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BLINKEN URGES ISRAEL, HAMAS

TO MOVE AHEAD WITH CEASEFIRE

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SRH SEEK PERFECT CHASE **AGAINST RR** 12 SPORTS

Mayday! Kids in 131 Delhi, Noida schools exposed to terror scare

SAUMYA SHUKLA

NEW DELHI/NOIDA

Tn a scare of unprecedented scale, panic gripped schools in the national Capital and adjoining Noida after 131 of them received identical bomb threats through emails on and a dedicated team formed Wednesday triggering mass evacuations an official said. "The matter is and massive searches as panicked parents rushed to needs a deeper probe." the pick up their children.

The anti-terror unit of the Delhi Police has started investigations into the bomb threat email sent to schools in the Delhi-NCR region, as the

initial probe hinted at a of Delhi Fire Service were deeper conspiracy by a terror group during the Lok Sabha elections.

A case has been registered under relevant sections of law for offences like conspiracy and threat by the Special Cell morning, to conduct the investigation, official said.

The schools received the threats on their official email IDs around 4 am. Bomb detection teams, bomb disposal squads and officials

rushed to schools but nothing suspicious was found. Multiple private schools in Greater Noida, Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurugram also received the bomb threat but local police dismissed them as a hoax.

As panicked parents crowded outside the schools, the Ministry of Home Affairs said the mails appeared to be a hoax. In a statement, the Union Home Ministry officials said, "There is no need to panic. Mails appear to be hoaxes. The Delhi Police and security agencies are



Children rushing out of a school in New Delhi area after the school received a bomb threat via email Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

protocol."
The schools sent out messages

taking necessary steps as per parents, informing them to pick up kids at the earliest with kids using buses and vans being sent to their home. and notices to the concerned

"Dear Parent, this is to inform you that due to a message received in the school we are evacuating the children early today in their respective school buses and vans. The parents who pick up their ward from the school should reach the school by 10.30 am. at the school gate," read one such message sent to worried parents. The anti-terror cell of the

Delhi Police will investigate the bomb threat. The case is being registered with the Special Cell and a dedicated team will be formed to conduct the investigation.

"The matter is related to national security. It needs a deeper probe," the official said. According to police, the threat was declared a hoax as "nothing objectionable" was found during searches. Bomb threats sent via email to schools in Delhi-NCR originated from Russia, as indicated by the IP address of the email, which was traced back to the domain "mail.ru". Investigating agencies said it is also possible that culprits may have masked their

identity using the dark net.

Such mails are often sent from

a vpn that helps them mask

Although the email, said to be sent out by one accused, has been called a hoax, Delhi

their real ip address as is the

case in these "bomb threat"

emails, said the sources. Police have stepped up security at all metro and railway stations, bus stands, and markets for precautionary measures. "We have stepped up security at every station. We have also alerted our staff to keep strict vigil on any suspicious activity," Deputy Commissioner of Police (railways) K P S Malhotra

Continued on Page 8



EC upgrades VVPAT security after SC nudge

The Election Commission on Wednesday issued revised protocol for handling and storage of symbol loading unit (SLU) of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips against the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). This comes in the backdrop of the latest order by the Supreme Court latest order by the Supreme Court which said, "After the completion of symbol loading process, the symbol loading unit (SLU) should be sealed in containers. The SLU should be stored at least for a period of 45 days." The SLU uploads the name and symbol of the candidates contesting on a particular seat on VVPAT or paper trail machines.

In a statement on Wednesday, the

poll authority said all State Chief VVPATs, will also be available for district election officer. Electoral Officers have been directed to create necessary infrastructure and provisions to implement the new protocols for handling and storage of the symbol loading units (SLUs).

"As mandated by the Supreme Court, the revised protocols are applicable in all cases of completion of the symbol loading process in the VVPATs undertaken on or after May 1, 2024," the commission said.

Currently, only components of the EVM - the ballot unit, control unit, and VVPAT - are stored for 45 days after the results. This is the first time that SLUs, used

to load candidate symbols onto the done under the supervision of a

examination along with the EVMs if a candidate challenges the results by filing an election petition in court. The EVM and VVPAT slips can be called by the court while hearing the plea.

> symbols of the candidates onto the VVPAT. It is a matchbox-sized device that is first connected to a laptop or personal computer, from which a

The SLU is used to load the

symbol loading application the three is used to load a bitmap file EVM - the containing the candidates' names, serial numbers, and symbols.

The SLU is then connected to the VVPAT to transfer that file on to the paper audit machine. This is As per the SOP, during the

period commissioning Assembly Constituency/Segment, all Symbol Loading Unit(s) along with its accessories shall be in the custody of the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning Officer, as the case may be and officer, as the case may be and shall be securely stored in locker/safe/cupboard etc. under lock and key in the Commissioning premises with proper security. RO/ARO shall be responsible for safe custody of contable line Market with the case of the Symbol Loading Unit(s) along with its accessories during the

commissioning period.
Each set of SLU along with its accessories used in a particular AC/AS shall be kept in a separate container. Not more than one set of

SLU along with its accessories should be kept in a container. "After sealing the SLU containers, the same shall be deposited with the District Election Officer concerned within 24 hours of the completion of commissioning. These containers shall be stored by the DEO in a separate strong room/secured room and shall be marked clearly on the door as 'SLU STORAGE ROOM'. It is clarified that both the used SLUs and Reserve SLUs shall be stored in the SLU Storage Room. District Election Officer shall be responsible for their storage and

security. The SLU Storage Room

shall be under double lock system

with all keys of each lock with two separate specified officers," it said. Continued on Page 8

Cong takes another hit, two ex-MLAs quit party

Tust when the campaigning is national Capital, the Congress which is contesting on three of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi as per arrangements with INDIA Bloc partner Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), faltered further as exodus

continued on Wednesday. Two former MLAs and observers for the Lok Sabha seat — Naseeb Singh and Neeraj Basoya resigned from the party citing their dissatisfaction with the party's decision to form an alliance with AAP and its choice to allot Lok Sabha tickets to Kanhaiya

Kumar and Udit Raj.

In separate letters to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Neeraj and Naseeb, who are AICC observers for West Delhi and North West Delhi Lok Sabha seats respectively, claimed that the Congress workers are "upset" and feel "humiliated" due to the alliance

with the AAP. The Congress had on Tuesday appointed MLA former Devender Yadav as interim president of its Delhi unit after Lovely resigned citing the tie-up with AAP and statements of Congress candidates

in the national Capital, exposing the cracks in the party's Delhi unit. Last week, former Minister and four-time MLA Raj Kumar Chauhan resigned from the party, alleging that he was humiliated by Deepak Babaria, AICC in charge of Delhi Congress. Lovely has resigned from the Delhi Congress president post, protesting against party in-charge Babaria and objecting to the choice and conduct of two candidates who are "total strangers" to party workers. In the coming days, some more leaders may resign from the party. Several former MLAs here are reluctant to campaign for Udit Raj and Kanhaiya Kumar.

Several prominent leaders including former Maharashtra CM Ashok Chavan, ex-Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Nirupam, spokesperson Gourav Vallabh, former social media head Rohan Gupta, Acharya Pramod Krishnam, former defense minister AK Antony's son Anil Antony, and Gujarat Patidar leader Hardik Patel have also left the Congress.

In his letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Basoya said



Amethi, Rae Bareli nominees may be named today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress asserted on Wednesday that within 24 hours, the candidates for the Amethi and Rae Bareli Lok Sabha constituencies would be announced by the party's Central Election Committee (CEC), which empowered Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to finalise the candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli.

"My expectation is that in the next 24-30 hours, the Congress president will finalise and a decision taken by him will be announced," Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said in response to a question at AICC press conference.

Speculation had been rife that Rahul Gandhi might contest the Lok Sabha polls from Amethi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Raebareli, a seat that was previously held by her mother Sonia Gandhi. Both seats are considered bastions of the Gandhi family and the local units of the Congress have demanded that the two scions of the family contest from there. Congress has forged an alliance with the SP in Uttar Pradesh and is contesting 17 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

the alliance with AAP was bringing disrepute" 'embarrassment" to Congress workers on a daily basis. Continued on Page 8

Prajwal ready to join probe; his family invokes truth, gods

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

On a day when Karnataka Chief letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cancel the diplomatic passport and take swift action against the Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, the latter took to social media to announce that he will join the probe soon and said the truth will prevail.

Revanna's family conducted a havan at their Holenarasipura residence which is also home to his father JD(S) MLA and former Karnataka Minister HD Revanna. The MP, who left the country as soon as the election to his constituency ended, has also sought seven days' time to appear before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Karnataka Government to enquire into the huge cache of about 3,000 explicit videos and photos allegedly pertaining to him, which have gone viral on social media.

"As I am not in Bangalore to attend the enquiry, I have communicated to CID have Bangalore through my advocate. Truth will prevail soon,"
Prajwal, grandson of former
Prime Minister and JD(S)
patriarch HD Deve Gowda, said in a Facebook post.

A case has been registered against MLA and former minister H D Revanna and his son Prajwal at Holenarasipura on a complaint lodged by their former cook and relative for allegedly sexually harassing her. She also alleged that



Prajwal made video calls to her daughter and spoke in an objectionable manner,

which forced her to block him. The MP who is seeking re-election from Hassan on a JD(S) ticket, shared a letter by his lawyer Arun G to the Deputy Superintendent of Police of the SIT, in which he has sought seven days' time to appear before the official because he is abroad.

Further, in a letter to Modi, the Karnataka Government asked the PM to take other steps such as using diplomatic and police channels of the Government of India as well as international police agencies to ensure the swift return of the "absconding" Member of Parliament to face the full force of the law.

Continued on Page 8



President Droupadi Murmu offers prayers at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya

Hindu marriage is a *sanskara*, not a party: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Hindu marriage is not an event for 'song and dance', 'wining and dining' or a commercial transaction, the Supreme Court has observed and said it cannot be recognised in the 'absence of a valid ceremony' under the Hindu Marriage Act.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih said a Hindu marriage is a 'sanskara' and a sacrament which has to be accorded its status as an institution of great value in Indian society.

In its recent order passed in the matter of two trained commercial pilots, who sought a divorce decree without performing a valid Hindu marriage ceremony, the bench urged young men and women to "think deeply about the institution of marriage even before they enter



upon it and as to how sacred the said institution is, in Indian society". "A marriage is not an event for 'song and dance and 'wining and dining' or an occasion to demand and exchange dowry and gifts by undue pressure leading to possible initiation of criminal proceedings

thereafter. A marriage is not a commercial transaction. It is a solemn foundational event celebrated so as to establish a relationship between a man and a woman who acquire the status of a husband and wife for an evolving family in future which is a basic unit

Terming the marriage as sacred as it provides a lifelong, dignity-affirming, equal, consensual and healthy union of two individuals, the bench said a Hindu marriage facilitates procreation, consolidates the unit of family and solidifies the spirit of fraternity within various communities.

of Indian society," the bench said.

"We deprecate the practice of young men and women seeking to acquire the status of being a husband and a wife to each other and therefore purportedly being married, in the absence of a valid marriage ceremony under the provisions of the (Hindu Marriage) Act such as in the instant case where the marriage between the parties was to take place later," the bench said.

În its April 19 order, the bench said where a Hindu marriage is not performed in accordance with the

applicable rites or ceremonies such as 'saptapadi' (taking seven steps by the groom and the bride jointly before the sacred fire), the marriage will not be construed as a Hindu marriage. "We further observe that a Hindu

marriage is a sacrament and has a sacred character. In the context of saptapadi in a Hindu marriage, according to Rig Veda, after completing the seventh step (saptapadi) the bridegroom says to his bride, 'With seven steps we have become friends (sakha). May I attain to friendship with thee; may I

not be separated from thy friendship?

A wife is considered to be half of oneself (ardhangini) but to be accorted with a sidentify of her accepted with an identity of her own and to be a co-equal partner in

the marriage," it said.

Continued on Page 8

Bomb threat to city school has cops on their toes

PNS LUCKNOW

fter about 100 schools in After about 100 serious

Delhi and NCR received bomb threat emails on Wednesday morning. A school in Lucknow also received a similar mail in the afternoon. This sent the police into a tizzy for hours and until the school premise was scanned thoroughly and no suspicious object was recovered. The incident kept the cops of the Lucknow police on their toes round the day.

Meanwhile, an alert has been sounded in the city and the police are keeping an eye on social media accounts besides

received by a prominent school located in Vrindavan colony in the PGI police station area of the state capital," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (East zone) Prabal Pratap Singh. The same was confirmed by the school authorities.

"As soon as the information was received, police forces reached the site and the school premise was immediately evacuated with the help of school administration. After this a bomb disposal team squad scanned the entire school," said the DCP East

a vigil in the city. adding that the information "A bomb threat email was received through email was entirely a hoax.

He said the police teams were keeping a close watch in the city and the school authorities had been asked to call police immediately if they received any foul email.

It may be noted that as many as 100 schools in the Delhi-NCR area received bomb threats through emails on Wednesday, triggering panic among parents and prompting schools to send students back to their homes. Later, it turned out to be a hoax threat. In Lucknow, the matter is also

being handled by a cyber

team. Along with that UP police's Special Task Force (STF) and Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) have been pressed to work out the case. The school authorities said

that it was the same mail which other Delhi-NCR schools received in the morning. "Since we are centrally run schools with branches all across even in Delhi, we received it in the common email ID of the organisation. The school administration said they took an immediate cognisance of the matter and informed police. The administration said the school activity was resumed later.



Several hurt as tempo falls into drain

PNS LUCKNOW

Passengers traveling in an over-crowded tempo had a providential escape after the vehi-cle went out of control and fell into nearly a 20-foot drain near Jagrani Hospital in the Gudamba area of Lucknow.

It is suspected that one of the wheels of the tempo fell into a pothole and due to heavy jerk the driver lost control

The eyewitnesses said the tempo was overcrowded and a little space was left for the driver to drive the threewheeler.

"There were around 11-12 passengers in the tempo when the accident happened on Wednesday afternoon. The passengers sustained serious injuries and were later pulled out and sent to hospital for treatment. Some passengers were discharged

after first aid," said Gudamba Nitish Kumar Srivastava. According to locals, some people present at the spot jumped into the drain and pulled the trapped passengers. According to one of the victims, Aarti, who is undergoing treatment at Jagrani Hospital, there were eight passengers on the back seats and three on the front including the driver.

It is being said that due to the ongoing construction, diver-

sions have been enforced on this route. "There is a jamlike situation on the road between Tedhi Puliya to Khurram Nagar and drivers often take shortcuts to reach their destination quickly and to avoid traffic snarls," said Radheshyam Sharma, a resident. "There are potholes, stones on the road and open drains without boundary walls.. People coming and going from here face a lot of problems," he added.

arrives in city

PNS LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the MP from Lucknow, arrived at his parliamentary constituency on Wednesday evening.
On his arrival at the Chaudhary

Charan Singh International Airport, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, BJP city pres-ident Anand Dwivedi, MLC Mukesh Sharma, MLA Yogesh Shukla, party general secretary Pushkar Shukla, Anjani Shrivastava, Ghanshyam Agarwal, Vineet Chauhan, Yashvendra Singh Yash and a large number of people welcomed him.

On reaching his residence, Rajnath Singh met a large number of public representatives and workers present there. BJP city president Anand Dwivedi informed that Rajnath Singh will reach Radha Swami Satsang Vyas situated at Atal Road, Sadar Cantonment on Thursday at 9:40 am and meet Baba Gurinder Singh, the spiritual head of Radha Swami Satsang Vyas and receive his blessings.

From there he will depart for Lucknow airport at 10:10 and will leave for Patna at 10:30

Rajnath Singh $|Modi\ got\ war\ stopped\ to$ evacuate Indians: Rajnath

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday claimed that the Narendra Modi government stopped the Russia-Ukraine war for four and a half hours to safely evacuate the Indian students trapped there. Singh made the remark while addressing a public meeting in support of BJP candidates Dharmendra Kashyap and Durvijay Singh.

While Kashyap is contesting from Aonla Lok Sabha seat, Durvijay Singh is a contender from Budaun seat.

Claiming that a new India has emerged over the last 10 years of the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singh thing, the whole world listens carefully. The Russia-Ukraine war has

been going on for the last two years. When it started, thousands of our children were studying in Ukraine. A delegation of parents of children stranded in Ukraine Prime Minister Met Narendra Modi and asked to bring back his children safely. Then the Prime Minister of India spoke to the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine and the war stopped for four and a half hours. This is today's India," he said.

The minister claimed that Modi rid the country of pilferage of government funding which, he alleged, was a norm during the Congress rule. "In the Congress government, one of their prime ministers had admitted that if we send one rupee to the poor, only 12 paise reaches their account. Today under Modi's rule, if one rupee is sent, the full rupee

reaches the account. Modi ji

has freed the country from cor-

ruption by opening Jan Dhan accounts," he said. Singh said that in the next five years, the BJP will take its development works forward at an even faster pace.

"SP is coming to an end. SP is a finished party. If you ask about Congress, after 10 years, it will also end like the dinosaurs," he said attacking the opposition.

NOTICE

This is to inform that original sale dee which was duly registered in the office of sub registrar Lucknow(executed by maiku lal in the favour of gulab kumar bearing document number 3819/10 dated 5.5.2010 regarding property plot number 15/312 khasra number 312 village Chandan ward Indira Privadarshini tahsil Lucknow was lost with my client namely Harish Kumar S/o Govind Ram resident of C/4 sector P Aliganj Lucknow on dated 03/01/2024 if any person has any claim or objection or it kindly inform to Mr

आवश्यकता है

Priyanshu Shukla R/o Jankipuran

प्राचार्य (०१ पद), प्रवक्ता (२१ पद) १. प्राचार्य (० 10—55% स्नातकोत्तर+50% एम०एड० / एम० शेक्षाशास्त्र) / एम०एल०एड० तथा अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थ में शिक्षण कार्य का 05 वर्ष का अनुभव। 2. प्रवक्ता शिक्ष विषयों में रनातकोत्तर 50%+50% एम०एड० / एम० (शिक्षाशास्त्र) अथवा 50% अंकों के साथ दर्शनशास्त्र समाजशास्त्र / मनोविज्ञान में स्नातकोत्तर उपाधि बी०एड०/डी०एल०एड०/शिक्षा में एम०फिल०/ पीएच०डी । ३. प्रवक्ता विज्ञान (०३ पद) यो०-विज्ञान विषयों नातकोत्तर ५०%+५०% एम०एड० / एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र प्रवक्ता गणित (03 पद) यो०-गणित विषय ातकोत्तर 50%+50% एम०एड०/एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र प्रवक्ता भाषा (०४ पद) यो०— भाषा विषयों में रनातको 50%+50% एम०एड० / एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र), ६. प्रवक्त मानविकी एवं समाज विज्ञान (03 पद) योo-सामाजिक विज्ञान विषयों में स्नातकोत्तर 50%+50% एम०एड०/एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र), ७. प्रवक्ता कला (०३ पद) यो०-ललित कलाओं / संगीत / नृत्य/थियेटर विषयों मे स्नातकोत्तर ५०% । ८ प्रवक्ता भारीरिक भिक्षा (०२ पद योo एमoपीoएडo 50% । वेतनमान – सम्बद्धक निकार के मानकानुसार। नोट– आवेदन पत्र, जिस पर अभ्यर्थ का मोबाइल नं० अंकित हो, दो फोटो एवं समस्त शैक्षिक योग्यता प्रमाण पत्र, आधार कार्ड एवं जाति प्रमाण प की रत प्रमाणित कारापितरों सदित विचापन तिथि महाविद्यालय, शान्तीनगर, फतेहपुर—212601 (उ०प्र०) व पते पर रजिस्टर्ड डाक द्वारा अथवा ईमेल/व्हाट्सएप प प्रेषित करें। अई अभ्यर्थी को साक्षात्कार तिथि की सूच महाविद्यालय द्वारा ईमेल/मो०नं०/स्पीड पोस्ट आदि नाध्यम से दी जायेगी।

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आवश्यकता है

खुशी इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ एजूकेशन, सौंरा,

प्राचार्य (01 पद), प्रवक्ता (06 पद) 1. प्राचार्य (01) यो0–55% स्नातकोत्तर्+50% म०एड० / एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र) /एम०एल०एड० तथा मध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थान में शिक्षण कार्य का 05 वर्ष का अनुभव। २. प्रवक्ता शिक्षा का आधार (०१ पद) यो०-समाज विज्ञान/विज्ञानेत्तर विषयों में स्नातकोत्तर 50%±50% एम०एड०/एम०ए० (शिक्षाशास्त्र) अथवा 50% अंकों के साथ दर्शनशास्त्र / समाजशास्त्र मनोविज्ञान में स्नातकोत्तर उपाधि एवं बी०एड० डी०एल०एड०/शिक्षा में एम० फिल०/पीएच०डी० । ३ प्रवक्ता विज्ञान (01 पद) योo—विज्ञान विषयों र स्नातकोत्तर 50%+50% एमoएङo / एमoएर शेक्षाशास्त्र), ४. प्रवक्ता गणित (०१ पद) यो०–गणित वेषय में स्नातकोत्तर 50%+ 50% एम०एड०/एम०ए८ शेक्षाशास्त्र), 5. प्रवक्ता भाषा (01 पद) यो०— भाषा . विषयों में स्नातकोत्तर 50%+50% एम०एड०/एम०ए शिक्षाशास्त्र), 6. प्रवक्ता कला (01 पद) यो०— ललित क्लाओं/संगीत/नृत्य/थियेटर विषयों में स्नातकोत्तर 50% | 7. प्रवक्ता शारीरिक शिक्षा (01 पद) यो०—एम०पी०एड० 50% | वेतनमान — सम्बद्धक निकाय के मानकानुसार। नोट— आवेदन पत्र, जिस पर अभ्यर्थी का मोबाइल नं० अंकित हो, दो फोटो एवं समस्त शैक्षिक योग्यता प्रमाण पत्र, आधार कार्ड एवं जाति प्रमाण पत्र की स्व प्रमाणित छायाप्रतियों सहित विज्ञापन तिथि से 21 दिनों के अन्दर कार्यालय— सचिव, चन्द्रप्रभा हाउस, नई बाजार, खागा, फतेहपुर—212655 (उ०प्र०) के पते पर रजिस्टर्ड डाक द्वारा अथवा ईमेल/व्हाट्सएप पर प्रेषित करें। अर्ह अभ्यर्थी को साक्षात्कार तिथि की सूचना महाविद्या द्वारा ईमेल/मो०नं०/स्पीड पोस्ट आदि के माध्यम सचिव

मो०नं०:8810759504, 9839305662

Deoria priest battered to death tal. Superintendent of Police Sankalp Sharma also reached In a sensational killing in

Deoria, the aged priest of Siddhapeeth Hanuman temple situated in Bhaluani police station area of the district was beaten to death by goons on Tuesday night.

Ashok Chaube, who was seriously injured in the attack, was taken to the medical college hospital by his family where the doctor pronounced him dead.

According to reports, on getting the information, a large number of people, including the temple's Peethadheeshwar Shivcharan Das and successor Gopal Das reached the hospi-

With the arrest of five dacoits, including a dowry case defendant, on

Wednesday, the police claimed to have solved the dacoity

NOTICE

I have changed my name from

AFSHA KHAN To AFSHA for all

future purposes, AFSHA W/O

SIRAJŪL KHAN R/O 96/16

Kasthana Road, Colonel Ganj

NOTICE

I have changed my name from CHAND BEGUM To CHAND

Kanpur Nagar

the pioneer

PNS LUCKNOW

the hospital and took information and also inspected the It is worth noting that Ashok

Chaube (60) of Tendua Chaube village under Bhaluani police station, used to perform wor-ship rituals in Baripur Hanuman temple. Two days ago, when he reached home from the temple at night, a birthday party was going on at the house of one Hausla Paswan, who lives in the neighbourhood. A lot of people had gathered there and DJ was playing. When Ashok Chaube protested against the loud sound of the DJ, the Paswan

family got into a fight. The victim had complained about this to the local police. The neighbours were angry about this. However, the local residents intervened and brokered a settlement.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday late night, Hausla Paswan's family members reached the grocery store next to the house of the deceased to buy goods, while the shop was closed. Ashok asked them to go back. There was a dispute again between the two on this matter and later some close associates of Hausla Paswan reached there with sticks and rods and brutally attacked the victim till he fell

Central Command commemorates 61st Raising Day

The Central Command was Gen Kanwar Bahadur Singh was the first General Officer Commanding-in-Chief and its founder.

On the occasion of 61st Command Raising Day, Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani, GOC-in-C Central Command, extended greetings and best wishes to all ranks, veterans, Veer Naris

and families. He exhorted all ranks of Central Command to rededicate themselves with full commitment and enthusiasm to successfully face the chal-

achieve excellence in every sphere. Lt Gen Mukesh raised at Lucknow on May Chadha, Chief of Staff, Central 1, 1963, post Sino-India war of Command, in a solemn ceremony at Smritika War Memorial, paid tribute to the bravehearts who laid down their lives for the safety and security of the nation.

Central Command is one of the seven commands of the Indian Army and has its headquarters at Lucknow. Surva Command, while ensuring the sanctity and security of the middle sector and hinterland, provides support to the entire Indian Army through its training establishments and logistic nodes as it has direct access to land, sea and air routes.

Cong, SP leaders join RLD in Lko

PNS LUCKNOW

The local level leaders of Congress and Samajwadi Party are joining the Rashtriya Lok Dal, anticipating a bright future after the RLD joined the National Democratic Party snapping its ties with the samajwadis. On Wednesday, SP leader Tanveer Fatima joined the RLD in the presence of senior RLD leaders including narty state general secreta-Shalini Singh, state president Ramashish Rai and national secretary Anupam Mishra. She joined the RLD at the

party's state office in Lucknow along with hundreds of women supporters and met Rashtriva Lok Dal women wing, Nari Shakti Sangathan state general secretary Shalini Singh.

Addressing the gathering, Ramashish Rai said that Fatima would strengthen the RLD organisation in the state and participation of women would

BJP LS poll offices inaugurated

PNS LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party inaugurated its Lok Sabha election offices in all the five assembly segments of Lucknow parliamentary seat on Wednesday. In the Cantonment assembly segment, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, BJP Lucknow city president Anand Dwivedi inaugurated the office at Chandernagar by performing havan pujan. Mandal president, councilors, booth in-charge, Shakti Kendra coordinator and

a large number of party workers of Cantonment assembly seat were present. Deputy Chief Minister Braiesh Pathak said that time was running very fast so everyone would have to work with double the capacity. "We have to work with double the percentage target as compared to 2019. The responsibility of voter turnout is on all of vou workers; make an action plan and implement it as soon as possible and distribute voter slips in time and motivate people to vote for BJP," he told party workers.

NOTICE It is to inform general public that Original Sale Deed dated 04.03.2016, executed by Sushil Kumar Rawat, in favour of Naina Mishra, registered in the office Sub Registrar B.K.T, Lucknow in Bahi no. I, Zild No. 8518, on Pages 01-20, at Serial No. 3066 on 04.03.2016 in respect of Plot No 33, area 1000 Sq.Ft, Part of Khasra No. 315, Village Mirzapur, Tehsit B.K.T, District Lucknow now owned by Atul Kumar Pandey, has been lost by him at Jankipuram market, Lucknow, on 23.04.2024 around 6 P.M. while going to Jankipuram IZ3JA_ZUZA arouno or P.M. white going to Jankipuram Chauraha for getting its photocopy from his house. Now, Pallavi Sharma is purchasing it from Atul Kumar Pandey and thereafter it will be mortgaged with PNB Housing Finance Ltd against loan. If any person or financial institution has or found these documents please return or have any interest or objection in this regard then contact to Advocate mentioned helps with before in in writing with mentioned below with objection in writing with relevant documents, within 7 days from the date of

publication of this notice. Mr. Amit Kumar Singh Rathaur-Advocate, Add.: Chamber No.7, UGF, Krishna Tower, Chakbast Road, Quaiserbagh, Lucknow. Mobile No.9559811119

BIBI for all future purposes, CHAND BIBI W/O SOHRAB KHAN R/O 98/5 Becon Ganj Nazir

NOTICE

Bagh Kanpur Nagar

The DOB of my mother have been wrongly recorded in the defence records, while my mother's (Gyanwati) correct dob is 12/10/1964. Adarsh singh Army no -17038718M Harsingarpur, Post-Mauhar, Thana-Kalyanpur, Fatehpur

NOTICE

The original copy of my daughter Shweta Yadav's high school certificate cum mark sheet (2022) serial number 1222631013 is actually lost somewhere. Dinesh Yadav son of Ramsurat Yadav Resident of village Sohrauna Tiwari police station Bhithauli, Maharajganj

NOTICE

I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM GURMEET SINGH TO GURMEET SINGH SALUJA HARBANS SINGH R/O 122/58-A, SAROJANI NAGAR, KANPUR

Those arrested were identified as Yusuf Khan aka

which was recently committed

at a house in Gudamba police

station area.

Police work out dacoity case

Mohammed Alam, Kaushal Kumar Singh, Saif and Halim, all of Barabanki, and Nurul of Gudamba. Yusuf is the leader of the gang and he works as a mechanic repairing air conditioners. This way he gleans information about the houses where the gang had to execute dacoity in the night. Kaushal is a driver while the other three are motorcycle mechanics. Yusuf and Kaushal stay in Keshav Nagar in Madiaon. Yusuf is facing a dowry case in Barabanki district.

The accused confessed to their crime and disclosed that they had scaled the boundary wall

school in Paikramau locality of Gudamba in the night of 23/24 April and committed dacoity by holding the house owner and other members in the family at gunpoint. They fur-ther confessed that they had looted cash and ornaments. The accused further confessed

of a house located close to a

that Yusuf was their gang leader while Kaushal was second in command in the gang. They said they worked on the instructions of Yusuf and all members of the gang remained present at the crime scene at the time of committing a crime. They disclosed the name of their absconding aide as Yogendra. He had given his car to them to reach the targeted

place. Police said the gang leader

of a house where they were committing dacoity and warned the gang members in some police patrolling jeeps passed the spot. The gang member would then escape by the car provided by Yogendra. The police said Saif, Nurul and Halim were experts in climbing long ladders to reach the roof to gain access to the targeted house.

used to stand guard at the gate

DCP (North) Abhijeet R Shanker said the police had recovered the ornaments looted from the house in Paikramau and also recovered a car, a motorcycle and two country-made pistols from the accused. He said Saif was named in four criminal cases in Barabanki and Kaushal in three

2 workers preparing sewer line for testing suffocate to death

PNS LUCKNOW

56-year-old man and his A⁵⁶-year-old man and mo 28-year-old son were suffocated to death while preparing a sewer line for testing in Lucknow on Wednesday afternoon.

The two had entered the sewer line without safety gear. Identified as Shobran Yadav

(56) and his son Sushil Yadav (28), both were daily-wage labourers and were engaged by a contractual company that was awarded the contract for laying sewer lines under the Smart City AMRUT scheme of the UP Jal Nigam.

A probe has been ordered into the incident to fix responsibility for the two deaths.

According to Jal Nigam Managing Director Shashi Kumar Mishra, the incident took place around 3:30 pm when both labourers were brought by a third party contractor of the company to remove debris in unused sewer line, constructed in 2016, to

prepare it for testing near the Residency area. Both labourers from Sitapur

went into the manhole for inspection without any safety equipment, and fell unconscious due to lack of oxygen. When traffic police personnel noticed equipment lying around and the manhole and its lid displaced, they attempted to communicate with individuals inside the sewer line. Receiving no response, they contacted the fire department. Both labourers were rescued by the fire department's rescue team. Later, one was sent to Balrampur Hospital and the other to KGMU Trauma Centre, where they were pronounced dead by the doctors. Junior Engineer G Verma of Jal Nigam, who arrived at the Balrampur Hospital, said that they were not informed by the contractor about the preparation work being carried out. According to protocol, such work is typically scheduled at night to minimise traffic disruptions. The standard procedure involves opening at least three manhole lids to prepare for testing. Subsequently, a suction pump is used to introduce fresh oxygen into the line. Following this, an oxygen reading is taken using specialised equipment to ensure the safe entry into the line. "If all safety parameters are

met, labourers are instructed to wear safety gear, including a tripod with winch, airline breathing apparatus for respiratory protection, full body harness, and a lifeline rope, before commencing any work," Verma

However, locals alleged that no personnel from Jal Nigam visited the site for two and half

Atul Kumar Mishra, an advocate practicing near the incident site, said, "Both labourers did not have any safety gear. They were rescued by the fire department. At least two and a half hours might have passed since the police were informed."

इंडियन बेंक



Indian Bank

ALLAHABAD Zonal Office Lucknow, New Building, 2nd Floor, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001, Ph. 0522-2286272, 2287283, Fax: 0522-2288033, E-mail id: zolucknow@indianbank.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE

NOTICE U/S 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized officer of Indian Bank (Erstwhile Allahabad Bank) Issue Demand Notices under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 to the Borrower's/Guarantor's herein below mentioned, Consequent upon the dispatch of such Notices through Post And returned Bank undelivered from the Borrower's/Guarantor's addresses. Through this Publication they are hereby called upon to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of publication of said notice failing which the bank will take the possession of the immovable and movable property will sell it through the process in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date of NPA

rancii . 310, iliulia Nagar	
1. Sri Saleem Ahmad s/o Gulam Ahmad (Borrower & Mortgagor), 1/139 Sec-J Jankipuram Behta Lucknow UP-226021 2. Smt Meer Jaha w/o Saleem (Guarantor), 1/139 Sec-J Jankipuram Behta Lucknow UP-226021	as on

226021

Date: 02.05.2024

Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/

Guarantor(s)/Date of Demand Notice

Raheem Nagar Madiyav Lucknow UP Date of NPA: Date of Demand: 20.04.2024

Place: Lucknow

House built on Plot no. 17 Khasra no 61 situated at village-Raheem Nagar Dudaul ward Faizullaganj Lucknow measuring 55.762 sqmtr, Boundaries- East- Plot no.18 West- Plot no 16, North- Aarazi Deega

Description of the

Property

South-15 ft wide road Sale deed executed dated 07.02.2007 at bahi no. 1 jild no. 3880 pages 125/142 Sr no.1352

at Sub-Registrar (IV) Lucknow

Authorised Officer Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank)







President Droupadi Murmu worshiping at Hanuman Garhi, offering flowers to Jatayu and performing aarti at Sarayu river in Ayodhya during her visit to Ram Lalla's birthplace on Wednesday

Ravidas Mehrotra, RK Chowdhary file papers

SHARMILA KRISHNA LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party candidates Ravidas Mehrotra and RK Chowdhary filed their nomination papers from Lucknow and tion papers from Lucknow and Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituencies respectively amidst the enthusiastic support of their party members on Wednesday. Twelve nomination papers were filed on Wednesday, nine for the Lucknow constituency, two for Mohanlalgani Lok Sabha seat Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha seat, and one for the Lucknow East assembly seat.

Both SP candidates arrived in a cavalcade of cars along with party members wearing the party members wearing the trademark red caps and waiving their party's flags. The party members raised slogans of "Victory to the Samajwadi Party" as the candidates walked down to the Collectorate where a large number of advocates present there also extended their support to the SP candidates. Launching a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Mehrotra, while addressing the media at the venue said, "Modi can only provide the guarantee of increase in unemployment and increase in inflation. In the name of electoral bonds, the Bharatiya Janata Party has only looted the general public. We eral public," he added. 30 lakh vacant posts of the Government of India," he added.

are not afraid of the cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate and raids carried out by the Income Tax Department. We have gone to jail several times and we have struggled with the issues of the public and hence the general public is support-

He said that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, unlike him, did not tour the city while filing his nomination papers and was accompanied by outsiders during the exercise. "However I have taken a tour

of Hazratganj, Lalbagh, Kaiserbagh, Nazirabad, Aminabad, Gwynne Road before coming to file my nom-ination and have got an over-whelming response from the public. We are the face of the public because we have fought for the public for the last 49 vears. Rainath Singh is claiming that he will win by five lakh votes and we will break his pride," he said.

Mehrotra stated that Rajnath Singh is in power for the last ten years but he has never been with the people in the times of their needs. "He was not present during the last rites of two of his own MLAs who passed away recently, what can we expect him to do for the gen-



Samajwadi Party leader Ravidas Mehrotra going to Collectorate to file his nomination paper from Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency on Wednesday **Pioneer**

nomination papers in the 2022 Vidhan Sabha assembly election, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak had fled from his constituency of Lucknow Central.

The SP candidate promised that if he wins the election, a government school will be opened in every mohalla, every poor woman will get Rs 8,500 per month and one lakh rupee annually. "We will give employment to the youth and fill the

Mehrotra has disclosed movable assets worth Rs 62.1 lakh and immovable property worth Rs 56.3 lakh.

RK Chowdhary said that the country was in a dire strait under the Bharatiya Janata Party government. "The farmer is worried, the youth is worried. The Constitution and reservation are in danger. The entire country is mismanaged and has to be managed properly," he

Chowdhary said that he would work on electricity connections, water and roads in the Mohanlalganj constituency if elected. "The support of the people is evident from their presence in large numbers at my nomination exercise," he

When asked if Kaushal Kishore has done some work in Mohanlalganj, he said that the public alone could speak about this. He said that he had won elections several times but this time he felt that there was a wave in support of the Samajwadi Party. Chowdhary has disclosed mov-

able property worth Rs 34.3 lakh and immovable property worth Rs 2.4 crore.

Advocate Pankaj Singh from the Voters Party who practices in the Lucknow civil court filed his nomination for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency.

Pankaj Singh, who fought the Vidhan Sabha election in 2022, said that he was unfazed by the said that he was unfazed by the fact that he was standing opposite Rajnath Singh. "If I win I will get the Advocate Protection Act implemented and will start a pension scheme for advocates. I will make eduction and health for fact the cation and health free for the citizens," he said.

Sushil Kumar from the Bahujan Mukti Party also filed his nomination for the Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituency. He has immovable property worth Rs

55,689. Avinash Chandra Jain, a businessman and an independent from Niralanagar, filed his nomination for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency. "The elections this time will be unique and it is my guarantee that I will reduce inflation after winning the election if the people give me a chance." he people give me a chance," he said. Jain said that he fought the election last time in 2019. Yugini Neelam, yet another candidate who came to file her

candidate who came to file her nomination papers for the Lucknow Lok Sabha con-stituency, captured the atten-tion of all present with her shimmering outfit and glossy make-up. She said that she was fighting the election for the first time. A former employee of the Irrigation department of the Irrigation department, she said that she left her gov-ernment job to serve the peo-ple. Nandini Ranjan filed nom-ination papers for the Lucknow

East assembly bypoll.
Others who filed their nominations for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency included independent candidates Akhand Pratap Singh, Vivek Kumar Jha, Ishtiaq Ali, Shalini Asthana from the Bhartiya Sarv Dharam Party, Manish Maurya from Bhartiya Nav Kranti Party and Neelam Sharma from Rashtriya Udai

EC taking steps to conduct free, fair elections: CEO

Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa has said that the Election Commission of India's directives are being adhered to uphold law and order during the Lok sabha elections.

He said that various agencies - the Police, Income Tax, Excise and Narcotics - were taking concerted action.

The state has deployed 438 inter-state and 1,827 check posts to ensure thorough scrutiny. Between March 16 and April

30, 2024, the police confiscated 535 licensed weapons from individuals with criminal records. Additionally, licences for 4,694 weapons were revoked and surrendered. Proactively preventing potential disturbances, the authorities have issued notices under the Criminal Procedure Code to restrict the movements of 26,27,735 individuals, with 22,36,435 individuals complyThe police have seized 8,317 unlicensed weapons, 8,384 cartridges, 2,900.32 kg of explosives, and 455 bombs. A total of 3,559 illegal weapon manufacturing centres were raided while 157 establish-

With the announcement of election dates for Lok Sabha elections-2024 on March 16, 2024, efforts are being made in the entire state to conduct free, fair, peaceful, fear-free, inducement-free, inclusive and safe voting. Model code of conduct is in effect," the

ments were sealed.

CEO said.

He added, "On April 30, 2024, the police cancelled the licence of two weapons of criminal persons and deposited them. Taking preventive action under the CrPC, 25,514 people were banned. Besides, 167 unlicensed weapons and 127 cartridges were recovered and seized. Police raided 67 centres manufacturing illegal weapons of which 05 were sealed.

Priyanka to campaign in **Fatehpur Sikri on Friday**

PNS LUCKNOW

With the suspense over the candidature of Gandhi scions Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Congress bastions Amethi and Rae Bareli respectively still continuing, Priyanka is all set to join the party's campaign for the lone Fatehpur Sikri Lok Sabha seat that the party is contesting in Uttar Pradesh in the third phase of the ongoing parliamentary elections.

Ten Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh are set to go to polls in the third phase on May 7. The Congress has got just one of these seats with its alliance partner Samajwadi Party contesting the remaining nine seats.

The third phase polls in UP are going to be the biggest litmus test for the Samajwadi Party-Congress alliance as majority of these constituencies are in the Yadav heartland. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Priyanka will reach Agra on Yadav is trying to retain the coming Friday afternoon and

Mainpuri seat while Shivpal Singh Yadav's son Aditya Yadav is trying to wrest the Budaun seat from Bharatiya Janata

Party.
For the Congress, Ramnath
Sikarwar is making all efforts to win the Fatehpur Sikri seat and bring some happiness in the party camp.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who has made just one appearance so far in this election in Uttar Pradesh by taking out a roadshow in Saharanpur for party candidate Imran Masood, will once again join the campaign trail for the party by taking out another similar roadshow and hold a rally in Fatehpur Sikri to seek votes for Sikarwar.

Sikarwar is a Thakur and the Rajput community is not happy with the Bharatiya Janata Party this time, so Priyanka will try to attract this vote bank, especially as Sikarwar is the lone Rajput contesting from western

straight away visit Fatehpur Sikri area to take out a roadshow in favour of the party candidate.

Sikarwar is engaged in a triangular fight with Bharatiya Janata Party's sitting MP Rajkumar Chahar and Bahujan Samaj Party candidate Ram Niwas Sharma.

The fight for Sikarwar has become interesting in Fatehpur Sikri as the sitting BJP MP is facing a party rebel after sitting MLA of the party, Rajkumar Choudhary filed his papers as an independent candidate. Choudhary had sought BJP ticket for his son Rameshwar Choudhary from Fatehpur Sikri and after it was denied, he entered the fray as an independent making the fight difficult for Chahar as both belong to Jat community having sizable votes in the area.

The Brahmin candidate fielded by the BSP also poses trouble for Chahar as the community is also seen as the traditional vote bank of the

Cong using fear, rumour and now deepfake for propaganda: Thakur

PTI LUCKNOW/AYODHYA

Union minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday said the Congress was using all types of tricks — fear, confusion, rumour and now deepfake — for its propaganda. He refuted the Congress' charge that democracy was under threat or that reservations will be taken away by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

"It was during the Congress regime that democracy was finished by imposing Emergency," Thakur told PTI Videos at Lucknow airport.

The minister is in Uttar Pradesh to attend several programmes, including filing of nominations by party leaders.

"Congress is using fear, confusion, rumour, deepfake and all kinds of tricks. The way foreign powers try to destabilise any country, the Congress is using all kinds of tricks for its propaganda," he said.
The BJP has lodged a complaint with the

Election Commission against the Congress alleging that it circulated the "deepfake and morphed" video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to derail the poll process, and demanded strict action against the party.

"They (Congress) have been lying constantly. They say reservation will be finished, democracy will be finished. The Modi government ruled for 10 years, there was no talk



of reservation. It will never end in the Modi regime. We have given the rights to SC, ST and OBC. On the other hand, the Congress has snatched their rights," Thakur said. Reservation is under threat in Congress-ruled states, such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telengana, he said.

"Congress humiliated Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. It was in the Modi regime that Constitution Day was celebrated and 'Panch Teerth' were made. Our slogan is 'sabka saath sabka vikas," he said.

Thakur said Uttar Pradesh will create a new record and play an important role in achieving the "400 paar" target in this year's Lok Sabha elections.

"Be it in 2014 or 2019, UP played a role. We

have to take the achievements of the Modi government to every household," he said. The minister also said that Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi may have joined hands again but the two 'shehzadas' "will not be able to do much".

He also questioned the Congress for allegedly not acting against MP Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda who was on Tuesday suspended by the JD(S) over an alleged sex scandal.

"Strict action should be initiated irrespective of his (Revanna) family or political party. I want to ask Rahul Gandhi and Congress President Mallikarjun Karge, who belongs to Karnataka and where his government is in power, why an action was not taken to arrest him (Revanna)," Thakur said.

The BJP leader paid obeisance to Ram Lalla at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "I prayed for 'Ek bharat shreshth bharat' and

for a developed country," Thakur said.
On being asked if Rahul Gandhi will also be paying a visit to the Ram temple, Thakur said, I want to say that those who questioned the existence of Lord Ram and did not attend the consecration ceremony, ultimately you have to come to the feet of Lord Ram."

Those who brought Lord Ram, people will bring them back to power," he said.

Akhilesh defends Khurshid's niece over 'vote jehad'

PTI LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday defended his party leader Maria Alam, booked for her "vote jehad" remark, saying that her intention was to ask people to vote in large numbers.

Seeking votes on Monday for INDIA bloc candidate Naval Kishore Shakya from Farrukhabad seat, Álam, who is also the niece of Congress leader Salman Khurshid, had made an appeal for "vote jehad", terming it as necessary in the current situation for the minority community to drive away the BJP government. The Uttar Pradesh Police on Tuesday booked Khurshid, who was present in the poll meeting, and Alam for her call for a "vote jehad". SP chief Yadav said, "Sometimes powerful words are used to enthuse people to vote in elections."

The meaning of it (Alam's call), I think, was not for which action has been initiated. The intention was that votes polled in maximum numbers, that all people cast their votes," Yadav stressed.

Akhilesh's challenge: 'Modi ki guarantee' vs Mulayam's legacy

PNS LUCKNOW

 $E^{\text{ven as the Samajwadi Party is}}_{\text{part of the INDIA bloc of the}}$ opposition parties, party president Akhilesh Yadav is single-handedly shouldering the campaign in all 67 Lok Sabha seats his party is contesting in Uttar Pradesh. For the SP the stakes are high as besides Akhilesh Yadav, his wife and three cousins are

also contesting the elections. The stakes are high for the husband and wife duo as retaining Mainpuri for Dimple Yadav and wresting Kannauj from the Bharatiya Janata Party for Akhilesh Yadav, are big tasks. In the past, party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav had won from both Mainpuri and Kannauj constituencies.

Though Akhilesh Yadav had taken control of the party in January 2017, it is now that he is stepping

into his late father's shoes so the results of the two constituencies will be closely tracked by both friends and foes. In 2019, Dimple had lost from Kannauj, but later she won the Mainpuri seat held by Mulayam Sing Yadav, in a bypoll in November 2022. The bypoll was caused by the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav in October 2022. Polling in Mainpuri will be held in the third phase of elections on May 7 and in Kannauj on May 13 in the fourth phase. After talking to a cross section of

had won Mainpuri five times - 1996,

2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. Dimple's

win by 2.88 lakh votes in the December 2022 bypoll was huge, but

voters in Mainpuri, it emerges that the Yadavs seem steadfast with the SP, but non-Yadav Other Backward Classes have drifted away from the SP. Non-Yadav OBCs had supported Mulayam Singh Yadav. Mulayam

was seen as largely a factor of sympathy vote, with the couple plus Akhilesh's uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav appealing for votes in Mulayam's In Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituen-

cy, while Yadavs number around 4.5 lakh, the Shakyas are second at 3.25 lakh, followed by Lodh Rajputs at 2.15 lakh. The Dalits number around 1.2 lakh and the Muslims about 60,000, with the rest around 3.35 lakh voters being upper caste Thakurs and Brahmins. So, it all depends on how the OBC vote gets split. Bahujan Samaj Party, much to the chagrin of the SP, has fielded Shiv Prasad Yadav, who is expected to cut into the SP's Yadav vote bank. Shiv Prasad Yadav runs a school and a dairy business and has been trying his luck against the Mulayam family in elections in the past. BSP chief Mayawati on Wednesday



addressed a big election meeting in Mainpuri.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has never won the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat. BJP is banking on the support of the non-Yadav OBCs and hopes to rope in a majority of the votes of the Shakya community.

Disrespect of tall Lodh leader and former UP chief minister Kalyan Singh also finds resonance in Mainpuri among the Lodh community. The BJP leaders are telling the voters in Lodh dominated villages that when Babuji (Kaylan Singh) died, Akhilesh did not go to his house to pay tribute, but when a mafia, Mukhtar Ansari, died, he and the SP leaders visited Ghazipur. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who addressed an election meeting in Mainpuri, also raised this issue while underlining how he and other BJP leaders had visited Saifai to pay

tributes to Mulayam after his death. He called it an example of the SP's 'bhed-bhao" (discrimination), suggesting the party was "biased" towards Muslims.

For the common people SP candidate Dimple Yadav is still viewed as an accidental politician. She is largely on her own this time, with Akhilesh tackling his own campaign in Kannauj, Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday along with uncle Shivpal Yadav addressed several meetings in various assembly segments falling in Mainpuri Lok sabha constituency. Mulayam Singh Yadav remains the calling card for the SP. Akhilesh Yadav, Shivpal Yadav and Dimple Yadav and all leaders addressing the meetings invoke the memory of Mulayam Singh Yadav and work done by him for the development of the constituency and uplift of the common people.

BJP candidates file papers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

BJP candidates, Praveen Patel from Phulpur Lok Sabha constituency and Neeraj Tripathi from Allahabad parliamentary seat filed their nomination papers on Wednesday. They reached the Collectorate in a procession with a large number of supporters and pre-sented their nomination papers before the returning officer. Before this, a large number of BJP workers and supporters had reached in front of the

Azad Park and they were shouting slogans on all the way.

Meanwhile BJP candidate from Kaushambi seat Vinod Sonkar also filed his nomination in Kaushambi. Vinod has been MP for two consecutive terms. For the third time, BJP has again made him its candi-

On the other hand, SP candidate Dr SP Singh Patel filed his nomination in Pratapgarh on Wednesday.

The candidate came out with his supporters from

Chilbila, reached the office at Meera Bhawan after worship at Manvila Devi Dham. From there, he along with party office-bearers and Congress leaders reached the nomination site at Collectorate and filed his nomination papers. There were strict security arrangements during this period. During the nomination, Patti MLA Ram Singh Patel, former MLA Nagendra Singh Yadav 'Munna', District General Secretary Abdul Qadir Jilani and other office-bearers were present.

Two shops gutted in fire PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR Baijnath of Rampur village is also situated. He said on Tuesday evening he had gone to the shop with the cosmetic conductive to the shop with the complex to the sho

a garbage dump in Patara town of Ghatampur Kotwali police area on Wednesday. Goods worth around ₹1 lakh were gutted in the fire. The villagers tried to extinguish the fire by pouring water from the nearby submersible pump and also informed the fire brigade and police. Magul of Raipur village in Sadh police station area said that his cosmetics shop is situated on Raipur road. Beside it, a grocery and fruit shop of

goods. In order to pay the balance he had gone to Kanpur on Wednesday morning. When his wife went to open the shop, she found thick smoke coming out of it. On her raising alarm, villagers tried to extinguish the fire. Meanwhile, goods worth around ₹1 lakh stored in both the shops were gutted. Ghatampur Inspector Pradip Kumar Singh said it seems the shops caught fire due to a spark from garbage dump.

Maj Gen Bhat takes over as GOC Purva UP & MP Sub Area

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Major General Rajesh Bhat has taken over as General Officer Commanding (GOC), Purva UP and MP Sub Area here on Wednesday. The handing taking over ceremony was held at Prayagraj New Military Station wherein Major General Jai Bainsla, Sena Medal handed over command and has moved to Shillong as ADG



Assam Rifles. Commissioned in the Corps of Engineers in June 1993, Major General

Raiesh Bhat brings extensive experience to his new role. Major General Bhat has a distinguished career encompassing prestigious command, staff and instructional appoint-ments. Major General Bhat's leadership promises to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and excellence, ensuring continued security and well-being of the regions served by the Sub Area.

Modi has increased pride of Kashi, Purvanchal: Jaiswal

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has increased the pride of Kashi and Purvanchal (eastern UP) along with India in the whole world. "Today Kashi has become a role model of development and there is a world of difference between the Kashi before 2014 and of today," he said while contacting the residents of Lajpat Nagar, Badshah Bagh and Kamla Nagar Colony of Lallapura Khurd ward under his City North assembly segment under Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency here on Wednesday morn-

Appealing to the people to vote 100 per cent, Jaiswal said it is a matter of pride for all of us that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is contesting the election from Kashi for the third time. "After the con-struction of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, devotees and tourists from all over the world are



"Now it is the turn of the people of Kashi to make the prime minister win with record votes and create a new history", he said. Former Municipal Corporation Deputy Chairman Mahendra Singh Gautam, city BJP general secretary Naveen Kapoor, Mandal president Siddha Nath Sharma, Shailendra Mishra 'Sonu', former corporator Ajay Singh and many others were also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the guidance received from national general secretary of coming to Kashi. Tourists coming to Kashi are surprised to see Sunil Bansal, who came to

Kashi recently, the party workers have started contacting the beneficiaries of Modi government in Varanasi Lok Sabha from Wednesday during the door-to-door contact drive. The BJP workers put stickers of Modi's guarantee of prosperity on the houses of the beneficiaries and handed over leaflets of schemes to them, asking the beneficiaries to make a missed call on 9638002024. In this direction, district party president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, along with the booth presidents and booth workers contacted the beneficiaries at booth numbers 346, 347, 348, 349 of Shakti Kendra

Kardameshwar Mandal of

Rohania assembly and handed

Susuwahi-I

over leaflets of government schemes to the beneficiaries, asking them to give a missed call. Vishwakarma said that PM Narendra Modi has done the work of realising the basic mantra of Antyodaya of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. "Under the Central government, 80 crore people are getting free ration. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, more than four crore poor have been provided permanent houses, over 10 crore free LPG connections, 12 crore toilets have been constructed", he said, adding that under Jal Jeevan Mission, tap water was provided to more than 14 crore houses, electricity was provided to 100 percent houses, loans were given to more than 53 lakh street vendors under Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana. Corporator Suresh Kumar Patel, Abhay Vishwakarma, regional co-media in charge Santosh Solapurkar, Dharmendra Patel

and others were also present. Earlier, former MLA Jagdish Patel said that under the leadership of the prime minister, India's respect, hon-our and glory has increased in the whole world. Addressing the youth and first-time voters at 'Namo Yuva Chaupal' programme organised by BJP's Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya Mandal Yuva Morcha in Kabir Nagar, he explained the importance of the votes of the firsttime voters. He said their contribution is important in fulfilling the resolve of the prime minister to make India a developed nation.

Special guest and City South assembly MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari said that the role of youth will be important in this Lok Sabha elections. "The government before 2014 was involved in corruption and scams, whereas the government led by Modi after 2014 took care of every section by implementing the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and today Kashi has become a role model of development," he said.

State BJP secretary Archana Mishra said the youth will have to contribute significantly in fulfilling the PM's resolve of a developed India. Corporator Akshayvar Singh conducted the programme.

Many Cong, SP leaders join BJP

Several big leaders of Congress and Samajwadi Party (SP), including former Zila Panchayat Chairperson (SP), joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Under the leadership of regional president Dilip Singh Patel these Congress and SP leaders were BJP's saffron scarves and caps. They accepted the membership of the BJP at a function held at BJP's Central Election Office of Varanasi Lok Sabha seat at Mahmoorganj here on Tuesday evening. This office was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently.
Patel, while welcoming all

the opposition leaders who joined the BJP, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done all-round development of the country and Kashi has been rejuvenated under the Modi government. "Influenced by the policies of Modi government, workers and leaders of many parties including Congress and SP have joined BJP in large numbers because the leaders of the opposition neither have a policy nor a

Dr Seema Paroha assumes



BJP in Varanasi on Tuesday evening.

leader. The workers of the opposition camps are apathetic towards their leaders whereas they are influenced by the policies of the PM," he said, adding that this is the reason why the leaders and workers of the opposition parties are leaving their parties and joining the BIP. He said that this time it is certain that the BJP will cross 400 and even the opposition leaders know this, that is why at many places the opposition leaders are withdrawing their names even before the elections. Former MLA and Lok Sabha convenor Surendra Narayan Singh Odhe said today we are very happy that our family is getting bigger. "This is a direct proof of increasing popularity of the PM", he said

The leaders of Congress, SP and other parties who took the membership of BJP at the function were former Zila Panchayat Chairperson Suchita Patel (SP), Ravi Shankar Mishra (former city Congress general secretary), Dr Vijay Shankar Dwivedi (ex-district Congress vice-president), Radheshyam Singh (former state Congress secretary), Ajay Pandey (former district Congress secretary), Virendra Patel (senior Socialist leader), Dharamraj Patel (ex-district Janata Dal-United chief), Vishal Tiwari (Congress), Rajesh Singh (vice-president-Pradhan Sangh, Sewapuri), Arvind Kanojia (secretary-Youth Congress Varanasi), Sarvesh Singh (Congress), Dr Sunil Agarwal (Congress), Ravindra Patel, Suraj Singh, Dr Raman Singh etc. The function was also attended by former MP Rajesh Mishra, district president and MLC Hansrai Vishwakarma, city president Vidyasagar Rai, MLC Dharmendra Rai, city general secretary Rahul Singh, district vice-president Suresh Singh, regional media in charge Navratan Rathi, Shailendra

Mishra and others.

management

Lecture on stress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

THE Faculty of commerce,

■ Banaras Hindu University (BHU) under the aegis of

Student Wellbeing Initiative

organised a guest lecture on

'Self Awareness and Stress

Management' on Tuesday. The

event started with garlanding

the bust of Pt Madan Mohan

Malviya and lighting the lamp.

Dean, Faculty of Commerce Prof HK Singh welcomed the

guest. He highlighted the

events and achievements of

the Faculty of Commerce. He

also announced that the facul-

ty will celebrate its diamond

DEO: Run voter awareness campaign on wide scale

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANAS

District Magistrate/District Election Officer (DM/DEO) S Rajalingam said that there is a need to make run a comprehensive voter every possible effort by making the right strategy to ensure maximum participation of vot-ers in the Lok Sabha elections in the district. He also stressed the need for running voter conduct the elections successawareness campaign on a wide fully, training on all the necesscale. He was presiding over a meeting at Commissionerate Auditorium here on Tuesday with the aim of increasing the voting percentage with all the Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and officers related to Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme. The district election officer said that special awareness programmes should be run in the booths where there was less turnout in the last election and more and more people should be motivated to vote. "Also, by making a booth-wise list of those who did not vote in the last election, all those voters should be contacted and motivated to vote", he said, adding that all officers concerned, including the AROs, must participate in voter aware-

ness related programmes. According to him, it is the responsibility of all of us to increase the voting percentage.

He gave instructions to awareness campaign at the district level as well as at the tehsils, development blocks, villages, schools, colleges etc. The DEO said that in order to sary procedures related to the elections will be done. This should be given to the employ-ees in advance. CDO ees in advance. CDO Himanshu Nagpal, Deputy District Election Officer, all AROs, District Inspector of Schools, Basic Shiksha Adhikari and other concerned officers were present. Meanwhile, under the chairmanship of Rajalingam, a meeting of the district level Udyog Bandhu Committee and industrial units was also held at same place. The district magitrate said that in order to make the industrial environment favourable in the district, the complaints of the entrepreneurs should be taken seriously and their quick resolution should be ensured on priority basis. During the meeting, as per the agenda, all the points

were discussed extensively before the Udyog Bandhu Committee and necessary guidelines were given to the officers concerned the DM appealed to the entrepreneurs and said that everyone should participate enthusiastically in the Lok Sabha elections in the district. "Vote as well as motivate the employees to vote. Everyone should try their level best to increase the voting percentage in the district Entrepreneurs should organise voter awareness programmes through their associations. Entrepreneurs themselves should download the Voter Helpline App and get as many people as possible to download it", he said, appealing to the entrepreneurs to adopt model booths. CDO, officials of industries, police and other related departments, Zila Panchavat and entrepreneurs were also

EXHIBITION: A painting exhibition was held at Mahamana Art Gallery, Faculty of Visual Arts (FoVA), BHU, after the four days painting workshop on Art therapy for cancer awareness. Director of Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS-BHU) Prof SN Sankhwar was the chief guest.

Srivastava to be officiating GM of BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANAS

Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) Sushil Kumar Srivastava will officiate as General Manager (GM) of BLW. This was informed by a letter issued by Joint Secretary of Railway Board VS Dahiya. It is said in the letter "...Ministry of Railways has decided that on superannuation of Basudev Panda on April 30, Sushil Kumar Srivastava, HAG/ IRSEE, presently working a PCEE/BLW should be delegated the administrative and financial powers of the post of GM, till posting of a regular incumbent or until further orders, whichever is earlier. "

charge as NSI director PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Professor and Head Biochemistry Department Dr Seema Paroha took over the charge as first woman Director of National Sugar Institute (NSI), Kanpur, on Wednesday. Addressing mediapersons, she spelt out her priority to fill various vacant posts in the institute. She said recently the ministry had given administrative approval for establishing the ntre of Excellence on fuels in corodination with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur. An MoU will be signed soon with the IIT-K in this regard. She said various post graduate diploma level



courses run by the institute will be coverted into degree level courses for providing better opportunities to the entrants be a milestone in developing the institute as 'Institute of Eminence'. During her stint as and Head Professor Biochemistry Department, she brought radical changes by establishing nano brewery, dis-

tillation unit and upgradation of the laboratories. She also valuably contributed in establishment of NABL accredited test facilities in the institute. She treatment of waste water gencoordination with the Central

has a wide experience in the field of alcoholic fermentation, production of ethanol from alternate feedstocks viz. sugar beet, sweet sorghum, maize etc. Apart from that she has shown a way forward for disposal of spent wash techniques by formulating the charter for stillery units located in Ganga and Yamuna river basin and erated in the sugar factories in Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi.

iubilee on completion of 60

ed. Prof BB Ojha connected spirituality and traditional knowlagement. The guest of honour Prof PN Singh said self-awareness

Motorcyclist killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

motorcyclist was killed

Amotorcyclist was kined after being hit by a speeding DCM near Paharipur on Sheoli-Rasoolabad road under Rura police area of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday. His brother-in-law rushed to the spot and identified the body which was sent for autopsy. Dinesh Yadav of Nizamatpur village, Rura, a bachelor, was living with his brother-in-law

Arvind in Kathara village for the past 10 years. When he was going to duty on the bike the DCM hit him from behind near Paharipur village on Sheoli-Rasoolabad road. As a result he was seriously injured. The police sent him to Rasoolabad CHC where the doctors declared him dead. Asalatganj outpost incharge Dhirendra Kumar said further action will be initiated on receipt of autopsy report and

18-year-old meets tragic end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

n 18-year-old youth who An 18-year-old youth who was going to sell vegetables in Hathiganha market was killed after being hit by a tempo here on Wednesday. The police took possession of the body and sent it for post-mortem. Shubham Patel of Nawabganj was going to the market on bike with vegetables

when he met with the mishap.

Meanwhile a 16-year-old

girl committed suicide by consuming poisonous substance in in Kaushambi on Wednesday.

DERAILS: The engine of Bareilly-Prayagraj Sangam Express derailed on Wednesday morning before reaching the Prayagraj Sangam railway station. ADRM of NCR Shivendra Shukla said the wheel of the engine came off the track. A major accident was averted. However, no causality was

years next year. After the felicitation of all the guests, Ramashish, Prof PN Singh, Prof Sanjay Gupta, Prof OP Rai and Prof BB Oiha, theme based guest lectures start-

edge system with self realisation and stress management. Quoting the Buddha, the chief guest Ramashish emphasised that righteous middle path is answer to stress management. He also compared the family support system of India and abroad which plays a pivotal role in stress manleads to self-confidence. Dias Management and anchoring was done by Dr Ishi Mohan.

BHU to upgrade infrastructure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANAS

Amajor exercise to revamp and upgrade the existing infrastructure and develop new facilities is underway in Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The exercise aims to enhance student amenities with focus on optimal utilisation of resources, preserving the glorious legacy of the university and ensuring that the end users are benefited in the best possible way. As part of these efforts the university has zeroed in several ambitious developmental projects. These include construction of a new state-of-theart girls' hostel at Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), upgradation and extension of Bhagwan Das as well as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan hostels, development of academic and residential blocks at the Kamachha Campus, construc-tion of Vishram Sadan for attendants of patients coming to BHU for treatment, modernisation and upgradation of display galleries of Bharat Kala Bhawan, renovation and upgradation of Central Library building, restoration and facelifting of main building for Department of Chemistry, as



well as developing a dedicated facility for student activities.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain chaired an elaborate meeting of all the stakeholders regarding these development projects and comprehensively reviewed the progress so far and future course of action. The meeting was attended by architects and consultants, directors of institutes, deans of faculties, key functionaries of the departments concerned etc.

The review exercise over the course of three days saw presentations on architecture, design and construction, on the projects and detailed discussions on addressing challenges in the implementation strategy.

The V-C said that these projects are being carefully crafted to ensure that the university fraternity is benefited in the best possible way. He said that several buildings of the university need urgent repair and restoration, as well as upgrading as per the growing needs of the university frater-nity. "We want to make sure that there is optimal utilisation of the university infrastructure, while the glorious legacy of BHU is kept intact. Over the past one and a half year we have undertaken a detailed

work on BHU's master planning, identifying challenges and possible solutions", he said.

Upon completion of the project, the MMV will get a major facelift with a doubled hostel capacity. The university has been laying a bigger focus on developing facilities for its girl students. Currently a 1,200 seat girl hostel is already under construction on the campus. The proposed MMV hostel is expected to have over 1,000 student capacity, with spacious rooms, social spaces, dining halls, reading and medical rooms, as well as provision of lodging facility for parents of students. The existing Science and Home Sciences buildings of the college are also proposed to undergo facelift and will be able to address concerns related to space and advanced facil-

ities. The Bhagwan Das Hostel

of the Faculty of Law and the Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Hostel of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences, are also set to undergo restoration. The extension of these hostels will not only almost double their capacity, but also provide better student amenities.

Additionally, the scope of developing Shri Vishwanath Temple precinct is also being explored in the interest of the devotees and pilgrims who visit the temple in BHU campus. The temple is visited by nearly 7,000-8,000 visitors daily on a non-festive day. The proposal is looking into creating more parking spaces, to effectively handle heavy crowds during festivals, better amenities for devotees, security measures and beautification of the temple premises. The V-C was also briefed on the progress of upcoming Critical Care Hospital at the Trauma Centre Premises. The 190-bed facility is being developed to cater to the long felt need to have a critical care unit at BHU hospital which serves the medical needs of a large population of this part of the country. The facility will also include a dedicated Burns ICU of 20 beds.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur) witnessed a resounding celebration of artistic prowess and community spirit as The Women's Association hosted the captivating cultural fest, "Jazba 2024" on Tuesday night. The vibrant fest showcased the diverse talents of over 100 participants from the campus community, captivating audiences with an array of enthralling performances, each imbued with distinct creativi-

ty and cultural richness. The prestigious occasion was graced by the esteemed presence of Prof Manindra Agrawal, Director of IIT Kanpur, alongside Rachna Agrawal, the current patron of the Women's Association, and former patrons Aruna Karandikar and Rajelakshmi Ganesh, supporting the celebration of talent and community spirit. The programme commenced with a heartfelt tribute to the late Prof Sameer Khandaker, followed by a series of captivating performances that left the audience spellbound. The highlights included the invigorating Saraswati



A dance performance at "Jazba 2024" at IIT Kanpur

Western dance performance, enchanting Madhurashtakam and the era dance, which beautifully depicted the eras of renowned Bollywood actresses from Waheeda Rehman to Alia Bhatt. Further enriching the evening was a thought-provoking drama, "Unveiling the Truth of Vaidehi," exploring the strength and resilience of Sita.

Vandana, a mesmerising

Prof Sanjay Mittal's captivating saxophone recital added a musical touch to the evening. Melodious vocal performances by Prof Javed Malik and Prof Rajesh Śrivastava enchanted the crowd, while Divya Tripathi's original poetry show-

cased the depth of literary talent within the community. Dr Monika Thakur, Secretary of The Women's Association, IIT Kanpur expressed her gratitude, "We are grateful for the overwhelming support we received for 'Jazba 2024'. This event wouldn't have been possible without the tireless efforts of the executive team and our dedicated Jazba coordinator, Sweta Kumar. We are thrilled to have brought the institute community together through artistic expression and celebration."

The event was hosted by Prof Bharat Lohani, Dr Rajeev Gupta, Jayshree Pant and Sweta Kumar, whose exceptional emceeing skills ensured atten-

dees a smooth and engaging experience. "Jazba 2024" exemplified IIT-K's commitment to encouraging a vibrant and inclusive campus community where talents are nurtured, and cultural diversity is celebrated. The Women's Association's initiative brought together the institute's faculty, staff and their families, creating an environment of camaraderie and artistic expression that left an indelible mark on all who attended. INITIATIVE: As part of

its social responsibility, the CSA University of Agriculture and Technology here has made arrangements for water to quench the thirst of animals. Due to scorching heat, many animals and birds die of thirst. Keeping this in mind, the varsity students have taken a good initiative to quench the thirst of these birds.

Under the drive, the students of MBA provided water in earthen pots for animals, birds and squirrels at over 50 different spots in the campus. Vice-Chancellor and Dean (Faculty of Agriculture) along with Dr Anshu Singh Sengar and Dr Neetu Singh were also present on this occasion.



BJP amended Constitution for social justice: UP Minister

The BJP strengthened the Constitution and amended it for social justice during its terms at the Centre unlike the Congress, which made a "malicious attempt" to change the basic structure of the Constitution when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, Uttar Pradesh Minister Asim Arun said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference, Arun, who is the Social Welfare Minister in the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, said that nobody has the right to change the basic structure of the Constitution and asserted that the BJP is ready to keep it

The Congress has said that it will bring back Article 370, which means the reservation provided to SCs and STs in . Kashmir will also be rolled back," he told reporters at the BJP headquarters.

The BJP leader said the Congress will not get any such

opportunity as people of the country have understood its

Arun's remarks came at a time when the Congress and other constituents of the INDIA bloc have gone on an offensive against the ruling BJP alleging that the party is seeking 400 plus seats in the Lok Sabha polls because it wants to change the Constitution and end the provisions made to provide reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs in the country.

Amendments were made during the BJP rule to strengthen the Constitution, carry for-

and the ideas of BR Ambedkar," Arun said. "On the contrary, the most malicious attempt to change the Constitution, not amend, was made by late prime minister Indira Gandhi when she was facing the prospect of losing the prime minister's seat following a high court's verdict," he added.

Arun said that the amendment brought by the erstwhile Indira Gandhi government had provided that the judiciary including the Supreme Court will now have jurisdiction to hear petitions challenging the election of the president, vice president, prime minister and

"it was the most malicious attempt, among others on various occasions, to change the basic structure of the Constitution. I salute the power of the judiciary which struck down this amendment. Later, Emergency was imposed and other things were done to save her (Indira Gandhi)," the BJP

EC push led to participation of vulnerable tribals in two LS phases

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission's I innovative measures, like eco-friendly polling stations in Chhattisgarh, tribalthemed booths in Odisha, and initiatives such as transportation provisions and electoral literacy clubs in Kerala, effectively encouraged the enthusiastic participation of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the two phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

Notably, the Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar voted for the first time, marking a historic milestone in their democratic engagement. In the last 11 state Assembly polls, there were around nine lakh eligible voters from 14 PVTGs communities namely Kamar, Bhunjia, Baiga, Pahadi Korwa, Abujhmadia, Birhor, Sahariya, Bhariya, Chenchu, Kolam, Thoti, Kondareddy, Jenu Kuruba and Koraga.

Elated at the encouraging response from these elusive communities which accounts India's 8.6 per cent tribal population, the Election Commission on Wednesday



said that inclusive efforts such as setting up polling booths in previously inaccessible areas have led to significant PVTG inclusion in the electoral

Inder the guidance of Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, special campaigns and registration drives were conducted, ensuring 100% enrollment of PVTGs in the electoral rolls across several

launched to register the PVTGs in the electoral rolls as a first step for their inclusion, the official pointed out. During a special summary revision to update the elec-

sure that special campaigns

and registration drives are

toral rolls, special outreach camps were held across specific states with a PVTG population.

At least 40 polling stations were established in unique tribal themes in an effort to draw these voters to the polls on election day in Karnataka while tribal theme-based polling stations welcomed the voters at the polling stations, with villagers in Dindori, decorating the polling stations themselves in Madhya Pradesh.

Additionally, in the State, three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) -Baiga, Bhariya, and Sahariya actively participated in the electoral process. Out of a total population of 9,91,613 across 23 districts, 6,37,681 eligible citizens aged 18 and above are registered in the electoral rolls. During the voting phases,

there was notable enthusiasm among voters from the Baiga and Bharia tribes. Many of them arrived at polling stations early in the morning, demonstrating their commitment to participating in the democratic process, shared the official.

Further exemplifying the dedication to democracy, Kurumba tribal voters in the Mukkali region of Silent Valley, Kerala, embarked on hours-long journeys, traversing dense forests to reach accessible polling booths. Despite their advanced age, numerous tribal voters, including women, showcased unwavering commitment, with 417 out of 817 voters being female.

The innovative use of wall paintings in local dialects not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal of surroundings but also conveyed empowering messages such as "vote for sure" and "my vote can't be purchased." Through various means, including navigating dense forests and waterways, enthusiastic voters ensured their participation in the Lok

SC reserves verdict on whether private properties can be termed material resources of community

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Anine-judge Supreme Court bench reserved its verdict on Wednesday on a vexed legal question that whether private properties can be considered "material resources of the community" under Article 39(b) of the Constitution and consequently, taken over by State authorities to subserve the "common good".

The question is being dealt with by the Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud. The bench is hearing 16 petitions, including the lead petition filed by the Mumbai-based Property Owners' Association (POA) in 1992.

The POA has vehemently opposed Chapter VIII-A of the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) Act. Inserted in

1986, the chapter empowers state authorities to acquire cessed buildings and the land on which those are built if 70 per cent of the occupants make such a request for restoration purposes.
The MHADA Act was enact-

ed in pursuance of Article 39(b) of the Constitution, which is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), and makes it obligatory for the State to create a policy towards securing "that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good".

The state government, represented in the court by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, said the MHADA provisions are protected by 31C of the Article Constitution, which was inserted by the 25th



Amendment Act of 1971 with an intention to protect laws giving effect to certain DPSPs. "...No law giving effect to the policy of the State towards securing all or any of the principles laid down in Part IV (DPSP) shall be deemed to be void on the ground that it is inconsistent with, or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by Article 14 or Article 19 and no law con-

taining a declaration that it is for giving effect to such policy shall be called in question in any court on the ground that it does not give effect to such policy...," Article 31C

The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, B V Nagarathna, Sudhanshu Dhulia, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Rajesh Bindal, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih, reserved its verdict after hearing the arguments put forward by several lawyers, including Attorney General R Venkataramani and Mehta. The POA and others have challenged Chapter VIII-A of the Act, claiming that the provisions of the chapter discriminate against the owners and attempt to dispossess

The lead plea was filed by the POA in 1992 and it was thrice

referred to larger benches of five and seven judges, before being referred to a nine-judge bench on February 20, 2002. Mumbai is a densely-populated city with old, dilapidated buildings that house ten-ants despite having become unsafe due to a lack of repairs. In order to repair and restore these buildings, the MHADA Act, 1976 imposes a cess on its occupants that is paid to the Mumbai Building Repair and Reconstruction Board (MBRRB), which oversees the repair and reconstruction of

these "cessed buildings". There are around 13,000 cessed buildings in Mumbai that need restoration or reconstruction.

However, their redevelopment is often delayed due to differences between the tenants or between the owners and the tenants on appointing

BJP invites political parties from ten countries to witness Lok Sabha polls

PNS NEW DELHI

Representatives of 18 political parties from 10 countries will interact with a host of BJP leaders, including party president J P Nadda and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, during their visit to India on the ruling party's invitation to get a first-hand experience of the Lok Sabha

top poll authority. In fact, in

the last two years since he has

been at the helm of electoral

affairs, Kumar has been

emphasising on a greater par-

ticipation of the PVTGs in the

electoral process, the EC offi-

Kumar has personally direct-

ed the state chief electoral

officers and district election

officers concerned to make

polls.
The BJP said the foreign leaders will also be given insights into the party's election campaign and will be briefed about its strategies and the overall electoral process. They will meet Nadda on Wednesday and also interact with Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Australia's Liberal Party, Vietnam's Communist Party of Vietnam, Bangladesh's Awami



League, Israel's Likud Party, Uganda's National Resistance Movement, Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi, and Russia's United Russia Party are among the political parties whose representatives are visiting India. Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna and United National Party from Sri Lanka, Militant Socialist Movement, Mauritius Labour Party, Mauritian Militant Movement and Parti Mauricien Social Democrate from Mauritius, and Nepali Congress, Janamat Party, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Rashtriya Swatantra Party from Nepal are among other parties visiting

CBI searches 30 locations in HPZ Token App fraudulent scheme case

PNS NEW DELHI

The CBI has searched 30 locations across 10 States and Union Territories after registering a case in a fraudulent investment scheme linked to the HPZ Token App, officials said Wednesday.

The agency has alleged the

scheme involved misleading the public to invest in nonexistent crypto-currency mining machine rentals. The nationwide operation ended Tuesday night. Two private companies, Shigoo Technology Private Limited and Lillian Technocab Private Limited, along with their directors were booked in the case under Indian Penal Code Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) 419, 420 (cheating) and Section 66 D of Information Technology Act, 2000, officials

The CBI seized digital devices,



accounts, during the searches spread across Delhi-NCR, Jodhpur in Rajasthan, Mumbai in Maharashtra, Bengaluru in Karnataka as well as locations in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. "The HPZ is an app-based token which promises users large gains by investing in mining machines for Bitcoin and other crypto currencies. including laptops, mobile phones, ATM and debit cards a modus operandi that entited The fraudsters allegedly used besides a trove of email victims to invest in the HPZ ment on Wednesday.

token app on the pretext of astronomical returns on their investments in Bitcoin mining, the CBI alleged.

The probe in the case so far has unearthed 150 bank accounts related to the accused used to collect funds from investors. "These funds were initially used for payouts to build trust, before being illicitly trans-ferred out of India, often converted into cryptocurrency or moved through Hawala transactions," the CBI said in a state-

Maximum temperature in May likely above normal: IMD

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

 $S_{\text{of escalating temperatures}}^{\text{ignalling the troubling trend}}$ across vast swathes of the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted abovenormal maximum temperatures for the upcoming month of May in most regions.

Particular implications will be felt on the northern plains, central areas, and adjoining parts of peninsular India. This forecast deviates from the usual pattern, as normally, northern plains, central India, and adjoining areas of peninsular India experience around three days of heat wave in May, said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of the IMD.He issued a warning about upcoming weather patterns, raising concerns for public welfare and environmental stability.

The IMD chief said, "around 8-11 heat wave days are likely over south Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Gujarat



region are expected to see around 8-11 heat wave days in May...The remaining parts of Rajasthan, east Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and some parts of Chhattisgarh, interior Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, north interior Karnataka and Telangana may record five-seven heat wave days in the month."

However, above normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country in May, except most parts of northeast India, some parts of northwest and central India and adjoining areas of northeast peninsular India where normal to below normal maximum temperatures are likely, the IMD Head said at a press

conference here.

Specifically, he highlighted that the northern plains, central region, and adjoining areas of peninsular India are likely to experience a significantly high number of heat wave days. The IMD also said that except for most parts of northeast India, some parts of northwest and central India, and adjoining areas of northeast peninsular India, where normal to below normal maximum temperatures are likely, above normal maximum temperatures are expected over most parts of

the country in May.

Mohapatra attributed the prolonged heat wave spell experienced over east and south peninsular India in April to the absence of thunderstorms and persisting anticyclone at lower levels over the west central Bay of Bengal and the adjoining eastern coasts of

Actress Rupali Ganguly joins BJP

India. This weather pattern caused the sea breeze to be cut off over Odisha and West Bengal on most days.

India recorded an average maximum temperature of 31 degrees Celsius in April, the second highest since 1901. Additionally, the average minimum temperature in April in east and northeast India was the highest since 1901, according to the IMD.

Mohapatra also highlighted a concerning trend of abovenormal maximum temperatures becoming more frequent over south peninsular İndia since the 1980s. He pointed out that the number of heat wave days in April was the highest in 15 years in Gangetic West Bengal and nine years in Odisha. Odisha also experienced its longest heat wave spell (16 days) in April since 2016. These observations underscore the increasing severity and frequency of heat waves, which have significant implications for public health, agriculture, and the environ-

Congress asks Modi to clear stance on removal of reservation cap

PNS NEW DELHI

Congress on Wednesday
asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clear his stance on whether he will remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

Former Union minister Jairam Ramesh said the Congress manifesto guarantees that it will pass a constitutional amendment to raise the 50 per cent cap on reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs but Modi is trying to give it a "communal colour".

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, the Congress chief spokesman alleged that the BJP is "talking about '400 paar' to get the right to change the Constitution as the BJP and the RSS are against secularism and social justice". "The Congress guarantees that it will pass a constitu- because it is being attacked.



50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs," he said.

"I want to ask the prime minister, who wants to give a communal colour to our Nvav Patra and wants to mislead, that will he remove the cap of 50 pc reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs," Ramesh said. He said Rahul Gandhi is holding a copy of the Constitution in his hand at public meetings

"First the prime minister's economic advisor talked about it (changing the Constitution), then many candidates and MPs also stated this. Today I want to say that this is not the first time BJP and RSS have given a 'samvidhan badlo' slogan, it has been the demand of the RSS since 1949 that there is a need to change the Constitution," Ramesh said, holding a copy of the Constitution.

He quoted a speech by B R Ambedkar on November 25, 1949, in which he had said, 'The task of the Drafting Committee would have been a very difficult one if this Constituent Assembly has been merely a motley crowd, a tessellated pavement without cement, a black stone here and a white stone there is which each member or each group was a law unto itself. There would have been nothing but chaos."

"This possibility of chaos was reduced to nil by the existence of the Congress Party inside the Assembly which brought into its proceedings a sense of order and discipline. It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge as to the fate of each article and each amendment. The Congress Party is, therefore, entitled to all the credit for the smooth sailing of the Draft Constitution in the Assembly," Ambedkar was quoted as saying by Ramesh. Ramesh then went on to quote an article that he claimed was published in the RSS-linked publication Organiser on November 30,

"The worst about the new Constitution of Bharat is that there is nothing Bharatiya about it. The drafters of the Constitution have incorporated in it elements of British, American, Canadian, Swiss sundry other Constitutions... Manu's Laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of

"To this day, his laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti, excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity.

But to our constitutional pun-

dits that means nothing," he

quoted the article as saying.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

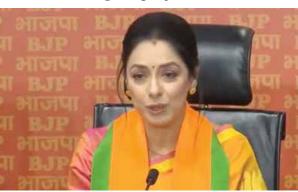
NEW DELHI

TV actor Rupali Ganguly, I famous for her roles in TV serials such as Sarabhai vs Sarabhai and Anupamaa, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party here on Wednesday ahead of the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

Along with Ganguly, Ameya Joshi, a social worker and astrologer from Maharashtra, also joined the BJP at the party headquarters in the presence of senior leaders including national general secretary Vinod Tawde and national media department in-charge Anil Baluni.

Tawde welcomed Ganguly and Joshi into the party fold and used the opportunity to attack the opposition parties over Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Maria Alam's appeal for "vote jihad".

Alam, while seeking votes for the INDIA bloc's candidate



from Farrukhabad Lok Sabha seat, called for a "vote jihad," saying it was necessary in the current situation for the minority community to dislodge the BIP from power.

Responding to the SP leader's remarks, Tawde said, "The Opposition, which has been spreading lies, has now started a 'vote jihad' campaign. This shows they are rattled."

He added, "On the one hand they are giving OBC reservation to Muslims, on the other they are talking about 'vote jihad' during elections." Tawde asked Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and

party leader Rahul Gandhi if the "campaign" was started on the instruction of the party high command.

Addressing the press conference, both Ganguly and Joshi said they have joined the BJP to work for the progress of the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Scare visits schools

A bomb threat directed at nearly 100 schools in Delhi-NCR serves as a wake-up call for all of us

mid an unanticipated cloud of fear, nearly 100 schools in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) sent students home early Wednesday upon receiving a bomb threat via email. The police conducted thorough searches, but found nothing suspicious. The scare has sent shockwaves through the community, leaving parents, educators and students grappling with a harrowing reality: The threat of terror is no longer a distant concern but a chilling presence in our midst. The sanctity of schools, once regarded as a safe haven for learning and growth, has been compromised. As we confront this sobering reality, it is imperative that we do not succumb to despair but unite in resilience and resolve. Foremost, we must commend the swift response of school authorities and law enforcement agencies in addressing these threats. Their coordinated efforts have undoubtedly helped reassure people. More importantly, our intelligence agencies need to put their act together; they are the ones who should have seen it com-



ing. We do not have enough specific information to process at the moment and no clue about the intention or the identity of the perpetrator(s); we don't know if it was a real threat or just a mischievous element playing mind games, but such threats cannot be taken lightly, especially when human lives are at risk. The threat emails, reportedly emanating from a Russian IP address, were well-planned and coordinated. Shooting in the US schools is rather rampant; Indian schools are much safer and should stay that way. All we have to do is be vigilant.

Also, this small win should not lull us into complacency. We must remain vigilant and proactive in fortifying the security infrastructure of our educational institutions. Beyond bolstering physi-

cal security, we must also invest in fostering a culture of vigilance and preparedness within our school communities. Educators play a pivotal role in equipping students with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to potential threats. Empowering students with safety protocols and encouraging open dialogue can go a long way in mitigating the impact of terror-induced anxiety. It is equally important that we address the root causes of such terror acts. Socio-economic disparities, marginalisation and ideological extremism often serve as fertile breeding grounds for radicalisation. By addressing these underlying issues through comprehensive social policies and inclusive education, we can strive towards building a more resilient and harmonious society. It is equally important to remain calm and not panic. In times of crisis, it is easy to succumb to fear and division. However, we must remember that our strength lies in our unity and resilience. Now more than ever, we must stand in solidarity with one another, refusing to be cowed by the forces of terror. Together, we can create a future where every child can pursue their education without fear and where schools are not battlegrounds but beacons of hope and enlightenment.



Participants during a State-level bullock cart race at Thegur, in Chikkamagaluru

Democracy, economics and governance

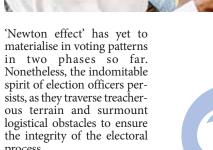


The confluence of elections, electioneering and the economy demands meticulous examination and rethinking to make the system work flawlessly

s India goes ahead with its 18th General Elections, the nation finds itself at a crossroads of democracy, economics and governance. The elections, spanning 44 days from April 19 to June 1, are poised to be the lengthiest in Indian history, reflecting both the enormity of the task at hand and the significance of the decisions to be made. Against the backdrop of a burgeoning economy, evolving political landscapes and pressing social challenges, the intersection of elections, electioneering and the economy warrants scrutiny. The magnitude of election expenditures provides a glimpse into the economic dynamics surrounding the electoral process. According to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), the anticipated expenditure for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is staggering, surpassing Rs 1.35 lakh crore. This figure, more than double the amount spent in 2019, indicates to the monumental scale of electoral spending in the world's largest democ-

With a projected voter base of 96.6 crore, the per-voter spending is estimated at around Rs 1,400, signifying both the financial investment and the democratic imperative of ensuring widespread participation. However, it's orth noting that the Election Commission's expenditure is expected to constitute only a fraction of the total outlay, pointing towards the diverse economic activities spurred by the elec-

The Election Commission tirelessly strives to facilitate universal suffrage across the nation. Recognising the pivotal role of public figures in shaping civic consciousness, the Commission enlisted the famed actor Rajkumar Rao as its 'national icon' to galvanise youth engagement and voter turnout as the country approaches the general elections. o's portraval of a dedicated poll officer in the acclaimed film 'Newton,' a poignant exploration of electoral challenges in a Naxalaffected region, resonated deeply with young voters. However, despite the cinematic depiction of electoral fervour, the anticipated



Electioneering acts as a catalyst for various sectors of the economy, fostering growth and employment opportunities across the spectrum. From hospitality and transportation to textiles and advertising, the ripple effects of political campaigns are palpable. As political parties vie for voter attention, rallies, events and promotional activities proliferate, injecting vitality into local economies and stimulating demand for goods and services. Moreover, the advent of digital campaigning has revolutionised the electoral landscape, with professional agencies employed to enhance brand visibility and engagement. The economic dividends of such strategies are evident, as digital platforms emerge as potent tools for political communication and mobilisation.

Amidst the fervour of electoral competition, political manifestos serve as blueprints for



ELECTIONEERING ACTS AS A CATALYST FOR VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, FOSTERING GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT **OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE** SPECTRUM

governance, delineating policy priorities and economic agendas. The contrasting visions articulated by major political parties underscore the divergent approaches to addressing pressing socio-eco-nomic challenges.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), buoyed by its track record and incumbent status, advocates for policy continuity and fiscal consolidation. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on infrastructure development and economic reforms, a BJPmajority Government is poised to prioritise private investment and fiscal prudence, thereby fostering economic stability and growth. Conversely, the Indian National Congress or INDI Block champions a progressive agenda focused on job creation, social welfare and agrarian reforms. Proposals such as Government-led employment initiatives, minimum support inclusive growth and equitable development.

While political rhetoric often dominates electoral discourse, the economic imperatives transcending partisan lines merit attention. Issues such as

water scarcity, climate change and unemployment pose formidable challenges to India's socio-economic fabric, necessitating concerted action beyond the electoral cycle. The water crisis in cities like Bengaluru serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for sustainable resource management and climate resilience. Yet, the conspicuous absence of these issues from political manifestos is very disheartening. There is an urgent need for non-partisan dialogue and policy discourse on environmental sustainability and socio-economic resilience.

As India embarks on its electoral journey, the confluence of elections, electioneering and the economy offers both opportunities and challenges. While the democratic process catalyses economic activity and political discourse, the imperatives of inclusive and sustainable development tranprice guarantees and education scend electoral cycles. By tranloan waivers underpin the scending electoral exigencies Alliance's commitment to and embracing a shared vision of progress, India can realise its aspirations for a vibrant democracy and a prosperous future for all.

(The author is Delhi-based senior journalist. Views *expressed are personal*)

of key political figures underscores the urgency

of addressing misinformation. Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's acknowledgement of this

issue highlights the importance of responsible

information sharing in the digital age. However,

the entanglement of political parties in this web

with the Delhi Police's actions, signals a cru-

cial step towards accountability. Yet, the broad-

of deceit further exacerbates the situation. The involvement of law enforcement, as seen

Post-poll path for infra financing!



VINOD BAHL

Modi 3.0 plans to bolster infrastructure creation post-election by expanding the infrastructure financing ecosystem

T n the interim budget for FY25, infrastructure L outlay was increased by 11.1 per cent to 11.11 lakh crore, including Rs 2.78 lakh crore for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and Rs 2.55 lakh crore for the Railway Ministry. Post-poll, the plan for a full-fledged budget for FY25 will look to raise Rs 25000 crore of finance through green bonds - higher than Rs 20000 crore raised through green bonds in FY24.

That going ahead private investment will be a big driver of infrastructure development, is evident from the National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) plan to raise USD 1 billion for its second Private Markets Fund (PMF). The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is likely to invest nearly USD 125 million. NIIF manages over USD4.9 billion of equity capital commitments across its four funds-Master Fund, PMF, Strategic Opportunities

raise a whopping Rs 60,000 crore in FY 25 through monetisation of Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) highways and NHAI InvIT. In FY 24, Rs 38334 crore was raised from ToT, InvIT and project-based financing. It is significant to mention that under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), an ambitious target of raising Rs 1.08 lakh crore has been fixed for FY25. The share of privately funded highways in the overall award of projects in FY25 is expected to meet the Government's target of 10

MoRTH had a healthy award project pipeline of over Rs 45,000 crore as of March 2024. Following the Government's push for private participation in high-ÌRB ways, Infra Development has committed to invest 10000-12000 crore in FY25, to add road capacity through Build Operate Transfer (BOT) mode. The recent modification in concession agreements, according to IRB, Further, the central per cent. NHAI has drawn Government is putting into Fund and India-Japan up a plan to develop 53 list-ed highways worth Rs 1.2 large portion of NHAI's Rs The MoRTH is looking to trillion through BOT. The 3.4 trillion debt within 5

years. This will free up NHAI's resources for development in the highways

The energy sector is getting a big green private investment boost. REC Limited, a leader in the power sector in India has availed a SACE-covered green loan for JPY 60.536 billion to finance eligible green projects. In the power sector, besides the airport, Adani Enterprises is firming up its plans to plough USD 1 billion into these businesses. It is in advanced talks with several investors in the US and Europe to raise USD 1 billion for its Solar Panel business and Mumbai Airport. The company, which is enhancing its focus on green energy, raised USD 750 million through bonds in 2022.

The investors and Indian corporates engaged in infrastructure development has bolstered investors' con- are banking on political fidence by enhancing the and policy continuity for bankability of projects. the fructification of the ambitious plan for infra financing push.

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

DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

Madam — Apropos the news article, 'Man gets life imprisonment for murdering teenage Indian wife in London," published on April 30, this is my response. The news of Sahil Sharma's sentencing for the murder of his wife, Mehak Sharma, is a heartbreaking reminder of the devastating consequences of domestic violence. The brutal act not only robbed Mehak's family of a beloved daughter but also shattered their sense of security and left them grappling with irreparable grief.

The fact that the tragedy unfolded within the confines of their own home, supposedly a place of safety, adds another layer of horror to the ordeal. Mehak's mother's poignant statement encapsulates the profound anguish and emptiness left in the wake of such a senseless loss. While the legal proceedings may offer some semblance of justice, they can never fully assuage the pain inflicted upon the victim's loved ones. It serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for greater awareness, support and intervention in cases of domestic violence to prevent similar tragedies

in the future. Aadhya Chawla | Chandigarh

GLOBAL IMPACT OF BHARAT

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Covid handling changed world's perception of India: EAM," published on April 30, this is my response. India's growth trajectory under the spotlight! External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reflects on India's changing perception abroad, citing COVID management and Chandrayaan-3 as game-changers. He highlights how decisions made domestically resonate globally, showcasing India's significance on the world stage. From bringing citizens home dur-Indian passport, India's actions garner international attention.

Jaishankar underlines India's technological prowess and socio-economic that initiates and sustains all life.

Technological deception

E EDITO



propos the news article, "Telangana CM summoned in Shah fake video case," published on April 30, this is my response. In today's complex political landscape, technology's role in shaping narratives is undeniable. The recent controversy surrounding doctored videos

er implications of such manipulation on societal harmony cannot be overstated. Platforms like 'X' and social media giants must cooperate fully in identifying and curbing the spread of fake content. Ultimately, restoring trust in our democratic processes necessitates collective vigilance and decisive action against those seeking to sow discord through technological Arya Sundaram | Chennai

advancements, attracting global interest in investment and exploration. The narrative shifts from India being a concern to being a source of support, showcasing its resilience and diplomatic agility. With a focus on domestic performance, Jaishankar emphasises infrastructure development and socio-political systems, which captivate foreign fascination. India's journey from a developing nation to a global player exemplifies its potential and allure on the international stage, echoing the sentiment that Bharat indeed matters. Kabir Oberoi | Mumbai

DIVINE SYMBOLISM UNVEILED

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Astroturf | Mother calls for full alert against evil forces," published on April 28, this is my response. The intricate symbolism of the goddess's accessories ing crises to enhancing the value of the reveals profound insights into the cosmic order and human existence. The conch shell, echoing the primal sound of creation, signifies the source energy

Meanwhile, the lotus flower, emerging from murky waters unstained, embodies purity and detachment amid creation's diversity. The goddess's eight weapons, contrasted with her two creative symbols, underscore the perpetual struggle against malevolent forces. This juxtaposition reflects the omnipresence and potency of negativity, urging constant vigilance and defensive action.

Demons, depicted in surreal forms, serve as metaphors for internal and external threats, reminding us of the deceptive allure and insidious nature of evil. In essence, the divine imagery prompts contemplation on the balance between constructive creativity and vigilant defence in navigating life's complexities. It emphasises the importance of spiritual awareness and moral integrity in combating adversities while upholding the cosmic order.

Devansh Khatri | Jaipur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION CAN TRANSFORM SOCIETY

It's high time to introduce spiritual learning to save our future generations



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

Il of us daily read, in newspapers, about one or the other major A problem causing grave suffering to a large segment of society or mankind as a whole. These problems are classified as economic, social, political, racial, administrative, etc. and attempts are made to find solutions to them from the respective areas of human knowledge. The unjust treatment of industrial or farm labour, unfair treatment of undertrials, bride-burning, ill-treatment of women, inhuman treatment because of racial prejudices or casteism, bonded labour and abject poverty are only some problems on the long list, the top of which is the problem of armament race that threatens the very existence of humankind.

Economic and social reforms, diplomatic negotiations, political declarations and legal enactments are only some of the measures that have been adopted to solve these and other problems over the years. Even such an august body as the U.N. also has addressed itself to some of these problems through its various organs. Though all these various efforts have borne some fruit, the problems at the core remain unsolved and there has been no satisfactory and lasting solution to resolve them. The question, therefore, remains: "What are these problems due to and how can these be solved or eliminated?"

A thorough analysis would lead us to the conclusion that all these problems are directly and indirectly caused by the absence or lack of goodwill or good motives. People generally lay emphasis on creative intelligence, scientific development, courage and life full of pleasures but, it is usually forgotten that, if there is no good motive, science and intelligence may be used to promote means of mutual destruction, courage may be employed for killing and pleasures may be gained in evil ways. Hardly is it realised that if there were goodwill towards all, there would be no armament race, no racial prejudice, no bride-burning, no exploitation, no poverty and no injustice to the labour class, for goodwill is the very antithesis of all these



Without goodwill, conferences end in bickerings, assemblies achieve nothing, resolutions are considered mere scraps of paper, economic remedies cannot prove effective and legal acts or social reforms cannot bring the desired change. The second factor essential to solving the problems of mankind is to consider the inherent worth of human personality. We must realise that every human individual is to be reverted and is not to be treated as a means for the gratification of the desires of another. No one has to be degraded, for another person's benefit, to the level of material goods and chattels or machines and tools or dolls and playthings but has to be regarded as a person. If this principle of giving respect to every being is applied in our daily lives, there would be no slavery, no bonded labour, no exploitation of the working class, no poverty, no brideburning and no ill-treatment of one by the other based on the difference in race, religion or caste.

The ultimate and lasting solution of problems lies, without doubt, in education that develops these two qualities in men and women and such an education cannot but be moral and spiritual. Trillions and Billions are spent every year by various Governments and non-Governmental agencies on solving social, economic, political, administrative and other problems without achieving the goal of ending exploitation of all sorts and thus ending class conflict, conflict, family conflict and other kinds of conflicts. This is mainly because we only talk of conflict resolution without real and practical moral and spiritual education. It's high time that the Governments and the people in power realise this and seriously do something about it & save our future generations from devastation.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

Plug leakages in fertiliser subsidy



UTTAM GUPTA

The real reason behind the leakage is control of the MRP at an artificially low level. Dubious players have a huge incentive to divert and rake in the moolah



s part of the 100-day agenda of Modi 3.0, the Government intends to administer fertiliser subsidies more effectively and cut down on leakages and diversions to build on the success of neem-coated urea. It intends to conduct a pilot in a few districts on a modified version of the direct benefit transfer (DBT) that seeks to establish a linkage between the land holding of a farmer and nutrient consumption. A proposal in this regard mooted in 2020 is being resurrected. To make urea - a widely used fertiliser that supplies primary nutrient nitrogen or 'N' and constitutes nearly half of India's total fertiliser consumption - affordable to farmers, the Union Government controls its maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level unrelated to the cost of production/import and distribution, which is much higher. The excess cost over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer/importer as a subsidy which varies from unit to unit depending on its cost. The MRP of urea is kept unchanged (today's price is more or less the same as in 2002) even as all cost escalations are absorbed by raising the subsidy.

In the case of fertilisers supplying phosphate or 'P' and potash or 'K' which constitute the other half (call them non-urea fertilisers), there is a 'uniform' subsidy on a per nutrient basis for all manufacturers under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme. They are free to fix MRP but need to reduce it to the extent of subsidy. Even as the subsidy remains unchanged, rising costs mean ever-increasing MRPs. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DoAC) - in consultation with states - assesses the requirement of fertilisers for each cropping season - kharif (April to September) and rabi (October to

The Department of Fertilisers (DoF) prepares an agreed supply plan to cover all the urea requirements from domestic production and import. The states allocate all of the urea arrivals and track disbursal up to the district level.

The DoF has developed a mobile and a web application - a mobile Fertiliser Monitoring System (m-FMS) that provides information

ARE INHERENT IN ADMINISTRATION OF FERTILISER SUBSIDIES IS DESIGNED. THE GOVERNMENT ASKS MANUFACTURERS TO SELL FERTILISER AT A LOW PRICE — A PRICE IT THINKS FARMERS CAN

FUNDAMENTAL

LEVEL, LEAKAGES

on stock, sale and receipt of fertilisers till the last retail point. The total expenditure on fertiliser subsidy on both urea and non-urea fertilisers put together - is around Rs 200,000 crore annually. Now, when the Government talks of leakage and diversion, we are reminded of the Economic Survey 2015-16 which said as much as 24 per cent of the subsidy is spent on inefficient producers, 41 per cent is diverted to non-agricultural uses including smuggling to neighbouring countries and 24 per cent is consumed by larger, presumably richer farmers. That leaves a tiny 11 per cent going to small and marginal farmers who constitute the vast majority i.e. nearly 86 per cent of the total number of farmers.

At a fundamental level, leakages are inherent in the way the administra-THE WAY THE tion of fertiliser subsidies is manufacturers conditional upon data - on land holding, crops designed. The Government asks manufacturers to sell fertiliser at a low price - a price it thinks farmers can afford. Having sold at this price, the latter claims from the former an amount equal to the excess of the cost of supply over it as a sub-sidy. The subsidy could have been given to the farmer directly say, by depositing the money in her bank account. But, for decades, successive Governments have preferred to route it through manufacturers. Having to deal with a handful of manufacturers instead of crores of farmers (that would have been the case if the subsidy were to be given to them directly), they have found this arrangement convenient. But, there is a big negative to it. Since the subsidy is embodied in the MRP (albeit low), the subsidised fertiliser product must reach the farmer and be used only for growing the crop. If it doesn't reach, then the benefit of subsidy is enjoyed by the person who grabs it.

After leaving the factory or the port (in case of imported stuff), fertilis-

ers travel a long distance moving by rails/roads to reach storage points in the district and further movement to retail outlets for sale to the farmers. In the initial years of the fertiliser pricing and subsidy scheme (it was introduced in 1977 for urea and

turers were given the bulk of the subsidy on the 'dispatch' of the material from the factory. In due course, the Government shifted to disbursing 95 per cent of the subsidy to urea producers and 85 per cent to producers of nonurea 'on receipt of material at a district's railhead point/approved

godown' (balance 5 per cent/15 per

1980 for other fertilisers), manufac-

cent was paid on confirmation of sales to farmers by states). In March 2018, the Government challenge. made disbursal of subsidies to The Government will need to have actual sales to farmers and these getting registered on point-of-sale (PoS) machines. But, this by itself offers no guarantee as a diversion can still happen at the retail level all the more because anybody - including non-farmers - can buy any quantity through PoS machines. All that he needs to do is to furnish his

unique identity or Aadhaar num-

Meanwhile, in 2015, the Government issued an order mandating all manufacturers/importers to neem-coat all of the urea supplies. The logic was simple. Upon neem coating, it is rendered unfit for use in chemical industries; hence the manufacturers/dealers will have no incentive to divert. But, this would happen only when coating is done. This is where the rub lies. Policing of a mammoth quantity across the length and breadth of the country is well-nigh impos-

Now, apart from barring nonfarmers from purchasing subsidised fertilisers, the Government wants to link the purchase of fertilisers with the size of the land the farmer owns. The motive behind this is to make sure that her purchase is capped at the quantum required for growing the crop only; and that she doesn't get away with excess and make money from selling at a much higher price (albeit for industrial use). The farmers' land/crop data will be loaded on her biometric card. When she goes to the retailer to purchase her requirement for the season, the PoS machine will register the number of fertiliser bags that correspond to the data embedded in the card.

The retailer will deliver this number, not what she demands orally. The idea has massive appeal. But, making it work poses a daunting

grown nutrient status of the soil etc on over 140 million farm households. Apart from ensuring 'full coverage, it will have to focus on the 'accuracy' of the data as well the 'accuracy' of the calculation as any incorrect figure or miscalculation could result in either shortfall or excess delivery of bags. Further, this data has to be updated on real realtime basis to account for the impact of changes in the weather/rainfall on fertiliser requirements. This apart, the Government is missing the woods for the tree.

The real reason behind leakage is control of the MRP at an artificially low level. When urea sells at onetenth the cost of supplying it, dubious players have a huge incentive to divert and rake in a moolah. They will do every bit to circumvent the rules resulting in the misuse of subsidies. The way forward is to end control on fertiliser prices and let the subsidy be given 'directly' to the farmers using DBT mode.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

The idea of rotating PMs is as ridiculous as it is impractical

INDIA bloc leaders face sharp criticism for it and are cautioned against the perilous consequences of such a move

eaders of INDI Alliance who are struggling to ✓save secularism, pluralism and the Constitution from the shackles of Fascist, Communalist and BJP should bear in mind that Indians are not village idiots. The move to have a new Prime Minister every year for the five-year tenure of the next Lok Sabha is a sure recipe for disaster. One is at a loss for words to explain what would happen to this country in the eventuality of M K Stalin, Supriya Sule, Mamata Akhilesh Yadav and Tejaswi Yadav become Prime Minister even for one day. The post of Indian Prime Minister is not something that could be



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

cians who do not have any links with the grassroots-level electorate of the country. Indira Gandhi, who ruled the country for almost 15 years Banerjee, Mallikarjun was a creation of the media Kharge/Rahul Gandhi, and she had an edge over othwas a creation of the media ers because she was a woman.

There was a more competent woman at that time and her name was Tarkeshwari Sinha. The modern Indian history, played around as per the whims and fancies of politiLeft historians may not have

much information about the lady, a postgraduate in economics from the London School of Economics who rose through the Congress cadre and became the deputy finance minister of the country during the tenure of Jawaharlal Nehru. Sinha had no political godfathers and it was almost certain that she would have reached the top position if she had not earned the wrath of the Royal Family of New Delhi. Even Indira Gandhi was not free from basic human natures like jealousy and inferiority complex. Sinha was the glamour girl of yesteryears and was at home in Hindi and Queen's English. With the passing away of Nehru, Sinha was left all alone and there was no one to prop up the lady who stood for free

enterprises while the Nehruvians were pontificating mixed economy and socialism and crony capitalism. Many leaders in the undivided Congress party were the right persons for the top job. Over the decades, the Congress disintegrated and degenerated and the likes of Devkant Barooah and Arjun Singh emerged as power brokers and wheeler-dealers. We had Pranab Mukherjee, a politician and gentleman, whose erudition and leadership qualities were heads and shoulders above others.

But top leadership never trust-ed or liked Mukherjee, Madhava Rao Scindia, Rajesh Pilot or Jeetendra Prasada who were all right people for the right job. Congress became weaker by the day and the

Grand Old Party ended up as a doormat for the likes of the DMK, RJD, AAP and even a letterhead organisation by the name of MDMK and its leader Vayyapuri Gopala Samy (Vaiko). Before the 1990s, Congress used to dictate terms to the above-mentioned outfits regarding the seats it would allocate to them. Now it is the other way round. Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family would decide the number of seats to be contested by the GOP from Bihar while the Samajwadi Party leaders would have the last word in the seats to be contested by it.

The roadshow held by Rahul Gandhi at Wayanad as a precursor to his filing nomination was a harbinger of the annihilation of the Congress Party. Rahul Gandhi, the

great-grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru who described the Muslim League as a dead horse in 1952, was forced not to display the party flag throughout the rally or even when he filed the nomination papers. That was the price dictated by the Sultans of Malappuram and the scion of Congress Party had no other option other than accepting their condition. One is reminded of the great

Malayalam novel Oru Deshathinte Katha (The Story of a Locale) written in 1971 by S K Pottekkat. This autobiographical novel was honoured with the Jnanapeetha Award in 1982 and remains one of the ten best novels written in Malayalam. This novel tells the story of Sreedharan and the village Athiranippadam where

he grew up. One of the characters in this great work is Kunhikkelu Melan, a scion of the Kelancherry Family, the locale's biggest and most powerful clan. This family-owned thousands of hectares of land, many hills, mountains and even forests. Kunhikelu Melan, born with a silver spoon in his mouth squandered the entire property for wine and women. When he was left with nothing other than the castle of Kelancherry, he started selling the doors and windows of the ancestral home to meet the expenses for his sundowners. "Doors and windows are installed to save the house from robbers and dacoits. If there is nothing valuable in the house, what is the use of doors and windows," Melan told the villagers when he was asked

why he was selling off the chat-

India needs a good, sincere and honest leader and we are willing to accept dictatorship to a certain level. Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, who enjoyed limitless power did not end up as despots. Richard Nixon, Margaret Thatcher, Charles De Gaulle, Francois Mitterrand and even Fidel Castro were loved by our Opposition leaders despite the aversion of these leaders to democracy and secularism. A politician should aspire for power. There is nothing abnormal in it. But he should have the ability and capability to occupy that position.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

BJP, Bengal do not match in Better to vote for BJP than TMC wavelength, claims Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

The BJP can never come to power in Bengal because its wavelength do not match that of the State, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said comparing the BJP national leadership with migratory birds who had no understanding of the State's cultural ethos and who only wanted to win votes by playing the communal card. "Bengal and BJP are not a

good match as their wavelength is completely different from ours. While we uphold our culture & tradition, the migratory birds from Delhi do nothing but spread lies on Bengal, in Bengal," Banerjee

The Chief Minister who later held an election meeting in Malda said that a culturally awakened and evolved Bengal was beyond communalism and would not fall in BJP's traps. Apparently doing what she has been accusing the BJP of doing the Chief Minister tried to play on the Muslim's fear of National Citizenship Register, politics in the State while



and Uniform Civil Code saying, "Bengal will never vote for engineers of the Gujarat riots and for those who killed hundreds of people in the anti-NRC movement in Delhi ... many bodies were thrown in the rivers and were never to be recovered," she said much the way she had accused the Left during the Nandigram movement of cutting the protesters and throwing them in the Haldi River.

Apart from lambasting the saffron outfit for playing a divisive Citizenship Amendment Act depriving its people of their

rightful wages by stopping the central funds meant for the MNREGA and housing schemes, the Chief Minister attacked the Election Commission too for allegedly fiddling with the Electronic

Voting Machines. Saying that the ECI should act honestly Banerjee asked, "how is it that the polling percentage goes up at once by six percent ... hence it is the duty of the ECI to ensure a fair play."

Meanwhile in a major development indicative of infighting within the party the TMC on Wednesday removed powerful

leader Kunal Ghosh from the post of general secretary after he jointly attended a blood donation programme with North Kolkata BJP candidate Tapas Roy. Roy a founder member of the TMC, a former Bengal minister and a sitting MLA had a month ago left his party to join the saffron outfit.
The TMC in a press statement said that, "Recently, Mr. Kunal Ghosh has been expressing gripsys that do not align with views that do not align with those of the party. It is important to clarify that these are his personal opinions and should not be attributed to the party. Only statements issued from AITC headquarters should be considered the official position

of the party." Ghosh had earlier been relieved from his role as party spokesperson.

When asked as to comment on the latest development Ghosh said he had not done anything wrong. "My action only upheld the culture of political courtesy," he said.

When asked as to whether he would quit his party he said he was not thinking of quitting immediately.

says Bengal Congress president Adhir

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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m n}$ what has startled the political fraternity Bengal Congress president Adhir Chowhdury has said that in Bengal it was better to vote for the BJP than to vote for the Trinamool Congress.

While both the TMC and BIP went to town interpreting Chowdhury to their own advantage the Pradesh Congress leadership demanded his statement to be read in its true context.

Chowdhury earlier campaigning for CPI(M) leader Md Salim told a rally that it was necessary for the Left and the Congress to win in order to save the Indian secular fabric and as there was no difference between the BJP and the TMC it was better to vote for the former than to vote for Mamata Banerjee's outfit.

"It is time people understand that only the Congress and the Left can save Indian secularism and democracy ... the TMC which is claiming to fight the BJP is actually handin-gloves with that party ... as there is no difference between them and as TMC means BJP and BJP means TMC it is better then, to vote for the BJP instead of voting for the

TMC," Chowdhury said. His statement came a day after Mamata Banerjee said that the Congress and the Left were helping the BJP in Bengal insofar as they were slicing away the TMC's votes to make things easier for the saffron outfit.

A furious TMC leadership which had earlier said that the Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance in Bengal BJP existed only outside the borders of Bengal went after Chowdhury for upholding the BJP's interest in the State. "His true political intent and character is hidden in his statement ... finally he has acknowledged that it is the TMC and not any other party

which is resisting the BJP in Bengal," TMC's Shantanu Sen

The party wrote on X "only a Bangla-Birodhi (anti-Bengal) person can campaign for the BJP, which has repeatedly insulted Bengal's icons. On May 13, the people of Baharampur will give a befitting response to this betrayal!," adding as to how "after acting as the eyes and ears of in Bengal, Adhir Chowdhury has now been promoted to be the voice of the BJP in Bengal. Listen to how the B-Team member is openly asking people to vote for the BJP – a party that REFUSED to release Bengal's rightful due and deprived our people of their rights." The BJP on the other hand lapped up Chowdhury's statement saying that the Congress leader's statement emanated from his realization that a single vote to TMC would mean a vote given against the interests of Bengal.

"Even Adhir Da tallest leader of Congress knows that a vote for TMC is a vote that will harm Bengal because of TMC policies to defend corrupt syndicate, mafias, blast accused, terrorists & rapists like Shahjahan Shaikh in Sandeshkhali, party Shehzad spokesperson Poonawala said.

Chowdhury who has won from Behrampore for five consecutive times has of late been on a treacherous wicket for the reason that the BJP has witnessed remarkable progress in the constituency. Going by the 2021 Assembly election records the Congress is presently in the third position trailing the TMC and the BJP in all the seven Assembly segments. Chowdhury's chances have further dwindled on account of the TMC fielding former India cricketer Yusuf Pathan form the seat which has more than 60 percent Muslim votes.

Polls deferred in Anantnag Rajouri to favour BJP allies: Mufti

Aday after the Election Commission of India decided to defer the poll dates of the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary seat from May 7 to May 25, two former Chief Ministers Dr Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti arrived in Rajouri to join the ongoing poll PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti

charged authorities deliberately delayed elections in the Ánantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seats to manipulate voters in favor of BJP allies and frighten the people not to exercise their franchise against the ongoing onslaught of Jammu and Kashmir's identity and resources.

Reacting to the revised schedule of the elections National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah said the decision of the ECI is wrong. "This request came in from the BJP date. This appears to be a Rajouri is part of the Anantnag reached Maniyal Gali in "Do not divide this country



parliamentary constituency, which is going to polls in the sixth phase on May 25. Mian Altaf Ahmad of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference faces a direct challenge from PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, though there are 18 other candidates in the fray. Dr Farooq Abdullah along with the party candidate addressed a worker's convention at Kotranka in Raiouri on Wednesday. On the other hand, planned conspiracy", he added. PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti

Rajouri to address an election

JKNC candidate Mian Altaf Ahmad claimed, "Show me any example in history where an election was postponed because of an apprehension of mudslide. This is grossly undemocratic."

In his speech Dr Farooq Abdullah targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for trying to divide people of the said Muslims cannot snatch

anyone's rights.

based on religion, otherwise a storm will unleash making the survival of the country difficult. It is better to talk about uniting the country, instead of dividing its people," Abdullah, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, said addressing an election rally in Thanamandi area of the

Rajouri district to garner support for party candidate Mian Altaf.Criticising PM Modi's recent speech in Agra that the Congress would "redistribute" people's property if voted to power, Abdullah said, "We are Muslims and our Allah has told us to respect other religions... A Muslim cannot snatch anyone's right."

He accused the prime minister of trying to create a rift between Hindus and Muslims in the country. "I want to tell Modi that former

prime minister Rajiv Gandhi stopped his vehicle in Pulwama (south Kashmir) during a visit of 'mangalsutra' as a gift since she was not able to purchase it,"

Addressing election rallies in Maniyal Gali, Rajouri, Mehbooba Mufti asserted the significance of the ongoing elections in safeguarding Jammu and Kashmir's unique identity. Mehbooba also emphasized that the polls present an opportunity to send a clear message to the Union Government that decisions made on and after August 5, 2019, must be revoked.

Addressing concerns over the delayed polls, Mehbooba criticized the lack of explanation from officials and questioned their motives. She said there seems to be a collusion at play between these officials and the Election Commission of India (ECI) to manipulate the electoral process. "The government has deliberately extended the election date here to make this path hazardous for me. The officers who have delayed the polls have not provided any reasons for this. It ions about whether these officers are also colluding with the ECI?," Mehbooba

Key accused in Salman house firing case dies after suicide bid in custody

T N RAGHUNATHA

n an embarrassing develop-Iment for the Mumbai police, one of the key accused in the sensational firing near Salman Khan's Bandra residence died at a hospital after an alleged suicide attempt in the Mumbai police crime branch lock-up. Anuj Thapan (32) — who had

been arrested from Punjab on April 25 — was found hanging in a toilet at the Mumbai police lock-up. He was immediately rushed in a critical condition to the nearby St. George Hospital, where he was declared dead on admission.

Thapan — who had been arrested along with one more been lodged in the lock-up after he was sent to police cus-

tody till May 8. Thapan was reportedly staying with ten other inmates when the incident took place. The incident, involving the death of an accused in police custody, is being seen as a clear case of negligence that has claimed a life.

Thapan is among the four accused who were arrested in connection with the firing that took place near Salman Khan's Bandra (west) residence "Galaxy Apartment" in north-west Mumbai on April 14. Less than 48 hours after the incident, the Mumbai police crime branch sleuths arrested two shooters — Vicky Gupta (24) and Sagar Shrijogendra Pal (23) — from Bhuj town in Gujarat and brought them to Mumbai. Thapan and one more accused Sonu Bishnoi, who had accused Sonu Bishnoi — had allegedly supplied arms and Pal — were arrested subsequently by the Mumbai crime branch sleuths from Punjab.

Former BIS scientist gets five years in jail T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

A Nagpur-based special CBI court has sentenced a former scientist attached to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to five years of rigorous imprisonment in a bribery

While handing out five years' jail term to Bipin Jambholkar, Scientific Cadre Officer-Grade-A, the then Scientist-C (Lot Cell), Nodal Officer, Enforcement and Legal Activities, BIS, the Special Judge for CBI cases, Nagpur, imposed a fine of Rs 1.10 lakh on him in the bribery case.

The CBI had registered a case on March 9,2015 against Jambholkar on allegations that said accused demanded and accepted a bribe of Rs.15,000 for not going in appeal against the acquittal of the complainant by way of a verdict given on December 20, 2014 by the first class Judicial Magistrate,

Mayday! Kids in 131

As per reports, about eight schools in Southwest Delhi, three in North Delhi, 18 in South Delhi, 21 in West Delhi, one in North East Delhi, 24 in East Delhi, 21 in West Delhi and 16 in Outer Delhi received these threats among others. Delhi Police Public of Wazirabad, School Mother's Marry Senior Secondary School of Mayur Vihar, DPS International of Saket, Sanskriti School of Chanakyapuri, Don Bosco School of CR Park and DAV Public School of Paschim Vihar were some of the prominent schools that received the threat via an email early morning. In the adjoining region of Noida, Delhi Public School received the bomb threat.

According central intelligence agencies sources, this could be a wakeup call as forces are engaged in the will

after Chacha Nehru Hospital in Delhi's Shahdara received a bomb threat via email on Tuesday morning. An email claiming that a bomb had been planted at Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya in Shahdara caused panic and disruption at the hospital on Tuesday. The email was also sent to at least 50 others, including government departments. On Monday, Raja Bhoj International Airport in Bhopal, Dabolim airport in Goa, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Subhash International Airport in Kolkata and the Jaipur

received bomb threats. Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said that Delhi Police has traced the origin of the bomb threat emails that were sent to multiple schools in Delhi-NCR on Wednesday, the entire nation and security and assured that the culprits given

International

Airport

punishment. Officials said the bomb threat appeared to be hoax and said there was no reason to panic. Saxena visited DAV school in Model Town area that also received the bomb threat. The LG said that Delhi Police responded quickly to the bomb scare and began action after cordoning off and searching the premises with bomb disposal

teams and dog squads. A senior security officer said, "A general advisory has been issued in the Delhi Metro network and CISF personnel have been asked to remain extra vigilant," adding that additional police force, along with paramilitary, has been deployed in several parts of Delhi and barricades have been installed at city borders. Special commissioner of police RP Upadhyay termed the bomb threat emails as a "terror threat" and stated that

the counterintelligence unit is

investigating the matter.

EC upgrades VVPAT...

From Page 1

While rejecting the plea for 100 per cent verification of VVPAT slips against the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) count, the Supreme Court on Friday (April 26) directed the EC to "seal and secure" the Symbol Loading Unit (SLU) for 45 days after the declaration of election results. This means that a

candidate can ask ECI officials to check the one-time programmable software in the BU (Ballot Unit), CU (Control Unit), and VVPAT for tampering, in case of any doubts regarding the result. This verification involves inspecting the burnt memory/ microcontrollers of these three

Cong takes another...

Basoya, said, "I am addressing the present communication to you, being aggrieved by the alliance of the party with the AAP in Delhi. I have humbly submitted that the said alliance is bringing a great dis-repute and embarrassment to Delhi Congress workers on a daily basis. And I believe that as a selfrespecting party leader, I cannot be associated with the party

The top three leaders of AAP — Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Satyendar Jain and Manish Sisodia — are already in jail. Their party has been accused of serious corruption charges on various issues such as the Delhi liquor scam and Delhi Jal Board scam, Basoya said in his letter. Also, AAP has throughout its existence levelled serious allegations against the Congress and its top

Prajwal ready to join probe; his family... From Page 1

Prajwal is the BJP-JD(S) alliance's candidate from Hassan, which went to the polls on Friday. Explicit video clips allegedly of Prajwal sexually abusing several women had started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, following which the State Government constituted a SIT to investigate the crime

allegedly involving the MP. "According to reports, sensing the impending police case and arrest, the accused Member of Parliament and NDA candidate for Lok Sabha Prajwal Revanna has fled the country and travelled abroad on April 27 itself. It is learnt from reports that he is travelling abroad on his Siddaramaiah said.

He said that while the SIT is working round the clock to investigate the allegations of crimes against several women by Prajwal Revanna, getting him back to the country is of utmost importance so that he faces investigation and trial as per the law of the land. "In this regard, this is to urge

you kindly to move the Ministries of External Affairs and Home Affairs to take swift action to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal Revanna and to take such other steps using diplomatic and police channels of the Government of India as well as international police agencies to ensure the swift return of the absconding Member of Parliament to face the full force of law," the CM said in

the letter.



Maneka Gandhi holding a roadshow in Sultanpur on way to filing her nomination

Number jobs created important indicator of economic growth of **country: Economist Muralidharan**

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Productivity, competitiveness, number of jobs created and skill of the labor force are some of the most important ingredients of economic growth of a country. It is for the Central and state Governments to generate enabling conditions for the speedy economic and social development, according to Karthik Muralidharan, renowned economist and Tata Chancellor's Professor of Economics at the University of California, San

Diego. Muralidharan in his new book "Accelerating India's Development – A State led India's Roadmap for Effective Governance" gives a new perspective to the roles of Central and State Governments in the economic and social development of India. Land, labor, capital, policies on taxation, bankruptcy, environmental regulation, promoting competition, and by investing in police and courts to facilitate safety, contract enforcement and dispute resolution are the cardinal points required for the economic growth of the Governments (both Central and State). But he says that the present

Central Government is always ahead in resolving issues which retard economic progress. "India's public discourse on growth mainly focusses on Central Government actions to promote it, though many of the key issues above are in the domain of State Governments. It is critical to analyze and improve the effectiveness of State level actions for boosting productivity and job quality. State-led initiative and innovations followed by rapid replication of successful ones can play a key role in accelerating both growth and development in India," writes Muralidharan in the chapter "Jobs, Productivity and Economic Growth". What makes the book interesting is Muralidharan's call for improving job quality than job quantity. It is not the number of jobs created but the quality of jobs that determine the welfare of the people, says Muralidharan

Hindu marriage is a samskara, not...

In Hindu Law, marriage is a

sacrament or a 'samskara' and it is the foundation for a new family, the bench noted, and said, "There is nothing like a "better-half" in a marriage but the spouses are equal halves in a marriage."

Observing that with the passage of centuries and the enactment of the Act, monogamy is the only legally approved form of relationship between a husband and a wife. 'The (Hindu Marriage) Act has categorically discarded polyandry and polygamy and all other such types of "Unless the parties have relationships. The intent of the undergone such ceremony,

Parliament is also that there should be only one form of marriage having varied rites and customs and rituals," it noted.

The bench said after the Act came into force on May 18, 1955, it had codified the law relating to marriage among Hindus and it encompasses not only Hindus as such but Brahmos, Lingayats, Aryasamajists, Buddhists, Jains

and Sikhs also who can enter into a valid Hindu marriage coming within the expansive connotation of the word Hindu.

there would be no Hindu marriage according to Section 7 of the (Hindu Marriage) Act and a mere issuance of a certificate by an entity in the absence of the requisite ceremonies having been performed, would neither confirm any marital status to the parties nor establish a marriage under Hindu law," it said.

The top court highlighted that the advantage of marriage registration is that it facilitates proof of factum of wedding in a disputed case but if there has been no marriage in accordance with Section 7 of Hindu Marriage Act, "the compliance of the conditions

registration would not confer legitimacy to the marriage". It noted that under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, a man and a woman can acquire the status of being a husband and a wife as per the provisions of the said Act. "The Special Marriage Act, 1954 is not

restricted to Hindus. Any man and woman irrespective of their race, caste or creed can acquire the status of being a husband and a wife under the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 but under the provisions of the Act (Hindu Marriage Act, 1955), there should not only be

as prescribed under Section 5 of the said Act but also the couple must solemnise a marriage in accordance with Section 7 of the Act," it said. Exercising its plenary powers under Article 142 of the

Constitution, the apex court declared the estranged couple were not married in accordance with the law and held the marriage certificate issued to them in absence of valid ceremony under the Hindu Marriage Act as null and void.

It also quashed their divorce proceedings and a dowry case lodged against the husband and his family members.

BJP will neither remove quota nor allow Congress to do so, says Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) neither remove reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs, nor will it allow the Congress to do so.

He also alleged that the Congress' formula was to speak lies loudly, publicly and repetitively, and advised party president Mallikarjun Kharge not to speak lies for a family as eventually he will be blamed for its loss in the Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a rally in Katghora town of Chhattisgarh's Korba district to campaign for Saroj Pandey, BJP candidate from the Korba Lok Sabha seat, Shah accused the grand old party of nurturing terrorism and Naxalism to win elections. "Congress party has one formula acceptable to the state of formula — speak lies loudly, publicly and keep repeating it. They say if (PM Narendra) Modi ji gets majority for the third term, he will scrap reservation. They circulated my fake video. We have been in power for 10 years, Modi ji



nor will he do it," Shah said. "Modi ji used majority to scrap Article 370 and triple talaq, construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and introducing Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). Neither shall we remove reservation nor allow Congress to do so. It is a guarantee of Mod ji," he said. Targeting Congress president Kharge, Shah said, "Kharge ji, why do you lie for a family?

After facing defeat on June 4, you will be blamed for it." "Kharge ji, you don't know they do not belong to anyone...As the Congress will suffer defeat on June 4, the brother-sister duo will remain safe, but 80-year-old Kharge ji will be blamed," he added. Shah said if Modi becomes the PM for the third straight term, then Naxalism will be uprooted in two years in Chhattisgarh. Targeting the previous

government in Chhattisgarh, he said, "The Bhupesh Kakka Government encouraged Naxalism, but after the BJP came to power in the state under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy CM Vijay Sharma (who also hold Home portfolio), 95 Naxalites were eliminated in four months....' PM Modi eliminated Naxalism from Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pardesh, Maharashtra in five years, but Chhattisgarh was left as the

Baghel-led Government was in

power, he said.

"Our security forces showed bravery and killed 29 Naxalites recently and yesterday (Tuesday) killed 10 Naxalites. But Bhupesh Kakka calls it a fake encounter despite Naxalites having accepted that they had suffered a huge loss. Congress people are not ashamed. Congress has been nurturing terrorism and Naxalism in this country for years to win elections," he claimed. Voting for the Korba Lok Sabha seat will be held on May 7.

TMC attacks Adhir over better to vote for BJP remark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress on Wednesday accused Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury of being the "Bteam" of the BJP, after a video, where he was heard saying that voting for BJP is better than voting for the TMC, showed up on the internet. Commenting on the remark, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the goal of his party is to bring the numbers of the BJP down in West Bengal and that TMC is a part of the INDIA bloc.

The purported video showed Chowdhury, the sitting MP and candidate from West Bengal's Baharampur, addressing a public meeting and saying "it's better to vote for the BJP than to vote for the TMC.

The TMC, which has already miffed been with Chowdhury's repeated jibes against the party, responded to the video by blaming him for the failure of the seatsharing talks with Congress and calling him "anti-Bengal." In a post on X, the TMC said that after acting as "eyes and

ears of BJP in Bengal," betrayal!" it added. Chowdhury has now been TMC Rajya Sabha promoted to be the "voice of Gokhale also att the BJP in Bengal."

"Listen to how the B-Team member is openly asking people to vote for the BJP – a party that refused to release Bengal's rightful due and deprived our people of their rights. Only a Bangla-Birodhi can campaign for the BJP, which has repeatedly insulted Bengal's icons," the TMC said.
"On May 13, people of Baharampur will give a befitting response to this TMC Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale also attacked the Congress leader over the remarks.

"Finally — from the B-team horse's mouth! Congress Bengal chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury publicly asks people in his rally to vote for the BJP and not the TMC. While Mamata Banerjee fights against the full might of Modi+Central Agencies machinery, Bengal Congress is openly asking votes for the BJP," he said in a post on X.

"In Bengal, TMC is INDIA taking on BJP. Meanwhile, Congress and CPM have chosen to become Modi's loyal soldiers. This is disgusting and beyond shameless," he said. Ramesh, meanwhile, said that the only goal of the Congress was to bring down the numbers of BJP in West Bengal.

"I do not know the context of what Adhir ji said, but our aim is to reduce the numbers of BJP in West Bengal significantly," Ramesh said. They won 18 out of 43 seats,

we have to reduce their numbers and that is the only goal. This is not assembly election, this is Lok Sabha election. Congress, along with Left parties, is a part of INDIA bloc, TMC leader Mamata Banerjee has also said they are part of the INDIA bloc, though we are not in a seat sharing arrangement," he said.

A triangular contest between the TMC, Congress-Left alliance, and the BJP is being witnessed in West Bengal, where the TMC has 22 out of 42 seats in Lok Sabha, BIP 17, and Congress two MPs.

Congress, MNF coalition to run Lai autonomous council in Mizroam

PTI ■ AIZAWL

After a prolonged political deadlock in Mizoram's Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), officials on Wednesday announced the formation of a Congresscoalition administration to run the 25member council.

LADC is one of the three autonomous district councils constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the constitution for Lai people in the southern part of the state with Lawngtlai as its headquarters. Officials said 12 MNF members have joined forces with the lone Congress Soon after that, eight MNF member, C. Lalmuanthanga, members defected from the Party (ULP). This newly its claim to Hari Babu Governor Kamphampati to run the

council, officials added.

Previously led by the MNF, the LADC was placed under governor's rule in March following the resignation of CEM V. Zirsanga in a graft

case conviction.



to four imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 4 lakh for misappropriating Rs 1.33 crore during his stint as an executive member of the council.

Soon after that, eight MNF to form the United Legislature party and tied up with the opposition and submitted a coalition has complaint to the governor expressing lack of confidence in the Zirsanga-led council. Following the resignation, one of the eight Lalmuanthanga is expected to become the chief executive member (CEM) of the MNF members returned to Zirsanga's camp thus making a situation where no single party could garner the magic number to run the council as both the ruling and opposition camps had 12 members each, excluding the chairman.

Subsequently, governor's rule In February, the special court was imposed, and Lawngtlai (Prevention of Corruption DC was appointed as the Act) in Aizawl had sentenced council's caretaker.

MP Opposition leader Singhar says he is not joining BJP

PTI ■ INDORE

Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh assembly Umang Singhar of the Congress on Wednesday rejected speculations of joining the BJP and took potshots at Union minister Ivotiraditya Scindia whose 2020 switch over led to the collapse of the Kamal Nath government. He alleged the Bharatiya Janata

Pradesh. Scindia later joined the BJP and became a minister

Party (BJP) was spreading rumours about defection of senior Congress leaders to divert voters' attention from core issues in the Lok Sabha elections. Singhar targeted Scindia, whose exit from the Congress led to the collapse of the 15-month-old Nath government in March 2020 and paved the way for the BJP's return to power in Madhya

at the Centre. "BJP leaders from Delhi to Bhopal have been contacting me (for switch over) for the last several years. Even when the Kamal Nath government was toppled, I was given all kinds of inducements. Even then I did not join the BJP because I am Umang Singhar and not Scindia," the senior Congress MLA remarked.

Indore about speculations of him joining the saffron party. The Congress legislator alleged the ruling BJP is putting pressure on opposition leaders by misusing central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the Income Tax Department.

"If the Congress had done this kind of politics in the last 70 years, the BJP would not have Singhar was replying to been visible today," he queries from reporters in maintained. The Leader of

Opposition targeted six-time Congress MLA from Vijaypur (Sheopur district) Ramniwas Rawat, who joined the BJP on Tuesday.

Singhar claimed Rawat joined the ruling party out of greed for a ministerial post and sought to downplay his switch over. "It doesn't make a difference to the Congress if power-hungry people leave the party," he said. Asked about Congress candidate

from Indore Lok Sabha seat Akshav Kanti withdrawing his nomination and later joining the BJP, Singhar remarked that it turned out to be a case of an "unexploded firecracker". "Whether it is Surat (where Congress candidate's nomination was rejected) or Indore, the law and the Constitution were openly violated. The BJP is trying to

change the Constitution,

Congress tried to defame Indian | Maneka Gandhi culture and civilisation, says Yogi

PTI LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday attacked the Congress, saying after it became "directionless" post-Independence, it has become "leaderless" as well and accused the party's leaders of attempting to defame Indian civilisation and culture.
"Unfortunately, the country's

oldest political party (Congress) went directionless after Independence and today it has become leaderless too. The Congress leaders have constantly tried to abuse the Indian culture and humiliate 'sanatan dharma'," Adityanath told reporters



"During government, a senior leader of the Congress and the then Union Home Minister had tried to insult India's 'sanatan' culture in the name of saffron terror," he said.

The priest CM blamed the Congress's policies for the problem of terrorism and Naxalism in the country. He

claimed that the central

government has controlled the militancy in the Naxalaffected areas and pacified the restive northeast. "Every person knows that the

policies of Congress became the cause of terrorism and Naxalism inside the country. Today under the leadership of Modi ji, not only terrorism

and Naxalism but the issue of extremism and anarchy in the North-East have resolved," Adityanath claimed.

He called Article 370 the "root of terrorism" and said that by abolishing it the Narendra Modi government connected Jammu and Kashmir with the mainstream of development. "Naxalism, which was spread in 120 districts during the time of UPA government, has been controlled.

It has been limited to twothree districts in half of the states of the country. Very soon Naxalism will end there too," he added.

Adityanath accused the Congress of sowing the seed

files nomination

PTI ■ SULTANPUR (UP)

 $B_{\text{Gandhi}}^{\text{JP}} \ \, \substack{\text{candidate} \\ \text{filed}} \ \, \substack{\text{Maneka} \\ \text{her}}$ nomination papers from the Sultanpur Lok Sabha seat here on Wednesday. Gandhi took ou

to reach the collectorate and filed her papers in front of District Election Officer Krittika Jyotsna.

NDA ally NISHAD Party president Dr Sanjay Nishad and Apna Dal leader and cabinet minister Ashish Patel were with her at the time of the nomination filing.

After filing her nomination, Gandhi said she will do more work in the next five years than was done in the last five. of Partition with its She said she wants to provide appeasement of the Muslims.

In Leningrad of Bihar, Left



under the Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana here.

"We have to take this region ahead. The people living in the area must get all facilities

— this has always been my effort and will be in future as well," she said.

On the opposition's allegation that the BJP, if voted back to power, will take away the reservation by changing the Constitution, she said no one

In Goa, BJP banks on Modi charisma

As the two Lok Sabha seats in Goa go to polls in the third phase of the general elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "charisma", while the INDIA bloc has made the state government's failures in providing employment and corruption-free governance as its poll plank.

The North and South Goa constituencies

will go to polls on May 7.
In North Goa, BJP's five-time MP and Union Minister Shripad Naik will battle Congress's Ramakant Khalap, and in the South Goa constituency, BJP's first female candidate in Goa and businesswoman Pallavi Dempo will take on ex-navy officer and Congress candidate Viriato Fernandes.

"People want stability. They don't want a khichdi (multi-party) government," BJP Goa spokesman Yatish Naik said, expressing confidence about the party's victory in both the seats.

"When they cast their votes, people need to consider who should lead the country for the next five years. Prime Minister Modi has given firm leadership to the country. He has become a world leader, and this is an important factor," the BJP leader said. Naik added that as far as infrastructure like public amenities is concerned, "people have seen the development under the BJP rule".

"People want stability. They want a settled administration. The BJP will win both seats in Goa and cross the 400-mark

in the country," he said. Goa Forward Party (GFP) general secretary Durgadas Kamat, however, claimed that even as voters haven't



expressed their discontent publicly, "a strong anti-government sentiment is brimming".

The GFP is a partner in the INDIA bloc. The government has failed to address the basic issues like unemployment in the state. The state government has failed to resume the mining industry in the state and also has not provided corruption-free governance," Kamat said. The GFP leader added that the BJP government has also failed to fulfil the assurances made during the Goa assembly election.

"It is for the INDIA bloc to convert this sentiment into votes. I am sure that the two candidates of the alliance will win. The INDIA alliance candidate is getting overwhelming response for his campaign. The people are volunteering

and attending the meetings," he said. The 2019 elections saw sitting MP Naik win the North Goa seat with 2,44,844 votes, defeating Congress candidate Girish Chodankar, while Congress's Francisco Sardinha defeated BJP's Narendra Sawaikar by a narrow margin of 9,755 votes in South Goa.

Naik, who has represented the North Goa seat in the previous five elections since 1999, is up against "strong resentment" this time, Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) general secretary Sunil Kawthankar said.

"Naik has failed to perform for the last five terms due to which the people are looking at change," Kawthankar said. He also claimed that people, including the local BJP leaders, are having a hard time accepting Pallavi Dempo, the

executive director of Dempo Industries, as she is not part of the party cadre. "There is resentment amongst the voters. The cadres are also not accepting Dempo because she does not belong to the cadre. She has been chosen by BJP high command and given ticket to contest from South Goa," the Congress leader

The grand old party has put its hopes in Navy veteran Fernandes against Dempo. "Fernandes is an ex-navy man. He has the interest of the country at heart. He will win hands down in his constituency, considering the support he has been garnering," Kawthankar said.

Memories of YSR haunt Jagan's re election bid

PTI KURNOOL

As electioneering intensifies, residents of Kurnool parliamentary constituency vividly recall the efficient governance of Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, the two-time former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, who tragically lost his life in a helicopter crash in September 2009, merely 74 km from here. Rajasekhara Reddy, fondly known as YSR, had carved a niche in state politics by working for the upliftment of the downtrodden and neglected segments of the society. YSR emerged victorious in every election he contested during his 25-year-

long political career. Elections to 25 Lok Sabha seats and 175 Assembly segments in the state will be held

simultaneously on May 13. As incumbent Chief Minister of bifurcated Andhra Pradesh, Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy seeks a second term, admirers of YSR in Kurnool say, after observing the former's first tenure, "Jagan is not like his father." "In the 2019 elections, we voted for Jagan in the name of Rajasekhara Reddy. But he has disappointed us. This time, we will have to reconsider, said Rafid, a fruit seller.

contends with saffron surge PTI ■ BEGUSARAI (BIHAR) Astrong presence of the Left had earned Begusarai

the epithet "Leningrad of Bihar" but the Red brigade here is now grappling with the

saffron surge.

The BJP fielded Union
Minister Giriraj Singh again from Begusarai, while CPI nominated Awadhesh Rai, as the united opposition candidate in the seat where the situation has changed much compared to that in 2019.

But the key change, the mindset of the voters, was noticed even earlier.

The ideological drift was, perhaps, best witnessed in the watershed elections of 2014, when the seat was won by late Bhola Singh on a BJP ticket, decades after he had begun his political career as an MLA of the CPI.

Five years later, with Bhola Singh no more, the BJP brought in here Giriraj Singh, an "outsider" who inflicted a crushing defeat on "local" Kanhaiya Kumar.

The electoral battle this time is not as eyeball-grabbing as it was in 2019, thanks to the electrifying presence of Kanhaiya Kumar, who had launched a spirited campaign,



to which many celebrities like Javed Akhtar, Shabana Azmi, Swara Bhaskar and Prakash Raj had lent their heft. The CPI debutant, who has

since moved to the Congress which has fielded him from Delhi North East, was badly hit by the RJD's decision to field its own candidate who cut into the anti-BJP votes, offering Giriraj Singh a victory on the platter, with a margin of over four lakh

Five years down the line, Five years down the line, though, many variables seem to have changed. The "outsider" tag against Singh, who hails from Barahiya in Lakhisarai district, right across the Ganges, may no longer stand. But the absence of an over-arching parenting of an over-arching narrative of nationalism fuelled by the Pulwama terror attack leaves the Union minister devoid of

the ballast that he would have liked for his dog-whistling rhetoric.

Moreover, unlike in 2019, the RJD, arguably the strongest regional party in Bihar, is not trying to play spoilsport this time. Its chemistry with the Left has also been tried and tested in the 2020 assembly polls when CPI(ML), CPI and CPI(M) together came out with a better-than-expected performance.

In the assembly polls, the CPI bagged two seats, both in Begusarai, where the RJD also notched up as many, while the BJP-JD(U) combine could win only three.

Unlike predecessor Bhola Singh who was a party-hopper, having tried his luck in a number of parties before joining the BJP, Giriraj Singh is a dyed-in-the-wool RSS man, who had earned his spurs as an ABVP activist.

Tall and powerfully built, the Union minister has proudly prefixed "Shandilya", his "gotra", to his profile on X, and moves around sporting a fiery red "tilak" on his broad forehead and a tuft of hair dangling from the crown, warning all those who come his way that here is a man who wears his Hindutva on

Campus tensions flare: UCLA, Columbia protest clashes

Dueling groups of protesters clashed Wednesday at the University of California, Los University of California, Los Angeles, grappling in fistfights and shoving, kicking and using sticks to beat one another. Hours earlier, police burst into a building at Columbia University that pro-Palestinian protesters took over and broke up a demonstration that had paralyzed the school while inspiring others.

After a couple of hours of scuffles between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators at UCLA, police wearing hel-mets and face shields formed lines and slowly separated the groups. That quelled the vio-lence, and the scene was calm as day broke.

Tent encampments of protesters calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies that support the war in Gaza have spread across the country in a student movement unlike any other in the

21st century, reaching from New York to Texas and California. The ensuing crackdown by police on some college campuses has stirred echoes of the much larger student protest movement during the Vietnam

There have been confrontations with law enforcement and more than 1,000 arrests. In rarer instances, university officials and protest leaders struck agreements to restrict the disruption to campus life and upcoming commencement ceremonies.

The clashes at UCLA took place around a tent encampment built by pro-Palestinian protesters, who erected a line of parade barricades, plywood and wooden pallets at the edge of the camp — while counter-protesters tried to pull them down. Video showed fireworks exploding over and in the encampment.

People threw chairs and other objects and at one point a group piled on a person who lay

on the ground, kicking and beating them with sticks until others pulled them out of the scrum.

It was not clear how many people might be injured.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called the violence "absolutely abhorrent and inexcusable" in a post on social media platform X and said officers from the Los Angeles Police Department were on the scene. Officers from the California Highway Patrol also appeared to be there. The university said it had

requested help. Security was tightened Tuesday at the campus after officials said there were "physical alterca-tions" between factions of protesters. Late that same day, New York City officers entered Columbia's campus after the university requested help, according to a statement released by a spokesperson. A tent encampment on the school's grounds was cleared, along with Hamilton Hall where a stream of officers used

ond-floor window. Protesters seized the hall at the Ivy League school about 20 hours earlier. "After the University learned

overnight that Hamilton Hall had been occupied, vandalized, and blockaded, we were left with no choice," the school said. "The decision to reach out to the NYPD was in response to the actions of the protesters, not the cause they are championing. We have made it clear that the life of campus cannot be endlessly interrupted by protesters who violate the rules

and the law." and the law.

A few dozen people were arrested at the building after protesters shrugged off an earlier ultimatum to abandon the encampment Monday or be suspended and unfolded as other universities stepped up efforts to end demonstrations efforts to end demonstrations that were inspired by Columbia. Fabien Lugo, a first-year accounting student who said he was not involved in the protests, said he opposed the university's

decision to call in police. "This is too intense," he said. "It feels like more of an escalation than a de-escalation."

Just blocks away from Columbia, at The City College of New York, demonstrators were in a standoff with police outside the public college's main gate. Video posted on social media by news reporters on the scene late Tuesday showed officers putting some people to the ground and shoving others as they cleared people from the street and sidewalks.

After police arrived, officers lowered a Palestinian flag atop the City College flagpole, balled it up and tossed it to the ground before raising an American flag. Brown University, anoth-er member of the Ivy League, reached an agreement Tuesday with protesters on its Rhode Island campus. Demonstrators said they would close their encampment in exchange for administrators taking a vote to consider divestment from Israel

Mayor says about 300 held Los Angeles (AP): New York Tent encampments of proand wooden pallets at the edge

City Mayor Eric Adams says about 300 people were arrested in police crackdowns on pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University and City College. Dueling groups of protesters clashed Wednesday at the University of California, at the University of California, Los Angeles, grappling in fist-fights and shoving, kicking and using sticks to beat one another. Hours earlier, police burst into a building at Columbia University that pro-Palestinian protesters took over and broke up a demonstration that had paralyzed the school while inspiring others. After a couple of hours of scuffles leaders struck agreements to between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators at restrict the disruption to campus life and upcoming com-UCLA, police wearing helmets and face shields formed lines mencement ceremonies. and slowly separated the groups. That quelled the vio-

testers calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies that support the war in Gaza have spread across the country in a student movement unlike any other in the 21st century, reaching from New York to Texas and California. The ensuing crackdown by police on some college campuses has stirred echoes of the much larger student protest movement during the Vietnam War era. There have been confrontations with law enforcement and more than 1,000 arrests. In rarer instances, university officials and protest

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Officers from the California Highway Patrol also appeared to be there.

The university said it had requested help.

Blinken urges Israel and Hamas to move ahead with ceasefire

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was meeting with Israeli leaders on Wednesday in his push for a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas, saying "the time is now" for an agreement that would free hostages and bring a pause in the and bring a pause in the nearly seven months of war in

He said Hamas would bear the blame for any failure to get a deal off the ground. Blinken is on his seventh visit to the region since the war erupted in October in his bid to secure what's been an elusive deal between Israel and Hamas that could avert an Israeli incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering. The current round of talks appears to be serious, but the sides remain far apart on one key issue — whether the war should end as part of an emerging deal.



"We are determined to get a cease-fire that brings the hostages home and to get it now, and the only reason that that wouldn't be achieved is because of Hamas," Blinken told Israel's ceremonial President Isaac Herzog at a meeting in Tel Aviv. "There is a proposal on the table, and as we've said, no delays, no excuses. The time is now," he

Blinken said the deal would also allow much needed food, medicine and water to get into Gaza, where the war has sparked a humanitarian crisis and displaced much of the

and also with families of Americans held by Hamas at his hotel, Blinken briefly greeted several dozen demonstrators calling for an immediate hostage release deal on the sidewalk outside. Chanting "SOS, USA, only

you can save the day" and "In Blinken we trust, bring them home to us," the protestors urged him to make their case to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Blinken will meet Netanyahu

and his War Cabinet later Wednesday. Blinken told the families that

there was a very strong pro-posal on the table and that Hamas needs to say yes to it. "That is our determination. and we will not rest, we will not stop until you're reunited with your loved ones," he

His comments came on the last leg of his regional visit, with previous stops in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, where he urged Hamas to accept the latest proposal, calling it "extraordinarily generous" on Israel's part. According to the State Department, he will also visit an Israeli port where

also visit an israen port where aid for Gaza is entering. The United States has staunchly supported Israel's war since Hamas' unprecedented attack on October 7 into southern Israel. But it has grown increasingly critical of the staggering toll borne by Palestinian civilians in Gaza and has been especially outspoken against Israel's plan to invade Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city where some 1.5 million Palestinians have fled from fighting elsewhere in the territory, saying that any major offensive there would bring potential harm to civilians and should be avoided.

Workers and activists across Asia and Europe hold May Day rallies

AP ■ SEOUL

Workers, activists and others in Asian capitals and European cities took to the streets on Wednesday to mark May Day with protests over rising prices and government labour polices and calls for greater labour rights. May Day, which falls on May 1, is observed in many countries to observed in many countries to celebrate workers' rights. May Day events have also given many an opportunity to air general economic grievances or political demands.

Police in Istanbul detained dozens of people who tried to reach the central Taksim Square in defiance of a government ban on marking Labour Day at the landmark location.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has long declared Taksim off-limits for rallies and demonstrations on security grounds, but some political parties and trade unions have vowed to march to the square, which holds symbolic value for labour unions. In

1977, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a May Day celebration at Taksim, causing a stampede and killing 34 people.On Wednesday, police erected barricades and sealed off all routes leading to the central Istanbul square. Public transport in the area was also restricted. Only a small group of trade union representatives was permitted to enter the square to lay a wreath at a monument in memory of victims of the 1977 incident.Riot police apprehended some 30 members of the leftwing People's Liberation Party who tried to break through the barriers.In Indonesia, workers voiced anger at a new law they said violates their rights and hurts their welfare, and demanded protections for migrant workers abroad and a

lence, and the scene was calm

minimum wage raise.
About 50,000 workers from Jakarta's satellite cities of Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi were expected to join May Day marches in the capital, said Said Iqbal, the president of the Confederation of Indonesian

Trade Unions.They gathered amid a tight police presence near the National Monument park, waving the colourful flags of labour groups and chanting slogans against the Job Creation Law and loosened outsourcing rules during a march to Jakarta's main sports stadium, Gelora Bung Karno.

"With the enactment of

this law, our future is uncertain because many problems arise in wages, severance pay and the contract system," said Isbandi Anggono, a protester.

Indonesia's parliament last year ratified a government regulation that replaces a controversial law on job creation, but critics said it still benefits businesses. The law was intended to cut bureaucracy as part of President Joko Widodo's efforts to attract more investment to the country, which is Southeast Asia's largest economy. In Seoul, the South Korean capital, thousands of protesters sang, waved flags and shouted pro-labour slogans at the start of their rally on Wednesday. Organisers said

their rally was primarily meant to step up their criticism of what they call anti-labour policies pursued by the conservative government led by President Yoon Suk Yeol.

"In the past two years under

the Yoon Suk Yeol government, the lives of our labourers have plunged into despair," Yang Kyung-soo, leader of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which organised the rally, said in a speech

'We can't overlook the Yoon Suk Yeol government. We'll bring them down from power for ourselves."

KCTU union members decried Yoon's December veto of a bill aimed at limiting companies' rights to seek compensation for damages caused by strikes by labour unions.

They also accuse Yoon's government of handling the 2022 strikes by truckers too aggressively and insulting construction sector workers whom authorities believed were involved in alleged irregular

24 killed in China highway collapse

Beijing (PTI): At least 24 people were killed when a section of a highway collapsed early Wednesday, the start of a fiveday long Labour Day holiday, in China's rain hit Guangdong province. The cave-in occurred at around 2am in Dabu County of Guangdong's northern Meizhou City. Nearly 18 metres of the mountainous highway crumbled into the forested slope below, trapping 20 vehicles and 54 passengers in all, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported, quoting a local government statement. The official statement said 30 victims had been sent to hospital, while around 500 public security, emergency response, firefighting, health and sanitation and other workers were taking part in the rescue work. The condition of the hospitalised patients was "not life-threatening at the moment", the statement said, but did not specify the level of their injuries. The reason for the collapse has yet to be declared and

the matter is under investigation, the Post reported.

The accident occurred as China began a five-day break for Labour Day, one of the four major holiday and travel periods for the country when highways are toll-free and see heavy

Footage and pictures shared by local news outlets showed flames and smoke rising from the collapsed section, while charred cars were visible on the gouged-out slope. The stricken highway links Guangdong to southeastern Fujian province.

State-run Xinhua news agency reported that 31 people have been sent to hospital for treatment after a road cave-in on an expressway in south China's Guangdong Province in which 18 vehicles were trapped.

The cave-in happened around 2:10 a.m. on a section of the Meizhou-Dabu Expressway in the city of Meizhou, according to the government of Meizhou.

Portuguese ship hit in Arabian Sea raises Houthi rebel concerns

AP JERUSALEM

Portuguese-flagged con-Atainer ship came under attack by a drone in the far reaches of the Arabian Sea, corresponding with a claim by Yemen's Houthi rebels that they assaulted the ship there, authorities said Tuesday.
The attack on the MSC Orion,

occurring some 600 kilometers (375 miles) off the coast of Yemen, appeared to be the first confirmed deep-sea assault claimed by the Houthis since they began targeting ships in November. It suggests the Houthis — or potentially their main benefactor Iran — may have the ability to strike into the distances of the Indian Ocean as the rebels previously threatened in their ongoing campaign over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The attack happened last Friday, according to the Joint Maritime Information Center, which operates as part of the US-led Combined

Maritime Forces in the Mideast.

After the attack, the crew dis-

covered debris apparently from a drone on board, the center said. The ship "sustained only minor damage and all crew on board are safe," the center said. Ship-tracking satellite data analyzed by The Associated Press put the container ship, bound for Salalah, Oman, in the area of the attack on Saturday. The MSC Orion has been asso-

ciated with London-based Zodiac Maritime, which is part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. It was operating on behalf of the Mediterranean Shipping Co, a Naples, Italy-based firm. Zodiac referred questions to MSC, which did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday. The Joint Maritime Information Center assesses "that MSC Orion was likely targeted due to (its) perceived Israeli affiliation," the center said in a report.

Brig Gen Yahya Saree, a military spokesman for Yemen's Houthi rebels, claimed the attack on the Orion early Tuesday. He did not explain why it took the rebels days to acknowledge the attack.

The attack immediately raised questions about how the Houthis could have carried out an assault hundreds of kilometers (miles) from the shores of Yemen on a moving target. Their primary area of attack so far has been in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait that connect the two waterways key for international trade. Those are close to Yemen's shoreline unlike the site of the MSC Orion attack. The Houthis are not known to operate an expeditionary naval fleet, nor do they have access to satellites or other sophisticated means of controlling long-distance drones. Iran, which has been supplying the Shiite rebels in their yearslong war in Yemen, has been assessed by the West and experts to have been behind at least one complex attack claimed by the Houthis — the 2019 attack on Saudi Arabia's oil fields that temporarily halved the kingdom's energy production. Iran also routinely operates military ves-

UK claims drastic drop in student dependents after visa crackdown

PTI ■ LONDON

 $T^{
m he\,UK}$ government has welcomed a "significant fall" in the number of dependents, or close family members such as a spouse and children, accompanying overseas students after its crackdown on student visas effective from early this year. In an update issued on Tuesday for the period of January to March this year compared to the same period in 2023, the Home Office said that dependents had dras-tically fallen by almost 80 per cent amid over 26,000 fewer student visa applications made. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement on social media that the figures mean that his changes to the country's visa system were working."The number of students bringing family members and dependants to the UK was too high. This wasn't fair," he said. "Our changes are working - stu-

dent dependant numbers are now down by 80 per cent," he

Under rules effective from January, most international students except those on research courses cannot bring along familv members. They can no longer switch their visa either before completing their course, which the government claimed misused the student visa as a "backdoor" to work in the UK amid a wider Home Office clampdown on institutions "selling immigration not education". Indians have led the international student visa tally in recent years and these figures indicate that a downward trend noted earlier this year is likely to mean fewer Indian students choosing UK universities. "Ever-spiralling numbers were eroding the British people's con-fidence in our immigration system, burdening public services and suppressing wages," said UK Home Secretary James

Teenager arrested in school attack in England

London (PTI): A 17-year-old boy has been arrested following reports of three people being injured at a school in Sheffield, northern England, on Wednesday. South Yorkshire Police said it was called to the Birley Community College and officers remain at the site. Minor injuries have been reported from the school premises."Officers are at the scene after responding to reports of an incident involving a sharp object at the school on Birley Lane at around 8.50 am. Two adults were checked over at the scene after suffering minor injuries," South Yorkshire Police said in a statement."A child was also checked over after being assaulted," the police said.The 17-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and remains in police custody. Police said its officers will remain at the scene throughout the day to provide assurances to those in the school and the local community.

COVID-19 sequencing scientist allowed lab access after protest

 $T^{\text{he first scientist to publish}}_{\text{a sequence of the COVID-19 virus in China said he was}}$ allowed back into his lab after he spent days locked outside, sitting in protest.

Zhang Yongzhen wrote in an online post on Wednesday, just past midnight, that the medical center that hosts his lab had "tentatively agreed" to allow him and his team to return and continue their research for the time being. "Now, team members can enter and leave the laboratory freely," Zhang wrote in a post on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform. He added that he is negotiating a plan to relocate the lab in a way that doesn't disrupt his team's work with the Shanghai Public Health

Clinical Center, which hosts

Zhang's lab. Zhang and his team were suddenly told they had to leave their lab for renovations on Thursday, setting off the dispute, he said in an earlier post that was later deleted. On Sunday, Zhang began a sit-in protest outside his lab after he found he was locked out, a sign of continuing pressure on Chinese scientists conducting research on the coronavirus. Zhang sat outside on flattened cardboard in drizzling rain, and members of his team unfurled a banner that read "Resume normal scientific research work," pictures posted online show. News of the protest spread widely on Chinese social media, putting pressure on local authorities. In an online statement

Monday, the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center said that Zhang's lab was closed for "safety reasons" while being renovated. It added that it had provided Zhang's team an alternative laboratory space. But Zhang responded the same day his team wasn't offered an alternative until after they were notified of their eviction, and the lab offered didn't meet

> their research, leaving his team in limbo. Zhang's dispute with his host institution was the latest in a series of setbacks, demotions and ousters since the virologist published the sequence in January 2020 without state

safety standards for conducting

approval. Beijing has sought to control information related to the virus since it first emerged.

Fitness influencer in Saudi gets 11-year sentence for terrorism

Jerusalem (AP): Saudi Arabia confirmed in a letter to the United Nations that a female fitness instruction who was popular online received an 11year prison sentence but did not specify any of her alleged "terrorism offenses."

Though the kingdom insisted the case had nothing to do with the instructor's online presence, human rights activists say the conviction levied against Manahel al-Otaibi shows the limits of expression in Saudi Arabia.

It also highlights another side of the kingdom, now run day-to-day by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who under his 88-year-old father King Salman has dramatically liberalized some aspects of women's lives

in the country.

sels in the Arabian Sea.

"Her charges related solely to her choice of clothing and expression of her views online, expression of her views online, including calling on social media for an end to Saudi Arabia's male guardianship system, publishing videos of herself wearing indecent clothes' and going to the shops without wearing an abaya," said Amnesty International and ALOST a London-based group ALQST, a London-based group advocating for human rights in Saudi Arabia that's followed al-Otaibi's case.

The human rights organisation issued joint statements on Tuesday about al-Otaibi's prison sentence, first revealed in Saudi letter dated January 25 and sent to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Trump awarded 36 mn more Trump Media shares worth USD1.8 billion

Washington (AP): Former President Donald Trump has secured an additional USD 1.8 billion worth of shares in Trump Media, according to a regulatory filing this week.
Based on the company's stock
hitting certain price benchmarks, Trump was awarded an additional 36 million shares in the company that owns his social media platform Truth Social. That brings his total ownership to more than 114 million shares, which based on Wednesday morning's stock price, are worth USD 5.7 bil-

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, now owns close to twothirds of the company's out-

standing shares.
Trump Media & Technology
Group shares have surged in

the past couple of weeks and closed Tuesday at USD 49.93. Trump only needed the stock to be above USD 17.50 each for 20 consecutive trading days to secure the new shares. Trump Media got its place on the Nasdaq after merging with a company called Digital World Acquisition Corp., a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC. These type of mergers offer young companies quicker and easier routes to getting their shares trading publicly. On March 26, the first day of trading after Trump Media closed the days to secure the new shares. Trump Media closed the merger with Digital World Acquisition, shares in the newly combined company reached nearly USD 80 each in intraday trading before closing at USD 57.99.

rebounding in mid-April. Truth Social launched in February 2022, one year after Trump was banned from major social platforms including Facebook and X, formerly Twitter, following the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol. He's since been reinstated to both but has Less than a week after that stuck with Truth Social.

flashy stock market debut, Trump Media disclosed that it

lost nearly USD 58.2 million

last year, sending its stock tumbling more than 21 per

cent. The 2023 losses marked

a stark decline compared with the profit of USD 50.5 million

that the company reported

for 2022, according to a regu-

In the subsequent weeks, the

company's stock tumbled to

around USD 22 each before

latory filing.

Vinícius Júnior leads Real Madrid to 2-2 draw at Bayern Munich

Tinícius Júnior scored twice for Real Madrid to draw 2-2 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal. Bayern dominated but Madrid survived, and the contest is still wide open ahead of the return leg in Madrid on May

With the focus on England stars Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham, as well as Toni Kroos' return to his former team, Vinícius emerged as the decisive figure on a night when his bright green boots were often a blur.

The Brazil forward opened the scoring against the run of play in the 24th minute and equalized with a coolly taken penalty in the 83rd after Leroy Sané and Kane had scored for Bavern.

"I think it's a good result," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who led Bayern to the Bundesliga title in 2017. "It gives us faith and confidence Borussia Dortmund or Paris

completely open."
Kane's goal, another penalty,

was the England forward's 43rd goal in 43 games for Bayern this season.

"It' felt like the goals were scored when the other team was better," Kroos said. "We're pretty sure that we'll advance at home."

Bayern had appealed to fans to wear red to the game and the visitors must have felt they were playing in a red cauldron as they were greeted by deafening whistles from the majority of the 75,000 in the stadium.

Fans in the "Südkurve" paid respect to deceased club great Franz Beckenbauer with a red-and-white huge

choreography before kickoff. A giant banner sent a message to the players as they were warming up: "To honor the Kaiser Franz, give everything to reach the final!"



London on June 1.

"Real Madrid does this to teams, so we should not be too disappointed," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said. "I think we will be able to create chances in the Bernabéu. This is one of the most difficult places to win, yes, but it's a challenge. That's the beauty of

Bayern totally dominated the opening stages on Tuesday. Sané had an effort saved by Andriy Lunin in the first minute and the hosts went on to miss a slew of chances. "We didn't have enough intensity, especially in the first

half," Ancelotti said. Nearly 20 minutes elapsed before Madrid enjoyed a

period with the ball.

Then Kroos spotted Vinícius' run and played a perfect through ball for the Brazilian to sweep the visitors' first real chance past Manuel Neuer in the Bayern goal.

Bayern lost its early zest as the visitors saw more of the ball. his players to push forward, then threw his arms up in exasperation.

Kane went closest with a free kick before the break, awarded for a foul by Nacho on Jamal Musiala, who gingerly rubbed his bandaged left leg. The Germany forward had only just recovered from a knee problem.

Sané equalized in the 53rd when he ran at the Madrid defense and cut inside Ferland Mendy before firing a fierce strike just inside the near post. Kane made it 2-1 four minutes later with a penalty awarded after Lucas Vázquez bundled over Musiala.

But it wasn't the last penalty as Kim Min-jae - who was beaten on Vinícius' first goal -brought down Rodrygo. Vinícius duly equalized from the spot.

"It was a back-and-forth game," Bayern midfielder Konrad Laimer said. "But yeah, it's Real Madrid, you can't let anything happen against this team.

Nadal plans to play in Rome after a positive week in likely his last Madrid Open



 $R^{\text{afael Nadal left Madrid feeling better}} \\ R^{\text{afael Nadal left Madrid feeling better}}$ arrived, and is now planning to play in Rome while continuing his preparations for the French Open.

Nadal lost in straight sets to the 31stranked Jiri Lehecka in the fourth round at Madrid on Tuesday. But the Spaniard was

"positive week" in every way, and said his body held up well.

"I was able to play four matches, a couple of tough matches," Nadal said. "So very positive, winning three matches, playing four matches at the high level of tennis. I enjoyed a lot playing at home. I leave here with very positive energy."

Nadal arrived in Madrid pessimistic about his physical condition, and he feeling good about his progress following his latest injury layoff.Nadal called it a wasn't even sure if he would be able to play. He said he only did it because it was

an emotional tournament for him. The 37-year-old Nadal is playing in his final year on tour. He had already bid farewell to Barcelona, where he lost in the second round. The 22-time Grand Slam champion hadn't played a tournament

champion hadn't played a tournament since Brisbane in January. "Today is unforgettable day in terms of saying goodbye, Madrid," he said. "But my career keeps going, and I have my personal goals that I have got in the next couple of weeks, and I want to explore if I have any chance to achieve that." Nadal said Rome, where he won 10 titles and where the tournament starts May 8, was also emotional for him.

"That's another very special tournament in my career," he said. "I dreamed to play all these tournaments that I had success one more time. I missed Monte Carlo unfortunately, that is one of the most special for me, but Rome is one of these ones that I enjoyed a lot playing there."
In Madrid, Nadal defeated American teenager Darwin Blanch in the first round and 11th-ranked Alex de Minaur in the second, both in straight sets. He needed three sets to edge Pedro Cachin in the third round."I want to play well there (in Rome). I want to be competitive," he said. "I want to give myself a chance to play good tennis, and I'm gonna keep working hard to try to make that happen."

Playing at the French Open, which begins May 26, is one of Nadal's main goals during his farewell season.

Top seeded Bopanna, Ebden pair knocked out of Madrid Masters

Top-seeded Indo-Australian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Mathew Ebden bowed out of the ATP Mutua Madrid Open after a shocking firstround loss to the unheralded duo of Sebastian Korda and Jordan Thompson here. Bopanna and Ebden, who are

the reigning Australian Open men's doubles champions, went down 7-6 (4) 7-5 in a contest that lasted one hour and 17 minutes. Squaring off for the first time,

the American-Australian duo matched Bopanna and Ebden shot for shot.

Korda and Thompson displayed a strong service game and saved the lone break point they conceded in the opening set.

To their credit, Bopanna and Ebden also did not allow Korda and Thompson to Korda and Thompson to convert the three breaks points they ended up conceding. However, Korda and Thompson managed to gain the upper-hand by clinching the set in a tie-breaker.

Korda and Thompson gained



in confidence and managed to break Bopanna and Ebden once from the four chances that came their way.

The top seeds, in contrast, could not exert any such pressure, resulting in an early exit from the tournament being played on clay. The rare

notwithstanding, Bopanna and Ebden have enjoyed a good run on the circuit, winning the Indian Wells

Masters last year which made the 43-year-old Indian the

The duo made the men's doubles semi-finals Wimbledon and the final of the US Open in the same season.

oldest ever ATP Masters 1000

champion.

Earlier this year, the Bopanna also became the oldest world number one in doubles thanks to the Australian Open triumph.

Four Indian boxers march into semi finals

PTI ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN)

Indian pugilists Aryan, Yashwardhan Singh, Priyanshu and marched into the semi-finals with confident wins at the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here

on Wednesday.

Aryan gave India a perfect start with a 5-0 unanimous decision win Uzbekistan's Iuraev Shakarboy in the 51kg category. His win was followed by a good show by Yashwardhan (63.5kg), who remarkable made comeback after going down in the first round to grab a 4-

1 victory over Iran's Mirahmadi Babaheidari. Priyanshu (71kg) and Sahil (80kg), on the other hand, didn't break sweat as they wrapped the bout with referee stop the contest (RSC) decision against Chinese Taipei's Wu Yu En Turkmenistan's

Yklvmov Abdyrahma respectively. Meanwhile, Jatin ended his category with a 1-4 loss against Uzbekistan's A

and

Nodirbek. The youth semi-finals will be

The youth semi-finals will be played on Friday.
Aryan (92kg), Nisha (52kg), Akansha Phalaswal (70kg) and Rudrika (75kg) will be in action later tonight in their respective youth quarter-finals bouts.
Late on Tuesday, Jugnoo (86kg), Tammana (50kg) and Preeti (54kg) claimed victories to enter the U-22 semi-finals.

semi-finals.

On Thursday, eight U-22 pugilists will take the ring pugilists will take the ring for their quarter-finals bouts -- M Jadumani Singh (51kg), Ashish (54kg), Nikhil (57kg), Ajay Kumar (63.5kg), Ankush (71kg) and Dhruv Singh (80kg) in the men's category and Guddi (48kg) and Poonam (57kg) in the women's section.

The tournament has seen participation from over 390 boxers from more than 24 countries, fighting for medals across 25 weight categories. The finals for the youth and U-22 category will be played on May 6 and 7 respectively.

Red Bull chief technical officer Adrian Newey to step down from F1 team

AP ■ MILTON KEYNES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

A drian Newey, the designer pivotal in Red Bull's dominance of Formula One, will step down early next year, the team said Wednesday. The 65-year-old Newey will end his near two-decade career with Red Bull in the "first quarter faces"

"For almost two decades it has been my great honour to have played a key role in Red Bull Racing's progress from upstart newcomer to multiple title-winning team," he said.

"However, I feel now is an opportune moment to hand that baton over to others and to seek

to hand that baton over to others and to seek new challenges for myself."
Newey joined Red Bull in 2006 and helped the team win seven drivers' titles - including the last three seasons for defending champion Max Verstappen - and six constructors' titles.
Red Bull said its chief technical officer would be stepping back from F1 design and focus on its first hypercar, the RB17. "All of our greatest moments from the past 20 years have come with Adrian's hand on the technical tiller," Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said.

team principal Christian Horner said.
"For me, when Adrian joined Red Bull, he was already a superstar designer. Two decades and 13 championships later he leaves as a true



legend. He is also my friend and someone I will be eternally grateful to for everything he brought to our partnership."

News of Newey's departure could spark a

bidding war for his services. As Newey is free to join another team when he leaves Red Bull, it join another team when he leaves Red Bull, it paves the way for him to have an impact on the 2026 car for whichever team he joins. The next major change in regulations is due in 2026 and having Newey on board would give his next employers a significant advantage. Newey's departure comes in the wake of Horner being accused of "inappropriate behaviour" by a female employee. Horner was exonerated by Red Bull's parent company GmbH and has always denied the claims.

Archer Dhiraj aims for team qualification at Paris Olympics

Dhiraj Bommadevara, the only Indian archer to qualify for the individual event of the Paris Olympics, says locking a quota in the team events at the quadrennial extravaganza is next on their

The 22-year-old recurve archer qualified for the Summer Games in the men's individual event owing to his silver medal at the Asian Qualifying Tournament in Bangkok last

year.

"We are trying hard to convert the individual quota into a team quota, so we are working consistently towards it, planning for it and taking part in as many tournaments as possible," Dhiraj was quoted as saying in a SAI release.

"Our first priority is to get the

"Our first priority is to get the team quota. We will go to Paris 2024 with a simple mindset



just to give our best. The rest is Turkey in June is the final not in our hands. No expectation on results. We have to be prepared for everything and perform accordingly."

accordingly."
The Indian men's recurve team has been in good form. Last week, the trio of Dhiraj, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav had stunned reigning Olympic champions South Korea to land a historic World Cup gold medal after 14 years Cup gold medal after 14 years. The World Cup in Antalya,

qualifying event for the Paris Olympics.

Olympics.
However, if the Indian men's team is unable to make the cut there, it is still in prime position to qualify for the Olympics owing to the rankings. The top-two ranked team in the world get direct entry for the Games. India are ranked second so far behind korea

Dhiraj was also a part of the silver-winning men's team at

the Asian Games last year. Despite doing well at in World Cups, World Championship and other marquee events, Indian archers have yet to get their hands on an elusive medal at the Olympics.

"We are trying to achieve better versions of our past. We're not comparing with any other nation. Our priority is only to get better and improve from leaven leavent. from lessons learnt.
Talking about the impact of the

Talking about the impact of the compound team's performances he said, "Our compound team is the best in the world. Its performance helps us push ourselves. Both the compound bow and the recurve bow competitions are equally tough."
"How Jyothi (Surekha) didi handles her pressure in various categories - individual, mixed or team event - is really commendable and inspiring," he added.

Man United makes more executive changes Chennaiyin FC extends contract of as Jim Ratcliffe new era takes shape

AP MANCHESTER

Manchester United announced more changes to its executive structure as the new era under co-owner Jim Ratcliffe continues to take

Interim CEO Patrick Stewart and chief financial officer Cliff Baty will step down at the end of the season by mutual consent, the club said.

Jean-Claude Blanc, CEO of Ratcliffe's INEOS Sport, will take over as chief executive until former Manchester City executive Omar Berrada takes on the role on July 13.

Baty will be replaced by former INEOS Sport chief financial



move on as we establish a new officer Roger Bell. "I would like to personally thank both Patrick and Cliff management team for the club," said Ratcliffe, who is one for their support in helping us get to know the club and

of Britain's richest people. The billionaire owner of making us feel welcome and I respect their decisions to now petrochemicals giant INEOS bought a 25% stake in United in February, and his investment has already seen a host of major changes at the storied club.

Former CEO Richard Arnold stepped down in November and football director John Murtough left earlier this month.Ratcliffe's investment, which will eventually rise to a 27.7% stake, has seen him assume control of United's soccer operations.

soccer operations.
INEOS director of sport Dave
Brailsford and Blanc have
joined the board of the soccer
club.As well as the
appointment of Berrada,
former City academy director
Jason Wilcox has been hired as technical director.

goalkeeper Samik Mitra until 2027

Indian super League side Chennaiyin FC has extended goalkeeper Samik Mitra's contract till end of 2027 season, the club announced on Wednesday.

Mitra joined the Marina Machans from Indian Arrows in 2020 and has played a total of 22 matches for the team in all competitions, keeping clean sheets in three games.

three games.

The 23-year-old goalkeeper from Siliguri has become a force to be reckoned with between the posts and has played a crucial role in the team's success on many occasions. With immense potential, head coach Owen Coyle expressed confidence in Mitra's abilities to continue playing for the team in the forthcoming season. "We believe in giving chances to youngsters at



has great potential. He is young, and we have already seen his capabilities in the matches that he has played for the team," said Coyle. the club, and Samik Mitra is someone who

"It's important that such talented players stay at the club, and I believe that he can continue to grow with the team," he said.

Mitra made four appearances for the club

in the ISL 2023-24 season and looks to deliver quality performances for the team in the upcoming season as well. He also spent his early days at Chennaiyin FC, joining the club's U-18 team in 2017 and playing there during his formative years, where he acquired the necessary skills before departing for the Indian Arrows in 2019.

"I am really excited for another season with Chennaiyin FC. We qualified for the playoffs this season and want to do even better in the coming year. This club is the right place for me to grow and learn from some of the best coaches and players in the "I have grown a lot in the last few years and

want to continue the upward trajectory in my career," commented Mitra after committing to the club for another year.

Gritty Punjab Kings floor CSK by seven wickets SRH seek

 $\begin{array}{cccc} P_{\text{pragmatic}} & \text{mounted a} \\ p_{\text{pragmatic}} & \text{chase to} \\ \text{consign Chennai Super Kings} \end{array}$ to a demoralising seven-wicket defeat at their own den in their IPL match here on

Wednesday.
Punjab rode on quick 40s by Jonny Bairstow (46, 30b, 7x4, 1x6) and Rilee Rossouw (43, 23b, 5x4, 2x6) to move past Chennai's modest 162 for seven, which was built around

skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's solid 62 (48b, 5x4, 2x6).
The win took PBKS to seventh place on the points table with eight points, while CSK stayed on fourth with 10

points.
The Super Kings' defence of 163 faced multiple barricades as their spinners – Moeen Ali and Ravindra Jadeja – were rendered ineffective because of dew and pacer Deepak Chahar walked off the field with a niggle after bowling just two balls.

But that should not take the sheen out of PBKS' effort with the bat on the night.

Former Australia fast bowler Brett Lee feels

Lucknow Super Giants did not manage Mayank Yadav's injury well, suggesting that

the young tearaway pacer was brought back to IPL action

prematurely after being sidelined due to abdominal

The 21-year-old Mayank developed abdominal soreness during LSG's match

against Gujarat Titans on

April 7. That was his third IPL

game, and he impressed one

and all with his express pace

and two Man-of-the-Match

He made a comeback in LSG's

win against Mumbai Indians

in Lucknow on Tuesday but

walked off the field without completing his fourth over

LSG coach Justin Langer said the young pace sensation is feeling "sore in the same spot"

that kept him out of action for

almost three weeks, while

captain KL Rahul that added

Mayank had complained of

blame on the LSG top management and medical

slight pain in his sides.

after an injury scare.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

soreness.

awards.

opener Prabhsimran Singh, who played two convincing strokes, Bairstow and Rossouw kept the visitors in the hunt with a handy 64-run alliance as they also went past 50 in the Power Play segment. Bairstow treated spinners Jadeja and Moeen with disdain taking three boundaries and a six off them. In stark contrast to their Punjab counterparts, the CSK spinners gave away 44 runs in five overs without any return. But Bairstow's attempt to be too cheeky ended his stay. The England batter went for a cute ramp shot off Shivam Dube, but could only manage to feather it to MS Dhoni behind

the stumps. However, Rossouw and Shashank Singh (25 not out, 26b) made 44 runs in quick time as PBKS remained ahead in the game.

Rossouw, who pummelled Dube and Thakur for a six each, had a brilliant chance to make a fifty. But his attempt to smash Thakur's low full-toss out of ground resulted in struggled massively against Punjab spinners – Harpreet Brar and Rahul Chahar. make a fifty. But his attempt to smash Thakur's low full-



stumps rearranged.

But those were minor irritants in an otherwise polished effort as Shashank and skipper Sam Curran (26 not out, 20b) knocked off the remaining runs without much fuss during their unbroken 50-run alliance.

Earlier, Gaikwad braved a sluggish Chepauk pitch to make a solid fifty, but CSK

Gaikwad and Ajinkya Rahane (29, 24b) added 61 runs for the opening wicket but they consumed 49 balls.

There were flashes of intent too. Gaikwad played a fine upper cut off pacer Arshdeep Singh for a boundary and Rahane creamed three fours in a row off Curran, including a lovely cover drive.

The slide of CSK began once PBKS brought their spinners on immediately after the Power Play that yielded a satisfactory 55 runs.

Rahane tried to slog sweep Brar but his skier ended in the hands of Rossouw in the deep. But the left-arm spinner inflicted a bigger blow in the next delivery, trapping Dube, who was named in India's T20 World Cup squad, leg before for a first-ball duck.

Dube, promoted to No. 3 to counter spin, failed to connect an almighty heave off a fuller ball on the middlestump by Brar, and he had to walk back despite seeking help from DRS.

In the next over, leg-spinner Chahar got rid of Ravindra Jadeja, who was deceived by a delivery that turned into him a whisker to beat his prod. It was a total shutdown for CSK between sixth and 10th over, losing three wickets for iust 16 runs.

For a team that generally bosses the middle passage between the seventh and 15th over making runs at a rate of 10.6, the CSK was a shadow of their marauding self, managing just 47 runs against

A big chunk of credit should go to two Punjab spinners — Brar and Chahar — who exploited a slow track to the hilt to return with combined figures of 33 in eight overs for four wickets.

They also did not concede a single boundary in their spell. Gaikwad did his best to bring CSK back into the match, using his wide array of shots against pacers Harshal Patel and Curran, and reached his fifty in 44 balls.

The right-hander brought up his third fifty in a row in this

was returning to action after

missing five games.

Mayank made a sensational start to the IPL by taking six wickets in his first two games

before getting injured. He was later seen engaging in

a conversation with India and

MI pace spearhead Jasprit

Former India batter Suresh

Raina said Mayank must have got some valuable insight on

how to manage injury.
"It was a fantastic gesture

from Jasprit Bumrah to talk to the youngster. He has so

much experience. When (Mayank) meets him, he will

learn so much from Bumrah's

words about looking after an injury. It's not easy to return

from an injury and take

"Team doctor Vaibhav Daga

has worked with the BCCI before and helped Bumrah

return to fitness as well.

When Mayank bowls more

with the red ball and white

ball, I want to see him in Test

matches when we play in Australia, England, or New

"We haven't seen pace like

wickets," Raina said.

Zealand.

Bumrah.

perfect chase against RR

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

erratic Sunrisers Hyderabad would look to fix their chasing troubles and get their campaign back on track when they host the high-flying Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League here on

Thursday. A lot more is at stake for the Sunrisers than the Royals, who have virtually qualified for the playoffs.

In ominous form till few days back, SRH dropped out of the top four on the points table after suffering back-to-back losses against wooden spooners Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings where they failed to chase down totals.

With five wins and four losses, the 2016 champions sit on the fifth spot with 10 his fourth over having taken one wicket for 31 runs. He points.

The Pat Cummins-led side's top and middle-order batters have failed collectively while chasing, forcing head coach Daniel Vettori to admit that the idea of going all out with the bat in the second innings might not be the right thing to do.SRH have breached the 250-run mark thrice this season but all while batting

first. In contrast, they haven't managed to chase a total in excess of 200 even once.

'We have been successful setting totals and now we have to look at how well we are in chasing," head coach Vettori had conceded after the loss to RCB.

"We're pretty well-suited to chasing, but it hasn't really come off yet. So yeah, it is something (we need) to work on," skipper Cummins had said after he loss to CSK.

SRH are too dependent on the explosive starts provided by Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma. And, while the duo gets going it's great but when they flop, SRH will want to do a better job at re-building their innings. It's also about time Aiden

Markram steps up and justifies his spot in the playing XI, having had an underwhelming

season thus far.Runaway leaders Rajasthan Royals, on the other hand, will look to continue their near flawless

The inaugural edition's champions have shown then are perfectly equipped to compete anywhere.

They are perched atop the table with 16 points -- four points ahead of second placed Kolkata Knight Riders.
They are all but through to the

knockout stage.The Royals boast of a formidable top order, comprising Jos Buttler, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and skipper Sanju Samson, with all three of them in good nick.

The West Indian duo of Shimron Hetymer and Rovman Powell and youngsers Riyan Parag and Dhruv Jurel have also shown they can hit top gear.

They have an equally potent bowling attack comprising Yuzvendra Chahal, the experienced Trent Boult, Avesh Khan and Sandeep Sharma.

THE TEAMS (FROM): Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Jos Buttler, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Rivan Parag, Donovan Ferreira, Kunal Rathore, Ravichandran Kuldeep Sen, Saini, Sandeep Ashwin, Navdeep Saini, Trent Boult, Sharma, Yuzvendra Chahal, Avesh Khan, Royman Powell, Shubham Dubey, Tom Kohler-Powell, Cadmore, Abid Mushtaq, Nandre Burger, Tanush Kotian, Keshav Maharaj.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Faroogi, Shahbaz Ahmed Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan.

Mayank getting injured in first game on comeback has to directly be on LSG leadership: Lee



feared fast bowlers, laid the injury would have required four to six weeks to heal,

much more than the time they're calling it, normally

Lee, one of the game's most He said Mayank's initial the sidelines before being to even come right. We don't know the depths of how big a

kmph, that's not good management at all," Lee said in a JioCinema release.

"His first game coming back and getting injured, has to directly be on the leadership and the medical staff of the Lucknow Super Giants." The 47-year-old Lee, who

took 310 wickets from 76 Tests between 1999 and 2008, sympathised with Mayank, saying he should have got the right advice.

right advice.
"The only person who has to pay this price is this poor young guy Mayank, who is just electric. Everyone in the IPL has loved seeing what he's brought... You wish he got the right advice, so he doesn't have to go through and absorb this.
"Now, it's most probably

"Now, it's most probably going to mean that he's going to miss out on the World Cup if there's an injury that might come up."

four to six weeks to heal, "A side strain or whatever much more than the time period the youngster spent at takes at least four to six weeks to heal, "A side strain or whatever strain it was but for somebody who is pushing the limits of takes at least four to six weeks his body by bowling 150 after bowling the first ball of one day be invaluable."

OTHER SPORTS

I want to be on that flight to Paris, says Krishan Pathak



Tom Lockyer is at peace with prospect of retirement

AP ■ LUTON (ENGLAND)

 $T^{\text{om Lockyer, the Premier}}_{\text{League player who suffered}}$ an onfield cardiac arrest earlier this season, says he is "at peace" with the prospect of having to retire from the sport.

The Luton captain had a defibrillator fitted after collapsing during a game against Bournemouth in December. He had previously collapsed seven months earlier during a game at Wembley Stadium because he suffered atrial fibrillation.

The 29-year-old Lockyer, who recently became a father for the first time, has not given up hope of resuming his playing career. But he accepts that may not be possible. "I've made no secret saying I

would love to return to football, but ultimately it would have to come down to someone who's a cardiologist or a specialist who has done full research into what has gone on and if it could happen again, because we've got a little girl now and she takes priority," Lockyer told BBC Radio Wales.

"I would love to play football again, of course I would, it's my life but if it's the case that I can't, then I'm at peace with that as well.

the call comes. There is a healthy competition going on within the Krishan Pathak finds himself in a bizarre situation. He will have to battle it out with his friend and squad to earn a place in the Olympics-

bound team.

"Every player feels that he can be part of that squad. I am no different, and I want to be on that flight to Paris," Pathak told PTI during the team's training camp at the SAI centre here. Pathak shares a deep connection with Sreejesh. In fact, the veteran was India's goalkeeping coach during the 2016 junior World Cup, where Pathak showcased his talent to a broader world for the first time.

The 27-year-old insisted that the competition for an Olympic berth has not affected their personal equation. "It's dream for me to work with and play alongside Sree bhai. We are very comfortable with each other. We share a lot of information, especially when one of us commits mistakes. We point that out to each other.



"Whenever I commit a mistake, he will come and tell me what went wrong and how to rectify it. Similarly, I will do that when Sree bhai makes a mistake. We have a great bonding between us - on and off the field," detailed Pathak.

Happy that the title is finally out: R

Vaishali on officially becoming GM

The immediate assignment in front of

him is the FIH Pro-League matches, starting at Antwerp, Belgium from May 22. India will face some top-flight teams like Germany and Belgium in that tournament. Pathak

wanted to assert his claim for an

Olympic berth through some strong

outings in the Pro-League.

"We've played eight Pro-League matches in Ranchi and Rourkela. Now, we have some more Pro-League matches coming up ahead of the Olympics. We will meet some of those teams in the Olympics too. That familiarity will help us. "As a goalkeeper, I will look to source

as much knowledge from the Pro-League matches about our possible opponents in the Olympics," he

The Kapurthala man was all praise for Indian national team coach Craig Fulton, saying that the South African is helping the players to achieve their optimum potential ahead of the quadrennial showpiece.

When he spots a weakness, he starts working on it immediately. He hates wasting time. When we went to Australia recently, our attack and defence were not working as we lost the series 0-5.

tag, Vaishali said she became a

PTI CHENNAI

Grandmaster much before A Grandmaster much before the title was officially bestowed on her by FIDE recently, Indian chess player R Vaishali has revealed that there was a time she was unsure of being able to achieve the feat but managed to pull through owing to a good support structure.

But this time, Pathak is not ready to

The coach hasn't told us the team

composition for the Olympics. My

aim is to be ready 100 percent when

give up the slot without a fight.

Vaishali completed the requisite 2500 ELO points Llobregat Open tournament in Spain to become only the third Indian woman after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli to become a GM. However, the title was officially

given to her only recently

following the FIDE Council meeting during the Candidates Tournament in Toronto last month. "After completing the (Women's GM) title, I knew it would be changed to GM someday. I did not think about the title so much," she told PTI in an interview.

"Yeah, it took some time to get it official, but I'm happy that the title is finally out. I was okay with it (the delay)," she



added. The 22-year-old is basking in the glory of her solid performance in the Candidates tournament, where she won five consecutive games to finish joint second. She became a Woman Grandmaster in 2018 after completing her final norm during the Riga Technical University Open in Riga, Latvia. Having had to wait six years to finally earn the GM

bit unsure of the GM tag after her ratings stagnated due to lack of competition during the COVID 19 pandemic. "In between, I could not play any tournament for two years

due to the (COVID-19) pandemic. But, I was working throughout, trying to improve my game. I completed my International Master (IM) cycle post-pandemic (in 2021)," she recalled.

"Although I was improving my game slowly, my rating became stagnant. There were some low moments when I felt I might not get the title, but people believed in me and helped me to attain it," she said.

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