



OPINION 6
DELHI SCHOOL BOMB
HOAX REFLECTS RANCOR

WORLD 8
ISRAEL ORDERS CLOSURE OF
AL JAZEERA OFFICES

MONEY 10
INDIA URGES ADB NOT TO
OVERLOOK ITS FOCUS ON GROWTH

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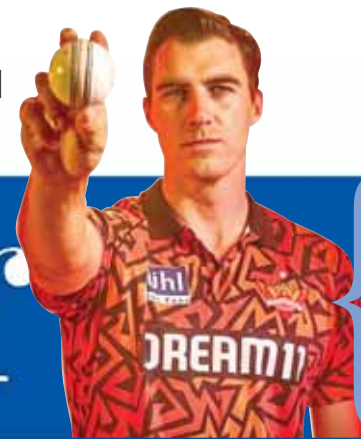
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SRH EYE
CONSISTENCY IN
MUST WIN CLASH
12 SPORTS

Janjgir-Champa: Can Cong outdo BJP?

From an electoral record point of view, Janjgir-Champa, a constituency reserved for the Scheduled Castes, sits on a political extreme. Here, the Congress won all the Assembly segments in last year's elections and has now fielded former Minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya against BJP's Kamlesh Jangde. Although the BJP has been consistently winning this seat since 2004, the Congress feels that its social justice plank might provide it an opening here. *The Pioneer* spoke to Kamlesh Jangde to know her party's prospects in the polls.

SHRI RAM SHAW ■ JANJGIR-CHAMPA

Smooth road never makes a good driver: Kamlesh Jangde

In the third and final phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, Janjgir-Champa will see voting with the BJP and Congress vying to outdo each other. There are 18 candidates in all including six women. Local dynamics are playing a major part here. BJP candidate and president of Mahila Morcha Kamlesh Jangde has vowed to implement all the Central government schemes effectively to provide benefits to the people.



you have been lucky go get it. Is there any internal feud in the party?

EXCERPTS...

Q - What are the major issues in the constituency you banked upon to garner votes?
There are several local issues which I will raise in parliament as a representative of my constituency after being elected. Education is my top priority. Setting up medical and engineering college here is very much important because students have been compelled to go to other states for studies. Another major issue is related with railways. We are really eager and committed for the expansion of train services here. I will implement all the Central governments' beneficiary schemes for the people.

Q - There were several contenders in the BJP who were wanting the party ticket. But

Yes, several central leaders from the party have visited the place to ask for support in the BJP's favour. Not only this, every party worker, from the booth level to senior level, are working

hard for "Abki baar, 400 paar." We are very much optimistic and confident.

Q - The Congress has fielded a heavyweight leader and former minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya against you. How big is the challenge?

I don't consider it a challenge because he recently lost the assembly election.

Q - This fight isn't going to be easy as there is no BJP MLA here. All the eight MLAs in this constituency belong to the Congress party.

So what? Smooth road never makes a good driver. If there is no competition, there will be no satisfaction in any business. We have to be bold enough to face it. I will go to the masses with the issue of development which the BJP government has done for every section of the society. Be it students, youth, farmers or women. There's a wave of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the country. 'Modi ki guarantee' will work wonders here and Modi magic will prevail and we will win all the 11 seats this time. Last time the BJP garnered 45.91 per cent votes while the Congress got 39.24 per cent votes. This figure is enough to tell the whole story and this time it's going to be much bigger.

Campaign ends for 3rd phase LS polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The high-octane campaigning for the third phase of 2024 Lok Sabha polls in 93 Parliamentary constituencies spread in 12 States and Union Territories came to an end on Sunday evening with top leaders of the BJP-led NDA and the Opposition INDIA bloc making a last-gasp effort to woo voters. The end of the campaigning marks the commencement of a 48-hour silence period. A total 1351 candidates are in fray in this phase. The third phase of Lok Sabha elections is an important round for Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. It will decide the political future of three bigwigs - "Maharaja" Jyotiraditya Scindia, from Guna, "bacchon ke mama and behno ke bhaiyya" Shivraj Singh Chouhan from Vidisha and "raja" of Raghogarh Digvijaya Singh aka Diggy Raja from Rajgarh. Scindia, who lost his family seat of Guna as a Congress candidate in 2019, is hoping to regain the constituency on a BJP ticket this time.

Similarly, this phase will be a test for the Samajwadi Party's (SP) first family as well, with Dimple Yadav, Akshay Yadav and Aditya Yadav contesting from Mainpuri, Firozabad and Budaun respectively. To ensure that the polling percentage is not affected due to the "harsh summer", the poll body has arranged shamianas and tents, additional fans and drinking water facilities to ambulances on standby and using adjacent rooms of the polling booth as waiting areas for the polling days.

The stakes are significant for the BJP in this round as the party had in 2019 won an overwhelming majority of these seats, including all in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, that will go to polls on May 7.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP charge, asking the Congress to give in writing that it will not hand over the quota for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes to Muslims.

Can Congress spring surprise in Durg?

Former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who focused on Rajnandgaon where he was the candidate and where polling was held in the second phase, remained more active in other seats too. His shadow looms large in his home turf Durg where the BJP has fielded outgoing MP Vijay Baghel, who lost to his relative and Bhupesh Baghel from Patan Assembly segment last November. He is said to be ahead of Rajendra Sahu, his opponent from the Congress. Will it be a one-sided affair or can the Congress stop Vijay's juggernaut? In an interview with *The Pioneer*, Vijay Baghel tried to clear the air on anti-incumbency factor and more...

SHRI RAM SHAW ■ DURG

Former ministers in fray shows Congress' frustration: Vijay Baghel

While the BJP refrained from offering ticket to sitting MPs in Raipur, Mahasamund, Kanker and Janjgir seats, it did renominate Vijay Baghel for the Durg constituency. He is a leader of the Kurmi community. He previously contested the assembly elections against then Chief Minister of the ruling Congress, Bhupesh Baghel, showcasing his resilience in the political arena. In the Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, he was also the coordinator to prepare the party's manifesto. Since becoming the president of Bhalai Charoda Municipal Council as an independent candidate in 2000, he has achieved an important position in state politics.



have sidelined the Congress. The Congress is in despair, that is why big former ministers have been fielded in the elections who have a lot of money. This shows frustration in the party. The Congress has already accepted defeat.

Q - There seems to be anti-incumbency against you! Will it hinder your chances?

I have faith in Janata Janardan. Despite Covid pandemic for two years, I always remained with the people. The account of every penny of MP fund is in front of the District Planning Committee and this account is online. Any person can go and see it or ask for it. There is no need to hide anything from anyone. First of all, by using my MP fund, I have got development works done everywhere. If two years of Corona are left aside, the amount that came from the MP fund in the remaining three years has been fully utilized. Medicines have been made available for the health benefits of people in Corona. The talk of anti-incumbency against me is completely baseless.

Q - The Congress had played a big gamble by fielding Bhupesh Baghel. How much impact will it have?

The Congress had contested elections in Chhattisgarh by betting on Bhupesh Baghel. The result of which is in front of everyone. The Congress has gone out of power. He contested and won the elections from Patan constituency using money power but his efforts in the Lok Sabha will be of no use. It has no effect here. The people of Durg Lok Sabha constituency

EXCERPTS...

Q - The BJP has made you a candidate from this seat for the second consecutive time. Why?

I am a leader who lives among the people and work for them 24 hours. I challenged former CM Bhupesh Baghel thrice in Assembly elections in which I faced defeat in 2003 and 2013 but I was successful in 2008. In the 2019 Lok Sabha

5 NYAYS - GUARANTEED BY CONGRESS

YUVA NYAY

- 30 lakh government jobs
- ₹1 lakh stipend under Apprenticeship Act for degree / diploma holders

KISAN NYAY

- Legal guarantee of MSP
- Loan waiver for farmers
- GST-free agriculture

SHRAMIK NYAY

- ₹400 daily wage under MGNREGA
- Free healthcare of up to ₹25,00,000

NARI NYAY

- ₹1 lakh annual cash transfer to women
- 50% reservation for women in government jobs

HISSEDARI NYAY

- Socio-economic caste census
- Settlement of all FRA claims within 1 year

HAATH BADLEGA HALAAT



This election is resolve to make Narendra Modi, PM third time

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

State President of Bharatiya Janata Party and Khajuraho MP Vishnudutt Sharma, while addressing the press conference held in Gwalior on Sunday, said that this Lok Sabha election is an election of the resolve to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi the third time.

been somewhat less. But the reason for this is that Congress leaders and workers are in despair. They have started feeling that the government will be formed by BJP and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is going to become the Prime Minister for the third time.

made a comment on Rohit Vemula, silent on the insult of a Dalit woman, Imarti Devi? Rahul Gandhi should apologize to the people of the country for his sin. BJP State President Shri Vishnudutt Sharma said that Congress has promised to provide reservation to Muslims if it comes to power.



Congress candidate Arun Shivastava with MLA Alif Aqueel during a rally ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in Bhopal on Sunday.

Voters to be provided refreshments at polling stations

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said that the third phase of voting will be held in the state on May 7. Preparations for this have been completed by the Commission.



said that the third phase of voting will be held in the state on May 7 in 9 Lok Sabha constituencies. This includes Bhopal, Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Rajgarh and Betul Lok Sabha constituencies.

voting on 7th May. Shade, cold water, medicines, seating arrangements and all other facilities have also been made available to the officers and employees involved in the polling parties at the polling material distribution site.

SBI organizes voter awareness car rally ahead of general elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

State Bank of India, Bhopal Circle organized a Voter Awareness car rally and walkathon in Bhopal on Sunday to encourage citizens to exercise their democratic right and cast their vote in the upcoming General elections at Bhopal parliamentary constituency on Tuesday.



through the main streets of the city, with participants displaying banners for awareness of casting their vote and importance of voting.

asm displayed at our voter awareness rally". He further added that through this car rally, we aim to inspire our fellow citizens to register and vote. He said that the task is not yet completed till everyone including all SBI staff members at Bhopal cast their vote on May 7.



BJP workers take part in a 'Walk for Modi' campaign ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in Bhopal on Sunday.

Boy dies after drowning in Sehere water park

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 9-year-old child died due to drowning in the water park of Sehere near Bhopal. He had come to celebrate the weekend with his family and drowned while playing in the swimming pool.

noticed, she pulled him out of the water. Called out to father. Aarush's mother alleges that after the accident, she asked for a first aid kit from the water park management but did not get it.

child was taken to the civil hospital. The doctors there declared the son dead after checking. We want to keep him bright, which is why we have decided to donate his eyes.

Health camp organised on third death anniversary of late Vijesh Lunawat

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Vijesh Lunawat Foundation organized a free health camp in Shivaji Nagar on the third death anniversary of Late Lunawat, in which hundreds of people were treated and examined by various noted doctors and their teams from Bhopal and outside.

Fire at restaurant in Reliable House

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A fire broke out in restaurant located in Reliable House in Koh-e-Fiza, Bhopal on Sunday morning. The Wonder Bread Bakery and Restaurant is situated on the ground floor of the building, where the fire broke out at around 8 am and the firefighters immediately rushed to the spot.

First year student beaten up fatally by five students in RGPV campus

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Five students fatally attacked a student at Rajiv Gandhi Technological University (RGPV) located in Gandhi Nagar, Bhopal. The accused seriously injured victim by hitting him on the head with a rod. The reason for the dispute is said to be old rivalry.



Examinees being checked as they arrive to appear in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) in Bhopal on Sunday.

Pioneer Impact: Collector orders probe in high price of liquor

PNS ■ DHAR

The Pioneer had prominently published the news on April 21, 2024 with the title "Liquor being sold at higher price in Dhar district". In this news it was highlighted that a bottle of country made liquor worth Rs 70 is being sold for Rs 80 and a bottle of Le Mount beer of Rs 150 is being sold for Rs 170, thus Rs 10 more is being charged on a bottle of country made liquor bottle and Rs 20 more is being charged on a bot-

tle of le Mount beer. There are a total of 90 composite liquor shops in Dhar district which are being operated by the single contractor, due to which liquor above MRP is being sold at all the 90 shops. Dhar Collector Priyank Mishra gave order to investigate the rate of sale of liquor to Dhar assistant commissioner Excise Vikram Deep Sangar who formed an excise team led by Sub Inspector and was sent to the shops posing as a customer and it was found that the sales-

Congress playing with fire by attempting Hindu, Muslim divide: Rajnath

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

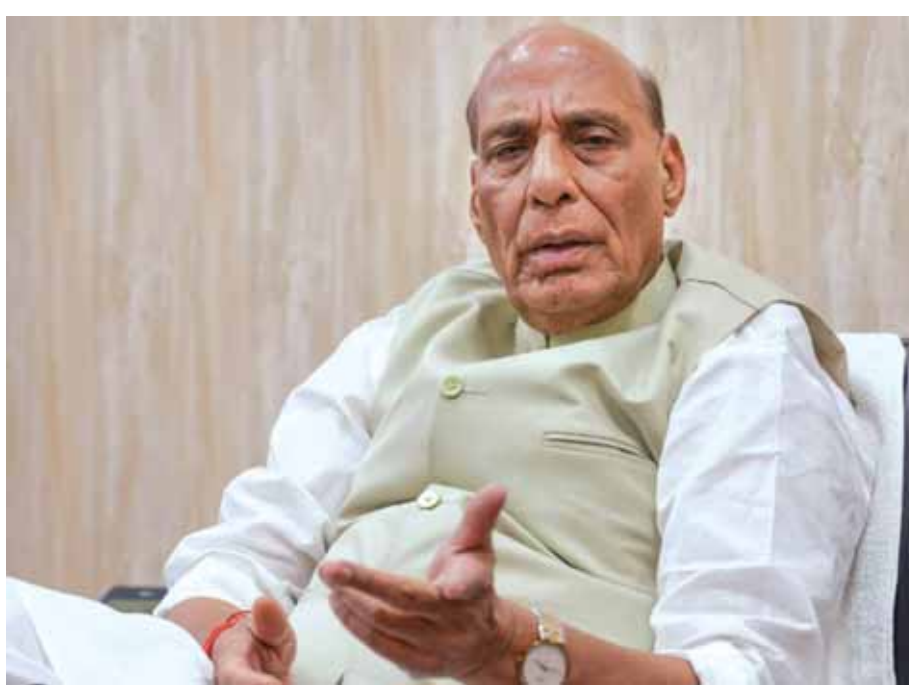
Rahul Gandhi has “no fire but the Congress is playing with fire” by attempting to create a Hindu-Muslim divide for electoral gains, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here even as he asserted that the NDA will cross the 400-seat mark in Lok Sabha polls and the BJP will improve its tally in most of the states.

In a free-wheeling interview to PTI, Singh also indicated that the BJP will implement its big-ticket plans like rolling out of Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and the ‘One Nation One Election’ push in its third consecutive term.

The defence minister, who has been vigorously campaigning across the country, said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi does not have the fire in his belly to put up a spirited fight in the polls. Singh also said that the BJP government will never change the Constitution or end reservations, and accused the Congress of creating “fear psychosis” and resorting to spreading misinformation for “vote-bank” politics.

The defence minister blasted Congress for spreading “canards” that the BJP will change the Constitution if it returns to power and especially stressed that there was no question of changing the Preamble of the Constitution.

His assurance that the Preamble will not be changed



addresses concerns among critics that the word ‘secular’ to describe India could be removed by the BJP if it retains power.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been alleging that BJP will “tear up and throw away” the Constitution if it retains power. Some other Congress functionaries had expressed apprehensions that the BJP may drop the word “secular” from the Preamble of the Constitution.

“Congress brought constitutional amendments 80 times. They changed the Preamble during the Emergency,” the defence minister said.

“The BJP will never change the Constitution. Constitution-makers never imagined that there would be changes in the Preamble. You (Congress) only acted to hurt the core idea of the Constitution,” he said in the interview on Saturday.

“There is no question of changing the Preamble of the Constitution. They changed it and now they are making baseless allegations against us,” the BJP leader added.

The Preamble to the Constitution of India presents the basic principles of the Constitution. The 42nd Amendment in 1976 changed the description of India from a “sovereign democratic republic” to a “sovereign socialist secular democratic republic”.

“They (Congress) are trying to get people’s support by

instilling fear among the citizens,” Singh said.

Attacking Congress, he said former Pakistani minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain’s “praise” of Rahul Gandhi is a matter of “grave concern” and his party must explain the “deep love” for its leader from a country that always attempted to destabilise India.

“There must be a reason behind this deep love (agadh prem) from a country that has been trying to destabilise India. It is a matter of grave concern and India wants to know the reason behind this love,” he said.

Chaudhry -- infamous for boasting about Pakistan’s hand in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack -- had on May 1 posted on ‘X’ excerpts from a speech by Gandhi with the caption “Rahul on fire” that drew sharp criticism from BJP leaders.

“If a former minister of a country that has been attempting to destabilise India praises (Rahul), then it is a matter of concern. The Congress owes an explanation about its relationship with Pakistan,” the defence minister said.

On the overall political landscape, the defence minister accused the Congress of attempting to disturb social harmony and trying to create tensions on the religious lines.

“They are attempting to create a Hindu-Muslim divide for electoral gains. The Congress is trying to create tensions on the religious lines,” he alleged.

“The Congress wants to disturb social harmony. They look at the Muslim community only as a vote bank. I have a suggestion for them -- politics should not be done only for forming governments. The aim of politics should be for nation-

building,” he said. “Rahul Gandhi has no fire but the Congress is playing with fire,” he said.

The defence minister also said that he was confident that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would cross 400 seats and the BJP would get over 370 as these projections were made after a detailed assessment of the ground situation and not made only for public consumption.

Singh said the people of the country will repose their faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP’s tally will improve significantly based on the performance of the government in the last five years. “Our seats will increase in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and we will get some seats in Tamil Nadu. Our account will open in Kerala as well. We are winning a good number of seats in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana,” he said.

“We will increase our tally in Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam. We are sweeping Chhattisgarh,” he said, noting that BJP will cross the 370-mark.

The defence minister said the BJP is set to win up to 75 seats in politically crucial Uttar Pradesh.

Asked whether the BJP’s seats in Maharashtra will come down, he did not give a direct reply but said there may be some adjustments here and there.

The BJP leader also came

down hard on the Congress for its plan to “redistribute” wealth, saying it will have disastrous consequences for the country’s economy.

“The concept of redistribution of wealth will trigger recession. Argentina and Venezuela implemented it and faced disastrous consequences. The investors will lose confidence in India,” Singh said.

On the BJP’s big-ticket plans like the implementation of UCC and ‘One Nation One Poll’ push in if it retains power, Singh said his party fulfils promises that it makes to the people of India.

In its manifesto, the BJP pledged to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) if it returns to power after the general elections. It also mentioned that the party will move forward with a resolve to realise the idea of ‘One Nation, One Election’.

“We always fulfil our commitments. We will never allow any question mark on our credibility and will not compromise on the country’s unity and integrity. We implement whatever we say in our manifesto. We have to do whatever we say,” Singh said.

“We will go for ‘One Nation One Election. We will take views of every quarter including all political parties on it,” he said.

On UCC, the defence minister said even the Constitution-makers felt a need for it, as it is mentioned in the directive principles.

“The Congress wants to create fear psychosis; they want to use the Hindu-Muslim card,” he said.

“They do not have any issue. They want to form a government by dividing the society in the name of caste, creed and religion and they have always done it,” he alleged.

Asked about the relatively lower voting percentage that ranged from 66-67 per cent in the first two phases of the elections, Singh said it was not a matter of concern for the BJP.

The defence minister said the opposition parties are not being able to enthuse their supporters to come out and vote.

On the issue of reservation, Singh alleged that the Congress is misleading the nation.

“The Congress is trying to mislead people. There will not be any end to reservations. They are making false allegations against us,” Singh said.

The Congress has also asked the BJP leaders to clear the party’s stance on whether it would remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, and the Other Backward Classes.

“We will not tinker with the reservations at all,” Singh said while replying to a query.

The Congress has promised to remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SC, ST and OBC.

Blue corner notice issued against Prajwal Revanna: Karnataka Home Minister



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Sunday said a Blue Corner notice has been issued and Interpol’s help is being taken to bring NDA’s Hassan Lok Sabha candidate Prajwal Revanna, who is facing sexual harassment cases, back to India.

A Blue Corner Notice is issued by the international police cooperation body to collect additional information from its member

and has acted as per law on the complaints it has received.

He recalled it has arrested the ‘accused,’ apparently referring to Prajwal’s father HD Revanna, who was apprehended in an abduction case.

Prajwal’s father Revanna, a JD(S) MLA, is also facing molestation and kidnapping charges, and has been arrested by the SIT on Saturday.

He was arrested by the sleuths of SIT on Saturday in the kidnapping case linked to sexual abuse allegations against his son Prajwal. He was picked up soon after a court here rejected his anticipatory bail plea.

Explicit video clips allegedly involving the 33-year-old Prajwal, grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister Deve Gowda, had started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, following which the state government constituted the SIT to probe the sexual abuse allegations against the MP.

countries about a person’s identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.

The minister said the Special Investigation Team formed to probe the sex scandal will decide on how to bring Prajwal back.

“Already Blue Corner notice has been issued. The Interpol will inform all the countries and locate him,” Parameshwara told reporters here.

Appreciating the work of SIT, formed to probe the case, he said the team is doing its job

Tents, fans, ambulances set up at booths to help voters beat heat



PTI ■ BENGALURU

With just two days left for the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka, the Election Commission has made elaborate arrangements to increase voter turnout amid the soaring temperatures in the 14 constituencies that go to the polls on May 7.

The first phase of the general elections in 14 of Karnataka’s 28 Lok Sabha constituencies was held on April 26, and the second, for the rest of the 14 segments, is on May 7.

From arranging shamianas and tents, additional fans and drinking water facilities, to keeping ambulances on standby and using adjacent rooms of the polling booth as waiting areas, the Election Commission is making efforts to ensure that the polling percentage

is not affected due to the “harsh summer”. There are 28,269 polling stations in these 14 constituencies - Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Bellary, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davangere and Shimoga -- which are going to the polls on May 7. In this first phase, Karnataka recorded 69.56 per cent voter turnout. Speaking to PTI, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena said the constituencies where polling will take place on May 7 are in North Karnataka region and the temperature is slightly high there, “so we have made all necessary arrangements to ensure that people aren’t deterred from coming out of their homes to vote.” He further said, “It is a harsh summer, so we are making special arrangements to mitigate this temperature, (and the

possibility of) stroke, dehydration... So, we are making special arrangements for shades, drinking water, fans wherever required at the polling stations.” The poll body has also roped in ASHA workers and Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) workers to handle any medical emergency that may arise at the polling stations. “We also have local-level health workers including ASHA workers and ANMs from primary health centres, so they will have basic medical kits to ensure that first aid is given to voters and polling officials in case of any medical emergency,” he said.

Ambulances have also been kept ready in a cluster of polling stations so that patients requiring more than first aid can be quickly taken to hospital, he added.

The priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of poll officials and voters, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Adequate number of tents and umbrellas for shade, and chairs to set the officials and voters have been provided at the polling stations to ensure that they are not exposed to direct sunlight. “All arrangements are being done to ensure that people have a pleasant experience and that the harsh summer will not deter them from coming to vote. We will do our best to see that people will not face any problem,” the CEO said. There are a total of 2,59,52,958 electors in these 14 constituencies, out of which 1,29,83,406 are male, 1,29,67,607 are female and 1,945 are others.



Congress has no support left, not even in its bastions: Dhami

PTI ■ BUDAUN (UP)

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday said Congress has no support left in its once-considered bastions.

Attacking Rahul Gandhi for not contesting from the Amethi Lok Sabha seat this time, Dhami said, “No ground has left for Congress anywhere in the country on seats once considered their traditional seats.”

On Fire incidents in Uttarakhand, Dhami, who was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a rally here, said the authorities have filed more than 350 FIRs in this connection.

“We conducted a review meeting on Saturday and responsibilities have been given to officers. We are also working on the Char Dham Yatra, which is about to start,” he said.

Asked about giving a ticket to Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh’s son from the Kaiserganj seat, he said the Samajwadi Party is a dynastic party and not the BJP. Former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is accused of sexually assaulting several female wrestlers. A case was filed against him by the Delhi Police last year.

Congress to approach courts for disqualification of MLAs involved in anti-party activities

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Congress general secretary in-charge of Assam Jitendra Singh on Sunday said the party will approach the courts for disqualification of its MLAs who are involved in “anti-party” activities after the Assembly Speaker “failed” to act on its petitions to cancel their membership of the House.

“We have already written to the Speaker seeking disqualification of Congress MLAs indulging in anti-party activities. That the Speaker is not acting against them shows that the BJP government is not following rules,” Singh said, addressing a press conference here.

He said the party will now approach the high court and even the Supreme Court, if needed, to get these legislators disqualified.

The state’s principal



opposition party has submitted multiple petitions to Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary seeking disqualification of at least five MLAs for various “anti-party” activities, like lending support to the government, voting against party nominee

in Rajya Sabha poll and campaigning against the party candidate in Lok Sabha elections.

On recent show-cause notice to Goalpara (West) MLA Abdul Rashid Mandal, Singh said, “There was a complaint against him and he was

served show-cause notice. He has given his reply. It is being studied and follow up action will be taken.”

AICC general secretary Ajoy Kumar, also speaking at the same press meet, claimed that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wants to return to the Congress, which he had left for the BJP in 2015.

“We hear that he wants to return and is evaluating the options, once Narendra Modi loses this election. But the Congress will never accept a turncoat like him,” Kumar, the party in-charge for Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, claimed.

Alleging large-scale corruption against Sarma, he said, “I have come from the second most corrupt state (Odisha) to the most corrupt state (Assam) in the country.”

He claimed that the BJP-led government has “failed” the

state on all fronts, with rising unemployment and corruption in the name of building roads and other infrastructure, among others.

“Unemployment has increased by 7 per cent on one hand, and liquor shops are mushrooming on the other hand. The youth, who have no jobs, are getting addicted to the easily available liquor. Sarma has become the ‘liquor man of India,’” Kumar alleged.

The AICC leader alleged that the Modi government has “failed” on economic, employment and national security fronts.

Money is concentrated at the hands of a few people leading to a greater rich-poor divide, unemployment is rising and the PM remains silent on China and Pakistan-based militants continue to carry out attacks, he claimed.

One more opportunity for Andhra staff on poll duty who missed voting: CEO



PTI ■ VIZIANAGARAM (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena on Sunday said that the Election Commission will facilitate another opportunity to vote for employees on election duty who missed exercising their franchise.

During a visit to Vizianagaram to check voting facilities, the CEO

noted that such employees will be given the opportunity on May 7 and 8.

“We are working with the goal to ensure that every employee discharging election duties will be offered the postal ballot facility,” said Meena in a press release.

In the event of eligible employees not finding their names on the postal ballot list and also in case of not applying for this facility,

Meena said they can still go ahead and include their name to vote by producing the election duty order and identity card at their relevant facilitation centres.

“Home voting and postal ballot voting for all will be completed by (the) 9th of this month (May),” the CEO told PTI. Further, he highlighted that minimum facilities and helpdesks have been arranged at all facilitation centres.

Besides making all the necessary arrangements for conducting polls in the southern state, Meena observed that election staff have already undergone two rounds of training.

Moreover, he noted that cash, liquor and other inducements worth Rs 450 crore have been seized in the run-up to polls until now.

Elections for the 175-member Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh are scheduled on May 13.

Putin entering a new era of extraordinary power

AP ■ MOSCOW

Just a few months short of a quarter-century as Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin on Tuesday will put his hand on a copy of the constitution and begin another six-year term as president wielding extraordinary power.



Since becoming acting president on the last day of 1999, Putin has shaped Russia into a monolith — crushing political opposition, running independent-minded journalists out of the country and promoting an increasing devotion to prudish "traditional values" that pushes many in society into the margins.

he has no need or desire to gamble for more." But, Walt added, "Russia will be in no shape to launch new wars of aggression when the war in Ukraine is finally over."

The regime "is at permanent risk of crumbling overnight, as its Soviet predecessor did three decades ago." Putin is sure to continue his continue animosity toward the West, which he said in his state of the nation address "would like to do to Russia the same thing they did in many other regions of the world, including Ukraine: to bring discord into our home, to weaken it from within."



Russian APC and S-400 anti-aircraft missile system launchers roll during the Victory Day military parade dress rehearsal at the Red Square in Moscow, Russia, on Sunday.

Ukraine marks third Easter at war under fire from drones

Kyiv (AP): As Ukraine marked its third Easter at war, Russia launched a barrage of drones concentrated in Ukraine's east where the situation on the front line is worsening.

Aus police shoot 16-yr-old boy after he stabs man

AP ■ MELBOURNE

A 16-year-old boy armed with a knife was shot dead by police after he stabbed a man in the Australian west coast city of Perth, officials said on Sunday.

That boy has been charged with committing a terrorist act. Six of his alleged associates have also been charged with a range of offenses, including conspiring to engage in or planning a terrorist act.

alerted by a phone call from a member of the public that a knife attack was underway in the parking lot. Three police officers responded, one armed with a gun and two with conducted energy devices.

Indian Embassy in China holds first meeting with students hit hard by COVID visa bans

PTI ■ BEIJING

The Indian Embassy here has held its first interactive session with the Indian students who suffered the most during the three-year COVID-19 period following China's visa bans prolonging their academic periods for several years.

2020 over 23,000 Indian students mostly studying medicine in Chinese universities constituting the second-highest number of foreign students after Pakistan.

Japanese foreign minister holds talks with Nepalese counterpart

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko on Sunday met Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayankaji Shrestha here and discussed issues of bilateral and mutual interests.

'Prachanda' separately, according to the sources. The Japanese embassy in Kathmandu last week expressed hope that the foreign minister's visit "will give a good impetus for further strengthening our friendly relationship towards the year 2026, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal."



A pigeon flies past as Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa takes a walk at the Basantapur Durbar Square, one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Sunday

King Charles III's openness about cancer has helped him connect with people

London (AP): King Charles III's decision to be open about his cancer diagnosis has helped the new monarch connect with the people of Britain and strengthened the monarchy in the year since his dazzling coronation at Westminster Abbey.

monarchy represent the people of modern Britain? How will the institution address concerns about its links to empire and slavery? Should the monarchy be replaced with an elected head of state?



People pose for photos among the tulips as they bloom in Commissioner's Park in Ottawa, Ontario, a week before the opening of the Canadian Tulip Festival, on Saturday

Saree tradition, elegance celebrated at Times Square

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The iconic Times Square there was awash with varied hues and styles of sarees as hundreds of women from the Indian-American community as well as other nations showcased the timeless elegance, heritage and cultural diversity of the garment at a special event.

embroidery, styles and fabrics, including Khadi, the women proudly showcased their collection as they waved the national flags, danced together, took pictures and shared stories about their sarees, culture and heritage.

New York City. A press release here said that building on the success of global events like the 'Royal Ascot Ladies' Day' and the historic 'Saree Walkathon' at Trafalgar Square in London, the Saree Goes Global event was not just a "celebration of cultural diversity but also a platform to support artisans in rural India, preserving traditional craftsmanship."

Kakati-Shah, a medic turned entrepreneur and philanthropist, emphasized Uma's dedication to empowering underprivileged girls, youth, and women, both in New York City and beyond.

supporting artisans worldwide. It serves as a powerful reminder of our commitment to heritage and cultural exchange," he said.

