana & Tehsil Siyana, Distt. Bulandshahr, U.P., above Mentino Property Document Sale deed executed by Mr. Gajendra Singh s/o Mr. Badam Singh in favour of Mrs. Malwati w/o Mr. Kamal Singh in respect of the said Plot admeasuring area 54 Sq. /4 or say 46 Sq. Mt., duly registered with the office of SR-Siyana (Bulandshahar), vide Doc. No. 5913, in Book No. 1, vol no. 511 Page no. 355/358, on dated 25.11.2001, has been lost/ misplaced & Present owner of the above Property Mr. Pradeep Kumar s/o Mr. Kamal Singh and same Property to be Loan financed by Mr/s Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. fary person(s) have any objection(s) or Claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 7 days from the dot this notice on the number mentioned herein below, Said Property then contact us within 7 adys from the date of this notice on the number mentioned herein below, failing which my client, i.e. M/s Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. 2° Floor, Commercial Market, Sanjay Vihar, Awas Vikas, Opp. Prachin Shiv Mandir, Hapur-245101 U.P. Shell not be held responsible in any

nanner whatsoever.

Arun Goswami (Advocate)

Chamber No. 119, I" Floor, Main Road Tehsil
Compound Distt. Ghaziabad; Mob.: 9997806112

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Manju Jain W/o Mr. Subhash Chand Jain, is the owner of the Built-up Property Bearing No. M-43, area measuring 70 Sq. Yds. i.e. 58 52 Sq. Mtrs. with Roof/Terrace rights, out of Rect. No. 58, Killa No. 23, Situated in the Abadi of Jagat Ram Park, Laxmi Jagar, in the area of village Kluvriej Khas, Illaga Shahdara. Delhi-110092, by virtue of Gift Deed dated 07.08.2018, regd. at doc. No. 4668. The abovesaid property is to be financed & mortgaged with my clientie, Aksis Finance Limited and She is the absolute owner of the property. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, falling white, it will be assumed that there are no claims or nich, it will be assumed that there are no claims of

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi – 110001, Mob.: +91-8076188328

Notice is hereby given that my client Inderpal is in process to purchase the Plot no. 4A, Area measuring 226 sq. yds. forming part of Khaera no. 112/i7/2, 14/2, 17/1, 14/1, 17/2, 17/3 Situated at Mauja Ballabgarh (Krishna Colony), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Colony), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Colony), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Capital Ballabgarh (Hrishna Capital Ballabgarh et al. 18/1), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Capital Ballabgarh et al. 18/1), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Capital Ballabgarh et al. 18/1), Tehsil Ballabgarh (Brishna Capital Ballabgarh et al. 18/1), Tehsil Ballabgarh et al. 18/1), Teh

given death sentences in Oatar

got pardoned from there and

one of them is from Visakhapatnam," he said.

Singh also rejected allegations that the BJP is a communal

"Some people accuse BJP of being a communal party where-as BJP is the largest secular party in the world. Today five Arab

countries have given Prime Minister Narendra Modi-ji the

Singh alleged that the Congress

is the "mother' of corruption",

"mother of appeasement" and

He said that the BJP has ended

the crisis of credibility in the pol-

"We do what we say. We have

promised to abolish Article 370

and we did it. We promised to

end the evil practice of triple

talaq. We have done that. We

talked about the Uniform Civil

Code. Today the BJP govern-

ment in Uttarakhand has imple-

highest honour," he said.

"mother of dynasticism".

itics of this country.

mented it," he said.

nam Aishan, whereas he acquired the same Relinquishment Deed dated 10.05.2019 executed by Sh. Ravinder, Sh. Tekchand and Smt. Geeta (Doc. No. 1227)
All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within? 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

NOTICE

This is to inform you that medical records department of Ram Lal Kundan Lal Orthopedic Hospital & R.K. Maternity Home, Pandav Nagar, Delhi-110092 is going to dispose off the OPD & IPD medical record files (Patient case sheet) from 1st January, 2011 to 31st December, 2015 if anyone has any issue or concern with these medical record files or case shee Kindly Contact MRD or Hospita management within seven working days. Tel: 011-43189000 TO 099 Mobile: 9811699123

Ram Lal Kundan Lal Orthopedic Hospital & R.K. Maternity Home

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)

Station of Delhi Division

App. Cost of the work: Rs. 14,93,621.31/- only

Address of the office: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C. Norther Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055. Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender

27.02.2024 / closing date & time- 22.03.2024 up to 15.00 hrs. Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc. : See the Northern Railway www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.

No.: 558-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1419 Dated: 27.02.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LTD Regd. Off.: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur-244901 (U.P.) Email id- rkumar@rampurfert.com CIN: L15136UP1988PLC010084 POSTAL BALLOT NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 108 and 110 of the Companies Act, amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act") read together with Rule 20 and Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 ("the Rules"), (including any Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 ("the Rules"), (including any modification(s) or re-enactment(s) thereof for the time being in force), Secretarial Stan General Meetings ("the SS-2"), read with General Circular Nos. 03/2022, 20/2021, 39/2020, 33/2020, 22/2020, 17/2020 and 14/2020 dated May 05, 2022, December June 23, 2021, December 31, 2020, September 28, 2020, June 15, 2020, April 13, April 08, 2020, respectively, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Governmer ("MCA Circulars"), Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing O and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the 'SE Regulations') and other applicable laws, rules and regulations, that the Special Riset out in the Postal Ballot Notice with respect to the following business:

Adoption of new set of Memorandum of Association of the Company as per Co. Act, 2013.

Adoption of new set of Articles of Association of the Company as ner Companies are proposed to be passed by the Members through Postal Ballot by voting through el neans only (remote e-voting System).

accordance with the MCA Circulars, Notice along with explanatory statement ent only through electronic mode to those members whose e-mail addresses are r vith the Registrar and transfer agent/ Depositories as on Friday, February 23, 2 Company has completed the electronic dispatch of Postal Ballot Notice on Tuesday. 7, 2024. The Notice is displayed on the website of the Company www.rampurfer etropolitan Stock Exhnge Limited (MSE) www.msei.in and Calcutta Stock Exch. CSE) www.cse-india.com and on the Website of NSDL viz. www.evoting.nsdl.cor Compliance with the aforesaid provisions, the company has provided the facil Members to exercise their votes electronically through remote e-voting only on the platform provided by the NSDL. The Login credentials for casting votes throug e-voting have been sent to the members along with notice. The detailed proc easting votes through remote e-voting has been provided in the Notice. The instru remote e-voting given in notes to Postal ballot Notice is its integral part.

No physical copy of Notice has been sent to Members and the communication of fissent of Members will take place only through e-voting facility

The "cut-off" date for the purpose of ascertaining the eligibility of members to ava e-voting facility is Friday, February 23, 2024. The members whose name is record egister of members of the company or in the register of beneficial owners maintain lepositories as on cut-off date shall only be entitled to avail the remote e-voting t The remote E-voting period will commence on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 0 IST) and shall end on Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 05:00 P.M (IST). Once the esolution is cast by a member, no change will be allowed subsequently. lembers who have not registered their e-mail ID are requested to register the sai

In case of shares are held in physical mode please provide Form ISR-1 with I Name of shareholder, scanned copy of any one share certificate (Front and be (self attested scanned copy of PAN Card), Mobile No. and email id (should be n in form ISR-1) AADHAR (self attested scanned copy of AADHAR Card) by investor@masserv.com or rkumar@rampurfert.com. Please also send origina ISR-1 with copy of PAN/AADHAR to RTA (i.e. MAS Services Limited, T-34, 2nd Fl Industrial Area, Phase-II New Delhi-110020).

Members holding shares in dematerialized mode and have not registered/upd. email address, register/update it with Depositary Participant(s) with whom thaccount is maintained.

The Company has appointed Mr. Sanjiv Nigam (Membership No. FCS9313/CP. N Company Secretary in Practice as Scrutinizer for conducting the e-voting process i ransparent manner.

The result of the Postal Ballot will be announced at or before on Saturday, March and shall be placed on the website of the Company at www.rampufert.com as website of NSDL and shall also be communicated to the MSE and CSE, where sha For e-voting instructions Members may go through the instructions given in the Noti

case of any queries or grievances relating to e-voting, Members may Contact NSDL by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or contact at Toll free no. 1800-102 1800-22-44-30 or to our RTA at investor@masserv.com.

Rajee (Company Secretary & Compliance

BJP will win 11 of 14 LS seats in Assam: Himanta

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday exuded confidence that the BJP will win 11 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the state in the upcoming polls. He said the saffron party will also "try to secure the 12th seat" in the state.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Majuli, Sarma said that Lok Sabha ticket aspirants will send their applications to BJP observers during the day and the list will be sent to Delhi for the first round of discussions on the probable list of candidates. "We do not want the process to be a longdrawn one so that there is not much chance of lobbying for candidature," he said.

"I am not interested in knowing the names of the candidates. People will vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he added.



Asked about the number of seats the BJP is likely to win in the Lok Sabha polls in the state, Sarma said, "We are sure to win decisively in 11 constituencies, while we will try our best to bag another seat. a 100-km

motorcycle rally from Kareng Chapori in Dhemaji to Majuli, riding a motorcycle himself, before participating in a series of programmes that included the distribution of land documents and the launch of development

Sarma led

initiatives in the world's largest river island.

He said that during the motorcycle journey on "roads constructed in schemes initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi", witnessed "excitement and enthusiasm among people, which made it clear that the NDA would cross the 400 mark this time".

The chief minister also distributed land documents to 10,932 beneficiaries under phase 2 of the Mission Basundhara scheme in Majuli, considered the cradle of Vaishnavite culture in the

The indigenous people will now benefit immensely from the ownership rights of their ancestral lands," he said. Sarma said that a legislation will be enacted soon to create a "protective heritage belt" so that their lands remain with them for generations to

मध्यप्रदेश राज्य पर्यटन विकास निगम मर्यादित पर्यटन भवन, भदभदा रोड, भोपाल- 462003

फोन नं. : +91-755 4027100, 2774340/42, वेबसाइट : www.mpstdc.com

क्रमांक 64/यांत्रिकी/पविनि/24 दिनांक: 27.02.2024

निविदा सचना मध्यप्रदेश राज्य पर्यटन विकास निगम भोपाल द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा प्रपत्र

APPENDIX 2.10 पर म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्र.	नि.सू. क्र./सिस्टम आई.डी./कार्य का नाम	ठेके की अनुमानित राशि रु. लाख में
1	34/2024_STDC_338374_1/बृहस्पति कुण्ड जिला पन्ना में ग्लास फ्लोर केंटीलिवर व्यू पाइंट, टिकिट बूथ, वेटिंग एरिया, पाथवे, प्लेट फार्म का विकास कार्य। (10 माह)	307.10
2	35/2024_STDC_338378_1/शिव मंदिर देवतालाब जिला रीवा में डे-शेल्टर, पब्लिक टायलेट एवं अन्य निर्माण के शेष कार्य। (03 माह)	67.46
_		

वेबसाइट पर ऑनलाइन भुगतान कर निविदा प्रपत्र (टेण्डर डाक्युमेंट) वेबसाइट के माध्यम से क्रय किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र ऑनलाइन क्रय करने की **अंतिम तिथि 13.02.2024 सँमय सायं 05:00 बजे तक** निर्धारित है। कार्य का विस्तृत

विवरण वेबसाइट https://mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। म.प्र. माध्यम/114003/2024

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office- ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation. Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand

notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-

mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited. Description of Property/

	No.	Loan Account Number	Date of Physical Possession	in Demand Notice (Rs.)	of Branch
		Pankaj Arora/ '031405006673/ '000255000044/ '000205003505	Commercial Property No. 1103 (Along With Two Car Parking Space) and 1104, 11th Floor Sas Tower Tower-B Sector-38, Gurgaon Haryana/ February 23, 2024	February 23, 2023 Rs. 2,64,71,117.00/-	Gurgaon
٠	The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else				

the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per

Date: February 28, 2024

Place : Gurgaon

Name of the Borrower

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Date of Notice NPA

Date of Notice | NDA

PUBLIC NOTICE Ficici Bank Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

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

Property Address

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

Sr. No.		of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Sent/ Outsta- nding as on Date of Notice	Date
1.	Mohammad Ajij/ Salim Bano/ Yusuf Ali- LBJAl00004964649- A- 81 Purana Vidhyadhar Nagar, Gokulpura Jaipur, Rajasthan Jaipur- 302039	Plot No. A- 54 and A- 55, Old Vidhyadhar Nagar, Jaipur Rajasthan- 302039	January 13, 2024 Rs. 25,34,215.00/-	02/08/ 2023
2.	Ankit Singh/ Vishal Singh- TBJAI00006569762- Flat No. B- 16, Srijan Vihar, Nyay Khand- 2 Indirapuram Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh- 201014	Flat No. 203 on 2nd Floor, Avana Patrakar Colony 11 A P, Khasra No. 56, Ajmer Road, Village Narotampura, Tehsil Sanganer, District Jaipur, Rajsthan- 302011 Flat No. 204 on 2nd Floor, Avana Patrakar Colony 11 A P, Khasra No. 56, Ajmer Road, Village Narotampura, Tehsil Sanganer, District Jaipur, Rajsthan- 302011	February 02, 2024 Rs. 46,20,556.00/-	05/11/ 2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Date: February 28, 2024 **Authorized Officer**

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Lo-Borrower/ Guarantor/	of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Sent/ Outsta- nding as on Date of Notice	Date
1.	Rupinder Kaur, Baljit Singh Arora, House No. 20 Xg, Rishi Nagar Block X, Haibowal Khurd, Ludhiana, Punjab- 141001, A/c No. LBLUD00005311965	Plot No. 95 Min., Comprised In Khasra No. 28//13-14-15-29//11, Khewat No. 159/115-116 Min 161/117-118, Khatoni No. 182-183-184, As Per Jamabandi Year 2014-2015, Village Chuharpura, Hadbasat No. 104, Abadi Sant Vihar Extension, Verma Colony, Tehsil & District Ludhiana, Punjab	19/01/2024 Rs. 20,58,683/-	04/07/ 2023
2.	Ashwani Kaushik, Rachna Kaushik, House No. C-69, Sector- 1, Phase-1, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh- 171009, A/c No. LBSHM00002032992	Apartment No. LD00150704, Kove Apartment, Tower 15, 7th Floor, at Jaypee Greens Sports City, Gautam Budha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201307	24/01/2024 Rs. 1,81,265/-	31/05/ 2018
3.	Ashwani Kaushik, Rachna Kaushik, House No. C-69, Sector- 1, Phase-1, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh- 171009, A/c No. LBSHM00002029842	Apartment No. LD00150704, Kove Apartment, Tower 15, 7th Floor, at Jaypee Greens Sports City, Gautam Budha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201307	24/01/2024 Rs. 31,85,862/-	31/05/ 2018

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

Date : February 28, 2024 Place : Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer

Place: Rampur **CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

DGM (E/M)

Date: 27.02.2024

www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Young dreams

Modi exhorts first-time voters to fulfil their aspirations by building a developed India

India, with one of the youngest populations in the world, boasts of a dynamic workforce brimming with energy, innovation and creativity. The demographic advan-■ tage of having a large number of citizens under 35 presents it with a golden opportunity to propel itself towards great economic, social and technological progress. Harnessing the power of its youth brigade, India can emerge as a global powerhouse, charting a path of sustainable development and prosperity. But channelling the youthful energy is most important as it cuts both ways. In this context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to first-time voters is pertinent. Beyond just casting their vote, it is about understanding the nation's political dynamics and making an informed decision. Modi's assertion that the youth possess the "maximum right to shape India" resonates deeply with the aspirations and potential of millions of young Indians. With the vision of a developed India aligning with the dreams of its



youth, the call carries profound significance as the nation navigates through a transformative phase. The empowerment of first-time voters symbolises the shifting dynamics of political engagement, where their voice is increasingly recognised as pivotal in shaping development policies. Modi's emphasis on the pivotal role of youth in nation-building underscores the recognition of their energy, creativity and ambition as indispensable assets for

By acknowledging the aspirations and dreams of the youth, the Prime Minister not only acknowledges their power but also instils a sense of responsibil-

ity in them. Moreover, Modi is calling for action, urging the youth to actively participate in the democratic process. Also, his emphasis on youth empowerment extends beyond electoral participation to encompass skill development, entrepreneurship and innovation. Through initiatives such as Skill India, Start-up India and Digital India, the Government has endeavoured to create an enabling ecosystem that nurtures the talents and ambitions of the youth, equipping them with the tools to contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. However, realising the vision of a developed India requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including the Government, civil society and the private sector. It demands inclusive policies that address the diverse needs and aspirations of the youth, irrespective of their socioeconomic background or geographic location. It also necessitates investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure and employment generation. The Government, for its part, must keep the youth at the forefront while forming policies and giving maximum leverage to them. As the nation marches forward, it is imperative that the aspirations and potential of the youth are harnessed effectively, ensuring a brighter and prosperous future.



Divyangjan (persons with disability) during a 'Purple Fest' at the Amrit Udyan, in New Delhi

China's bid to expand maritime infrastructure



Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative and the String of Pearls strategy, China aims to extend its maritime influence, raising questions about its long-term objectives

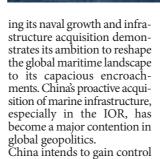
hina's expansive push into larger maritime domains has emerged as a significant global concern. This is particularly evident in its construction and takeover of maritime infrastructure across strategic locations, most prominently in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the South China Sea, and the largely Indo-Pacific. The surge in its naval activities, along with the aggressive acquisition of vital maritime assets beyond its strategic limits, has compelled nations to dissect Beijing's long-term expansive objectives.

China's intention: China's muchcalculated ambitious plans for maritime expansion are evident, particularly when examining the modus operandi of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) investments. These investments aim at enhancing China's maritime reach and linkages in all directions, which go hand in hand "by the intent of crafting a global power imbalance." Much attached to this intention is its String of Pearls strategy - which is aimed at encircling and containing the littoral South Asian countries and dictating their maritime trade and naval support networks.

Littoral States into Client States: Amongst its expansion motifs into South Asia, the transformation of the small states into client states remains the foremost- of late Maldives has fallen into this trap. Concern remains, as the latter will act as a buffer zone around India's maritime strategic space and serve China's naval expansion in the IOR.

Maritime infrastructure: In the IOR, China is doing extra-territorial heavy investments into maritime infra. The intention is to take over others' critical assets while tactically positioning itself in crucial maritime zones. To further its access and reach to others' maritime zones that once remained distant is now getting closer to China using the creation of support networks in the littoral states through diverse invest-

Giodai Stadility: The implications of China's maritime goals, particularly infrastructure control, require further examination. China's hybrid strategy of expand-



of critical marine infrastructure via a variety of initiatives. Several naval projects have been proposed, including port expansion, drone submarines, air-to-air refuelling, specialised missile systems, carrier-based stealth aircraft, and underwater drones. The intention, beyond doubt, is to bring its naval force to a formidable presence by keeping control over critical maritime infrastructure.

The Response: In response to China's extraterritorial garnishment, global players must urgently devise a comprehensive plan. The major stakeholders must come to the interest of the small littoral States. The focus should be on countering China's strategic procurement and control over the maritime expanse and infra in these contested

The role of India: as the Net Security Provider in the region, India must have a long-term underpinned perspective -



IN RESPONSE TO CHINA'S **EXTRATERRITORIAL** GARNISHMENT, **GLOBAL PLAYERS** MUST URGENTLY DEVISE A **COMPREHENSIVE** PLAN. THE MAJOR **STAKEHOLDERS** MUST COME FORWARD TO **DEFEND THE** INTEREST OF THE SMALL LITTORAL **STATES**

that keeps the potential consequence of China's escalating expansion - clear spelt. By remaining aligned with these perspectives, India can make the major players critically aware of the Chinese motives and align them with the task. The singular agenda must be, by remaining adhered to the established maritime laws and conventions, there must be a coordinated and proactive response arrangement put into action before the IOR region exasperates into a conflict

Alternative Supply Chain : As nations cope with the escalating challenges posed by China's maritime motives that centre on infrastructure control, a united front to contain this must be imperative. Countries must push back against the BRI; and, alternatives to the BRI, such as Japan's "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor " and "India's Security and Growth for All" must be pursued as alternatives. While Australia, the EU, Indonesia, Japan, and the U.S. are implementing strategies to counterbalance Chinas maritime ambitions, India's effort must be to bring them to these alternative inilatives and collaborate with them to the realisation of a fullscale "Alternative Global Supply chain Alliance"-keep-

ian and military purpose. Multi-modal partnership mechanism: Global cooperation is essential to contain China's assertion and control

over extra-territorial maritime zones and infrastructures. Further to contain its ulterior expansion motives, vigilance in maritime affairs must be consolidated. Necessary multi-modal-part-

nership mechanisms must be in place to protect the critical maritime infrastructures, assets and activities, where India can play a key role. India, while maintaining its

strategic autonomy also needs to cooperate with non-residential maritime powers to cultivate the required response considerations. To the effectiveness of the multilateral security framework in place; things like diplomatic initiatives, military strategies, supply chain initiatives and multilateral cooperation must remain pivotal.

Net Security Provider: To carefully achieve this, measures to demystify the complexities presented by China's assertive projection, providing better alternatives with a non-zerosum partnership platform for the aggrieved nations, must be

India's priority.
(The writer works with an independent think tank; Views are personal)

Tourism takes Indo-Russian ties a notch higher



DIVYA BHATIA KAUL

Moscow rolls out the red carpet to greet Indian tourists, inviting them to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of culture, history and hospitality

n recent years, the Indo-Russian friendship has ■ discovered new avenues of expression, with tourism emerging as one of the most promising. Moscow, the vibrant capital of Russia, has been spearheading this endeavour by actively engaging with Indian travellers and fostering meaningful collaborations to enhance tourism between the two nations. Moscow's journey toward becoming a global tourism hub has been characterized by strategic initiatives aimed at partnering with international stakeholders.

"Our objective," states Bulat Nurmukhanov, Head of the International Cooperation Division of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, "is to position Moscow as a leading global destination. We are particularly optimistic about India due to our long-standing cultural ties and the traditionally cordial relations shared between Indians and

Russians. Furthermore, Russia's reputation as a friendly country with clean environments and hospitable people makes it a top choice for Indian tourists. Moreover, Moscow's afford-



ability, especially for budget travellers, and the reasonable airfare to the city further enhance its appeal. Moscow's success in attracting a diverse array of tourists, including a notable surge from emerging markets like India, underscores its significance. Nurmukhanov acknowledges India's importance, attributing targeted marketing initiatives and improved accessibility as driving forces behind the influx of Indian visitors. "India represents a significant source of tourism growth for Moscow," he affirms.

To cater to the specific needs of Indian travellers, Moscow has implemented a multifaceted approach encompassing promotional campaigns, cultural exchanges. Collaborations with Indian travel agencies and hospitality stakeholders, along with leveraging international plat-

forms to showcase Moscow's

attractions to Indian audiences. A significant stride towards facilitating travel from India has been the introduction of electronic visas for select countries, including India. The role of electronic visas in streamlining the visa application process.

"Moscow remains committed to furthering international cooperation and enhancing its appeal as a global tourism hub," says Nurmukhanov. Despite its age, Moscow continues to evolve while maintaining its charm in an everchanging world.

The statistics speak volumes about Moscow's growing allure for Indian tourists. Last year alone, over 60,000 visitors from India explored Moscow—a remarkable yearon-year increase of 25%. This positive momentum fuels optimism for the future, with plans to enhance infrastructure and reinstate flight connections between Moscow and various Indian cities. Moscow's dedication to fostering inclusive and sustainable tourism growth extends

a warm invitation to travellers

from India and beyond to dis-

cover the rich cultural her-

itage and vibrant atmosphere

of the Russian capital. With its dynamic approach and unwavering commitment, Moscow is poised to cement the Indo-Russian friendship through the lens of tourism. In conclusion, Moscow's proactive efforts in engaging with Indian travellers, coupled with strategic initiatives and enhanced accessibility, underscore its commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable tourism growth.

With a remarkable surge in Indian visitors and plans for further infrastructure improvements, Moscow stands poised to solidify the Indo-Russian friendship through tourism. The city's dedication to showcasing its rich cultural heritage and vibrant atmosphere extends a warm invitation to travellers from India and beyond. Through dynamic innovation and unwavering commitment, Moscow continues to pave the way for lasting bonds and unforgettable experiences, ensuring its place as a top global destination for all.

(The writer is a freelance writer and a social media influencer; views are personal)

HEROIC ACTS OF AN ELDERLY COUPLE

Sir — No words of appreciation will be enough for the brave act of an elderly couple Shanmugaiah and Kurunthammal in Tenkasi district, Tamil Nadu when they ran a few meters on the railway track in the wee hours, defying their age, and prevented a major train accident by warning the loco pilot of an obstruction on the tracks near the Bhagavathipuram railway

The couple's act is a heartwarming reminder of the indomitable spirit that often emerges in times of crisis. They remind us that heroism is not the preserve of the young or the powerful, but resides in the will to make a difference, regardless of one's age and physical prowess. The elderly couple's courageous act shows that the spirit of humanity burns brightly even in the darkest hours.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

DEPORTATION FROM RUSSIA

Sir — The recent death of an Indian worker in the Russian war zone has brought to light the indifferent attitude prevailing among certain segments of society in India. This unfortunate incident has the potential to strain the relationship between India and Russia. Additionally, the deportation of 100 young Indians who were serving as helpers in the Russia-Ukraine war zone is a matter of grave concern, especially for individuals from poor and marginalised families who rely on such employment opportunities for financial support.

These workers are often bound by contractual agreements, with minimum terms of one year and no provision for leave or early exit before six months. Despite the promise of lucrative monthly salaries and bonuses, the risks associated with working in a war zone are substantial. While workers undergo psychometric tests and are briefed about the dangers before deployment, the nature of their duties can vary significantly, from frontline combat to support roles as

Adieu, Pankaj Udhas 1976 marked the commencement of a resplen-

ing in attention both the civil-

THE EDITOR



Pankaj Udhas, the esteemed maestro of ghaz-al and playback melodies, bid adieu to this mortal coil on February 26, 2024, at the age of 73, thereby concluding a chapter of unparalleled musical artistry that transcends temporal bounds. Born on May 17, 1951, in the quaint environs of Jetpur, Gujarat, he embarked upon his mellifluous odyssey in the realm of music at a tender age, imbibing the essence of classical melodies under the tutelage of revered maestros. His migration to the bustling hub of Mumbai in

causes such as cancer awareness, thalassemia eradication, and education for the underprivileged masses. As the luminary founder of the Parents Association Thalassemic Unit Trust, his philanthropic endeavours illumined the lives of myriad souls. Survived by his beloved consort Farida and cherished progeny, Nayaab and Reva, Udhas shall forever be ensconced in the hallowed annals of musical lore, an embodiment of timeless musical virtuosity and humanitarianism.

matic history.

Amarjeet Kumar | *Hazaribagh*

dent career in the cinematic sphere. Debuting as

a playback virtuoso in the cinematic opus

"Kamna" in 1979, he ascended to the pinnacle of

fame with his stirring rendition of "Chitthi Aayi Hai" in the cinematic magnum opus "Naam" in 1986,

thereby etching his name in the annals of cine-

Beyond his illustrious musical odyssey, Udhas was

a paragon of benevolence, championing noble

recruitment of individuals from various countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, by the Russian Army for similar purposes underscores the political manoeuvres at play. This trend also sheds light on the alarming unemployment rates in India. In light of these developments, it is imperative for the Ministry of External Affairs and embassy authorities to prioritise the protection of Indian citizens abroad. Efforts should be made to dissuade individuals from pursuing high-risk professions overseas and to ensure their safety and dignity are preserved. Furthermore, India's stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict should be carefully evaluated in the context of its citizens' well-being and security.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

INDIAN TEAM ON A WINNING SPREE

Sir — Winning is a habit and Team India continues its winning spree in India. This is the 17th successive series win for India porters. It is worth noting that the at home. The true colours are well and

truly maintained at the home level. The spin combination is a striking force as we come across squaring and winning a series after being in the dumps. As we are worried about the toss and pitch the real interest revolves around DRS as several balls hit below knee level and even the

umpires are in a fixed reading of the tra-

We run around victory and winning is a habit after all. If Jadeja fails then Ashwin will be a kingpin in our home pitches. Ashwin has more than 350 home wickets out of his 507 wickets. Cricket is a competitive game where the stakes are very high. We win regularly at home and that provides us a platform for going up to the World Test Championship where we fail miserably. We could not win the ICC Trophy in the recent past despite calling our team number one. That is where we need to work hard.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

FIRST COLUMN MATERIALISTIC SPIRITUALISM

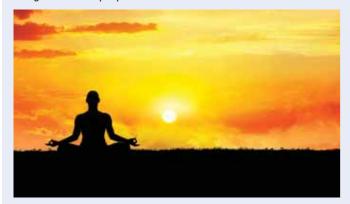
A true spiritualist remains untouched by temptations and is a living example of purity



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

he recent web series shedding light on the life of a renowned spiritual preacher has not only captivated audiences worldwide but has also ignited a profound contemplation about the authenticity of spiritual figures and the intertwining of spirituality with materialism. It also raised a lot of guestions that were until now merged in people's minds. It made people question their beliefs and reevaluate the faith and the trust they place in spiritual figures, often referred to as Gurus. There is no doubt that there are some people who have an intense love for spiritualism, but the brand of spiritualism that they promote may not be entirely rooted in pure spirituality. Instead, it appears to carry undertones of materialism. No doubt, these spiritual figures engage themselves in spiritual practices and persuade others also to have spirituality in their life but still their mind is tied in knots of materialism. They dedicate their time and energy to propagate spirituality and uphold high ideals, but their manners and methods and their hopes and aspirations reflect some special kind of materialism.

It is true that despite advocating for soul consciousness and encouraging others to relinquish body consciousness, these souls find themselves entangled in the webs of material desires. And while doing so, they often target individuals with financial means, hoping to utilise their resources for a greater cause. While on the surface, their efforts may seem altruistic, a closer look reveals that they have a hidden desire for personal glory and praise. They hold big congregations and mass gatherings where people in large numbers come to listen to their discourse and to have community dining. But the purpose of holding these mass-scale programmes is not to spread waves and vibrations of spirituality but to have a large number of people who remain in their fold.



Thus, they have a desire for fame and material abundance. So, in this sense, they are protagonists of materialistic spiritualism. Such people start their spiritual careers by just being seekers of truth or being simple spiritual practitioners. As they march forward on the spiritual path, people begin to praise and adore them for their noble intent, simple life and spirituality and start offering them money, materials and lands, as a result of which these spiritual practitioners get bitten by the money bug. The allure of grand titles and high epithets, coupled with ceremonies meant to honour and felicitate them, further entangles them in the trappings of materialistic spiritualism.

Navigating the path of spirituality, as depicted in this narrative, is likened to walking on tiles that may occasionally slip beneath one's feet. Hence one has to be very cautious in one's gait. Because, one may, sometimes, see the self surrounded by flatterers and flippants and, at other times, by those who want some special favours by offering fat purses, costly gifts, big bouquets or high-flown words of praise. This environment can fuel the hunger for fame, power, and honour, testing the authenticity of their spiritual journey. However, a true spiritualist remains untouched by these temptations and stands as a living example of purity amidst the challenges of the world—like a lotus blooming in the mud. At the same time, it should also be noted that genuine spirituality does not necessitate a complete rejection of worldly aspects such as money, building projects, or events. Instead, the essence lies in cultivating a spirit of sacrifice and renunciation, avoiding an insatiable desire for transient and hollow worldly pursuits. Needless to say, one must look after one's health and have necessary things but at the same time, one must lead a simple life and must not stretch things out of the controllable limit.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist;

views are personal)

Gender bias in electoral politics is a global issue



Despite Haley's accomplishments, Trump's triumph underscores a deeper societal phenomenon influencing voters' perceptions of male versus female candidates



onald Trump has won the South Carolina primary, defeating Nikki Haley, the last major Republican candidate in the race for Presidential nomination. On the eve of the poll, one of the South Carolinian Republican supporters in her home State, reportedly commented that 'yes, Ms. Haley did some fine things as governor, but, Donald Trump is the man', which perhaps reflected the predominant public mood. Now, is this a case of a perceptible preferential bias among voters in favour of male candidates compared to female candidates?

'Many voters seem to use gender as one of the ways to evaluate candidates, predict a candidate's beliefs and competency — and use it as a shortcut for information about the candidates subtle biases in some electoral contests, put a candidate at a disadvantage because of his or her gender', said Kira Sanbonmatsu, a political science professor, Ohio University, who authored a 2000 study on 'gender and voter's preferences'. A study of French parliamentary elections across different polling stations found that votes for women are lower in municipalities with more traditional gender-role attitudes (Barbanchon and Šauvagnat, 2019).

However, a 2018 research contended that 'gender, through which men and women identify with masculinity and femininity with sets of roles, traits and ideals, strongly conditions the impact of sex on the voting pattern, but, it differs from case to case, depending on where one places oneself on a masculinity/femininity continuum'. Many men, who do not strongly identify with hyper-masculinity, are equally or more liberal than women on various issues, while, many highly feminine women with very tra-



WHILE INDIA

WITNESSED AN

INCREASING TURNOUT OF **WOMEN VOTERS** IN THE 2019 ELECTION, THE NUMBER OF WOMEN **CANDIDATES** REMAINED LESS THAN 9 PER CENT. THOSE WHO DID **GET PARTY** TICKETS MOSTLY

HAVE FAMILY **POLITICAL** CONNECTIONS OR ARE 'DYNASTIC' **POLITICIANS**

ditional gender identities, are more conservative on some issues, and thus, gender cannot be automatically treated as a 'firstorder' or 'meta' identity, the study There is also a competing view

that 'gender is not a strong pull on the vote or political attitudes, and that there are few malefemale gaps in attitudes in voting' (Amanda Bittner, University of Newfoundland Elizabeth Queens Goodyear-Grant, University, 2017). A study in Spain, after it adopt-

ed a law in 2007, that obliged political parties to include at least 40% of women on every list for every election, didn't find any evidence that it had either wors. ened women's relative electoral performance or voters' lower electoral support for exogenous reasons(Bagues and Campa, 2020). Nevertheless, in the 2018 midterms in the USA, sex and

gender did play a prominent role, leading to large partisan gaps between men and women in casting their ballots. While, a study in India revealed that a 'woman voter' is more likely to vote for a male candidate than a man to vote for a woman, as it is more about perception of society, than the candidates' suit-

Sadly, women's under-representation in electoral politics is a reality! World Economic Forum's Gender Equality Report, underlined that so far only 25% of a hypothetical 100% gender gap has been closed in women's political participation. Many political

the angle of supply and demand constraints, as there is a shortage of potential candidates and a lower appeal of women politicians in electoral battles. Several socioeconomic and cultural barriers keep women away from politics and create a higher opportunity cost of running for elections (Fox et al., 2001). Women also tend to be less in number in professions that become a conduit for a political career (Welch, 1977, Clark, 1994). Studies also mentioned the 'ambition deficit, as many women, despite having the requisite professional and economic credentials, often fight shy of entering competitive politics (Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007&Fox and

Scientists explained the gap from

Family and relational considerations dissuade many of them, as recent research in Sweden found that female politicians in mayoral positions experienced a significant increase in the likelihood of divorcing their partner (Folke and Rickne, 2020). On the other hand, 'women are routinely demotivated by being told that they do not belong here, signifying a structured system of oppressive gender hierarchy in politics'. Sexism among party leaders is also rampant, more so, if they are aware of voters' bias against women, as a votes-maximising strategy.

Lawless, 2004).

While, India witnessed an increasing turnout of women voters, in the 2019 election, but, the number of women candidates

Those who did get party tickets, mostly, have family political connections or are 'dynastic' politicians. The gender quota at PRIs 'hasn't created much larger candidacy responses at the state level'. However, a study (Bhalotra et al. 2018), analysing electoral data over three decades (1980-2007) found that a woman's electoral victory leads to an 18.5 percentage point higher probability of having a woman as a major party candidate in the next elec-

Now, as of November 2021, gender quotas have been adopted in 132 countries, either in the form of voluntary party or compulsory legislative quotas. A study (1995-2012)disclosed that such measures enhanced women's representation from 11 percent to 21percent. Some critics argued that it is 'anti-democratic', and 'manipulates voters' choices', while, a section of women's rights activists claimed, they are 'disrespectful in the assumption that women cannot get seats on their own, and are often negatively labelled as 'quota women'. Nevertheless, it brought women in many least-developed countries like Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania to the political front, and increased their substantive representation on issues that are traditionally seen as gendered.

India has already passed the Women's Reservation Bill, 2023, its implementation cannot be put off to an uncertain date!

(The author is former Director General, Doordarshan & All India Radio, views are personal)

Political funding: Not just transparent, it should be clean too

There is a necessity to enhance the current system's transparency in alignment with the directives of the Supreme Court

⊣he decision of the Supreme Court on electoral bonds is a legal process and there is no point in making any special comments on the same. But the first thing that deserves consideration in this regard is why the system of electoral bonds was introduced in the first instance. Political parties have the right to collect donations and do not have to pay any income tax on the funds so collected. Those who receive money in the form of donations are expected to provide information about the same to the Election Commission. Earlier, information about the money received through bank cheques or drafts was available, but there was a complete lack of transparency regarding cash



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

It is a fact that the presence of black money has been prevalent in the politics and electoral process of our country, and the solution to this problem has been under discussion for a long time. Before the introduction of electoral bonds, big cash collection was legal and

Due to black money, funders continued to take unfair advantage of the political parties and their governments. The Supreme Court has

This situation was a serious challenge to our political system. In this background, by introducing the system of electoral bonds, an attempt was made to stop the problem of black money and discourage the same.

In the year 2017, the system of electoral bonds was first introduced by the Government of India, in which provision was made that electoral bonds can be purchased by any person or institution and can be given to any party. The parties redeem the electoral bonds within a stipulated period. In this system, there has been no provision to make public the information as to how much donation has been given by which person or institution to which party through electoral bonds.

objected to this provision and has said that there should be proper transparency in the transactions of election dona-

The court has instructed the State Bank of India to stop the issuance of electoral bonds. The main objection of the Supreme Court is regarding transparency. We should understand that there was a huge lack of transparency in the system that was in place before the advent of electoral bonds and the way political parties raised money. Besides, there was also the problem of what is the source of money of the people who are giving huge amounts of cash. It was impossible to find out who had given cash to the political party in question and whether there was any quid pro quo, that is, whether an undue advantage had been given to that person or firm donating to the political party.

The number of registered political parties in our country is in the hundreds. In such a situation, it is not possible to have a central repository of wealth and to provide an equal share to all the parties. Moreover, the ideologies of the political parties are also different. Suppose someone has to donate and feels that the ideology and programmes of some party are based on narrow thinking and are harmful to the country. They would not like to donate to that party. If all parties receive equal funding, then forming a party will become a business.

If the Supreme Court believes that it should be transparent- the objections of the Supreme

ly known how much money has been given by which person or institution to which party, then this is an interpretation of the law and should be

taken positively. We have many examples in the past where the government did not accept the decisions of the Supreme Court and passed laws in the Parliament, nullifying the court's rulings. Ádditionally, there have also been instances when amending laws have been passed accepting the main points of court orders and incorporating them into the law. Since the government still needs time to understand and interpret Supreme Court decisions. It seems that there is a need to

make the present system more transparent and in tune with

Court, and the government can present a revised draft before the Parliament. But this cannot be done immediately. The journey of the nation continues. In this journey, laws are formed, amended and also abolished, with changing circumstances. There is no need to consider this electoral bond issue from a short-

term perspective. Since this decision is of the Supreme Court of India, the country and the government have to be respected, but it must be understood that the system of electoral bonds has been a progressive step towards dealing with the use of black money in elections. The provision of electoral bonds was made during the tenure of this government, hence this government will have to see

that a revised system is brought in compliance with the objections and instructions of the Supreme Court.

The purpose of any system or legislation is that there should be no interference of economic and muscle power in the democratic process of our country and there should be clean and fair elections.

While making amendments to the law about political funding, we need to ensure that we may not revert to the old system of cash receipts by political parties which would allow corruption in public life and even the play of muscle power and the use of illicit money and money received from unethical activ-

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

'Israel ready to pause Gaza war deal during Ramadan'

AP
JERUSALEM/COLOMBO

srael would be willing to I srael would be willing pause its war on Hamas in Gaza during the upcoming Muslim fasting month of Ramadan if a deal is reached to release some of the hostages held by the militants, President Joe Biden said in comments released Tuesday.

There was no immediate Israeli reaction to Biden's comments on an emerging framework deal, brokered by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, under which Hamas would free some of the dozens of hostages it holds in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners and a six-week halt in fighting.

During the temporary pause, negotiations would continue over the release of the remaining hostages and additional Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

A Hamas official played down any sense of progress, saying the group wouldn't soften its demands. The start of Ramadan, which falls around March 10, is seen as an unofficial deadline for a cease-fire 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



Demonstrators gather during a vigil outside the Israeli Embassy, Monday in Washington. An active-duty member of the U.S. Air Force died after he set himself ablaze outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington, while declaring that he "will no longer be complicit in genocide

have flared in the past during

Biden said Monday that he hopes a cease-fire deal could take effect by next week. '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

light With Seth Meyers".

At the same time, Biden did not call for an end to the war, which was triggered by the deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel on Oct 7, when militants killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted roughly 250 people, according to Israeli authorities.

The prospect of an inva-sion of Rafah has prompted Biden, who has shown global alarm over the fate of Gaza civilians trapped there. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said a ground operation in Rafah is an inevitable component of Israel's strategy for crushing Hamas. This week, the military submitted for Cabinet approval operational plans for the offensive, as well as evacuation plans for civilians there. Biden

said he believes Israel has

Rafah. "They have to and they have made a commitment to me that they're going to see to it that there's an ability to evacuate significant portions of Rafah before they go and take out the remainder Hamas," he said. "But it's a process." Hamas official Ahmad Abdel-Hadi indicated that optimism on a deal was premature. "The resistance is not

interested in giving up any of its demands, and what is proposed does not meet what it had requested," he told the Pan-Arab TV channel Al Mayadeen.Hamas has previously demanded that Israel end the war as part of any deal, which Netanyaĥu called "delusional". Israel's devastating air, sea and ground campaign in Gaza has killed more than 29,700 people, most of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, which does not distinguish between fighters and noncombatants in its

The fighting has obliterated large swaths of the urban landscape, displaced 80% of the battered enclave's population and triggered a humanitarian crisis that has left a quarter of the population starving, according to the United Nations, and sparked concerns

The first and only deal in the war, in late November, brought about the release of about 100 hostages - mostly women, children and foreign nationals - in exchange for about 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, as well as a brief halt in the fighting. Roughly 130 hostages remain in Gaza, but Israel says about a quarter of them are dead.

Negotiations were still underway Tuesday in Qatar to hammer out the deal's details. A senior official from Egypt has said the draft cease-fire deal includes the release of up to 40 women and older hostages in return for up to 300 Palestinian prisoners - mostly women, minors and older people.The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the negotiations, said the proposed six-week pause in fighting would include allowing hundreds of trucks to bring desperately needed aid into Gaza every day, including to the hard-hit north.

SRI LANKA SETS UP FUND **TO HELP GAZA CHILDREN**

The Sri Lankan government will contribute USD 1 million to a fund set up by it to help children in war-torn Gaza who are affected by the announced on Tuesday.

All ministries and government institutions have been directed to forego Ifthar celebrations during the upcoming Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and to contribute to the Children of Gaza Fund, a

press release issued by

President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office said. The Sri Lankan Cabinet has approved the proposal by President Wickremesinghe to create the fund to help children caught in the war in Gaza, it said. Contributions by citizens are also encouraged for this purpose, it said. The government will also donate USD 1 million in aid for the affected children. The aid will be distributed through official UN agencies. Sri Lanka has called for a ceasefire in war-torn Gaza while advocating for a Palestine state. President Wickremesinghe has also highlighted the need to ensure the security of Israel. The Israel-Hamas war began after the Palestine-based militants stormed across Israel on Oct 7, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking about 250 others hostage. According to the Gaza Health Ministry, nearly 30,000 Palestinians have been killed so far in attacks

carried out by Israel.

Biden and Trump marching toward their nominations

While Joe Biden and Donald Trump are marching toward their respective presidential nominations, Michigan's primary on Tuesday could reveal significant political perils for both of them. Trump, despite his undoubted dominance of the Republican contests this year, is facing a bloc of stubbornly persistent GOP voters who favour his lone remaining rival, former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, and who are sceptical at best about the former president's prospects in a rematch against Biden. As for the incumbent president, Biden is confronting perhaps his most potent electoral obstacle yet: an energised movement of disillusioned voters upset with his handling of the war in Gaza and a relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that critics say has been too supportive. the test in Michigan, the last major primary state before Super Tuesday and a critical swing state in November's general election. Even if they post dominant victories as expected on Tuesday, both campaigns will be looking at the margins for signs of weakness in a state that went for Biden by just 3 percentage points last time.

Biden said in a local Michigan radio interview Monday that it would be "one of the five states" that would determine the winner in November.

Michigan has the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the nation. More than 310,000 residents are of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry. Nearly half of Dearborn's roughly 110,000 residents claim Ărab ancestry. It has become the epicentre of



President Joe Biden talks with Seth Meyers during a taping of the "Late Night with

Democratic discontent with for us to vote for a ceasefire, a the White House's actions in the Israel-Hamas war, now nearly five months old, following Hamas' deadly Oct 7 attack and kidnapping of more than 200 hostages. Israel has bombarded killing nearly 30,000 people, two-thirds of them women and children, according to Palestinian figures. Democrats angry that Biden has supported Israel's offensive and resisted calls for a cease-fire are rallying voters on Tuesday to instead select "uncommitted". The "uncommitted" effort, which began in earnest just a few weeks ago, has been backed by officials such as Democratic Rep Rashida Tlaib, the first Palestinian-American woman in Congress, and former Rep Andy Levin, who lost a Democratic primary two years ago after pro-Israel groups spent more than \$4 million to defeat him.

Abbas Alawieh, spokesperson for the Listen to Michigan campaign that has been rallying for the "uncommitted" campaign, said the effort is a "way

way for us to vote for peace and a way for us to vote against war".

Trump won the state by just 11,000 votes in 2016 over Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, and then lost the state 154,000 votes to Biden. Alawieh said the "uncommitted" effort wants to show that they have at least the number of votes that were Trump's margin of victory in 2016, to demonstrate how influential that bloc can be.

The situation in Gaza is top of mind for a lot of people here," Alawieh said. "President Biden is failing to provide voters for whom the war crimes that are being inflicted by our US taxpayer dollars - he's failing to provide them with something to vote for." Our Revolution, the organising group once tied to Senator Bernie Sanders has also urged progressive voters to choose uncommitted" on Tuesday, saying it would send a message to Biden to "change course NOW on Gaza or else risk losing Michigan to Trump in

Biden to urge Congress' top leaders to send aid to Ukraine and Israel

staunch support for Israel throughout the war, left open

the door to an eventual Israeli

ground offensive in the city of

Rafah in southern Gaza, on the

border with Egypt, where more than half of the enclave's 2.3

million people have fled under

Israeli evacuation orders.

Washington (AP): US President Joe Biden was meeting Tuesday with the top four leaders of Congress to press them to act quickly to avoid a looming government shutdown early next month and to pass emergency aid for Ukraine

Biden was hosting House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. Vice President Kamala Harris also was attending. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden invited the leaders to the Oval Office meeting because he wants to make sure US national security interests are "put first". She said those interests include tinuing to fund the govern

"Look, what the president wants to see is we want to make sure that the national security interests of the American peo-ple gets put first, right?" she said Monday as Biden flew to New York. "It is not used as a political football, right? We want to make sure that gets

"And we also want to see that, you know, that the government does not get shut down," Jean-Pierre said, adding that keeping the government open and functioning is a "basic basic priority" of Congress.

The Senate's top two leaders also urged that the government be kept open. Parts of the government could start to scale back operations as early as Friday unless a deal is reached on spending and legislation is sent to Biden for his signature.

Manhattan DA asks judge for gag order in Trump's hush-money case Trump's arraignment last April ly attempting to prevent"

AP ■ NEW YORK

 $P^{\text{rosecutors in Donald}}_{\text{Trump's New York hush-}}$ money criminal case asked a judge Monday to impose a gag order on the former president ahead of next month's trial, citing what they called his "long history of making public and inflammatory remarks" about people involved in his legal cases.The Manhattan district attorney's office is seeking what it described as a "narrowly tailored" order that would bar Trump from making or directing others to make public statements about potential witnesses and jurors, as well as statements meant to interfere with or harass the court's staff. prosecution team or their fam-A gag order would add to

restrictions put in place after

that prohibit him from using evidence in the case to attack

Without limits, prosecutors said, Trump's rhetoric would "create a significant and imminent threat to the trial by distracting personnel, government diverting resources, and delaying the administration of justice."

The judge, Juan Manuel Merchan, didn't rule immediately. Jury selection is scheduled to start March 25. Barring a last-minute delay, it will be the first of Trump's four criminal cases to go to trial. A spokesperson for Trump's presidential campaign called the gag order request "election interference pure and simple" and called the hush-money case a "sham orchestrated by partisan Democrats desperate-

Republican presidential front-Trump from returning to the White House. Trump lawyer Susan

Necheles said the defense will

respond in court papers later this week. The Manhattan case centers on allegations that Trump falsified internal records kept by his company to hide the true nature of payments made to his former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen. The lawyer paid porn actor Stormy Daniels \$130,000 as part of an effort during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign to bury claims he'd had extramarital sexual encounters.

Trump is charged with 34 counts of falsifying business records, a felony punishable by up to four years in prison, though there is no guarantee that a conviction would result the case repeatedly on social media, warning of "potential death & amp; destruction" before his indictment last year, posting a photo on social media of himself holding a baseball bat next to a picture of District Attorney Alvin Bragg and complaining that the judge, Juan Manuel Merchan, is "a Trump-hating judge" with a family full of Trump haters." Trump is already under a

in jail time. Trump, the

runner, has lashed out about

similar gag order in his Washington, D.C., election interference criminal case and was fined \$15,000 for twice violating a gag order imposed in his New York civil fraud trial after he made a disparaging social media post about the judge's chief law clerk.

Prince William pulls out of godfather's memorial due to 'personal matter'

PTI ■ LONDON

 $B^{
m ritain's}$ Prince William on Tuesday pulled out of attending the memorial service in honour of his late godfather, Constantine – the former King of Greece, due to a "personal matter". The 41-year-old Prince of Wales' Kensington Palace office said the royal had called the Greek royal family, which is attending the memorial service at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, to let them know he was unable to attend the service. The palace did not give any further details but in an update on the health of William's wife, Kate Middleton, it said the Princess of Wales "continues to be doing well" after an abdominal surgery earlier. William was scheduled



to attend the service for the late Greek King, who died in January last year. King Charles III, who is undergoing cancer treatment, is also not attending, leaving his wife Queen Camilla as the senior-most representative for the British royal family at the ceremony.

King Constantine's eldest son, Crown Prince Pavlos, is to step in to give the reading in place of Prince William. King Charles is believed to have been close to King Constantine, who was his second cousin and related on his father Prince Philip's side of the family. Constantine, the last King of Greece who reigned from 1964 to 1973 until a military coup, died at the age of 82 in January

Queen Camilla is to host a private reception for guests at the memorial service, including Queen Anne-Marie, former Queen of the Hellenes, as well as other members of the Greek royal family at Windsor Castle.

Thousands of farmers meet in Warsaw to protest

Warsaw (Poland): Thousands of farmers marched in downtown Warsaw on Tuesday to protest the European Union's agricultural policies and the imports of cheap food from

Ukraine. The protesters say they are demanding that the Polish government withdraw from the EU's Green Deal, a plan meant to help the environment and fight climate change with measures that include reductions in pesticide use. Farmers across the continent say the plans are

too costly. The protesting Polish farmers also want Poland's border with Ukraine sealed to the imports of grain and other food products that they say are bringing down the prices the farmers can get on the domestic market. The protesters gathered at a major intersection near the landmark Palace of Culture and began walking together toward the parliament building. They planned to end up in front of the offices of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who on Tuesday was in Prague for a meeting with his Czech counterpart Prime Minister

In Prague, Tusk said they would be working with Brussels to find solutions to the farmers' demands. Tusk, who has described the farmers' anger as being justified, said Poland and Czechia are intent on helping Ukraine while also helping their farmers as a result of the "negative effects" that Ukrainian produce is having on

Petr Fiala.

not bring their heavy equipment into the city.

Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple to open for public on March 1

AP ABU DHABI

The first Hindu stone temple I in Abu Dhabi, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this month, will be opened to the public from March 1, according to the temple authorities.

The temple has been built by the Bochasanwasi Shri Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Swaminarayan Sanstha on a 27 acre site in Abu Mureikhah, near Al Rahba off the Dubai-Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Highway, at a cost of around Rs 700 crore.

The grand temple was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi on February 14 during a dedication ceremony attended by over 5,000 invitees. From February 15 to 29, overseas devotees who had registered in advance or VIP guests were allowed to visit the temple.

"The temple will be open

to the public from March 1 from 9 AM to 8 PM. The temple will remain closed for visitors every Monday," a temple spokesperson said.

Constructed with 18 lakh bricks and 1.8 lakh cubic metres of sandstone sourced directly from Rajasthan, the temple has been made in the Nagara style of architecture, just like the recently inaugurated Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

According to the temple authorities, the grand temple has been built as per an ancient style of construction and creation mentioned in the Shilpa and Sthapathya Shastras, Hindu scriptures which describe the art for mandir design and construction. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has at least 3.5 million Indians who are part of the Indian workforce in the Gulf. The land for the temple was donated by the UAE government. The BAPS Hindu Mandir is the



largest in the entire Gulf region The UAE has three other Hindu temples in Dubai

Seven spires representing the seven Emirates of the UAE, carvings of camels, and nation-

al bird falcon, are part of the architecture of the stone temple, to give equal representation

The seven spires have idols of deities, including Lord Ram, Lord Shiv, Lord Jagannath, Lord Krishna, Lord Swaminarayan (considered a reincarnation of Lord Krishna), Tirupati Balaji and Lord Ayappa. The seven shikhars represent the seven Emirates of UAE," Brahmaviharidas, head of international relations for BAPS, had told PTI. To give equal representation to the host country, along with animals like elephants, camels and lions that occupy an important place in Indian mythology, the UAE's national bird, the falcon, has also been included in the temple design.

Apart from 15 tales from India, including the Ramayana and Mahabharata, stories from Mayan, Aztec, Egyptian, Arabic, European, Chinese and African civilisations have also been depicted in the temple.

While the outer walls of the temple are made using sandstone from India, the interior, made of white Italian marble, is adorned with intricately designed and carved columns

Other noteworthy architectural elements include two ghumats (domes), 12 samrans (dome-like structures) and 402 pillars. The two ghumats are the "Dome of Peace" and "Dome of Harmony". On the two sides of the temple, holy water flows from Ganga and Yamuna, which was brought

from India in huge containers.

The temples facade features exquisite marble carvings set against a sandstone backdrop, crafted from more than 25,000 pieces of stone by skilled artisans from Rajasthan and Gujarat. A substantial number of pink sandstone were transported from northern Rajasthan to Abu Dhabi for the

Unlike previous protests, the farmers, who carried Polish flags, marched on foot and did

Court indicts Imran Khan, wife in graft case Germany, Poland



190 million pounds to the

exchequer. During the hearing

on Tuesday, the court said

that statements of 58 witness-

es will be recorded in the case,

was guilty or not while fram-

chargesheet when I know what's written in it?" Khan

denied the charges against

copies of references have to be

provided seven days before

the indictment, adding that these documents hold impor-

"We have filed a petition to share the copy of the documents," he added.

court also ordered five witness-

es of NAB to attend the hear-

The court also approved Khan's petition seeking a gen-

eral physician and dentist for

his medical examination and

at Khan's Bani Gala residence

in Islamabad after an account-

ability court sentenced the

couple to 14 years in jail in the

Toshakhana corruption case

last month. She was brought to

the court in a security convoy.

According to the Al-Qadir Trust case, Khan, when he

was the prime minister, instead

of depositing the 190 million

pounds in the national trea-

sury, allowed property tycoon

Bushra, 49, is imprisoned

dental check-up in jail.

hearing adjourned till March 6 and the

tance in this case.

ing charges against him.

The judge asked Khan if he

"Why should I read the

Both Khan and his wife

Khan's counsel said that

Geo News reported.

AP ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

An accountability court in Pakistan on Tuesday indicted Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the 190 million pounds Al Qadir corruption case, in another blow to the beleaguered former prime minister who is currently in jail after being convicted in multiple cases. Judge Nasir Javed Rana, who replaced Judge Mohammad Bashir as he is retiring in a few weeks, conducted the hearing at Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala jail where the 71-yearold Pakistan-Tehreek-Insaf founder is incarcerated in graft cases as well as the Cipher leak

The Al-Qadir Trust case pertains to the settlement of 190 million pounds, which the UK's National Crime Agency sent to Pakistan after recovering the amount from Pakistani property tycoon Malik Riaz Hussain. Khan and his wife Bushra,

who were brought before the court, pleaded not guilty after the judge read the chargesheet in their presence.

Khan was arrested in the same case from the premises of the Islamabad High Court on May 9, 2023. His arrest sparked violent protests across the country, with his protesters attacking military installations. Later, the Supreme Court declared his arrest on May 9 as

In December, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) initiated an investigation against Khan, his wife, and others regarding the alleged acquisition of hundreds of canals of land under the name amount to partly settle a fine of about Rs 450 billion imposed by the Supreme Court some years ago. The businessman, in return, allegedly gifted about 57 acres of land to a trust set up by Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, to establish the Al-Qadir University in the Sohawa area of the Jhelum district of Punjab.

Hussain, his son Ahmed Ali Riaz, Mirza Shehzad Akbar, and Zulfi Buk-hari are also among the suspects in the case, but instead of joining the investigation and subsequent court proceedings, they absconded and were subsequently dec-lared as proclaimed offenders.

Khan was ousted through vote of no-confidence in April 2022. More than 150 cases have been registered against him since his ouster from power. Khan has also been disqualified from holding any public office for 10 years.

IMRAN-PARTY-PROTEST

Imran Khan's party gives nationwide protest call against poll 'rigging' on Mar 2 Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party on Tuesday announced a country-wide protest on Saturday against the alleged rigging in the February 8 elections that has prevented the party from returning to power.

Addressing a press conference after meeting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala jail where he is currently incarcerated, the party's Secretary General and its candidate for the prime minister's slot, Omar Ayub reiterated "large scale" rigging in the polls.PTI would stage countrywide protests against the "rigging" in polls alongside other political parties, he was quoted as saying by Geo News.

"Our seats were stolen with just a stroke of pen. The people gave the mandate to the former PTI chairman. Nation's mandate and our seats have been attacked," Ayub said.

He said the PTI would protest in courts and assemblies across the country.

'Alvi's stonewalling of new Parliament session justified'

Tailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday said President Dr Arif Alvi's decision to not summon the newly-elected National Assembly for its first session was justified since his party's mandate in the elections was

The president on Monday rejected the summary from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the first session of the newly elected National Assembly session on February 29 and 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. After the president's denial, National Assembly outgoing Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf decided to convene the session of the lower house of parliament on February 29.

According to constitutional provisions, the meeting of the National Assembly must be convened within 21 days of the elections, and February 29 is

cording to a media report.

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's election commis-

sion on Tuesday held an open hearing on a peti-

tion by jailed former prime minister Imran

Khan's party-backed Sunni Ittehad Council seek-

ing the allocation of its share of reserved seats,

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) fought as independents

after the party could not directly participate in

the February 8 elections due to the non-allot-

ment of its iconic electoral symbol - the crick-

for women and minorities in the national and

provincial assemblies, the winning independent

candidates backed by the party joined the rightwing Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) - an

alliance of Islamic political and religious parties in the Muslim-majority country which repre-

To receive the PTI's share of reserved seats

Candidates of 71-year-old Khan's Pakistan

Alvi, inclined towards the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, was a senior member of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party before the cricketer-turned-politician made him the country's President in 2018.

In a conversation with journalists at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, the PTI party founder said his party won the February 8 general elections but it was being denied its due share of the reserved seats.

"There is no greater theft than stealing the public's mandate..," he said.

"May 9 was used to end the party. The party did not end due to oppression but became the strongest party," said 71-

Speaking about the letter he plans to write to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the cricketer-turnedpolitician said it was being termed a "treason". "I can't write anything from the jail. I have dictated the letter for the IMF," he said, lamenting about

Pak EC holds open hearing of SIC's

plea on reserved seats' allocation

the mandated date under not being able to meet party Article 91. not being able to meet party leaders ever since.

"A letter will be sent to the IMF after consultation with the party leaders today."

Khan says he will write to the Washington-based global lender not to provide additional loans to cash-strapped Pakistan unless the IMF holds an audit of the February 8 general elections. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) top leader Senator Ishaq Dar said President Alvi was "once again" trying to violate the Constitution by refusing to summon the NA session.

The Constitution is clear: the National Assembly session should be summoned within 21 days of the elections. The president could have called the session on February 26, 27, and 28," he said. Khan's party on Tuesday said that no provincial assembly session could be called without notifying the reserved seats, a day after the assemblies of Punjab and Sindh were summoned and the chief ministers were sworn in.

The Punjab [Assembly]

sents followers of the school of Sunni Islam. In total, 266 National Assembly seats were up for

and 10 for minorities, and are allotted to the win-

ning parties based on proportional representa-

Commission of Pakistan on Monday held an

open hearing on the SIC's plea seeking alloca-

tion of reserved seats, and the counter-pleas filed

against it, the Dawn newspaper reported. The

bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner

(CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard petitions by

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Azam Nazeer

Tarar, Pakistan Peoples Party's Farooq Naik and

PTI-backed SIC's counsel Gohar Khan and Ali

Zafar, before adjourning the hearing till

Another 60 seats are reserved for women

A five-member bench of the Election

grabs out of the 336.

not sending troops to Ukraine

European military heavy-weights Germany and Poland affirmed on Tuesday that they would not be sending troops to Ukraine, after reports that some Western countries may be considering doing so as the war with Russia enters its third year. The head of NATO also said the US-led military alliance has no plans to send troops to Ukraine, after other central European leaders confirmed that they too would not be providing soldiers.

The Kremlin, meanwhile, warned that a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be inevitable if the alliance sends combat troops. "In this case, we need to talk not about probability, but about the inevitability (of conflict)," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Moscow's warning came a day after French President Emmanuel Macron said that sending in Western ground troops should not be "ruled out" in the future, after hosting a conference of top officials from more than 20 of Ukraine's Western backers.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz appeared to have a different view of what happened in Paris. He said the participants had agreed "that there will be no ground troops, no soldiers on Ukrainian soil who are sent there by European states or NATO states". Scholz said there was also consensus "that soldiers operating in our countries also are not participating actively in the war themselves'

The idea of sending troops has been taboo, particularly as NATO seeks to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia. Nothing prevents NATO members from joining such an undertaking individually or in groups, but the organization itself would only get involved if all 31 members agree. NATO Secretary-General Jens

Stoltenberg told The Associated Press that "NATO allies are providing unprecedented support to Ukraine. We have done that since 2014 and stepped up after the full-scale invasion. But there are no plans for NATO combat troops on the ground in

At a meeting in Prague on Tuesday, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said, "Poland does not plan to send its troops to Ukraine?

Prime Minister Petr Fiala of the Czech Republic insisted that his country "certainly doesn't want to send its soldiers". Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico has said his government is not planning to propose a deployment, but that some countries were weighing whether to strike bilateral deals to provide troops to help Ukraine fend off the Russian invasion. Fico did not provide details about which countries or what the troops would do in Ukraine. Macron, too, avoided naming any countries, saying he wanted to maintain "strategic ambiguity" and not tip the West's hand to Russia.

NATO as an alliance provides Ukraine only non-lethal aid and support like medical supplies, uniforms and winter equipment, but some members send weapons and ammunition of their own accord, bilaterally or in groups. A decision to send troops and keep them deployed long term would require the kind of transport and logistics capabilities that only countries like the US, UK, France, Germany and possibly Italy, Poland or Spain could muster.

While ruling out NATO military action, Stoltenberg told the AP "that this is a war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, blatantly violating international law.

According to international law, Ukraine of course has the right to self-defense, and we have the right to support them in upholding that right".

China's sacked foreign min Qin **Gang resigns**

Beijing (PTI): In a surprise move, former Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang, who went missing after he was unceremoniously sacked last year, resigned from China's nationannual session next week. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), which concluded its session here on Tuesday, said in a statement that the Tianjin Municipal People's Congress accepted Qin's resignation as a delegate to the upcoming annual parliamentary session, staterun Xinhua news agency reported. The NPC regarded as China's rubber-stamp parliament for its routine approvals of the ruling Communist Party's agenda is due to begin its annual session on March 5 to legislate on a host of new laws and discuss steps to revive the country's economy which is on a slowdown mode.

The NPC statement said Qin has not been dismissed or expelled from the NPC but resigned, according to a report by Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post. Qin, 57, regarded as a close

confidant of President Xi Jinping, was dismissed in July in a big political surprise just after seven months in office. Later, the NPC passed a resolution sacking Qin and reappointing his predecessor Wang Yi who is also the Director of the ruling Communist Party's Foreign Affairs Commission. This is the first time Qin's

name figured in the form of his resignation from the NPC, regarded as a technical requirement.He was rumoured to have been sacked for an extramarital affair. The announcement of

Qin's resignation also coincides with the removal of the sacked former Defence Minister Gen. Li Shangfu from Central Military Commission (CMC) - the overall high command of the Chinese military headed by Xi Jinping, the Post reported.

Li, who headed the country's Rocket (Missile) Force, had previously been dismissed as defence minister and as a state councillor in October without any official explana-

Zelenskyy in Saudi to push for peace

Ukrainian President Volodomyr Zelenskyy arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday with plans to visit the kingdom's powerful crown prince to push for a peace plan already contributed to the and the return of prisoners of trip comes as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has sought to position himself as a potential mediator to end the war between Ukraine and Russia — even as Riyadh remains closely aligned with Russia on energy policies through the OPEC+ group of

In message on X, formerly Twitter, Zelenskyy said that Úkraine continued to "rely on Saudi Arabia's ongoing active support" in pushing forward with what has been described as a "Peace Formula" to end the full-scale invasion, which marked its second anniversary over the weekend.

Zelenskyy has presented a 10-point peace formula that, among other things, seeks the expulsion of all Russian forces from Ukraine and accountability for war crimes — at a time when the two sides are fighting from largely static positions along a roughly 1,500-km

(930-mile) front line. Such ideas are rejected out of hand

"The second topic is the return of POWs and deportees," Zelenskyy wrote. "The kingdom's leadership has release of our people. I am conalso yield results."

He didn't elaborate on that, but said that economic cooperation also would be dis-The state-run Saudi Press

Agency said that Zelenskky arrived at Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport and was met by government officials.

Over the last several years, Crown Prince Mohammed over the last several years has reached a detente with Iran, pursued a peace deal with Yemen's Houthi rebels and also offered himself as a leader in other crises worldwide. That's after facing widespread international condemnation for the Saudi-led war in Yemen and the 2018 killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, which US intelligence agencies believe was carried out on his orders.

In May, Zelenskyy traveled to Saudi Arabia for a meeting of Arab leaders and also met

Yellen urges world leaders to 'unlock' frozen Russian

Central Bank assets Secretary Janet Yellen on Tuesday offered her strongest public support yet for the idea of liquidating roughly USD 300 billion in frozen Russian Central Bank assets and using

them for Ukraine's long-term

reconstruction. "It is necessary and urgent for our coalition to find a way to unlock the value of these immobilised assets to support Ukraine's continued resistance and long-term reconstruction," Yellen said in remarks in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where Group of 20 finance ministers and central bank governors are

meeting this week. ward. This would be a decisive response to Russia's unprece-

then with Crown Prince

Mohammed. Saudi Arabia, the

United Arab Emirates and

Qatar — all neighbours on the

"I believe there is a strong international law, economic, and moral case for moving fority," she said.

The United States and its allies froze hundreds of billions of dollars in Russian foreign holdings in retaliation for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Those billions have been sitting untapped as the war grinds on, now in its third year, while officials from multiple countries have debated the legality of sending the money to Ukraine. More than two-thirds of Russia's immobilized central bank funds are located in the EU.

Using the assets to help Ukraine "would make clear that Russia cannot win by prolonging the war and would incentivise it to come to the table to negotiate a just peace with Ukraine", Yellen said.

been involved with prisoner exchanges since the war broke

https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

Arabian Peninsula — have

Macron: Western troops on ground in Ukraine not 'ruled out' in future

 $F^{\tt rench}_{\tt Emmanuel\ Macron\ said}^{\tt\ President}$ ruled out" in the future after the issue was debated at a gathering if European leaders, as Russia's full-scale invasion grinds into a third year. The French leader said at the meeting of 20 European heads of state and other Western officials in Paris that 'we will do everything needed so Russia cannot win the war." "There's no consensus today to send in an official, endorsed manner troops on the ground. But in terms of dynamics, nothing can be ruled out," Macron said in a news conference. The meeting included German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Polish President Andrzej Duda as well as leaders from the Baltic nations. Macron declined to provide details about which nations were considering sending troops, saying he prefers to maintain some 'strategic ambiguity." Macron earlier called on

European leaders to ensure the continent's "collective security" by providing unwavering support to Ukraine in Monday that sending the face of tougher Russian Western troops on the offensives on the battlefield in cannot expand his aggression months particularly, we have seen Russia getting tougher," Macron said. "We also know that Russia is preparing new attacks, in particular to shock Ukrainian public opinion."

Macron cited the need to to solidify security to head off any Russian attacks on additional countries in the future. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia as well as much larger Poland have been considered among possible targets of future Russian expansionism. All four countries are staunch supporters Ukraine. Estonia's foreign

minister said earlier this month that NATO has about three or four years to strengthen its defenses. In video speech, Ukraine

Zelenskyy called on the leaders gathered in Paris to "ensure that Putin cannot destroy our achievements and States was represented at the Paris meeting by its top diplomat for Europe, James O'Brien, and the U.K. by Foreign Secretary David Cameron.European nations are worried that the US will dial back support as aid for Kyiv is teetering in Congress. They also have concerns that former US President Donald Trump might return to the

continent. The Paris conference comes after France, Germany and the U.K. recently signed 10-year bilateral agreements with Ukraine to send a strong signal of long-term backing as Kyiv works to shore up Western support.

Incharge (Purchase)

White House and change the

course of US policy on the

Newborns in Japan at new low, while fewer couples marry

The number of babies born ▲ in Japan last year fell for an eighth straight year to a new low, government data showed on Tuesday, and a top official said it was critical for the country to reverse the trend in coming half-dozen years. The 758,631 babies born in Japan in 2023 were a 5.1 per cent decline from the previous year, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. It was the lowest number of births since Japan started compiling the statistics in 1899.

The number of marriages fell by 5.9 per cent to 489,281 couples, falling below a halfmillion for the first time in 90 years — one of the key reasons for the declining births. Outof-wedlock births are rare in



based on a paternalistic tradi-

Surveys show that many younger Japanese balk at marrying or having families, discouraged by bleak job prospects, the high cost of living that rises at a faster pace than salaries and corporate cultures that are not compatible with having both parents work. Crying babies and chil-

dren playing outside are increasingly considered a nuisance, and many young parents say they often feel isolated. Chief Cabinet Secretary

Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters on Tuesday that the ongoing declining birth rate is at "critical state". "The period over the next six years or so until 2030s, when the younger population will start declining rapidly, will be the last chance we may be able to reverse the trend," he said. "There is no time to waste." Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has called the low births "the biggest crisis Japan faces," and put forward a package of measures that have included more support and subsidies mostly for childbirth, children and their fam-

किच्छा शुगर कम्पनी लिमिटेड, किच्छा वित्तीय वर्ष 2024—25 के लिए निम्नाकित स्टोर सामग्री एवं जॉब कार्य हेर्

GST के अन्तर्गत पंजीकृत निर्माता/अधिकृत विक्रेता/सक्षम ठेकेदारों रे उत्तराखण्ड अधि० प्राप्ति (प्रोक्योरमेन्ट) नियमावली 2017 में निहिः प्रविधानों के अन्तर्गत दो निविदा प्रणाली (Two Bid System) के अन्तर्ग ई—निविदायें www.uktenders.gov.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है www.uktenders.gov.in पर प्राप्त निविदा ही मान्य होगी, अन्य माध्यम प्राप्त निविदा स्वीकार्य नहीं होंगी। आवश्यकता होने पर नेगोशिऐसन L—1 (प्रथ न्यूनतम) एवं सामग्री विक्रय हेतु H—1 (प्रथम उच्चतम) दर दाता से कि जायेगा । विस्तृत सूचना मिल की वेबसाइट <u>www.kichhasugar.com</u> पर १ अधिशासी निदेशक

Tender Notice Reference No.: PGSC/ADMIN/Architect/2024/1 Pushpa Gujral Science City invites online bids for the following On-line Digitally signed open e -tenders under two Bid System are invited from the reputed Architects/ Architectural firms of Indian origin having requisite experience and financial capability for providing comprehensive Architectu ral Engineering services to Pushpa Gujral Science City https://eproc.punjab.gov.in by 20.03.2024 (1500 Hrs) Note: PGSC reserves the right to ac cept or reject any bid and to annul the process at any time, without any liability and assigning any reason thereof Closing date & time: 20.03.2024 (1500 Hrs) For further details, please visit website www.pgsciencecity.org Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published

2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only Administrative Office Pushpa Gujral Science City

www.verka.coop tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items: Qty Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Annual/ Minimum 200 Ltr and above 246 Units Minimum 300 Ltr and above Minimum 400 Ltr and above Minimum 600 Ltr and above ii. Chest Cooler · Minimum 100 Ltr and above . Minimum 200 Ltr and above 332 Units · Minimum 300 Ltr and above · Minimum 400 Ltr and above iii. Deep Freezer a) Glass Top Deep Freezer 250 Units Minimum 400 Ltr and above b) Hard Top Deep Freeze 80 Units Minimum 500 Ltr and above 1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop 8 e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.

verka

Align to Viksit Bharat goals: FM to India Inc Markets rebound on gains in index heavyweights

Pinance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday exuded confidence that India Inc will align itself to the developmental goals of the nation with an objective of making the country a developed nation or 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 on the 100th anniversary of independence. Sitharaman said Minister Narendra Modi has

clearly indicated that the goal of Viksit Bharat is to be attained to provide the future generations a better India. Addressing a session on 'Viksit

Bharat @ 2047: Viksit Bharat & industry', organised by Ficci, the minister said that industry's role is critical in achieving the goal by 2047. "You were with India during

the freedom struggle, you built industry and capacity despite the colonial pressure...So Indian industry has always kept that spirit up and against terrible odds kept moving along on national interest.

"I can't see how they will be left out in this game of building a developed India by 2047. So it should be natural to India's industry to align itself with India's developmental interests, and after all industry will be



the first contributor as much as the first beneficiary...," the minister said.

The finance minister also assured the industry that reforms will continue in the third term of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.

The new government will be formed after the general elections due in April-May and the BJP is confident that Prime Minister Modi will return to power with a greater majority. Sitharaman said that India has moved up to become the fifth largest economy and is on the way to become the third largest

global economy. Covid, Even after emphasised that government showed commitment by ramping up capital expenditure. Indian industry can now surely move forward with a great speed globally as investments are

coming in. It is time for the Indian industry to also capitalise, the finance minister said.

She said that several reforms were undertaken by the government during the last 10 years and the trend will continue. She said that the reforms to be

undertaken by the next Modi government will touch on factors of production. The minister further said today, without digital infrastructure, no country can move at a pace at which it wants to achieve developmental goals for its

India, she said, has shown how making investment in creating the digital infrastructure at the bottom, and scaling it up, led to creation of 'India Stack'

own citizens.

...Other than the traditional factors of production like land, capital and the labour, enterprise, I would put digital infrastructure as an important

factor, without which we wil not be able to scale up and bridge the gap with those who are still aspiring to move forward," the minister said.

Sitharaman also told the gathering that the government

gathering that the government is focussing on areas like space and artificial intelligence (AI). "We have emphasised that India should become a global hub for AI and we will set up centres of excellence for the same," she said, adding, a great leap forward has been made in

logistics.
Whether it is logistics, agriculture productivity or tourism, India has immense potential and government is committed to its policy.

That is why the prime minister is confident that in the third term we will be the third largest economy. It's because of the push which he likes to give in these areas, not just fiscal, but legislative and other measures as well," the minister said.

Renewable energy has better prospects for not just solar or wind, but the government is also looking at renewing its commitments to hydroelectric power, she said, and added that in green hydrogen and green ammonia, big investments are happening in India.

76.30

(0.34%)

NSE NIFTY

 $B_{\text{Sensex}}^{\text{enchmark}} \begin{tabular}{ll} equity & indices \\ and & Nifty \\ \end{tabular}$ Tuesday rebounded on following buying in index major Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors and Sun Pharma amid mostly firm global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 305.09 points or 0.42 per cent to settle at 73,095,22. The index was hit by volatility in the first half of the session but gains heavyweights in index helped the barometer end two sessions of losses. During the day, the Sensex jumped 371.17 points or 0.50 per cent to a high of 73,161.30.

Snapping its two-day falling streak, the broader Nifty ended 76.30 points or 0.34 per cent up at 22,198.35.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy IndusInd Bank, Services. Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel and Tata Steel were the major gainers. On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank and NTPC were among the laggards. "Markets rebounded from 2-

session losses as selective buying in frontline stocks

Close:

22,198.35

72,723.53

aided recovery from early weakness. There is no major trigger and investors are taking cues from global markets. As we approach F&O expiry day on Thursday, volatility will begin to kick-in as traders will rollover their positions to next expiry day," said Prashanth

Mehta Equities Ltd. "The hopes for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and the drop in crude oil prices supported the sentiment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geoiit Financial Services.

Tapse, Senior VP (Research),

In the broader market, the BSF smallcap gauge declined 0.25 per cent and the midcap index dipped 0.10 per cent.

Among the indices, realty jumped 1.02 per cent, consumer durables climbed 1.01 per cent, teck (0.85 per cent), capital goods (0.79 per cent), IT (0.76 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.45 per cent). Commodities, financial

telecommunication, utilities and oil & gas were the laggards. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the green while Seoul

Circumventions of rules a generic problem in AIFs

Sebi's Whole Time Member Ananth Narayan on Tuesday said circumvention of regulations is an industry-wide and generic issue with the Alternate Investment Fund ecosystem.

Narayan stressed that the capital markets regulator wants to learn from the industry and work in close collaboration with it to frame the rules going ahead. Speaking at an event organised

by industry body IVCA here, said a Narayan consultation paper is an attempt on the same and added that Sebi has already decided to make some relaxations like equity pledging by an AIF to borrow in the case of an infrastructure company.

However, Narayan made it clear that when it comes to circumventing regulations like evergreening of loans or exchange management, Sebi will have to

He said the estimate of 40 funds involving investments of over Rs 30,000 crore

numbers are far higher. "Structure to circumvent has an industry-wide problem. You can argue about whether it is endemic or one-

"conservative" one, and actual



off, we think it is more than one-off. It's definitely a generic issue we are grappling with," Narayan told the audience largely composed of fund

also come up with a regulation increasing the provisioning for banks' investments in AIFs over fears of the route being used for evergreening of loans. veteran Kotak Sriniwasan from Alternate Asset Managers said the RBI's move has put the sector in a "tizzy" and many public sector banks are not honouring the capital calls now. He also feared that the insurance watchdog Irdai is also mulling a similar move on

take up its concerns with the respective regulators, and also launched by Sebi in January.

The first step is an obligation on the key management personnel and fund managers to adhere to mandated process set by Sebi, the second stage is framework which will explicitly mention the need not It can be noted that the RBI has to circumvent any regulations like forex management while

> industry preparing a list of "Do's and Don't's" which will have to be followed by all. Without elaborating much, Narayan also said that the Sebi management will be taking the regulation to its board "soon" and also conceded that the Sebi is fraught with risks because it prescriptive and not principle-based.

the third focuses on a body of

"We are going to tweak the Narayan asked the industry to manner that there will be no ambiguity at all that this is very, very specific in terms of dos explained the workings as per and don'ts and very specific in consultation paper terms of which regulations are sought to be circumvented," he

Stressing the need for dialogue between the industry and the regulator, Narayan said, "You understand what our concerns are. Either you give us an alternative that works, or explain to us how you tweak the proposal you have so that it works for you. If you want to be like a baby, and say this doesn't work and life is unfair

to me, we won't make progress. Neither will you, nor will I." He said the overall interactions between the AIF industry and the regulator have gone up in the last year and also assured the industry that Sebi will not take more than one month to clear an AIF proposal by March this year.

The commitments for AIFs have risen 44 per cent to over Rs 10 lakh crore in 2023, he said, adding the actual investments have also gone up. However, the share of actual investments has been at less than 65 per cent of the commitments, he said, adding that Sebi would like to explore this aspect more.

We are seeing a series of valuations that are kind of stale period of time. Sometimes more than a year, sometimes a couple of years. We are also seeing a sharp drop in valuations as a fund comes close to its maturity," he said.



Roche launches multiple sclerosis treatment drug in India

Roche Pharma India on Tuesday launched a drug for the treatment of Multiple Sclerosis (MS), expanding its neurology portfolio to cater to unmet needs of patients grappling with the disease.

The company has introduced Ocrevus (Ocrelizumab) which is the first and only approved disease modifying therapy for both Relapsing Remitting Multiple Sclerosis (RRMS) and Primary Progressive Multiple

Patients on Ocrevus have the persistence and highest adherence superior treatment because of its twice yearly (once every six months) dosing which is preferable for

most patients compared to more frequent (monthly) injections.

The introduction of Ocrevus represents a pivotal moment in the management of multiple sclerosis in India," Roche Pharma India CEO and Managing Director V Simpson Emmanuel said.

Boasting formidable efficacy, streamlined administration, and a long-term safety record, Ocrevus instils fresh optimism in individuals grappling with this formidable neurological lition he ad

The majority of individuals are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis between the ages of 20 and 40, making the disease a leading cause of non-traumatic disability in younger adults.

Maruti inks pact for dealer financing solutions



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $M^{\text{aruti Suzuki India on}}_{\text{Tuesday said it has inked}}$ an initial pact with Union Bank of India for dealer financing solutions.

The tie-up enhances the comprehensive inventory funding options for over 4,000 Maruti Suzuki sales outlets across the country, the auto major said in a statement.

MSI (Maruti Suzuki India) Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the automaker takes great care in nurturing its

"We proactively align our efforts in meeting the evolving demands of customers and the market, "he added.

The company's partnership with Union Bank of India since 2008,

has steadily evolved and reached a significant milestone of facilitating over 3,00,000 car finance cases till date, Srivastava said. "As a next milestone of our asso ciation, we are entering into an inventory funding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will focus on innovative financing solutions for dealer partners," he added. Union Bank of India Managing

Director & CEO Manimekhalai said the bank's comprehensive range of products and services are crafted to support dealers at every stage of their business journey.

flexible financing options, we empower dealers to optimise their operations, enhance their competitiveness, and unlock new growth opportunities," he added.

Gold flat at ₹62,950 per 10 grams; Silver declines by ₹400

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

old prices remained flat at Rs 62,950 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to HDFC Securities. Silver, however, declined by Rs 400 to Rs 74,200 per kilogram. In the previous trade, silver ended at Rs 74,600 per kilogram. Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading flat at Rs 62,950 per 10 grams, unchanged from the previous close," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities, HDFC Securities.

In the international markets. spot gold at Comex was trading higher at USD 2,034 per ounce from USD 2,031 per ounce in

the previous trade.
"Gold prices traded in a choppy range on Tuesday amid mixed global cues. Pullbacks in the US dollar and Treasury yields provided support for gold prices, while expectations of a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war reduced safe haven demand," Gandhi added.

In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,034 per ounce, up by USD 3 from the previous close he added.

Silver was marginally down at USD 22.65 per ounce from USD 22.75 per ounce in the previous trade.

Single fund manager for funds to reduce costs: Expert

Markets regulator Sebi's proposal of allowing mutual fund houses to have a single fund manager to oversee commodity and foreign investments is aimed at reducing the cost of managing the fund, a top official of Anand Rathi Wealth said on Tuesday.

Sebi, on Friday, came out with a consultation paper proposing measures to support ease of doing business for Mutual Funds (MFs).

In the draft paper, the regulator suggested appointing a single fund manager for domestic and overseas/commodity funds, relaxation of nomination requirement for joint holders and streamlining of prudential norms for passive schemes with respect to exposure to a single issuer within the AMC's group companies.

This came after the Finance Minister in the FY24 Budget made an announcement to simplify, ease and reduce cost of



compliance for participants in the financial sector through a consultative

approach.
"The appointment of a single fund manager for domestic and overseas/commodity funds is intended to reduce the cost of managing the fund," Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd Deputy CEO Feroze Azeez said.

Sebi noticed that the appointment of dedicated fund managers leads to additional costs for Asset Management Companies (AMCs) in terms of employing two fund managers.

Moreover, AMCs already hire research analysts tracking assets classes such as at each sector level, irrespective of the same being a domestic or overseas investment. Therefore, the current provision with respect to dedicated fund manager could

On proposed easing of rules on nomination front, Azeez said relaxation of nomination requirements for joint holders is beneficial as it simplifies the process of nomination by allowing the surviving member to become the nominee.

This streamlines the transmission process and reduces hassle in such situations. Later, the last surviving member can assign a nominee.

Additionally, Sebi has suggested changes to simplify rules for passive funds like Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) and index

Godrej Appliances expects 20 per cent sales growth in summer

Tuesday.

PTI MUMBAI

Homegrown white goods major Godrej Appliances on Tuesday said it expects at least a 20 per cent growth in sales of air conditioners and refrigerators during the summer season.

The city-based company is the fourth largest air conditioner brand with 0.7 million units sales and the fifth when it comes to refrigerators with 1.8 million sales in the country.

We expect the summer to be scorching this year after an extended winter and this should help us clock at least 20 per cent uptick in volume both ACs refrigerators.

"Last year, our AC sales more than doubled," Kamal Nandi, executive vice president and business head at the Godrej Appliances told PTI here on

He was speaking on the sidelines of the launch of its new range of wood-finish and natured-inspired refrigerators and air conditioners.

Nandi said he expects at least 10 per cent of incremental volumes to come in from these new products which will command a 5 per cent premium over its existing products. While its ACs (Air Conditioners) are priced Rs 35,000-45,000 depending on the tonnage, its refrigerators are priced in the Rs 25,000-35,000 range depending on

the volume capacity. The new range of products will be manufactured at its Shirwal plant near Pune.



to launch IPO on March 4

PTI NEW DELHI

Integrated marketing services firm RK Swamy Ltd is set to float its initial public offering on March 4.

The initial share sale will conclude on March 6 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on March 1, according to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP).

The company's proposed Initial Public Offering (IPO) comprises a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to Rs 173 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 87 lakh equity shares by selling shareholders according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). Those offering shares in the OFS are Srinivasan K Swamy, Narasimhan Krishnaswamy, Evanston Pioneer Fund L.P, and Prem Marketing Ventures LLP. RK Swamy Ltd.

Funds raised through the fresh issue would be used for setting up a digital video content production studio, establishing new customer experience centres and computer-aided telephonic interview centres as well as for general corporate purposes.

Firms to dole out 10 per cent average salary hike this year for innovation and talent. Employees in the automobile, tion in salary range being the top

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ompanies in India are Cexpected to dole out an average of 10 per cent salary increase this year, with automobile, manufacturing and engineering sectors anticipated to witness the highest hikes, says a

In 2023, the average salary hike was 9.5 per cent, according to consultancy firm Mercer's Total Remuneration Survey (TRS) released on Tuesday. across various industries, with

"This trend showcases India's strong economic performance and its growing appeal as a hub isation performance and posi-

manufacturing & engineering and life sciences in India are projected to see the highest salary increment increases, highlighting the competitive nature of these sectors," it said The survey, conducted between

May and August 2023, gathered data from 1,474 companies, covering more than 6,000 job roles and representing more than 21 lakh employees. It focused on salary trends

individual performance, organ-

Employees
Salaries

three factors determining incre-The median merit salary incre-

ments in India are expected to reach 10 per cent in 2024, which was on top of a 9.5 per cent increase in 2023, the survey said. In India, it said the rate of voluntary attrition has shown a gradual increase from 12.1 per cent in 2021 to 13.5 per cent in

"The half-yearly data for 2023 indicates a slight increase in attrition compared to 2022, suggesting a continuing upward trend in voluntary attrition each

year, which is also being reflected in other parts of the world, including Brazil, China, Australia, and Japan," Mercer said. Mansee Singhal, Rewards Consulting Leader for Mercer in India, said the projected salary increments highlight both confidence and optimism in the Indian market, driven by robust economic indicators and a thriving business landscape. The continuous focus on AI and

automation has propelled key industries like automobile, manufacturing & engineering and life sciences into a new phase of growth, Singhal added.

Boulter, Saville among opening day winners

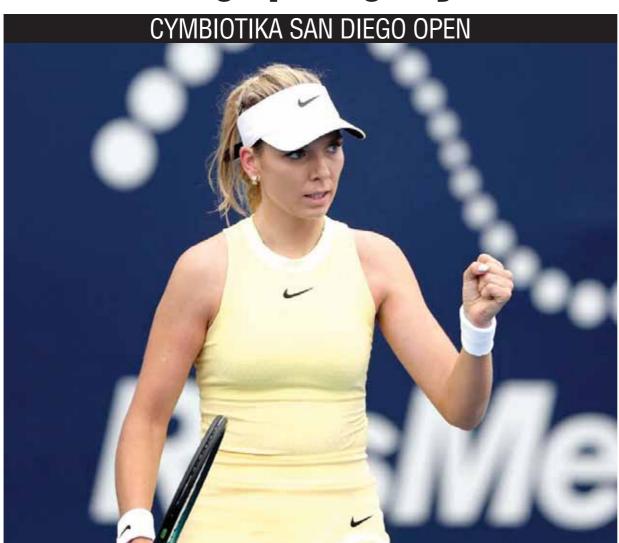
Tatie Boulter of Britain and Daria Saville of Australia scored decisive wins Monday in the rain-interrupted opening round of the Cymbiotika San Diego Open.

Boulter earned her first win over Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko in four career matchups, 6-3, 6-1, in one hour and 11 minutes.

"I know how tough she can be to play against," said Boulter, who collected her 10th victory over a top-50 opponent. "I've never won against her before. I knew today was going to be an absolute battle. I just came out and tried to compete and do the best I could. I don't think either of us played our best tennis, but sometimes it's about finding a way, and I did

The 36th-ranked Tsurenko was indeed playing some of her best tennis earlier this month in Doha, Qatar, where she stunned sixth-ranked Ons Jabeur in the second round. However, the 34-year-old was unable to take the court for her round-of-16 matchup with Naomi Osaka due to a right elbow injury. On Monday, she had eight double foults and won just four of 21 faults and won just four of 21 second-serve points.

Saville continues to charge back toward the top 100 after experiencing a series of injury setbacks. The 29-year-old upset 58th-ranked Lin Zhu for the second time in 2024, 6-3, 6-3. She also defeated the Chinese baseliner in January on her way to the semifinals in Hobart, Australia



basically my game. I'm glad that I took opportunities

"I definitely had to run a lot when I could, took my own today," said Saville, who chances and made it happen." converted all four of her It was the third win in as break-point opportunities many days for Saville, who against Zhu. "But that's came through the qualifying

rounds.

are pretty dangerous," she "I've had some of my said. best runs from playing qualifying.

qualifier Jule German Niemeier beat Varvara "I always think that qualifiers Gracheva of France in their

first-ever matchup, 6-3, 6-0, in just 54 minutes. Former No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki, the Australian Open champion, will make her tournament debut on Tuesday night against Anna Blinkova.



Dybala has first hat trick for Roma in win over Torino

Paulo Dybala scored his first hat trick for Roma as the home side beat Torino 3-2 in Sorie A on Monday.

in Serie A on Monday. On a day that Chris Smalling started for Roma for the first time since September, Dybala took all the plaudits. It was Dybala's first club hat

trick since October 2018, when he was with Juventus. Roma stayed sixth, while Fiorentina rose to seventh after beating Lazio 2-1. Lazio dropped to eighth, and

Torino remained 10th. Dybala got the opener from

the penalty spot three minutes before halftime and Duvan Zapata equalized for

when he headed home a corner kick from the left. Dybala score a splendid second goal after 58 minutes, swerving a 30-yard shot low move. goalkeeper Milinkovic-Savic.

The Argentine striker capped a fine performance when he worked a neat one-two with substitute Romelo Lukaku and slotted home from a tight

Smalling's substitute, Dean Huijsen, conceded an own goal at the end.

Later, Fiorentina hit the woodwork four times and missed a penalty but still managed to win from a goal down against Lazio in

the visitors two minutes later Florence. Lazio took the lead seconds before halftime when Luis Alberto took Matteo Guendouz's pass and shot low into the net to end a flowing

> The 19-year-old Michael Kayode equalized for Fiorentina 16 minutes into the second half with his first goal of the season.

Nicolas Gonzalez saw his penalty come back off the post midway through the second half but one minute later the home side went ahead. Lazio keeper Ivan Provedel could only parry a shot from Andrea Belotti and Giacomo Bonaventura followed up to give Fiorentina

returning after 12 years to

AP RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

ll signs point toward Anthony All signs point toward America, Kim ending his 12-year absence by playing the LIV Golf event in Saudi Arabia, with the latest indication a video tease from Greg Norman on Monday.

Kim was a raw talent who broke the country club image in golf with his belt buckles and bling, winning three times on the PGA Tour and playing in one Ryder Cup in 2008 at Valhalla, where he secured a spirited win over Sergio Garcia. He rose as high as No. 6 in the world.

The 30-second clip on X showed vague images of Kim, now 38, accompanied by Norman posting, "He oozes incredible talent. The world has seen it in the past and now it is an honour as Commissioner of to give the opportunity for this star to be reborn.

This followed initial reports from Golf.Com in January that Kim was gearing up for a potential return, a

post on X from an account called Flushing It (the first to report Jon Rahm leaving for LIV in December) over the weekend that Kim had agreed to terms with Saudi-funded LIV and a story on Golf Channel citing sources confirming the move. A LIV Golf spokeswoman said in an email there would be "nothing

official-official" on Monday.
Kim is expected to play as a wild card - meaning he would not be affiliated with any of the 13 teams - at LIV Golf Jeddah that begins Friday in Saudi Arabia.

Kim last competed in May 2012 at the Wells Fargo Championship, where he shot 74 and walked straight to his car and left. He runtured his Achilles tondon getting ruptured his Achilles tendon getting ready for 2013 season, and then had a herniated disk.

Associated Press — his most recent monthly interview — he said his injuries insurance policy that cost "well into included a rotator cuff, labrum, spinal fusion and his hand, and that



payments from an the mid-six figures" when he took it out in 2010 in case of injury

he had gone through at least six LIV Golf has two individual players deal to play in all 13 tournaments, LIV Golf events are 54 holes with no while Laurie Canter played in the first two events.

Kim grew up in Los Angeles and

played at Oklahoma before turning pro in 2006. He won at Quail Hollow (Wells Fargo Championship) and Congressional (AT&T National) in 2008, and his last win was the Houston Open in 2010. He had a thumb injury that year that kept him from being chosen for the

Ryder Cup team. Kim was particularly spunky in his lone Ryder Cup in 2008, beating Garcia a 5-and-4. Stewart Cink, who turns 51 in May, and J.B. Holmes are the only players from that U.S. Team who still have full status on the PGA

Kim also played in the Presidents Cup at Harding Park in 2009. Robert Allenby accused Kim of partying all night in San Francisco the night before singles, sharing the story after Kim had recorded a 5-and-3 victory

cut, and most of the top players have been signed to lucrative deals to join



Long serving Hockey India CEO Elena resigns top job, the country's men

and women's teams achieved

ending a 41-year medal drought, was also a major accomplishment. The women also finished at an unprecedented fourth in the

Norman served a major part

of her stint with HI when

former international hockey federation (FIH) chief Narendra Batra was the

president of the national

During her tenure, HI hosted

two consecutive editions of FIH Men's World Cup in 2018

and 2023, two Junior Men's

World Cup in 2016 and 2021 and also hosted five editions

of the now-discontinued Hockey India League (HIL), a

franchise-based league. Besides, HI also hosted several international hockey

events including the Champions Trophy, World League Finals in 2015 and 2017, Olympic Qualifiers in 2019 and 2024 as well as the

Hockey Pro League home

Elena was also at the forefront of bringing women's hockey to limelight,

hockey to limelight, providing them equal facilities as the men's hockey

team, including cash awards

games during her tenure.

quadrennial showpiece.

career-best world rankings. historic bronze-medal finish by the men's team at the Tokyo Olympic Games,

Norman's resignation comes days after the chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team Janneke Schopman who claimed that she was not

Norman's resignation is another setback for the body, which did not give the exact reason for her departure in the official statement. However, a top source said Norman was upset about "non-payment of her dues for

HI president and former India captain Dilip Tirkey, while accepting Norman's resignation, expressed his gratitude towards the gratitude Australian.

"Not only as the President of Hockey India but also as a

international events through the Hockey India Annual statement. "Her dedication and efforts

was have played a pivotal role in propelling Hockey India and Indian hockey to the commendable position they hold today. I wish her great success in all her future endeavours?

 $F^{resh\ turmoil\ hit\ Hockey}_{India\ on\ Tuesday\ when\ its}$ long-serving CEO Elena Norman resigned from her position owing to non-payment of dues for the past few months, sources in the national federation told PTI. The Australian held the post for nearly 13 years and had not been paid for the last three months.

valued and respected by the national federation.

"She was also unhappy with the work environment," the source added.

former player and avid hockey enthusiast, I want to formally acknowledge and extend my sincere gratitude for her remarkable contributions over the last 12-13 years," Tirkey said in a

Awards," said a Hockey India statement. particularly instrumental in the success of

recognising

performances

the women's team that qualified for the 2016 Rio Olympics, a historic feat as the team qualified for the first time and participated in the Olympics after 36 years," the During the time she held the statement added.



Olsson in hospital with brain condition

AP ■ HERNING (DENMARK)

Sweden midfielder Kristoffer Olsson has been hospitalized with an acute condition after losing suddenly

consciousness at home, his Danish club FC Midtjylland said Tuesday Olsson is on a ventilator in Aarhus University Hospital, the club said, while a team of Denmark's leading medical

experts work to make a diagnosis and begin the correct course of treatment. Midtjylland said the 28-yearold Olsson lost consciousness on Tuesday last week and was transferred to the hospital, where he is surrounded by his immediate family staff members of

Midtjylland. "Olsson is affected by an apparently acute disease

related to the brain, which is not caused by self-harm of any kind, nor is the cause due to external factors," the club

Midtjylland said it was "forced" to release the information about Olsson because of "increasing rumors" about his absence from the team.

is of course deeply affected by Kristoffer's sudden illness and our thoughts and full support go to Kristoffer and his

Olsson has played 47 times for Sweden, most recently against Estonia in November. He joined Midtjylland in 2022 for a second spell, having played for in Belgium, previously Anderlecht Krasnodar in Russia, AIK in Sweden and in the youth teams at English club Arsenal. | Goyat is more experienced having fought

"Everyone at FC Midtjylland family," the club said.

> The two engaged in a dramatic face-to-face encounter on the streets of Puerto Rico recently and challenged each other.

"Both of them are slated to fight in a mega card soon," read a statement from Goyat's promoters. Paul has appeared in nine professional fights in his career, winning eight of them.



24 bouts, 18 of them being victories. The feud started when 32-year-old Goyat accused Paul of using a translator application to abuse him in a regional Indian language. "Jake Paul, I'm the man of my word. I'm here. I'm in your country. I'm here in your town. I'm here in your gym, man. Now abuse... You using translate application and you abusing in Indian language. Now abuse," declared Goyat. Before the face off in Puerto Rico, Goyat had been consistently issuing challenges to

physical bout.

In response, Paul had implied that the Indian lacked interest in engaging in a

each, and Hamilton is the outright leader just go with my gut feeling and I decided to take the opportunity. Hamilton begins his last season with

Mercedes on Saturday at the season-

opening Bahrain Grand Prix. His last win was at the Saudi Arabian GP in the penultimate race of the 2021 campaign, where Max Verstappen won the first of his three straight titles with Red Bull.

Indian pro boxer Neeraj to take on Jake

with 103 race wins and 104 pole

Hamilton has spoken in the past of the

lure of racing with Ferrari, where Schumacher won five of his world titles.

"I mean, the opportunity just popped up and I was like, OK, I've got to think for a second," Hamilton said. "(But) I didn't

have a lot of time to think and I had to

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tndian professional boxer Neeraj Goyat will take on Jake Paul in a mega card this vear after a bitter war of words on social media with the American pugilist who is also a voutuber.

It then emerged that the two-year deal penned with Mercedes and announced

last August was actually for one year with

an option for a second year, which

Hamilton informed Mercedes team

principal Toto Wolff of his decision to

leave only the day before over breakfast at Wolff's home. They have become close

friends over the years after Hamilton

joined Mercedes from McLaren in 2013.

The 39-year-old Hamilton and Michael

Schumacher have a record seven F1 titles

Hamilton did not take.

STATE UNITS AGREE WITH ROHIT HUNGER COMMENT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

skipper Sharma's assertion that Test Lopportunities should be only for those who show hunger for the format found resonance with associations grappling with youngsters desperate to make a name in white-ball cricket but reluctant to grind it out in

first-class games. With the advent of IPL, the club vs country debate has been raging for years now and Rohit's stern statement came at a time when two established names in Indian cricket — Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan

- ignored a BCCI diktat to Ranji Trophy focussing neir IPL quarterfinals, their instead on preparations.

"Jin logon ko bhookh hai, hum unhi logon ko mauka denge (We will give opportunities to only those who are hungry)," Rohit declared on Monday after a series-clinching win Test in Ranchi.

"Agar hunger nahi hai to unko khila ke koi matlab nahi hai (There's no point in playing those who don't have the hunger)," he said.

The hunger that he spoke about was there for everyone to see in young guns like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel, Akash Deep and the more established Shubman Gill, all of whom sparkled at various stages of the series against England.

But Rohit did make a point about the unnamed ones who don't seem to have that fire in

"I concur with the Indian captain. There should be hunger in younger cricketers to play the longest format," Abhilash Khandekar, president of Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association, told PTI. It is for those that the BCCI issued a directive earlier this month asking centrally-contracted cricketers to be



available

engagements. Several representatives from state associations admitted that Rohit was not off the mark when he said those who are not up for it should not be

format. But they also feel that a system needs to be in place so that such a situation never

"Ranji Trophy cannot be taken lightly by any player, it is the backbone of Indian cricket. It the most important

tournament in domestic cricket. This should be followed up in other formats domestic cricket," Khandekar said.

Another official, who did not wish to be named, went to the extent of saying that Ranji

Trophy ran the risk of "a slow death if it was not made mandatory for top players to compete.

late than never.

"I complement BCCI for this

State units see the parent body's move as a case of better

player of spin.

decision of compelling players to play for their state in Ranji Trophy. I see it as a case of better late than never, this is going to help domestic cricket in a big way," said Khandekar. In the recent past, the Indian batters have been found

home. Former India captain Dilip Vengsarkar believes if elite players turn up for their respective states in Ranji Trophy whenever available, it would only make them better players of spin. "Playing Ran

vulnerable on turning tracks at

"Playing Ranji is very important. It helps you play spin better on Indian wickets, skills are your overall improved. And when you play foreign teams, it becomes easier (to face spin)," said Vengsarkar, himself a great

feel it is a player's wish whether to play Ranji or not. If he doesn't want to play, we have enough in India to choose from, they will play

one is bigger than the game. No one is indispensable," he

In Kishan's absence from the ongoing series, Dhruv Jurel made the most of the opportunity by coming up with two brilliant under-pressure knocks in only his

second Test. Like the MPCA chief, a state unit official proposed another step to rein in players who ignore red-ball cricket.

This was a much needed step and should have been taken earlier. If an India player is regularly featuring in Ranji Trophy, it acts a massive motivator to the younger players in the squad.

"I would also want the BCCI to empower state units to ban those players who don't play Ranji Trophy. If a senior is dropped for once, the juniors would not dare to ignore their red ball commitments for T20 cricket," said a state unit official requesting anonymity.

We did not have a chance in hell of competing with India: Stokes

Skipper Ben Stokes expressed pride in how England have fought toe to toe with India despite not having "a chance in hell of competing" with the hosts in the ongoing series.

India registered a five-wicket win in the fourth and penultimate Test to take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series against England, who suffered their first Test series defeat under the leadership of captain Stokes and head coach Brendon McCullum.

"3-1 doesn't look great, but the way in which we've come at India is what I'm most proud of," Stokes told British media. "We didn't have a chance in

hell of even competing with But today(Monday), that wasn't an easy win for India, and I think they would admit that," he

In the fourth Test, England tried to fashion a fight-back before India crossed the line on the fourth day in Ranchi. Chasing 192, India slipped to 120/5, before Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel stitched a 72-

run unbroken partnership. "This young, inexperienced team has been successful over the past two years, but coming different beast, something that this team has not been exposed

"The way in which we have reacted to everything, even being on the wrong end of three results, is something I'm

incredibly proud of." The visitors had started off with a thrilling win in the

opener but the hosts have

come back strongly taking the

attacking game.

next three fixtures in an emphatic manner.

every player has thrown everything at India. No one has ever taken a backward step,"

Stokes said. England have let slip several promising opportunities in the series. Their batters have displayed poor judgement, giving away the advantage to

it as they were bowled out for iust 145 in their second essay, undone by the Indian spin trio Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra

Stokes conceded that the Indian spinners' skill in those conditions made it "nigh-on impossible" to play with their

"Looking back at when we had

our chance to bat yesterday, cricket is always skill against "I'm very proud of the way skill. Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep and the conditions we found ourselves in against was very,

challenging.
"When India have a sniff in conditions like that, any team is going to find it hard to not only keep the scoreboard ticking but rotate the strike. You've got to give them a lot of Opting to bat first, England credit for the way in which had a first-innings lead of 46 they bowled in very favourable their skill was better than ours yesterday.

'When you've got three worldclass spinners operating in conditions like that, you know ou're going to be up against it. That period yesterday after lunch was the game.

"Nothing is impossible, I wouldn't say that. But it was nigh on impossible to operate how we wanted to," he added.

McCullum buoyed by Bairstow effort

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ollie Robinson's Test future is in doubt after a disappoint-ing outing in Ranchi but England head coach Brendon McCullum has backed the out-of-form Jonny Bairstow to make an impact in Dharamsala, where he will play his 100th game. Bairstow is the only English batter yet to play a significant knock in the Test series against India. The rubber is already out of England's reach but runs of England's reach but runs from Bairstow's bat will be more

"It'll be really emotional for him," said McCullum in a interaction with the UK media in reference to Bairstow's landmark

than welcome. His highest score

in eight innings thus far is 38,

which came in the first innings

of the Ranchi Test.

"Everyone knows Jonny's story. He is quite an emotional char-



acter at times and big milestones like that do mean a lot to him. (In this match) he walked taller, looked stronger, had that presence and that real Jonny Bairstow swagger to him. When he has that you kind of feel he's never too far away.

Talking about pacer Robinson, who had a forgettable first outing in the series, the New Zealander said: "Everything he did leading into the Test match suggested we'd see not just the Ollie Robinson we'd seen previously but a better version of it. For one reason or another it didn't quite work out for him. Obviously he's not just as disappointed as everyone else, he's the most disappointed out of everyone." Robinson went wicketless in the 12 overs he bowled in the first innings and was not used in the second essay

India have handed England their first series loss in the Bazball era but the head coach remains optimistic about the

"There's times in games where we haven't quite screwed down our method just yet. We've lost here, didn't win the Ashes (2-2). but we're a better team than 18 months ago and we've got an opportunity in the next 18 months to do some special shit. "We'll keep chiselling away at those rough edges. It's not a bad time to be coach of the England team," he said.

He was all praise for rookie spinners Tom Hartley and Shoaib Bashir who exceeded expectations with a combine tally of 32 wickets in the first four Tests. Hartley in fact is the leading wicket taker in the series with 20 scalps. "It will be a slight frustration of ours if they weren't given opportunities at county level. There's a very real possibility that might be the case but without wanting to dictate to counties because they have their own agendas as well.



to miss IPL PTI NEW DELHI

India Cenior Mohammed Shami has undergone a successful surgery on his left achilles tendon, which rules him out of next month's Indian Premier League and possibly the T20 World Cup in June.

The 33-year-old, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final against Australia on November 19, went under the knife in the London on Monday, as reported by PTI last week. Shami, who is eager to "get back on my feet soon" stares at a recovery time of a minimum of three months. The IPL is slated to be played from March 22 to May 26 followed by the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean

'Just had a successful heel operation on my achilles tendon! Recovery is going to take some getting back on my feet," Shami tweeted, along with several pic-

architects of India's stupendous ODI World Cup campaign with 24 wickets, had played through

He had flown to London in January to take special ankle injections. However, the medication didn't work and the fast bowler had to opt for a surgery

New Zealand fast bowler Neil retires from test cricket

AP WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND)

The hard-working and durable New Zealand fast bowler Neil Wagner has announced his retirement from test cricket at 37. South Africa-born Wagner played 64 tests for New Zealand and will finish fifth on New Zealand's list of all-time test wick-

The left-armer likely was not going to be included in New Zealand's lineup for the first test against Australia, starting at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Thursday and decided to retire from the five-day game. Wagner made his test debut in 2012 and was a key figure in one of New Zealand's most successful eras, helping the team win the inaugural World Test Championship in 2022. He moved from South Africa to New Zealand in 2008 and quickly established himself in first-class cricket with Otago



province.

In recent years Wagner pursued a sort of leg theory of continual short-pitched bowling which was contentious among some fans but invariably produced results. New Zealand won 34 of the 64 tests in which he played. His strike rate of 52 is bettered only by Richard Hadlee among New Zealand bowlers who have taken more than 100

wickets. One of Wagner's most notable performances was in bowling New Zealand to a one-run win over England after following on at the Basin Reserve last year. Wagner took 4-62 including the final wicket of James Anderson which fell with England one run short of a winning total. "It's been an emotional week," Wagner said Tuesday. "It's not easy to step away from something you've given so much to and got so much out of, but it's now time for others to step up and take this team forward. I've enjoyed every single moment of playing test cricket for the Black Caps and am proud of everything we've been able to achieve as a team."

captains who all knew they could throw the ball to him when in need of a breakthrough or simply of someone to bowl for long periods. "Neil's numbers are phenomenal but I don't think we can underestimate his contributions to the team when the chips were down and he found a way to create a wicket," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said, "His accuracy, execution and tenacity has been instrumental in many of our great test victories and he will always be remembered for his lion-hearted nature.

time, but looking forward to tures of him in the hospital, on Shami, who was one of the

and USA.

pain as he had problems with his landing but didn't let it affect his performance.

RANJI TROPHY

Mumbai qualify for semifinals

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tailenders Tanush Kotian and Tushar Deshpande entered the record books with a century each but it was their team's slender firstinnings lead against Baroda that propelled Mumbai into the semifinals of the Ranji Trophy here on Tuesday.

With the contest ending in a draw on the fifth day at the BKC Ground, Mumbai made it to the final four on the virtue of first-innings lead. Mumbai will take on Tamil Nadu in the second semifinal this season at the same venue while in

the first semifinal game, Vidarbha will host Madhya Pradesh. Mumbai had taken a lead of 36 runs in the first innings after Baroda were bowled out for 348 in reply to the hosts' 384.

The match was called off at tea with Baroda reaching 121 for three in an improbable chase of 606 on the final day, with Musheer Khan being adjudged the player of the match for his unbeaten 203 in the first innings. A thrilling final day was on cards when Mumbai resumed play at 379 for nine with Kotian unbeaten on 32 and Deshpande batting on 23.

Having come together in the middle with Mumbai leading by 373 overall, the pair went about its job with ease to pile up further misery on the Baroda side.

Mumbai's Nos 10 and 11 Kotian and Deshpande



recorded their maiden first-class hundreds while adding 232 runs for the 10th wicket, which came off only 240 balls.

But Kotian and Deshpande fell just one run short of equalling the record for highest partnership for the 10th wicket, which is held by the pair of Ajay Sharma and Maninder Singh. Kotian remained unbeaten on 120 from 129 balls with 10 fours and four sixes and the pair was separated only when Deshpande was dismissed by Ninad Rathva for 123 from 129

balls, hitting 10 fours and eight sixes.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai 384 & 569 in 132 overs (Hardik Tamore 114, Prithvi Shaw 87, Shams Mulani 54, Tanush Kotian 120*, Tushar Deshpande 123; Bhargav Bhatt 7/200) drew with **Baroda** 348 & 121/3 in 30 overs (Priyanshu Moliya 54; Tanush Kotian 2/16).

Vidarbha crush Karnataka

PTI NAGPUR

Vidarbha completed a 128-run hammering of Karnataka to cruise to the Ranji Trophy semifinal, riding on splendid four-wicket hauls by Harsh Dubey and Aditya Sarwate here on Tuesday. It was a memorable win for the

hosts here at the VCA Stadium at Civil Lines as Vidarbha came from behind on the final day to stop Karnataka in their tracks with a flurry of wickets.

Chasing a massive 371 to win, Karnataka had laid the foundation when they closed at 103 for one at stumps on the fourth day, but a spectacular batting collapse on the fifth day morning undid all their hardwork. With 268 more to win and nine

wickets in hand, Karnataka would have backed themselves to cross the line but Dubey and Sarwate ran through their batting line-up to deliver a huge win for Vidarbha. Inside the first hour's play, Karnataka lost the fulcrum of their batting unit including skipper Mayank Agarwal (70), Nikin Jose (0) and Manish Pandey (1) in a short span, with Sarwate (22-0-78-4) account-



ing for each of them. Aneesh KV tried to stabilise the

innings from one end but the No. 3 batter was run out for 40, which dealt a body blow to Karnataka's hopes of winning the game. Aneesh had added 40 runs for the sixth wicket with Hardik Raj (13) to lead recovery.

Dubey (13.4-1-65-4) then got into the act to run through Karnataka's lower order, starting with the key wicket of Raj, following it up with the dismissal of wicketkeeper-batter S Sharath

for 6. The pair of Vijay Kumar Vyshak (34) and Vidwath Kaverappa (25) tried to delay the inevitable

with a 33-run stand but Dubey kept chipping away with wickets to complete a fine four-wicket haul. Karnataka were shot out for 243 in pursuit of 371 and were thus crashed out of the race to the semifinals.

Vidarbha have joined Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the semifinal round For his seven-wicket haul in the

game, Sarwate was named the player of the match. BRIEF SCORES: Vidarbha 460

& 196 beat **Karnataka** 286 & 243 in 62.4 overs (R Samarth 40, Mayank Agarwal 70, Aneesh KV 40; Harsh Dubey 4/65, Aditya Sarwate 4/78) by 128 runs.

Shreyas named in Mumbai squad for semifinal against Tamil Nadu

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer was on Tuesday named in Mumbai's 16-member squad for the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Tamil Nadu starting on March 2.

Mumbai qualified for the semifinals after their quarterfinal clash against Baroda ended in a draw at the BKC Ground, with the 41-time champions making it to the final four on the basis of first-innings lead.

Lacking big runs and struggling with a back-related issue again, the 29-year-old Iyer was not named in India's squad for the last three Tests against England. Iyer, subsequently, also missed Mumbai's quarterfinal match along with all-rounder Shivam

Dube. The timing of Iyer pulling out of the key Ranji clash coincided with BCCI secretary Jay Shah announcing that a directive will be issued to players to compul-



sorily play domestic matches. While Dube is on the mend having suffered a side strain issue, Iyer has recovered completely and will be available for the semifinal against Tamil Nadu. Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane, Shreyas Iyer, Prithvi Shaw, Bhupen Lalwani, Amogh Bhatkal, Musheer Khan, Prasac Pawar, Hardik Tamore, Shardul Thakur, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Aditya Dhumal, Tushar Deshpande, Mohit Avasthi, Royston Dias, Dhawal Kulkarni.

damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.