OPINION 6

COMMUNAL FRICTION

WORLD 8

CONDITION OF SLOVAKIA PM

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MONEY 10

HERO MOTOCORP PLANS TO EXPAND

ELECTRIC MODEL RANGE

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

> Late City Vol.18 Issue 139 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable



DEHRADUN, TUESDAY MAY 21, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3 the plant 1864 the stablished 1864 the plant of the stablished 1864 the stablished 186

SALT LESS KKR TAKE ON SUNRISERS **HYDERABAD** 12 SPORTS

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Polling goes south as mercury heads north AAP's trouble mounts

s swathes of north India stewed in brutal heat Aduring the peak of summer, voter apathy continued in the fifth phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, with voter turnout recorded at 57.46 per cent (tentative until 8:30 pm) in 49 constituencies across six States and two Union Territories. This phase saw sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal and a poll boycott in a village in Uttar Pradesh.

highest The percentage was in West Bengal (73 per cent), while lowest was Maharashtra (49.04 per cent). This was the smallest phase in terms of the number of constituencies for which voting took place.

Low voter turnout in the fifth phase sent political parties, including the BJP, into a tizzy. After Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency, one of the 49 seats voting in the fifth phase registered 54. 49 per cent voter turnout seems heading for the highest turnout in the last eight Lok Sabha elections.

This is a record of sorts for the constituency in north Kashmir for any general election held so far. The best turnout in the last thirty-five year history of polling in Baramulla seat was 61.09 per cent, in the 1984 general

elections. This comes after Srinagar recorded 38.49 per cent polling during the fourth phase. Baramulla is one of the three seats in the Kashmir division of J&K-other than Srinagar and Anantnag-Rajouri-where the BJP has not fielded any candidates. In 2019, the constituency recorded a turnout of 34.6 per cent, whereas in 1989, it was at a mere 5.48 per cent,

the commission said.
As per the EC's voter turnout App, Ladakh recorded at 67.15 per cent, Jharkhand at 63.00 per cent, Jammu and 52.60 per cent, Jammu and Kashmir 54.67 per cent, Odisha 60.72 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 57.79 per cent.

In Maharashtra, the Dindori seat recorded highest voter turnout of 57.06 per cent, Bhiwandi recorded 49.43 per cent, Dhule 48.81 per cent, Dindori 57.06 per cent, Kalyan 41.70 per cent, Mumbai North 46.91 per cent, Mumbai North Central 47.46 per cent, Mumbai North East 48.67 per cent, Mumbai North West 49.79 per cent, Mumbai South 44.63 per cent, Mumbai South Central 48.26 per

cent, Nashik 51.16 per cent, Palghar 54.32 per cent, Thane 48.04 per cent and Kalyan 41.70 per cent

In 14 Lok Sabha seats of Uttar Pradesh, Amethi and Raebareli, two wellknown constituencies in the State recorded voter turnout



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addresses a campaign meeting in support of BJP candidate for East Delhi seat Harsh Malhotra for Lok Sabha polls, in New Delhi, on Monday

at 54.17 per cent and 57.85 per cent respectively. Union Minister Smriti Irani from the BJP is contesting here while Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is contesting from Raebareli.

After the fifth round of Opposition Bloc is set to polling in the ongoing Lok

Sabha election, the Congress on Monday said only 15 days remain for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's departure, claiming that winds of change are blowing across the country and the INDIA

sweep the ruling NDA away.

Modi has alleged that poor campaigning by the Congress and its allies could be a reason for low voter turnout in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls with even their party workers not turning out to vote for them and this could politically benefit the BJP.

incidents of Scattered violence marred the polls in seven parliamentary constituencies of West Bengal where TMC and BJP workers clashed in various parts of Barrackpore, Bongaon, and Arambagh seats. The poll panel said it has received 1,036 complaints from different political parties alleging

malfunctioning and agents being stopped from entering

In a social media post, the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Congress, said, "Booth number 5, Rasulpur in Sareni in Rae Bareli is closed since 8 am (and) voters are going back. So this is how (the target of) 400 (seats) will be crossed!

Samajwadi Party candidate from Gonda constituency Shreya Verma complained to the Election Commission that fair polling is not taking place at booth numbers 180 and 181 in the Mankapur

In Maharashtra, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray claimed there were a lot of complaints from electors about facilities outside polling booths.

over foreign donations

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In yet another setback to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his party, of which he is the national convenor, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received Rs 7.08 crore in foreign funds from 2014 to 2022, allegedly violating the Contribution Foreign Regulation Act (FCRA), the Representation of People Act (RPA), and the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

In its dossier to the Union Home Ministry, the ED has revealed that the AAP received funds from multiple donors in USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman and other countries.

According to the ED, the real identity of foreign donors was concealed in AAP's books to circumvent restrictions on foreign donations to political parties, with donations directly deposited into AAP's IDBI bank account.
The ED investigation revealed

that multiple donors have used the same passport numbers for donation, e-mail IDs, mobile numbers and credit cards to donate to the AAP.

The ED has shared all the information with the Union Home Ministry relating to its investigations with details of donors, such as names of the various AAP volunteers and

donor, country of donor, functionaries, passport number, amount donated, mode of donation and bank account number of receiver, billing name, billing address, billing telephone numbers, billing e-mail, time and Durgesh Pathak. The investigations so far

The ED, in its investigation, claimed several instances of irregularities in the collection of foreign funds by the AAP and its leaders and accused some of them, including AAP MLA, Durgesh Pathak, of siphoning off the funds collected during a fund-raising event in Canada in 2016, for personal benefits.

& date of donation and

payment gateway used etc,

investigation under PMLA,

gathered

during

directorate substantiated the allegations through the contents of emails exchanged between Aniket Saxena (coordinator of AAP overseas India), Kumar Vishwas (then convenor of AAP overseas India), Kapil Bhardwaj (then AAP member)

revealed that not only were collected amounts fund-raising through campaigns in the USA and Canada and identities of actual donors have been concealed in the books of accounts maintained by the AAP in order to circumvent the restrictions imposed under FCRA on donations by foreign citizens to a political party. But also the analysis of data of foreign donations revealed that multiple donors have used the same passport numbers for donation, used the same passport numbers, e-mail IDs, mobile numbers and credit cards to donate to AAP.



BJP National president JP Nadda chairs party's national general secretaries' meeting, at party headquarters, in New Delhi, on

Two rounds to go, Nadda takes stock of BJP poll fortunes

PIONEER NEW SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A mid the hectic Lok Sabha polls campaigning for the remaining two phases, an urgent meeting of top BJP leaders, including general secretaries

review the party's performance so far in the election and devise a strategy for the remaining

BJP national general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh, national general secretaries Arun Singh, Tarun Chugh, party IT department head

was convened by party president JP Nadda on Monday at the party headquarters.
Party sources said the meeting was called to

Amit Malviya, national media in-charge Anil Baluni, and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw were among those who were in the meeting. Sources said Nadda asked all senior leaders and office bearers of the party to play a "more effective role" and make an "active contribution" in the implementation of the party's poll strategy on the ground. BJP chief also reviewed the fifth phase of polling and also discussed the future strategy of the party with regard to the ongoing

Iran Prez dies in chopper crash after stinging Israel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW DELHI/DUBAI

Tranian President Ebrahim Raisi. **⊥**the country's Foreign Minister and several other officials were found dead on Monday, hours after their tainous region of the country's northwest, state media reported. Raisi was 63. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei hours later announced Iran's first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, would serve as the country's acting president until elections are held. Khamenei also announced five days of public mourning.

India announced one-day State mourning on Tuesday as a mark of respect for President Raisi. The Union Home Ministry said the national flag will be flown at half-mast on all buildings where it is regularly flown across India and will be no official entertainment during the period of State mourning.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Congress president Malliarjun Kharge expressed shock and sadness at the demise of the Iranian President. Modi said, "India stands with Iran in this time of sorrow.

"As a mark of respect to the departed dignitaries, the Government of India has decided that there will be one day's State mourning on May 21 (Tuesday) throughout India," the

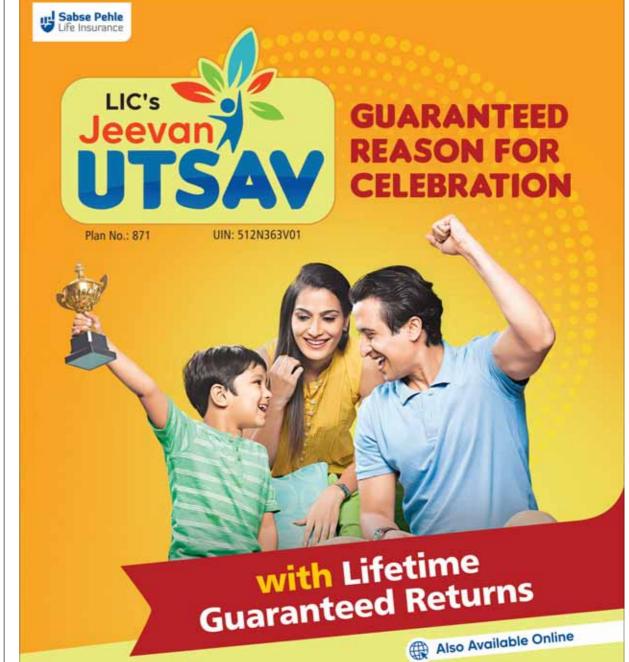


spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, state TV immediate cause for the crash that occurred in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. Among the dead was Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60.

The helicopter also carried the Governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

It was last month when tension had increased in the region after Iran and Israel had clashed in worrying, unprecedented fashion. temperatures cooled after the intervention of the US and other world powers.



No relief on the horizon till May 24

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

elections, the sources said.

There seems to be no respite from the sweltering heat for the residents of Northwest India, including Delhi, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a stark warning on Monday of impending heatwave to severe heatwave conditions over the next five days in the region.

As temperatures increased to alarming 48-degree Celsius mark in Delhi's Najafgarh and red alerts issued for the national Capital and extensive regions northwest India, the severity of the situation cannot be overstated. This has also pushed the country's peak power demand to hover near the projected 235 GW level in



Ranjan Dimri / The Pioneer May, following excessive use

of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert

peak power demand or the highest supply in the day has already reached 233 GW on May 6 compared to 221.42 According to the Union GW recorded a year ago Power Ministry data, the The IMD said scorching

heatwave conditions will persist in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh-Delhi, and West Rajasthan; in some parts of West Uttar Pradesh, East Rajasthan, and northwest Madhya Pradesh during May 20 to May 24, 2024. Also, the heatwave conditions

are likely to be over North Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat during the period.

Health experts said this extreme weather not only poses significant health risks but also disrupts daily life and challenges the day to day activities of the people.

"In the face of such adversity, urgent measures are needed to safeguard the well-being of citizens and mitigate the impact of this blistering heatwave," they said.

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Five including two AIIMS doctors arrested for helping three persons cheat in INI-CET

PNS DEHRADUN

dates in cheating during the Institute of National Importance Combined Entrance Test (INI-CET) conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences

allegedly aiding three candi- AIIMS for admissions to postgraduate courses like answers to the question Doctor of Medicine (MD). The test was conducted across the country on May 19 and the police received confidential information that

कोतवाली ऋषिकेश

 $T^{\text{he police arrested five}}_{\text{persons including two doctors in Rishikesh for}}_{\text{two doctors in Rishi$ car near Barrage Road, who were allegedly sending papers of the entrance test to the three candidates using mobile phones and tablets. The candidates in question were taking the test at the

mobile phones, two medical the possession of the accused. and Vaibhav from AIIMSsending photos of the questhrough which he helps canexaminations across the country. The police have also found admit cards and other details of the three candidates

and will take action accord-

ingly, he added.

◇ GRIHUM

Kashyap (23). All the accused belong to Haryana except Kashyap who hails from Punjab. The police also recovered three tablets, three books and a luxury car from Singh said that according to the main accused Ajit, they had hired two doctors Aman Rishikesh for Rs two lakh each to provide answers to the questions papers. The candidates from Kangra were tion papers from the examination centres and the gang was sending the answers through a Telegram group. Ajit revealed during interrogation that he has three labs didates cheat in several other competitive examinations in exchange for a huge amount of money. The SSP said that the police are investigating the gang as it has been felicitating cheating in several

Two die, three injured | Govt asks departments after vehicle falls into gorge in Rajpur

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

■ sustained serious injuries after the car they were travelling in fell into a gorge near Shikhar Fall in the Rajpur area on Monday morning. The officials informed that the

Two persons died and three two deceased were identified as Dehradun resident merchant navy officer Ayush Sharma (30) and a cafe operator on Mussoorie Road, Âvni Kukreti (29) who lived in Dalanwala area. The injured



Rajpur police station received information about a vehicle falling into a gorge at Shikhar Fall around 3 AM. A police team reached the accident spot and called the search and rescue team of the State Disaster Rescue Force (SDRF) to start the rescue and relief operation. The SDRF with the help of the police and local people pulled out five persons from the gorge after considerable effort. The police found out that two persons had died on the spot and the remaining three were admitted to the hospital for treatment. The

persons include two Dehradun residents Yuvraj Bisht (33) and Isha (28) and a Delhi resident Sagar Narula (30). The officials informed that Bisht and Narula were admitted to the Max Hospital and Isha was admitted to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay (Coronation) Ĥospital. The officials said that according to the injured victims, they had come to Shikhar Fall for sightseeing in their vehicle but when they were returning home, the brakes failed and the vehicle fell into the gorge.

to give benefit of relaxation in promotions to employees

PNS DEHRADUN

The State government has directed all the departments to complete the process of promotions of the employees eligible under the benefit of one time relaxation in the norms. In a letter to all the secretaries, commissioners, heads of departments and district magistrates, the additional chief secretary Anand Bardhan said that the State government on December 29, 2023 had notified a relaxation (amendment) regulation -2023 according to which the eligible employees will be given benefit of relaxation in promotion norms between July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The relaxation will be given to the employees only when all their senior employees have got promoted so that there is no disparity in cadre man-

agement. In his letter, the ACS said that it is observed that in many departments the process of promotion is being delayed. He said that a time of less than one and half month is remaining for promotion on relaxation of norms and eligible employees should not remain deprived

Expressing happiness at the order of the ACS, the president of the State employees' joint federation, Arun Pandey said that the promotion process of the employees should not get delayed. He demanded that the State government should take strict action against the departments showing negligence in the process of promotion.

police Ajai Singh said. He Rishikesh police station start-Relief from heat wave conditions forecast today

(AIIMS) on Sunday. Each of some men of the cheating

the three candidates had mafia were helping some

reportedly paid Rs 50 lakh to candidates appearing for INI-

the accused, the Dehradun senior superintendent of CET in a neighbouring State from Rishikesh. A team from

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The maximum and minimum temperatures mum temperatures remained a few degrees above normal in the plains and in some mountainous regions even as some mountainous regions received light to moderate rain on Monday. The mercury level is expected to get slightly lower today. The State meteorological centre forecast that very light to light rain/thunderstorms are likely to occur at isolated places in Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, Almora and Champawat districts today while dry weather is likely to prevail in the remaining districts. The meteorological centre has also issued a yellow warning (Watch) regarding the possibility of thunderstorms accompanied with lightning/gusty wind (30-40 kmph) likely to occur at iso- Agastyamuni, 12 millimetres lated places in above-men- in Jakholi and five millimetres districts

Uttarakhand. The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness a mainly clear to partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 39 degrees Celsius and 23 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun on Tuesday.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded on Monday were 40 degrees Celsius and 23.5 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 39.5 degrees Celsius and 24.7 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 29.1 degrees Celsius and 13.1 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 28.5 degrees Celsius and 14.1 degrees Celsius in New Tehri. There was 19.5 millimetres rain in Rikhnikhal, 17.5 millimetres in Ukhimath, 13.5 millimetres

Increased traffic causes issues for Rajpur Road residents

PNS DEHRADUN

examination centre in

Kangra, Himachal Pradesh,

the SSP said. The arrested

accused are Ajit (40), Aman Shivach (24), Vijul Gaura

(31), Jayant (22) and Vaibhav

 $R^{\rm esidents\ of\ Rajpur\ Road\ who\ live\ along}$ the stretch from Mussoorie Diversion to old Rajpur Road have expressed their concern over the increased traffic, particularly during the weekends. The rush of tourists to Mussoorie on the weekend and the increased traffic of visitors to this destination with the start of the Char Dham Yatra are posing issues for residents of this area. They claimed that the living environment in the Rajpur Road area has been significantly impacted by the increased traffic and disruptive activities of commuters, adversely affecting local residents. The residents of Rajpur Road urged the administration to restrict heavy traffic diversion in the area during weekends. Virat Pahwa, who owns an automobile shop in the Rajpur Road area, said that during weekends, increased traffic can be observed in the Rajpur Road area as compared to other areas of the city. He said that in addition to the traffic, the visitors play loud music and litter which spoils the condition of Rajpur Road and affects the livng atmosphere and health of local residents. A senior citizen living in the old Rajpur Road area Sunita Bindra stated, "The increased traffic has greatly affected elderly people like me. Due to the increased traffic, especially on weekends, we are unable to

go for a walk." She also expressed concern that the tourist season, with visitors heading to Mussoorie and other areas, will further disrupt their evening walks and lead to noise and air pollution. She further added that the administration must con-

sider diverting heavy traffic to other areas instead of Rajpur Road. For safety reasons, especially during the tourist season, the police administration must increase patrolling in the Rajpur Road area, she said.

The founding president of the Rajpur Community Initiative, Reenu Paul stated that the increased traffic has led to the police administration diverting heavy traffic, especially in the Rajpur Road area. Local residents have been expressing concerns about the increased traffic and the nuisance they suffer during the tourist season for many years, but the authorities have not taken any action so far. Further, she highlighted that half of the people in the Kajpur Koad area are senior citizens, mostly affected by the increased traffic. She suggested that the police and administration should look into diverting heavy traffic during weekends. Additionally, the government should consider limiting the number of tourists in the city, as the increased traffic not only causes chaos but also affects the people, she said.

card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. Tender No. 29-DRM-24-25 30-DRM-MB-24-25 Date 20.05.2024 Date 20.05.2024 Provision to cover shed over LHS 33, 34 (RAC-SPC) in Provision to cover shed ove LHS 37, 29 (ON-BLM) in the the section of SSE/W/SPC section of SSE/W/BLM under ADEN/II/HRI under ADEN/II/HRI Tender Closing Date Time 13.06.2024 16:00 Advertised Value (Rs.) 1,40,24,859,14 1,40,24,971,72 2,20,100.00 2,20,100.00 Earnest Money (Rs.) Bidding Start Date 30.05.2024 30.05.2024 Validity of Offer (Days) 60 Days Period of Completion No. 75-W/2/3/WA/Publi ation DATED : 20.05.202

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Amount Due As Per Demand Notice

Appendix IV (See Rule 8(1) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Where as, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Central Bank of India, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as mentioned against account stated here in to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of the said notices. The borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rule on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured asset. The borrowers / Guarantors in particular and the public in general is nereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Central Bank Of India, Roorkee Branch for the amount and interest thereon.

Name of the Branch & Borrowers	Description of the Immovable Property	Demand Notice	Amount	
Borrowers:1. Sh. Amit Kumar S/o Bhavar Singh, Address: Tikola Kalan, Tekaula Kalan, Roorkee, Distt-Haridwar Uttara -khand Pin- 247670. Guarantor: 1. Mrs. Pinki W/o Mr. Amit Kumar, Address:	Rajendra, South: House of Shree Rampal, East: Plot of	Date of Possession 17.05.2024	Rs. 22,57,553.80 + interest & expenses thereon (less if any payments made)	

Place: Dehradun

DAV College organises workshop on emerging technology

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

PAV PG College organised a one-day workshop on emerging trends in technology on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the department head at Gurukul Kangri University Girls Gurukul campus, Hemlata Krishnamurthy elaborated on research techniques, detailing how research problems should be selected and different research techniques applied

larly in Indian English liter-

Further, the English department head at Doon University Chetan Pokhrival informed about the practical aspect of research. He highlighted that innovative techniques are being adopted in contemporary research to explore themes like feminism, Dalit consciousness, translation art and Indian lit-



problem. each Underscoring the importance of various formats and methods of research and dissertation, Krishnamurthy also added a comprehensive overview of analytical and descriptive methods in English literature, particu-

erature. These methodologies not only enhance existing knowledge but also elevate the literary quality. Further, he introduced novel research topics to the students for potential selection in their dissertations.

CLASSIFIEDS

In my Husband's service record my

THE PIONEER

name is mistakenly recorded as PUNAM THAPA whereas my correct name is POONAM THAPA as mentioned in other all documents. Army no. JC 612234M EX H/CAPT BRITAM RAJ THAPA R/O 110 BELL ROAD MOHOBEWALA, PO CLEMEN TOWN DEHRADUN UTTARAKHAND. vide IN-UK21904191766314W Affidavit 20.05.2024 before Dehradun.

In my Army record my daughter's name is mistakenly recorded as KUMARI SUMAN whereas her correct name is SUMAN RATURI as mentioned in all other documents.Army No-15351777K EX HAV DINESH CHANDRA R/O LANE NO. 5 TAPOVAN ROAD RAIPUR DEHRADUN UTTARAKHAND.vide IN-UK21924517823511W Affidavit 20.05.2024 before Dehradun.

In my Husband's service record my name is mistakenly recorded as BUBLI whereas my correct name is BABLI as mentioned in other all documents. Army no-4082179F EX HAV KEWAL SINGH R/O VIVEK VIHAR L.NO. 6 BALAWALA DEHRADUN UTTARAKHAND. vide IN- UK21904633245391W Affidavit 20.05.2024 before Dehradun.

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Date - 20.05.2024

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE -Sale of secured immovable ass under SARFAESI Act Exaction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the "Act") read with Rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/ Mortgagor (s)/Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to Grihum Housing Finance Limited (formerly known as Poonawalla Housing Finance Limited changed to Grihum Housing Finance Limited with effect from 17 Nov 2023 (Previously known as Magma Housing Finance Public Unlimited Company) (hereinafter referred to as the "Secured Creditor" as per the Act), the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Secured Creditor in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) of the Act read with Rules 8 and 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rule pursuant to notice under section 13(2) of the Act.

The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is," As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on 22/06/2024 through E-Auction. It is hereby informed to General public that we are going to conduct public through E-Auction platform provided at the website: https://www.bankeauctions.com.

For detailed T&Cs of sale, please refer to link provided in GHFL's/Secured Creditor's website i.e. www.grihumhousing.com

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Ind the auction properties and make his own service Loan No. HF/0557/H/21/100037 Prabhakar Gupta

[Interest @ 15.5 p.a. till the realization.] | Disapur, Uttar Pracesh: 244921. | Interest Only) | Interest @ 15.5 p.a. till the realization.] | Disapur, Uttar Pracesh: 244921. | Interest Only) | Interest @ 15.5 p.a. till the realization.] | Disapur, Uttar Pracesh: 244921. | Interest on a secretain additional charges, encumbrances and any third-party interests and satisfy himself/herself/itself in all aspects thereto before submitting the bids. All statutory dues like property taxes, electricity/water dues and any other dues, if any, attached to the property to be ascertained and paid by the successful bidder. The interested bidders are required to register hemselves with the portal and obtain login ID and Password well in advance, which is mandatory for e-bidding, from auction service provider) C1 India PVT LTD, Address- Plot No-68 3rd floor Gurgaon Haryana-122003. Helpiline Number-7291981124,25,26 Support Email id - Support@bankeauctions.com. Contact Person - Vinod Chauhan, Email id-delhi@c1india.com Contact No-9813887931. Please note that Prospective bidders may avail online training on e-auction from them only. The intending purchaser/bidder is required to submit amount of the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by way of NEFT/RTGS /DD in the account of "Grihum housing Finance Ltd", Bank-ICICI BANK LTD. Account No-0006511004660 and IFSC Code. 20, R. N. Mukherjee Road-Kolkata-700001 drawn on any nationalized or scheduled Bank on perfore 21/16/E02024 and register their name at https://www.bankeauctions.com and get user ID and password free of cost and get training on e-Auction from the service provider. After their Registration on the website, the intending purchaser/bidder is required to get the copies of the following documents uploaded, e-mail and sent self-attested hard copy at Address-2 and Floor, SGAD Complex, Naintiat Road, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand -263153. Mobile no.+91 9567626050 e-mail ID rahul.r1 @grihumhousing.com. For further details on terms and conditions please visit https://www.bankeauctions.com & www.gr DATE: 21.05.2024, PLACE: UTTRAKHAND AUTHORISED OFFICER GRIHUM HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED (FORMERLY KNOWN AS POONAWALLA HOUSING FINANCE LTD)

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank **Branch Office: UNDELIVERED** Patel Nagar (DP Code 5315) DEMAND NOTICE 🜃 सिंडिकेट Syndicate NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND

RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002,

Nature of

Loan/s

Date of

Demand

The borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors mentioned below has availed credit facilities From Canara Bank, Branch Patel Nagar, Dehradun and secured by way of mortgage of under mentioned property. As the borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor failed to adhere to terms and conditions of respective loan agreements and had become irregular and classified as NPA as per RBI guidelines. The bank intends to enforce the said properties mortgaged by you and issued demand Notice under registered post / speed post which were not served. Hence this publication is issued. Hereby borrower / co-borrower / Guarantor are called upon to pay the amount mentioned below with contractual rate of interest, costs, charges etc thereon within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned will be constrained to initiate proceedings u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI act against the mortgaged property mentioned below to realize the amount due to Canara Bank, Patel Nagar Branch Dehradun. Further you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said act from transferring the said secured asset either by way of sale / lease or otherwise. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Details of Mortgaged Property

	1.Mr. Pappu Kumar (Borrower/Mortgagor) S/o Soran Singh, 580 Brahampuri Niranjanpur, Dehradun- 248001, Mrs Pramila (Co-Borrower) W/o Pappu Kumar, 580 Brahampuri Niranjanpur, Dehradun- 248001, To Sunny Electronics Prop. Pappu Kumar S/o Soran Singh, 580 Brahampuri Niranjanpur, Dehradun- 248001	Kamia Sharma S.M,30 Ft, North: 20 Ft wide Road, S.M. 30 Ft, South: Land of Smt Kamla Sharma S.M. 30 Ft. Name of The Title Holder Mr. Pappu Kumar S/o Soran Singh.	Finance Canara Home Loan Plus MSME-OD /OCC MSME TERM LOAN Date of NPA 15.03.2021		Rs. 9,74,403.66 (Rupees NineLakh Seventy Four Thousand Four Hundred Three And Paisa Sixty Six Only) as on 15.04.2024 +interest w.e.f from16.04.2024+expenses -recoveries from 15.04.2024 (if any) HL Loan Account No.5315619000015 Rs. 13,07,122 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Seven Thousand One Hundred Twenty Two Only As On 16.04.20244 + interest w.e.f 17.04.2024+ expenses - recoveries from 16.04.2024(if any) HL Plus Account No.164003508279 Rs 14,49,987.30 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Seven And Paise Thirty Only) as on 30.04.2024 +interest from 01.05.2024 -recoveries from 30.04.2024 (if any) ODCC Account No.5315261000006 Rs 4,06,360.84 (Rupees Four Lakh Six Thousand Three Hundred Sixty And Paisa Eighty Four Only) as on 30.04.2024 + interest from 01.05.2024 - recoveries from 30.04.2024 (if any) in MSME Term Loan Account No.17000992084		
Da	Dated: 20.05.2024 Place: Dehradun Authorised Officer, Canara Bank						

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements

Name of Branch/Borrower/

Guarantor

Offline registration for Char Dham | Deploy mechanical excavators 24x7 Yatra suspended till May 31

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Tn view of the increasing number of pilgrims, the State government has decided to suspend the offline registration for the Char Dham Yatra till May 31. The order was given by the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami during a meeting on Char Dham Yatra and drinking water and electricity supply during the ongoing summer on Monday. The CM said that the decision to suspend offline registrations has been taken in public interest from the point of view of security and convenience. He said that devotees should also be encouraged to visit other religious and historical places in Uttarakhand and instructed the Garhwal commissioner and inspector general of police to make a diversion plan for this.

On a firm note, the CM said special focus should be laid on crowd management in the Char Dham Yatra and it should be ensured that the devotees are sent in the Dhams as per the capacity determined.

The CM said that the devotees who have entered the State without registration and want to visit other religious and tourist places other than Char Dhams should be sent there. A clear message should be given to such devotees that they will be sent for darshan in the Char Dhams as per the prescribed number and set standards. For this, advisory should also be issued to tour operators,



The CM directed the officials to analyse shortcomings in the arrangements and management of the Char Dham Yatra in the last 10 days. He said that the reasons for these shortcomings should be identified. The CM said that the commendable works done during the Yatra should also be identified and directed the Additional Chief Secretary Anand Bardhan to prepare weekly report on the Yatra.

On a stern note, the CM said the government and police officers who have been given the responsibility as nodal officers in Kedarnath and Yamunotri should remain in the field continuously and cooperate with the district magistrate concerned and the

police in the arrangements. He also directed the officers to ensure availability of adequate doctors and medicines on the Yatra routes. He instructed all the departments related to Char Dham Yatra to remain on alert mode always.

The CM also reviewed drinking water availability in the State in the meeting. He directed that adequate arrangements for drinking water should be done in view of the ongoing summer season. He said that overhead tanks should be built away from the natural water sources in the mountainous areas. The CM said that adequate arrangements for drinking water should be made in the Char Dham Yatra. He directed that senior officials of departments related to drinking water should go to the field and see the drinking water arrangements. Adequate arrangements for water tankers and generators should be ensured in the State.

During the review of power supply, the CM gave instructions to ensure adequate elec-

tricity supplies in the State . He directed that all the three power corporations, UPCL, UJVNL and PITCUL should work in mutual

at Sirohbagad slide zone: Kumar

Health secretary and secre-tary in- charge of Char Dham Yatra, R Rajesh Kumar has directed officers of Public Works Department (PWD) and administration for round the clock deployment of mechanical excavators at Sirohbagad landslide zone in Rudraprayag district. He said that Sirohbagad is a very sensitive landslide zone and the road here gets blocked even in light rain. The secretary directed that the phone number of the excavator operator should be available with all the officers of administration so that the road block is cleared as soon as possible.

Kumar visited Kedarnath shrine on Monday to inspect the arrangements made by the district administration of Rudraprayag for the Yatra. He said that the State government is committed to a safe and accessible Yatra for the pil-

During his visit Kumar inspected facilities and arrangements in the district hospital of

Rudraprayag. He directed the chief medical officer and medical superintendent to ensure that the treatment of the indisposed pilgrims starts on priority basis. Kumar said that the health department has deployed 180 doctors in the

He directed that the CT machine which has been approved should be installed without any delay. The secretary in charge of Yatra directed the municipal council,

Char Dhams.

Nagar Panchayat and district panchayat for maintaining san-

He directed the Jal Sansthan for ensuring proper supply of drinking water in the Yatra.

itation in the Yatra points.

Kumar also inspected many food outlets and restaurants in Rudraprayag city during his visit. He directed that the edible items should not be kept in open and special care of maintaining quality of food should The representative of the Vyapar Mandal met the secretary and informed him about the lack of proper drinking water and toilet facilities in Rudraprayag market.

The secretary met the district magistrate Saurabh Gaharwar and superintendent of police Vishakha Ashok Badhane at GMVN guest house. The DM informed the secretary about the arrangements and facilities on the Yatra route of Kedarnath. The SP gave an account of the traffic plan for the Yatra.

The CM Dr HC Martorlia informed that five medical officers (MOs) and one physician from other districts have been deployed for Kedarnath Yatra. Similarly nine MOs and one orthopaedic doctor from Rudraprayag are deployed in Yatra. Joint director Dr Amit Sukla, chief development officer GS Khati, MS Dr Manoj Badoni and senior officers of administration and other departments were present during the visit of the secretary.

E-Auction

Sale Notice

Authorised Officer

Upgrade traffic management plan for Char Dhams considering summer break: DGP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

directed the officials to upgrade their action plan for traffic management on Char Dham routes as the number of local pilgrims and tourists is expected to increase soon considering summer vacations in several States nationwide. The Char Dham Yatra is related to the people's faith, identity and economy so it should be the their stay there. He said that to main focus that the pilgrims maintain smooth arrangeget a better experience in the ments in Badrinath Dham State without any adverse after the Darshan, the pil impact on their pilgrimage. This was stated by the DGP grims should be sent towards their destinations continuous-

The director general of Dham Yatra through proper police Abhinav Kumar traffic management on all routes. He said that when traffic pressure increases, the police should make arrangements to halt passengers at designated places. Such places should be near main towns to ensure the passengers can get the facilities like food, beverage, accommodation and essential commodities during



during a meeting with senior police officials at Joshimath in Chamoli on Monday. He held the meeting regarding the smooth conduct of the Char premises.

ly. This will ensure that all can have a smooth and well-organised Darshan without over-

Dham registration

PNS DEHRADUN

The police on Monday arrested a tour and **⊥** travel operator Ravi Kumar Pandey sure on the administration for Char Dham registration of pilgrims. The officials informed that Pandey had lured several pil-



grims to Rishikesh claiming that he will register them for Char Dham Yatra, to extort money from them. Since the government before the court, they added.

Tour operator arrested after threatening suicide for Char

(50), a resident of Uttar Pradesh, on charges of threatening to commit suicide in the transit camp in Rishikesh to allegedly put pres-

has closed new registrations for Char Dham pilgrimages this month, the employees at the transit camp refused to register the pilgrims. After this, Pandey started creating chaos at the site and started threatening that he would commit suicide to put pressure on the administration. Despite repeated attempts, he continued to repeat his suicide threats causing a sense of panic and disturbance among the people there. Considering this, the police deployed there imposed a challan on the accused under section 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and then arrested him. He will be soon presented

eSwasthyaDham app launched for Char Dham pilgrims

App designed to monitor health status of pilgrims, integrated with Char Dham registration portal

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In an initiative aimed at Lenhancing healthcare and monitoring systems for pilgrims undertaking the Char Dham Yatra, the Health department of Uttarakhand in collaboration with Wadhwani Initiative for Sustainable Healthcare (WIHS) has launched "eSwasthyaDham application. The app is designed to monitor the health status of pilgrims and is integrated with the existing Char Dham registration portal of the department of tourism. The platform

enables pilgrims to access their medical records conveniently via their ABHA ID, ensuring easy retrieval of essential health information. The pilgrims will be checked



the Yatra routes. The status of the health checkups will be updated on

the App. Pilgrims themselves can access this vital information ensuring transparency and e m p o w e r i n g them to make informed decisions about their

The chief secretary Radha Raturi said that the health web app underscores the government's unwavering

commitment to health and wellbeing of pilgrims during pilgrimage season.

punjab national bank पंजाब नेशनल बेंक ····भरोसे का प्रतीक! Circle Office- 01 Paltan Bazar, PNB House, Dehradun, Uttarakhand E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement

of Security Interest Act 2002 read with provison to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on" As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentiond in the table herein below, for recovery of dues due to the Bank/Secured creditor from the respective borrower(s) and Guarantor (s). The Reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

w	SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS							
Lot No.	Name of The Branch Name of the Account Name & Addresses of The Borrower/Guarantor/Mortgager	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/Owner's Name (Mortgagers of Property (ies))	(A) Dt. of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (B) Outstanding Amount as on (C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (D) Nature of Possession Symbolic //Physical/Constructive	M. A. S. C.	DATE & TIME OF AUCTION	Details of The Encumbrances Known To The Secured Creditors		
		be treated as 15 days statutory notice to under Ru	le 8(6) Security Intere	st (Enforcement) Rules				
1	(Proprietorship Firm), Add.1. Main Market, Vikasnagar, Distt. Dehradun-248196, Add.2. Hospital Road, Maharaja Agarsan Marg, Vikasnagar, Distt. Dehradun-248198, Proprietor: Sh. Alok Bansal S/o Sh. Jeevan Lal Bansal, Add 1. 80, Enfield Lane, Vikasnagar Near Shiv Mandir, Tehsil Vikasnagar, Distt. Dehradun-248198, Add.2. 1, Opp. Guru Kirpa Complex, Near Govt. Hospital, Vikasnagar, Distt. Dehradun-248198. Guarantor/Mortgagor: 1. Smt. Manisha Bansal W/o Sh. Alok Bansal, Add 1. 80, Enfield Lane, Vikasnagar, Near Shiv Mandir, Tehsil Vikasnagar, Distt. Dehradun-248198, Add.2. 1, Opp. Guru Kirpa Complex, Near Govt.	pachhwadoon Distt. Dehradun. Bounded and Butted as: East- 20ft. wide rasta, wide side 46 ft., West: Land of purchaser, wide side 46 ft., North: Land of Smt. Babita wide side 60 ft., South: Land of Sh. Anil Jain and Sanjay Aggarwal, wide side 60 ft. Owner: Smt. Manisha Bansal W/o Sh. Alok Bansal. Property No. 2. All that land Khata Khatuni No. 143 (1399 to 1404 fasili) bearing Khasra No. 2902 mi, Area 3780 sq.ft. or 351.30 sq.mtrs. Situated at Mauja Alonbagh, within Nagar panchyat Herbertpur Tehsil-Vikasnagar, Pargana pachhwa Doon Distt. Dahradun. Bounded and Butted as East: 16 ft. wide road, wide side 63 ft., West: Land of others, wide side 63 ft., Owner: Smt. Jeevan Lal Bansal S/o Late	(A) 23.12.2021 (B) Rs. 1,00,79,146.00 + further interest and other charges w.e.f. 01.12.2021 (C) 22.03.2022 (D) Physical Possession	Property No.1. (A) Rs. 19.55 Lakh (B) Rs. 1.96 Lakh (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh Property No.2. (A) Rs. 26.78 Lakh (B) Rs. 2.68 Lakh (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	10.06.2024 From 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Not Known		
2	- 248198. 3. Sh. Arvind Kumar Tebak S Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh- 247341, Pradesh-247341, Add.3. D-10, Bajar K Branch: Vikasnagar, Dehradun Borrower: M/s Durga Sugar Company (Proprietorship Firm), Add: Enfield Grant, Vikasnagar Tehsil- Vikasnagar, DisttDehradun- 248198. Proprietor: Sh. Avnish Kumar, Add: Enfield Grant, Vikasnagar Tehsil- Vikasnagar, Distt	Manisha Bansal W/o Sh. Alok Bansal. Boundaries: East: Khala, wide side 90ft., West: 20 ft. wide rasta, wide side 71 ft., North: Land of Others wide side 36 ft., South: Land	(A) 08.11.2021 (B) Rs. 83,46,045.00 + further interest and other charges w.e.f. 01.11.2021 (C) 18.02.2022 (D) Physical Possession	Property No.1. (A) Rs. 27.40 Lakh (B) Rs. 2.74 Lakh (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	10.06.2024 From 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Not Known		
	Jeevan Lal Bansal, Add: Enfield Lane, Vikasnagar, Near Shiv Mandir, Tehsil-Vikasnagar, Distt Dehradun- 248198. 2. Smt. Manisha Bansal W/o Shri Alok Bansal, Add: Enfield Lane, Vikasnagar, Near Shiv Mandir, Tehsil- Vikasnagar, Distt Dehradun- 248198.	Property No. 2. All that land khata Khatuni No. 1002 (1399 to 1404 fasli) bearing Khasra No. 2901 min., Area 2280 sq.ft. r 0.0211 Hect. or 211.89 sq. mtrs. Situated at Village Aton Bagh Tehsil Vikasnagar, Pargana pachhwa Doon Distt. Dehradun, in the name of Smt. Manisha Bansal W/o Shri Alok Bansal. Boundaries: East: Land of others, wide side 38 ft., West: 24 ft. wide Rasta, wide side 38 ft., North: Land of others, wide side 60 ft., South: Land of Shri Alok Bansal, wide side 60 ft. Property No. 3. All that land Khata Khatuni No. 1002 (1399 to 1404 faslli) bearing Khasra No. 2901 min, Area 3180 sq.ft. or 0.0295 Hect. or295.53 sq. mtrs. Situated at Village Aton Bagh Tehsil Vikasnagar, Pargana Pachhwadoon Distt. Dehradun in the name of Sh. Alok Bansal S/o Shri Jeevan Lal Bansal. Boundaries: East: Land of other, wide side 53 ft., West: 24 ft, West: 24ft. wide rasta, wide side 50 ft., South: Land of others, wide side 50 ft.		Property No.2. (A) Rs. 16.15 Lakh (B) Rs. 1.62 Lakh (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh Property No.3. (A) Rs. 22.53 Lakh (B) Rs. 2.26 Lakh (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh				
3.	Road, Dehradun. Address 2: Opposite Negi Market, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun. Address 3: Mamgai Mohalla, Near Nagaraja Temple Danda Khudda Dehradun.	Having area of 147.25 Sq. Mtrs in the name of Ownership holder Smt. Urmila Sharma W/o Sh. Subhash Chand Sharma, Boundaries: North by: Land Smt. Renu Sehata, Side Measuring 64 ft, South: Land other, side measuring 62 ft 9 inches, East: 20 ft, wide road, side measuring 25 ft, West: 4 ft wide street, side measuring 25 ft.	(B) Rs. 53,57,661.02 & Rs. 11,36,470.96 & Rs. 4,19,708.86 (C) 27.10.2023	(A) Rs. 59,00,000/- (B) Rs. 5,90,000/- (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	10.06.2024 From 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Not know		

Kuldeep Sharma: Shri Deepak Sharma s/o Shri Subhash Chand Sharma. Borrower: M/s Sharma Ji Hardware, Prop. Late Shri Kuldeep Sharma, Shri Deepak Sharma S/o Shri Subhash Chand Sharma (Legal Heirs of Late Kuldeep Sharma) Address- Block D, Street No. 4, Aman Vihar, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun.

Borrower: Shri Deepak Sharma S/o Shri Subhash Chand Sharma (Co-borrower/Legal Heir of Shri Kuldeep Sharma) and Smt. Urmila Wife of Shri Subhash Chand Sharma

(Debtor), Address 1: Chetan Mohalla, Near Negi Market, Gujrara Man Singh, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun. Address 2: Opposite Negi Market, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun. Address 3: Mamgai Mohalla, Near Nagaraja Temple Danda Khudanewala, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun. Branch: Tilak Road Dehradun.

One Shop situated 35 Shivaji Marg Kanwali Road, Borrowers: Smt. Kamini Sharma Wo Dehradun Measuring Area 92.4 Sq.ft, i.e. 8.58 Sq.Mtr, (A) 01.01.2020 (A) Rs. 13.50 Lakh 10.06.2024 Not know (B) Rs. 20,18,132.74 (B) Rs. 1.35 Lakh Bounded North: 30 ft wide way, s.m. 6ft-6lnch, South: Property of Seller, s.m. 6ft-6lnch, East: 6.3.feet wide Shri Manoj Kumar Sharma, 35, 11:00 AM Kanwali Road, Dehradun & Manoj Kumar Sharma S/o Shri Mahendra (C) 07.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM w.e.f. 01.12.2021 way, s.m. 14 feet, West: Shop of Seller, s.m. 14 feet, (D) 29.09.2021 (D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh Prakash Sharma, , Kanwali Road, Ownership: Smt. Kamini Sharma W/o Shri Manoj Kumar. (E) Physical Possession

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The auction sale will be The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The auction sale will be "online through e-auction" portal https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp/ on 10.06.2024 From 11.00 AM to 04.00 PM 2. The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register on portal (https://www.mstcauction.com) using their mobile number and email-id. Further, they are requested to upload requisite KYC documents. Once the KYC documents are verified by e-auction service provider (may take 2 working days), the intending Bidders/ Purchasers has to transfer the EMD amount using online mode in his Global EMD Wallet BMD Wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction. 3. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount as mentioned above shall be paid online through 3 modes i.e. NEFT/ Cash/ Transfer (After generation of Challan from (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) in bidders Global EMD Wallet. NEFT transfer can be done from any Scheduled Commercial Bank, however for Cash/ Transfer the bidder has to visit Punjab National Bank Branch. Payment of EMD by any other mode such as Cheques will not be accepted. Bidders, not depositing the required EMD online, will not be allowed to participate in the e-auction. The Earnest Money Deposited shall not bear any interest. 4. Platform (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) for e-Auction will be provided by e Auction service provider M/S MSTC Limited having its Registered office at 225-C, A.J.C. Bose Road, Kolkata-700020 (contact Phone & Toll free Numbers 07941072412/411/413 or 1800-103-5342). The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at e-Auction Service Provider's website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp. This Service Provider will also provide online demonstration/ training on e-Auction on the portal. 5. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule he Further rules and regulations of the auction either visit these websites or Contact Auhorised Officer, Mob: 8193024024 at the address Punjab National Bank, Circle Sastra, PNB HOuse, 1 Paltan Bazar, Dehradun. The bank reserves the right to cancel/suspend the auction process without furnishing any reason. Any type of taxes i.e TDS/ Gst etc. Shall be borne by the successful bidder himself. Any Bid increment will be treated to have increased proportionally on both Land & building and plant & Machinery. The successful bidders shall immediately, i.e on the same day or not later than next working day, as the case may be, deposit 25% of the bid/sale amount (which is inclusive of earnest money deposited) to the account mentioned as above or by way of Demand Draft, to the Authorized Officer conducting the sale. In case of default in payment of the bid amount within the prescribed period, the amount deposited will be forfeited and the secured assets shall be required to deposit the balance 75% of the bid amount within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. In case of default in payment of the remaining 75% of the bid amount within the prescribed period, the amount deposited will be forfeited and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold. In case the date of auction is declared a holiday, then the auction shall be held on the following day. 9. Borrowers/Guarantor are informed that according to the demand notice deposit all the amount (including interest and other expenses) before the date of the auction. If is not done, the property will be auctioned and remaining amount, If any, will be recovered along with interest and expenses from the Borrower. Note: For more information. Contact Authorised Officer Mobile Number: 8193024024.

Opposition hits out at Modi over his minorities remark

The Opposition on Monday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "never uttered a word against minorities" remark, saying he is "lying" as he is "unleashing hate speech" against Muslims from every available forum. Modi had stated he has never uttered a word against minorities, and the BJP has "not just today but never" acted against them. He, however, made it clear that he is not ready to accept anyone as "special cit-

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi said what the PM has said is the truth and all his policies for the poor have benefitted all. He also said the Congress has constantly violated the secular spirit of the Constitution, and his campaign speeches are aimed at



ties' bid to appease the minorities with vote bank politics.Reacting to the prime minister's remarks, CPÎ general secretary D Raja said, "It is completely lie. Modi knows how they (BJP) have been talking about Muslims. Who spoke about mangalsutra, mothers giving births to more children? Muslims and other minorities have been disrespected and deprived of many of their due rights."

The BJP-RSS have been pursuing a "sinister design" of

undermining the minorities and ridiculing them, Raja

alleged. While TMC MP Sagarika Ghose also slammed the prime minister for his remarks, AAP MP Sanjay Singh said the prime minister's comments were laughable as he talks in the "language of hate daily".

When you think he cannot lie anymore, he speaks another lie... This is the party which garlanded the rapists of Bilkis Bano, this is the party which garlanded those who lynched

a Muslim cattle trader. Mod himself speaks of 'shamshan, kabristan, (UP Chief Minister) Yogi (Adityanath) speaks of 80/20," she said. "Not only Hindus and

Muslims, he makes Hindus fight with each other as well. First make Hindus fight with Muslims, then make Hindus fight with Sikhs, then with Christians, then make them fight Buddhists, make Marathas fight non-Marathas, make Dalits fight backwards... This is Bharatiya 'jhagda' party and this is their job," Sanjay Singh said.

DMK spokesperson T K S Elangovan also hit out at the prime minister, saying this is the problem with Modi "that his lie starts getting exposed immediately". "Whatever he says, his government does something that makes it a lie. So people do not believe him," the DMK leader said.

Confident of securing youth votes for Congress: IYC

Confident of securing the youth votes for his party as well as INDIA Bloc alliance members, the youth wing of the Congress - Indian Youth Congress — claims to have toiled hard to set the narrative of perennial problem of unemployment amongst all caste, creed, section, religion and irrespective of degrees and qualifi-"Unemployment, just like pover-

ty is a curse on humanity which has no religion. In the last 10 years of (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's misrule such a vast country has only show growing inequality, restlessness amongst youths, no jobs, no vacancies, no manufacturers to fill the vacuum of earning in every household. Youths have understood that Modi cannot play the Pied Piper of Hamelin by exhibiting false narratives through several platforms of media including the social media where he (PM) and his entire army (Council of Ministers and BJP) keep on sharing vague figures, fake reports of unknown agencies. Youth need jobs to feed their



family, look after this kids for better education and care their elderly parents who needs proper medical attention," said Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Srinivas BV, in an exclusive interview to The Pioneer.

Srinivas said the above gist is the Congress Manifesto 2024 Lok Sabha poll which has shaped after millions of interactions done by the party's tallest leader, Rahul Gandhi, during his two Bharat Jodo Yatra — the first one from Kanniyakumari to Kashmir and the second from Manipur to Mumbai.

He also questioned the very intention of the BJP State Governments about the exams or job vacancies' paper leaks regularly which he claimed that the job seekers too now underBJP Governments.

During his yatra, along with RG, (Rahul Gandhi as mentioned by him), Srinivas claimed that most complaints were on the issues related to demonetisation, GST, pandemic and the combined effect of all these has led to depressions, other medical complications amongst the citizens. "Over these a lot of thoughts were given during the prepara-tions for general elections and the strategy to dislodge the BJP led Government at Centre and in due course in the States. Modi government and BJP Governments have only brought complications in their governance which always hampered the common man. Congress from its inception one and half a century ago first thinks of welfare and social upliftment and work to bridge the gap wherever. If you look soon after Independence the realise how a visionary statesman like first PM Nehru ji worked to balance the regional imbalance by placing strategically industries, institutions, organisations the benefit of which shall continue for another century. BJP and Team Modi has this understanding but they will never utter a word on

party has now visions except to dent harmony," Srinivas said who earned lot of laurels for his humane approach during the covid pandemic for creating a team and bank of medicines and oxygen cylinders to distribute to the needy.

On a question that what has been the reason that once upon a time Congress' top youth leaders left the party to join BJP, the Youth Congress president said those who were afraid by pressure tactics and intimidations by the ruling party has

Our leader (Rahul Gandhi) says he will never compromise on party ideology and sincerity come whatever may. He always convey us Daro Mat (don't be afraid). During my cris-cross travel for the elections I heard even the citizens of the country have started feeling the same and says that this time they will pass on the idea of Daro Mat. They claimed they are being intimidated by the current regime that Congress will take away their cattle, ornaments (mangalsutra) but the voters have realised yet another chunavi jumla will not reap this

Agniveers not just soldiers but leaders, innovators, defenders of national sovereignty: CDS Chauhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Monday said Agniveers are not just soldiers but also leaders, innovators and defenders of the nation's

Interacting with the Agniveers undergoing training at Maratha Regimental Centre and Airmen Training School (ATS), Belagavi, he underscored the noble purpose of military service and its pivotal role within the military framework.

The CDS lauded Agniveers for choosing the Armed Forces. He stated that it was a testament to their exceptional duty towards the nation, defence ministry said

Acknowledging the personal challenges faced by the soldiers and their families and the hardships they endure while operating in the challenging environments, General Chauhan assured that despite the challenges, the Agniveers will find their journey immensely rewarding and their each step, will lead to their personal growth and the nation.

Elaborating the evolving nature of the warfare, the CDS highlighted the complexity and unpredictability of training for becoming techfuture conflicts to include



Cyber Warfare, Artificial Intelligence and Asymmetric Threats which are now an integral part of the battlefield. He also spoke about technology integration and continuous learning and mentioned that in addition of staying abreast with the latest advancements, there is also a need to showcase innovative approach towards combat.

During his visit to ATS, Belagavi, CDS took a tour of the training institute to gain insight into Agniveervayu training of IAF.

batch of Agniveervayu of training, the CDS lauded as per the revised induction pattern introduced by the defence ministry in 2022. He exhorted them to focus on

nologically proficient soldiers,

ready to meet the challenges of future warfare.

The CDS further stressed upon the trainees that learning is a lifelong process, especially in an ever evolving and dynamic field of warfare which is tech intensive, entailing a profound sense of responsibility in constant upgradation of skills.

He advised the trainees to always nurture the values of integrity, physical fitness, discipline, and esprit-de-corps in their pursuit of professional excellence.

He interacted with the third Highlighting the importance ing faculty of ATS, and the Maratha Regimental Centre and urged them to keep on striving for excellence towards furtherance of operational might of the nation.

No attempt be made to reduce area of open air prisons functioning in country, says SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has ▲ directed that there shall be no attempt to reduce the area of open air prisons functioning in the country.

Semi-open or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the premises during the day to earn a livelihood and return in the evening. The concept was introduced to assimilate the convicts with society and reduce psychological pressure as they faced difficulties in leading normal lives outside. A bench of Justice BR Gavai and Justice Sandeep Mehta noted advocate

Parameshwar, assisting it as an amicus curiae in a matter related to jails and prisoners, submitted that a model draft manual has been prepared by the Centre wherein the nomenclature "open correctional institutions" was used for open air camps/institutions/prisons.

"We further direct the (Union) Ministry of Home Affairs to present a status report on recent developments in respect of the open correctional institutions after coming of the Model Prison Manual, 2016, Correctional Services Act, 2023," the bench said in its order passed on May 17.

The bench noted it has been informed that there is a proposal to reduce the area at Sanganer open air camp ir

"We thus direct that there shall be no attempt of reduction in area of open air camps/institutions/prisons, wherever they are functioning," the bench

"The data put on record, wherein such open correctional institutions are shown to be functioning in different names, would further show that the said institutions are not being utilised to their optimum capacity," it said.

It noted the amicus curiae submitted that strengthening of the open correctional institutions, apart from addressing the issue of overcrowding of jails, will also help in the rehabilitation of prisoners and do away with caste discrimination faced by them.

The top court directed Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal, where such facilities are functioning most robustly, to share their best practices, applicable rules, guidelines and experience on setting up, expansion and management of open correctional institutions with the National Legal Services Authority

"The registry shall communicate this order to the chief secretary of the states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal for compliance," it said.

Kharge heaps praise on Adhir as combative soldier of party

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/KOLKATTA

 $D_{\substack{\text{questioning the trustwor-thiness of TMC supremo}}}^{\text{ays after snubbing him for}}$ Mamata Banerjee, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday heaped praise on West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, lauding him as a "combative soldier" of the party. Kharge had snubbed

Chowdhury, five-time Lok Sabha MP from Bahrampur, last week for his remarks that Banerjee cannot be trusted and that she might go with the BJP. "Vo hamarey ladaku sipahi hain (combative solider)," he said about Chowdhury, who has only intensified his offensive against the West Bengal chief minister by alleging that she has used violence to crush the Congress in the state and has been helping the BJP.

Kharge said some TMC leaders were now trying to rake up the issue of the Congress alliance with the Left but that will not help. "They are trying to present it differently. But it will not happen like this as the Congress party is strong and understands each other. What is that the Congress high command has taken a decision to have a coalition with the Left and we are moving forward with that," Kharge said. The TMC is contesting the Lok

state, while the Congress and the Left are jointly fighting the polls. On Saturday, Kharge had the organisation". dismissed Chowdhury's criticism of Banerjee while address-

(SP) chief Sharad Pawar in Mumbai. "Mamata Banerjee is with the alliance. She has recently said that she will join the govern-ment. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will not take the decision. The decision will be taken by me and the high command and those who don't agree will go out," Kharge had said in remarks that riled Chowdhury's supporters in

ing a joint press conference

with Shiv Sena (UBT) president

Uddhav Thackeray and NCP

Bengal. Chowdhury, while reacting to cannot speak in favour of someone who wants to finish me and our party in Bengal politically. This is a battle for every Congress worker. I have spoken on their behalf. I don't used for her (Banerjee's) personal agenda and then finish After Kharge's remarks, sever-

al posters and hoardings of the Congress president were defaced with ink in front of the party's state headquarters in Kolkata on Sunday. Chowdhury had expressed dis-Sunday. pleasure over the incident and asked party workers to lodge a police complaint.

Banerjee, who had initially stated that she will extend outside support to the opposition front INDIA after it comes to power, later said she is very much part of the anti-BJP alliance at the national level and would form the next government with it.

However, the West Bengal CM both CPI(M) and Congress, who are part of the alliance, have joined hands and helped the BJP in the state. The TMC had walked out of the INDIA bloc in West Bengal in January.

Congress vows to deliver Paanch Nyaya, Pachees Guarantee if INDIA Bloc comes to power

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

As the Siddaramaiah-led government completed one year in office, the Congress on Monday said it has successfully implemented all guarantees made to the people of the State and when the INDIA bloc inevitably gets the clear mandate on June 4, the party will deliver by implementing 'Paanch Nvava Pachees Guarantee'.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said when the Congress makes guarantees to India's voters, it delivers.

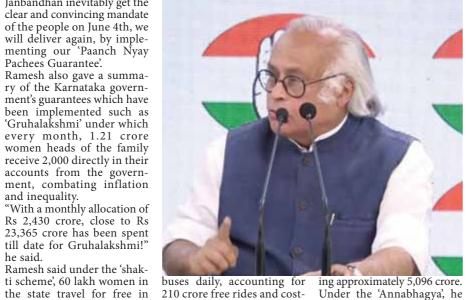
"It has now been one year of our government in Karnataka, where we have successfully implemented all guarantees made to the people. When the and INDIA

Janbandhan inevitably get the clear and convincing mandate of the people on June 4th, we will deliver again, by implementing our 'Paanch Nyay Pachees Guarantee'.

Ramesh also gave a summary of the Karnataka govern-ment's guarantees which have been implemented such as 'Gruhalakshmi' under which every month, 1.21 crore women heads of the family receive 2,000 directly in their accounts from the government, combating inflation and inequality. "With a monthly allocation of

Rs 2,430 crore, close to Rs 23,365 crore has been spent till date for Gruhalakshmi!"

Ramesh said under the 'shakti scheme', 60 lakh women in



said in order to end hunger in Karnataka, the government transfers 5 kg free rice grain to 1.38 crore families and 4.08 crore beneficiaries

Ramesh also listed the other schemes implemented by the Karnataka government such as 'Yuvanidhi — to support youth looking for jobs, graduates are given Rs. 3000/month and diploma holders Rs. 1500/month and 'Gruhajyoti under which 200 units of free electricity is benefiting over 1.67 crore families.

"Many of our signature guarantees for the Lok Sabha elections are built on the Karnataka Model: Mahalakshmi: Rs. 1 lakh per year transferred directly to the account of one woman in each poor family; Doubling of

the individual allowance of free ration under the National Food Security Act to 10 kg per person; Pehli Naukri Pakki: Guaranteed one-year apprenticeship of Rs. 1 lakh per year to all graduates and diploma holders," the Congress leader said.

The Congress' vision for India is being implemented in Karnataka today -- freedom from hunger and from price rise, affordable healthcare, jobs for youth, and prosperity for all, Ramesh said

The Congress has pitched its election campaign on 'Paanch Nyay' — Yuva Nyay, Naari Nyay, Shramik Nyay, Kisaan Nyaya and Hissedari Nyay -under which it has promised 25 main guarantees for the

Three Indian Navy ships in Philippines to strengthen maritime cooperation: Official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Three Indian Navy ships are in the Philippines with an aim to further strengthen maritime cooperation with that country, an official said on Monday. Their visit is part of an operational deployment of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet to the South China Sea.

Indian Navy ships — INS Delhi, INS Shakti and INS Kiltan — arrived in Manila on Sunday, a spokesperson of the Navy said. The aim is to further strengthen the longstanding friendship and maritime cooperation, the official said. The ships were accorded a warm welcome by the

Philippines Navy. During the visit, personnel from both the navies will engage in wide range of professional interactions, including subject matter expert exchange, sports fixtures, cross-deck visits, cultural visits and collaborative community outreach programmes, the spokesperson

"The ships will also partici-Partnership Exercise (MPX) with the Philippines Navy," he

ICMR distances itself from research stating 50 per cent of Covaxin recipients complained of infection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Monday distanced itself from the study, conducted by researchers from the Banaras Hindu University that stated that nearly 50 per cent of 926 study partici-pants who received Covaxin complained of infections during the follow-up period, predominated by viral upper res-

piratory tract infections. Covaxin has been indigenously developed in India by the Hyderabad based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the ICMR. ICMR Director General Dr

Rajiv Bahl criticised the study for its poor methodology and design, and clarified the arti-cle was misleading and erroneously "acknowledges" the government's premier medical research institute.

Dr Bahl said the study had no control arm of unvaccinated individuals for comparing the rates of events between the vaccinated and unvaccinated groups. Hence, the reported events in the study cannot be linked or attributed to COVID-19 vaccination.

with the study and has not provided any financial or technical support for the research, Dr Bahl said.

The ICMR DG has also written a letter to the authors of the paper and Editor of the journal to immediately remove the acknowledgement to ICMR and publish an erra-

The research paper, titled 'Long-Term Safety Analysis of the BBV152 Coronavirus Vaccine in Adolescents and Adults: Findings from a l-Year Prospective Study in North India' stated that nearly one



in the study who received Bharat Biotech's anti-Covid vaccine Covaxin reported 'adverse events of special interest, or AESI.

Dr Bahl said that ICMR was acknowledged for research support without any prior approval of or intimation to ICMR, which is inappropriate and unacceptable. He stated that ICMR cannot be associated with this poorly designed study which purports to present a "safety analysis" of Covaxin due to several criti-

He said the study does not

rates of observed events in the population, making it impossible to assess the change in incidence of observed events in the post-vaccination period. Baseline information of study participants is missing.
The study tool used is incon-

sistent with 'Adverse Events of Special Interest (AESI)' as defined in the reference provided in the paper for AESI. The method of data collection has a high risk of bias, he said. Dr Bahl also noted that similar acknowledgements to ICMR have been made in

previous papers without permission, raising concerns about the authors' practices. "The authors have been

urged to immediately rectify the acknowledgment to ICMR and publish an erratum. Additionally, they are asked to address the methodological concerns raised. Failure to do so may prompt ICMR to consider legal and administrative action," he said.

The Editor has been asked to retract the paper which implicitly makes conclusions on vaccine safety which are not supported by evidence.

Congress did not revoke Article 370 for appeasement politics: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday attacked the Congress, saying the party did not revoke Article 370, which allowed special status to Jammu and Kashmir, for the sake of appeasement politics.
Addressing an election rally

here, Shah reiterated that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) belongs to India and "we will take it back".

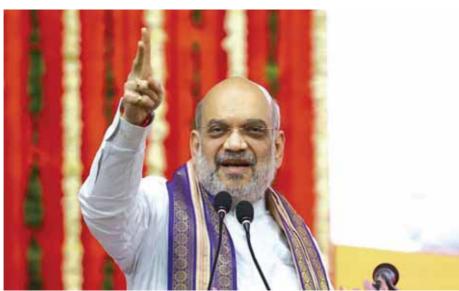
The senior BJP leader also attacked the Congress on the Ram temple issue, saying its top leaders such as Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi did not take part in the temple's consecration ceremony to please the party's minority vote bank.

Targeting the Congress on Kashmir, he said "For appeasement politics, they did not revoke Article 370." The Congress did not revoke the article despite a rise in terrorism in Jammu and

Kashmir, he said.

"You all made Narendra Modi ji the Prime Minister for the second time, and on August 5, 2019, he scrapped Article 370. And now our tricolour proudly flutters in Kashmir," he said.

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, who is contesting the Karnal assembly bypoll and chieḟ minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who is in fray for the Karnal Lok Sabha seat, were also present



Addressing the gathering, Shah told the crowd, "Tell me, is Kashmir ours or not? Say it loudly, your voice should reach Kharge."

"Kharge sahab, you are 80-year-old but you do not understand the country. Haryana's youth can give their life for Kashmir," Shah said hitting out at the AICC president. Shah was alluding to the AICC president's recent remark on why the prime minister spoke about the abrogation of Article 370 during a rally in Rajasthan and not the issues plaguing

The home minister also slammed Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's atom bomb remark that has sparked a political row.

"I want to tell Rahul (Gandhi) baba from this land of Karnal, listen with open ears, this is the BJP government, PoK belongs to India, will remain ours and we will take it back,"

In a purported video clip that has gone viral on social media, Aiyar is heard saying India should give respect to Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and engage with it as it also possesses the atom bomb. He indicated in the video that if a "mad person" comes to power there and uses the atomic bomb, it will have its effect in India too.

Shah also asked the Congress and particularly, its party leader B S Hooda why they let the Ram Temple issue linger

He highlighted that all the developments major regarding the temple took place in Modi's second term the 'bhoomi pujan' of the temple land, the victory of the Hindu side in the Ram

Janmabhoomi case, and the

idol consecration on January

The BJP leader also pointed fingers at Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi for not taking part in the "Ram Utsav (consecration) which was happening after 500 years as they feared about their minority vote bank".

The Union minister also praised Modi on the occasion for making India prosperous and bringing the country's economy from the 11th to

Post polls, vacation | 62 per cent voter beckons Andhra Pradesh leaders

After a velectioneering whirlwind polling, some of the prominent leaders from Andhra Pradesh are currently on a well-deserved break, scattered across diverse destinations, enjoying some much-needed relaxation and rejuvenation.

Polls for the 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state were held on May 13 and the counting of votes will be taken up on June 4, nationwide. YSRCP supremo and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on May 17 left for a foreign tour with family.

Jagan, who is currently in Europe, is expected to return during the month-end, sources close to him said.

The YSRCP chief contested from Pulivendula Assembly segment in the recently

concluded polls.
Similarly, TDP supremo and
Leader of the Opposition
Nara Chandrababu Naidu also, along with his family left the country for a vacation after the polls, Telugu Desam Party sources told PTI.

"Naidu will be coming back at the end of May. He may also undergo a health check-up in the USA during his vacation," they said. He also visited Shirdi and

offered prayers at the Sai Baba temple before embarking on

The TDP leader is contesting from Kuppam Assembly



constituency Janasena founder and actor Pawan Kalyan also left for a foreign country after the polls and is expected to return in a couple of days, party sources said while refusing to share details.

contested from Kalvan Pithapuram Assembly segment.

Naidu's son Lokesh, along with his family is also currently on an international tour. He is contesting from Mangalagiri Assembly seat from where he lost in 2019. The YSRCP contested in all 175 Assembly seats and 25 Lok Sabha segments in the

As part of a seat-sharing deal among NDA partners, the TDP was allocated 144 Assembly and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies while the BJP contested from six Lok Sabha and 10 Assembly seats.

fielded Janasena candidates in two Lok Sabha and 21 Assembly seats.

turnout recorded in Jharkhand till 5 pm

A voter turnout of 61.90 per cent was recorded till the end of polling at 5 pm on Monday in the three Lok Sabha constituencies in Jharkhand, officials said. Voting had commenced at 7

am in Chatra, Hazaribag, and Koderma constituencies as part of the second phase of elections in the eastern state. It was peaceful in all the three constituencies, officials said. Hazaribag Lok Sabha seat registered the highest voter turnout of 63.66 per cent, followed by Koderma (61.60 per cent) and Chatra (60.26 per cent). The overall voter turnout in these three constituencies was 61.90 per

Among the voters in Hazaribag was 81-year-old Abhijit Sen, who exercised his franchise at polling booth no

153 in Hazaribag town. "From voting during the time of first Prime Minister Pt Jawaharlal Nehru to present PM Modi, I have voted in all the Lok Sabha and assembly elections since 1962," Sen

claimed. First-time voter Chandra, 18, said she was happy to participate in the democracy. festival Similarly, 91-year-old Shankar Lal Chaudhary, who voted at Koderma, also expressed his happiness to

take part in the process. This phase involved 22 candidates in Chatra, 15 in Koderma, and 17 in

In Hazaribag, villagers boycotted polling at booths 183 and 184 in Kusumbha village under Katkamdag due to unmet demands for a

bridge. About 58.34 lakh voters, including 28.35 lakh women, are eligible to vote in these

constituencies. Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar said this phase covered seven districts and

three parliamentary constituencies. Kumar said there were 6,705 booths, including 6,130 in

rural areas. Among these, 73 were managed by women, 13 by persons with disabilities, and 13 by youths. Chatra constituency has 16.89 lakh voters, including 8.27

lakh women, with 1,899 booths. Koderma has 22.05 lakh voters, including 10.65 lakh women, with 2,552 booths. Hazaribag has 19.39 lakh voters, including 9.42 lakh women, and 2,254 booths

The BJP has fielded Manish Jaiswal from Hazaribag and Kalicharan Singh from Chatra. The Congress has nominated KN Tripathi from Chatra and Jai Prakash Bhai Patel from Hazaribag. CPI (ML) Liberation has given ticket to Bagodar MLA Vinod Kumar Singh from Koderma. BJP Koderma nominee Annapurna Devi promised to focus on employment generation and educational improvements after winning

Restoration of JK statehood is solemn promise we have made, will stand by it: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said his government has made a "solemn promise" for restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and will stand by it, adding the Centre was working very hard to create the right conditions. Noting that the record voter

turnout in Srinagar is one of the "most gratifying things" he has seen in his tenure, Modi said people of Jammu and Kashmir have seen the government's commitment to democracy enhancement in the region, "even at the cost of us

ourselves". The restoration of statehood is a solemn promise we have made and we stand by it. We are working very hard to create the right conditions so that it can be done expeditiously," he told PTI in

an exclusive interview here

Sunday night. The Modi government had abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, in August 2019 and the erstwhile state was

Territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

"Through the abrogation of Article 370, we today have and Kashmir where violence witnessed not just the dreams and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir coming into fruition but also their enthusiasm for participating in one of the biggest festivals in any democracy -elections," Modi said. He said the voting percentage

in Srinagar, once a hotbed for all kinds of radical elements, witnessed the highest voter On holding assembly turnout in decades. Srinagar elections in J and K, the prime recorded a 36.7 per cent minister said the Supreme turnout--the highest since Court has set a date for 1996--in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections on May and the Election Commission 13. The world witnessed the growth and enthusiasm of the people in J and K when they welcomed the delegates from across the world during the G20 events, he added.

immense hope that we are on the right path to restore statehood. We want to irreversible so that the people

ever witness the torrid years that generations had to bear. "We want to create a Jammu

> is history, prosperity is destiny. This is our long term strategy for Kashmir. Our aspiration is that Jammu and Kashmir regains its stature as the hub of culture, knowledge and tourism along with becoming a centre of futuristic technologies like AI (Artificial intelligence)," Modi

> is mandated to follow the directions of the highest court and it is the best organisation to assess as to when and how it will conduct assembly elections.

"The progress that Jammu In December 2023, the apex and Kashmir has made in the court had directed the last five years gives me Election Commission to conduct elections in J and K by September 30, 2024.

Asked for his assessment on institutionalise the positive the high turnout in the changes that have taken place ongoing Lok Sabha polls in J and make the gains and K after the abrogation of irreversible so that the people Article 370, Modi said



the people had given their implicit approval in 2019 itself and beyond by defying all doomsday predictions and helping maintain peace in the region.

Then in December 2023, he said, the Supreme Court imprinted the judicial seal on the abrogation with an unanimous verdict by a constitution bench.

"What the elections in Jammu and Kashmir have done in

democratic approval as well the final seal in the trinity of according approval to our historic decision," Modi said. Modi said the BJP is perhaps the only party in the country which walked out of a government so that more power could be devolved to the people.

fulfilled our "And we commitment by conducting peaceful local body and Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir in December

was part of a coalition government in J and K with the People Democratic Party (PDP), pulled out of the alliance, leading to the fall of the then Mehbooba Mufti government and imposition of central rule. The saffron party then alleged that it became untenable for it to continue its alliance government as "terrorism, alliance violence and radicalisation have risen and fundamental rights of the citizens are under danger in the Valley".

region have seen his government's honest intentions, the consistent efforts it has made to integrate them into the mainstream of India's democracy and they have now proactively endorsed the steps taken through this peaceful, high voter turnout.
"I have no doubt in my mind that Jammu and Kashmir has a very bright future and the region will serve as a beacon of democratic empowerment and aspirations."

Asked how the recent

situation in J and K aligns with the government's longterm strategy for the region, Jammu and Kashmir, since 1947, has been a victim of conflict economy, where the stakeholders were a few politicians, many who were working for their own personal agendas or those of outside forces.

"For almost seven decades, the people of Jammu and Kashmir were denied the right to development, progress, and prosperity because a few families, in India and their masters outside, wanted to use the people to peddle their own

irreversible loss for generations of innocent families who were pulled into a conflict. We want to ensure that now there is an irreversible dividend of peace for future generations to come." Modi said ever since his government came into office in 2014, its agenda has been quite clear — development for all, opportunities prosperity for all.

He said for 70 years, there was a conflict, but for 70 years, not all regions were accessible via all-weather roads, or with all the basic necessities.

"Think about the struggles of the tribal population in the mountains, or the youth in region who could n aspirational jobs like the youth in the rest of the country. We have managed to reverse this trend, especially post 2019," he added.

The prime minister said from tourism to education, from sports to agriculture, from manufacturing (Farmer Organisations), and from SHGs (Self Help groups) to entrepreneurship, government wants to create an ecosystem for everything

within the region itself.

Over 45 per cent polling recorded in five LS seats in Bihar till 3 pm

PTI PATNA

Avoter turnout of 45.33 per cent was recorded in five Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar till 3 pm on Monday, officials said.

The polling began at 7 am in Muzaffarpur, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Saran and Hajipur Lok Sabha constituencies and will continue till 6 pm, a senior official at the CEO's office said.

Over 95 lakh voters in these five seats will decide the electoral fate of 80 candidates at 9,436 polling stations.

Over 49.99 per cent of voters

have exercised their franchise in Muzaffarpur, 45.19 per cent in Sitamarhi, 44.59 per cent in Hajipur, 43.77 per cent in Madhubani and 43.13 per cent in Saran till 3 pm. Of the total voters, 45.11 lakh

are women, 21 lakh are under 29 years of age and 1.26 lakh are in the age group of 18-19

Talking to reporters in Patna, Bihar BJP president and Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary said, "Voting is going smoothly in all five constituencies in the state



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai cast his vote on Monday at a polling booth in Hajipur Lok Sabha constituency. After casting his vote, Rai said, "I urge people to exercise their franchise in large numbers. It's a festival of democracy". Rai is seeking re-election from Ujiarpur Lok Sabha constituency where voting

who is pitted against two-term sitting BJP MP and former Union minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy in Saran, and Muzaffarpur's sitting MP Ajay Nishad, who crossed over to the Congress after being denied a BJP ticket for a third

Sudhir Kumar Ojha, an advocate who remains in the news for his petitions against took place on May 13." top political figures,
Notable candidates include
NDA ally Chirag Paswan in
Hajipur, Lalu Prasad's contesting from Muzaffarpur.



elections here on Monday. Polling was underway since 7 am in 13 Lok Sabha constituencies Maharashtra, including six in Mumbai.

Bachchan, 81, and wife Java, superstar told reporters. 76, cast their votes in a polling Shah Rukh Khan, wife Gauri, son Aryan, daughter Suhana booth in the Juhu area of Mumbai. Daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who is nursing a hand injury and just returned from her trip to

the Cannes Film Festival, was also seen at a polling booth. Aamir Khan and ex-wife Kiran Rao posed for cameras after voting at a polling booth in Bandra in suburban Mumbai. The actor also urged people to come out and cast

their votes. "I just want to appeal to all Indians to come out in large numbers and cast their vote and become part of this democracy. İt is our responsibility to vote. I appeal to everyone to step out and



vote, and don't waste your vote. I want youth, elderly, women, men and everyone should come out and vote," the

and younger son AbRam were also photographed entering a polling station in Bandra. Superstar Salman Khan's father Salim Khan and mother

Salma too cast their votes. Ranbir Kapoor posed for pictures with his inked finger after casting his vote. Ranveer and Deepika, who are

expecting their first child, cast their votes at a polling booth in Bandra, while Varun Dhawan and Shahid Kapoor took to their social media accounts to encourage others to vote.

Kumar, who voted for the first time since receiving Indian



Amitabh Bachchan, SRK, Aamir Khan, Akshay

citizenship, was one of the early voters. want my India to be

developed and strong and I've kept these things in my mind when I went to cast my vote, and all the Indians should think what is right for them and vote," Kumar said after voting at a polling station in Iuhu.

Akthar, who queued up at a polling station in Bandra West to cast his vote, told PTI: "My vote is for good governance, the government that looks after all people, gives us a better city.

The actor-filmmaker urged

people, especially youngsters to step out and vote. "I just heard from somebody that young people are complaining that it's too hot but it's not hot at all, so please do step out, do vote," Akhtar



said. His sister, filmmaker Zoya Akhtar and mother Honey Irani also voted.

Actor Hema Malini, who's BJP candidate from Mathura Lok Sabha constituency, said she is hopeful that voters' turnout will be good.

We are very much concerned (about voter turn-out). We've done maximum publicity for people to come and vote. Across India, celebrities have requested (people to vote). I'm sure the voter turnout will be good," Malini, who was accompanied by daughter Esha, said after casting her vote in Mumbai.

Dharmendra, 88, said, "They (voters) know how to be a good Indian citizen. They know how to take India to great heights, and they know how and what to do for that." Other Bollywood celebrities,



who have voted so far, include Tabu, Kajol, Saif Ali Khan with his wife Kareena Kapoor Khan, Kiara Advani, actor Kiara Advani, Rekha, Sunny Deol, Sanjay Dutt, Sanya Malhotra, Govinda, Manoj Bajpayee, Anil Kapoor, Ali Fazal, Konkana Sen Sharma, Paresh Rawal, Shraddha Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar, Ananya Panday, Sara Ali Khan with her mother Amrita Singh, Suniel Shetty, Shilpa Shetty, Arshad Warsi and Tiger Shroff. Filmmakers Ashutosh

Gowariker, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Subhash Ghai, Onir noted poet and lyricist Gulzar, his filmmaker daughter Meghna Gulzar, Kunal Kohli, musician Vishal Dadlani, singer and music composer Shankar Mahadevan, among others.

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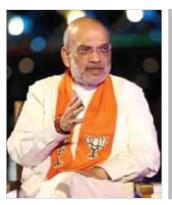
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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

The PoK hobgoblin

In election season, BIP leaders intensify campaign for PoK integration with India

■ f it is election season in India, can references to Pakistan be far behind? In 2019, it was Pulwama and the resultant surgical strikes. This time, an IAF convoy came under terror attack in the Poonch area on May 4, following which Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) made a rather late entry into the poll narrative. The call for reclaiming PoK is being given wide currency by the BJP; its top leaders are making bold assertions on the issue. Senior party leaders Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Himanta Biswa Sarma have all recently underscored the BJP's commitment towards integrating PoK with India. To begin with, Amit Shah made a striking declaration, asserting that India will take PoK as it "belongs to us". The statement is seen as a bold political promise, aligning with the BJP's longstanding position on PoK. Then, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma echoed the sentiment, adding that the move is not merely aspirational but a realistic objective under the current Government. Then came Rajnath Singh's slightly different approach,



focusing on the human rights situation in PoK. Singh called on international bodies to take cognisance of the rights violations in the region. These statements during the ongoing polls are clear indication that the BJP wants to draw people's attention to this long-pending issue. They also underline the party's strategic use of PoK as a rallying point in the lead-up to the elections, aiming to consolidate support among nationalist segments.

Indeed, the situation in PoK is not good. The locals there are demanding greater autonomy and political rights, more self-governance and local control. They are also concerned about rights abuses and restric-

tions on civil liberties, calling for the protection of their basic rights, freedom of expression and an end to political repression. Additionally, economic development is a major issue, with calls for better opportunities, improved infrastructure, healthcare and education, along with increased investment to drive regional growth. But can India intervene in PoK matters and reintegrate it in our territory is another question. Unfortunately, such statements often cross borders and have unintended ramifications on the other side. Domestically, it may serve to galvanise the party's core supporters and assert the BJP's strong stance on national security and territorial integrity. It is also likely to influence electoral dynamics, with the party hoping to leverage this narrative to bolster its performance in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Internationally, these statements may furthet strain India-Pakistan relations, potentially escalating tensions in an already volatile region. The call for international intervention on human rights grounds adds a new dimension to the discourse, potentially inviting global scrutiny and diplomatic engagements which India has been avoiding ever since this issue started. These remarks are more driven by poll expediency and election rhetoric rather than the Government's stated policy. These statements could exacerbate regional tensions and complicate diplomatic efforts.



People show their inked finger after casting their vote during the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Ladakh

Communal friction must end now

Despite facing criticism, Modi's tenure has seen minimal communal clashes, emphasising the importance of mutual understanding for communal harmony

rime Minister Narendra Modi in the hectic campaigning for the current Lok Sabha elections has asked the Muslim community to seriously introspect; he has also exposed the Congress of endlessly pampering their notions of separateness. As expected, he has been pilloried for doing some blunt speaking.

No honest political observer can deny that Prime Minister Modi's administration has been free of communal clashes, except the Delhi riots of 2020. Earlier, this used to be a regular feature. The only other communal clashes have been over the abduction of cows. Hindus detest the killing of cows and oxen. In the 16th century, the Mughal emperor Akbar banned the killing of cows, because it offended Hindu senti-

In the 20th century, the Jamiate-Ulema-e-Hind, founded by Maulana Azad advised Muslims to avoid killing cows as it offends Hindus. An unwritten clause of the Partition of India was that those Muslims who wanted to stay back in post-Partition India shouldn't do anything to offend Hindu sentiments. Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had clearly stated in his Lahore speech of March 22, 1940, that "Hindus and Muslims are very different and cannot exist in the same country". Dr BR Ambedkar endorsed this view in his 1941 book Thoughts on Pakistan that an exchange of population should be organized on the Turko-Greek lines in 1923, under the auspices of the League of Nations. Jinnah, Ambedkar and Dr Rajendra Prasad endorsed this view. Rajendra Babu, India's President from 1950 to 1960, had written India Divided, wherein he proposed that Muslims who couldn't emigrate to Pakistan could be specially permitted to stay back, not as citizens but as aliens with visas.

linnah and other League functionaries in 1946 and 1947, had repeatedly demanded an exchange of population. Their views were published in the Jawn, newspaper Jinnan (now published in Karachi but initial-ly printed in Delhi). Sir Feroze all Muslims went away to Khan Noon, later Pakistan's first Pakistan'. prime minister, threatened in The point here is that all



April 1946 that if Hindus took an obstructive attitude to population exchange, Muslims would re-enact the murderous orgies of Genghis and Halaqu Khan. Iftikhar Husain, the Nawab of Mamdot, in December 1946 said he supported an exchange of population because many Muslims wanted to settle in Sindh. Ismail Chundrigar, later Pakistan's sixth prime minister, said that the British had no right to hand over Muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Shaukat Hayat Khan, son of Sikandar Hayat Khan, said the exchange of population was an integral part of the demand for Pakistan. Ismail Mohammed, a Muslim Leaguer from Madras said that Muslims were in the middle of a jihad. Similar were the views of Raja Ghazanfar Ali, who was later Pakistan's food, agriculture and health minis-

To the extent that Professor M Mujeeb, Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi met the Turkish representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNO), the latter was surprised and asked Mujeeb, "How are you all Muslims went away to



GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BOLD ENOUGH TO BRING IN SOME REFORMS, HOWEVER LIMITED. INSTANT VERBAL DIVORCE HAS BEEN ABOLISHED AND **EDUCATIONAL** FACILITIES AND **INITIATIVES HAVE** BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MUSLIM GIRLS

clashes or friction between the two communities ought to have been put finally at rest. They would have been so but for the insertion of Articles 25 to 30 into the Constitution of India by the Leftist followers of the country's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru. They wanted a substantive vote base for their great leader. This explains why a Uniform Civil Code was made a non-justiciable part of the Constitution. While zamindaris and jagirdaris were abolished, waqfs, which have been nationalized in many Islamic countries, were left untouched. Every other aspect of the separateness of the community's separate identity, like Urdu, polygamy, instant verbal talaq, etc., was not only not touched but continuously pampered. Madrasas, which foster a parallel and obscurantist education system, continue to thrive, preaching sectarianism and schism, to the detriment of their communi-

The present Government has been bold to bring in some reforms, however limited. Instant verbal divorce has been abolished and educational facilities and initiatives have been expanded to include wiusiim giris. The womenfolk of the community, who have benefitted from these reforms, are being suspected of voting for a Hindu party in these elections. Islam accords priority to the ummah (community) over the vatan (country). There can be no denying that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that Muslims have "first claim over our national resources' and he would have no hesitation in allotting 15 per cent of resources to them. During his regime, he appointed no less than five commissions to 'enquire' how and why Muslims in India were disadvantaged and what should be done to pull them up.

Qutbuddin Aibak captured Delhi in 1192 AD and thereafter, one Muslim dynasty after another ruled Delhi till 1857, i.e., a total of 665 years before they were erased by the British Crown. With such a long rule, has any Government asked why the community is backward and needs a lift-up? Is taqlid (orthodoxy) in preference to ijtihad (re-interpretation) the reason for this? Does the neglect of women also further this state of nearperpetual backwardness? Who is answerable for these crimes of omission? Is the present prime minister, the first Indian leader to ask these uncomfortable questions, in any way

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

answerable for this?

Museums are pillars of culture and education



BIJU **Dharmapalan**

Museums play an essential role in preserving the history of human civilisation, offering tangible evidence of our existence and activities throughout time

useums play an indispensable part in understanding the history of human civilisation. It is proof of our existence on this planet and material evidence of human activity carried out during our lifetime. Understanding the diverse cultural tapestries that make up human history helps build more inclusive soci-

Museums come in various types, each focusing on different aspects of human knowledge, culture and the natural world, like Art museums, history museums, natural history museums, science museums, military and war museums, aviation and space museums, etc. This range of purposes results in a remarkable diversity of museums in terms of their form, content and function

The history of museums is a fascinating journey that reflects humanity's evolving ways of collecting, preserving and interpreting objects of significance. The concept of collecting valuable or significant objects dates back to ancient civilisations. In ancient Greece, for instance,

tions of art and artefacts dedicated to the gods. The word "museum" originates from the Greek "mouseion," a term used to describe a place dedicated to the Muses, the goddesses of the arts and sciences. The concept of the public museum began to take shape in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Many consider the Ashmolean Museum, which opened in 1683 at Oxford University, as the first public museum of its kind.

The founding of the British Museum in London in 1753 was a watershed moment in the evolution of museums worldwide. Numerous national museums were founded in the 19th century, frequently serving as emblems of cultural identity

and national pride. The history of museums in India is deeply intertwined with the country's rich cultural and historical legacy. The temples often housed collec- colonial period saw the establishment of the first formal museums in India. The British East India Company and other colonial powers began collecting artefacts, often to showcase their conquests and understand local cultures. The Indian Museum in Kolkata, founded in 1814, is the oldest museum in India and one of the earliest in the world. It was established by the Asiatic Society of Bengal and housed collections that ranged from geological to

archaeological artefacts. Post-independence, the National Museum under the Ministry of Culture was established in Delhi in 1949. It houses a vast collection of artefacts representing over 5,000 years of Indian history. It was a significant step towards preserving and showcasing İndia's cultural heritage. To propagate science and develop scientific temper, the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) was established on April 4, 1978. Today, it administers 26 Science Centres/Museums spread across the country and is considered the world's

largest network of science centres/museums. Museums not only play a vital role in education and research, serving as repositories of knowledge, culture and history, but also in the conservation and preservation of the region's cultural heritage. Their contributions extend beyond simply displaying artefacts; they provide immersive learning experiences, support scholarly research and engage the public in various educational activities. Museums offer interactive exhibits that engage visitors in hands-on activities. These interactive elements make learning more engaging and memorable, helping visitors, especially children, to grasp complex concepts in science or history through experience. Museums also act as centres of active research. Researchers in archaeology, anthropology, biology and art history rely on museum collections for their studies. Much breathtaking research in science, especially on paleogenomics, was done using the artefacts from museums.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal) such a transformation? THE TRUMP SYNDROME

THE EDITOR

ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS PERSIST

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Economic crisis takes a backseat in elections," published on May 20, this is my response. In this dance of democracy, scarce resources are rambling up election tempos. The focus shifts from core issues like employment to distractions like religious and cultural symbols. Despite being touted as the fifth-largest economy, India faces grim realities: high unemployment, displacement due to conflicts in Manipur and agrarian distress. Political promises of increased reservations appear futile without sufficient job creation.

The International Labour Organisation highlights severe forced labour issues, questioning India's progress. With inflation soaring and trade deficits widening, the economic situation remains dire. Publicsector job cuts and reliance on selfemployment indicate systemic failures. To truly uplift the marginalised and revitalise the economy, a robust public sector and equitable competition with the private sector are essential. Would politics support

Kunal Singh | Patiala

 ${\it Madam-In~US~politics, Donald~Trump}$ was not the cause of a democratic crisis of faith. He just rode to power on it. Once in control, he leveraged the same disillusionment that helped him into office. Debasing democratic norms and abusing tall institutions led to the subversion of democratic systems. This Trump syndrome of relentless polarisation, which spawns apathy and disconnect in the polity, is seen creeping into nations across the globe to keep the political brew on a boil. Scandals and crises would shake voters' faith in the political system occasionally, but an engineered schism and dysfunction in the polity with agenda-driven governance turned

Universally, people feel that democracy is failing because the Governments it produced were unable or unwilling to address their greater concerns. In the ongoing

Combating wildlife trafficking



propos the news article, "YouTube happy hunting ground for wildlife traffickers, published on May 20, this is my response. Reading about the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) taking down over 1,100 YouTube videos linked to illegal wildlife trade is both reassuring and deeply concerning. On one hand, it's encouraging to see concerted efforts to tackle this digital menace. However, the sheer volume of such content on a major platform like

YouTube highlights a troubling trend. It's alarming that tech-savvy wildlife traffickers exploit YouTube's vast user base to market and sell protected species, such as parakeets, rare turtles and pangolins. This underscores a significant challenge: the intersection of advanced technology and traditional crime. Despite YouTube's policies against animal abuse, the persistence of these videos suggests enforcement

The WCCB's proactive steps, involving volunteers and "WILD NET," show progress in wildlife crime control through digital tools. Stronger tech-enforcement collaborations are vital for effective monitoring and policy enforcement. As we applaud the WCCB's efforts, we must also recognise the ongoing battle against a lucrative and persistent illicit wildlife trade that adapts as quickly as we counter it.

Neha Gupta | Delhi

phase of political asphyxiation, the disillusioned electorate is dispirited to defend a system that has failed to champion its cause. Worse, it could be more than ever before that ballots may no longer be the sole guarantee of true democracy. Apathy towards democracy is a gateway to larger

R Narayanan | Mumbai

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT Madam — Various things on earth now feel the effect of climate change. Due to climate change, it has been seen that the negative impact on the mental health of people has increased. This research has been published in the journal "Lancet Neurology." Fluctuations in temperature are now affecting brain diseases as well. I recently read in the news that the severity of diseases like cerebral palsy and encephalitis is increasing. Cases of cerebral palsy are also increasing due to the rise in nighttime temperatures. Overall, the scope of climate change is becoming very large. Due to the increase in temperature, various birds and animals have also started to be affected. It is time for them to go to human settlements for drinking water. All this is happening due to many things. It seems that more than 5 million trees have been cut in India only from 2018 to 2022. This was recently stated in the report "Nature Sustainability." According to this report, most trees have disappeared in Telangana and Maharashtra.

It has come to light that big trees have been cut down to expand agriculture in many areas. The remaining trees are also affected by forest fires and fungal infections. One factor that mitigates overall temperature rise is the current state of the tree. The temperature rise will affect many things and many cities near the sea are also likely to go under water. The increase in temperature should be stopped by humans. Otherwise, it seems that he will have to face many problems and the Government should also take measures for

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

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Celebrating the power of cultural diversity

RAJDEEP PATHAK

As Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu once articulated, our differences underscore our mutual interdependence, highlighting the profound value of cultural diversity

ADDRESSING EMOTIONAL

IMBALANCE IN SOCIETY

Independence is not possible without education in emotional self-control

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

oday, whether you open a newspaper or tune into a news channel, you are almost guaranteed to encounter reports of crimes ranging from petty thefts to dacoity, murder, terrorism and sexual offences. Crime is alarmingly on the rise. This surge in criminal activity to a variety of factors, each adding to the growing sense of unease in our society. Giving the rationale behind this frightening phenomenon, they explain that some cases are due to the motive of money, others due to rage, hate, enmity and revenge and yet others due to odious discrimination based on caste, religion, ethnicity, culture or nationality or due to business rivalry or professional jealousy. However, they do not go into the common root cause of all these multifarious manifestations and motives of crime. As a result, they fail to address themselves to the real problem and to remedy the worsening and threatening situation. So, it would be correct to say that, in reality, there is no other problem but that people do not know and eradicate the roots of the tree of all problems and, instead, they try to get rid of some of its branches only. Of course, no one can deny that in a society where corruption and criminal tendencies have become strongly entrenched and where the virus of crime has entered and spread into the whole body of society, it has become difficult to breathe the pure air of freedom or liberation from worry, fear and tension and, despite lacs of able-bodied military men and police and trained and thoughtful investigating officers, life is neither safe from ruffians nor Governmental apathy. Everyone is fed up with the delaying tactics of those whose job is to facilitate rather than obstruct. Everyone is tired of the corrupt ways of everyone who can do something good and gracious but who, in practice, is doing the reverse.



tasteful, disdainful, obnoxious or horrible. If we go deep into this problem, then we will find that emotional disturbance is the origin of all disturbances. Yes! emotional imbalance or instability of the mind is the forerunner of all imbalances and instabilities. Emotional imbecility is the mother of all kinds of anarchy, deviant behaviour and crime — big or small. It is a lack of emotional intelligence that is at the back of every kind of waywardness, wanton behaviour and vicious tendencies.

In this context, let us understand that like and dislike are the natural tendencies in all men and women. But liking for a particular gender may become so irresistible as to grow into -lust and dislike for certain persons may become so strong as to grow into deep hatred and, in the case of these emotions going berserk, people may, one day, find that they have landed in jails. So, when we talk of emotional maturity or control, what we mean is that we have to have a measure of discipline or control over our tendencies of inclination and aversion, liking and disliking or love and hate so that these natural tendencies enable us to keep the company of what is good and salubrious and keep away from what is bad and harmful.

When we refer to emotional intelligence, we, refer to our sound judgment as to what are the things or who are the persons with which or with whom we should associate and what or who are of the opposite kind so that we may ward them off.But, alas! Most men and women miss that education that trains emotions or develops emotional potential positively. As long as this continues to happen, we will have a society where crimes are rampant and where people live in a State of tension with the push and pull of criminal tendencies pounding their minds. But what else is the means of emotional training than spiritual education? Our struggle for independence will remain incomplete unless people are educated to have emotional self-control.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist;

views are personal)



Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development" in response to the 2001 terrorist attack that destroyed the Bamyan Buddha statue in Afghanistan. In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly officially designated May 21st as this day. The 2002 Universal Declaration recognized the need to "Enhance the potential of culture as a means of achieving prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexis-

Moreover, with 89% of all current conflicts in the world occurring in countries with low intercultural dialogue, to forge effective cooperation and sustain peace, strengthening intercultural dialogue becomes a necessity. Further, according to

(https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversity-day), the cultural and creative sector is one of the most powerful engines of development worldwide. It accounts for more than 48 million jobs globally - almost half of which are held by women - representing 6.2% of all existing employment and 3.1% of global GDP. It is also the sector that employs and provides opportunities for the largest number of young people under the age of 30. However, the cultural and creative sector still does not have the place it deserves in public policies and international cooperation. Thus, in a bid to change this, in September 2022, delegations from 150 States gathered in Mexico for MONDIAC-JLT 2022 - the largest world conference devoted to culture (in the last 40 years) where they unanimously adopted the historic 'Declaration for Culture' affirming 'culture' as a "global public good" and calling for it to be integrated "as a specific goal in its own right" in the Development Agenda beyond 2030.

But what exactly are the concepts of diversity and inclusion along with culture? Diversity encompasses the intentional and inclusive gathering of individuals from various backgrounds, encompassing differences in race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, educational background and this list can go on. It emphasizes the importance of bringing these diverse identities together to interact positively and contribute to a shared environment. Inclusion goes beyond merely acknowledging and respecting each person's distinct experiences and identities. It requires fair treatment and widespread recognition. It means embracing and appreciating these differences as essential



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, **NUMEROUS** INSTANCES UNDERSCORE THE **TRANSFORMATIVE** POTENCY OF DIALOGUE IN RESOLUTION. ONE SUCH EXAMPLE IS THE GANDHIAN MODEL OF COMMUNICATION'

'NONVIOLENT MAHATMA **GANDHI ADVOCATED** 'SATYAGRAHA' **AGAINST** OPPRESSION

elements for the progress and well-being of all.
Thus the 'World Cultural Diversity

Day', commemorating the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, also emphasizes four key objectives. First, it advocates for policies fostering the creation, production and dissemination of diverse cultural goods and services. Secondly, it encourages initiatives facilitating a balanced exchange of cultural products while enhancing the mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Thirdly, it promotes sustainable development policies and international aid programs that embrace cultural integration. Lastly, it underscores the importance of aligning international and national legislation with human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensuring the preser vation and flourishing of cultural diversity worldwide. All this is because, 'Cultural Diversity', drives development, not only economically, but also personally. Simultaneously, 'Dialogue' also

transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, catalysing crosscultural understanding and cooperation. As Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet, poignantly expressed, "The wound is the place where the Light enters you," a profound insight underscoring the potential for growth and enlightenment that arises from engaging in dialogue, even amidst

In today's complex landscape, dialogue emerges as an urgent necessity, given the multitude of global challenges like climate change, economic disparity and geopolitical tensions. Martin Luther King Jr.'s timeless words, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," emphasize the interconnectedness of human experiences and the pivotal role of dialogue in addressing systemic inequalities in

this landscape.
Engaging in dialogue, not only enhances self-awareness but also fosters profound connections with others. For instance, movements like 'Black Lives Matter,' sparked by tragic incidents like George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's deaths, underscore the imperative of dialogue in combating systemic racism and police brutality. Meaningful conversations among communities, law enforcement agencies and policymakers are essential for driving substantial reforms and promoting racial equity.

Throughout history, numerous instances underscore the transformative potency of dialogue in conflict resolution. One such example is the Gandhian model of 'nonviolent communication'. Mahatma Gandhi advocated for Satyagraha' or truth force, advocating peaceful resistance against oppression. His commitment to dialogue and nonviolence inspired millions, to follow the path of nonviolence against the might of British colonial rule. Through nonviolent protests, civil disobedience and constructive dialogue, Gandhi showcased the power of dialogue in effecting profound social and political change. His method challenged colonial oppression's legitimacy, spurring a global movement for civil rights and social justice, across the country and inspiring others worldwide. Gandhi's legacy underscores dialogue's enduring potential in resolving conflicts and advancing

Human Rights, Judith Oloo, writing for "The Standard" in her article "The World Day of Cultural Diversity: Children's role as carriers of culture" (standard media.co.ke), lays importance on the role of children as torchbearers of cultural diversity. She says that children, "As participants in and carriers of our culture... are a critical part of our population - the future of our societies". According to her, culture profoundly shapes children's development, influencing emotional, social, physical and linguistic growth from birth. Customs, beliefs and practices surrounding food, art, language and religion play significant roles. Recognizing this, professionals working with children, such as social workers and child rights advocates, must grasp these influences to bring about a change In today's world, addressing global challenges requires collaborative approaches rooted in dialogue and mutual understanding. According to the UN, "Three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension. Bridging the gap between cultures is urgent and necessary for peace,

CEO of the East African Centre for

stability and development. Each of us has a role in fostering understanding to cultivate thriving communities. It's crucial to recognize how culture, in its various diversified forms, enriches discourse and contributes to sustainable development across different realms - social, environmental, economic and so on. Is it then not the time for us to at least sit across the table and start communicating?

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views

Outrage over superstar Mammootty's alleged Jihadi ties

The controversy has ignited a fierce political debate and exposed deep-seated tensions within Kerala's political landscape

⊣he disclosure by Mohammed Sharshad, a Chennai-based businessman, who is also a CPI(M) activist, that Malayalam cinema's "super mega star' Mammootty has shocked the secular, liberal and democratic political leaders of Kerala. The CPI(M), CPI and Congress leaders have come out openly against the Sangh Parivar for portraying Mammootty as a Jihadi. The disclosure about Mammootty's links with Jihadi organisations was made by a Muslim youth, a local leader of the CPI(M). The first person to attack Sangh Parivar about the report about Mammootty's Jihadi links was K T Jaleel MLA, a former CPI(M) minister and former president of the banned



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

speeches and writings that India could be liberated only through Islam. Then other ministers took up the issue and it has caused ripples in Kerala. Mammootty, who was a below-average student during his college days is an Arabic graduate from Maharaja's College Ernakulam. While he was a student, Prof Ummer was the head of the Arabic Department and it was the lat-

and valued the answer sheets. No Arabic student has failed in BA Arabic examination in Maharajas College those days. The title super mega star reminds one of the age-old adage in the land of the blind, the one-eyed is the King. Mammootty is no match for his counterparts in Hindi movies or Hollywood.

Being a Jihadi or communalist is not a crime. The issue here is that one who questions the organized bargaining capacity of the Muslim community becomes persona non grata in Kerala. Leaders who were bold enough to point out the hidden agenda of the Muslim political and spiritual leaders ended up in dust-

EMS Namboodirippadu tops SIMI. Jaleel is famous for his ter who set the question papers the list of such persons who

were decimated by the Islamist leaders. Before the 1991 assembly elections, there was a suggestion from certain CPI(M) leaders like E K Nayanar and M V Raghavan (both left to meet Marx, Lenin and Stalin) that the party should ally with the Muslim League. But Namboodirippadu was quick to retort that the Muslim League should get rid of its name and flag (that resembled the Pakistani national flag) to be considered an ally. Leaders of the Muslim League became furious and they saw to it that Namboodirippadu was cut to size and the CPI(M) removed him from the coveted position of general secretary in 1992. The next to earn the wrath of leaders of the Muslim community was A K Antony who was

period 2001 to 2004. The 2003 CPI(M) was sworn in as chief Marad beach massacre that saw the slaughtering of eight Hindu fishermen by Islamic radicals happened during Antony's tenure. Antony was for an investigation by the CBI but made a hasty retreat as Muslim League leaders throttled the move. But he warned the League leaders openly that the organized bargaining power of communal outfits would not be entertained by his Government. This hurt the Muslim League leadership who asked the Congress High Command to remove Antony from the chief minister's post at the earliest. That's how Antony tendered his resignation post-2004 Lok Sabha polls and moved over to New Delhi. V S Achuthanandan, a widethe chief minister during the ly respected leader of the ted with larger-than-life-size where he hails. PC George, the

minister in 2006 after the election. assembly Achuthanandan was always against any kind of communalism and fanaticism. During a press meeting in the national capital in Achuthanandan said that Love Jihad was a reality. "The Muslim fundamentalists have an agenda to convert Kerala into a Muslim majority State within the next two decades,"

he had said. Though the CPI(M) lost the 2011 elections by a whisker, the party returned to power in 2016 making use of the goodenjoyed Achuthanandan all over Kerala. The highway from

Kasaragod Thiruvananthapuram was dot-

posters of Achuthanandan giving an impression that he would be the automatic choice of the CPI(M) as chief minister after the election. But Pinarayi Vijayan, whose pictures or posters were conspicuously absent, was nominated as chief minister by the party's leadership and since then the former has become the uncrowned king of Kerala. Achuthanandan was sidelined not because of the influence wielded by the Muslim community in the CPI(M). .

The ire of the Muslim League and community leaders also claimed the political career of G Sudhakaran, a CPI(M) minister who was disliked by the district-level leaders of Alappuzha (all belonging to the Muslim community) from

seven-time legislator who had defeated both the LDF and the UDF in assembly elections was made to bite the dust in his home turf of Poonjar for lambasting Love Jihad and the role of various Islamist outfits in this operation. For more than four decades, George was a secular leader acceptable to the Muslim community. But when he pointed out the plight of the victims of Love Jihad, George became an enemy of humanity and the entire Muslim community voted against him in the 2021 assembly election. This is Kerala's brand of secularism. Caveat Emptor would be the ideal word of caution for those daring to question the Islamic outfits.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer, views are personal)

the pioneer DEHRADUN | TUESDAY | MAY 21, 2024

Mohammad Mokhber appointed Iran's acting President

ran's first Vice President Irans first vice 1121
Mohammad Mokhber was appointed as acting president of the Islamic Republic on Monday after the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in the country's northwest. Mokhber, 68, largely has been in the shadows compared to other politicians in Iran's Shiite theocracy. Raisi's death under the constitution thrust Mokhber into public view. He is expected to serve as caretaker president for some 50 days before mandatory presidential elections in Iran.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made the announcement of Mokhber's appointment in a condolence message he shared for Raisi's death in the crash Sunday. The helicopter was found Monday in northwestern Iran. Despite his low-key public profile, Mokhber has held prominent positions with in the country's power structure, particularly in its bonyads, or charitable foundations. Those groups were fuelled by donations or assets seized after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, particularly those shah or those in his govern-

Mokhber oversaw a bonyad known in English as the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, or EIKO, referring to the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

The US Treasury said the organisation oversaw billions of dollars in assets as "a business juggernaut under the direct supervision of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei that has a stake in nearly every sector of the Iranian economy, including energy, telecommunications, and financial services". "EIKO has systematically violated the rights of dissidents by confiscating land and property from opponents of the regime, including political opponents, religious minorities, and exiled Iranians," the Treasury said in 2021 in sanctioning Mokhber. The European Union also had sanctioned Mokhber for a time with others over concerns then about Iran's nuclear programme. As the head of EIKO, Mokhber oversaw an effort to make a COVID-19 vaccine during the height of the pandemic, pledging to make tens of millions of



In this photo provided by Moi News Agency, rescue team members work at the scene of a crash of a helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Varzaghan in northwestern Iran, Monday

doses. Only a fraction of that ever made it to the public, without explanation.

banking and telecommunications. He also worked at the Mostazafan Foundation, anoth-Mokhber previously worked in er bonyad that's a major con-

glomerate that manages the country's mega-projects and businesses. While there, he found himself entangled in a bitter legal dispute between mobile phone service providers Turkcell and South Africa's MTN over potentially entering the Iranian market. MTN ended up entering Iran

A Turkcell filing alleged Mokhber sought MTN's help in securing "certain defence equip-ment" in exchange for potential-ly working with it as opposed to Turkcell.

Mokhber used "improper influence up to and including negotiating with and on behalf of the Supreme Leader in MTN's favour," Turkcell later alleged in a legal filing. An MTN report later said there were no arms transfers, though it acknowledge Mokhber was a player in Iran's decision to go with MTN. Iranian media reports suggest Mokhber, who holds a doctor-

ate in international law, was crucial in Iranian efforts to bypass Western sanctions on its oil industry. Mokhber has been a member of Iran's Expediency Council since 2022, which advises the supreme leader, as well as settles disputes between parliament and the Guardian Council, Iran's constitutional watchdog that also oversees the country's elections. Mokhber

'China lost a good friend'

President Xi Jinping on Monday condoled the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash, saying China has lost a good friend as he made positive efforts to consolidate and deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations. In a message to Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, Xi on behalf of the Chinese govern-ment and the people of China, expressed deep condolences and extended sincere sympathies to Mokhber, the family of President Raisi, and the Iranian government and people, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. Xi said since President Raisi took office, he made important contributions to maintaining

was born Sept 1, 1955, in Dezful in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province to a clerical family. He served as an officer in the Revolutionary Guard's regime insiders like himself," medical corps during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, according to the UANI said.



pressure group United Against Nuclear Iran. "Mokhber used the vast wealth accumulated by EIKO — at the expense of the Iranian people-to reward

en the China-Iran comprehen-

sive strategic partnership. Raisi's

tragic death is a great loss to the

Iranian people, and the Chinese

people also lost a good friend,

WikiLeaks founder wins bid to challenge extradition to US

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange on Monday won a major reprieve as a London court permitted him to appeal against his extradition to the US on espionage charges, a legal saga which has been going on for over a decade. The 52vear-old Australian national has been held at Belmarsh high-security prison in London since 2019 when he was taken into custody from the Ecuadorian Embassy here where he had sought asylum. While the US authorities want Assange to face trial for allegedly endangering lives by publishing thousands of classified documents on Wikileaks, his lawyers have argued that the case against him is politically

On Monday, two High Court judges at the Royal Courts of Justice granted the Australianborn Assange permission to appeal against his extradition

motivated.

order. They agreed with his legal

team on the issue of assurances from the US administration that Assange would be protected by and allowed to rely on the First Amendment of the country's Constitution, which protects freedom of speech in the US, and the death penalty would not be imposed.

"Based on the principle of the separation of powers, the US court can and will apply US

may say or do," barrister Edward Fitzgerald told the court on behalf of Assange. The barrister representing the US government countered that the judicial branch of the country would take due notice of the executive's "solemn assurance". The assurance does make it clear that he will not be discriminated against because of his nationality. He can and will be able to raise all those arguments and his nationality will not prejudice a fair trial," said James Lewis in written submis-

The High Court ruling in favour of Assange means he will be able to challenge US assurances at a full hearing over how his prospective trial in America would be conducted and whether his right to free speech would be infringed on being extradited.

His appeal is expected to be heard sometime next year as he continues his fight against being extradited after the UK government had signed off on the order in June 2022. Assange has denied any wrongdoing all along and argued that his disclosures in 2010 revealed war crimes by the US. Supporters of Assange, led by his wife Stella Assange, gathered at the High Court and continued their calls for his release on medical grounds.

Had the court ruled in the US's

favour, Assange would have exhausted all legal avenues in the UK. He has resisted extradition from the UK for more than a decade after his Wikileaks website published thousands of confidential US documents in 2010 and 2011. The US Department of Justice described the leaks as "one of the largest compromises of classified information in the history of the United States". The files suggested the US military had killed civilians in unreported incidents during

Condition of Slovakia PM Fico improves

ulist Prime Minister Robert Fico's condition is improving following an assassination attempt last week that shocked the European Union nation deeply polarised over his policies. "After today's consultation, the patient's condition is stabilised," the hospital treating the Slovak leader in the central city of Banská Bystrica said on Monday.

A statement released by the clinic said Fico is "clinically improving, communicating, inflammatory parameters are slowly decreasing". It said Fico remains hospitalised in the clinic for the time being. On Sunday, the clinic said that Fico, 59, was no longer in life threating condition after he was shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters on Wednesday outside a cultural centre in the town of Handlova, nearly 140 km (85 miles) northeast of the capi

South Africa's apex court ends Zuma's bid to be elected again

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's highest court on Monday ended a bid by for-mer president Jacob Zuma to stand as a candidate for Parliament in a national election on May 29 citing his previous criminal conviction. The country's apex judicial institution, the Constitutional Court (ConCourt), upheld the initial decision by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to disqualify 82-year-old Zuma's candidacy on the grounds of his

15-month prison sentence for contempt of court in 2021. had been nominated as the leader of the recently-established Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) Party, named after the erstwhile armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) during the freedom struggle that ended in 1994 with Nelson Mandela becoming the country's first democraticallyelected President.

When MK named him as its candidate whose photo should appear on the ballot paper, the IEC declared that Zuma could not run because of the constitutional provision that prohibited anyone sentenced to more than 12 months in prison from being a member of parliament. On appeal to the Electoral Court, the IEC decision was overturned and Zuma has been actively campaigning for the party, despite a dispute with a founding member that Zuma was no longer the leader of the

'It is declared that Mr Zuma was convicted of an offence and sentenced to more than 12 months' imprisonment for purposes of Section 47(1)e of the Constitution and is accordingly not eligible to be a member of and not qualified to stand for election to the National Assembly until five years have elapsed since the completion of his sentence," Justice Leona Theron said as she read the unanimous decision of the court. Zuma was ousted in 2018 by the ANC just months before the end of his second term in 2018 after he refused to step down amid a huge public outcry about his alleged closeness to the controversial Gupta family, originally from India and now believed to be in self-exile in Dubai, as South Africa seeks their extradition to face charges of looting billions from state cof-

After walking out of hearings at the Commission of Inquiry into state capture in 2020, Zuma was slapped with a contempt of court sentence of 15 months. He served only three months after being controversially released on medical parole. The incident led to unprecedented violence and looting for several days in Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and in the economic hub of Gauteng province, Johannesburg,

Ship that caused deadly Baltimore bridge collapse refloated

Baltimore(AP): The container ship that caused the deadly collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge was refloated Monday and has begun slowly moving back to port. The Dali has remained at the collapse site since it lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns on March 26, killing six construction workers and snarling traffic into Baltimore Harbour.

The ship appeared to start moving shortly after 6 am as crews started to maneuver it out of the wreckage. It started and stopped a few times before slowly backing away from the collapse site. Officials said it would move at

about 1 mph on the roughly 2.5-mile (4-km) trip, a fraction of the speed it was travelling when it lost power and crashed into the bridge. Pieces of the bridge's steel trusses protruded from its bow, which remained covered in concrete from the collapsed roadway. Officials have said they plan to unload the ship's containers and complete some shortterm repairs while it's docked in Baltimore. Monday morning's high tide

had been expected to bring the best conditions for crews to refloat and start moving the ship, according to a statement from the Key Bridge Response Unified Command Several tugboats were escorting the Dali on its path to the marine terminal. The work is expected to last at least 21 hours. Crews conducted a controlled demolition on May 13 to break down the largest remaining span of the collapsed bridge.

The Dali experienced four electrical blackouts within about 10 hours before leaving the Port of Baltimore for Sri Lanka and hitting the bridge, according to a preliminary report issued by the National Transportation Safety Board.

ICC prosecutor seeks arrest warrant for Netanyahu

AP THE HAGUE/ JERUSALEM

The chief prosecutor.

International Criminal The chief prosecutor of the Court said Monday he is seeking arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in connection with their actions during the seven-month war. Karim Khan said that he believes Netanyahu, his defence minister Yoav Gallant and three

Hamas leaders — Yehya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh — are responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Israel.Speaking of the Israeli actions, Khan said in a statement that "the effects of the use of starvation as a method of warfare, together with other attacks and collective punishment against the civilian population of Gaza are acute, visible and widely known. ... They include malnutrition, dehydration, profound suffering and an increasing number of deaths among the Palestinian popula-



tion, including babies, other children, and women."Of the Hamas actions on October 7, he said that he saw for himself "the devastating scenes of these attacks and the profound impact of the unconscionable crimes charged in the applications filed today. Speaking with survivors, I heard how the love within a family, the deepest bonds between a parent and a child, were contorted to inflict unfathomable pain through calculated cruelty and extreme callousness. These acts demand accountability." 'ICC SEEKING WARRANTS IS 'HISTORIC DISGRACE'

Israel's foreign minister says the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court's decision to seek arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is "a historic disgrace that will be

remembered forever". Israel Katz said Monday he would form a special committee to fight back against any such action and would work with world leaders to ensure that any such warrants are not

UK's health service accused of cover up in infected blood scandal

AP ■ LONDON

Britain's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) was accused of cover up in an infected blood scandal dating back to the 1970s in a public inquiry report submitted to the government on Monday.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is expected to issue an apology on behalf of the government after inquiry chair Sir Brian Langstaff delivered his scathing verdict on the issue, which involves over 30,000 people being infected with life-threatening viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C while they were under NHS care between the 1970s and 1990s. It involves infected batches of Factor VIII, an essential blood clotting protein which haemophiliacs do not produce naturally, imported from the US and used widely to treat patients at the time. They were infected as donated

blood was not tested for HIV/AIDS until 1986 and Hepatitis C until 1991 in the UK. "The scale of what happened is horrifying. The most accurate estimate is that more than 3,000 deaths are attributable to infected blood, blood products and tissue," notes angstaff in his report following a five-year investigation. "Standing back, and viewing the response of the NHS and of government, the answer to the question 'was there a cover up?' is that there has been. Not in the sense of a handful of people plotting in an orchestrated conspiracy to mislead, but in a way that was more subtle, more pervasive and more chilling in its implications. To save face and to save expense, there has been a hiding of much of the truth," he said.The 2,527-page and seven-volume document goes on to detail the enormous scale of the scandal and also makes a series of recommen-

dations, including a speedy compensation scheme for those directly affected and who lost loved ones as a result. The report also calls upon the NHS to ensure anyone who received a blood transfusion before 1996 is urgently tested for Hepatitis C. New patients at any medical practice should also be asked if they had a transfusion before that time. The report also picks apart the approach to the scandal under the Margaret Thatcher led Conservative Party government, which insisted that people were given "the best treat-ment available" at the time. 'The reality is that this use of this blanket line to take sometimes applied to the position of people with bleeding disorders, sometimes to all those infected with Hepatitis C from blood or blood products - was inappropriate. It was wrong and its use was unacceptable. It became a

tioned," it notes. "An apology should not only give some detail as to what is being apologised for, but to be understood by those to whom it is addressed as sincere and meaningful, it should lead to action. Compensation is part of this," it adds.

Two sets of people were caught up in this historic health scandal of contaminat-ed blood – people with haemophilia and similar blood clotting disorders who received a new treatment at the time to replace the missing clotting agents made from donated human blood plasma and a second group who had a blood transfusion after childbirth, accidents or during medical treatment. Ministers from the Sunak-led government have promised to address the issue of final compensation once the inquiry's report is published, the total cost for which is likely to run into billions of pounds.

Saudi Arabia's all-women rock band 'Seera' breaks barriers

AP ■ RIYADH

Leaning into the microphone in Saudi Arabia's capital, Nora let loose a primal scream. Guitars wailed and drums throbbed behind her as part of a set with her bandmates during a recent show. The performance by Seera, an all-women psychedelic rock band that blends traditional Arabic melodies with the resurgent psychedelia of bands like Tame Împala, would have been unthinkable just years earlier in the kingdom.But as Saudi Arabia liberalises some aspects of its society, Seera represents the way women now are finding their voice and expressing themselves through the arts in a nation long associated with ultraconservative Islam and the strict separation of the sexes. "We didn't know how

people would react," said Aeesh, the band's bassist, who like other members asked to be identified by their stage names. "We believe strongly in self-

expression. To our surprise, they really had open arms for us."The band's name, Seera, can mean "life" or "biography" in Arabic. Band members say they try to embrace the multiple meanings one can draw from a word in the language in its sound, whether through the driving drums and cymbals or the synthesizer backing the guitars. Seera's music style

revolves around the life experiences of the four-member band, who are all Saudi nationals. They sing in the Saudi dialect of Arabic, while drum-mer Thing wears a traditionally embroidered red face covering. "I thought this would be great as a reflection of the culture, the heritage and the roots," she said. "At the same time it would be a cool representation between the traditional and the modern and the expression of it. That's also within our sonic identity as well."Seera is quick to point out they aren't the first female band in the kingdom. Instead, they say that goes to The Accolade, which formed in 2008 and could only play underground. Things have changed radically in the kingdom in recent years since the accession of King Salman and

his assertive son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.In 2018, women gained the right to drive. Movie theatres and other entertainment centres opened. Women are no longer required to wear the fully cloaking black abaya. Clear limits still remain on speech and any political activity in the tightly governed kingdom. But in the arts space, Saudi Arabia is slowly opening up, as could be seen by Seera's show earlier this month at The Warehouse, a live music space in Riyadh's Diriyah neighbourhood. There, dozens of youths in leather jackets and black rock T-shirts swayed and danced to the

mantra and was never ques-

One young man with heavy eyeliner wore a shirt declaring: "I HATE LIFE." The fashion choices resembled any other punk show at a club in the West, though there was an absence of smoking or any alcohol in the dry kingdom. "Things have become definitely better, more towards inclusivity and in a broader perspective and in a broader way," Thing said. "There's definitely room for more growth."Seera plans to release their debut album later this They've also booked their

first international concert in Dubai, where they'll get their first chance to perform outside of Saudi Arabia.Nora said she wanted the band to be "an inspiration for the younger generation" to express themselves. "It's OK to look, act, behave the way you want as long as you're not harming anyone," she said.



Prachanda wins vote of confidence in Parliament | China fumes as

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Monday won a vote of confidence in Parliament, allowing him to lead a coalition government in the Himalayan nation while attempting to maintain political stability amidst frequent power struggles. Prachanda, 69, a former

guerilla leader from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) - the third largest party in the House of Representatives (HoR) received 157 votes in the 275member House Representatives.

The government required at least 138 votes to win the vote of trust.

In total, 158 lawmakers took part in the voting. The main Opposition Nepali Congress boycotted the voting process and chanted slogans against Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Lamichhane, accused of misappropriating cooperative



Nepal, Monday. Dahal will continue leading his shaky governing coalition after winning his fourth vote of confidence in two years

remained neutral.

Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire announced that Prachanda had won the floor test as he got a majority in Parliament.

This was the fourth time that Prachanda sought a vote of confidence in the House since he assumed prime ministership in December 2022. The vote comes days after

one of the coalition partners,

Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP),

withdrew its support last week for his government while quitting the coalition government. Earlier, the voting had to be delayed due to obstructions caused by the Nepali Congress, which has been demanding formation of a Parliamentary probe committee to investigate Lamichhane's

According to constitutional provisions, a prime minister has to take a vote of confidence after an ally withdraws support to the ruling coalition. Earlier on March 13, Prime

alleged involvement in the

the presidential poll.

Prachanda is serving a third previous stints.

funds, leading to the delay in the session. One HoR member Minister Dahal won his third consecutive vote of confidence, days after he dumped the Nepali Congress and forged a new alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist-Leninist). Last year, Prachanda faced a floor test after former prime minister KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML withdrew its support to the Prachanda-led government following a rift over backing the main opposition party's candidate for

> time as prime minister, although he did not complete the full five-year term during In the past few decades, three

> big parties — the Nepali Congress, the CPN-UML, and the Maoist Centre - have ruled the country turn by turn, forever changing coalitions and partners at their convenience.

Nepal has had 13 governments since it abolished its 239-year-old monarchy in 2008 and became a republic.

Prez Lai asserts must resist annexation and protect sovereignty, and cannot China on Monday denounced Taiwan's new sacrifice national sovereignty for political power," Lai said in President Lai Ching-te for his an apparent reference to proassertion that the self-ruled Beijing opposition parties. island is sovereign and vowed Taiwan's sovereignty is a red rag for China as President Xi

to uphold the status quo, say-

this year, was sworn in as the

Taipei on Monday. China

views Taiwan as a rebel

province that must be reunified

with the mainland, even by

maintains that Taiwan is

never back down in the face of

intimidation from China, the

Hong Kong-based South

China Morning Post reported.

'As the future of both sides of

the Taiwan Strait will have a

decisive impact on the devel-

opment of the world, we -

carrying on Taiwan's democra-

tisation — are the helmsmen of

ments" [of national sovereign-

ty, democracy, and freedom]

and maintain the status quo

without being overbearing or

China, (official name for

China nationality is a citizen of the Republic of China; thus, it

is clear that the Republic of China and the People's

Republic of China (PRC) are

not subordinate to each other,"

he affirmed. "Every individual

must unite and cherish the

nation. Any political party

ets for them, as well as muni

peace," he said.

servile.

leaning

force.

ing that he has sent "a danger-Jinping has been consistently ous signal" of seeking "Taiwan independence". Lai, 64, also known as William Lai, who maintaining that Taiwan will eventually be part of China. Xi has ramped up massive succeeded his independencemilitary infrastructure around Democratic the Taiwan Strait, the narrow Progressive Party (DPP) colsea that separates the two sides league Tsai Ing-wen after winning the popular vote in the January Presidential election deploying aircraft carriers, with

numerous naval ships, jet fighters, and missiles pointing toward the island. Many top Taiwanese politicians speculated that China president at a ceremony held in will attack Taiwan by 2027 but the US said it will militarily

oppose Beijing's invasion of Taiwan. US President Joe Lai's DPP party does not seek Biden had said "Yes" in 2022 to independence from China but a question from a US TV network whether US forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion. Later again, during a visit to

already a sovereign nation. In his no-holds-barred inaugural speech, Lai called on China to stop threatening the island, promised to uphold Tokyo, Biden reiterated that Washington adhered to the the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, and called on Beijing to 'One China' policy, but opposed the forcible takeover work jointly for peace.
Lai urged Beijing to replace
confrontation with dialogue
and avowed that Taiwan would of Taiwan by China.

Much on the expected lines, China hit back with its Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin countering Lai by saying: "Taiwan independence is a dead end." "Regardless of the pretext or the banner under which it is pursued, the push for Taiwan independence is destined to fail," Wang told a media briefing here, in reaction to Lai's remarks. No matter how the political situation on the Taiwan island changes, Lai said his government will adhere to the "four commitit will not change the historical and legal facts that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China, and the historical trend that China will eventually be reunified and will inevitably be reunified, We all know that a country has Wang said. He said the vast sovereignty. According to the majority of countries and interconstitution of the Republic of national and regional organisations in the world stand firmly with the Chinese gov-Taiwan) the sovereignty of the Republic of China belongs to the people as a whole," Lai said. "Anyone who holds Republic of ernment and people. China makes its 'One China' policy,

meaning Taiwan is part of it, mandatory for all nations to

have diplomatic ties with it.

Only 12 countries out of the

193 UN member states have

diplomatic ties with Taiwan but

Taipei gets diplomatic support from the US and Japan despite their recognition of the 'One China' policy.

Taiwan's new prez urges China to stop military intimidation

Taiwan's new president, Lai Ching-te, said in his inauguration speech Monday that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own

"I hope that China will face the reality of (Taiwan)'s existence, respect the choices of the people of Taiwan, and in good faith, choose dialogue over confrontation," Lai said after being sworn into office. Lai pledged to "neither yield nor provoke" Beijing and said he sought peace in relations with China. But he empha-sised the island democracy is determined to defend itself "in the face of the many threats and attempts at infiltration from China". Lai's party, the Democratic Progressive Party, doesn't seek independence from China but maintains that Taiwan is already a sovereign nation.

Lai, 64, takes over from Tsai Ing-wen, who led Taiwan through eight years of economic and social development despite the COVID-19 pandemic and China's escalat-



Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te delivers an acceptance speech during his inauguration ceremony in Taipei, Taiwan, Monday

ing military threats. Beijing views Taiwan as a renegade province and has been upping its threats to annex it by force

progressive policies, including universal health care, backing for higher education and sup port for minority groups, if necessary. including making Taiwan the Lai is seen as inheriting Tsai's first place in Asia to recognise

In his inauguration speech, Lai pledged to bolster Taiwan's social safety net and help the island advance in fields such as artificial intelligence and green energy.

Lai, who was vice president during Tsai's second term, came across as more of a firebrand earlier in his career. In 2017, he described himself as a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan's independence",

drawing Beijing's rebuke. He has since softened his stance and now supports maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and the possibilty of talks with Beijing.
Thousands of people gathered in front of the Presidential

Office Building in Taipei for the inauguration ceremony. Donning white celebratory hats, they watched the swearing-in on large screens, fol-lowed by a military march and colourful performances featuring folk dancers, opera performers and rappers. Military helicopters flew in formation, carrying Taiwan's flag. Lai accepted congratulations from fellow politicians and delegations from the 12 nations that maintain official diplomatic relations with

ous European states.

Lai, also known by his English name William, has vowed to continue his predecessor's push to maintain stability with China while beefing up Taiwan's security through imports of military equipment from close partner the US, the expansion of the defense industry with the manufacture of submarines and aircraft, and the reinforcing of regional partnerships with unofficial allies such as the US, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. The Chinese government didn't immediately address Lai's inauguration, but the Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced sanctions against Boeing and two other defence companies on Monday for arms sales to Taiwan.

US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken congratulated Lai on his inauguration.

'We look forward to working with President Lai and across Taiwan's political spectrum to advance our shared interests and values, deepen our longstanding unofficial relationship, and maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan

Taiwan, as well as politicians from the US, Japan and variment from his office.

Strait," Blinken said in a statement from his office.

The US doesn't formally recognise Taiwan as a country but is bound by its own laws to provide the island with the means to defend itself. Lai's relatively conciliatory

tone will come across as reassuring to foreign governments that may have been concerned about his past reputation as a firebrand, said Danny Russell, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute. There is virtually nothing

that Lai could have said, short of unconditional surrender, that would satisfy Beijing," he During her tenure, Tsai over-

saw a controversial pension and labour reform and extended the military conscription length to one year. She also kickstarted a military modernisation drive.

Tsai's leadership during the pandemic split public opinion, with most admiring Taiwan's initial ability to keep the virus largely outside its borders but criticising the lack of investment in rapid testing as the pandemic pro-

Stabbing spree: Two killed, 10 hurt at Chinese school

PTI ■ BEIJING

At least two people were killed and 10 others injured when a knife-wielding woman went on a stabbing spree at a primary school in east China's Jiangxi province on Monday, in the second such incident in the country

this month. The incident happened in Guixi city and the suspect, a 45-year-old female surnamed Pan, has been brought under control by the police, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Two people were killed in the incident, while 10 others were injured. The injured have received treatment, among which six were slightly wounded while trying to dodge the attack, local public security authorities

Further investigation into the

incident is underway, the

report said. This is the second

knife attack in China this month, which has become a common occurrence. Officials blame these attacks on disgruntled or mentally deranged people. Earlier this month, two people were killed and 21 others injured in an incident of mass stabbing at a hospital on May 7 in Yunnan province. China, where private gun ownership is illegal for most civilians, has faced a spate of mass knife attacks in public places in recent years. In August last year, two people were killed and seven others injured after a man with a history of mental illness attacked people with a knife in a residential district in Yunnan. In July of the same year, six people, including three children, were killed in a stabbing incident at a kindergarten in the south-eastern province of Guangdong. Zhenxiong County, situated in Yunnan's northeast, borders Guizhou

and Sichuan provinces and,

until 2020, was classified as

poverty-stricken.

Imran, others acquitted two vandalism cases

 \mathbf{I}^{n} a relief to beleaguered Imran Khan, a district and sessions court in Pakistan on Monday acquitted the jailed former prime minister and other leaders of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party in two vandalism cases.

The court's verdict in the two cases related to the vandalism during the March 2022 long march came during the hearing of acquittal pleas filed by the 71-year-old PTI founder and other politicians, Geo News reported.

Other leaders of the party who were acquitted included Zartaj Gul, Ali Nawaz Awan, Faisal Javed, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Qasim Suri, Raja Khurram Nawaz, Shireen Mazari, Saifullah Niazi, Asad Umar and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid

The cases against Khan and

other politicians were registered in the Kohsar and Karachi Company police stations for violation of Section 144 imposed by authorities following the arrest of the former prime minister in an alleged corruption case.

Speaking with journalists here, Khan's lawyer Naeem Panjotha said the cases against the PTI founder were based on political vengeance. "No evidence of vandalism

found against the PTI founder during the long march," he said, adding that the Islamabad administration did not issue any notification to enforce Section 144 in the cap-

Various cases of the same nature have been registered against the PTI founder and he has been acquitted in several cases about the long march, the counsel added. He also noted that other political leaders were acquitted in the vandalism cases.

The verdict on the acquittal of Khan, Qureshi, Rashid, Awan, Suri, and Nawaz was issued by Judicial Magistrate Shahzad Khan for a case registered at Kohsar police station.

The court had earlier reserved its verdict in the Long March vandalism case. The development comes days after a district and sessions court on May 15 acquitted Khan in two cases about the May 9 vandalism.

Khan, the only prime minister to be voted out of his office, who remains behind bars in Adiala jail, and several other PTI leaders have been facing various allegations in the cases related to the violence following his arrest on May 9. Islamabad High Court on May 16 also approved the PTI founder's bail petition in the 190 million pound National Crime Agency (NCA) settle-

Pentagon vows to keep weapons moving to Ukraine as Kyiv faces assault by Russia

AP WASHINGTON

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin committed DAustin committed Monday to keeping US weapons moving to Ukraine as Kyiv faces one of its toughest moments against a renewed assault by Russia. Austin and as many as 50 defence leaders from Europe and around the world were meeting Monday to coordinate more military aid to Ukraine, as Kyiv tries to hold off a Russian offensive in the northeast while launching its own massive assault on the Russia-occupied Crimean Peninsula. "We're meeting in a moment of challenge," Austin said, noting that Russia's new onslaught of Kharkiv showed why the continued commitment by the countries was vital to keep coming. Austin vowed to keep US weapons moving "week after week." The US announced no new aid packages Monday, even as Ukrainian forces continue to

complain that weapons are

just trickling into the country after being stalled for month's due to congressional gridlock over funding. Pentagon officials have said that weapons pre-positioned in Europe began moving into Ukraine soon after the aid funding was approved.

It's unclear how much of that has reached some of the front lines, where Russian troops have intensified their assault. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday during a visit to China that Moscow's offensive in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region aims to create a buffer zone but that there are no plans to capture

Ukrainian troops have been fighting to halt Russian advances in the Kharkiv region, while also increasing their offensive attacks in Crimea, including on military infrastructure sites on the Black Sea coast and in the Russian-occupied city of

Ukraine has also struggled to get enough troops to the front ines, as the war drags on into its third year and fighting takes its toll. In an effort to increase troop numbers, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed two laws, allowing prisoners to join the army and increasing fines for draft dodgers fivefold. The controversial mobilisation law goes into effect on Saturday.In the three weeks since President Joe Biden signed the USD 95 billion foreign aid package, the US has sent USD 1.4 billion in weapons pulled from Pentagon stockpiles and announced it was providing USD 6 billion in funding through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, USAI pays for longer-term contracts with the defence industry and means that the weapons could take many months or years to arrive. In recent packages the US has agreed to send High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and rock-

tions for Patriot and National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, artillery, antiaircraft and anti-tank munitions, and an array of armoured vehicles, such as Bradley and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The US is also providing additional coastal and riverine patrol boats, trailers, demolition munitions, high-speed anti-radiation missiles, protective gear, spare parts and other weapons and equipment. The State Department has also approved a proposed emergency sale of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) to Ukraine for an estimated USD 30 million. State said Ukraine has asked to buy three of the rocket systems. which would be funded by the government of Germany.The US has now provided about USD 50.6 billion in military assistance to Ukraine since Russia invaded in February

Irish diplomat worried about slow justice in peacekeeper's killing

tourists; in 2022, that figure on Monday expressed his concern over the slow progress in criminal proceedings against Mediterranean country.

Beirut (AP): Ireland's top diplomat in a visit to Lebanon probe. Rooney was killed on December 14, 2022. Only one of the suspects, Mohammed Avvad, was arrested. However, he was released on bail in November, with officials citing his medical condition. The four others facing charges — Ali Khalifeh, Ali Salman, Hussein Salman, and Mustafa Salman — remain at large. All five are allegedly linked with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Hezbollah has repeatedly denied any role in the killing. On the fatal night, Rooney and several other Irish soldiers from UNIFIL were on

their way from their base in

southern Lebanon to the Beirut

apparently took a detour through Al-Aqbiya, which is not part of the area under the peacekeepers' mandate. Initial reports said angry residents confronted the peacekeepers, but the indictment concluded that the shooting was a target-ed attack. The UN peacekeeper vehicle reportedly took a wrong turn and was surrounded by vehicles and armed men as they tried to make their way back to the main road.

and for the killers to be "brought to justice", Martin told reporters. "We understand the separation of powers. But we are concerned at the slow pace of the trial. And the Irish people want justice"

ISIS claims attack in Af that killed 3 Spanish citizens and 3 Afghans 2021, there were 691 foreign ing tourists and their guides. Qani said that all those who

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for an attack on foreigners in central Afghanistan in which three Spanish citizens and three Afghans were killed.

Seven people were wounded in the attack on Friday in Bamiyan province, a major tourist area, according to Abdul Mateen Qani, a spokesman for the interior minister. He said seven suspects were arrested at the

The Islamic State group issued statements on its Aamaq news agency late Sunday that said IS fighters attacked a bus carry-

The attack was in response to the IS leaders' directions to target citizens of the European Union wherever they are found," it said. Spain's Foreign Ministry said

three Spaniards died and at least one more had been wounded. A Taliban official in Bamiyan who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media said the four wounded foreigners were from Spain, Norway, Australia and

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez wrote on social media platform X that he was "overwhelmed" by the news

were wounded have been transferred to capital Kabul for treatment and they are stable condition.

The Islamic State group's affiliate in Afghanistan is a major Taliban rival and its militants have attacked schools, hospitals, mosques and minority Shiite areas throughout the country

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021 as US and NATO forces were in the final weeks of their withdrawal from the country after 20 years of war.

The Taliban is seeking to increase the number of tourists coming to the country. In responsibility for the blast.

rose to 2,300; and last year, it topped 7,000.Bamiyan was the site of two massive Buddha statues carved into a cliff between the 4th and 6th century and which were destroyed by the Taliban at al-Qaida's urging in early 2001. Separately on Monday, a hand grenade exploded in the south-

ern city of Kandahar, killing at least one civilian and wound ing three, the Kandahar police chief's office said. Police were investigating the explosion near the road toward

Kandahar airport, the state-

several Lebanese men charged with the killing of an Irish peacekeeper in 2022 in the tiny Micheal Martin, Irish foreign and defence minister, said he was "very, very concerned" about the case. He met with

Irish peacekeepers in south Lebanon and with Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib and a representative of the Lebanese defence ministry. Lebanon's military tribunal last June charged four men with the killing of Pvt. Seán Rooney, 24, of Newtown Cunningham, airport. Two UN vehicles

"We want justice to be done"

GST officers working on registration

mechanism for shared warehouse

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

official said.

geo-tagged

(GST) rules.

authorities

after multiple suppliers have

warehouse as their 'additional

place of business' under the

Goods and Services Tax

"We are working to see whether a 'shared workplace'

or 'coworking space' concept

can be implemented for the

GDP growth likely to be 6.2 per cent in Q4, 7 per cent in FY24: Ind-RA

India Ratings and Research expects the country's GDP growth rate for the March quarter at 6.2 per cent and around 6.9-7 per cent for the 2023-24 fiscal, its principal economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said. The GDP numbers for the fourth quarter (January-March 2024) and the provisional estimates for the 2023-24 fiscal are scheduled to be released by government on May 31.

The Indian economy grew 8.2 per cent in the June quarter, 8.1 per cent in the September quarter and 8.4 per cent in the December quarter of 2023-24. "We are expecting the fourth quarter growth to be 6.2 per cent and the overall GDP growth for FY24 to be around 6.9-7 per cent," Sinha told PTI in an interview.

He said the growth rate in the first two quarters benefited from a low base, though the 8.4 per cent growth rate in the third (October-December 2023) quarter was surprising. "When we analyse the data then what is visible is the wedge between the GVA and GDP. A large impetus to Q3 GDP has come from higher



collection, but this phenomenon is unlikely to be repeated in the fourth quarter. The wedge between the GDP and GVA is unlikely to be repeated in the fourth quarter," he noted.

While the gross value added (GVA) was 6.5 per cent in the third quarter, the GDP growth rate stood at 8.4 per cent. This wedge is on account of higher taxes collected during the quarter. In the first quarter, the GVA and GDP growth was 8.2 per cent, while in the second witnesse quarter, the GVA was 7.7 per second

electricity, while mining and industrial output will be laggard.
"The prediction of above normal monsoon (by the Indian Meteorological Department), if it turns out to be true, will see some revival

demand, and make it broadbased, instead of skewed currently," Sinha said. The cent and GDP 8.1 per cent. finance ministry, in its GDP is the total value of monthly economic review, goods and services produced said resilient growth, robust in a given period. GVA is economic activity indicators, GDP minus net taxes (gross price stability, and steady tax collection minus subsidy). The Reserve Bank, in its external sector performance continue to support India's monetary policy review in April, projected GDP growth promising performance amid uncertain for 2023-24 at 7 per cent. As global conditions. Overall, India continues to be regards the economic growth in the current fiscal, Sinha said the GDP is expected to

expand at 7.1 per cent.

"Even if we set aside the tax

component, the momentum

witnessed in the first and

the fastest-growing major with positive economy, assessments of the growth outlook for the current financial year by international organisations and the RBI, the ministry noted.

quarters, and the likelihood is

that momentum will continue in FY25," he added. The

services sector, he said, will

continue the momentum, led

in rural demand, which will

consumption

economic

construction

Hero MotoCorp plans to expand electric model range

Hero MotoCorp is looking to expand its presence in the electric two-wheeler segment as it aims to introduce new models below its current range to cater to a broader set of customers, as per a senior company official. The country's largest two-wheeler maker currently sells two electric scooters under its Vida range, priced between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.5

"We are expanding our portfolio in the first half of this year (current fiscal)..Into the mid and the mass segment as well," Hero MotoCorp Chief Business Officer - Emerging Mobility BU Swadesh Srivastava said in an analyst call.

With new product introductions this fiscal, the company is going to be able to play in each of the three segments of premium, mid and mass, he noted.

'With this, we are looking at significant growth within this year. And we are also looking to improve our cost structures," he said.

The company is going to witness huge growth in the EV segment this year as well crore and Rs 1,50 the current fiscal.



as next year, he stated. We are looking at steep growth this year and next year, based on the portfolio the geographical expansion," Srivastava said. Hero MotoCorp ha

expanded the presence of the VIDA brand to more than 120 cities and over 180 touch-points in the country. It has also entered into a partnership with Ather Energy for an interoperable charging network, providing over 2,000 charging points across 200 cities to its customers.

To strengthen its global presence, VIDA is also expected to make its debut in European and UK markets in FY25. Replying to a query, Hero MotoCorp CEO Hero MotoCorp CEÓ Niranjan Gupta said the company's capex guidance remains between Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 1,500 crore for

Moore Singhi Executive warehouses maintained by ecommerce companies to store goods of multiple suppliers," the official told PTI. Under Goods and Services Tax (GST) law, suppliers to an e-commerce platform can store their goods at a common suppliers.
GST authorities have recently

warehouse. However, the suppliers in their GST registration are required to show the warehouse as an additional place of business. The official said that when multiple taxpayers register at a single warehouse, the geo-tag reflects the same address for all. This sends a signal to the tax officer that numerous

taxpayers are based at one location and this might be a possible fraudulent registration. The other issue is that the warehouse where multiple suppliers store their goods should not be held not accountable for the default of a single supplier. Additionally, there is a risk that tax officers might attribute such risks to

the e-commerce operators

potentially

themselves,

affecting their businesses, the official added. The issue of registration of warehouses maintained by ecommerce companies was discussed between the Central and state GST officers at a meeting earlier this month. "It is currently in the phase of discussion. Whether a shared workplace concept can be implemented for e-commerce



warehouses discussed the committee and then presented before the GST Council," the official said.

The law committee under the GST Council comprises officers from central and state

Director Rajat Mohan said the evolution of e-commerce has necessitated many companies maintain warehouses for multiple suppliers, with some facilities accommodating thousands of

implemented geo-tagging, requiring taxpayers to provide geo-tags for all registered premises. This allows tax officers to pinpoint the exact locations registered taxpayers. "A scenario of multiple

taxpayers showing the same address can lead to undue scrutiny for both the taxpayers operating within warehouses companies managing them. It presents significant challenge that resolution at the industry level," Mohan said.

He said GST authorities implementing a mechanism to separately identify warehouses and train tax systems to avoid conflating the tax payment score of these facilities with those of the suppliers registered there.

"A refined tax system should enable geotags to distinctly represent warehouses and individual facilitating more accurate risk assessments by tax officers and minimising unwarranted harassment," Mohan added.

India has sufficient domestic tyre capacity: ATM

India has sufficient tyre manufacturing capacity and imports should not be liberalised through FTAs by way of duty concessions, industry body Automotive Manufacturers Ássociation said on Monday. The automotive tyres rank at the forefront of those sectors domestic manufacturing capabilities render imports Automotive Manufacturers Association (ATMA) has communicated to the Centre. This was in response to the government seeking feedback

about sectors in which India

has capabilities to be selfreliant so that upcoming



FTAs could be drafted while India's domestic tyre industry, safeguarding the interests of among the largest in the domestic industry, ATMA said in a statement.

The industry body has pointed out that imports should not be liberalised through FTAs by way of duty

has an annual production exceeding 200 million units across various categories including twowheelers, passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, and offroad vehicles, it added

manufacturing capacities, over Rs 2,000 crore worth of tyres were imported in the country in the first three quarters of FY24, an increase of 27 per cent over the same period in the preceding year, ATMA said. "Over the last few years, the

tyre sector has witnessed substantial investments, by manufacturers allocating over Rs 35,000 crore towards capacity expansion, technology upgrades, and research and development. As the new capacities go on stream, it is important to meet the demand from domestic manufacturing rather than importing tyres," ATMA Chairman Arnab Banerjee tyre industry is today geared to meet all the requirements of domestic and international OEMs (original equipment makers) by way of design, development and ensuring regular supply of tyres for all categories and vehicles manufactured in the country. 'The industry is ahead of the demand curve in production of all types of tyres. As soon as a vehicle is conceived, tyre companies are ready with the fitments. As a result, auto OEMs are not importing tyres the domestic tyre industry is meeting the Banerjee requirements,"

ATMA said the domestic tyre industry is a significant people directly and indirectly employed in manufacturing, distribution, and related services "Prioritising domestic manufacturing of tyres is also

livelihoods to over 5 lakh

essential as the livelihood of over 10 lakh rubber growers in the country depends upon the tyre industry that consumes over 70 per cent of the domestic natural rubber," it said. By fostering domestic production and leveraging technological advancements, India can strengthen its position as a global leader in the tyre industry while generating employment, promoting sustainability, and driving economic growth. ATMA asserted.

Training Programme on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics organised

PNS AMRITSAR

Under the esteemed leadership of Prof. (Dr) Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Vice Chancellor, "Artificial Intelligence and Robotics' laboratory is established in the Department of Mechanical Engineering funded by RUSA grant, Govt. of India, New Delhi. Five-day Training Programme

was conducted on"Factory Automation and Robotics Programing using FluidSim Software and CIROS Software of Germany based FESTO Company" atArtificial Intelligence and Robotics laboratory with the support of Professor Dr PK Pati, coordinator, Golden Jubilee Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation GNDU.

In this five-day training programme, students were given hands on training practice of AI based factory automation and robotic programming techniques.

Dr Pati, emphasised that this kind of training can bridge the



gap between academics and latest technologies used in the industry.

Dr Harminder Singh, Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering welcomed the Resource Person, Er. Chandrashekhar V. Varerkar, Manager Didactic at Festo India Pvt. Ltd. Varerkar Mechatronics completed Trainer Level 1 & Level 2 Certification from Siemens Technik Academy, Berlin, Germany. He has 15 Years experience core manufacturing industry at TATA Steel Wire Division in Electrical Maintenance Dept. and 9 Years core training experience in a Indo-German IV

company, ChristianiSharpline Technical TrainingPvt. Ltd as a AGM Training with specialisation in

India Cements narrows net loss to ₹50.06 crore in

PTI NEW DELHI

ndia Cements Ltd on **■**Monday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss to Rs 50.06 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2024, helped by improved sales volume. The company had posted a net loss of Rs 243.77 crore in the same quarter a year ago, India Cements Ltd said in a

regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations in the quarter under review was at Rs 1,266.65 crore as against Rs 1,485.73 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. "With the improved sales volume, India Cements Ltd could turn out a better operating performance and pared the losses for the fourth quarter under review," the company said.

The cement and clinker volume for the fourth quarter was 24.36 lakh tonne as compared to 27.85 lakh tonne in the same period of the previous year, it added Together with the profit arising

from the sale of land, the company has made a cash profit of Rs.24 crore for the quarter despite the setback caused by the fall in selling prices of cement, the company said. India Cements further said after muted capacity utilisation in the previous two quarters caused by the stressed working capital conditions, the same could be improved in the fourth quarter due to infusion of working capital and it was 63 per cent from 51 per cent in the third quarter of the current

Total expenses in the fourth quarter were lower at Rs 1,351.84 crore as compared to Rs 1,637.65 crore in the corresponding period previous fiscal. For the fiscal ended 31, 2024, the consolidated net loss was at Rs 215.76 crore. It was at Rs 169.82 crore in the previous fiscal, the

company said. In FY24 consolidated revenue from operations was at Rs

5,112.24 crore, down from Rs

5,608.14 crore in FY23. On the outlook, the company said after Lok Sabha elections and assembly elections in some states, the centre and states are expected to retain their focus on the development agenda. The construction activity is expected to be brisk in the coming months driven by continued infrastructure spending by the government, private sector housing and commercial segments.

'This presents a healthy demand outlook for cement and the industry, especially in the South, has built adequate capacity to meet the firm demand," India Cements said. At the same time, it said, "Increasing cost pressure, high cost of logistics and severe competition in the market are also hanging over the head which will affect the margins."

PGIM India Asset Management aims to double AUM to ₹50,000 crore

PGIM India Asset Management aims to more than double its assets under management to Rs 50,000 crore within the next 2-3 years, which will be driven by efforts to complete the product basket coupled the strong focus on SIP, its top official said on Monday.

The asset management firm, which forayed into the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) space in October 2023, is also looking to complete its product basket with the launch of new schemes including a special opportunities fund.

The fund house, which has an Asset Under Management (AUM) of Rs 23,240 crore at present, expects to touch Rs 50,000~crore mark AUM in the next 2-3 years, Abhishek Tiwari, Chief Business Officer of PGIM India Asset Management, told PTI here. "Factors that will drive the growth of PGIM India Asset

Management are — the organic growth the of management industry in India and our focus on completing our product basket along with the continued focus on SIP which is a very healthy part of our business growth," he said. Apart from this, having licenses and in turn products across the mutual fund, PMS (Portfolio Management Services) and AIF (Alternative Investment Fund) on the public market is a big enabler for being relevant across the distribution and client segments, he added. PGIM India Mutual Fund is a

fully-owned subsidiary of the US-based Prudential Group's Prudential Global Investment

Managers. Overall, the 44-player mutual fund industry has an asset base of Rs 57.26 lakh crore as of April this year, marking a growth of 37 per cent from Rs 41.62 lakh crore in April 2023, according to data available with the Association Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).

Uber gets licence to operate buses in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

d e Rhailing app Uber has received an aggregator licence by

the

Uber Delhi Transport Department to

operate buses in the national Capital under the Delhi premium Bus Scheme, the company said in a statement. Delhi becomes the first state to award a licence for bus operations and Uber becomes the first aggregator to be granted a licence under the Delhi Premium Bus scheme, the statement said.

"Following a successful pilot programme, where we witnessed significant demand for buses, we are thrilled to officially introduce the convenience of Uber rides to buses in Delhi," Uber Shuttle India head Amit Deshpande said. Customers will be able to pre-book seats on their preferred route by choosing the 'Uber Shuttle' option on the Uber app.

Godrej Properties acquires 10 land parcels in FY24 to build ₹21,000 crore worth projects

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

n a bid to expand the In a Did to Capalla business, Godrej Properties acquired 10 land parcels, of which eight were outright, last financial year to build housing projects worth over Rs 21,000 crore and has set a target for this fiscal to buy more parcels that can generate sales bookings of Rs 20,000 crore.

In its investors presentation, Godrej Properties informed that it "added 10 new projects with an expected future booking value of Rs 21,225 crore".

For the last 2023-24 fiscal, Godrej Properties had given a guidance of Rs 15,000 crore new

development, which means acquiring land parcels through an outright basis and joint development with land

Godrej Properties has given an annual guidance of Rs 20,000 crore for this fiscal year under the new business development. In investors call Godrej

Executive Properties Chairperson Pirojsha Godrej said there is no upper cap for business development and the company would acquire more land if there are right opportunities.

...If we see great opportunities, Rs 20,000 crore is not going to form any kind of upper cap certainly. And business we have seen in past years, for The company, which is part of Godrej Properties plans to



example, in FY23, where I think we guided around Rs 15,000 crore and ended up doing 35,000 crore or so.

"So, certainly I would not

look at this Rs 20,000 crore as an upper cap and we would hope to if we see the right opportunities, go well past this," he said.

has a major presence in four Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region), Pune and Bengaluru. recently entered the Hyderabad property market. Out of the 10 land parcels acquired in the 2023-24 fiscal,

Godrej Industries group, is

one of the leading real estate

developers in the country. It

the presentation showed that four land parcels are in Delhi-NCR, two each in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, and one each in Kolkata and Nagpur. The total saleable area in these 10 future real estate projects is estimated at 18.93 million square feet.

On the new supply guidance,

fiscal across major cities to achieve 20 per cent growth in sales bookings. In the last fiscal, the

company's sales bookings jumped 84 per cent to a record Rs 22,527 crore, from Rs 12,232 crore in the preceding year. This is the highest sales reported so far by any listed entity for FY24. According to investors presentation, Godrei Properties plans to launch 21.9 million (219 lakh) square feet area this fiscal with an

estimated sales booking value of Rs 30,000 crore. Earlier this month, Godrei Properties reported its scale it up to 15 million highest-ever quarterly profit square feet in 2024-25.

launch residential projects as earnings jumped 14 per worth Rs 30,000 crore this cent annually to Rs 471.26 crore in the March quarter. Its net profit stood at Rs 412.14 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 1,914.82 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24, from Rs 1,838.82 crore in the year-ago period

During the 2023-24 fiscal, the company's net profit increased to Rs 725.27 crore, from Rs 571.39 crore in the preceding year. Total income rose to Rs

4,334.22 crore in FY24, from Rs 3,039 crore in 2022-23. The company delivered 12.5 million square feet area in the last fiscal and is targeting to

Entrepreneurship course organised

PNS NEW DELHI

Entrepreneurship Development Cell at IIT Delhi (eDC, IIT Delhi), in collaboration with some distinguished Institute alumni, conducted the first season of Venture Studio, an entrepreneurship course to support IIT Delhi students in their journey to successful startups scratch.

The course was designed to empower the students with the knowledge and skills to enable them to become successful entrepreneurs.

Drawing from a pool of over registrations, outstanding students from diverse academic backgrounds were selected to



difference entrepreneurial landscape. The curriculum of Venture Studio Season-I meticulously crafted to cover a wide range of topics critical entrepreneurship, including ideation, market

research, business model development, funding strategies, development, marketing, and



Be it sports or education, discipline is necessary: Gopichand to students

scipline defined him both as a player and coach. So, it was hardly surprise that Pullela Gopichand stressed on the virtue as he delivered a motivational speech youngsters preparing for competitive exams here, drawing sporting analogies to drive home his point. The 50-year-old former All

England champion, who is also a Droncharya awardee, was addressing a gathering of students preparing competitive exams in streams engineering medicine.

"Be it sports or education both are same. In both, discipline as well as dedication is necessary.

With time, another need has been added to both these fields and that is mentoring," Indian badminton's chief national coach said.

"Only when there is training along with teaching, a student becomes capable of competing in the present times. Similarly, in sports also, if coaching becomes good along with discipline and dedication, then the player moves ahead," he added at an event held at the Allen Career Institute here.

Hyderabadi, who is credited for shaping Olympic medallists Saina Nehwal and P V Sindu among others, said he foresees bright future for youngsters growing up in cities like Patna.

"One-sided results cannot always be expected in sports.

Sometimes you may be the with your performance and sometimes the player in front of you may be better, this does not mean that we should stop working hard.

"Even in studies, if the results are not as per expectations then we should not stop. Try to learn more, solve problems, your hard work will never go in vain, one day you will be able to fulfill your dream," he told

the gathered students. "Cities like Kota and Patna are modern-day Gurukuls of India nurturing dreamers with potential like you into world champions in field of engineering, medicine and beyond. It takes a good coach to know when he sees a world champion," he added.

Zverev's stock rising for French Open

pop-ranked Novak Djokovic hasn't won a tournament all year. Record 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal has been far from his best. Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz have been out injured And Daniil Medvedev has won only one clay-court title in his

Considering the state of his rivals in the top five, Alexander Zverev's credentials entering Roland Garros are looking pretty good following his second Italian Open title.

The clay-court Grand Slam in

Paris starts this weekend.
"I'm somebody that I know when I don't play well, I can lose to anyone, but when I play well, I know I can beat anyone. That's my mindset. That's how I think about it," Zverev said after raising the trophy in Rome.

"I know I have to focus on myself, to find my rhythm in Paris the way I did here. Then everything is on my own

Zverev won 44 of his 49 service points in a 6-4, 7-5 victory over 24th-ranked Nicolas Jarry 6-4, 7-5 in Rome on Sunday to earn his biggest trophy since a gruesome ankle injury two years ago.

It's been a long road of recovery for the fifth-ranked Zverev after tearing three ligaments in his right ankle during the 2022 French Open semifinals against Nadal. In all, Zverev has reached three

consecutive semifinals

Roland Garros — which has

led him to declare it's the tournament he wants to win more than any other.

"It's the one where I have the most memories, good or bad," Zverev said. "U.S. Open, yes, I was two points away from winning the title. Of course, that's also one that kind of sticks out. (But) Roland Garros, so close to being in the final in 2021, I felt like I was playing some of the best tennis of my life in 2022. Those kind of things, they are still in the back of my mind. That's the one that I want to do well in." That loss in the 2020 U.S. Open final to Dominic Thiem

remains the closest that the 27vear-old Zverev has come to

winning a Grand Slam title. Having been in the top five of the rankings for years, claimed Olympic gold in Tokyo three years ago and won the ATP Finals twice, a Grand Slam title is the only big thing missing in his career.

And if Zverev is going to contend in Paris, he's going to have to do it while dealing with a major distraction.

Zverev has disputed a penalty order from a German court over allegations that he caused bodily harm to a woman and he will go on trial in his home country starting on May 31 entering the middle weekend of the French Open.

Zverev is accused of physically

abusing and damaging the health of a woman during an argument in Berlin four years ago. He said in Rome that he won't attend the start of the legal proceedings.

Zverev, who moved up one spot to No. 4 in the rankings released on Monday, shared an emotional moment over the weekend with his father and coach, who is also named Alexander Zverev.

While Zverev kept his composure on the court, dad was teary eyed in the stands during the trophy ceremony. "A father is always important,

no matter who it is," Zverev said. "Obviously in my career super important. It's funny

great relationship — which is not always the case, a fatherfather-daughter relationship when they're coaching them as well. You see it a lot of times, it's very shaky. But we have a great relationship outside as well."

A few years ago, the elder Zverev was missing from the player's box due to medical

"I'm going to have him around as long as he wants to," the younger Zverev said. "It's obviously a special moment for all of us, given the circumstances that this is my first Masters after the injury. There was obviously a lot of uncertainties whether I was going to be back at this level." Zverev's mom, Irina, was also courtside, along with the family's two dogs.

In Paris, however, the Zverevs won't be the only high-profile entourage

Djokovic has entered a small tournament in Geneva this week to get more match preparation in before heading to the French Open, and Sinner and Alcaraz have been back on the practice courts following hip and right forearm injuries, respectively. 'Nole is going to be at his best. You'll see. It's just the way it is," Zverev said. "Rafa is going to play a lot better than he did in Madrid and Rome. I'm certain about that. The other two, they just depend on health. Íf they're healthy, they're two of the best players in the world for sure and there's no question

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

For a long time, Deepthi Jeevanji's parents were taunted by fellow villagers for having a "mentally impaired"

But now they are counting the compliments as the same bunch converged at their modest house in Telangana's Kalleda hamlet to celebrate her world record-beating gold medal in the Para Athletics World Championship in Kobe,

Born to daily wage labourers at in Warangal district of Telangana, the 20-year-old Deepthi on Monday clinched gold with a world record time of 55.07 seconds in the women's 400m T20 category race. She also qualified for the upcoming Paris Paralympics.

The T20 category is meant for athletes who have intellectual impairment.

Deepthi's coach Nagpuri Ramesh said her parents were at the receiving end of taunts often say that she will never get married since she is "mentally impaired".

"Deepthi's parents were daily

Taunted for being mentally impaired once, Para world champion Deepthi is now feted in village

struggling to run the family. On top of that they faced constant taunts from the villagers that a mentally impaired girl cannot get married," Ramesh told PTI from Hyderabad, where Deepthi trains currently.

"After Deepthi won gold in the Hangzhou Asian Para Games last year, the scenario changed. Now, the same villagers are praising them for being parents of Deepthi. They told me this when they came in Hyderabad after the Para Asian

'They told me even the district collector and politicians of the area visited their house which was a shock to them, considering how things have changed."

category in the Hangzhou Para Asian Games with Asian record time of 56.69 seconds. Deepthi's father J Yadagiri and

poor that they did not even have money to afford bus fare to send their child to Hyderabad from Warangal when Ramesh wanted to train

"She was spotted in a school meet through a PET teacher in Warangal. When I told them to send Deepthi, they said they didn't have money for bus fare. I told them to just board a bus and give me the phone number of the conductor.

"After that I explained to the bus conductor to let her board the bus and told him I will pay the fare when she reaches Hyderabad. During the 130km journey from Warangal to Hyderabad I kept calling the bus conductor inquiring about her safety."

had earlier sold their half acre land due difficulties but they bought an identical piece of land with the wage labourers and they were mother J Dhanalaxmi were so Rs 30 lakh reward she got for



winning the Para Asian Games gold medal.

"Deepthi's parents are now doing better. They have bought land with the money Deepthi got as reward for her achievements and they have started farming," said Ramesh. After Deepthi was brought to Hyderabad, she was enrolled at the Sports Authority of India's Training Center in Hyderabad where Ramesh is a coach. She was studying in ninth standard

Ramesh, who is also the Athletics Federation of India's national junior team coach, said he had a tough time initially in training Deepthi because she could not communicate.

at that time.

"You cannot teach her too in learning things, If you do that she will get confused," he

Her parents once told Ramesh that Deepthi fell down from

the roof of a building but acted as if she didn't feel any pain because of the inability to

about it.

express her feelings.
Chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand also played a role in Deepthi's career.

It was Gopichand who suggested Ramesh to take her to the National Institute for the Empowerment of Person with Intellectual Disability in Hyderabad. After medical tests, she was certified as "mentally impaired" and that allowed her to compete in para

Gopi-Mytrah Foundation chipped in as her sponsor and funded two international events for her to get international license, which is a must for para athletes to compete.

"She competed in two tournaments, one in Morocco and another in Australia and she got her international license. Around Rs three lakh were spent in the two tourn: Mytrah Foundation funded it," said Ramesh, a Dronacharya awardee, who was also the coach of top sprinter Dutee

BCCI lays foundation stone for indoor cricket Co-hosts from Caribbean aiming to defy academies in six North Eastern States

The Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) on Monday laid the foundation stone for indoor cricket training academies in six North-Eastern states, with the sole emphasis on helping budding cricketers from the The indoor cricket academies

will serve players from Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram Nagaland and Sikkim and will be based in Shillong, Itanagar, Kohima, Aizawl, Imphal and Gangtok. "Honoured to have laid the

foundation stone for BCCI's upcoming state-of-the-art indoor training facilities in the



North-East," Shah wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Earlier, cricketers from these

states were required to travel to centres in Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai Ahmedabad training

during the monsoon season. The BCCI had also created North-East Cricket Committee, Development which is being headed by DaĪmiya, Avishek

of the Cricket

"Our cricketers from six states Pradesh Arunachal Manipur, Meghalaya Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim — will soon benefit from world-class indoor nets, indoor swimming pools and enhance developing a new National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru with expanded area and

Association of Bengal (CAB).

fitness centres for year-round training options," Shah wrote. "This, along with the launch of the new pavillion in Mizoram, are his extres towards our vision. are big steps towards our vision cricket infrastructure in the region, exciting times ahead," he added. Meanwhile, the BCCI is already in the process of

Indian Open Surfing to kickoff on May 31

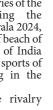
president

PTI ■ MANGALORE

The fifth edition of the Indian Open Surfing (IOS) will be held at the Sasihithlu Beach here from May 31 to June 2, the sport's governing body SFI announced on Monday.

The three-day surfing competition will include four categories — Men's Open, Women's Open, Groms (U-16) Boys and Groms (U-16) Girls.

"Indian Open Surfing will be the 2nd stop of the National Championship series of the 2024 calendar year, following the International Surfing Festival Kerala 2024, held in March at the beautiful cliff beach of Varkala," the Surfing Federation of India (SFI), the governing body for the sports of surfing and stand-up paddling in the country, said in a media release. The IOS will feature intense rivalry





between surfers from the east and west coasts, as these championships carry important ranking points that will determine the surfers' standings at the end of the season.

"Our goal is simple, we want to elevate India to the top in surfing. After a successful start to the National Series in Kerala, we are glad to continue the championships in Mangaluru before the championship tour moves to the East Coast," SFI president Arun Vasu said.

Ramesh Budihal, Harish M, Srikanth D, and Manikandan M will be the surfers to watch out for in the men's category, having performed exceptionally well in the last national championship recently held in

In the women's category, Kamali Moorthy, Srishthi Selvam, and Sandhya Arun are among the participants competing for the top honors

Teenage sensation Kishore Kumar will have all eyes on him, having stunned everyone with his recent performances.

history and win third Twenty20 World Cup title

After leading the West Indies to two Twenty20 World Cup titles as a captain, Daren Sammy has to defy history to win again as a head coach.

No host has won the tournament on home soil in the first eight editions, a trend Sammy hopes to break with the 2024 T20 World Cup being staged in the United States of America and the Caribbean.

Sri Lanka went the closest by reaching the final in 2012 before losing to West Indies in Colombo. That win is widely remembered for the Gangnam Style celebrations of the Caribbean players after Sri Lanka was bowled out for 101 in pursuit of a 138-run target. Four years later, a fearless brand of West Indies cricket set the Eden Gardens alight in India. Carlos Brathwaite hit four consecutive sixes against Ben Stokes in the final over to steer the Caribbean team to a second T20 World Cup title.

Sammy was appointed head coach of the West Indies limited-overs squads last year. His past teammates Johnson Charles and Andre Russell, T20's most accomplished allrounder, are the only two-time champions still in the squad.

"We know how to select winning teams," Sammy said in a news conference with Caribbean media to announce the squad. "We've done it before and I think, as a selection group, we're really eliminated in the group stage



excited about it.

"It's an exciting time, and this preparation did not start now. It started from the last World Cup in Australia," Sammy was quoted as saying by CNC3.

What we've been able to do throughout the last year as a T20 group, the players we've exposed, has brought us to this moment, and I think we're about to knock it out of this world?

Curtley Ambrose, the great West Indies pace bowler, was confident the squad could play the consistent, smart cricket required to win a third title. West Indies and England are the only teams to have won the

title twice, and no host has ever won, he said, "so all that is motivation for the guys to do The last two T20 World Cups

in the United Arab Emirates in

in the UAE with just a win. Nicholas Pooran's side didn't qualify for the main round in Australia the following year. It was a setback for West Indies cricket, dating back to the late 1800s when a

and territories began playing under a unified banner. And, it's something Sammy's squad is determined to put right, coming off some solid individual performances in

collection of mainly English-

speaking Caribbean nations

the Indian Premier League. Without the pressure of the captaincy, Pooran could be a key to success in the middleorder. The left-hander had an impressive outing in the IPL, scoring 499 runs at a strike rate of 178.21 for Lucknow

Super Giants. The absence of Sunil Narine, who helped Kolkata Knight Riders top the IPL standings 2021 and Australia in 2022 didn't go well for West Indies. this season with his batting Kieron Pollard's team was and bowling exploits, will be difficult to cover.

Sammy said he'd had conversations with Narine since the last Caribbean Premier League season, but couldn't convince him into a West Indies comeback: "As the news clearly stated, Narine is retired."

But, led by captain Rovman Powell, West Indies has enough batting firepower to challenge the leading teams and the advantage of playing in the CPL.

Young fast bowler Shamar Joseph, who has just played three T20s and is yet to make his T20 International debut, was selected ahead of Matthew Forde as the West Indies looked for extra speed in the bowling attack.

"Shamar Joseph has the pace, he has skills with the new ball," Sammy said. "Not saying Matthew Forde doesn't but when you look at the role, it makes it easier for us to now pick the personnel to fit that

West Indies will be playing its first two Group C games against Papua New Guinea and Uganda at Providence on June 2 and June 9 before taking on higher-ranked New Zealand and Afghanistan at Torouba and Gros Islet on June 13 and June 18. The top two teams from each of the four groups in the league stage will advance to Super 8.

The tournament starts June 1 with a North American rivalry between the US and Canada in Dallas and concludes with the final on June 29 at Bridgetown, Barbados.

Salt less KKR take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in power hitting slugfest

Hydershed to the Hyders Hyderabad, teams that have built their IPL 2024 campaign on power-hitting, will look to outmuscle each other in Qualifier 1 here on Tuesday.

If KKR were the first team to make IPL playoffs this year, SRH gave themselves a huge boost by inflicting a four-wicket loss on Punjab Kings on Sunday to eventually finish second with 17 points, ahead of Rajasthan Royals.

While the two top teams from the 70-match league round have enjoyed some time off courtesy incessant rains during their respective clashes over last 10 days, the lack of turnaround time to compete in a high-intensity playoff game will also pose a unique

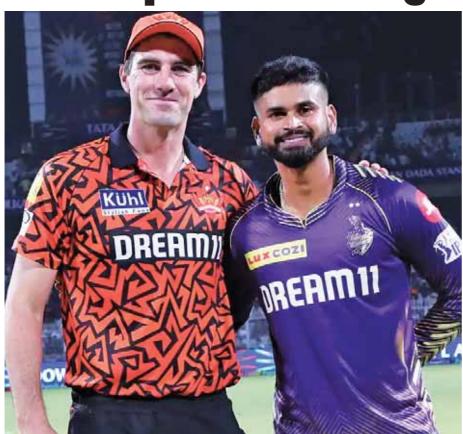
challenge.

KKR and SRH will get only a day's time to traverse thousands of kilometres and get here for the first half of the playoffs as they both featured on the final day of the league round on Sunday. SRH would feel they have hit

their strides following a comprehensive win over PBKS and having also got recent game-time, which isn't the case for KKR whose last complete

game was on May 11. Shreyas Iyer's KKR had won four games on the trot before rains washed away their last two league games and the twotime winners.

Table-toppers KKR (19 points) will also have to fill in KKR (19 the huge void at the top with their second-highest run-



scorer and wicketkeeper Phil Salt (435 runs) leaving the camp for national duties with England ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Salt had forged a devastating partnership with Sunil Narine (461) at the top and KKR were immensely benefited by their ultra-aggressive approach with the bat, backed up well by a potent middle-order even though skipper Iyer (287) has not had a major impact yet. The washed out contest against

RR in particular robbed KKR of an opportunity to give expected replacement Rahmanullah Gurbaz a go at the top with Narine, something that would have settled a few

concerns certainly.

For KKR, the form of Nitish Rana adds more solidity to the middle-order while a fiery Andre Russell among the finishers promise them vital In many ways, SRH match

KKR's firepower on paper and

that is what adds more to the lure of this contest.

Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma have both got their runs at a strike rate exceeding 200 while inspiring their side to rewrite a few records.

Australian southpaw Head has in many ways redefined aggressiveness with the bat also while remaining successful (533 runs with one century and four fifties). His fearlessness has also brought the best out of the

(467), who has clobbered an overall 41 sixes this IPL - 10 more than his overall tally of 31 in the previous six seasons.

SRH have also managed to find answers to a couple of questions which were lingering on for a while. At No 3, the 2016 winners have found a dependable option in Rahul Tripathi who can both accelerate as well as weather storms when head storms when bowlers are on-

song. Additionally, Heinrich Klaasen has rediscovered his form after has rediscovered his form after a dip in the middle of the tournament. With a crucial knock of 42 against PBKS, Klaasen has signalled having found his mojo back, which only makes SRH even more formidable formidable

At Ahmedabad, as seen in the World Cup final last year, teams batting second have had more success, winning four out of six completed games while only twice the team which batted first could defend successfully.

Also, against the style of play for both these teams - to bury oppositions under mountains of runs - this venue has had only two scores of 200 or above in 12 innings, which means the bowlers will also have their say. If KKR have a battery of spinners to back their fast bowlers led by Mitchell Starc, SRH's pace bowling attack led by skipper Pat Cummins has time and again produced unified efforts to make their mark.

In their only meet earlier this season back in late March, KKR had pipped SRH by four runs in a high-scoring game.



Swapnil Singh contemplated quitting cricket until RCB picked him up in IPL auction

PTI ■ BENGALURU

auction, the dejected left-arm spinner felt it was time to end his 18-year-old-career.

But then Royal Challengers Bengaluru raised the paddle late in the auction to add a welcome twist to his cricketing journev.

The day of the IPL auction I was travelling to Dharamsala for a game. It was around 7-8 pm after I landed. Nothing had happened by then and the last rounds were on. When I missed out at first, I thought that's it. Frankly I thought it was all over," Swapnil told RCB Bold Diaries. "I thought I would play out the ongoing (domestic) season, and if needed, I would end my career after playing the next season because I did not want to keep

playing all my life," he said.

"There are other things to do well in life as well. I was very disappointed," said Swapnil, who made his debut in 2006 and had even shared the dressing room with RCB teammate Virat Kohli at one point in time.

Bought at a base price of Rs 20 lakh, the 33-year-old has repaid the faith the franchise showed in him.

Swapnil has played a pivotal role in RCB's recent string of wins which have propelled them into the playoffs, with the 2016 finalists set to face a struggling Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad in the Eliminator on Wednesday.

Swapnil said it was an emotional moment for his entire family after they learnt that he was picked up by RCB. "As soon as my family called, we broke down. Because no one else understands how emotional the journey has been?

Swapnil has also credited former Zimbabwe captain and RCB head coach Andy Flower for showing the faith in him. "Before RČB picked me in the auction, they had organised a trial-cum-camp. I spoke to Andy sir and told him all about how my (domestic) season had gone. I told him, 'Just give me

one chance. This might be my

last chance. Just have faith in

me.' He told he had faith in me.

He called me for the camp," Swapnil said. Swapnil also revealed his wish that he expressed to his brother, that he wanted to contribute with the bat in IPL. The moment eventually arrived when he smacked a

four and a six against Sunrisers

Hyderabad.

"I would tell my brother that I have neither scored a four nor a six in the IPL, and I have taken only one wicket. So I really want to hit a four and a six," he said.

OTHER SPORTS

Rohan to pair with either Balaji or Yuki at Paris Games PTI ■ NEW DELHI conclusion of the French Open will pulled out of the continental event



India's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna will pick either N Sriram Balaji or Yuki Bhambri as his partner for the Paris Olympics and All India Tennis Association (AITA) will most likely approve his choice even as the combinations will be discussed by the selection Ranked four in the world, 44-yearold Bopanna, being a top-10 player, can pick a player of his choice as

per the rules. The men's doubles draw at the Paris Games will be a 32-team affair, where one nation can have a maximum of two teams.

The qualification criteria gives top-10 players the privilege to pick their partners, who should be inside top-300 on the ATP and WTA ranking

The rankings of June 10 after the

be considered for qualifications.
According to AITA sources,
Bopanna had recommended names
of Balaji and Bhambri to the national federation for inclusion in TOPS as his potential partners for Paris Olympics.

"Usually, it's the player's choice (to pick his partner). The selection committee will ask him about his choice and discuss that. Whoever Rohan wants to play with, will be considered positively," AITA Secretary General Anil Dhupar told PTI when asked if the national federation will allow Bopanna to play with the partner of his choice or impose its own choice on him. Both Balaji and Bhambri have got some decent results on clay in lead up to the Roland Garros, where the action will unfold during the Summer Olympics from July 27. Balaji won the Cagliari Challenger



Focus on Sindhu as she looks to end title drought at Malaysia Masters

event with German partner Andre Begemann apart from reaching the semifinals at Francavilla al Mare in

Bhambri won the ATP 250 event in Munich with French player Albano Olivetti in April and reached the Challenger — the only event he competed this month.

one for Olym other multi-sporting events have often created controversy in Indian tennis. In 2012, a huge controversy had erupted when both Mahesh Bhupathi and Bopanna had refused to pair with Leander Paes, who was forced to play with Vishnu Vardhan.

Sania Mirza was then asked to pair with Paes in the mixed doubles event and the top woman player of the country had chastised the AITA for using her as bait to placate Paes. In the 2018 Asian Games, Paes had

just two days before the start of tennis competition, saying he was not given a specialist player to pair with. AITA had nominated Bopanna and Divij Sharan as a team, leaving Paes with no option semifinals of the Bordeaux but to pair with one of the singles players in the squad.

It will be Bopanna's last shot at Olympic medal come close to a bronze medal with Sania Mirza in the mixed event of the 2016 Rio Games.

In the singles, Sumit Nagal will need a good run at the French Open to boost his ranking. He is placed 94 as of Monday.

In a draw of 64, the organisers will accept 56 direct entries and out of six ITF places, three men's quotas have been awarded to winners of continental events — Asian Games, African Games and Pan-American

Nagal bows out of Geneva Open after loss to world

PTI ■ GENEVA

India's top-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal made a first round exit from the Geneva Open after going down fighting agai Argentina's Sebastian Baez. against

The world no.94 went down 6-7 (7) 3-6 to the Argentine, who is a clay court specialist, in a match that lasted one hour, 52minutes here on Sunday.

"Gutted with the loss today But good preparation ahead of Roland Garros. Paris next, Nagal, who has qualified for the French Open, tweeted after the loss

Nagal started off brightly taking an early 4-1 lead over Baez. He also had a set point. But world no. 19 Baez, who has already won two titles on clay this season, showed his class to force a tiebreaker owing to his first fantastic performance.

In the second set, Baez continued to bank on his superb first serve, and wrapped up the proceedings in 38

number 19 Baez

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

 $B_{\text{Sindhu will look to hit the}}^{\text{ack from a break, P V}}$ right notes in her quest for some confidence-boosting wins ahead of Paris Olympics when she spearheads India's campaign in the Malaysia badminton Masters tournament starting here on Tuesday.

Sindhu, a former world champion, returns to the international circuit after skipping the Uber Cup and Thailand Open, and she will aim to go deep in the women's singles draw of the BWF World Tour Super 500 event.

The 28-year-old from Hyderabad hasn't been able to hit top form after recovering from a knee injury sustained in October last year.

A silver and bronze-winner at the Olympics, Sindhu's return hasn't been smooth and she has endured a series of narrow losses. Sindhu has just two quarterfinal finishes to show in six competitive

appearances so far. The last title win for her came in the 2022 Singapore Open though she did come close to claiming the Spain Masters last year when she reached the finals in Madrid.

Sindhu, who had also suffered a stress fracture on her left ankle en route to the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold,

will look to hit the ground running when she opens against Scotland's Kirsty Gilmour this week. Top stars such as An Se Young,

Yu Fei, Chen Yamaguchi or Carolina Marin are not participating this week and Sindhu will be desperate to test her preparation against the next generation players, who have troubled her recently. With a new set-up under mentor Prakash Padukone,

Sindhu has shown glimpses of her menacing game but she hasn't been consistent with her shot-selection. Ashmita Chaliha, Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod

too will look to produce some good results after having been in the circuit for quite sometime now.

Chaliha has played some quality matches against the likes of Han Yue and Aya Ohori, both of whom she had pushed to three games recently. În men's singles, Kiran George is the lone Indian in fray and he will open against Japan's Takuma Obayashi.

Thailand Open While Satwiksairaj champions Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have opted out and it will be a chance for Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K to show their prowess in men's doubles

In mixed doubles, the husband-wife duo of B



Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy, and Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath would be carrying India's hopes.

Paralympics opens in 100 days; Paris organizers launching campaign to boost ticket sales Paris, (AP) With 100 days until the Paralympics begin, Paris organizers are delivering a message from the athletes in a bid to boost ticket sales: I am not missing anything, except you. The countdown campaign for the August 28-September 8 Paralympic Games begins Monday. It features three Paralympic athletes, each of them alone in an empty stadium.

The campaign slogan - "Il ne me manque rien, sauf yous" (I'm not missing anything, except you) - is a rallying call to get people to come along and

watch them compete.

The French athletes featured in the campaign are Arnaud Assoumani, a long jump and triple jump specialist who won gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing; wheelchair tennis player Pauline Déroulède, and blind soccer player Gaël Rivière who was a European championship winner two years ago. He plays at club level for Bondy Cécifoot Club - in

the same suburb where France star Kylian Mbappé grew up. National broadcaster France Télévisions will show the campaign in a bid to raise awareness and - ultimately boost sales. So far, 900,000 of the 2.8 million tickets have

been sold. A total of 4,400 athletes will take part in the Paralympics. Tickets are available from 15 euros (USD 16) for track and

field sessions at Stade de France, wheelchair tennis at Roland Garros, or blind soccer at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. The finals cost from 25 (USD 27) euros and it costs 45 euros (USD 49) to watch the closing ceremony.
Ticket sales could escalate once

posters start appearing around Paris, with organizers aiming to raise awareness and increase fan engagement and solidarity. There will be 651 posters dotted around the city, 972 on the subway and a further 2,520 on the sides of buses.

On Tuesday, four Paralympic athletes will walk up the famed steps at the Cannes Film Festival along with Paris 2024 Olympic head Tony Estanguet. Of the tickets sold so far, organizers said 300,000 have been bought by the state and 150,000 by the International Olympic Committee and Paralympic National

Committee. Organizers haven't released details for the amount of tickets sold for the opening ceremony, which takes place along a section of the famed Champs-Élysées.

Paul McCartney has let the song "We All Stand Together" be used in a promotional film the International Paralympic Committee.

The Paralympics will have a record 164 broadcasters worldwide covering 549 events across 22 sports.