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STATE ASSEMBLY

SIKKIM

ELECTION 2024

3rd Jun'19 — 2nd Jun'24

Total No. of AC Seats: 32

ANDHRA PRADESH

Term of Assembly 12th Jun'19 — 11th Jun'24

Total No. of AC Seats: 175

3rd Jun'19 — 2nd Jun'24 Total No. of AC Seats: 60

25th Jun'19 — 24th Jun'24

Total No. of AC Seats: 147

Term of Assembly

Term of Assembly

ODISHA

RUNACHAL PRADESH

GENERAL

ELECTION 2024

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI Setting the stage for a two months long electoral battle for the world biggest election exercise in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a third consecutive term, the Election Commission (EC) on Saturday announced that the Lok Sabha elections will be kicking off on April 19 and will be held in seven phases. The results will be declared on June 4.

The general elections will be held through the months of April and May and the EC claimed to have framed the poll scheduled keeping in mind the regional climatic conditions.

regional climatic conditions besides certain festivals in between. conditions Four States, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will also be holding simultaneous Assembly elections. The Model Code of Conduct, which bars the Government in power from announcing any new policy decisions, comes into effect immediately after the

announcement. Addressing a press conference, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar along with two election commissioners—Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu—announced that Lok Sabha polling for the 543 Sabha seats will begin with first phase of polling on April 19, followed by April 26, May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4. While Lok Sabha elections in the national Capital will occur in a single phase on May 25, polling will be held in all seven phases in three States -- Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim will be held on April 19 and in Andhra Pradesh on May

13. Elections to Odisha Assembly will be held in four phases on May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. Bypolls will also be held for 26 Assembly constituencies, Kumar said. The Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir would take place soon after the Lok Sabha polls due to security concerns, with both events deemed unfeasible to be held simultaneously.

The Lok Sabha polls will be conducted in seven phases starting April 19, with the results to be declared on June 4, while voting in Jammu and Kashmir will take place in five phases.

The term of the 17th Lok Sabha is set to end on June 16 while the terms of the Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim assemblies will end on June 11, June 2, June 24 and June 2, respectively. Last time the Lok were

Sabha polls wer announced on March 10 and held in seven phases beginning April 11. Votes were counted on May 23. In the first phase on April 19, voting will take

102 place constituencies spread over 21 States/UTs including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir with 10 States/UTs completing the poll process in this phase.

Continued on Page 2



Poetic CEC talks tough on model code violations

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

From taking a tough stand on hate speeches to bust the myth of information and realities and share that in 12 States and Union Territories, the ratio of women

voters

higher than men, Election Commission Saturday categorically listed out a set of advisories for political parties, urging them to refrain from personal

will be

language. The election watchdog emphasised the need for a campaign based on issues, stressing a zero tolerance policy for hate speeches and

attacks and even use of foul

speeches based on caste or religious lines. In an effort to curb the spread of misinformation, commission has enlisted

2,100 advisors to monitor these issues closely, with strict action promised against any violations. In the one and half hour long Press conference, the CEC

Rajiv Kumar made attempts to keep the ambience of massive hall of Vigyan Bhawan lighter by sprucing up his Press conference with poetics' and shayaris.

On allegations of EVM, he answered: "Adhoori hasrato ka iljaam, har baar hum par lagana thik nahi, wafa khud se nahi hoti, khata EVM ki kehete ho, aur baad mein jab parinaam aata hai toh uspe kaayam bhi nahi rehte"

Continued on Page 2

gets bail in ED summons case

STAFF REPORTER **NEW DELHI**

A Delhi court on Saturday granted bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in two complaints filed by the Enforcement Directorate(ED) against him for skipping summons in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

The court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra also allowed Kejriwal to leave the courtroom. "Offence being bailable, accused Arvind Kejriwal is admitted to bail," it said. The court further directed the ED to hand over documents related to the complaints to Kejriwal.
The ED has filed two
complaints before the
magisterial court, seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for skipping summonses issued to him in the case. The latest complaint pertains to Kejriwal not honouring summonses no. 4 to 8 sent by the federal probe agency under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The FD had earlier moved The ED had earlier moved the magisterial court seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for not attending the first three

summonses issued to him in

the money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped

Delhi excise policy.

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EC gears up for free and fair LS polls challenges

Drone-based checking at borders, surveillance of non chartered flights, a crack-down on misleading advertisements and fake news, and "ruthless" action against poll violence are among the Election Commission's strategies to deal with the four fold challenge of "muscle, money, misinformation, and Model Code violations". Announcing the schedule of general elections for the 18th Lok Sabha, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the poll body is fully determined to tackle the challenges. The CEC listed Money, Muscle, violation of model code of conduct and misinformation as challenges that the EC faces. "Parties must maintain decorum during campaigning and refrain from abuses and personal attacks," Kumar said. The Commission has issued a Model Code of Conduct (MCC) advisory to all political parties ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the country.

"The daunting challenge in conducting free and fair elections are four-fold, the four Ms: muscle, money, misinforma-



tion, and MCC (Model Code of Conduct) violations. The Election Commission is committed and has put in place measures to deal with these disruptive challenges," he said. To tackle the first 'M' -- "Muscle" the Election Commission has issued some guidelines and regulations so that the polls can be held in a free and fair man-

"We have issued strict directions to DMs and SPs to ensure a level playing field. Additionally, CAPF would be deployed adequately and assisted by integrated control rooms in each district. There will also be drone-based checking at the borders," the CEC said. Asserting that violence in elections is unacceptable, Kumar said the poll panel will be "ruthless" if any violence takes place during elections.

cash seizure surged over 800 per cent to Rs 3,400 crore in 11 states compared to five years ago. Enforcement agencies have been directed to crack down on illicit money, liquor, drugs and freebies, and stay vigilant against disruptive methods.

No movement of bank vehicles will be allowed after sunset and there will be surveillance and inspection of non-scheduled chartered flights. Strict vigil will be maintained over illicit online cash transfers," he said.

Warning against creating "digital memories" of any bad words during campaigning, Kumar said, "I urge parties to refrain from personal attacks and foul language. No-go areas in speeches are defined to maintain civility. Let's not cross lines in our rivalry." "It is important because in this digital world... Whatever is said once, its record will be there for 100 years. Avoid creating digital memories of bad words coming from your mouth," he

Noting that tackling misinformation in this digital age is complex, Kumar said the EC has put in place certain measures to ensure misinformation is nipped in the bud.

Voting period of 44 days in 2024 LS polls longest since first elections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The voting period for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, spread over 44 days, would be the second longest after the first Parliamentary elections of 1951-52 that lasted for more than four months.

The shortest voting period for a general election in the country was in 1980 and it was just four days.
The total days of the electoral

process this time, from the announcement of the polls by the Election Commission on Saturday till counting of votes,

Lok Sabha polls will be held in seven phases beginning from April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4 for the world's biggest election exercise in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a third consecutive

Dates are decided based on the geography of regions and other factors such as public holidays, festivals and examinations, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference on Saturday when asked about the long-duration of

polls. He was also asked if this long schedule could work against opposition parties.



"It has been asked why elections are being held in seven phases and opposition parties have alleged that it may disturb the level-playing field...," Kumar said.

"Look at the geography of the country...There are rivers, mountains, snow, jungle, summers...Think of the security forces' movements, they will move in the gaps between phases, through the length and breadth of the country...Imagine the pressure on them. There are festivals and exams...When we sit with the calendar, we fix one date, then it has to be changed...," he said. "We do not take any action to favour anyone or hurt anyone. If anyone has such doubt they are wrong," the CEC said.

Several opposition parties have criticised the move to hold elections in seven phases, especially in states such as West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Kumar, however, said more phases have to be held in larger states, which have high-

The country's first general election was held between October 25, 1951, and February 21, 1952, the longest

During the 1951-52 election, 489 seats of the Lok Sabha were allotted across 401 constituencies in 25 states. There were 314 constituencies

electing one member using the first-past-the-post system, and 86 constituencies elected two members, one from the general category and one from scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. One constituency elected three representatives.

Due to the challenging logis tics, the election was held in 68 phases. Majority of voting took place in early 1952, but Himachal Pradesh voted in 1951 as its weather was commonly inclement in February and March. The remainder of states voted

in February-March of 1952, except for Jammu and Kashmir, where no voting took place for Lok Sabha seats Between 1962 to 1989, the

duration of the Lok Sabha elections was between four to 10 days. The shortest election was held in 1980 -- from January 3 to 6 -- when Indira Gandhi was voted back to

Poll panel to use two pronged strategy to counter fake information during LS polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Election Commission I will use a two-pronged strategy to deal with misinformation and fake narratives on social media during the Lok Sabha polls, with Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar asserting that the poll body will "join the issue" to provide the correct picture to voters.

Addressing a press conference to announce the schedule for elections to the 18th Lok Sabha Kumar said the commission will soon launch a "Myth vs Reality" project to clear the air around fake news being spread on social media.

"Misinformation troubles us a lot during elections. We are conscious of two facts -- that social media helps us in our outreach programmes and there is freedom to criticise anybody in a democracy. But one cannot be allowed to create fake news, which is not based on facts because it can disturb public order," he said. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kumar said that under sections 69 and 79 (3) of the IT Act, authorities in each state are empowered to ask to take down fake social media posts.

"Authorised officials have been appointed in all states or are being appointed. In each district, we have done thorough training to deal with this kind of menace. Our entire machinery will now react to whatever is coming by (using) facts. We will join the issue instead of being in the background," Kumar said.

"If someone is trying to set a fake narrative that is disturbing the level-playing field or disrupting the law and order, we will also join them. We will soon launch a 'Myth vs Reality'

project to clear the air around fake news spreading on social media," the CEC added. Polling for the 543 Lok Sabha seats will be held in seven phases, starting with 102 in the

first phase on April 19. The votes will be counted on June

"Tackling misinformation in today's digital age is complex. We have put certain measures in place to ensure misinformation is nipped in the bud. We will be proactive in debunking fake news. debunking fake news. Originators of fake news will be dealt with severely as per extant laws," Kumar further said. Remember, 'Verify Before You

Amplify' is the mantra to combat faké news. Let us rely on authoritative sources to ensure accurate information prevails. Stay vigilant and help us maintain the integrity of the electoral process," he added.

Country witnessed historic decade of good governance under Modi rule: Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the country has witnessed a historic decade of good governance, security, welfare of all sections under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and appealed to everyone to vote for a leadership which has a track record of doing work and a vision to make India developed.

women and all voters of the country to participate in this great festival of democracy by voting in maximum numbers to elect the BJP-led NDA which will put the nation first.

"The 2024 Lok Sabha elections have been announced today by the Election Commission. Elections are a great festival for

the world's largest democracy. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has witnessed a historic decade of good governance, security, welfare of all sections and reconstruction of cultural heritage.

To maintain the pace of India's development journey, cast your vote for a leadership which has a track record of doing work and a vision to make India developed," he wrote in Hindi on 'X' with the hashtag 'Phir Ek

The senior BJP leader said this time, under the leadership of Modi, the NDA is going into the elections with the slogan of crossing 400 seats in the polls. "I have full confidence that this time the people will vote to achieve the target of 400 and build a developed and safe

Lok Sabha polls in J&K to be held in five phases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

The Lok Sabha elections in **▲** Jammu and Kashmir will be conducted in five phases with voting in each of the five Parliamentary constituencies of the Union Territory to be held in each phase, according to the poll schedule announced by the Election Commission on Saturday.

The Lok Sabha polls will be held across the country in seven phases beginning from April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4 for the world's biggest election exercise in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a third consecutive

The Udhampur Lok Sabha seat in the Jammu region will go to polls on April 19 in the first phase. The notification will be issued on March 20 while for filing nominations. The last date for withdrawal of candidature will be March 30.

Voting for the Jammu Lok Sabha seat will be held on April 26 in the second phase of elections. The notification will be issued on March 28 and April 4 will be the last date for filing nominations. April 8 is



the last date for withdrawal of candidature. The Anantnag constituency,

which spreads across the Pir Panjal range and includes Rajouri and Poonch areas after delimitation, will go to polls on May 7 in the third phase. The notification will be issued on April 12 and April 19 will be the last date for filing nominations. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 22. For the Srinagar Lok Sabha polling will be held in the fourth phase on May 13. While the notification will be issued on April 18, the last date for nomination filing is April 25. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 29. After delimitation, Pulwama

and Shopian districts have been added to the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency while two assembly segments -- Budgam and Beerwah -- have been deleted.

Baramulla constituency in Baramulla constituency in north Kashmir will go to polls on May 20 in the fifth phase of elections. The notification will be issued on April 26 while May 3 will be the last date for filing nominations. The last date for withdrawal of candidate for withdrawal of candidature will be May 6. The Ladakh Lok Sabha seat spread will go to polls in the fifth phase

A total of 86.93 lakh voters, including 42.58 lakh women and 161 people of third gender, are eligible to exercise their franchise in Jammu and Kashmir. Nearly three lakh voters form the electorate for the Ladakh seat.

NIA chargesheets two accused in Kokernag encounter case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday chargesheeted two accused in the Kokernag (Jammu & Kashmir) encounter case.

The chargesheet filed before the NIA Special Court, Jammu, names Mohd Akbar Dar and Ghulam Nabi Dar, both residents of Kokernag area of Anantnag. They have been charged under various sections of the IPC, Arms Act and UA(P) Act.

04/2023/NIA/JMU) relates to a week-long encounter that took place at Guri Nad Forest, Halpora Kokernag, in which the security forces neutralized terrorist Uzair Khan.

The terrorist killed in the encounter was an active member of The Resistant Front e-Taiba (LeT). Uzair had joined the LeT in August 2022 and was involved in promoting terror activities against security forces in the Anantnag area through Pakistani handlers from across the border. He had also been involved in earlier terror incidents in the Kokernag area, and on previous



two occasions, he had managed to flee from the clutches of the security forces after taking advantage of the mountainous/forest terrain. Investigations revealed that the

accused Mohd Akbar Dar and Ghulam Nabi Dar were working as OGWs for terrorist Uzair Khan. The duo was helping the terrorists active in the area to commit terror acts & activities in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. They were providing information about the movement of the security forces, along with logistic supneed items, etc. They were also harboring terrorists by sheltering them.

Both LeT and TRF are proscribed organizations and have been involved in the continuous instigation/motivation of Kashmiri youth to join the terror outfits in the name of

Strong undercurrent among Christians in Kerala towards BJP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's four visits to Kerala in the last three months have started yielding results and that too in a big way, according to P C George, seven-time legislator of Kerala Legislative

George, Kerala's whistle blower politician, who merged his outfit Janapaksham with the BJP last month, told The Pioneer that the speech delivered by Modi on Thursday at Pathanamthitta was a clear signal that Christians in the State were being harassed by the CPI(M)-led LDF. "The Prime Minister assured farmers in the State that the Centre was aware of their burning issues and his government would resolve the issues at the earliest. Modi also said that the youth from the State are leaving Kerala for education and jobs because of lack of opportunities. This means been briefed well by people who matter in the State," said

marked change in the approach of Christians towards the BJP if the number of community members who joined the Hindutva party are any indi-

He said there has been a

Countdown to June 4...

Voting will take place in 89 constituencies across 13 states/UTs in the second phase on April 26. which also include Assam,

Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh. This would cover four more states and UTs. In the third phase on May 7, voting will take place in 94 constituencies spread across 12 states/UTs. With this, polling will be completed in six more

In the fourth phase on May 13, 96 constituencies spread across 10 states UTs would vote. With this, three more states/UTs would have completed voting. As many as 49 constituencies spread across eight states/UTs will vote in phase five on May 20. This phase will see voting completed in three more states/UTs.

In the sixth phase on May 25, voting will take place in 57 constituencies spread across seven states/UTs. Polling in two more states/UTs would completed with this phase. The seventh and final phase will take place on June 1 in 57 constituencies spread across eight states/UTs. The polling process in eight states/UTs would be would

completed. Kumar said the poll authority is preparing to set up 10.5 lakh polling stations across the country. have 97 crore registered

voters, over 10.5 lakh polling stations manned by 1.5 crore personnel, and 55 lakh EVMs," he said. "There are voters and 47.1 crore were voters.The Commission has conducted

17 Lok Sabha elections, 16 Presidential elections and more than 400 assembly elections," he said. He said there are 1.82 crore firsttime voters. The CEC said the poll authority is prepared to counter the challenges of four 'M's muscle power, money power, misinformation and Model Code of Conduct violations. Kumar said that the plummeting level of political discourse is a matter of concern and the EC would be going beyond the moral censure to act against Model

Code violators. "I would appeal to parties to 67.4 per cent. In the 2019 maintain decorum during the campaign and refrain from personal attacks," Kumar said. For the first time in Lok Sabha elections, people above 85 years of age and those with more than 40 per cent disability will be able to cast their votes from and Jammu and Kashmir home, Rajiv Ku announced on Saturday. Kumar

The Commission is expected to deploy 3.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel along with state police forces in the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections and the assembly

four beginning April 19. 92,000 maximum of personnel of CAPFs are 97.8 crore eligible voters of likely to be deployed in which 49.72 crore were male politically volatile West Bengal, where elections will be held in seven phases, followed by 63,500 personnel in militancy-hit Jammu and Kashmir, where polling will be held in five phases.

The last 11 State elections were peaceful and violence free with near zero repolls, he said, adding that this will further be improved going forward. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, polling was held in seven phases. There were a total of 91.2

crore eligible voters with about 43.8 crore female voters and nearly 47.3 crore male voters. A total of about 61.5 crore votes were cast and the voter turnout was poll results, the BJP won 303 Congress seats,

Trinamool Congress 22, BSP 10, NCP 5, CPI-M 3 and CPI 2.According to EC, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal will see voting in all seven phases. Maharashtra will see voting in five phases. Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand will witness four phases voting. Three phases voting will occur in Chhattisgarh and Assam while Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tripura and Manipur will witness two phases voting.

Poetic CEC talks tough on model code...

Urging Voters to not share fake news, he quipped "Jhooth ke bazaar mei raunak toh bohot hai, goya bul bule jaisi hi turant hi phat jati hai, pakad bhi loge toh kya hasil hoga sivaye dokhe ke". (In the market of lies, there is much splendor, as if it were a bubble that bursts immediately, and if you try to catch it, what will you gain except deceit).

In another poetic inimitable style, Rajiv Kumar requested the political parties to avoid personal attacks maintain decorum during the campaign by reciting couplet of famous Urdu poet Bashir Badr. "Dushmani jamkar karo lekin yeh gunjayish rahe, jab kabhi hum dost ho jaaye toh sharminda na ho"

"We are often told that we issue notices for MCC violations, but what after that? This time, we are saying that we will go beyond issuing notices.

We have the past record and it will be considered while deciding on the action that we will take against candidates for proven offences," CEC Kumar said. proven Kumar said that the election watchdog is fully prepared to deal with the issue of plummeting the

"We urge parties to refrain from personal attacks and foul language. No-go areas in speeches are defined to maintain civility.

Let's not cross lines in our

rivalry," the EC said. He reminded parties' star campaigners of their responsibility to maintain decorum throughout the campaigning process.

Interestingly, the poll body said that this year, there will be 1.89 crore first time voters and 85 lakh out of them will be women and that in 12 States and Union Territories, the ratio of women voters is higher than

The total number of electors in the Lok Sabha polls 2024 are 96.8 crore. Out of these, 49.7 crore are males, 47.1 crore females and 48,000 transgenders.

Besides all this, the EC said stressed on the importance of avoiding the distribution of unverified or misleading advertisements, as well as refraining from presenting advertisements as news. Social media posts are expected to be restrained, with a call to refrain from vilifying or insulting rivals. "We shall notify myth and reality through our website and other social media platforms," the CEC said.

India soon to launch room temperature stable suspension for sickle cell anaemia

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

Priced at less than one percent of the global cost, India is all set to launch soon its first room temperature stable drug Hydroxyurea oral suspension, for sickle cell anemia management, bringing hope to patients grappling with this life-threatening genetic disorder. The current global brand of hydroxeurea solution requires refrigeration at 2.8 degree C, the Delhi-based company on the X media platform while calling the development as a 'groundbreaking milestone," said its new solution eliminates such logistic challenge. Moreover, the affordability aspect is equally compelling. The current import price of the global brand of Hydroxyurea solution stands at a staggering Rs 77,000, posing a significant financial burden for patients. However, Akums has pledged to offer it at a fraction of the cost, less than Rs 600. Union Health Minister

Mansukh Mandaviya repost-

ed the news of the launch on

Social media. "Many con-

gratulations to you for devel-

oping a medicine to prevent

sickle cell disease. PM

@NarendraModi Ji had

launched the Sickle Cell

Anemia Eradication Mission

in 2023. This medicine will

prove to be a boon especial-

ly for our tribal sisters, brothers and children and we will soon free India from sickle cell," said Mandaviya.

This commitment aligns with the objectives of the National Sickle Cell Mission and underscores India's dedication to championing indigenous pharmaceutical innovation through the "Make in

India" initiative. According to clinical research by Indiana University School of Medicine investigators and their collaborators in Uganda, hydroxyurea significantly reduces infections in children with sickle cell anemia. Their latest findings enhance strong evidence of hydrox-

yurea's effectiveness and could ultimately reduce death in children in Africa, the continent most burdened by the disease. In India, tribal belts ranging from Madhya Pradesh to Odisha and Chhattisgarh among a few

anemia condition. The group's research, recently published in the journal Blood, revealed that hydroxvurea treatment resulted in a remarkable 60% reduction in severe or invasive infections, including malaria, bacteremia, respiratory tract infections and gastroenteritis, among Ugandan children with sickle cell anemia.

other states have a high number of people with sickle cell

Voting for seven LS seats in Delhi to take place on May 25

The voting in Delhi, for its seven Lok Sabha seats, will take place on May 25 during the sixth phase of general elections, as informed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday. Gurugram will also witness

citizens exercising franchise on the same day as Delhi while voting in Noida will already be done on April 26 in the second phase. The final counting is scheduled on June 4. There are currently 14.7 million people eligible to vote for the MP of their choice in the national capital. Neighboring Ghaziabad too will vote with Noida on April 26.

BJP currently holds all the seven seats in the national Capital by receiving 56.6 percent of all the votes in Lok Sabha 2019 polls. The BJP, the main rival of the AAP-Congress combine in Delhi, has already declared candidates for the seven seats. Barring the name of two time BJP MP Manoj Tiwari from North east Delhi, rest all the faces are new

the prestigious New Delhi Parliamentary Lok Sabha seat. In Delhi, the AAP and the Congress have entered a seatsharing agreement. The AAP has fielded its candidates from the East Delhi, South Delhi, New Delhi and the West Delhi seats. The Congress is yet to announce its candidates from the three seats it is contesting in the national capital --Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi and North West Delhi. While the 2019 contest was a triangular fight between BJP, Congress and AAP, this time the fight was between the BJP and the INDIA bloc.

The BJP has relied on Prime

Minister Modi's popularity and his government's schemes to woo voters during elections. This time too, it will be no different as the party will go to campaign with "Modi ki guarantee". Political observers have dubbed him a deciding factor in elections -- assembly or parliamentary while alliance partners AAP and Congress will seek to challenge their rival on issues related to price of the East Delhi Municipal

recently implemented con-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). Lack of civic amenities for residents of unauthorised colonies who form a sizeable part of the electorate and the constant bickering on implementation of projects between the Lt Governor and the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government will also feature in the campaigns. The Ayodhya Ram temple and the corruption cases against AAP leaders are expected to be put forth prominently by the BJP, while its rivals would look to raise the alleged targeting of opposition leaders by central agencies and the electoral bonds issue. In the past New Delhi Lok Sabha has been represented by prominent leaders from both the Congress and the BJP, including former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former deputy prime minister LK Advani, Madan Lal Khurana, Sushma Swaraj, Lalit Makan, actor Rajesh Khanna.

Harsh Malhotra, former mayor



Constituency	Male voters	Female voters	Transgender voters	Total voters	
Chandani Chowk	8,66,127	7,43,443	160	16,09,730	
North-East Delhi	12,87,660	10,93,638	144	23,81,442	
East Delhi	11,23,410	9,38,897	116	20,62,423	
New Delhi	8,08,721	6,72,554	73	14,81,338	
North West Delhi	13,39,266	11,33,406	238	24,72,910	
West Delhi	13,27,008	11,61,717	106	24,88,831	
South Delhi	12,34,380	9,86,726	339	22,21,445	
Total	79,86,572	67,30,371	1,176	1,47,18,119	
rotar	79,86,572	67,30,371	1,176	1,47,18,11	

Corporation, has been fielded from the East Delhi seat and former North MCD mayor Yogendra Chandolia from the North West seat.

From Chandni Chowk, the seat of former Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, Founder of the Confederation of All India Traders Praveen Khandelwal

Sehrawat has been fielded from West Delhi while Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has been fielded from South Delhi

Arvind Kejriwal led AAP's candidates from four seats are Kuldeep Kumar East Delhi, Sahi Ram South Delhi, Somnath Bharti from New Delhi and Mahabal Mishra West Delhi and grand old party taking the rest three including North East, Chandni Chowk and North West. While, AAP has announced the

names of its probables, Congress hasn't yet made the names public. AAP got 18.11% and the Congress 22.51% of all the votes in the last elections. Once the Congress led Sheila Dikshit's 15 years regime had seen all seven MPs of the grand old party retaining the fort for three times. On the contrary while AAP has been successful in forming governments in Delhi thrice besides gaining grounds in the Civic bodies, it is yet to a bag a Lok Sabha seat. BJP, which won all the seats in the 2019 as well as the 2014

polls, is optimistic of repeating the feat, despite the INDIA bloc partners coming together in an attempt to end its streak. Of the parliamentary constituencies here, New Delhi and South Delhi are the seats to watch out. New Delhi is the oldest parliamentary constituency of the capital city, and has been a bastion both for the Congress and the BJP. There are 14.81 lakh voters, including 8,08,721 men and 6,72,544 women, in the constituency -- all the 10 assembly segments of which were won by the AAP in the last polls. BJP dropped twotime MP and Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi to field

Swaraj. South Delhi is the fourth largest Lok Sabha constituency in the national capital in terms of number of voters after West Delhi, North West Delhi and North East Delhi. Its around 22.21 lakh voters, including 12.34 lakh men and 9.86 lakh women, live mostly in villages and unauthorised colonies.

BJP dropped its two-time sitting MP Ramesh Bidhuri to field Leader of Opposition in Singh Bidhuri from the seat. It was last won by the Congress in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls. Because of its rural profile, the area is known for having a large number of farmhouses, particularly in Mehrauli and Chhatarpur, that double up as venues for events such as mar-

With nearly 23.81 lakh voters, including 12.87 lakh men and 10.93 lakh women, the North East Delhi is the third largest constituency in the national capital has a large population of migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. BJP has repeated its sitting MP Manoj Tiwari, a popular Bhojpuri singer and actor, from the seat, particularly for his connect with the majority Bhojpuripeaking Purvanchali people of the area.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) accused the BJP of violating the Constitution and trying to crush democracy in the country during the last 10 years of its rule and said the people were "desperately" waiting for the general elections.

Kejriwal Government notifies Delhi solar policy

STAFF REPORTER NEW

The Arvind Kejriwal government has notified Delhi Solar Policy, 2023, that will help the consumers with monthly use of over 400 units to get zero bills through rooftop solar plants, a statement on Saturday said. The state government will spend Rs 570 crores to implement the policy. Under the policy, the con-

sumers who do not get subsidy for using more than 400 units per month can now install rooftop solar panels and get zero bills. The power bills of commercial users will be halved if they go for rooftop plants, said the state-

ment of Delhi government. Currently, domestic consumers receive zero bills up to 200 units monthly consumption while monthly consumption 50 percent subsidy is given for 201-400 units. The Delhi Solar Policy, 2023, was announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on January

The Delhi government will spend Rs 570 crores towards the implementation of the policy, it said. It provides for to solar panel installers, allowing for additional earnings of up to Rs 900 per month. Expenses incurred for installing solar panels under the new policy will be recovered within four years, according to the policy.

This policy will not only reduce electricity bills for



Delhiites but also help in reducing pollution, Power

She said the Kejriwal government aims to have 50 per cent of Delhi's total electricity usage from solar energy by

The Delhi government will deposit Rs 3 per unit of electricity generated into the bank account of the consumer. For 3 to 10 kilowatts, money will be deposited at the rate of Rs 2 per unit. The government will continue to provide this generation-based incentive for five vears.

The amount under GBI will be adjusted against the monthly electricity bill of the consumer. Any excess amount will be deposited into the consumer's bank account by month. Earlier, GBI amount was transferred only twice a

A solar portal is being created to make all the information about the Delhi Solar Policy available in one place. All the relevant information related to the policy will be provided. The policy also stipulates installation of rooftop solar plants on all government buildings with rooftop surface area of 500 square meters.

area of 500 square meters. For the first time, the Delhi government will provide a capital subsidy to residential consumers of Rs 2,000 per kW of installation up to a maximum of Rs 10,000 per consumer. This will be over and above the capital subsidy and above the capital subsidy of the Central government. Under 'Net Metering', the solar power generated gets offset with the electricity consumed from the grid. So, if a household consumed 400 units and generated 100 units of solar power, it will be billed only for 300 units. This allows the consumers to benefit from reduced electricity

bills, the statement said. After net metering, which happens every month, the excess solar units left will be rolled-over into subsequent billing cycles for up to 12 months (until close of every financial year), it said.

Additional income: at the end of the year, in case the solar power generated is more than the consumer's annual electricity demand, the consumer will earn money for the same from the discoms, it said.

cent of Delhi's residential consumers get ZERO electricity bill - less than 200 units consumption per month. By installing a rooftop plant under the new policy, partially-subsidized and unsubsidized consumers too can get zero bill every month from the first month itself, it added.

DDA allots 1,396 flats to residents of three JJ clusters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a big step toward providing modern flats and a dignified life to the slum dwellers in the national capital, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious in situ rehabilitation - 'Jahan juhggi wahin makan, scheme, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has allotted 1,396 flats out of the total 1,675 flats, to the residents of three JJ clusters at Jailorwala Bagh in Ashok Vihar in North Delhi. Giving this information here on Saturday, officials said during his visits to the Jailorwala Bagh project and subsequent review meetings, Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena had issued specific instructions for allotting the flats to eligible beneficiaries at the earliest.

As against the construction cost of Rs. 25 lakh per flat, the allotment are being made to the eligible JJ dwellers for Rs. 1.41 lakh as beneficiary contribution. These flats are equipped with all modern social and physical infrastructure, community facilities, sewerage treatment, clean

The Scheme has been formally approved by Vice-Chairman (DDA). Accordingly, a draw was held and particular flats have been allotted to eligible JJ dwellers. Out of these 1,396 flats, 1,078 flats have been allotted to eligible slum dwellers of Jailorwala Bagh JJ cluster



while 318 flats have been allotted to eligible households of 02 nearby JJ clusters namely Golden Park Rampura and JJ clusters opposite Mata Jai Kaur Public School in Ashok Coming after the Kalkaji in

situ rehabilitation project under the "Jahan Jhuggi wahin Makaan", scheme, these flats will go a long way in ful-filling the Prime Minister's inclusive vision of a dignified life to the poorest of the poor. Earlier, in November, 2022, the Prime Minister had handthe Prime Minister had handed over 3,024 modern EWS flats to the slum dwellers. At Jailorwala Bagh, Ashok Vihar, DDA has constructed 1,675 EWS flats. Spread over 340 sq.ft, each of these flats kitchen, separate toilet and bathroom and a balcony. While the total residential built-up area of the project is approximately 67,000 sq.mtr., the covered area for community facilities is nearly 1000 sq.mtr. It will also have a provision for parking of 337

Sultanpur Majra Congress MLA writes to Rahul, accuses Opposition of harassment

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four time Congress MLA from Sultanpur Majra in North west Delhi, Jai Kishan approached the Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi accusing the Opposition party for harassing him and lodging false cases against him. The senior Congress leader said that he and his son were beaten up by Delhi police in the fake cases lodged against him. Jai Kishan also alleged that he was completely ignored by the party leadership in Delhi.

In a letter to Rahul on Friday, he wrote, "My opponents made false allegations against me but I never left the Congress Party and won the election by more than 8000 votes. Some of my opponents even made a woman accuse me of some lies and Sonia Gandhi knew that I was innocent and had been a confidant of the party. By ignoring my rights, the party will regret in future."

Jai Kishan also mentioned the incident of getting beaten in front of Wayanad MP. He stated, "In front of Rahul Gandhi, the Police beat me and my younger son with sticks and we were admitted to the Hospital." He further added that despite being offered high posts by the BJP, he stayed loyal to Congress. "I, Jai Kishan, have been MLA from Sultanpur Majra for five consecutive times with my wife. I always defend the Congress Party and regret the high posts offered by



Kishan got into a controversy in 2015 when he was arrested for allegedly beating up students and a teacher of a private school for attending a reality show in Hyderabad without his prior permission. The former Congress Secretary

asked the high command to name a person who has worked more than him for the party and the Dalit community in Delhi. "No one has worked more than me in the rallies, Panchayat, Meetings and demonstrations for dalit Congress party and also no one has spent more money than me on the party's work. If anyone has done it, please let me know. It is my humble request to you that, please tell me who worked more than me for the Congress Party and dalit samaj in Delhi."

Concluding the letter, Kishan remain loyal to the party, adding that he is worried for the party in future. "If my words have hurt anyone, I really apologise for that and my activities will be weakened. I will try to remain loyal to the Congress Party. I am worried about my family's livelihood and the Congress Party."

LG clears project for footover bridge at Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tila



STAFF REPORTER NEW DELH

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has cleared a project for the construction of a footover bridge in front of the Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tila crossing on the Ring Road, according to a statement issued on Saturday. The bridge will ease the "chronic" traffic congestion at the location, it said.

The Lt Governor has cleared the way forward for the construction of the footover bridge (FOB) in front of the Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tila crossing on the King Road on Delhi Development Authority (DDA) land, the statement

The land on which the construction will be undertaken is part of a 123-acre land of the

The FOB on the Public Works Department (PWD) road in front of the gurudwara will be designed and constructed in a manner that will ensure that the same can be dismantled or relocated easily whenever construction of a flyover is taken up at this junction, the statement said.

Adhir raises question of traffic snarls due to PM Modi cavalcade

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

ongress' leader in Lok CSabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has raised with Prime Minister Narendra Modi the issue of "huge traffic snarls", particularly in central Delhi, due to the movement of the PM's cavalcade and urged his intervention to ensure avoidance of any hardship to people. Chowdhury raised the issue in a letter to Modi while stressing that the prime minister's security and well-being are of utmost concern to the people as a whole and there can never be any compromise or let up on that front. "Nevertheless, it is a fact that the commuters on the public roads, who are from varied sections of the society and may include daily wagers, patients, office-goers, school and college going children, are often put to immense hardship owing to blocking/diversion of traffic, which is often for long durations, due to the VVIP movement," he said.

"I have heard and am also told

of instances of people missing

their flights, trains, examina-

tions, as also delays in getting

critically needed medical care

owing to traffic blocks. The

effect on the commuters that

your movement on Delhi's

roads has been having may not

be in your notice and knowledge in complete and objective terms," Chowdhury said in his letter dated March 15.

Considering the factual position relating to the negative effect of traffic blocks and diversions on the general public, it is an imminent necessity on the part of the authorities concerned, including the experts on traffic management, work out and implement appropriate plans to minimize the hardship that the "travelling public" is being put through owing to the VVIP movement on the roads of the capital city, he said. "This obviously needs to be achieved without an iota of compromise on your security," Chowdhury asserted. "The matter being of public

concern, I am sure, you will have this looked into, and needful action taken, as suggested," he said. "I would once again like to reit-

erate here that your safety and security are of paramount concern on which there can never ever be any let up or compromise. At the same time, it will be just and proper to ensure that the general public is not put to any avoidable hardship due to the disruption caused to the traffic movement on the roads of New Delhi, Chowdhury said.

Services department appoints special counsels for LG office

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Amid tussle between the Arvind Kejriwal government and the Rai Niwas over the authority to appoint advocates, the Delhi government's Services Department has appointed Special Counsels and Additional Special Counsels to defend the litigations for the office of the Lieutenant Governor and Services Department. There have been a total of eight appointments which include five special counsels and three additional special counsel. The five newly appointed Special Counsels are Nihaarika Jauhari, Padmesh Mishra, Arkaj Kumar, Rashmi Chopra and Amar Dave. The three new appointments for the position of Additional Special Counsel include the names of Preeti Goel, Rhea Verma and Sriparna Chatteriee.

"In continuation of orders of Directorate of Vigilance dated 14.12.2023 and 31.01.2024, the Competent Authority is pleased to order the appointment of Special Counsels/Addl. Special Counsels to defend the litigation for the office of of Lt. Governor and Services Department," the Services Department said in its order. Meanwhile, the rift between the Kejriwal government and Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena



counsels continued. Earlier, Saxena has removed the Delhi government's counsel for misrepresentation of the facts in the high court while Delhi Law Minister Atishi has declared the same order as "invalid" an order issued by the principal secretary (Law) appointing another lawyer as standing counsel to represent Delhi government before the Delhi High Court on interim basis instead of standing counsel (civil) Santosh Kumar Tripathi. The minister, in an order issued on February 15, said "Tripathi will continue to handle the responsibilities of standing counsel (civil), Delhi High Court, GNCTD". Saxena had alleged that the Delhi government's counsel "misled" the Delhi high court

only on 16.01.2024, after a months, even as the governthe High Court on all occasions and "committed perjury" by delaying the submission of a list

forming wards in the city prepared in 2022 ahead of the implementation of the nowscrapped excise policy 2021-22. In a note to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, the LG said: "I would like to reiterate... the Committee submitted its report on 18.08.2022, however, the file to this effect was received in my secretariat for the first time, lapse of almost 01 year and 05 ment counsel kept misleading of hearing that the file was pending approval of the LG. This file moved unnecessarily between Departments on one pretext or the other resulting in unwarranted delay in disposal of this matter, even as the government counsels kept comwhere they were relocated. mitting perjury in the name of Saxena also expressed grave displeasure over the failure of

Saxena paves way for conversion of leasehold industrial plots to freehold

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major relief to thousands of small and medium industrial units in the national Capital, Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena has paved the way for conversion of industrial plots from leasehold to freehold, that were allotted by DSIIDC under Relocation Scheme of 1998.

Giving details here on Saturday, the LG allowed the extension of the Conversion Scheme-2005 to industrial plots, and noted that these plots which were allotted on leasehold basis in 2000-2001, were still prohibited from sale / purchase and transfer even after a lapse of 23 years.

This decision will directly benefit nearly 22,000 such industrial units / plots that were relocated by DSIIDC way back in 2000-2001. This was a long-pending demand of entrepreneurs in the apital, who were on one hand not allowed to sale and transfer these plots and on the other hand were suffering severely due to acute lack of infrastructure and amenities that were to be provided by DSI-IDC and various other agencies under GNCTD and MCD in the new industrial areas

DSIIDC in providing even basic amenities and infrastructure in these industrial areas and developing them as per the industrial needs and standards. He noted that this was a major constraint for many allottees / industrialists to get their industrial units shifted from a non-conforming area to the new allotted

There has been progress in

development of industrial plots in Bawana and Narela Îndustrial Areas, but it has been noticed during field visits that DSIIDC has miserably failed in providing adequate and basic infrastructure in Bhorgarh Industrial Area, which in turn has proved to be a major constraint / deterrent for many allottees/industrialists to get their industries shifted from non-conforming areas", the LG also noted. However, with a view to encourage original allottees to shift from the non-conforming areas and complete the construction and put these industrial plots to use, the LG granted an 'in principle' approval to the proposal, subject to the following conditions:

a) Conversion will be allowed only in case of those industrial plots which are in the possession of original allottee and where the construction of the

building has been completed. The completion certificate of the building shall be obtained

by the Department.
b) The Scheme shall be applicable only to those industrial plots where the original allottee has closed his industrial unit in the non-conforming area as envisaged in the Scheme framed in compliance to Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions.

c) With an aim to achieve the objective of the Supreme Court's judgement as also to encourage the allottees to take possession, complete construction and shut down their industrial units in non- confirming areas, conversion be allowed as and when the same is completed, with an outward limit of March 31, 2025, beyond which no further extension shall be provided. d) Payment of due conversion charges/ fees and all other pending dues to be made by original allottees. No remission or rebate whatsoever shall be provided in any case of conversion. Saxena also directed to for-

mulate a comprehensive policy after taking into consideration the above points or any other point in the interest of effective implementation of the relocation scheme within the overall framework of the

India has seen turnaround in ten years, will fight polls on our track record: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

sserting that the BJP-led Anational Democratic Alliance is fully prepared for the general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday slammed the Opposition as "rudderless" and "issueless" and expressed confidence about retaining power. Soon after the Election Commission announced the seven-phase schedule for the Lok Sabha polls, Modi, in a series of posts on X, highlighted the "glorious turnaround" India has seen in the 10 years of his government and said the ruling alliance will go to people based on its track record of good governance and service delivery across sectors.

"The biggest festival of democ-

the 2024 Lok Sabha election dates. We, the BJP-NDA, are fully prepared for elections," he said with the hashtag 'Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar' ('once again Modi government').

Reiterating his confidence about winning the polls, the prime minister said the war against poverty and corruption will go on at an even faster pace in his third term and the emphasis on social justice will There is much work to be

done in the third term, he said. "The last decade was about filling gaps created by those who ruled for 70 years. It was also about instilling a spirit of selfconfidence that yes, India can become prosperous and selfreliant. We will build on this spirit," Modi said.



"We are going to work towards making India the third largest global economy. We will further cement our effort for fulfilling the dreams of the youth." Prime Minister Modi claimed that 10 years ago before the BJP came to power at the Centre, the people of India were feeling betrayed and disillusioned "thanks to INDI Alliance's pathetic governance".

No sector was left untouched from scams and policy paral-ysis and the world had given up on India, he said. "From there, it has been a glorious turnaround.

In a swipe at the opposition, he said it is "rudderless and issue-

"All they can do is abuse us and practise vote-bank politics. Their dynastic approach and attempts to divide society are not being accepted. Equally hurting them is their corruption track record. People don't want such leadership," Modi

Powered by 140 crore Indians, the nation is creating new records of development, he said. "We have become the fifth largest economy and crores of people have been freed from poverty. Our schemes have reached all parts of India and the emphasis on saturation has yielded great results," Modi said.

People are witnessing what a determined, focused and result-oriented government can do, he said and added that they want more of it.

"That is why from every corner of India, cutting across all sections of society, the people are saying in one voice- 'Ab Ki

Modi said he can see that the coming five years will be about the collective resolve of establishing the roadmap that will guide the nation's trajectory for the next 1,000 years and make India the embodiment of prosperity, all-round growth and global leader-

The prime minister said he derives great strength from people's blessings, especially the poor, farmers, youth and women. When they say they are Modi's family, it fills him with joy and makes him work harder to build a developed India, he said. Now is the era to make it happen and "together we will," he said, underlining his slogan "yahi samay hai, sahi samay hai" (this is the right

BJP will form Government at Centre with overwhelming majority: Nadda

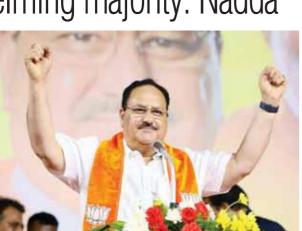
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The BJP will form its government at the Centre with an "overwhelming majority" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and work with determination to fulfil people's aspirations in the next five years, party chief J P Nadda said, welcoming the announcement of polls by the Election Commission on Saturday.

In a post on X in Hindi, Nadda called upon people to vote in record numbers and further strengthen the foundation of the world's largest democracy. "I welcome the announcement of Lok Sabha elections 2024 by the Election Commission," he

Nadda said elections are the biggest festival of democracy and a medium to keep the country and the state moving on the path of development and good governance.

"I call upon the people of the entire country to vote in record



numbers and further strengthen the foundation of the world's largest democracy," he wrote on the social media website.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, BJP will form its government with an overwhelming majority and will work with determination to fulfil the aspirations of the people in the next five years," he added. In a post on X, senior BJP

leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the electoral process has started in the country with the announcement of polls and imposition of the Model Code of Conduct.

The Lok Sabha elections in India is the "biggest and grandest" festival of democracy in the entire world, he said. "The BJP-led NDA (National Democratic Alliance) under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is determined to participate in this festival with full zeal and enthusiasm," he added.

3.4 lakh CAPFs to be deployed for LS, four States polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Election Commission (EC) is expected to deploy 3.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel along with State police forces in the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections and the Assembly polls in four States beginning April 19, officials said.

A maximum of 92,000 personnel of CAPFs are likely to be deployed in politically volatile West Bengal, where elections will be held in seven phases, followed by 63,500 personnel in militancy-hit Jammu and Kashmir, where polling will be held in five phases

As many as 36,000 personnel will be deployed in Naxalaffected Chhattisgarh, where polling will be held in three

The EC has considered the requests made by the state CEOs and decided to deploy a maximum of around 3,400 companies of the CAPFs in all states and Union territories in a phased manner to ensure



free, fair and peaceful elections, an official privy to the development said.

A CAPF company comprises around 100 personnel. The entire force mobilisation will be completed in the next few

Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will also be held coinciding with the Lok Sabha polls.

A maximum of 920 companies of CAPFs are expected to be deployed in West Bengal in a phased manner, followed by 635 companies in Jammu and Kashmir, 360 companies in Chhattisgarh, 295 companies in Bihar, 252 companies in Uttar Pradesh and 250 comanies each in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Punjab, the official said.

The CAPFs are the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and National Security Guard (NSG). The combined strength of all CAPFs is around 10 lakh.

In other states where a sizeable number of CAPFs are expected to be deployed are: 200 companies each in Gujarat, Manipur, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, 175 companies in Odisha, 160 companies each in Assam and Telangana, 150 in Maharashtra, 113 in

nology, which can be used for

taking out the results in a group of 14 EVMs without

revealing the votes in individ-

Madhya Pradesh, 100 in Tripura among others.

Those forces which will be deployed in West Bengal, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and Jammu and Kashmir have already reached their respective destinations. According to the plan, about 2,000 companies were mobilised as part of the pre-poll deployment in sensitive and hyper-sensitive constituencies beginning March 1. About 1.5 lakh personnel will move through roads and rail as part of this mobilisation, another official said.

The Railways have also made available adequate rolling stocks with all appropriate facilities in trains, thereby ensuring hassle-free and timely movement of the forces to perform election duties.

Officials said the CAPF personnel are being deployed for poll-related duties, such as area domination, confidencebuilding measures, poll dayrelated duties, guarding of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and strong room centres, counting centre security,

also prepared a prototype to

enable migrant workers to vote

remotely and is working on

blockchain technology to

enable remote voting in the

"We prepared the machines to

get votes from migrant work-

ers -- remote voting -- the pro-

can take 72 assembly segments

together, that's a step towards

remote voting. We are also

ready at some stage for remote

voting through blockchain. But

let such things take time to

adjust. Every idea has its time,

perhaps time for this idea has

not come," he said.

Technology to link EVMs, hide booth wise polling patterns ready to be implemented at right time: EC

PNS NEW DELHI

A technology to link a number of Electronic Voting

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GL2306381086, GL2306383514, GL2306385215, GL2306390235, GL2306390235, GL2306396858, GL2306400093, GL230640404163,

GL2306404163, GL2306408680, GL2306413101, GL2306415650, GL2306419839, GL2306424718, GL2306427408, GL2307434879, GL2307437957, GL2307454728,

GL2306392692,

idea has not come yet, Chief Election Commission of India Election Commissioner Rajiv

Kumar said on Saturday. During a press conference to

Kumar also mentioned that the to work in the entire landpoll panel is working on remote voting technology such as

link a number of polling machines and combine the

The totaliser is a technology to

machine," Kumar said.

"Let the political system mature

"But, here, people do not have

itself, the need is to introduce the totaliser. We are ready, the technology is ready but one has

scape. Let that be matured further," he said.

Votes in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are counted according to polling stations, leading to situations in which voting patterns in various localities or pockets become known. ment undertakings Electronics Corporation of India Ltd and

Bharat Electronics Ltd -- the manufacturers of EVMs -developed the totaliser tech-

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known my client (1) Sh. Ram Niwas S/o Late Sh lage Ram and (2) Smt. Nirmala W/o Sh. Ram Niwas oth resident of 107, Pittampura Village, Delhi-110034 nas disowned & severed all their relations with their on Prince Aadvanshi & his wife Vandana and their children debarred from their movable and immovable roperties/assets due to their misbehavior, unfamiliar ttivities, intolerable act, misconduct & going against ny client do not want to keep any relation with their. shall be doing at their own risk, cost & responsibility and my client & their family shall not be liable for their

any act. NAVEEN KHURANA (ADVOCATE) Shop no. 16, DDA Mkt. RU Blk, Pitampura, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

s to inform to the public at large that wir. Samueep Auril lo is purchasing the NORTHERN PORTION OF PLO D. 43, LAND AREA MEASURING 50 SQ. YDS., OUT O

PUBLIC NOTICE e is hereby given to the General Public that K Il Sharma W/o Mr. Ajay Prasad Sharma is rof A FREEHOLD RESIDENTIAL HOU wher of A FREEHOLD RESIDENTIAL HOUS UILLT ON Plot no. 741, area measuring \$8,52 s htt, out of khasra no. 266, situated at New Cards inclave, revenue Village-Mahiuddinpur, Mainapu ehsil & Dist, Ghaziabad U.P, vide Registered G leed Dated 18.01.2024, Sub-Registrar-II shaziabad, Doc no. 693 Vide Volume No. 1838 look No. 1 Page No. 87/108 Dated 18.01.2024 area mortoacious the said prometty with SMEG Ind Book No. 1 Page No. 87/108 Dated 18.01.2054 same mortgaging the said property with SMFG Ind Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerto India Credit Company Limited), if anybody ha any charge/interest/tille in the said property or a kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned writing on the below mentioned address with 07 days of the present. Mrs. Prassoon Lata, Advoca FF 18, Lous Pod Plaza klabias Khand Indirapuran Kazabad L E-mail: sgassociatespi@gmail.com, Ph. 7011172764, 81302008.

PUBLIC NOTICE Amit Anand Advocate acting on behalf of my Ram, R/o H.No. 1675, Kotla Mubarkpur, New Delhi-110003.That my client is national resident of this country. That my client is very disturbed and anguished about continued misbehavior, irresponsible conduct of his son and his family and decided to give a public notice to disown his son Shri Vishnu Dutt and his wife Veena Devi, and their children Lakshay immovable properties and server all the relationship ties with his son and his wife and their children. The Power of attorney of my client in favour of me is attached here with this notice Amit Anand (Advocate), 102, G.K. House, Plot

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

1 Tender Notice No 232-Elect-EMU-WC-11-23-24 Name of the work Rs. 14,41,443.54 inclusive of GST

3 Tender cost 5 Earnest Money Completion period 36 Months Validity of offer 60 days Date & Time from tender advertised 15.03.2024 18:57 Hrs. Date & Time from tender submission 22.03.2024 to 05.04.2024 15:00 Hrs. 05.04.2024 15:00 Hrs. 10 Tender closing Date & Time

12 Publication cost allocation Note 1: All participants Tenderer/Tenderers will submit their requisite documents along with www.ireps.gov.in. 232-Elect-EMU-WC-11-23-24. Dated: 16.03.2024.

The poll panel has also repeatedly rejected the idea that EVMs should be manufactured by other companies as involved and it should be only

ual machines.

done by the two PSUs. Before the introduction of EVMs, ballot papers were often mixed in a drum to prevent intimidation of voters by disclosure of voting patterns.

Kumar said the poll panel has

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the general public that Mohd Irfan is the sole owner of Plot area measuring 20t Sq. Yds., i.e., 167.22 Sq. Mtrs., out of Khasra No 866min., situated in the village Masoon Pargana Dasana, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. Thi ownership was legally acquired through a Salc Deed dated 16.03.2021 read with Rectification Deed dated 99.07.2021 vide DOC. No. 494. executed by Mr. Yamin as GPA of Mohd Swadkeen in favour of Mohd. Irfan.

Mohd. Irfan is now the process of mortgagin the aforementioned Plot with SMFG Indi Credit Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton Indi Credit Co. Ltd.). Any objections or concern

Credit Co. Ltd.). Any objections or concern regarding this transaction should be raise within a period of 7 days from the date of thi public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-days period will not be considered binding with respect to the sai property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, pleas do so within the stipulated 7-day period be contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floo Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Utta Pradesh-201301; Landline(s):+9101203101603 4562809; E-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

To all the persons, let it be known that I Subhash Chand son of Late Sh. Jai Bhagwan, resident of 2132/1, Nai Basti, Anaz Mandi, Narela, Delhi-

do hereby revoke in its entirety that the General Power of Attorney dated 11.11.2019.

General Power of Altorney dated 11.11.2019, alongwith any other document therewith (may be collectively referred as 'GPA), thereby giving attorney in favour of Ved Prakash S/o Late Sh. Shiv Lal Mangia, R/o 2007/1, Nai Basti, Anaj Mandi, Narela, Delhi-40. I do hereby revoke, cancel and make void the GPA for all matters.

granted to such Attorney. The revocation of GPA shall be conclusively for all purposes. Any action(s) taken by the said Attorney prior to and

after this notice, shall have no effect. The

revocation of GPA is also served through

Speed Post or other electronic transmission, and shall be effective regardless of the manner in which the same is served. The undersigned

confers no right to any person who acted/acts in accordance with this GPA which is illegal void ab

Attorney shall be binding on every person, entity, statutory authority or the public at large. The revocation of GPA is executed on this 15th

Subhash Chand

day of March, 2024 at Delhi.

Lost & Found

I, Bharat Mehta S/o Shri Dewan Chand I, Bharat Mehta S/o Shri Dewan Chand resident of H-11, Dharma Apartments, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-92 do hereby inform the public at large that I have misplaced the Original Allotment and Descension. Letter of immemble properties. Noted singer





PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELH**

Noted Bollywood singer Anuradha Paudwal joined the BJP here on Saturday ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a joint press conference with BJP leaders at the party's headquarters, Paudwal praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said she was happy to join the party led by him. She also sang 'Sarva Mangal Mangalye' and paid obeisance to Adi Shakti.

'I am very happy that I am joining those people and their government who have a very deep connection with Sanatan. I have only been singing devotional songs for the last 35 years after years of playback singing in the film industry," Paudwal told reporters.

'Many times I wondered whether I did the right thing or not. Today, I feel that I am at the right place. It is my great fortune that I am joining you (BJP)," she added.

who is purchasing the NORTHERN PORTION OF PLOT NO. 43, LAND AREA MEASURING 50 SC, 175, OUT OF KHASRA NO. AREA MEASURING 50 SC, 175, OUT OF KHASRA NO. KHET NO. 49, KHASRA NO. 40/720, 21, 46/1/14, WARKA MAUJA GAON (INORHA GAON), TEHSIL BALLABGARH DISST, FARIDABAD, HARYANA. From Mrs. Sheela Wo Mr. Ramesh Chand Solanki who is owner through Sale Deed dated 14.08.2023 Vide doc No. 3672, book no. 1, vol no. 4/126, pages 118/44-57, dated 14.08.2023, SR-Ballabgarh., executed by Mrs. Sunita W/o Mr. Dalveer Singh and same to be financed & mortgaged by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. That, Original Sale Deed dated 03.11.2010 Executed by Mr. Lakhmi Chand S/o Mr. Prabhu Dayal in favour of Mrs. Kusumlata W/o Mr. Surender Singh Vide doc No. 3702, book no. 1, vol no. 10/193, pages 146/59-60, dated Nr. Lakhmi Chand S/o Mr. Prabhu Dayal in favour of 3.11.2010, SR-Ballabgarh. have been Lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 11.03.2014 with App. No. 132250972400081/2024 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/little/intersot worthe said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 07 days mentioned below, about his objections within 07 days mort days, falling within it shall be pressumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances. LUCEM LEGAL LLP Office No. B-338, Second Floor, Opposite SBI Bank Secretz-2 Notable 110-071501. Office No. B-93B, Second Floor, Opposite SBI Ban Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301, Contact# 0120-426937 No.187A, Sant Nagar. New Delhi-65, Sr.DEE/EMU/GZB for and on behalf of President of India, Invites open e-tender for the

Overhauling of carriage fans fitted with EMU/MEMU coaches at EMU Car Shed, Ghaziabad for the period of 03 years Rs. 28,800.00 (online payment mode available on IREPS

shall be entertained after opening of the Technical & Commercial offer. Even suo-moto posi tender letters of the tenders shall be treated as null & void? Note 2: Duplicate documents should not be enclosed/up loaded. Tender Notice is available on website of

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

resolution on Islamophobia

'Religiophobia against Hinduism, Sikhism must also be acknowledged'

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

ndia abstained in the UN General Assembly on a draft resolution introduced by Pakistan and co-sponsored by China on Islamophobia, asserting that the prevalence of "religiophobia' Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and other faiths facing violence and discrimination must also be acknowledged rather than singling out just one religion. The 193-member General Assembly adopted the resolution 'Measures to combat Islamophobia, introduced by Pakistan on Friday, with 115 nations voting in favour, none against and 44 abstentions. including India, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Ukraine and

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj voiced condemnation of all acts motivated by anti-Semitism, Christianophobia and Islamophobia but asserted that it is crucial to acknowledge that such phobias extend beyond Abrahamic religions.

"Clear evidence shows that over decades, followers of non-Abrahamic religions have also been affected by religiophobia. This has led to the emergence of contemporary forms of religiophobia, particularly anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist and anti-Sikh sentiments," she said, in an explanation of India's position on the resolution.

India stressed that the adoption of the resolution should not establish a precedent that could result in numerous resolutions centred on phobias tied to specific religions, "potentially dividing the United Nations into religious camps."
"It is crucial for the UN to

maintain its stance above such religious concerns, which have the potential to fragment us rather than unite us under the banner of peace and harmony, embracing the world as one global family," Kamboj said. India called on all member states to consider the broader scope of religious discrimination that persists globally.

the issue Islamophobia is undoubtedly significant, we must acknowledge that other religions are also facing discrimination and violence. Allocating resources solely to combat Islamophobia, while neglecting similar challenges faced by other faiths, might inadvertently perpetuate a sense of exclusion and inequality," she said.

Kamboj told the UN General Assembly that "it is crucial to recognise" that Hinduism, with over 1.2 billion followers, Buddhism with more than 535 million and Sikhism with over 30 million followers worldwide, are all subject to religiophobia.

It is time that we acknowledge the prevalence of religiophobia, rather than single out just one, she said.

Kamboj said the contemporary forms of religiophobia are evident in the increasing attacks on religious places of worship such as gurudwaras, monasteries and temples, as well as the spreading of hatred and disinformation against non-Abrahamic religions in many countries.

The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, violations of

gurudwara premises, massacres of Sikh pilgrims in gurudwaras, attacks on temples, and the glorification of breaking idols in temples all contribute to the rise of contemporary forms of religiophobia against non-Abrahamic religions," she

The destruction of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan in Afghanistan by the Taliban in March 2001 led to global condemnation. Kamboj underlined that India

stands against all forms of religiophobia, be it antisemitism, Christianophobia, Islamophobia, as "we stand

against all anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist, and anti-Sikh sentiments.' The resolution condemned

the incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence against Muslims as manifested in the increasing number of incidents of desecration of their holy book, attacks on mosques, sites and shrines and other acts of religious intolerance, negative stereotyping, hatred and violence against Muslims.

India abstains in UNGA on Pak Cease-fire talks with Israel and Hamas expected to restart

S talled talks aimed at securing a cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas are expected to restart in earnest in Qatar as soon as Sunday, according to Egyptian offi-

The talks would mark the first time both Israeli officials and Hamas leaders joined the indirect negotiations since the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. International mediators had hoped to secure a six-week truce before Ramadan started earlier this week, but Hamas refused any deal that wouldn't lead to a permanent cease-fire in Gaza, a demand Israel rejected.

In recent days, however, both sides have made moves aimed at getting the talks, which never fully broke off, back on track.

Hamas gave mediators a new proposal for a three-stage plan that would end the fighting, according to two Egyptian officials, one who is involved in the talks and a second who was briefed on them. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to reveal the

contents of the sensitive discus-

The first stage would be a six-week cease-fire that would include the release of 35 hostages — women, those who are ill and older people — being held by militants in Gaza in exchange for 350 Palestinian prisoners being held by Israel.

Hamas would also release at least five female soldiers in exchange for 50 prisoners, including some serving long sentences on terror charges, for each soldier. Israeli forces would withdraw from two main roads in Gaza, let displaced Palestinians return to north Gaza, which has been devastated by the fighting, and allow the free flow of aid to the area, the officials said.

Nearly one in three children under 2 years old in the isolated north are suffering acute malnutrition, the UN children's agency UNICEF reported Friday.

In the second phase, the two sides would declare a permanent cease-fire and Hamas would free the remaining Israeli soldiers held hostage in exchange for more prisoners, the officials said.

In the third phase, Hamas

would hand over the bodies it's holding in exchange for Israel lifting the blockade of Gaza and allowing reconstruction to start, the officials said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the proposal "unrealistic". However, he agreed to send Israeli negotiators to Qatar for more talks.

Those talks were expected to resume Sunday afternoon, though they could get pushed to Monday, the Egyptian officials said.

Netanyahu's government has rejected calls for a permanent cease-fire, insisting it must first fulfil its stated goal of "annihilating Hamas". Netanyahu's office also said Friday he approved military plans to attack Rafah, the southernmost town in Gaza where some 1.4 million displaced Palestinians are shelter-

The United States and other countries have warned such an operation could be disastrous, but Israel says it plans to push ahead to destroy Hamas battalions stationed

Many Palestinians fled to Rafah when Israel began

attacking Gaza following the Oct 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel that killed 1,200 people and left another 250

nostage in Gaza. Netanyahu's office said the Rafah operation would involve the evacuation of the civilian population, but did not give details or a timetable. The military said Wednesday it planned to direct civilians to 'humanitarian islands" in cen-

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday: "We have to see a clear and implementable plan" to safeguard innocent people in Rafah from an Israeli incursion.

'We have not seen such a plan," he said.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Saturday that at least 31,553 Palestinians have been killed in the war. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count but says women and children make up two-thirds of the Israel's offensive has driven

most of Gaza's 2.3 million people from their homes. A quarter of Gaza's population is starving, according to the United Nations.

Navalny allies keep fighting to undermine Putin's grip on power

AP TALINN (ESTONIA)

lexei Navalny's team is Aused to working independently. The most potent foe of Russian President Vladimir Putin was frequently absent for long stretches after being arrested, assaulted, poisoned, or imprisoned.

But when Navalny died suddenly in February at age 47 in a remote Arctic prison, his team was left with a monumental challenge: sustaining an opposition movement against Putin — who is all but assured to be reelected — without the living example of their defiant and charismatic leader.

After the initial shock wore off, Navalny's closest allies returned to the work that cost his freedom and his life: undermining Putin's iron-fisted grip on

A significant test will come Sunday, the last of three days that voters can go to the polls

viewed as more of a formality than an exercise in democracy. That's when Navalny's team with the endorsement of his widow, Yulia Navalnaya — is calling for a protest dubbed "Noon Against Putin." They are asking Russians to flock to polling stations Sunday at noon local time across the country's 11 time zones to demonstrate

their discontent with Putin's rule and his war against Ukraine. "It is a very simple and safe action, it can't be banned," Navalnaya said in a video address. "It will help millions of people to see their like-minded allies and to realize that we are not alone, we're surrounded by people who are also against the war, against corruption and against lawlessness." Navalny's followers have expressed a wide mix of emotions in the weeks since his death, from renewed inspira-

tion to a sense of defeat.

Maria Obukhova of Moscow,

who paid tribute to Navalny on Wednesday at the Borisovskoye Cemetery, said the crowds she saw at his funeral — which numbered in the thousands were motivational.

"It was a huge surprise for me, because it seemed before like everything had died here, that Russia is no longer, that it had died," said Obukhova, who placed white daisies at Navalny's gravesite.

Valery, another Muscovite at

the cemetery, who withheld his

last name for security reasons, said he had little hope for the future and that after Navalny's death, that "something has really broken" inside of him. Just several days after her husband's death, Navalnaya expressed determination to keep his mission alive. In the past month, she has addressed the European Parliament, met with United States President Joe Biden, and urged Western countries not to recognize the results of Russia's election.

2 Pak Army officers killed in terror attack

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A t least seven Pakistan Army soldiers, including two officers, were killed when six terrorists launched multiple suicide attacks on a security check post in the restive tribal district of North Waziristan bordering Afghanistan on Saturday, the military said.

A Lieutenant Colonel and Captain were killed along with five soldiers. All the six terrorists who attacked the check post in Mir Ali area were shot dead. According to the ISPR

statement, after the troops foiled the initial attempt of intrusion, the terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the post, followed by multiple suicide bombing During the subseattacks. quent clearance operation, troops effectively engaged and

Outrage over Schumer's criticism of Netanyahu Trump abruptly declared the US

AP WASHINGTON

 $R^{
m epublicans}$ and Israeli officials were quick to express outrage after Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer sharply criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's handling of the war in Gaza and called for Israel to hold new elections. They accused the Democratic leader of breaking the unwritten rule against interfering in a close ally's electoral politics.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell reacted to Schumer by saying it was "hypocritical for Americans who hyperventilate about interference in our own democracy to call for the removal of a democratically elected leader.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said Schumer's call for new elections was "inappropriate." Even Benny Gantz, a political rival of Netanyahu and member of Israel's war cabinet, said Schumer's remarks were "counterproductive."

Netanyahu — the senator said the Israeli leader had "lost his way" and was an obstacle to peace - was certainly provocative but it was hardly normbreaking.

US leaders, as well as American allies, are more frequently butting into electoral politics beyond the water's edge. Look no further than the close

and historically complicated relationship that American presidents and congressional leaders have negotiated with Israel leaders over the last 75 years. "It is an urban legend that we don't intervene in Israeli politics and they don't try to intervene in ours," said Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who worked as a Middle East negotiator in Republican and Democratic administrations. We do intercede and they do intercede in ours." In 2019, with just weeks to go

before Netanyahu faced a diffi-Schumer's stinging rebuke of cult election, President Donald

was recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the disputed Golan Heights, giving Netanyahu a political boost just when he badly needed it. In 2015 Republican House

Speaker John Boehner invited Netanyahu to deliver an address to Congress during sensitive negotiations about Iran's nuclear program and shortly before a national election in Israel.

Boehner did not coordinate the invitation with President Barack Obama's administration. Obama declined to invite Netanyahu to the White House during the visit, with White House officials saying that holding such a visit so close to Israel's election would be inappropriate. The standard Obama set for a White House visit wasn't one Bill Clinton subscribed to years earlier. In April 1996, Clinton invited Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to the White House to sign a USD 100 million counter-terrorism accord

later. Clinton acknowledged in an interview that he was trying to give Peres a boost with vot-

It didn't work; Peres lost to Netanyahu.

In practice, keeping out of allies' elections has been more of a professed American value than enshrined protocol. US leaders have frequently demonstrated a "varsity, versus junior varsity" approach to how overtly they noodle in the internal politics of friends, says Edward Frantz, a University of Indianapolis historian. The bigger the ally's economy, the less likely American leaders are to meddle openly in its elections.

'American politicians want to have it both ways," Frantz said There are moments when American leaders want to and need to speak out and have their say. But there is reason to stay close to the lines on elections. You don't want foreign governments to interfere in our own internal politics,

Pak court slams interior ministry for failure to deport Indian held 11 years ago

Pakistani court has Aslammed the interior ministry for its failure to deport an Indian national arrested nearly 11 years ago despite court orders and warned that the secretary concerned would be summoned to explain how his department is working in such

The single-judge bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) headed by Justice Mohammad Karim Khan Agha on Friday directed the interior ministry to depute an officer well-versed with the facts of the case or file a compliance report at the next hearing, the Dawn newspaper reported on Saturday. Abdul Mughni was arrested in 2013 by the Mobina Town

police station near Abul Hassan

Ispahani Road and booked

under various provisions of the

Foreigners Act. A sessions court sentenced him to six months in prison in 2017. The convict filed an appeal against his conviction before the SHC. The court during the hearing observed that the appellant was an Indian national, while the interior ministry was not able to confirm his nationality apparently due to lack of efforts, the report said.

The bench said that since the appellant had already served out his sentence, the jail superintendent had been directed to make arrangements for his deportation through the home department.

However, at the last hearing, it also noted that the focal person of the home department of Sindh had submitted that a correspondence was made with the Ministry of Interior on the subject matter and it did not court had issued a notice to the secretary to send an official familiar with this case to explain as to why the appellant had not been deported yet.

On Friday, a section officer of the ministry turned up and said that the deportation did not happen due to certain procedural issues.

The bench in its order said: "I find it quite extraordinary that after a lapse of seven years, the Ministry of Interior has not been able to confirm whether the appellant is an Indian national or not. Prima facie this is because of lack of efforts on the part of the Ministry of

Interior The bench stated that when the Section Officer was confronted, he was not even aware if the Indian government had a similar computerised national identity card system (Aadhar) respond and thereafter, the like the Nadra

"In the event, the impugned order dated 24.08.2017 regarding the deportation of the appellant is not complied with by the next hearing, this court will have no option except to call the secretary, Ministry of Interior, government of Pakistan in person to explain as to how his department is working in such like matters," it

added. The court asked its office to send a copy of this order to the interior secretary for information and compliance and set April 13 as the next date for the hearing of the case. "It is expected that on the next date of hearing, the secretary, Ministry of Interior shall send an officer well-served with the facts of the case or file his compliance report via DAG [deputy attorney general] regarding the deportation of the appellant," the court said.

Wales gets its first Black leader

AP ■ LONDON

aughan Gething won the Welsh Labour Party leadership contest on Saturday, and is set to become the first Black leader of Wales' semiautonomous

government. Gething, who is currently Welsh economy minister, beat Education

Minister Jeremy Miles in a race to replace First Minister Mark Drakeford Drakeford. announced late last year he would step down once a replacement was chosen. Gething, 50, will be the fifth first minister since Wales' national legislature was established in 1999. He needs to be confirmed next week by the Welsh parliament, the Senedd, where Labour is the largest party. Gething, son of a Welsh father and Zambian mother, will be the first Black leader of a government

support for cash-strapped Pak PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Caudi crown prince and de Salman on Saturday assured newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of full support for Pakistan which has been going through a tough economic phase.

Riyadh has supported cashstrapped Pakistan in recent years by depositing and rolling over large sums of greenbacks to shore up the country's low foreign reserves. Earlier, Saudi Arabia rolled

over its USD 3 billion in deposits at the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for another year by the end of December

Prime Minister Shehbaz received a congratulatory telephone call from the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, according to a

statement by the PM Office.

shortly an Israeli election. Years

Saudi crown prince reaffirms

"The Crown Prince thanked the Prime Minister for his kind sentiments. He said both countries enjoyed close brotherly relations and reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's support for Pakistan," it said.

The prime minister said Pakistan was proud of its historic, deep-rooted and frater-nal ties with Saudi Arabia and the two countries had always stood together through thick and thin. He lauded Saudi Arabia for its unwavering commitment and support to Pakistan.

The prime minister also conveved his sincerest wishes and prayers for the health and wellbeing of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz. He said the people of Pakistan had great love and respect for His Majesty as well as the Crown

Prince, the statement said "Look forward to working closely with HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to transform the deep-rooted historic fraternal Pakistan-

Saudi ties into a comprehensive

strategic partnership," Shehbaz

Sharif posted on X

The call was made just days after Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on March 11 and while extending an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Saudi Arabia, he assured the Prime Minister of the Saudi leader-

ship's full support. He said that Saudi Arabia would always remain a reliable partner for building a stronger and prosperous Pakistan, according to a statement issued by the PM Office after the

Kim enjoys limousine gifted by Putin as the two nations expand ties

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un used a Russian luxury limousine gifted by President Vladimir Putin recently, Kim's sister said Saturday, praising the car's "special function" and the two countries' deepening bilateral ties.

In February, Putin sent Kim a highend Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to the North Korean leader when they met for a summit in Russia in September. Observers said the shipment violated a United Nations resolution aimed at pressuring the North to give up its nuclear weapons program by banning the supply of luxury items to North

In a statement carried by state media, Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, said that her brother used that limousine for the first time during an open event Fridav.

The special function of the private car is perfect and can be thoroughly trusted," Kim Yo Jong said. "Kim Jong Un's using of the private car sent by the president of the Russian Federation as a gift is a clear proof of (North Korea)-Russia friendship, which is developing in a comprehen sive way on a new high stage.

According to Russian state media, Aurus was the first Russian luxury car brand, and it's been used in motorcades of top officials since Putin first used an Aurus limousine during his inauguration ceremony in

Kim Jong Un, 40, possess a collection of foreign-made luxury cars believed to have been smuggled into his country. During his Russia visit, he traveled between meeting sites in a Maybach limousine that was brought with him on one of his special train



carriages. Other limousines he's reportedly used include a Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman Guard and a Maybach S62.

Over the past year, North Korea and Russia have sharply boosted their military and other cooperation as they face separate confrontations with the West — North Korea for its advancing nuclear program and Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Drawing the biggest outside concerns was North Korea's purported shipments of conventional weapons to support Russia's war with Ukraine to receive high-tech Russian weapons technologies and other support. Russia, together with China, have repeatedly blocked the United States and its partners' attempts to impose fresh UN sanctions on North Korea over its barrage of banned ballistic missile tests. North Korea's state media separateUn guided his troops conducting parachuting training the previous day. It's unclear if Friday's training was the same event in which Kim rode in the Russian limousine. The parachuting training was the lat-

ly reported Saturday that Kim Jong

est in a series of military drills that Kim has supervised in recent days, likely in response to the annual 11day South Korean-US military exercises that ended Thursday. Kim views his rivals' exercises as an invasion rehearsal. After watching Friday's training,

Kim ordered his military to conduct future training more intensively and make full preparation for a war, according to the North's official Korean Čentral News Agency. Kim made similar demands after he guided other recent drills involving tanks, long-range artillery guns and com-

Government removes untested Al models permit requirement

The government has dropped the permit requirement for untested AI models but emphasised the need to label AI-generated content, according to a latest advisory on Artificial Intelligence

technology.
Instead of permission for AI models under development, the fresh advisory issued by the Ministry of Electronics and IT on Friday evening fine-tuned the compliance requirement as per IT

"The advisory is issued in suppression of advisory...Dated 1st March 2024," the advisory said.

It has been observed that IT firms and platforms are often negligent in undertaking due diligence obligations underlined under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, according to the new advisory. The government has asked firms to

label content generated using their AI software or platform and inform users about the possible inherent fallibility or unreliability of the output generated



using their AI tools

"Where any intermediary through its software or any other computer resource permits or facilitates synthetic creation, generation or modification of a text, audio, visual or audio-visual information, in such a manner that

such information may be used potentially as misinformation or deepfake, it is advised that such information created generated or modified through its software or any computer resource ...That such information has

been created generated or modified using the computer resource of the intermediary," the advisory said.

In case any changes are made by the user, the metadata should be so configured to enable identification of such user or computer resource that has effected such change, it added.

After a controversy over a response of Google's AI platform to queries related to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government on March 1 issued an advisory for social media and other platforms to label under-trial AI models and prevent hosting unlawful content.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in the advisory issued to intermediaries and platforms, warned of criminal action in case of non-compliance.

The previous advisory has asked the entities to seek approval from the government for deploying under trial or unreliable artificial intelligence (AI) models and deploy them only after labelling them of "possible and inherent fallibility or unreliability of the output



India UK FTA round 14 talks close ahead of election schedule

The 14th round of the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations between India and the UK has now closed, with formal negotiations being put on hold as India heads into election campaign mode as the general election schedule is announced on Saturday.

According to UK officials familiar with the discussions, a lot of progress has been made but the teams are not in a position to conclude an agreement which led to the Round 14 closing on Friday. The next round of formal trade talks can commence only after the Lok Sabha polls have concluded.

India-UK The negotiations, which opened in January 2022, are aimed at securing an "ambitious outcome for bilateral trade "ambitious" currently worth around GBP 38.1 billion a year as per official statistics from last month.

We anticipate that while some talks might happen between rounds, the next round of negotiations will take place after the Indian elections, official sources in the UK said. "Neither side is walking away from talks. It's just that we don't

finalise a deal that meets our joint ambition across goods, services and investment. We're very proud of the track record we have and how far we've been able to come with this trade deal so far. Negotiators have worked really hard in the past few years and we've managed to get a lot of chapters closed," the sources said. The development follows a phone call between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his UK counterpart, Rishi Sunak, earlier this week when both leaders reaffirmed their commitment towards

"securing a historic and comprehensive deal" and reiterated the importance of reaching an "ambitious reaching outcome'

"The UK and India are continuing to work towards an ambitious trade deal. Whilst we don't comment on the details of live negotiations, we are clear that we will only sign a deal that is fair, balanced and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy," a UK Department of Business and spokesperson said.

Last week, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush

in New Delhi that long-term benefits for the economy were the key in such FTA negotiations and that India was seeking a "balanced, fair and equitable" deal.

His UK counterpart, Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch, said during a trade conference in London earlier that while a trade deal with India is "possible" before general elections in the country, Britain does not want to use that as a deadline.

"The bigger the country, the more complex the trade agreement. And also, the more different the economy is, the harder it is to negotiate... India is still very protectionist, where we are very, very liberalised," Badenoch noted.
The UK wants India to

significantly reduce tariffs on UK exports such as food, cars and whisky that can currently be as high as 150 per cent. India in turn is concerned about the fairness of rules applied to Indian workers temporarily transferred to the UK on business visas who have to pay national insurance, despite not being eligible for UK pensions or social security

DGCA sticks to June 1 deadline for revised flight duty norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation regulator DGCA has decided not to extend the June 1 deadline for implementing the revised flight duty norms for pilots and asked air-lines to submit the revised schemes by April 15, according to a communication.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), comprising Air India, SpiceJet and IndiGo, had written at least twice to the regulator seeking more time for Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms were issued on January 8.

The new norms, to come into force from June 1, provide for rest time for pilots and seek to alleviate pilot fatigue.

In a communication to the FIA, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that airlines have to take all necessary steps to roll out the revised FDTL CAR, with effect from June 1, 2024.

Further, the carriers have been asked to ensure that the FDTL schemes in tune with the revised norms are submitted for approval by April 15.

The revised norms provide for increased weekly rest time to 48 hours for pilots and limit the number of landings to two during night operations.

Besides, the night hours for pilots will be extended to cover the period from 0000-0600 hours, whereas it was 0000-0500 hours earlier.

Also, all airlines have to compulsorily submit quarterly fatigue reports, which "should follow a non-punitive and confidential-

ity policy".
"The CAR (Civil Aviation Requirement) provisions may appear either restrictive or liberal, depending on its direct impact on the viewing entity,

said it was planning to set up an

additional 1,000 slow chargers

and 200 fast chargers across var-

ious states in India and to estab-

lish an additional 500 slow

chargers and 100 fast chargers in

Kerala. It said this was exclud-

ing the existing 1,500 charging

and differing perceptions may be formed, when viewed from the eyes of either the airline operators or the pilots.

'While perceptions may vary, DGCA is primarily concerned in ensuring safe operations and practices that are best suited to the unique operating environment prevailing in India," the communication said. According to the DGCA, the

time frame for implementation

of the revised CAR was arrived at after taking into account the to put in place the necessary change management steps, including crew recruitment, crew training and other attendant logistical arrangements. Alleviation of flight crew fatigue is the core philosophy behind the revised FDTL norms, and the perspective planning frame-work of airlines will adequately cater to meeting the requirements of the new stipulations, the regulator said.

The unfortunate instances of pilot deaths in the recent past ostensibly due to punishing roster schedules and consequent cumulative attendant impact on flight crew health and wellbeing is an urgent wake-up call to address these issues with-out further delay," the DGCA noted.

The draft of the revised FDTL norms was issued in October 2023, and more than 1,500 comments/ objections and recommendations were received from public stakeholders and operators.

"These have been diligently evaluated and the CAR has been promulgated after substantive data analysis and deliberations, taking into account the unique operational environment prevailing in India," the regulator said in the communi-

ZEEL shareholders approve three independent directors appointment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Special

Entertainment Enterprises shareholders have approved the appointment of three independent directors to the company's resolutions for

approval of the appointment - Uttam Prakash Agarwal, Shishir Babubhai Desai and Venkata Ramana Murthy Pinisetti were passed with majority by the shareholders of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) through a postal ballot

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices have been slashed by up to Rs 15.3

per litre in the islands of

Lakshadweep after Indian Oil

Corporation removed a cost

element that was imposed to

recover expenditure on special

infrastructure to transport fuel

been reduced by Rs 15.3 per

litre in Andrott and Kalpeni

islands and Rs 5.2 a litre for

Kavaratti and Minicoy in

Lakshadweep islands, the oil ministry said in a post on X citing information from IOC. Petrol price in Kavaratti and

Minicov has been cut to Rs 100.75 per litre from Rs 105.94

previously and that on Andrott

and Kalpeni to Rs 100.75 a litre

from Rs 116.13. Similarly,

diesel rates have been revised

to the remote islands.

Petrol and diesel pri

All three special resolutions received over 75 per cent of the total number of valid votes, according to the Consolidated Report of the Scrutinizer shared by the company to bourses. "This outcome of the remote

e-voting process concluded on 15th March 2024 reflects the shareholders' confidence in the Board of the Company," ZEEL said in a statement later. On February 5, 2024, ZEEL

sent a postal ballot notice to seek approval of the

to Rs 95.71 a litre in Kavaratti

and Minicoy from Rs 110.91

earlier and to Rs 95.71 in Andrott and Kalpeni from Rs

The new rates are effective

"In Lakshadweep, IOC is supplying petrol and diesel to four islands: Kavaratti,

Minicoy, Andrott, and Kalpeni.

and Minicoy, and the product

at these depots is supplied from the IOC depot in Kochi,

"Retail outlets at Kavaratti and

Minicoy are supplied directly

through pipelines from our depots. Other two islands,

Andrott and Kalpeni, are supplied from the Kavaratti

depot through barrels," the

This element amounting to Rs

6.90 a litre had been included

ministry said in the post.

111.04 previously.

from March 16.

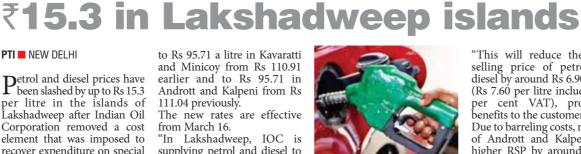
Kerala.

Petrol, diesel price cut by up to

of three appointment independent directors for their first term of three years, which is from December 17 2023, to December 16, 2026.

On Friday, Zee Entertainment informed its president and group chief technology officer Nitin Mittal resigned as the company streamlines the

The board of the company had accepted the resignation of Mittal, who had been working in this role for the



in the price buildup of petrol capital expenditure made in depots at Kavaratti and Minicoy in the Lakshadweep islands, due to very low and

unviable volumes. This element has been included in prices for the last three years.

"Since the full recovery of capital expenditure has now been achieved, this element is being removed from the prices of petrol and diesel," the

"This will reduce the retail selling price of petrol and diesel by around Rs 6.90 a litre (Rs 7.60 per litre including 10 per cent VAT), providing benefits to the customer."

Due to barreling costs, markets of Andrott and Kalpeni had higher RSP by around Rs 10 per litre compared to Kavaratti and Minicov.

islands, the available margin of Rs 7.60 a litre has been distributed across the four islands based on their sales volume," it said. "This will result in a reduction of retail selling price of petrol and diesel at the main islands, namely Kavaratti and Minicoy, by around Re 5.2 a littre. In the by around Rs 5.2 a litre. In the other islands, namely Andrott and Kalpeni, the retail selling price will be reduced by around Rs 15.3 per litre."

capacity with a built-up area spanning 6 lakh sq ft, Sakra World Hospital said in a

statement. Sakra World Hospital is a collaboration between Japan's healthcare

major Secom Medical System and trading conglomerate Toyota Tsusho. "The new

facility is the extension of our firm commitment towards fulfilling the healthcare needs of the local and international communities," said Tatsuro

Fuse, Executive Director, SECOM Co Ltd, and Chairman, SECOM Medical System

Co Ltd, Japan. Sakra World Hospital Group Chief Operating Officer Lovekesh

Phasu said the company is in talks to finalise plans to set up a third facility that

is likely to have 300 beds. The deal has not been signed yet for the third unit but the

investment pipeline could range between



DGCA issues license for Ambikapur airport to start flight operations

PTI ■ RAIPUR

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued the aerodrome license for Ambikapur airport in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district to start flight operations, officials said on Saturday.

cials said on Saturday.

Maa Mahamaya Airport,

And Habur has been Ambikapur, has been developed in the 3-C VFR category to expand air services in the state, a public relations department official said.

An application, seeking a license to start air services from the airport, was submitted to the DGCA in December 2022. The aviation regulator on Friday granted the license to the state government for Ambikapur Airport, he said. With this, the state now has

three licensed airports --Bilaspur, Jagdalpur Ambikapur under regional connectivity scheme (RCS), he added.

The license has paved the way for the operation of 72-seater flights from Ambikapur, he added.

The state government has already been making efforts to start air service from Ambikapur Airport to Raipur, Bilaspur, Lucknow, Patna, and Ranchi

With the commencement of flights from Ambikapur, tourism and commercial activities in the northern region of the state will get a boost and facilitate the development of the region, the official said. the Meanwhile,

government also signed a memorandum of understating (MoU) with the Centre-run Alliance Air on Friday to start regular commercial flight Bilaspur services from (Chhattisgarh) to Delhi and Kolkata, and Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh) to Delhi via Jabalpur by the end of this month, he noted.

chief inaugurated flight services from Bilaspur to Delhi and Kolkata on March 12, while the flight service Delhi-Jabalpur- Jagdalpur-Jabalpur-Delhi was also launched on the same day, the official said. Now, after the pact, the flight services on the three routes will be regular from the month-end, he added.

As per the MoU, the state will provide financial assistance to the airline company to compensate for the loss based on the cost revenue model in case of non-availability of passengers on the flights.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri in a post on X thanked IOC "for extending the benefits of completion of cost recovery of capital expenditure and inter-island price rationalisation to the people of Lakshadweep by reducing fuel prices?

'The move will improve #EaseofLiving #EaseofBusiness for the people and ensure a bright future for the islands, which are poised to become major hubs of global tourism. Truly #ViksitBharat," he said. "It is #ModiKiGuarantee that all parts of the country benefit from good governance."

Sakra World Hospital to invest ₹1,000 crore on second unit in Bengaluru

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

apan's Toyota Tsusho and Secom Medical **J** System on Saturday announced plans to set up a second multi-super specialty healthcare facility under their Sakra World Hospital operations in India at an investment of Rs 1,000 crore.

The two partners, which already run a Sakra World Hospital facility in Bengaluru, plan to add another 500-bed new unit at Banaswadi in Bengaluru North. The facility is scheduled for completion by the end of 2026. Sakra World Hospital is also looking to set up at a third unit, which is envisaged to have 300



beds, as part of its plans to add 1,000 beds in the upcoming years. The second facility, to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 1,000 crore, will have a 500-bed

Rs 700 crore and Rs 800 crore, he added. The third facility is part of Sakra's forthcoming plans with 1,000 beds in the second phase of its expansion. ChargeMOD to deploy 1,200 more EV chargers across India

within a 50 km radius underscores chargeMOD's dedication to accessibility and convenience for EV users nationwide.

The company claimed that with over 120 new subscribers joining their network daily, chargeMOD has enabled over four million kilometers of emission-free travel, preventing over

stations in Kerala and 2,000 stations across India. 'chargeMOD' is set to introduce Ultra Fast PTI ■ KOCHI $K^{\mathrm{erala-based}}$ energy tech Startup, 'chargeMOD', has Chargers with capacities ranging from 120 kW to 340 kW, further announced its expansion plans enhancing charging speeds and convenience for EV users across and said it will deploy 1,200 more EV chargers across India the country, the company said in a release. M Ramanunni, the and 600 more in Kerala The company, in an announce-CEO and Co-Founder of ment made earlier this week,

now become an entrepreneurial powerhouse. Despite the hurdles posed by inexpensive imported chargers, 'chargeMOD' remains steadfast in our dedication to striking an

'chargeMOD' said the startup led

by four engineering students has



equilibrium between quality and affordability. By placing utmost importance on reliability and efficiency, 'chargeMOD' endeavours to maintain its position as an architect within the EV charging sector," he was quoted in a release. We have set new standards in the electric vehicle charging indus-

try by building an entire ecosystem of EV charging, including hardware and software designed and manufactured in India, Ramanunni added.

The strategic placement of AC slow chargers within a 5 km radius and DC fast chargers

charging stations.

995 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and saving more than 160,000 liters of gasoline. The startup, incubated under Kerala Startup Mission, is the first company in Kerala to develop an indigenous mobile app for

Sen enters All England semifinals

Lakshya Sen displayed great mental resolve on his way to a stunning win over former champion Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia to progress to the men's singles semifinals of the All England Championships here. The 22-year-old Indian, who had finished runner-up in 2022 edition, produced good variations while attacking and kept fighting to outlast Lee 20-22, 21-16, 21-19 in a absorbing quarterfinal that lasted 71 minutes on Friday.

"It was a really good match and happy to be on winning side. It was all about keeping the nerve. I knew he has the quality to comeback and give a

tough fight," Sen said.
"Even when I was 18-14 up, I knew if I play a little bit lose, he will grab the opportunity. For me, it was important to

Boxing great Duran

care for heart problem

for him.

Panama.

"We are waiting for results so that we can provide more X, formerly Twitter.

receiving medical

AP ■ PANAMA CITY (PANAMA)

Boxing great Roberto was receiving

medical care for a heart

problem, the family of the

72-year-old Panamanian

Duran, who was a champion

in four different weight

classes, "has suffered a health

complication due to an

atrioventricular blockade,"

his family said in a statement

on Duran's Instagram

PTI PONTE VEDRA (USA)

▼ndian-American Sahith ■Theegala found six birdies

against one bogey to card 5under 67 and jump to 10th

spot after the second round

Championship at TPC

He was tied 37th after the first round but made a big

leap with birdies in 10th,

14th and 16th hole. On his

second nine, he birdied the

second, fourth and eighth

and dropped one shot at

The lead was held by

Wyndham Clark, the reigning US Open

identical rounds of 65 to be

14-under and four ahead of

Xander Schauffele (69) and

Canadian Nick Taylor at 10-

under at PGA Tour's flagship

England's Matt Fitzpatrick

and American Maverick

McNealy are tied fourth at 9-

under while defending champion Scottie Scheffler,

Canadian Corey Conners

and course-record holder

Tom Hoge are six shots off

the pace at 8-under.

champion. Clark

the

Sawgrass.

third.

reigning

PLAYERS

shot

said Saturday.

dictate the pace. In the end, it was about not giving him an open chance to hit and keep the shuttle down."

World no. 18 Sen, the reigning Commonwealth Games champion, will take on Indonesia's world no. 9 Jonatan Christie in the semifinals.

Sen played four three-game matches last week at the French Open before engaging in two back-to-back long matches in the past couple of days but despite that he was able to maintain a high pace.

"It (physically) was really good. The way I played last week and now too. Now it is all about recovering as there is not much time. My support team will have to

be really on their toes to get me up for next match," Sen

The two shuttlers played some excruciating rallies but Sen

information on his health,

the statement continued

"We thank our relatives, friends and all of his

supporters who are praying

WBC president Mauricio

Sulaiman said in a social

media post that Duran was

being treated in a hospital in

"His family is joined by the

world in prayers for his

successful and prompt

recovery, he is a champion

and will win this fight,"

Theegala shoots 67 to move to

tenth as Clark leads by four



managed to grab a 8-3 lead as Lee made too many errors at

Soon Sen was 12-7 up but Lee, who has defeated the Indian only once in four meetings, recovered in time to claw back at 12-12 and then 20-20 before taking the opening game. In the second game, Sen kept himself ahead 11-9 at the mid game interval and then upped the pace to take seven points on the trot to roar back into the contest.

In the decider, Sen kept a high pace to take 7-5 and 11-8 leads in the break. He didn't let the advantage slip despite Lee gaining four successive points from 15-19.

However, Sen got the two crucial points to register his fourth win over the Malaysian. In the end, the Malaysian shot one long to hand the Indian the win as he fell on his back to

father

in

road

under



Sanjna sizzles as Bengal seal quarterfinal berth

Sanjna nHoro continued her rich vein of form vein of form, registering yet another hat-trick as Hockey Bengal thrashed Telangana Hockey 11-0 to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Senior National Women Championship here on

Saturday. Saturday.

In a lop-sided contest, Sanjna (4th, 20th, 21st, 38th, 44th minutes) scored five goals, while Susmita Pana (6th, 10th, 42nd) also slammed a hat-trick for Bengal.

Monika Nag (7th, 40th) struck a brace, while skipper Anjna Dungdung (5th) also found the balk of the monitoring the back of the net at the Major Dhyanchand Hockey Stadium. Sanina had earlier scored eight goals against Hockey Gujarat. Hockey Bengal finished with an all-win record and collected nine points from Pool H, which also includes Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu and Hockey Gujarat.

However, it was the end of the road for Uttar Pradesh Hockey despite registering a dominating 11-2 win over Hockey Andhra Pradesh in a Pool C match.

Veteran Vandana Katariya (43rd, 50th, 55th minutes) slammed a hat-trick, while Mumtaz Khan (27th, 47th) and Upasana Singh (35th,

46th) struck twice each. Shashikala (14th), Reetu Singh (27th), Swarnika Rawat (38th) and Simran Singh (57th) found the net once each for Uttar Pradesh.

Kalyani Swarnapoodi (7th) and Garlanka Varahalamma (57th) were on target for Hockey Andhra Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Hockey finished C behind Hockey Jharkhand, while Hockey Andhra Pradesh remained win-less. Both Uttar Pradesh Hockey

and Hockey Jharkhand had four points from one win and one draw but the former were second in the standings by virtue of an inferior goal difference.

Hence, Hockey Jharkhand qualified for the quarterfinals from Pool C.

In other matches of the day, Delhi Hockey beat Kerala Hockey 4-1 in Pool B but failed to progress ahead of Hockey Maharashtra, who have two wins in as many games. Sonali (37th, 59th) found the

net twice, while Tanya (21st) and Manshi (54th) were the other goal-scorers for Delhi. Kerala Hockey's lone goal came from the stick of Swetha (33rd). Elsewhere in Pool A, Chhatisgarh Hockey recorded their first win in two matches, beating Hockey Bihar 2-0 as the latter slumped to their second straight loss.

Anisha Sahu (8th) and Aanchal Sahu (51st) scored for Delhi Hockey.

The win, however, was not enough for Delhi Hockey to enter the knockout stages, finishing second behind Hockey Maharashtra.

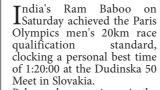
Hockey Madhya Pradesh, Hockey Jharkhand, Hockey Maharashtra and Hockey Bengal have sealed their places in the quarterfinals.

Later in the day, Hockey Gujarat will take on Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu in a Pool H tie, while Hockey Uttarakhand will be up against Dadara & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu in Pool G.

On Friday, Hockey Mizoram defeated Hockey had Himachal 10-0.

Ram Baboo breaches Paris **Games qualification mark**

PTI NEW DELHI



Baboo, a bronze winner in the 35km walk race at the Hangzhou Asian Games, gave a good account of himself in this Race Walking Turr Gold-Level event finishing third. This is the first time an Indian

athlete is finishing on the podium in this meet. The cutoff mark for Olympic qualification is 1:20:10. Cesar Rodriguez of Peru

finished top with a timing of 1:19:41, while Ecuador's Brian Pintado came second clocking 1:19:44. The 24-year-old Baboo is also

the seventh male walker from the country to breach the above-mentioned qualification mark, while the others are: Akshdeep Singh, Suraj Panwar, Servin



Sebastian, Arshpreet Singh, Pramjeet Bisht and Vikas Singh.

Priyanka Goswami remains the lone female walker to have qualified for the quadrennial extravaganza, having achieved the feat at last year's National Walking Open Race Championships in Jharkhand. However, a country can send only three athletes in an individual track and field

Krishna,

Pratheek pair

Orleans Masters

Indian pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K suffered a

straight-game loss in the

men's doubles quarterfinals to bow out of the Orleans

The world No. 70 Indian pair

lost 17-21 16-21 in 40

minutes against seventh-

seeded Danish combination

of Andreas Sondergaard and

Jesper Toft, ranked 46th in the BWF chart, on Friday

It ended India's campaign at

The Indian pair was the only

one from the country to

reach the last-eight following

its 21-14 21-9 win over the

local combination of Lucas

Krishna and Pratheek had

defeated Bulgaria's Ivan

Rusev and Iioyan Stoynov in

In women's singles, eighth

seed Malvika Bansod, Tanya

Hemanth and Imad Farooqui

Samiya lost early in the

Renoir and Mael Cattoen.

their opening match.

tournament.

the Super 300 event.

badminton

Masters

night.

tournament here.

PTI ORLEANS (FRANCE)

bows out of

event in the Olympics and it will now be up to the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to determine who makes the cut for the Paris Games out of the seven race walkers.

athletics Radhakrishnan Nair had said that the final selection could be made in June.

Athletics removed that event from its programme. Baboo eventually moved to the 20km event as the mixed team event is unpredictable because the combined timing and female male Irrespective of that, the competitors of a country is Olympic qualification comes taken into consideration for as a big step-up for Baboo, medal. second in the three-team Pool

He initially started with 50km race walk but shifted to 35km

race walk after World

Kruis conducts workshop for domestic head coaches

Hockey India High Performance Director Herman Kruis conducted a workshop, focussing on contemporary coaching methods and grassroots hockey development for domestic

coaches. workshop conducted on the sidelines of the ongoing 14th Hockey Senior Women National Championship here with an aim to upgrade the knowledge of the homegrown coaches, who are currently working with junior players. The workshop was a part of

HI's ongoing commitment to

Iga routs Kostyuk to reach Indian Wells final

elevating coaching standards at the grassroots level. During the session, Kruis

highlighted the significance of instilling a sense of ownership in young athletes and stressed the value of active learning. Kruis also underscored the importance of promoting broad motor development, advocating for exposing players to diverse styles and sports to establish solid foundation of fundamental skills during their developmental stages. Kruis emphasised the key points covered in the

workshop.
"We delved into effective coaching strategies that prioritise interactive Encouraging

and articulate concepts themselves fosters a culture of learning from mistakes and boosts confidence," he said in a statement.
"This approach cultivates a

supportive learning environment, moving away from mere competition where players seek

outshine each other. "The importance empowering grassroots

coaches to provide topquality coaching cannot be overstated. It is essential for athletes to establish strong fundamentals early on. This smoother ensures transition for players entering the national setup, Kruis added.

Diksha makes a modest start on Epson Tour

PTI ■ LONGWOOD, (US)

India's Diksha Dagar got off to a modest start with a 3over 74 to be tied-86th after the first round of the IOA Golf Classic on the Epson

Diksha had just one birdie against four bogeys at the Par-71 Alaqua Country Club. It is a three-round 54-hole

event. Diksha, who is using her time in between her other international engagements on the Ladies European Tour, where she has had two Top-10 finishes recently, stayed in Florida after playing the Aramco Team Series last

week. She will be playing at least two events right now and probably a few more later in the season.

Cydney Clanton, a three-

time Epson Tour champion, navigated the course with five birdies and an eagle on her way to a 6-under 66. The round was bogey-free till she missed the green and failed

The tight, tree-lined course was challenging but does

offer birdie opportunities as it showed on the first day. first round

The round will not be affected.

Sheuli caught entering women hostel at night, expelled from national camp

a neck complaint during his round. Yet, the world No. 1

managed to post 69. Chinese

Taipei's CT Pan feeling sore

in his left wrist saved a huge

par save on his last hole at

The Stadium Course to post

a 4-under 68 for tied 10th

Asia's challenge was also

being carried by Japan's

Hideki Matsuyama who

fought back from a slow

start for the second straight

day and signed for a

successive 69 to sit on 6-under in the USD 25 million

Scheffler needed Korea's Si Woo Kim, the Matt Kuchar (2012) also physiotherapy treatment on 2017 PLAYERS champion, missed the cut.

place on 7-under.

showpiece.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Games ommonwealth **U**gold medallist weightlifter Achinta Sheuli has been expelled from the Paris Olympics preparatory camp after he was caught entering the women's hostel at night at NIS Patiala.

The disciplinary breach occurred on Thursday night.

competes in the men's 73kg Director Vineet Kumar were weight class, was caught by security personnel, who made a video of the lifter.

"Obviously, such indiscipline will not be tolerated. Achinta was asked to leave the camp immediately," an Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) official told PTI on

condition of anonymity. The Sports Authority of India remove Achinta from the

immediately made aware of the incident. Since there was video evidence of the incident, SAI did not constitute an investigating

will enter the weekend on 3-

under after a 71 while

compatriot Sungjae Im shot

Rory McIlroy was 6-under

par going into the weekend,

eight shots behind leader

Will Zalatoris (71-74) and

missed the cut and were the

biggest names to make an

early exit. Also missing out

Matthieu Pavon (70-77) and

Nick Dunlap (77-70). Past PLAYERS champions

Webb Simpson (2018) and

Eric Cole (72-74)

Thomas (73-75)

a 72 to lie on 2-under.

Justin

The video was sent to NIS Patiala ED Vineet Kumar and the SAI headquarters in New Delhi and IWLF was asked to 22-year-old, who and NIS Patiala Executive camp," a SAI source said.

AP INDIAN WELLS (US)

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek routed Marta Kostyuk 6-2, 6-1 to reach the BNP Paribas Open final. Swiatek improved to 19-2 this

year, with her match wins leading the WTA Tour. She'll face the winner of the other semifinal between thirdseeded Coco Gauff and No. 9 seed Maria Sakkari in Sunday's

final. Swiatek has beaten Gauff

in nine of their 10 career

meetings and taken three out

of five meetings against



Sakkari. Swiatek won the 2022 tournament as part of a 37match winning streak. She had advanced to the semis when Caroline Wozniacki retired trailing 6-4, 1-0 in their quarterfinal. Swiatek has lost just 17 games through the Kostyuk, of Ukraine, hit 17

winners to 14 for Swiatek in the match. But the Polish star was better in nearly every other facet and didn't face a break point. Swiatek connected on 74% of her first serves, won 83% of her first-serve points

points on a cool and windy evening in the Southern California desert. "It was the cleanest match I

and 50% of her second-serve

played here," Swiatek said in an on-court interview. "I didn't really have any moment today in the match where I didn't feel confident." In the men's doubles final,

Nikola Mektic of Croatia and Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands defeated fifthseeded Marcel Granollers of Spain and Horacio Zeballos of Argentina, 7-6 (2), 7-6 (4).

to hole a testy par putt. Lindsey McCurdy, Dewi Weber and Jessica Peng with rounds of 66 each will be starting their second rounds one shot behind Clanton.

suspended due to darkness but the start of the second

PANT RECOVERY EARLIER THAN ANTICIPATED: NCA STAFF

R ishabh Pant's mental strength and his backstrength and his back-ground in gymnastics has helped the dashing wicketkeep-er-batter to make an early recov-

Fifteen months after Pant was involved in a horrific car accident on the Delhi-Dehradun highway in 2022, December wicketkeeper-batter received a green signal to play in the IPL, starting March 22.

"The mental strength and confidence inside him made us give our 100 per cent in doing the rehab part for him,"Thulasi Yuvraj, a physiotherapist at the National Cricket Academy told 'bcci.Tv

"The doctors believed that he may take up to two years. Once he came to NCA, it was like a progressive phase for him,"he added.

had dabbled in Pant gymnastics at a young age and that served as an asset in his according Bordoloi, Nishanta strength and conditioning coach at NCA,

"One thing was that Rishabh background for gymnastic which was a very



very big asset for us because there are a few things that naturally

him,"Bordoloi said. "Anytime he would feel he

couldn't move, he could tumble or roll over back to his feet again. Which was so much of an added advantage for him.

get foundational strength in him, making his understand what movements are like. "It's completely reconstructed thing and once it's reconstructed it takes a lot of mind and body connection.

tendons have to function,"he

Although Pant left no stone unturned, ticking all the boxes, the 26-year found the rehab mundane.

"Rehab is very irritating, have to do same thing again and again. But you have to do it because you don't have any other choice. It's boring but the more you do the better you get, said Pant.

But returning to the cricket field has made him love the sport more than he could

"I feel so happy when I go to the ground. The love of cricket has gone up, I used to love it more than anything before but still there is an increase."

His treating doctor, renowned orthopedic surgeon Dinshaw Pardiwala has credited the NCA staff and the cricketer's extreme motivation for his comeback.

"NCA keeping a physio with him daily. Making sure the determination and intensity was there each an every day. He has returned so quickly, six earlier

than anticipated. It is because of his drive, his extreme motivation The neural system need to and also he expertise in rehab understand, the muscle, aspect,"Pardiwal said.



Sri Lanka appoint Aaqib Javed as fast bowling coach until T20 WC

Sri Lanka on Saturday appoint-ded former Pakistan pacer Aaqib Javed as their fast-bowl-ing coach until the completion of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in June.

Javed, a 1992 World Cup winner, is currently serving as the Director of Cricket Operations and head coach of the Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). "We warmly welcome Aaqib and believe that his immense international experience, both in playing and coaching, will help our bowlers come into good shape ahead of the upcoming major international competitions, such as the ICC Men's T20 World Cup,"Ashley De Silva, the SLC CEO, said in a press release.

The 51-year-old Javed comes with a rather impressive coaching CV, having worked with Pakistan senior and junior teams, Afghanistan and

UAE in the past.
Under his guidance, UAE had obtained the ODI and T20I status besides getting qualified for the 2015 50-over World

He was also the bowling coach of Pakistan when they won the T20 World Cup in 2009.

As a right-arm seamer, Javed was an effective support cast to Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis in the 90s. He captured 236 international wickets across 22 Tests and 163 ODIs

Not really co relating with what happened with the men team: Smiriti Mandhana

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Royal Challengers Bangalore Skipper Smriti Mandhana doesn't want to put too much pressure on her side ahead of the Women's Premier League final against Delhi Capitals here on Sunday, and added that she is not in the mood for comparisons with their men's team counterparts in the IPL.

The RCB men's team has failed to win a single IPL title in the last 17 years, finishing runners-up thrice (2009, 2011, 2016). But just into the second WPL season, the Mandhana-led women's team has a great chance to win the title on Sunday.

"Firstly, I think this year was really important for us to connect to the whole franchise with what's happened with the men, sometimes it puts pressure. "So we were just thinking that we are two seasons into it, so let's not put too much stress. So not really co-relating with what happened with the men's team,"Mandhana said in the post-match press conference after defeating Mumbai Indians by five runs in the Eliminator

RCB did not have a very good first edition of the WPL last year, finishing fourth in the league standings, but Mandhana believes it is important to live in the present.

"What cricket has taught is it is important to live in the present. It's just about playing good cricket on that particular day, whoever plays the best cricket tomorrow is going to win,"she

"Last year wasn't the greatest campaign for RCB. (But) the conversation in the last 25 days has always been around we are enjoying each other's company,



really focussed on the process, training well. So doesn't change anything. We are not changing anything overnight because it is

The left-handed opener has high regard for rival captain Meg Lanning of DC, but she feels a skipper is always as good as the

"We give a lot of importance to the role of captain but the captain is as good as the team. Nothing changes tomorrow, we are playing a good Delhi Capitals side, who have played last two seasons,"Mandhana

"I always looked up to her (Lanning), little conversation with someone who understands batting as much as she does really helps. Really taught me how to look up to other players. From the time I (made my) debut, Lanning was the top run scorer for Australia. It's been nice to watch the way she has gone

DC skipper Lanning hoped her side plays its best cricket of the tournament on Sunday and lifts the title, which eluded them last

DC finished finished runners up in 2023 after losing to Mumbai Indians in the final. 'We are really in a good space heading into tomorrow. It's going to be a cracking game. We are really excited to be involved,

> go out there and win it," Lanning We are looking forward to taking it on and play our best game of the tournament."

Lanning doesn't want to think about what happened last year, saying they are only focussed on a taking on a very good RCB side on Sunday.

give ourselves an opportunity to

'RCB has played some excellent cricket, they played some great cricket when they were under the pump. What a challenge for our group to go out there and take them on. I have got full confidence that we will be able to deliver what we need to,"she said. "I don't think we thought about what happened in the last year. It's important what happens tomorrow. It's about performing on the day. The experience of last year helps in a way but it doesn't drive us any thing differently. It's pretty cool we get the chance to do it again.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In-form Delhi Capitals, led by the inspirational Meg Lanning, would hope to be second time lucky and lift their maiden Women's Premier League title when they take on a plucky Royal Challengers Bangalore in the summit clash here on Sunday.

After missing out on the title in WPI's

After missing out on the title in WPL's inaugural edition last year, losing by seven wickets to Mumbai Indians in the final, DC looked a rejuvenated side this year. DC have been in superb form this year,

topping the five-team league standings with 12 points from eight matches.

Lanning has led DC from the front, scoring 308 runs from eight innings, while South African all-rounder Marizanne Kapp and Australian left-arm spinner Jess Lorescop are the highest wicket takers for Jonassen are the highest wicket-takers for the side with 11 scalps each.

DC's only two defeats this season came against Mumbai Indians UP Warriorz. Leaving aside those two matches, they have enjoyed a near-perfect campaign. Going into the final, they will definitely start as favourites, having never lost to RCB in four meetings. But having said that, past results will

hardly have any significance in the final. It will be a new day and the the side which can withstand pressure and expectations

In form DC look to win maiden WPL title after falling short last



Verma to provide them with a quick start alongside Lanning.

Jemimah Rodrigues has been in fine nick in the middle, but Lanning would expect more contributions from the likes of allrounders Alice Capsey and Kapp.

will lift the title.

On the bowling front, Jonassen has been the star performer but the likes of

Kapp and Shikha Pandey too have contributed. Left-arm spinner Radha Yadav has also been effective with 10 wickets and the home team will definitely depend a lot on its spinners in a relatively slow Kotla pitch.

RCB, on the other hand, finished third in the league phase after an inconsistent

run that yielded eight points from as many games but they clicked when it mattered, knocking out defending champions MI by five runs in the eliminator here on Friday. All-rounder Ellyse Perry will be key to

RCB's success on Sunday as besides being the highest run-getter with 312 runs, the Australian has been impressive with the

ball, scalping seven wickets.

If not for Perry's all-round show against MI on Friday, the result could have been different. She first played a vital 50-ball 66-run knock and then returned with figures of 1/29 to play a key role in RCB's journey to the final.

But Perry would look for more support from the likes of skipper Smriti Mandhana, Sophie Devine, Richa Ghosh and Sophie Molineux with the bat. However if RCB were to stop DC, they

would need efforts from their bowlers, especially the likes of Renuka Singh, Shreyanka Patil, Georgia Wareham etc. All in all it promises to be a cracker of a contest with the balance slightly tilted

We will miss Hardik experience but I never tried to convince him to stay back: Nehra

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

ujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra on Saturday said he never tried to convince Hardik Pandya against returning to Mumbai Indians but conceded that the star allrounder's experience would be dearly missed by the team in the IPL beginning on March 22. Pandya, who led GT to IPL title in their maiden year before taking them to the final last year, has moved back to

Mumbai Indians as their skipper for the upcoming

"In any sport, you have to move on. You cannot buy experience and to replace someone like Hardik Pandya or (an injured) Mohammed Shami isn't going to be easy. But that's a learning curve and that's how team moves forward,"Nehra mediapersons here Saturday.

Pandya-Nehra combination



had worked wonders for GT in their first two seasons and the inevitable question arose whether the head coach tried to stop the skipper from joining Mumbai Indians.

"I never tried to convince Pandya to stay back. As you play more, you gain experience. I could have stopped him had he gone to any other franchise. He (Pandya) played here for two years but he has gone to a team (MI), where he has played

previously for 5-6 years,"Nehra was frank in his admission

The way Pandya's transfer took place, Nehra feels that day isn't far away when IPL goes the European club football way.

"The manner in which the sport (cricket) is moving, we will have trades and transfers like we see in international soccer. It's a new challenge for him and may be he will learn something new and we wish him the best."

Clark sets a big target at The Players Championship

AP ■ PONTE VEDRA BEACH (US)

Scottie Scheffler had his 25th consecutive round under par in The Players Championship, and this was hard work. He felt pain in his neck that required treatment on the course, and he struggled to swing and to stay within range of Wyndham Clark.

Feeling fit or not, that turned out to be the goal for everyone. Clark was playing in the group behind, oblivious to Scheffler's injury or anything else. He ran off four straight birdies on the front nine and finished with a 7-under 65, one shot short of the 36-hole record at the TPC Sawgrass. He had a four-shot lead over Xander Schauffele (69) and Nick Taylor (68), who played in the afternoon and had to cope with warm, breezy conditions on greens that remained surprisingly soft on the Stadium Course

Scheffler was simply happy to be done. He felt something wrong on his fourth full swing of the day, a shot that went left on the par-5 11th that kept him from a good look at birdie. He got treatment before his tee shots on three straight holes and managed a 3-under 69. "I felt a little something in my neck, and then I tried to hit my tee shot on 12, and that's when I could barely get the club back,"Scheffler said through a PGA Tour official. "So I got treatment, maybe loosened it up a tiny bit. But most of the day, I was pretty much laboring to get the club somehow away from me." The hope for Scheffler is he

would have free range by the weekend. The concern is that he already was No. 1 in the world and appearing to hit another gear coming off his five-shot victory last week at Bay Hill until this injury interruption.

Clark is proving each week to be a serious challenger no matter Scheffler's condition.



The U.S. Open champion already shot 60 at Pebble Beach to win in 54 holes because of weather, and he was the only player who mounted any challenge against Scheffler at Bay Hill last week, finishing runner-up. He got through the back nine on another calm, sunny morning in 1 under and then started hitting everything close to perfect — a wedge to 18 inches on No. 1, a simple up-and-down for birdie on the

par-5 second, a 12-foot birdie putt on the par-3 third and a wedge to 4 feet on the fourth hole.

"I'm just super excited that kind of had a ho-hum front nine and then turned and really just got into a nice zone and felt really good on the greens and shot an awesome number,"Clark said. He closed with a birdie for a 30

on the front nine and was at 14-under 130. The 36-hole recordholder for The Players is Webb Simpson in 2018.

Schauffele has only one blunder through 36 holes, a hybrid he hit into the water on the par-5 11th that led to double bogey. He got that back with a 7-iron into the par-5 16th for eagle and at least worked his way into the final group. He got there with a 6iron off the pine straw and under the trees onto the 18th green for par. "I wanted to be in the final group as often as possible, especially being four shots back, "Schauffele said.

Taylor had three bogeys, each time answering with a birdie to stay in the mix.

Former U.S. Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick had a double bogey on No. 4 that slowed his momentum. He had to settle for a 69 and was five shots behind, along with Maverick McNealy, who finished with a 67 in the morning and followed with a 68.

Scheffler was in the group at 8under 136, and by the sound of it, he was happy to be there.

"I did enough to keep myself somewhat in the tournament, and so that's really all I could ask for,"Scheffler said. "The way I was getting around the course, the way my neck was feeling, I didn't know if I was going to be able to continue playing. So yeah, good fight out there."

At least he's still playing. Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth and Will Zalatoris were among those set to miss the cut -Spieth for the sixth time in 10 appearances, Thomas for the first time. The second round was to be completed Saturday morning because of darkness. Rory McIlroy didn't make a par until the seventh hole in a wild shots behind Clark. Scheffler converted two of his

four birdie chances at the start, but then he walked briskly up the hill toward the 14th tee with his physio, Marnus Marais. He sat on a chair behind the 14th tee with Marais working on him. Scheffler drilled his drive

down the middle and had a 20foot birdie chance. Then he walked through the palmetto bushes, away from spectators, for more work. Thomas and Rickie Fowler hit their tee shots and waited on Scheffler. The same scene played out after the 15th.

Clark, meanwhile, looks to be a daunting target. A year ago at The Players Championship, hardly anyone knew who he was. But the 29-year-old from Denver is working his way into the elite in golf as much with his big titles — two signature events and one major — as his

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"The difference - the fundamental difference between theater acting and film acting is that film acting is disjunctive"



You may admire him, you may despise him, but you can never ignore him, both on and off screen. Indeed, that is **PARESH RAWAL**, a pillar of Indian cinema, embodying roles as a hero, villain, comic, and versatile actor celebrated for his unmatched range and flawless portrayals. With a career spanning several decades, Rawal has left an indelible mark on the Indian film industry through his nuanced portrayals, impeccable comic timing, and compelling dramatic performances. He has seamlessly transitioned between genres, effortlessly embodying a diverse array of characters with depth and authenticity. He became a Member of Parliament (MP) from Ahmedabad East constituency in the 2014 Indian general election on a BJP ticket. In 2014, he was awarded the Padma Shri. Rawal's journey in acting has been nothing short of extraordinary, marked by his unwavering commitment to his craft and his ability to continually push the boundaries of his art. One of his most remarkable contributions to Indian cinema has been his ability to infuse realism and depth into his characters, elevating them beyond mere caricatures and stereotypes. Rawal is celebrated for his mastery of both comedic and dramatic roles, effortlessly

oscillating between light-hearted comedy and intense drama with equal finesse. His impeccable comic timing has endeared him to audiences across generations, while his ability to evoke genuine emotion has earned him critical acclaim. Furthermore, Rawal's dedication to his roles goes beyond mere performance; he delves deep into the psyche of his characters, bringing them to life with layers of complexity and nuance.

Whether portraying a bumbling comic or a morally conflicted individual, Rawal's performances resonate with authenticity and depth, leaving a lasting impression on viewers. In addition to his prowess as an actor, Rawal has also made significant contributions to Indian theatre and television, further solidifying his status as a true icon of the performing arts. His ability to seamlessly transition between mediums highlights his versatility and enduring relevance in an everevolving industry. Paresh Rawal's illustrious career serves as a testament to the transformative power of acting, showcasing how dedication, talent, and a relentless pursuit of excellence can elevate the craft to new heights. As he continues to captivate audiences with his unparalleled performances, Rawal remains a shining beacon of inspiration for aspiring actors and a true legend of Indian cinema. He talked to **GYANESHWAR DAYAL** about his acting and stint in politics.

THE WANDS THE WANT FACES

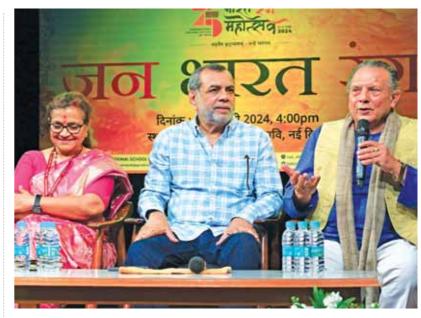
GOOD, BAD AND HILARIOUS

You are celebrating Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2024 National at the School of Drama. What is it about and how has the experience been? How do you see it as the Chairperson of NSD?

We are very excited about it. We are into the 25th year and that too in Amritkal. It is all about connecting people; understanding people. Theatre is entertaining as well as enlightening. It is a medium through which we can patch our differences and know each other better. I am happy that we are celebrating it in Amrit kal which makes it even more special.

You are an actor who took to politics. How has politics changed your acting and choice of scripts and approach?

Well, broadly speaking, actors are confined to their comfort zone, in a way they are insulated from the problems the country faces. When you are in Parliament you know about it from all angles, laid threadbare. And that gives you a right perspective. I would say that stays with you and subconsciously affects your acting and approach to cinema.



Your journey in the world of acting has been nothing short of remarkable. How do you approach the roles you accept?

I try to do justice to the role I get and my training in theatre helps me a lot. I am Eklavya of theatre which means all the details and minute nuances of the role must be given due importance and done with finesse.

You have done myriad roles but there must be one which is close to your heart?

I would say the role of Sardar Patel. He was indeed one of the greatest statesmen and politicians we have had. It not only made me a better actor but also a better citizen. While preparing for it, I was flabbergasted by his personality and work. I came to know that the history we are taught is mutilated and full of lies. There were many people who got us independence, not just two. Sardar Patel was sidelined and forgotten.

You have been associated with Marathi theatre for a long time. Do you think theatre is more progressive than cinema?

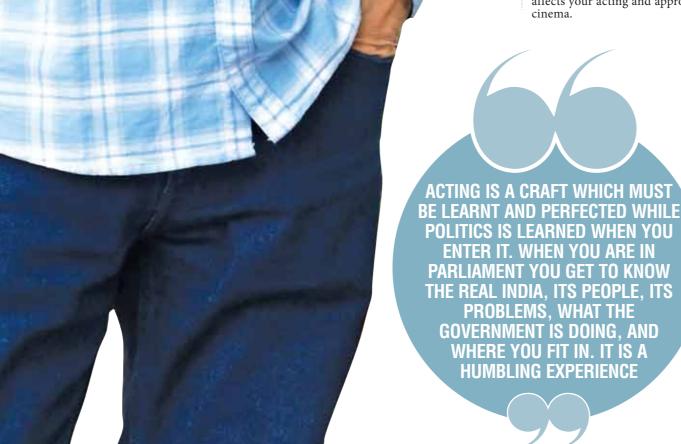
Yes, that is correct to say. Theatre is progressive and has long traditions of breaking stereotypes and helping society do some serious thinking about itself.

Your ability to seamlessly transition between comedic and dramatic roles is truly commendable. How do you approach such diverse characters? Each character, comedic or dramatic, comes with its own set of challenges and nuances. For me, the key lies in understanding the essence of the character and tapping into their emotional core. Whether it is finding the perfect timing for a comedic scene or delving into the complexities of a dramatic role, I always strive to bring authenticity to my performances. I also believe in extensive research and preparation, which allows me to inhabit the character fully and deliver a memorable portrayal.

You began with a career and then had a stint with politics. How does politics shape your acting style? Acting is, of course, a craft which must be learnt and perfected while politics is learned when you enter it. When you are in Parliament you get to know the real India, its people, its problems, what the Government is doing, and where you fit in. It is a humbling experience.

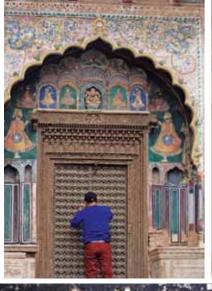
Do you think actors have a role to play in politics?

Of course. If they want to become full-time politicians, they should prepare for it. If they do not want to enter it, fine but still they should know about it. After all, they are also part of society and should be aware of its challenges and problems. They should not just curse sitting on the sidelines and come forward to make a change. Those who enter politics must be serious about it and be be aware and of the opportunities and challenges politics throws at them.

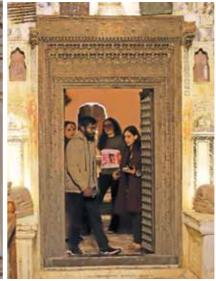


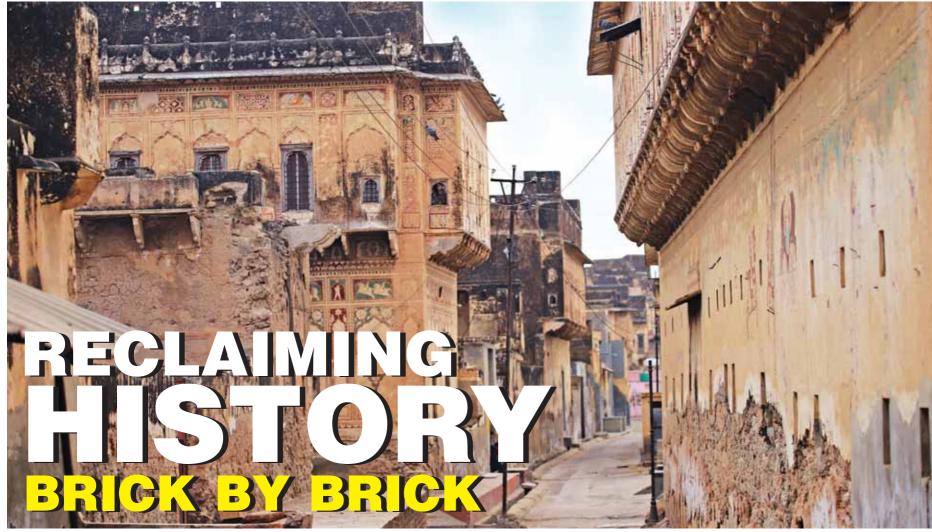
Photos: Pankaj Kuma/Pionee











Join us as we embark on a transformative journey through the winding lanes and storied landmarks of Ramgarh, where the past intertwines with the present in a vibrant tapestry of tradition, resilience, and hope. Text and photographs by **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

estled amidst the arid plains of Rajasthan, India, lies the quaint non-descript town of Ramgarh Shekhawati. Steeped in history (traditional mansions), hidden gem is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region. Time stands still in Ramgarh Shekhawati, as the town stands as a living chronicle of bygone eras, while simultaneously embracing modernity. Today, efforts by organisations like the Shruti Foundation, INTACHShekhawati chapter and Vedaaranya Healing seek to revive and preserve its legacy, ensuring that its charm endures for generations to come.

HISTORICAL NEEDLEPOINT

RAMGARH SHEKHAWATI traces its origins back to the 17th century when it was established by the Poddar merchant community Situated along the ancient trade routes, the town flourished as a bustling centre of commerce, art, and culture. Its prosperity during the hevday of the Marwari traders is reflected in the opulent havelis that adorn its streets.

These havelis, with intricately carved facades, vibrant frescoes, and ornate architecture, served as symbols of wealth and social status. They also bore testimony to the artistic prowess the craftsmen who meticulously adorned them with scenes from Indian religious and cultural narratives, folklore, the musical instruments, the flora and fauna and other prevalent objects and applications of the time. Éach haveli narrates a story, preserving the essence of a bygone era within its walls. There are more than 200 havelis and over 30 chhatris or cenotaphs, intricately carved braving the heat and dust customary to the region. Add to them as many wells and Johads, which are no longer in use but stand as testimony to the life and lifestyle of the bygone era. In Shekhawati, earning the title of 'Seth' required a different approach. One had to undertake at least seven acts of public good, such as constructing besides their own Haveli, a Chhatri for travellers, a temple, a well, a water harvesting Johad, creating a gaushala for cows, a dharamshala, a Vidyalaya, an ayurvedic rasayanshala for the community.



While times may have changed, the seven or more wooden carved levels on entry doors in Shekhawati symbolising a Seths status still speak volumes. They did not solely indicate wealth, but rather the generosity and benevolence of the owner on seven levels or more for the people.



PRESENT STATE OF HAVELIS

DESPITE THEIR historical

significance, many of Ramgarh Shekhawati's havelis have fallen into disrepair over the years. Neglect, mindless construction and the passage of time have taken their toll on these architectural marvels, with fading frescoes and crumbling facades threatening to erase their splendour forever. Ramgarh Shekhawati as suffered the betrayal of its own people. The generations of opulent Seths mostly turned their back of Ramgarh and never returned, some left caretakers to look after the havelis who didn't mind conniving with the usurpers of the wealth of the havelies However, amidst

dilapidation, there remains a glimmer of hope. Efforts by local authorities and heritage enthusiasts are underway to conserve and restore these havelis, breathing new life into their weathered walls. The Ramgarh Shekhawati's cultural heritage



has become a rallying cry for those who recognize importance of safeguarding the town's legacy for future town's legacy generations.

THE CONSERVATION EFFORTS

AT THE forefront of this conservation movement is the Shruti Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation India's of architectural heritage. Through initiatives focused on restoration, documentation, and community engagement, the foundation is working tirelessly to revive the splendour of Ramgarh Shekhawati's havelis. And it is not just the havelis but its mandate goes beyond the architecture and touches people's life, reviving their craft, providing them employment and purpose.

One such endeavour is the restoration project undertaken by the Shruti Foundation, beginning with the restoration of part of the Ramgarh Fort and various Havelies of Ramgarh Shekhawati, including the beautiful Deepchand



poddar Kishanlal Haveli. Vedaaranya Haveli and MOHAR Haveli. Shruti Nada Poddar, Convener, INTACH Shekhawati Chapterinvited INTACH division, which Architectural resurrected the unique Ramgarh Shekhawati Veda temple, the only Veda temple in India dedicated to Vedas and not deities!

PRESERVING THE LEGACY

IN ADDITION to its stunning havelis and ongoing restoration efforts, Ramgarh Shekhawati

A PERSONAL

Shekhawati In the heart of Ramgarh Shekhawati beats the pulse of a revitalization movement led by the indomitable spirit of Shruti Poddar. A scion of the illustrious Poddar family, the creators of Ramgarh Shekhawati, Shruti Nada Poddar embarked on a deeply personal journey to breathe life into the faded glory of her ancestral town. With unwavering resolve and a singular focus, she founded the Shruti Foundation, a beacon of hope for the preservation restoration Ramgarh Shekhawati's heritage. She also heads INTACH Shekhawati chapter, covering tree districts of Rajasthan and has won accolades for her single-handed efforts at bringing Ramgarh Shekhawati ion the world

n the heart of Ramgarh

Shruti's connection to the Indian cultural ethos runs deep, which led her back to India from her life in the UK, to a promised land she unwittingly dreamed of, surprisingly and intuitively led her back to the abandoned land of her ancestors,

Heartbroken with the decay and destruction of this astonishing town, the decay of the town's oncemajestic havelis and the erosion of its cultural identity over a entury, she was spurred into action. Determined to reclaim the town's lost splendour, Shruti returned to her roots, armed with a vision renewal and commitment to effect change, fuelled by a profound sense of duty towards this great land, its tangible and intangible local heritage, its communities, particularly

JANUARY

boasts a rich tapestry of cultural

traditions that further enrich its

allure. The town is home to a

lineage of knowledgeable vaids or

Ayurvedic doctors, carrying forward centuries-old healing

traditions. Their expertise in holistic wellness adds another

layer to Ramgarh Shekhawati's



the indigenous greatness of this great land of patronage of knowledge and culture, also called Doosra Kashi. Over the span of a mere decade, Sĥruti's tireless efforts have borne fruit, transforming the landscape of Ramgarh Shekhawati in remarkable ways. From the moment one steps off the train at the railway station, the signs of rejuvenation are unmistakable. Some of the dilapidated facades have been lovingly restored, vibrant murals adorn oncemuted walls. Shruti's approach to revitalising Ramgarh Shekhawati is characterised by a blend of innovation and tradition. She has spearheaded initiatives traditional crafts, promote eco-tourism, and empower local artisans. Through the Shruti Foundation's collaborative efforts with the community, heritage conservationists, government Ramgarh Shekhawati is experiencing a renaissance

Yet, perhaps the most aweinspiring aspect of Shruti's journey is her unwavering commitment to the cause. Her passion is infectious, inspiring others to rally behind her vision and join the movement to revitalise Ramgarh Shekhawati.

(Vedaaranya Heritage and Healing

of sorts.

Festival) since 2016. This annual celebration showcases the town's rich traditions to the world, drawing visitors from far and wide to experience its enchanting heritage Through exhibitions, performances, and workshops in the old world ambience of its Fort and its havelies,, the festival serves as a platform and a fascinating journey of awareness and appreciation of Ramgarh Shekhawati's great heritage, fostering a deeper connection with its past and present.

As efforts to preserve and promote Ramgarh Shekhawati's heritage continue, there is growing recognition of its significance on the global stage. With over 200 intricately carved havelis dotting the small town, Ramgarh Shekhawati stands as a testament to the architectural brilliance of yesteryears. It may well be on its way to earning UNESCO World Heritage status, joining the ranks of the world's most cherished cultural treasures.

As the sun sets over the limestone facades and winding lanes of Ramgarh Shekhawati, it whispers tales of a glorious past and a promising future. In its havelis, streets, and traditions, the town embodies the essence of Rajasthan's timeless charm, inviting travellers to embark on a journey through history, culture, and heritage. Ramgarh Shekhawati stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of India's cultural legacy. Ramgarh Shekhawati embarks on

a journey of revival and rejuvenation, the efforts of organisations like the Shruti Foundation and INTACH serve as beacons of hope. Through their dedication and perseverance, they are fostering a sense of cultural identity and pride among its inhabitants. With each stroke of the brush and each brick laid in place, the town's havelis are being transformed into monuments, testifying to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of heritage. In the heart of Rajasthan's desert landscape, Ramgarh Shekhawati stands as a timeless reminder of the beauty of the past and the potential of the future. It also reminds us what we can do to our heritage if we turn our back on it.

egend has it that Ramgarh Shekhawati owes its existence to a poignant tale of love and resilience. Once ridiculed by her own family for not having a rich kingdom, the Queen of Sikar kingdom, whose family were the rich king and queen of Churu, returned to her husband, the king of Sikar Kingdom, and went into isolation, giving up food and water. In response to her adamant demand for a new and most rich and beautiful town ever, the Sikar maharaja called the wealthy merchants of Churu, the Poddars, and requested them to cross over with seven families.

The Poddar Seths agreed to cross over from Churu to Sikar and build a new town as never before under the following conditions -They would be granted the region they picked, they



would pay zero tax, they would rule the town themselves, with their own administration and their own law and order, and last but not the least, they will not sit below the king,

Having no choice, the King agreed. Thus, Ramgarh Sethan (Ramgarh of the Seths) the only town in the world not ruled by the King in the 18th and 19th century was born, emerging as a testament to the power of love and determination.

Thus, from the crucible of royal decree and entrepreneurial pact, the resplendent enclave of Ramgarh Shekhawati emerged, forever enshrined as the "Ramgarh Sethan" - the bastion of opulence and prosperity. It flourished as one of the richest town of that era with the highest per capita income in the world in 1900.

cultural heritage, offering visitors a glimpse into the ancient wisdom of India's traditional medicine systems. The last ten years have been truly magnificent in the life of Ramgarh Shekhawati.It is seeing a turnaround and it is visible right from the railway station, adoring beautiful frescos and giving a glimpse of the town to visitors looking for a cultural experience. Furthermore, no visit to Ramgarh Shekhawati would be complete without indulging in its culinary delights. Authentic Rajasthani

cuisine including bajre ka Upoma, every dish tells a story of the region's culinary heritage, inviting visitors to savour the tastes of tradition. Moreover, the town's rich artistic heritage extends beyond its architectural wonders. Local artisans continue to uphold traditional crafts such as handloom weaving with katran (recycled cloth), beadwork, dollmaking, lac bangle making, and infusing each creation with the spirit of Rajasthan's vibrant culture. With increasing support and recognition, these crafts are

cuisine, renowned for its bold

flavours and aromatic spices, takes

centrestage here. From savoury dal

baatichurma to decadent ghevar,

to Vedaaranya Haveli's special

generations to come. One notable event that celebrates Ramgarh Shekhawati's cultural heritage is the VHAH Fest

experiencing a revival, ensuring

that their legacy endures for



SCS: Old battleground, new twist

The South China Sea (SCS) has once again come into focus following sudden skirmishes between the coast guard vessels of the Philippines and China last week. The ongoing assertion by the Philippines of territorial claims over the Spratly Islands and China's refusal acknowledge these claims lie at the heart of the current crisis.

This dispute has deep historical roots, with China asserting its rights over the entire SCS, a claim that other countries involved simply reject. The contentious issue of control over sea waters and its resources has long strained relations between China and the other claimants.

Since 2009, during Hu Jintao's presidency of China, the country has steadily intensified its efforts to solidify its position in the SCS, despite Hu's advocacy for China's "Peaceful Rise" Doctrine. In this endeavour, the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing devised a subtle strategy involving the use of its military and coast guard to surveil foreign vessels, explore and exploit resources in disputed islands, drawing the attention of the international media and SCS neighbouring countries. However, starting in 2013 with Xi Jinping assuming the presidency after Hu, Beijing escalated its activities by initiating the construction of artificial islands and stationing military and civilian personnel in various parts of the SCS. This aggressive expansion has increasingly posed a security threat to other claimants in the SCS.

They have all begun to question China's extensive claims over the land parcels and adjacent waters in the SCS. As China has asserted its claim through frequent naval patrols and island-building in the Paracels and Spratlys, other nations have sought support from the US and Japan to deploy their military and naval vessels in the area. Interestingly, the US, without directly participating in the conflict, has started sending



near the disputed islands under the guise of 'freedom of navigation' operations. Meanwhile, Japan, a close ally of the US in the region, although having no direct claim in the SCS, regularly provides ships and military equipment to countries like Vietnam and the Philippines. The involvement of global powers is heightening tensions in the regional power balance, which may compel the China to further militarise the SCS.

In addition to China, seven resources and water bodies in the SCS. These countries include Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, and Taiwan. However, Chinese claims and territorial occupation of the sea are the most prominent in the region. This greatly concerns all other nations involved in the conflict, posing one of the most serious security threats to neighbouring nations in the Western Pacific area.

military ships and aircraft More than the concerns about troublesome neighbours, the US is deeply troubled by the increasing Chinese claims and security buildup in the SCS. The SCS, along with the East China Sea (ECS), is an where US-China area strategic interests constantly clash. This strategic competition encompasses various issues in the SCS, including but not limited to: - US security commitments to

obligations to the Philippines Maintenance countries consistently claim enhancement of the US-led security architecture in the Western Pacific

Western

encompassing

Pacific,

treaty

bodies

Sustaining a regional balance of power favourable to the US and its allies

Defending the principle of peaceful dispute resolution Maintaining the universal doctrine of freedom of navigation, also known as

freedom of the seas These factors compel Washington to focus more on the Asia-Pacific region than the conflict-laden West Asia.

Currently, the US aims to restrict China from engaging additional construction, deploying more military equipment to the initiating constructions at Scarborough Shoal, declaring straight baselines and Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ), taking actions over the Philippines to either operate in or vacate the Spratly Islands, and granting Filipino fishermen access to water

Islands. Additionally, Washington clearly desires Beijing to adhere to and abide by the verdict issued by the Permanent Court Arbitration at The Hague on July 12, 2016, which was established under the UN Convention on the Law of the

Scarborough and the Spratly

surrounding

Sea (UNCLOS). This verdict, which China outrightly rejects, was fully in favor of the Philippines based on a case lodged by the latter against the former in 2013. The Philippines brought the case against China for its claims and activities in the SCS. However, China did not respect the verdict of the international court because it was not prepared to accept a decision against its interests. In fact, Chinese President Xi Jinping asserted that China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights in the SCS would not be affected by this ruling.

The tribunal challenged China's extensive claims over the SCS and dismissed its 'Nine-dash line' thesis, which claimed sovereignty over 90 percent of the SCS. The tribunal also rejected China's historic rights over the resources of the SCS, stating that there was no legal basis for such claims.

Finally, the court declared a large part of the SCS as Neutral International Waters (NIW) or exclusive economic zones of other nations.

This ruling was nonetheless a significant setback for Xi's regime and other members of the Communist Party of Spratlys are largely president of the China (CPC) who viewed the uninhabited. Also, the SCS Research Foundation)

entire SCS as the exclusive territorial zones of the country, inviolable by any other nation.

China reputedly claims to have historic rights and claims over the SCS. Despite the legally binding nature of this historic ruling on China, it chose not to comply. Instead, the Communist leadership in Beijing dismissed it as 'ill-founded' and 'naturally null and void'. This saga clearly illustrates China's determination to assert its expansive territorial claims over the SCS, regardless of the provisions of the UNCLOS. Such an attitude from Beijing strongly indicates its aggressive pursuit of sovereignty and complete disregard for the rules-based international order. While Beijing advocates for a rules-based international order, it seeks to establish one on its own terms and conditions rather than adhering to the existing framework. Why are all these countries

actively involved in the SCS? Located in the Western Pacific Ocean, the SCS is the largest marginal sea in the region. The Paracels and the Spratlys are two chains of islands claimed by many countries in the region, particularly all of them in their entirety by China through its 'Nine-dash Line' Thesis. The significance of the SCS lies in its status as a major international shipping lane. According to estimates by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD), over 21 per cent of international trade, amounting to 3.37 trillion dollars, passes through these sea lanes.

Also, the entire SCS encompasses more than 250 islands, reefs, sandbars, etc, which are rich reservoirs of minerals and other sea-borne resources. Experts also suggest that the sea is believed to contain nearly 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

However, these Paracels and

oversees the operation of more than half of the world's fishing vessels, and these fishing reserves serve as a potential source of livelihood for millions across the region. Thus, all these countries surrounding the SCS are fiercely asserting their claims over it. Beyond this, their regional and geopolitical interests are clearly evident in the clashes and differences of opinion that have surfaced so

It is not surprising to many strategic experts that China does not want to be subordinate to or follow the dictates of the existing global liberal order led by the US and the rest of the West. Thus, China, especially under

Xi, has consistently advocated for a multipolar world and a new world order in which Beijing will establish (or has already set) the terms and conditions. At no point does it want to be dominated by the West, especially by the US. It unequivocally demands equal terms of engagement and treatment in all international forums, on par with Western nations.

China's territorial claims, both on land and in neighbouring water bodies, seem to have no bounds; they are continually on the rise. Its imperial ambitions have become increasingly apparent in recent years.

However, by turning the South China Sea into another flashpoint, alongside Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang, China is not only threatening American interests in the Asia-Pacific but also challenging the security architecture of Western allies in the region. This may lead to more global powers aligning against

Beijing. Xi and his regime should be cautious not to overextend their reach, as this could drive more nations to align with the US. China must learn to respect the existing global order before others feel compelled to rally behind an Asian order led by Beijing.

(The writer is currently president of the Global The South China Sea has once again become a focal point of international attention following sudden clashes between coast quard vessels of the Philippines and China. As tensions rise. the involvement of global powers like the US and Japan adds further complexity to the situation, potentially pushing more nations to align against Beijing. Amid these escalating tensions, it becomes imperative for China to reconsider its assertive stance and respect the existing global order to avoid further



international

backlash

MAKHAN SAIKIA

Cannot afford tiger safari in Corbett core area

The SC's recent verdict on tiger safari in Corbett **Tiger Reserve** marks a crucial step in wildlife conservation. Amid concerns over illegal construction and deforestation, the ruling underscores the intrinsic link between tigers and forests, stressing the need for effective habitat protection and restoration measures



BK SINGH

The Supreme Court's order last week to ban tiger safaris in the Core area of Corbett Tiger Reserve, while tasked permitting them in buffer and peripheral areas, represents a significant judgment concerning the conservation of flora and fauna. Also, it underscores the impact on the ecological services provided by forests, including their carbon sequestration potential. A three-judge bench led by Justice BR Gavai criticised former Uttarakhand Forest Minister Harak Singh Rawat and former Divisional Forest Officer Kishan Chand permitting illegal construction deforestation.

The bench emphasised, "The tiger perishes without the forest and the forest perishes without the tigers. Therefore, the tiger should stand guard over the forest, and the forest should protect all its tigers." The court further expressed concern over poaching and illegal destruction in tiger habitats and established a committee comprising former DGF Chandra Prakash Goyal and two officers Uttarakhand, Anup Malik

warden respectively. The committee has been given three months to effective management of tiger reserves in India, assess the inflicted on Corbett tiger

and Samir Sinha, occupying

the positions of head of forest

force and chief wildlife

measures to recover damages from those responsible for such destruction. It is also with making recommendations regarding restrictions on ecotourism facilities in the best interest of protection. Moreover, the court directed the CBI to conclude its investigation into the criminal intent of individuals responsible for the destruction of the tiger habitat in the renowned Corbett Tiger Reserve.

During the case hearing, the court also took into consideration the suggestions provided by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). Based on the feedback from these two national agencies, the court has allowed the opening of safaris for rescued tigers and cubs within the buffer and peripheral areas of the core of the tiger reserves, while prohibiting the housing of zoo-born tigers in such

It is important to note that buffer areas are equally important as core areas and are legally designated as such. Both core and buffer areas constitute the tiger reserve. When a tiger loses its territory to a more dominant one, it often gets pushed into the buffer area. In many reserves, such as Corbett, the habitats in buffer areas are propose suggestions for more comparable to those in the core.

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, cost of restoring damages 1972, prohibits the opening of any safari or rescue center in propose buffer areas. Section 38-O of

reserves must be inviolate, meaning management efforts should ensure that both the core and buffer areas of the tiger reserve remain undisturbed. The NTCA, in collaboration with state forest departments, has been consistently working to relocate villages from within tiger reserves and resettle families outside. It would be contradictory to remove human and livestock populations from tiger reserves only to open them for safaris. Studies on tiger occupancy surveys indicate that tigers do not inhabit areas occupied by humans and livestock. The social dynamics of tiger territories suggest that we require 800 to 1,200 square kilometres of undisturbed habitat to sustain a viable tiger population, provided there is an adequate prey population.

the Act stipulates that tiger

Such areas could support 70 to 75 tigers, including females but breeding excluding cubs. Furthermore, the tiger population would be genetically robust if two such source population areas were connected by corridors. In October 2012, the NTCA

issued SC-approved guidelines for creating tourist facilities and regulating visits in core areas. These guidelines stipulated that not more than 20 per cent of the core area in any tiger reserve should be open to visits. Additionally, they restricted the number of safari vehicles and the duration of visits, and prohibited the construction of

any tourist infrastructure within the tiger reserve. The proliferation of tourist resorts outside the reserve has disrupted the movement of elephants, leading to an increase in conflict cases between humans and wild

Often, the forest areas within corridors are not managed by the Wildlife wing of the Forest Department. These areas are also interspersed with human settlements, where multiple activities take place. Effective management of corridors is crucial, and new economic activities such as industries and mining are prohibited to minimise human presence.

I am uncertain whether the Pakharo area, where the tiger safari is constructed, is in the core or buffer zone of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. However, what I am certain of is that it serves as the gateway for tiger movement towards Lansdowne forest division, where tigers breed in substantial numbers. Also, it forms a corridor for tiger movement through the Lansdowne and Haridwar forest divisions, connecting to the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, another source population. These landscapes are also

vital for the movement of elephants. I have observed a proliferation of tourist resorts between Pakharo and Lansdowne, with many of especially elephants. Numerous island fences within elephant corridors creating fences, buildings,

herds, leading to humanelephant conflicts. Unfortunately, what the Minister and DFO have done is erect another island fence, which will undoubtedly impede elephant movement within the Corbett Tiger Reserve itself.

I have had the opportunity to visit the site where the habitat inside the Corbett Tiger Reserve has been destroyed. More than 6000 Sal trees have been felled to make way for water holes and to provide a perimeter fence for the safari to prevent the entry of wild elephant herds. I understand that higher authorities permitted DFO Kishan Chand to fell less than 200 trees. However, I fail to comprehend why a DFO would continue cutting trees far beyond the permitted limit, with his superiors remaining silent spectators. Why did they not visit the site when the destruction was ongoing? In my assessment, this is a complete failure of administration Uttarakhand.

These forests are extremely dense, with nearly 0.8 canopy density, and the felled Sal trees had a girth of more than 2 meters. One of the tasks assigned to the Supreme Court-appointed committee is to assess the cost of restoring the tiger habitat. My understanding of restoration them fenced off to prevent encompasses not only the access by wild animals, removal of all structures constructed using angled iron, RCC, etc, used in

and bunds for the water holes, along with the spillover structures, but also the regrowth of the habitat previously dominated by more than 6000 Sal trees and other hardwood species.

The natural setting of the area, which has been disturbed by cutting and filling of earth, can never be fully restored. Artificially grown trees in an area of equal extent can never serve as proper compensation. Forest departments have a

poor track record of successfully implementing compensatory afforestation. I am more than certain that the Sal and other miscellaneous species lost in the destruction can never be replaced. These forests are a gift from nature, and once lost, they cannot be regenerated by human efforts. The destruction of forests and the fragmentation of habitats and corridors are irreversible. Relatively pristine forest areas with high biodiversity values across states are designated as sanctuaries and national parks, commonly referred to as protected areas (PAs). Various laws and guidelines are in place to ensure the integrity of PAs is maintained. While forests are often burdened with rights and concessions, as well as the rights of dwellers and tribal communities, PAs generally fewer such encumbrances. Some PAs, like Corbett National Park, are also designated as Tiger Reserves. Many rivers in the central Indian landscape and peninsular India originate in

forested areas, typically within PAs.

Air and water are among the most crucial ecological services provided by forests. The primary reason for conserving forests and wildlife is to ensure that these ecological services are not disrupted. Without them, our existence on this planet would be uncertain.

Ministers like Harak Singh Rawat and officers like Kishan Chand have the capability to pave the way for more safaris and rescue centers in the buffers of tiger reserves or any other protected areas (PAs). The court's approval for buffer and peripheral forests opens the door to potential misuse. Under the guise of road formation, maintenance, creation and upkeep of water holes, and removal of invasive species, heavy machinery such as JCBs for earth cutting and filling are already being utilized in many PAs. The practice of earth cutting in PAs must come to an end. The Forest Conservation Act Amendment of 2023 has classified zoos and safaris as forestry activities, eliminating the need for approval to establish these facilities in forested areas. Without proper regulation of this provision, officers who favor the use of JCBs may end up causing destruction to the

(The writer is a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force)

























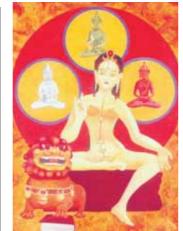






ARIES March 21-April 19

This week promises a blend of international connections and swift developments. Expect uplifting news from afar or a familial encounter crossing borders. Be prepared for sudden travel opportunities linked to your professional pursuits. A positive turn in legal affairs may emerge, demanding decisive action on your part. Health-wise, a phase of recuperation is on the horizon, allowing you to resume your usual activities. As the week concludes, joy surrounds family matters, especially concerning your offspring. Their academic achievements or an unexpected matrimonial proposal will bring delight, leading to enthusiastic wedding preparations. For those in established partnerships, expect a deepening of bonds, enhancing both harmony and commitment in the relationship. This period is marked by rapid transitions, pivotal decisions, and heartwarming familial developments, guiding you towards a harmonious blend of personal and professional fulfillment. Lucky number 25 | Lucky colour Turquoise Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Seeking a fresh start away from daily tumults and discord might be your heart's desire. It's crucial to reflect on your past journeys and future directions. Such introspection brings clarity, paving a smoother transition towards tranquility. Positive outcomes require decisions aligned with your aspirations, remembering that actions, once executed, shape your destiny. Imagine the harmony of finding someone with whom you share an unparalleled bond. This connection, akin to the confluence of two luminous entities in the cosmos, intensifies their radiance. As you navigate this week, you may encounter this profound partnership, where each enhances the other's brilliance, crafting a shared path illuminated by mutual understanding and support.

Lucky number 24 | Lucky colour Olive Lucky day Saturday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week is poised to be a period of significant transformation, with unexpected shifts unfolding rapidly in your professional environment. Anticipate a series of beneficial developments to emerge shortly, marking a turn of events that could significantly alter your current trajectory. However, if you've recently been basking in a streak of success, it's wise to remain vigilant. Challenges may arise in the form of deceit or betrayal, with potential adversaries looking to undermine your achievements or financial stability. Such encounters could prove to be deeply unsettling. As the week progresses, your inherent boldness and zest for life will come to the forefront. You possess an indomitable spirit and a fearless approach to life, which fuels your swift decision-making and embraces a dynamic perspective.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Mint Lucky day Wednesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week calls for a period of calm reflection and distancing yourself from bustling social scenes. Engaging in calming practices such as mindfulness or deep relaxation techniques can be beneficial for your inner tranquility. Recently, dissatisfaction might have clouded your professional and personal realms, but it's crucial to not let this overshadow the current period. The horizon looks promising, with opportunities for financial growth and success in your endeavors. Trusting your gut feeling could help navigate through simpler situations, leveraging your fair-minded and thoughtful approach to transition smoothly from challenges to positive outcomes. This approach not only paves the way for financial and emotional fulfillment but also guides you towards a deeper understanding of yourself and your surroundings, leading to a fulfilling journey towards personal growth.

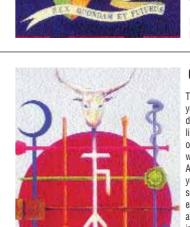
Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Lavender Lucky day Monday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

As the week unfolds, you may find yourself grappling with limitations. Your current endeavors have saddled you with an overwhelming array of duties, leaving you feeling ensnared and unable to extricate yourself. This sense of being trapped, coupled with apprehensions about making any moves, suggests an undercurrent of challenges stifling your progress. The presence of adversaries. or perhans those who wish to see you falter, adds to this complex scenario. Obstacles, driven by misplaced desires and a lack of awareness, further complicate your journey towards success. However, amidst these trials, there remains a glimmer of optimism. An inherent strength within you holds the key to overcoming these hurdles. As the week comes to a close, a wave of tranquility washes over, allowing you to rise above worldly concerns.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Maroon Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week marks a period of achievement and stability in your life, built on a foundation of hard work and dedication. The rewards you're experiencing may seem like a sudden boon, yet they are often the result of your own efforts. It's a time to recognize not just your material wealth but the richness of your inner life as well. Advancements in your career, symbolizing a boost in your confidence, are likely. You find yourself being a source of support and inspiration for those around you. earning respect and admiration. Your unique perspective allows you to approach situations with fairness and insight. As the week draws to a close, you turn your focus inward, engaging in practices that enhance your inner peace and understanding, reflecting on the depth of your knowledge and enlightenment.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Peach **Lucky day** Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, you embody a spirit of kindness, generosity, honesty, and tranquility. An opportunity for a burgeoning relationship presents itself, promising deep fulfillment and joy. Listen closely to your inner guidance, as it plays a crucial role in bringing your most cherished dreams and aspirations to fruition. Professionally, your resilience, swift decisiveness, and unwavering commitment pave the way for overcoming challenges, leading to noteworthy achievements. Your efforts are likely to garner widespread recognition and respect, celebrating your unwavering dedication. This period marks the culmination of previous competitive challenges, allowing you to relish in the rewards of your hard work. As the week draws to a close, a sense of celebration permeates the air, with plans for a significant gathering or event highlighting your recent successes and the joy they bring. Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Coral



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, your forward momentum might attract unwelcome attention from those who wish to see you falter. Beware of those aiming to tarnish your reputation as obstacles and opposition could emerge, potentially flipping your world on its head. Additionally, there's a risk of your own innovative energies being misdirected to work against you. However, remember, the greatest challenge comes from within. Workplace disagreements and resistance from critics could test your patience and convictions. Despite this, maintain your composure and seek common ground when possible, clinging steadfastly to your goals without letting external forces sway your path. As the week concludes, a wave of nostalgia may inspire a return to familiar surroundings, where reuniting with loved ones will rejuvenate your spirit, allowing you to recharge and return with a renewed, optimistic outlook

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Nevy Blue Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week marks a profound beginning for you, as initial surges of deep feeling set the stage for transformative experiences. You'll encounter moments of intense passion, joy, and enlightenment early on, signaling a time when your most private hopes and ambitions could start to materialize. However, as the week progresses, you may find yourself grappling with familial tensions, enveloped in a cloud of melancholy and nostalgia that ties you to bygone times. Despite this, as the week draws to a close, you'll witness a significant shift away from these challenges towards a brighter, more serene state of being. This period of transition might inspire you to seek a fresh start in a new environment, suggesting a move or significant change in your professional setting is on the

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Indigo Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Lucky day Sunday

You are entering a period marked by deepening connections, where feelings of closeness and affection are set to flourish. Embrace this time by listening to your intuition and aligning with your inner desires. This phase is ripe for experiencing the joy of new or unconditional love whether it manifests as a significant romantic development a commitment, or the joy of a new beginning. Alongside these developments, you may find yourself engaging more passionately in competitive activities, striving for personal bests. However, challenges in the form of disagreements or intense rivalries could surface, urging the need for compromise and understanding. Striving for equilibrium is key—acknowledge differing perspectives and work towards unity and peace. In doing so, you'll find that harmony can be achieved, even in the face of adversity

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Teal Lucky day Wednesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

At the start of the week, emotional turbulence dominates your experience, leading to heightened sensitivity over minor concerns such as health fluctuations, challenges with family dynamics, or a lack of attention from your partner. Seeking your feelings through writing or other artistic endeavors. As the week progresses, a surge of vitality and ambition empowers you to take control, embracing commitments and tasks with integrity. Your readiness to uphold promises and tackle responsibilities head-on may lead you to receive a significant assignment, demanding your full dedication and effort. Approaching the week's conclusion, anticipate a pivotal shift in your circumstances. Opportunities for professional growth or entrepreneurial ventures are on the horizon, promising a positive transformation in your life's direction and heralding a period of prosperity and fulfillment. Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week, individuals are deeply influenced by their emotional currents, embodying the roles of compassionate caregivers, healers, and nurturers. Their open-hearted generosity extends a supportive hand to those in need, offering guidance and profound commitment to the well-being of others, showcasing their innate ability to navigate and alleviate the challenges faced by those around them. These individuals are characterized by a remarkable blend of mental and physical resilience. Their strength, derived not merely from empathy and affection but also from an indomitable force within enables them to persevere. Their unique approach to life, unfettered by sentimentality, surprises many, revealing an unexpected depth of character. Through these qualities, they effortlessly earn the admiration and deep connection of those

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Fuchsia

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aking off from the previous issue, first, the symbology of Damru needs attention. With its play, the equilibrated state of the primordial source gets shaken, when the primal sound note 'Om' gets excited. Now going by the scientific perception, once there is entropy (disorder), it multiplies in geometric progression. It so happened following excitation of Om sound also. In the process, first came into play Energy-trinity - Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa. Lord Shiva's Trident is symbolic of his power. Three phalanges of the trident, branching out of the base rod, imply three dimensions of energies emanating from a singularity. Following random mutation of these three primal energies, emerged multitude of differentiated energy streams. The harmony and symphony of those energy streams led to all creations. First, up above in the sky. The ground thus got laid down for creation of life cycle on earth plane. Moon, playing from the front carries forward cosmic forces on earth. Moon, thus, serves as the interface between the cosmic world above and life mechanism on earth

Thus, comes into being a life cycle, which runs in succession. It is reflected by running water stream of the perennial river Ganges originating from Lord Shiva's hair locks. Water travels from its source to the sea, extending life all through its run. We are aware that but for water there would be no live form-existence. Science also believes that the first live existence emerged in water. Water running down the river stream, as also in the sea, evaporates. It then takes the form of cloud, and again rains back in purified form to recharge the water bodies on earth every now and then. All forms of life follow a similar cycle. We are born and then after pursuing one's journey here in this world for a while, we meet the end of our form-existence. Life's journey however does not end in finality with death. It rather gets recycled with a new rejuvenated bodyencasement, charged with fresh vigour and strength. The way recycled water appears in purified form. Life's journey thus continues unabated changing its garb again and again. In the second imagery, Lord Shiva is shown mounted on a bull. He has in

Shiva shows how the world evolved



His entourage assortment of multitude forms of existences, some of them weird and even invisible. To name a few, divine beings; human beings; devilish existences; animals; birds; goblins,

ghost. Symbolically, His entourage is indicative of the multipolar manifest world with all its enormity and diversity. This symbol stands for the dynamic

and even invisible existences such as

as a bull, while pulling a cart keeps moving unprovoked at a constant speed. It will not stop in the way till it reaches a place designated for being fed and taking rest. After a while, the bull again takes the journey forward. After reaching the desired destination, it again reverts to its normal place of abode after completing the voyage. The manifest world too, after being on the run for a specified time, gets back to the primal source to acquire a restful state, whence it gets recharged once again. Following which, out of the seeds of life withdrawn into primal source, fresh creation cycle takes off. Let us now have a look at those forming Lord Shiva's entourage. It exemplifies multitude of existences forming this world. It will be important to note that as per Indian perception approximately 8.4 million species are there in existence. Perhaps, even the chroniclers of modern science suggest a number close to Indian perception. The divine beings are personification of the cosmic forces, vital to creation, sustenance, and recycling of existential order. Human beings are said to be armed with intelli-

world ever on the move at its own pace,

gence and awareness level, much higher than other creatures. The onus, thus, lies on them to work towards qualitative existence of the whole living order. Devilish existences imply ignorant people having a clouded mind. Because their intelligence level is under limitation, they are primarily driven by animalistic instincts. They, therefore, are not expected to be conscious about their collective obligations. It also implies all negative orientation of mind that may prove detrimental to harmonious and peaceful coexistence. The presence of invisible existences such as ghosts, make out a purposeful reference. These unseen creatures supposedly symbolise the formless existence during the interregnum period between two successive lives. They, therefore, symbolise continuum between successive lives. In a way it can be said that Lord Shiva's entourage presents a picture of all seen and unseen existences forming this living world.

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