

Sarbananda accuses Congress Shah highlights Himanta govt's success story of playing divisive politics China couldn't encroach 'single inch' of land under Modi govt: Union Home Minister

LAKHIMPUR, April 9: Asserting that China couldn't encroach a "single inch" of land under the Narendra Modi government, home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday claimed that people will never forget how former PM Jawaharlal Nehru said "bye-bye" to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh during the 1962 Chinese aggression.

Addressing an election rally in Assam's Lakhimpur, he said the BJP-led government at the Centre secured the country's border with Bangladesh and stopped infiltration

"During the Chinese aggression of 1962, Jawaharlal Nehru had said 'bye-bye' to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. People of these states can never forget that," Shah said.

"But now what changed is that under the Narendra Modi government. China could not encroach even a single inch of our land. In Doklam, we stood firm against them for 45 days and forced them to retreat," he added.

Shah claimed that Assam's border with Bangladesh was earlier "open for infiltration"



"Then the Modi government came to power at the Centre, and the Himanta Biswa Sarma's government was formed here. Now, we can say that infiltration has stopped," he said.

Taking a swipe at the Congress, he said, "A few days back I saw Rahul Gandhi saying that he is here to save Assam's culture. I want to ask, what have you done

grandmother, injustice has been done to Assam. Scores of youths have lost their lives.

Noting that the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA was withdrawn from 80 per cent of areas of the state, he said peace accords were signed with different militant outfits over the last 10 years and 9,000 youths surren-

dered. "They signed the (Assam) Accord but did not fulfil the clauses. We signed the Bodo Accord and within two years, all clauses were fulfilled," Shah said. He said that it was under Sarma's government that rhino poaching stopped, encroachers of Kaziranga National Park were cleared and Satra (Vaishnavite monastery) land was freed of encroachment.

Shah also accused the Congress of not giving due recognition to the state's icons, be it Ahom general Lachit Borphukan, first CM Gopinath Bordoloi, or music maestro Bhupen Hazarika.

Criticising the Congress manifesto, he claimed that it favoured the Muslim personal law.

"Himanta Biswa Sarma has stopped child marriages. In Uttarakhand, there is the UCC." he said, drawing a comparison with the Congress manifesto. Questioning Congress's support for Article 370, he said the entire country considers Kashmir an integral part of India. Shah alleged that the Congress was (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, April 9: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, while rallying support for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, accused the Congress-led opposition of sowing seeds of division along religious lines.

Addressing public meetings at Nigam Paanch Ali, Oufulia Tea Estate, and Kushal Nagar under Tingkhang LAC on Tuesday, Sonowal emphasized that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, has been tirelessly working towards the upliftment of every member of society and improving their quality of life. "Our government has gone beyond mere slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' and has successfully lifted 25 crore people out of abject poverty in less than 10 years. The allegations made by the Congressled opposition are baseless, as our focus has always been on inclusive governance and holistic societal development. The attempts by the Congress-led opposition to divide people along religious lines are unfortunate, confusing, and detrimen-



tal to political discourse and the overall environment," he added.

As a senior leader of the BJP contesting from the 13th Dibrugarh Lok Sabha Constituency, Sonowal highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity across all religions and sects, attributing it to his efforts to uplift every section of society and bring the northeast out of decades of violence and neglect by the Congress.

"People have suffered greatly under six decades of Congress misrule, but in the last 10 years, our government has made sincere efforts to improve the quality of life

for all. We must strive for harmony and unity, regardless of our religious affiliations," he stated.

He further said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives to strengthen ties with Islamic countries and his respectful gestures towards the Pope reflect our commitment to the vision of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabkar Prayas,' aimed at building a strong and inclusive society.

"Let us all unite towards building a developed India," he added. Sonowal was accompanied by Union minister of state for petroleum & (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Expenditure observer inspects candidate's spending ahead of LS polls HT Correspondent

JORHAT, April 9: Ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Jorhat, the expenditure observer for the 14 Jorhat HPC, Ashok Kumar Suthar, conducted a thorough inspection of the expenditure registers of contesting candidates at the Jorhat Circuit House on Monday.

A district administration official revealed that the inspection saw the presence of key personnel including the chief executive officer of Zila Parishad, an assistant commissioner, assistant expenditure observers representing the 10 Assembly constituencies within the Jorhat Lok Sabha seat, authorised election agents of the candidates, and junior accounts officers.

The meticulous scrutiny aimed to ensure transparency and adherence to spending regulations by the candidates vying for the Jorhat parliamentary seat.

The expenditure observer is slated to revisit the expenditure registers of the candidates on April 13 and 17 for further assessments. With four candidates in contention for the Jorhat parliamentary seat, the electoral landscape includes representatives from prominent parties such as the BJP and the Congress party, setting the stage for a closely watched electoral contest



HT Bureau DONGKAMUKAM, April 9: With the Parliamentary elections drawing near, political fervor in West Karbi Anglong is on the rise as parties have geared up for the second phase of polling scheduled for April 26.

This time around, five candidates are vying for the 6-Diphu (ST) Parliamentary Constituency. Among them are Amarsing Tisso from the BJP, Joyram Engleng from Congress, Jotson Bey from the Au-Demand onomous State Committee (ASDC), John Bernard Sangma from the Gana Suraksha Party (GSP), and independent candidate JI Kathar, backed by the All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC).

In recent campaign efforts, Con-

gress candidate Joyram Engleng expressed confidence in his party's prospects, asserting that the people are disenchanted with the Modi government's promises of "ache din" and are seeking change.

Meanwhile, independent candidate JI Kathar has been advocating for the strengthening of the Sixth Scheduled and the implementation of Article 244 (A) to grant autonomous statehood in hill districts of Assam. Kathar's campaign has focused on reaching out to every Member of Autonomous Constituency (MAC) in West Karbi Anglong On the BJP front, candidate

Amarsing Tisso has made development his central agenda, expressing assurance of victory with the highest margin. Tisso's campaign has re-

ceived support from chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and chief executive member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, along with various MLAs, execu-

tive members, and MACs. During campaign meetings, the BJP highlighted plans for the development of Ronghang Rongbong, the seat of Karbi traditional kings. into a model village, promising further progress under their governance. The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), a regional party based in Karbi Anglong, has also initiated its campaigning efforts, with candidate Jotson Bey criticising both BJP and Congress governments for allegedly neglecting the interests of the Karbi people. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

GUWAHATI, April 9: The Assam Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has issued notice to the Congress on allegation of violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), raised by the BJP.

A complaint was filed by the BJP on Monday, alleging that the Congress 'guarantee cards', which are being distributed house-to-house, were in violation of the MCC

The CEO issued a show-cause notice to the state Congress president on Monday evening, seeking a response within 2 pm of April 11.

"Whereas on the basis of a prima facie scrutiny, it appears that these Guarantee Cards bearing the Symbol and Photographs of Star Campaigners of your party are violative of the Model Code of Conduct guidelines," the notice said

It said the complaint by BJP stated that the 'guarantee cards' promised Rs one lakh

to every educated youth in the first year and Rs one lakh per year to one female member of every poor family, without disclosing the source of funds to fulfil these promises.

The CEO maintained that prima facie scrutiny indicated that the card contains a form which collects certain details of the person, including data which are of the nature of personally identifiable information. It said that while 'electoral promises are in the realm of possibility, form distribution and data collection make the design transactional and in the nature of inducement of electors', which is a prohibited activity.

The manifesto is expected to reflect the rationale for the promises and broadly indicate the ways and means to meet the financial requirement for it, as trust of the voters should be sought only on those promises which are possible to be fulfilled, it added. Maintaining that the 'guarantee cards' are violative of MCC (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

in the region

AAU prioritises healthcare and women's wellbeing on World Health Day HT Correspondent JORHAT, April 9: The Department of Food Sci-

ence and Nutrition at the College of Community Science, Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, marked World Health Day with a fervent dedication to promoting accessible healthcare and raising awareness about women's wellbeing on Tuesday.

In collaboration with Jorhat Medical College & Hospital (JMCH) and the Nutrition Society of India (NSI), Jorhat chapter, a series of impactful events unfolded on April 7th under the theme "My health, My Right." The day commenced with a compelling lecture on "Women's health and wellbeing," delivered by Dr Pranabika Mahanta, associate professor at the Department of Gynaecology, JMCH, Jorhat.

Dr Mahanta also shed light on various aspects of women's health, offering insights into common issues, preventive measures, and strategies for maintaining overall wellbeing.

Dr Nandita Bhattacharrya, Dean (i/c) of the College of Community Science, AAU, Jorhat, extended a warm welcome to the chief guest, faculty members, office staff, and students at the event. Simultaneously, a screening camp for cervical cancer was conducted, aiming to raise awareness and provide essential screenings (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

We are not outsiders: Manipuris who took refuge outside state yearn to vote in LS polls

IMPHAL/NEW DELHI, April 9: "Don't holding elections in the current circumtreat us like outsiders". Forced to leave their state after clashes broke out last year, that's the impassioned plea from Manipuris who fled to other parts of the country to escape the violence and long to vote in the Lok Sabha election but can't because there is no such provision

Displaced people living in relief camps in conflict-hit Manipur will be able to vote in the upcoming elections beginning April 19. However, there is no such arrangement for those outside the state unable to return home because they feel it's still not safe. And officials say getting them to vote is just not feasible.

Manipur has traditionally seen a very high voter turnout with more than 82 per cent polling recorded in the 2019 elections. This time, the ethnic violence has cast a shadow with several civil society groups and displaced people questioning the relevance of

stances. As leaders of both the Kuki-Zo and Meitei groups take up the issue with the Election Commission, those who took shelter outside the state say they have stakes in the future of Manipur and should be allowed to vote through postal ballots if no other arrangement can be made. Like Biren Chandam, a Manipuri now living in Delhi.

"I came to Delhi and found a job here while my family moved to neighbouring Mizoram. We long to go back to our house which may or may not be existing right now but we cannot vote for our state. Why?

"The elections should either be postponed or some arrangements should be made for us to vote from wherever we are. We are being made to feel as outsiders in our own home state. Don't make us feel like outsiders," Chandam told PTI. Kumthai, a tribal from Manipur now living in a relief camp in Mizoram, echoed him. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Alarm bells ringing in economy, households slowly sinking into debt'

are ringing in the Indian economy, the Congress on Tuesday claimed stagnant wages and high inflation have forced households to take loans just to get by and are slowly sinking into debt.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also stressed that the Congress' 'Nyay Patra' is a direct response to the "failures" of the government and said "dus saal anyay kaal" ends on June 4.

"All the alarm bells are ringing in the Indian economy, only Mr Modi does not seem to hear them. Under his leadership, India has witnessed record levels of unemployment, high inflation, declining real wages, widespread rural distress, and dramatic increases in inequality," Ramesh said in a statement. He said the latest report from a leading financial

services company shows the devastating impact that Modi's policies have had on Indian households.

"According to the report, household debt levels reached an all-time high of 40% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by December 2023. Furthermore, at 5% of GDP, net financial savings have also dropped to their lowest level in 47 years!" he said, referring to the report by financial services firm Motilal Oswal. The report states that this "dramatic" fall in savings is

NEW DELHI, April 9: Asserting that "alarm bells" due to weak income growth, which explains why both private consumption and household investment growth have remained markedly subdued in 2023-24, Ramesh said.

> "The authors make sure to point out that the 'dismal' savings rate is 'not an anomaly', and that net financial savings have remained at 5% of GDP for the first nine months of 2023-24. Reduced savings means less capital available for business and government investments, and increased reliance on volatile foreign capital," he said.

The report also confirms that a spike in unsecured personal loans is to blame for high levels of household debt, not home loans or vehicle loans as the Finance Ministry would have us believe, he said.

"The share of housing in personal loans is actually below 50% for the first time in 5 years, and only highend automobiles are doing well, while mass market cars and 2-wheeler sales have slumped," the Congress leader argued.

"December also saw a worrying surge in gold loans given the sentimental value that households place on gold assets such as jewelry, these loans are only taken as a last resort. Although the Modi Sarkar would be loath to admit it, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SC to hear on April 16 pleas

for cross verification of votes

'Road to India bloc majority in LS polls will begin from Nagaland'

HT Correspondent DIMAPUR, April 9: Exuding confidence that the Congress Party and the INDIA bloc would get a clear majority in the 2024 Loka Sabha elections, AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday said the road to that majority will begin from Nagaland. With Nagaland having only one Lok Sabha seat, Ramesh said every vote and every seat counts as the country is at a turning point.

"That is why I have started my election campaign in Nagaland from Dimapur. I turned 70 today, and I am celebrating my 70th birthday in Dimapur," the senior Congress leader said while addressing a press conference at the Congress Bhavan here. Saying that the 2024 election is a battle between unity and uniformity, he said while the Congress wants to celebrate India's diversity, the BJP wants to impose artificial uniformity. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

GUWAHATI, April 9: One lakh students of Assam's Kamrup district on Tuesday wrote postcards to their parents, urging them to exercise their voting rights in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The campaign 'Maa-Deutaloi Votdanor Ahbaan' (appeal to mother-father to vote) by the Kamrup Election District is targeted to ensure 100 per cent voter turnout when polling will be held in the district in the third phase on May 7.

"We are hopeful of an emotional impact generated by the children appealing directly to their parents as it makes the adults answerable to the future generation," Kamrup district commissioner Keerthi Jalli said. As part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, one lakh students from class 8 to 12 from 526 educational institutions



'We are hopeful of an emotional impact generated by the children appealing directly to their parents'

Assam: One lakh students send postcards to parents to vote

across the district wrote postcards. beseeching their parents to cast their ballots on election day for their better future, more participative democracy and growth of India. "I remember writing letters to friends as an assignment in school.

It used to be an exercise we all looked forward to. The nostalgic joy associated with receiving a stamped letter in your name from a postman is unparalleled," she added. The postcards will be posted with cooperation of the

postal department so that they reach the parents within 15 days.

The postcards have been stamped with 'Kamrupa' and 'Luit', the black softshell turtles which are election mascots of the district. Upon receipt of the letter, students will be encouraged to upload selfies with their parents and the postcards.

Jalli said the writing exercise is important to inculcate the value of writing letters for a generation most accustomed to computers and phones. As the students are from high schools, these children will always remember this message of need to vote and as they grow into their adulthood, they would carry on their democratic duties by casting their votes on time, Jalli, also the district election officer, said. "With a target of one lakh house-

holds, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

cast with VVPAT slips NEW DELHI, April 9: The lated to Electronic Voting Machines Supreme Court said on Tuesday it will hear on April 16 a batch of pleas seeking cross-verification of

Audit Paper Trail (VVPAT).



correctly. It generates a paper slip which can be viewed by the voter. It is kept in a sealed cover and can be opened in case of a dispute. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, which could not take up the petitions re-

(EVM), said it will consider all pleas in the matter for hearing on next Tuesday. The seven-phase Lok the votes cast with Voter Verifiable Sabha polls will begin on April 19.



vocate Prashant Bhushan sought an urgent hearing

On April 1, the top court had sought responses from the Election Commission and the Centre on a plea by activist Arun Kumar Agrawal (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

had said on April 3 it would hear next week the plea filed by NGO Asfor Democratic Re-(ADR)

BUSINESS

anticipated to impact gold prices

71,481 at 1700 hrs, up by ₹ 569 or

Silver prices jumped by ₹ 500 to a record high of ₹ 84,500 per kg

Gold, silver trade at record high levels for second day in Delhi

NEW DELHI, April 9: Extending the record breaking run to the second day in a row, gold and silver hit lifetime high levels in the local market here on Tuesday following strong global trends, according HDFC Securities.

Gold prices rose by ₹ 140 to scale a new peak of ₹ 71,840 per 10 grams in the national capital. Gold had settled at a record ₹ 71,700 per 10 grams on Monday. Silver prices jumped by ₹ 500 to a record high of ₹ 84,500 per kg. Silver breached the 84,000 level for the first time on Monday.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in Delhi markets are trading at a new record high of ₹ 71,840 per 10 grams, up ₹ 140, amid bullish cues in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD

2,350 per ounce, up USD 14 from the previous close.

Traders continue to propel the momentum which aided the gold prices to new highs on a daily basis. Further, the dollar index traded lower and US Treasury yields retreated which provided



additional support for the safe

Asia stocks rise with market focus on signs of interest rate cut

HONG KONG, April 9: Asia stocks were mostly higher on Tuesday, with investors mainly focusing on a US inflation report and what it means for interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

Oil prices advanced while US futures were mixed. The yen weakened, coming close to a 34-year low.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.1% in morning trading to 39,773.13. The yen languished as the US dollar edged up to 151.88 Japanese yen, coming close to a 34-year high of 151.97 yen which it hit in late March. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong rose for a second day, adding 0.7% to 16,856.41, while the Shanghai Composite index slipped 0.2% to 3,041.30. In South Korea, the Kospi lost 0.3% to 2,710.41, and Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.4% to 7,822.40.

An update on the US consumer price index is due later Wednesday. "The upbeat sentiment stemming from Friday's jobs report, where indexes surged following wage-growth data suggesting contained inflationary pressures, has set the stage for a white knuckle event as the forthcoming consumer-price index release looms larger than life," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management.

US stock indexes were at a virtual standstill Monday as trading calmed after a whirlwind couple of days left them a bit shy of their records. The S&P 500 edged down less than 0.1% to 5,202.39. The Dow Jones

Industrial Average tiptoed less than 0.1% lower to 38,892.80, while the Nasdaq composite inched 5 points higher to 16,253.96. A string of reports showing inflation and the economy have remained

hotter than expected has led investors to delay forecasts for when relief on rates could arrive.

This week has several flashpoints that could further swing expectations. Apart from Wednesday's report on the inflation that US consumers are feeling at cash registers, there will be reports on inflation at the wholesale level and on expectations for future inflation among US households.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said recently that he still expects cuts to interest rates this year, but the central bank needs additional confirmation inflation is heading toward its target of 2%. The Fed has been holding its main interest rate at the highest level since 2001, hoping to grind down enough on the economy and prices for investments to get inflation under control. The risk of holding rates too high for too long is that it could cause a recession.

Friday's surprisingly strong jobs report showed that workers' average hourly wages were behaving as expected, even though employers hired

LG Electronics introduces innovative MoodUPTM refrigerator

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, April 9: LG Electronics, a leading consumer durable brand in India, has unveiled a groundbreaking product in collaboration with renowned fashion designers Gauri and Nainika at the prestigious Lakme Fashion Week. The LG MoodUPTM Refrigerator combines cutting-edge technology with exquisite design, offering consumers a unique blend of luxury and functionality. The MoodUPTM Refrigerator features LED panels on its doors, allowing users to customize the refrigerator's exterior lighting according to their mood or personality. With over 1.7 lakh color combinations, this innovative appliance adds a touch of personalization to any kitchen space, creating a vibrant ambiance. Hwang Youngmin, Director of Home Appliances & Air Conditioner, LG Electronics India, expressed excitement about the launch, stating that the MoodUPTM Refrigerator reflects LG's commitment to blending style with cutting-edge technology. The collaboration with Gauri and Nainika underscores a shared vision of vibrant, bold, and optimistic living, encapsulating the essence of 'Life's Good.' Gauri and Nainika echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the seamless integration of innovation and sophistication in both the re-

frigerator and their Fall Winter 2024 collection. The collaboration signifies a commitment to merging design with timeless elegance, offering consumers a unique and luxurious experience. Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu, the showstopper at Gauri and Nainika's fashion showcase, praised the LG MoodUPTM Refrigerator for its innovative features and vibrant colour palette. She highlighted the synergy between fashion and technology, emphasizing the refrigerator's celebration of style and innovation. The LG MoodUPTM Refrigerator boasts a range of intelligent features, including InstaView technology for quick access, retractable shelves for flexible storage, and advanced temperature management for optimal food preservation. Additionally, the refrigerator comes equipped with a built-in Bluetooth speaker, allowing users to connect external devices and play music of their choice. With its sleek design and advanced functionalities, the LG MoodUPTM Refrigerator redefines the kitchen experience, offering unparalleled convenience and performance for modern households. Seamlessly integrated with LG Thin $Q^{\mbox{\scriptsize TM}},$ the refrigerator allows for remote control and monitoring, empowering users with convenience and peace of mind.

Contd. from Page 1...

Shah highlights Himanta

responsible for the delay in the construction of the Ram temple, and asserted that it was the decisiveness of the Modi government which ensured that the temple was built in its tenure. He said the development of the Northeast is central to the overall growth of the nation and urged the people to vote for the NDA candidates in all the seats of the region. Shah said the Congress-led government had given ₹ 1,62,000 crore to the state between 2004 and 2014, while during the BJP's 10-year rule, Assam got ₹ 4,15,000 crore. "There are two alternatives before you -- to vote for the Rahul Gandhi-led INDI Alliance, or vote for Modi-led BJP," he said, urging people to ensure a third term for the NDA government at the Centre. (PTI)

Sarbananda accuses Congress

natural gas Rameswar Teli, Duliajan MLA Terosh Gowala, Tingkhong MLA and state cabinet minister Bimal Borah. Political parties intensify

As the election landscape evolves, parties intensify their efforts to sway voters in West Karbi Anglong, awaiting the onset of campaigning by the Gana Suraksha Parishad (GSP).

Assam CEO issues notice

on preliminary examination, the CEO issued the notice, asking the Congress to present in writing as to why appropriate action should not be taken against the party and its leaders. Earlier last week, the BJP was also served a show-cause notice by the CEO over allegation of violation of MCC, raised by the CPI(M) on similar grounds of collection of data of voters. The Left party had alleged that the BJP violated the MCC by collecting data of people, on the pretext of conducting a socio-economic survey, with the intention of increasing the number of beneficiaries under a government scheme. The Congress had also submitted a written complaint over the same matter before the CEO's office against the ruling BJP. (PTI)

We are not outsiders: Manipuris

"We took refuge in a separate state because our state was burning. Eleven months later, the situation is still not conducive to return. Unless we vote for the right person to take the right steps for us, how can we come out of this situation," he said. Ten Manipur MLAs belonging to the Kuki-Zo community earlier this month asked the Election Commission to let displaced members of the community scattered beyond the state to vote from wherever they have taken shelter across the country. "If suitable arrangements are not made for our displaced people taking shelter in different parts of the country many of our genuine voters will be deprived of their constitutional rights to exercise their franchise as provided under the Constitution," the MLAs said. A Meitei civil society group has also written to the poll panel asking that the postal ballot facility be extended to voters from Manipur living outside the state. The Meitei Heritage Society said recently that it is impossible for voters living outside the state to take expensive flights and road travel is completely unsafe. "Many others are also unable to travel to Manipur to vote due to security concerns," the society wrote, referring to the sharp ethnic divide due to which Meiteis can't pass through Kuki-Zo-dominated hill areas by road, while members of the Kuki-Zo tribes have stopped taking flights since the airport is in Imphal valley.

According to officials in the state government, it is not possible to extend the vote facility to those outside the state. "There is no official number of such people who left the state..some left through Imphal, some left through Mizoram... We do not have a count. It does not seem feasible to arrange voting for them due to logistical reasons,' an official said on condition of anonymity. The Mizoram Home Department estimates that at least 9,196 adults and children from neighbouring Manipur have taken shelter in different parts of the state.(PTI)

Sensex breaches 75,000-mark and Nifty scales new peak in intra-day MUMBAI, April 9: Benchmark 0.15 per cent. Among the indices, equity indices hit new peaks on consumer durables went lower by 1.10 per cent, industrials declined

Tuesday with Sensex breaching the historic 75,000-mark for the first time during intra-day before ending the session marginally lower on profit-booking at higher levels.

breaking rally, the 30-share BSE



Sensex declined 58.80 points or 0.08 per cent to settle at 74,683.70. During the day, it climbed 381.78 points or 0.51 per cent to reach the all-time peak of 75,124.28.

The NSE Nifty closed 23.55 points or 0.10 per cent lower at 22,642.75. During the day, it climbed 102.1 points or 0.45 per cent to hit the record peak of 22,768.40.

From the Sensex basket, Titan, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Wipro and ITC were the major laggards.

gainers.

ICICI Bank, Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, Axis Bank, Bajaj

0.55 per cent, capital goods (0.48 per cent) and telecommunication (0.29 per cent) Metal jumped 0.53 per cent, re-Putting a break on its recordalty (0.50 per cent), financial services (0.22 per cent) and teck (0.10 per cent).

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Seoul ended lower. European markets were trad-

ing mostly lower. Wall Street ended on a mixed note on Monday.

The Indian market reached a fresh intra-day peak before seeing profit-booking at higher levels in anticipation of tomorrow's key US inflation data, which carries weight in determining future rate cuts by the US Fed. Concerns have emerged amidst recent better-thananticipated US employment and manufacturing data, suggesting a potential shift in expectations regarding rate cuts this year," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geoiit Financial Services

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 684.68 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.18 per cent to USD 90.54 a barrel.

haven asset, Gandhi said. 0.8 per cent. Additionally, silver prices also The August delivery contract of gold breached the ₹ 72,000 per traded higher at USD 28.04 per ounce. In the previous close, it gram level intra-day. The August contract traded ₹ 574 or 0.81 per had finished at USD 27.80 per cent higher at ₹ 71,813 per grams ounce. "The upcoming US Consumer Price Index (CPI) data is at 1700 hrs. (PTI)

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Finance, Nestle and Mahindra & The BSE benchmark jumped 494.28 points or 0.67 per cent to Mahindra were among the major In the broader market, the BSE

settle at a new closing peak of 74,742.50 on Monday. The NSE midcap gauge dipped 0.47 per cent Nifty climbed 152.60 points or 0.68 and the smallcap gauge declined per cent to 22,666.30. (PTI)

far more workers than expected last month. But critics say stock prices already look expensive given their huge run of more than 20% from November into March. That means "achieving ambitious earnings forecasts has become paramount," according to Lisa Shalett, chief investment officer at Morgan Stanley Wealth Manage-

PhonePe partners with Star Health Insurance to offer insurance with monthly payment options

ment. (AP)

Star Health Insurance's Comprehensive Health Insurance will be offered to customers with a monthly premium payment plan

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, April 9: PhonePe on Tuesday announced a partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd. (Star Health Insurance), India's largest retail health insurance Company, to offer customers health insurance with a monthly and annual payment option. With this partnership, PhonePe users will now be able to avail of 'Star Comprehensive Insurance Policy' on the PhonePe app with coverage up to Rs 1 Crore. Having previously disrupted the market with its motor insurance products, with this launch, PhonePe further expands the options available to its users in the health insurance category.

Through this partnership, for the first time, Star Health Insurance's Comprehensive Health Insurance will be offered to customers with a monthly premium payment plan, pioneered by PhonePe - a first-ofits-kind initiative in the industry. Users can also opt to pay their premium with the UPI AutoPay mandate and enjoy added convenience. This move was driven by a critical insight that smaller monthly payments ease the financial burden for users while empowering and enabling them to opt for more extensive insurance coverage without stretching their finances.

Star Comprehensive Insurance Policy is a power-packed insurance plan with benefits including the most popular OPD and maternity coverage. Market research conducted with PhonePe's user base indicates that these two features were the most preferred by



customers while buying health insurance. Star Comprehensive Health Insurance Policy is an endto-end health insurance policy with sum insured available up to ₹ 1 crore. The policy covers road ambulance and air ambulance expenses, out-patient medical consultation up to the limits, outpatient coverage for dental and Ophthalmic treatment, delivery expenses, organ donor expenses, provides coverage for newborn babies, including any congenital disorders, from day one of birth and vaccination expenses of the new born until the baby completes one year. Mental well-being is covered up to the sum insured. The policy does not impose sub-limits for day care procedures. Accidental death and permanent total disablement is covered up to 1 crore. Star Comprehensive Health Insurance Policy also offers wellness programmes that provide discounts on premiums and condition management programmes. Furthermore, the policy provides an annual health check-up, automatic restoration of the sum insured up to 100%, and a cumulative bonus, payable up to 100% of the basic sum insured.

Speaking on the partnership, Vishal Gupta, CEO of PhonePe Insurance said "PhonePe is excited about this partnership with Star Health. Star's differentiated benefits combined with PhonePe's distribution. customer centric approach and simple DIY journeys will help turbocharge insurance adoption and penetration in the country. We are on a mission to help turn India from an underinsured nation to one that is adequately insured and view this partnership with Star as a crucial milestone in this journey.' Speaking on the partnership,

Anand Roy, MD and CEO of Star Health Insurance, said, "We are excited to partner with PhonePe and offer health insurance targeted at Gen Z and Millennials since peo'Alarm bells ringing in

the fact is that stagnant wages and high inflation have forced households to take loans just to get by," Ramesh said. The finance ministry can spin this all they want but the truth is there for everyone to see - far from saving money, Indian households are slowly sinking into debt, he claimed.

"The findings of this report add to the laundry list of the Modi government's economic failures: Near-zero growth in employment - just 0.01% jobs added between 2012 and 2019, while 70-80 lakh youths join the labour force every year. Real wages of regular workers have declined between 2012 and 2022. Due to high inflation, workers can now afford less than they could ten years ago," he said. Ramesh said MGNREGA person-days increased from 265 crore in FY2022-23 to 305 crore in FY 2023-24, indicating widespread rural distress.

In a post on X, Ramesh said, "Modi ka parivar chhorho, desh ke parivaron ka kya? (Leave aside Modi's family, what about the families of the country?)." The seven-phase Lok Sabha polls will begin on April 19 and end on June 1. The results will be declared on June 4. (PTI)

Assam: One lakh students

we intend to touch at least seven lakh people that would include the parents and grandparents, which is 90 per cent of our voter population," said district development commissioner, Kamrup, and SVEEP Cell in-charge Susanta Kumar Dutta. "The remaining 10 per cent youth voters are being targeted differently," he added. (PTI)

SC to hear on April 16

seeking a complete count of VVPAT slips in polls as opposed to the current practice of tallying slips from only five randomly selected EVMs from each assembly segment comprising a parliamentary constituency. Both the pleas will now be taken up for hearing on April 16. The ADR has sought the court's direction to the poll panel and the Centre to ensure the voters are able to verify through VVPATs that their vote has been "counted as recorded".

The petition has sought matching the count in EVMs with votes that have been verifiably "recorded as cast" and to ensure that the voter is able to verify through VVPAT slip that his vote, as recorded on the paper slip, has been "counted as recorded". The plea has said the requirement of the voters verifying that their votes have been "recorded as cast" is somewhat met when the VVPAT slip is displayed for about seven seconds after pressing the button on the EVM through a transparent window. (PTI)

AAU prioritises healthcare

such as the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) DNA test and PAP smear for cervical cytology. The camp, held at the Medical Unit of AAU, facilitated convenient access to healthcare services for 25 women from the campus. Today, an enlightening exhibition was arranged, featuring themes like "Brain food," "Stress-relieving foods." Access to healthcare facilities," "Healthy eating behavior," and "Non-communicable diseases." The exhibition aimed to disseminate crucial information about maintaining good health among students and the general public. Under the guidance of the organising team from the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, AAU, Jorhat, these initiatives were executed effectively, emphasising the fundamental right to health for every individual. This collective effort underscores the commitment of Jorhat's academic and medical institutions towards advancing public health and wellbeing.

'Road to India bloc majority

He added that the BJP's long-term and real game plan is one nation, one language, one nation, one election, one nation, one religion, one nation, and one culture. Ramesh said while the Congress wants to strengthen unity in the country by celebrating its diversity, the BJP wants to impose artificial uniformity. Citing the removal of Article 370 from the Constitution by the BJP government, he said their next target is Article 371. He said Article 371 (A) that protects the cultures, languages, religions and ownership and transfer of land of Nagaland is under threat. Ramesh said this Lok Sabha election in Nagaland is between unity and uniformity, for survival and protection of Article 371 (A), permanent peace and return to social harmony, progress and prosperity, jobs for youth and preservation of democracy and democratic institutions. He said the Congress is fighting for justice for women, youth, farmers and workers and social justice for all sections of our society, particularly the SC, ST and backward classes. "You will not hear the PM speaking about these issues," he stated. Ramesh said the people of country are fed up of 10 years of Modi's instice, false promises, lies and defamations, adding they want to give a long retirement to the PM on June 4.

He added that the Congress is the only party in Nagaland, the northeast and the rest of India that is keeping the democracy alive. He called the BJP ally Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) in Nagaland a hotchpotch of opportunists and people who need protection from ED, CBI and Income Tax. Ramesh said the NDPP is a washing machine of the BJP and that the Congress is fighting this washing machine in Nagaland.

ple in that group are digital natives. The partnership between Star Health Insurance and PhonePe will provide consumers with a hasslefree payment option that is light on the pocket and at the same time meets their wellness needs. Today, health insurance has become a necessity. Given the high medical inflation in the country, it has become crucial to have an all-inclusive health cover that can protect at every stage of an individual's life. At Star, we believe in keeping our customers healthy, and towards that end, customers buying our policies will not just get insurance but will also

have access to free teleconsultations, homecare, and nutritionists, among other services. We look forward to expanding our digital reach through this partnership.'

Users can purchase the policy via the PhonePe app by clicking on the Health Insurance option, selecting the members to be insured, the desired sum to be insured and the payment tenure. Here, they can choose either monthly EMIs or annual payments and then select the policy of their choice. Once they opt for the policy, the customer's have to fill in their details, such as name, age, and gender, followed by the health history of all members to be insured. This will be followed by a regulator mandated Know Your Customer (KYC) form and declarations, once the payment is completed.

Star Health, in association with PhonePe, plans to roll out more such innovative offerings across its indemnity and benefit products.

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REGION

the 10 years of the BJP govern-

ment at the Union, they have failed

Speaking to reporters, Atishi

Marlena questioned why, when the

government was unable to provide

jobs and houses to its own people,

controversial Draconian Law like

the Citizenship (Amendment) Act

is being brought in to create prob-

lems by bringing people from

candidate Manoj Dhanowar and

other countries?

Five contenders engage in rigorous campaigning, focusing on development, indigenous rights and change Campaigning heats up for Diphu LS seat in WKA

HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, April 9: Campaigning in the West Karbi Anglong district by all MP candidates has commenced following validation by the returning officer at Diphu. There are five contenders vying for the No 6 Diphu parliamentary seat, where over 500,000 voters will determine their fate on April 26, 2024. The candidates include Amarsingh Tisso (BJP), Joyram Engleng (INC), Jotson Bey (ASDC), JI Kathar (APHLC), and John Bernard Sangma (GSP).

The Opposition party Congress has fielded Joyram Engleng, ex-CEM of KAAC and also a former MLA of BJP who represented the Howraghat constituency for five years. He was regarded as one of the pioneer members in establishing the BJP stronghold in the Hills area of Assam. However, he was denied a ticket for another term. Engleng blamed the high command for denying him a ticket. As an experienced politician, Engleng recently expressed confidence in winning from the Diphu seat. "People are fed up with Modi's 'ache din'; they don't want him now, they want change," the INC candidate said.

JI Kathar, a retired bureaucrat represent-



crease their awareness and pro-

mote their informed participation.

SVEEP is designed according to

the socio-economic, cultural, and

demographic profile of the state as

well as the history of electoral par-

ticipation in previous rounds of

ing APHLC, is also moving forward on the APHLC banner. He is spearheading for a stronger Sixth Schedule and implementation of Article 244(A). He is conducting MAC-wise awareness campaigns these

days. Two days back, in the Kopili constituency, he slammed both BJP and Congress for failing to protect indigenous rights and the people of the hills. BJP sitting EM of KAAC, Amarsingh

SVEEP conducts voter awareness procession

Tisso, also clearly stated that he will win and his agenda is development mantra. His star campaigner is reported to be the state chief minister and KAAC chief Dr Tuliram Ronghang. Additionally, five MLAs from hill districts, including EMs of KAAC and Dima Hasao, support Tisso's candidacy.

In a pocket meeting at Niz Rongkhang and a far-flung remote hilltop area on Tuesday, MS Timung EM KAAC assured of making Ronghang Rongbong the headquarters of Karbi Kingdom to be the topmost model village in days to come. He asked the gathering to vote for the ruling party for more development for the district. Similar such a campaigning meet was held at Rongchingdon, Hamren. The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), who once ruled the council for 15 years, also began their canvas, especially in the village area. The candidate of ASDC and former CEM of KAAC, Jotson Bey, in the meeting claimed BJP and Congress have done nothing for Karbi people. "They are a cheater party," he said. On the other hand, until Tuesday no canvas was reported from Gana Suraksha Parishad (GSP) in West Karbi Anglong.

Atishi Marlena rallies support for AAP candidate

The minister criticises BJP's performance & highlights concerns over CAA



HT Correspondent RGHERITA, April 9: Delhi government Education minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader Atishi Marlena arrived in Margherita central field for an election campaign on Tuesday. She came to support Manoj Dhanowar, the candidate for the

13th Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency

Accompanying her were Aam Aadmi Party state president Dr Bhaben Choudhary, AAP North East in-charge Rajesh Sharma, and members of the AAP Margherita committee, Yuva Shakti Tinsukia district committee, Mahila Shakti.

Over 2000 AAP members and workers were also present while Atishi Marlena was welcomed with a grand motorcycle rally from Margherita Makum Pather to Margherita Central Field.

promises they made to the people of Assam.

opposes the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and this is an important issue for it in the Lok Sabha polls in Assam, senior party leader Atishi Marlena said here on

Atishi Marlena said that before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Narendra Modi assured that within 6 months ethnic communities of Assam such as Tai Ahom, Adivasi, Moran, Mottock, Chutiya, and Koch Rajbonshi would be granted Sonitpur candidate Rishiraj Kaun-ST status. Unfortunately, during dinya.

Stakeholders collaborate for Doloni Beel's integrated management plan

New president of Nagaon Bar Association

HT Correspondent NAGAON, April 9: The election for the new committee of the Nagaon Bar Association was held on Monday. Senior advocate of the Nagaon Court, Paran Gohain, was elected as the new president of the Nagaon Bar Association, while senior lawyer Tarun Ch Sarma was elected as the vice president of the association. Jayanta Kr Bordoloi was elected as the general secretary, and Hemanta Bhuyan, Promod Kuthari, and Prasanta Bora respectively were elected as the assistant general secretaries of the association.

Dima Hasao set to cast votes on April 26 HT Bureau GUWAHATI, April 9: The dis-

trict commissioner cum district election officer, Dima Hasao, Simanta Kumar Das, has issued a letter informing the polling hours from 7 am to 5 pm on April 26, 2024, which is a Friday, for 113-Haflong (ST) LAC, a segment of the 6-Diphu (ST) parliamentary constituency, relating to the Lok Sabha election, 2024.

Informing about the date and polling hours, the district election officer urged all the citizens of Dima Hasao to exercise their franchise by casting their votes on April 26 at their respective polling stations.

Crack down on

HT Correspondent BOKAJAN, April 9: As part of the Systematic Voters' Education Electoral Participation and (SVEEP) program, a procession was held in the Bokajan Municipal area in Karbi Anglong for the 108 Bokajan LAC segment

elections. The Commission pro-According to the SVEEP webduces several voter awareness masite, "SVEEP is the flagship proterials and disseminates the same gram of the Election Commission through various mediums/platforms of communication i.e., print of India for voter education, spreading voter awareness, and media, electronic media, social promoting voter literacy in India. media etc." t is a multi-intervention program The voter awareness procession that reaches out through different was led by Surya Saikia and modes and media to educate citi-Lakhimi Beypi, prominent citizens zens, electors, and voters about the

of Bokajan, along with a host of 40 women Self-Help Groups. electoral process in order to in-



Starting at 10 am, the procession

Retired professor Anna Mahanta passes away at 82

HT Correspondent TEZPUR, April 9: A sense of deep sorrow envelops the entire greater Tezpur area as the distinguished sports figure, noted writer, and retired vice principal of Dar-rang College, Anna Mahanta, breathed her last on Sunday night at Tezpur Medical College and Hospital following old age ailments. She was 82.

Late Mahanta dedicated her services in the department of Economics at Darrang College as a distinguished teacher and noted

set out from the compound of the

viduals, including Dr Polashmani Saikia, principal of Darrang College, Dr Khageswar Borkakati, president of Darrang College Governing Body, president and general secretary of Darrang Čollege Alumni Association, Dr Dharmendra Sarma, Dr Manoj Kumar Hazarika, Prithiraj Rabha, MLA, Tezpur, Brindaban Goswami, former MLA Tezpur. Ritubaran Sarma, vice chairman of Amtron, Jiten Borthakur, president of District Sports Association, Pankaj Barua, executive president of Sonitpur Press Club, former principal secretary of Asam Sahitya Sabha, Jadab Chandra Sarma, Mahendra Kumar Nath, Central Body Member of Asam Sahitya Sabha, president of Sonitpur Zila Sahitya Sabha Dr Bhupen Sakia, president of Tezpur Sahitya Sabha Ramesh Chandra Kalita, and others have deeply mourned the death of the noted personality. Among many disciples, she leaves behind her two daughters, one son, daughter-in-law, and a score of grieving relatives.

Bokajan Municipal Board and made a round of Ward No 1 to 7. **Election officials stress** adherence to guidelines in crucial meeting

HT Bureau DIPHU, April 9: Following the conclusion of the withdrawal process and symbol allotment, a crucial meeting was convened at 5 pm in the office of

ference hall on Monday. The meeting was attended by three observers, the district election officer, key election officials, as well as representatives from all political parties and candidates. During the meeting, the general observer highlighted the importance of adhering to the guidelines and rules set forth by the Election Commission of India (ECI) regarding election preparedness and processes in the three hill districts under the 6-Diphu (ST) parliamentary con-Emphasising stituency. the significance of maintaining transparency and accountability, the general observer encouraged the utilisation of tools such as cVIGIL, an online application for citizens to report violations of the model code of conduct, and the Suvidha app, aimed at streamlining the nomination and permission processes for candidates during the election period. Furthermore, the expenditure observer provided an overview of the ECI guidelines on expenditure rules, stressing the impor-Pradyut Bordoloi leads election campaign in Jagiroad tance of accurately maintaining registers and accounts of all expenditures incurred by candidates during He campaigned in Buraburi, Kushiani, Sidhaguri, the campaign, including advertise-Pavakati, and Gagalmari bazaars of Mayang in the presments, paid news, and vehicle expenses. ence of hundreds of people. He also criticised the BJP Additionally, the police observer addressed security measures and urged all "The Congress party will fight against two communal stakeholders to ensure a free and fair forces in Nagaon this time. He said Badruddin Ajmal electoral process. Towards the conclu-(chief of AIUDF) and Aminul Islam (AIUDF candidate sion of the meeting, some political for Nagaon) are the loyal followers of chief minister Hiagents raised concerns regarding alleged manta Biswa Sarma and these two leaders have done misuse of power by certain parties. nothing for the Muslim people in the past. Therefore, the These concerns were duly noted and will people need to be more vigilant when casting their prebe addressed in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

to deliver on this assurance. Similarly, tea garden workers were promised ₹ 350 daily wages, but unfortunately, they are only getting ₹ 250, which is the lowest wage compared to all the states in our country In the last years of the BJP-led government at the Union, people are suffering from price inflation of essential commodities, unemployment problems, international

said Atishi Marlena. In her speech, she criticised the

BJP-led Union and state governments for their failure to fulfill the The Aam Aadmi Party strongly

"This will be a major issue that we are going to raise during our campaign for the two Lok Sabha Tuesday seats in Assam," she said. Atishi Marlena, who is the Education minister of Delhi, is in Assam on a three-day visit to campaign for the party's Dibrugarh

the district commissioner at the con-

border issues, and ethnic violence. In this Lok Sabha election, all should vote for INDIA Bloc candidates all over our country, and only then change will be seen. Otherwise, in the coming days, everyone will have to suffer a lot, as Narendra Modi will change our Indian Constitution, leading to the countdown for our country's destruction,

unaccounted cash

HT Correspondent JAGIROAD, April 9: The flying squad of Jagiroad assembly constituency under Nagaon LS constituency seized ₹ 2,87,000 in cash from a man at Aujari Tinali under Morigaon Police Station on Monday. Another team of flying squad deployed in Jagiroad assembly constituency seized ₹ 68,000 in cash from a man near Nellie Police Station. Meanwhile, static surveillance teams deployed in Jagiroad assembly constituency seized ₹ 3,00,000 in cash from a man near Neli Police Station on Monday. As per the Election Commission's directives, if a candidate, any agent of the candidate, or party worker is seized with a vehicle worth more than ₹ 50,000 in cash or carrying drugs, liquor, weapons, or gifts worth more than ₹ 10,000, such items will be confiscated. The public is also required to carry appropriate documents to carry amounts exceeding ₹ 50,000.00.

educationist, retiring from her position as vice principal of the college in 2000.

Born in 1943, late Mahanta started her literary career during her student life and contributed numerous short stories, poems, and other literary creations to magazines, newspapers, and several other publications. She published several collections of her poems titled 'Uttaran Aru Anyanya Kabita', 'The Sky is the Limit', and 'Aloron', a book of lyrics titled 'Aai Asomiloi Geetor Sharai', a

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, April 9: As the election day approaches,

every political party is in full swing with its campaign.

The 9th Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency is no exception.

The Congress candidate for Nagaon MP, Pradyut Bor-

doloi, has also been able to attract the attention of voters

by conducting a massive campaign among people of dif-

ferent languages and ethnic groups in various areas of

the Jagiroad assembly constituency. The Congress can-

didate opened party offices in Bhakatgaon, Manaha, and

Jhargaon panchayats of the Jagiroad constituency after

serving at the Deoshal temple in Jagiroad on Monday.

short story collection 'Satyasatya' and a book on women empowerment titled 'Ardha Akash', leaving an indelible mark on Assamese literature. Alongside her literary pursuits, late Mahanta showed her proficiency as a sports figure in the national and international arena. During her service period, she also led the National Service Scheme of the college. Besides being a life member of Asam Sahitya Sabha, late Mahanta was also closely associated with several other literary and social organisations. Different organisations and indi-



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 9: A 'District Level Stakeholder Consultation on Integrated Management' of the Doloni Beel was held recently in the conference hall of the district commissioner's office in Bongaigaon district.

The meeting was jointly convened by the Bongaigaon district administration and Aaranyak, Bongaigaon district commissioner Nabadeen Pathak chaired the meeting, with additional district commissioner Apurba Nath serving as co-chair.

The purpose of the consultation meeting was to sensitise stakeholders about the salient findings of the assessment that Aaranyak has conducted on the Doloni Beel and share the major recommendations for the integrated wetland management plan (IWMP) that is under preparation.

Aaranyak, a reputed research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation of the country, has been carrying out a holistic assessment of the Doloni Beel, a unique and socio-ecologically important wetland of western Assam. This assessment covers the physical and environmental aspects of the wetland and its catchment, as well as the socio-economic and livelihood conditions of the stakeholder communities. An integrated wetland management plan is also being prepared for the wetland, situated in the Boitamari Community Development Block of the Bongaigaon district, approximately 22 km southwest from Abhayapuri, the nearest town-

The project has been implemented for the last year under the NERAQ (Protection and Sustainable Management of Aquatic Resources in the North-Eastern Himalayan Region of India) program, which is an alliance between GIZ and the state Forest Department. Usha Dewani Das, communication advisor, NERAQ, GIZ-India, was also present at the meet-

The meeting was attended by a total of 54 participants, mainly comprising government officials from relevant line departments, representatives of communities from 10 villages located around the Doloni Beel, and a few local educationists from various colleges of Bongaigaon.

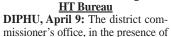
Government departments and agencies present included the Forest Department, Water Resource Department, Agriculture Department, Veterinary Department, Social Welfare Department, Handloom and Textile Department, Tourism Department, NABARD, AFDC (Assam Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd.), ASRLM (Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission), Revenue Department, Pollution Control Board, DIPRO (District Information & Public Relations Office), and the Soil Conservation Department.

Other important stakeholders who participated were Gram Panchayat members, Mahila Morcha, academicians, researchers, as well as stakeholders from the community.

scrutinised in Diphu HEC affected community receives training & support to safeguard crops

cious vote this time.

and the AILIDE



Nomination papers

central observers Jaydip Mukhopadhay, IAS as the general observer; Shankar Lal Verma, IRS as the expenditure observer; and T Uniel Kichu Ao, IPS as the police observer, along with the district election officer and representatives from various political parties, scrutinised the nomination papers. This transparent process ensured the thorough examination of all submitted documents, upholding the integrity of the electoral process. With the scrutiny now concluded, the stage is set for the next phase of the electoral journey. The deadline for withdrawal of candidature was set for April 8. Following this, the remaining candidates will proceed to compete fiercely in the forthcoming election. As we navigate through this democratic exercise, it emphasises the importance of active citizen participation and adherence to electoral norms, ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process and contributing to the strengthening of our democratic fabric.



<u>HT Bureau</u>

GUWAHATI, April 9: As part of its relentless endeavour to mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC) to facilitate coexistence, one of the country's premier biodiversity conservation organisations, Aaranyak, has installed a 2.3 kilometer-long solar-powered electric fence to restrict the movement of wild elephants in the Padumphula area in Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district.

The Padumphula area, inhabited by indigenous communities and mostly farmers, has been a hotspot for HEC, situated in Sadiya under Tinsukia district. The farmers in the area have been unable to secure their crops from depredation by wild elephants every year.

After conducting a field study on the HEC problem and its ramifications on the local population in the area, Aaranyak has taken the ini-

tiative to mitigate the problem in the area by installing a 2.3 km long single-strand community-managed seasonal solar fence on the periphery of the vegetable crop field at Padumphula recently.

Around 385 households located in Padumphula, Bacha Gaon No 1, Bacha Gaon No 2, and Na-Basa Gaon will benefit from the solar fence in terms of crop security.

The initiative has been taken by Aaranyak in collaboration with the British Asian Trust, supported by the Darwin Initiative (Biodiversity Challenge Funds). In this connection, the community of Padumphula had been trained by the Aaranyak team to build their capacity to install and maintain the solar fence at the community cultural center of Padumphula a few months back.

After the training, the local community members were involved in installing the 2.3 km-long solar fence to protect their vegetable fields with technical guidance and supervision of the Aaranyak team. The installation work was completed on April 5 last. The Aaranvak team was led by Rubul Tanti and comprised of Dibakar Nayak, Tonmoy Gogoi, Debojit Gogoi, and village champion Debananda Gogoi

4 THE HILLS TIMES VOL. XXV, ISSUE 91, DIPHU, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible. -Dalai Lama

Upholding Assam's harmony

n the labyrinth of Assam's political terrain, Chief Minister Mr. Himanta Biswa Sarma emerges as a guiding force, navigating the state through turbulent waters with finesse. Despite vehement opposition and dire predictions surrounding the operationalisation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Mr. Sarma's leadership has defied expectations, maintaining a semblance of calm amidst the storm. Recent media reports indicate a surprising trend: the rush for confirmation of Indian citizenship under the CAA has been markedly subdued, with figures failing to breach even the double-digit threshold. This stark contrast to the ominous forecasts of mass influxes underscores the disconnect between rhetoric and reality. The fears of the non-BJP opposition, centered around the perceived threat to Assamese culture and tradition, have so far proven unfounded. In the face of relentless political campaigns and personal attacks, Mr. Sarma's unwavering support for the CAA has remained steadfast. His resolute stance, coupled with a deep understanding of ground realities, has bolstered confidence in his leadership. Mocking the exaggerated claims of opposition figures, Mr. Sarma challenges them to reconcile their misjudgement with the prevailing situation in Assam

Ethnicity, religion, and language have long been pivotal factors in Assam's political landscape. Against a backdrop of historical migrations and simmering tensions, Mr. Sarma's pragmatic approach seeks to strike a delicate balance. His outreach to Bengali-dominated regions, particularly the Barak valley, underscores a commitment to inclusivity and economic development. Critics decry Mr. Sarma's tactics, accusing him of sowing division within the Bengali-speaking community. However, his efforts to differentiate between Bengali Hindus and Muslims, while contentious, reflect a nuanced understanding of Assam's complex social dynamics. The recent delimitation proceedings, though contentious, are framed within the broader context of preserving Assam's ethnic and cultural fabric. In the Barak valley, where protests against delimitation adjustments have simmered, Mr. Sarma's government maintains its resolve to uphold Assam's essential character. Despite vocal opposition, the state BJP anticipates strong support from these districts, buoyed by the operationalisation of the CAA.

At the heart of Assam's identity lies a delicate equilibrium, forged through centuries of coexistence amidst diversity. Mr. Sarma's leadership embodies this spirit of harmony, transcending political divides to uphold the state's unity. As Assam grapples with the challenges of the present, it is imperative to acknowledge the resilience of its people and the vision of its leaders. Moving forward, Assam must embrace a future guided by inclusivity and mutual respect. Mr. Sarma's pragmatic governance offers a roadmap for navigating the complexities of identity and citizenship while safeguarding the state's rich heritage. In a region often plagued by volatility, Assam's journey towards peace and prosperity serves as a beacon of hope for the entire nation. In a region marked by volatility, Assam's journey towards peace and prosperity under Mr. Sarma's leadership stands as a testament to the resilience of its people. As the state charts its course forward, it must remain committed to fostering inclusivity and mutual respect. Mr. Sarma's pragmatic governance offers a roadmap for navigating the complexities of identity and citizenship while safeguarding the state's rich heritage. In a nation characterized by diversity, Assam's story serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating the potential for unity amidst difference and the triumph of governance over division.

C ix months have passed since the beginning of Israel-Hamas war on October 7 last year, but instead of agreeing to the UN cease-2020. fire plan, Prime Minister

Netanyahu has expanded the confrontation to Syria by bombing the Iranian embassy in Damascus. On April 1, an alleged Israeli airstrike destroyed a building within the Iranian emcomplex bassy in Damascus. The explosion resulted

in the deaths of seven individuals, including several influential Iranian officers. This event marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran, as it targeted a location that should have been considered off-

limits according to international standards. The crucial question now is how Iran will respond, whether by directly attacking Israel or its primary supporter, the United States. Damascus is the capital

city of Syria. It is located in the southwestern part of the country, near the border with Lebanon. Damascus is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and holds great

historical and cultural significance. The airstrike resulted in the death of General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a prominent figure in Iran's Quds Force, the expeditionary branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). General Zahedi held the position of operations chief in Syria and Lebanon for several years and was believed to have a close relationship with Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah. a Lebanese Shia militia and

political party. Additionally, his deputy and five other IRGC officers lost their lives in the explosion. This incident

marks the highest-ranking Iranian commander to be assassinated since the U.S. drone strike that killed Oassem Soleimani in

> The Iranian Quds Force is a special forces unit within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. It supports and coordinates with proxy militias and insurgent groups in the Middle East, advancing Iran's interests abroad through training, funding, and weapons. It plays a significant role in Iran's regional influence and asymmetric

warfare strategy. General Oassem Soleimani, who was the commander of the Quds Force, was a prominent figure in Iran's military and played a crucial role in expanding Iran's influence across the Middle East. However, he was killed in a U.S. drone strike in January 2020, resulting in a significant loss for the Quds Force. Despite his death, the Quds Force continues to operate under new leadership and remains an essential component of Iran's regional

strategy

While Israeli officials did not openly acknowledge their involvement in the airstrike on the embassy compound, their private statements strongly imply their responsibility. However, they did put forth the argument that the entity behind the attack was justified in doing so. Daniel Hagari, the army spokesperson, referred to the targeted building as a "civilian building" that had been camouflaged to appear as a military facility. It is indeed true that the IRGC officers were not in Damascus to discuss reduced pistachio tariffs(Iran is a major pistachio producer). It's frustrating to hear Iranian officials using proxy the sanctity of consular



Six months after October 7, Israel expands

pecially considering that the Islamic Republic began with the hostage-taking at the American embassy in Tehran in 1979. However, despite these contradictions, the sanctity of consular buildings is a well-established

norm.

If

strikes into the Bekaa Valley, an agri-DEGREE OF THOUGHT culturally global rich region **Girish Linganna** in eastern the

neighbouring Lebanon.

mid-January.

presence of military perwhere Hizbullah has a sigsonnel alone were enough nificant presence. Howto disregard this norm, ever, Israel does not some of Israel's own emhesitate to target Syria. bassies would also be con-After enduring a decade of sidered legitimate targets. civil war, Bashar al-Even Saudi Arabia, a long-Assad's regime is too weak standing rival of Iran, to retaliate, and the Iranswiftly condemned the ian-backed militias in strike without explicitly Syria lack the extensive arnaming Israel.

Since October 7, Israel has been engaged in a dual conflict. On one front, they are fighting against Hamas in Gaza, where the militants crossed the border and caused the death of over 1,100 people. On the other front, Israel is facing a broader range of Iranianbacked militias across the region. Among these militias, Hizbullah is the most powerful and has been launching missile attacks almost daily on towns and army bases in northern Israel.

However, Hizbullah has refrained from initiating an all-out war. This restraint is driven by the reluctance of most Lebanese people to be dragged into a war and Iran's cautious approach to risking its most valuable

Israel has been cautious on Aleppo's airport on deep about launching March 29th that claimed

members and numerous Syrian soldiers. Following the assassina-

tion of Suleimani, Iran responded by launching a barrage of ballistic missiles at two American bases in Iraq. This attack, although the largest of its kind thus far, fell short of the more aggressive and forceful retaliation advocated by cerstrikes into Lebanon to avoid provoking a strong tain hardliners. However, the recent bombing of an response from Hizbullah. Iranian consular building Instead, it has primarily focused its attacks on southby Israel has potentially increased domestic pressure ern Lebanon, although it has recently extended its on Iran to respond more significantly. Iran has endured months

of Israeli attacks, and now that Israel has effectively targeted Iranian territory, there is a possibility that Lebanon Iran may opt for a direct response rather than relying solely on its proxies. In statement on April 2nd, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei hinted at the potential for direct action, stating that the "evil regime will be punished by the hands of our brave warsenal possessed by their riors.

Hizbullah counterparts in Iran has a history of favouring indirect methods of warfare, relying on Svria has become a prime target for Israel, ofproxies to carry out its acfering a wide range of potions. This preference for tential objectives such as proxy warfare is evident in their past conduct. For in-Iranian officers, allied militias, and shipments of stance, a drone attack origweapons destined for inating from Iraq targeted Hizbullah. Since October an Israeli naval base in 7th, Israel has conducted Eilat, Israel's southernmost numerous strikes in Syria, city, the night before the resulting in the elimination strike on the embassy. A coalition of pro-Iranian of a significant portion of the IRGC's high-ranking militias claimed responsibility for the attack. It is officials in the country. Notable incidents include possible that Iran will authe killing of an Iranian thorize further similar atgeneral in Damascus on tacks and may even direct Christmas Day and the its aggression towards the elimination of five officers, United States.

Since January 28, both including the IRGC's intelligence chief in Syria, in the United States and Iran have made efforts to de-es-Additionally, Hizbullah calate tensions. The de-escalation attempts followed has been targeted in these an incident where an Iranstrikes, including an attack ian-backed group launched

a drone attack on an Amer-

ican base in northeastern Jordan, resulting in the death of three soldiers.

In response, the United States conducted airstrikes on Iranian targets in Iraq and Syria. Concerned about further escalation, Iran instructed its proxies to halt any further attacks on American troops, albeit reluctantly complying. American officials publicly stated that they had no prior knowledge of the Israeli attack in Damascus, and they also conveyed this message through intermediaries to their Iranian counterparts.

The Iranians remain skeptical and unconvinced. On April 2nd, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian asserted that America must be held accountable for the attack. Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to the supreme leader, echoed similar sentiments, placing direct responsibility on America. Shortly after the embassy bombing, American troops successfully shot down an attack drone near al-Tanf, an isolated American outpost in eastern Syria. Officials are uncertain whether the drone was specifically targeting the base, but this incident marked the first of its kind since early Febru-

Israel is engaging in a high-risk strategy in Syria. It believes that it currently has a unique chance to weaken Iran's proxy forces in the region, while Iran is hesitant to engage in a large-scale retaliation due to concerns about escalating into a broader war. So far, this gamble has paid off for Israel.

However, it is important to remember that past outcomes do not guarantee future results. If Israel oversteps its boundaries, the region could quickly descend into a more chaotic and complex conflict. (IPA Service)

Cooperative sector to play a vital role in employment generation

By: R K Sinha

But this happened only in 2019 after the has been made mandatory. This has ensured change of regime. Cooperatives institutions representation of wome in the boards of

By: Dipak Kurmi

likely contributed to her securing ments has elicited a polarized rethe BJP's nomination. This devel sponse, with some l

The cooperative societies in some states in the country were known for all the wrong reasons for several years. A few societies were synonymous with corruption. No more. Many things have changed in India in recent years of Modi Government. The cooperative sector has not remained untouched.

Emphasis was laid on it, because it had the potential to help the country become the third largest economy which is the goal of the present dispensation. A separate ministry was created by the Modi government for the purpose. Now, a separate budget can be provided to it. Since this sector is very large and crores of people depend on it, much has to be done. A good beginning has been already made.

To give an idea of how big the sector is, here are a few facts. There are over eight lakh cooperative societies in 28 states of the country at present. These societies are not catering only to the needs of agriculture sector but several others including banking.



The total number of cooperative banks in the country is 1886, which includes 1,500 urban cooperative banks and 386 rural cooperative banks. These cooperative institutions play an important role in meeting the financial needs of various communities across the country.

The present looks good. But so was not the past. The central government had to do a lot to change the scenario ln last 10 years. Before that, the condition of cooperative societies in the country was bad, to say the least. Manipulation had become the order of the day. Only paperwork was done in the name of management. Personal differences and fights were common. Many societies were closed due to disputes.

Some groups used to make most of it. They used to act arbitrarily, not to benefit farmers and small entrepreneurs. Now the situation has changed completely under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and due to the monitoring of Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah. Many important reforms have been made. Accountability has been fixed.

Amit Shah has rightly said that a separate cooperative ministry should have been created soon after independence to strengthen the 115 -year-old cooperative movement.

are formed due to mutual cooperation and they work on the principle of collectivism. The capital is raised in the spirit of partnership and there is a spirit of helping others in its use. Its vastness and spread can be gauged from the fact that at present there are about 2 lakh cooperative dairy societies and 330

cooperative sugar mills running in India. Over 81000 cooperative societies are working in Gujarat alone. As many as 19 multi-state cooperative societies have the status of national level cooperative societies. In terms of turnover, IFFCO's turnover for the financial year 2022-23 was ₹ 60.324 crore and AMUL's turnover for 2023-24 was ₹ 12,880 crore. Not only this, IFFCO has been included in

the list of 300 largest cooperative societies in he world. Earlier, the Department of Cooperation was under the Ministry of Agriculture, but in July 2021, the Modi government formed a separate Ministry of Cooperation and Home Minister

Amit Shah became the first Cooperative Minister of the country. The ministry introduced the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill in Parliament in 2022. The main objective of this bill was to serve the interests of members in more than one state by amending the existing laws and making the voluntary formation of cooperative societies more democratic. Along with this, the objective was also to give more economic and organizational autonomy to the istitutions.

Cooperatives are now playing a very important role in bringing especially the youth and women into the mainstream. An inclusive cooperative model that integrates capacity building, education, skill training and women's participation in economic activities is ready. If the slogan of women empowerment is becoming a reality anywhere, it is in the field of cooperation. The efforts made by the Ministry of Cooperation for the betterment, empowerment and income generation of women in the cooperative sector are now showing results.

Reservation for women has been fixed in the boards of multi-state cooperative societies. Appointment of women directors in the boards of multi-state cooperative societies

more than 1,550 multi-state cooperative societies across the country. Reservation has also been given to women members in Primary Agricultural Cooperative Credit Societies (PACS).

buildings as an excuse, es-

Representation of women and their participation in decision making has been ensured in more than 1 lakh Pacs. A financial assistance scheme named Nandini Sahakar Yojana has been formulated for projects, support and capacity building of women cooperatives. National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has provided assistance of ₹ 5,714.88 crore to women cooperatives and this has directly benefited more than 1.5 crore women members. In total, the Ministry of Cooperation has taken 54 major initiatives to empower all members including women.

A strong system has been created to generate self-employment through cooperatives. A new cooperative policy has been implemented to realize the vision of "Prosperity through Cooperation". The entire system has been modernized - from Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) to Registrar of Cooperative Societies offices of the states and Agriculture and Rural Development Banks. This will increase transparency and accountability and open new facilities for farmers seeking medium and long-term loans. Simultaneously, the world's largest grain storage scheme in the cooperative sector, which will work in 11 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) of 11 states, has been launched. Foundation stone of additional 500 PACS has 8 been laid across the country for construction of warehouses and other agriculture-related infrastructure. The initiative aims at integrating PACS warehouses with the food grain supply chain system.

All this is not say that there are no challenges now. All is not well in cooperative banking system. The figures related to fraud in this section are disturbing. According to the RBI, as many as, 4,135 frauds were reported by cooperative banks across the country, involving ₹ 10,856.7 crore. But the Center cannot directly interfere because cooperative is a state subject. However, the PM has promised to depositors that those who have looted their money will not be spared. He has mentioned in this connection a case of Kerala; in particular, where a 500 crore scam has allegedly taken place (Karuvannur Cooperative Bank). The Enforcement Directorate is investigating the case and action has already been taken against some CPM leaders. Where there is a will, there is a way. (The writer is a senior editor, columnist and a former MP)

angana Ranaut's path from Himachal remote Pradesh village to Bollywood stardom and now potential politics is a remarkable journey defying odds. Born into humble origins, the firebrand actor's grit and tenacity paved her way into the dazzling Mumbai film fraternity. Her uncompromising persona, which often courted controversies, now eves a new arena - the political landscape of her home state. Ranaut's transformation from an outsider trying her luck in films to a vocal figure weighing political ambitions exemplifies her fearless spirit that shaped her incredible ascent against all circumstances.

Kangana's rise from the obscure village of Bhambala in Mandi district is a compelling narrative of unwavering determination and steadfast commitment. Defving familial resistance against her aspirations to carve a niche in the glittering realm of Bollywood, she embarked on an arduous odyssey. Grappling with financial adversities and the stark realities that Mumbai's unforgiving landscape posed, Kangana's path was paved with formidable obstacles, even facing periods of homelessness. Yet, her training under the tutelage of the esteemed theatre director Arvind Gaur proved to be a pivotal juncture, refining her talents and sculpting her into the formidable force she has become within the industry today. Her ascent stands as a testament to the indomitable human spirit's capacity to conquer seemingly insurmountable odds.

Kangana Ranaut's transition from the glamorous realm of Bollywood to the tumultuous arena of politics represents a profound career pivot. Her decision to contest the Mandi Lok Sabha seat under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) banner signifies a significant departure from her established profession as an actress. Despite her lack of direct political experience, Ranaut's vocal endorsement of Hindutva ideology and her unwavering support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, coupled with her affiliation with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have

opment sets the stage for an intriguing political contest, wherein Ranaut's unconventional foray into the political sphere will be put to the test, potentially leading to a high-stakes electoral showdown in the Mandi constituency.

Kangana Ranaut's new role:

Trading stardom for statesmanship

Kangana Ranaut's decision to venture into the political arena is undoubtedly a bold move, but it comes with its fair share of hurdles. Unlike the world of cinema where scripts dictate the narrative, the realm of politics demands a wholly different set of skills and unwavering commitment. The voters of Mandi will expect her to place their needs and concerns at the forefront, necessitating her to establish a permanent presence within the constituency. Her lack of experience in navigating the intricate web of political maneuvering will require her to work tirelessly to earn the trust and support of the electorate, notwithstanding the backing of the BJP machinery and the personal charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Mandi Lok Sabha by-election on October 30, 2021, witnessed the Congress party's triumph, primarily attributed to the wave of sympathy following the demise of the stalwart leader. Virbhadra Singh. However, the political landscape has undergone a transformation, and the Congress finds itself embroiled in internal turmoil. Amidst this shifting dynamic, the potential entry of Kangana into the electoral arena could significantly disrupt the existing power equations, potentially swaying the balance in her favor. The interplay of these factors promises to shape the forthcoming electoral contest into a captivating specta-

On her 37th birthday, Kangana Ranaut's nomination as a candidate for the Mandi parliamentary constituency was viewed as a fitting recognition of her steadfast adherence to her ideological principles and her fervent desire to contribute to the development of her place of birth. However, her penchant for courting controversy through her provocative social media posts and public pronouncespokenness while others condemning her for fanning divisiveness. From her contentious remarks regarding the farmer's protest to her controversial views on India's independence struggle. Kangana has consistently found herself at the center of heated debates, drawing both ardent support and vehement criticism from various sections of society.

Transitioning into the political arena, Kangana Ranaut faces the daunting task of shedding her celebrity image and establishing a more relatable connection with the common people. To thrive as a politician, she must forge a bond with the grassroots workers and voters by demonstrating an authentic grasp of their struggles and aspirations. Cultivating trust and rapport with the electorate will be pivotal, as she endeavors to convey a profound comprehension of their pressing needs and concerns. This shift from the glitz and glamour of the silver screen to the gritty realities of public service will undoubtedly test her ability to resonate with the masses on a personal and empathetic level.

Kangana Ranaut's foray into the political domain, departing from her established career in the Indian film industry, stands as a compelling narrative of perseverance and an unwavering adherence to personal convictions. While this transition presents a formidable set of obstacles, her steadfast dedication to her ideological principles and an ardent desire to serve the populace could potentially forge a path towards a prosperous political trajectory. As she ventures into this uncharted territory, Kangana will be compelled to harness her inherent strengths, concurrently adapting to the rigors of the political landscape, all while maintaining an authentic connection to her origins and firmly held beliefs. This paradigm shift will undoubtedly demand a judicious equilibrium between her artistic roots and the demands of the political arena, a delicate balance that will ultimately shape the course of her endeavors. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

WOMEN

However, some researchers have suggested that

Doctors do not know what causes endometrial

cancer. Cancer occurs when genetic changes

cause cells to start growing uncontrollably instead

of dying at the expected stage of their life cycles.

changes is ongoing, but health experts know that

several factors may increase the risk of develop-

People exposed to high levels of estrogen may

Risk factors for endometrial cancer

have an increased risk of endometrial cancer.

• start menstruating before 12 years of age

• experience menopause after 55 years of age

• using estrogen-only hormone therapy after

· using Nolvadex to prevent or treat breast can-

having had previous radiation therapy to the

• having polycystic ovary syndrome, or PCOS

· having diabetes, obesity, hypertension, or

It is important to recognize the early signs of

• unusual vaginal discharge that is watery or

Anyone who has unusual discharge or periods

To diagnose this type of cancer, a physician

• ask about personal and family medical histo-

• request some tests, if they believe that it is

The doctor will inspect and feel the cervix,

With a transvaginal ultrasound, a doctor can as-

sess the size and shape of the uterus and the tex-

ture and thickness of the endometrium and rule

To perform this scan, a healthcare professional

Blood tests can also reveal the presence of can-

Or, they may take an aspiration biopsy, using a

small, flexible tube to take sample cells for exam-

To monitor the progress of endometrial cancer,

The average 5-year survival rate for endome-

trial cancer overall is around 81.2% Trusted

cerous cells. Alternately, a doctor may use hys-

teroscopy, which involves inserting a thin scope

inserts a transducer into the vagina and assesses

uterus, vagina, and labia to detect any lumps or

endometrial cancer because prompt treatment can

• having a family history of uterine cancer

other aspects of metabolic syndrome

having endometrial hyperplasia

significantly improve the outlook.

vaginal bleeding between periods

• periods that are heavier than usual

• vaginal bleeding after menopause

Early signs include:

should consult a doctor.

• review the symptoms

changes in shape or size.

out other conditions.

the relayed images on a monitor.

into the vagina and uterus.

ination under a microscope.

• a lymph node biopsy

a doctor may use:

• a Pap test

Outlook

reproductive age, espe-

cially in low- and middle-

This may also speak of

income countries.

their experiences.

• perform a pelvic examination

The risk is greater for those who:

• have never been pregnant

Other factors include:

Research into the cause of these genetic

it may be suitable for females with early stage

cancer and low-grade tumors who wish to retain

cancer and also provide chemotherapy.

their fertility.

Causes

ing cancer.

menopause

Early signs

tinged with blood

Diagnosis

will:

ries

necessary

cer

pelvis

lated deaths could be possibly explained

by advances in public healthcare infra-

structure, socioeconomic upliftment and

increased access to cooling and heating in

The analysis suggested women exhibit

a heightened susceptibility to extreme

temperature conditions (specifically heat)

The team also compared studies on

The Global North, they point out,

shows stronger evidence on women being

at higher risk of weather-related mortal-

ity. No study has concluded the opposite.

studies that were a part of the analysis,

seven studies conclude women are at high

risk, six conclude the opposite and three

declare no significant difference between

Among the 16 studies, four were from

India. Of them, three found that women

face a higher risk and one reported the op-

Current studies in the Global South

present conflicting views on gender-spe-

cific mortality rates from temperature

changes, the researchers noted in the

from sectors like industry, agriculture, or

informal daily wage labourers. The au-

thors found no data on the population that

mostly stays indoors. In countries like

India, women spend 54 per cent more

Women in the Global South are espe-

cially at risk due to rigid cultural norms

and societal expectations, which limit

their ability to respond and cope effec-

bility factor due to poor built environment

conditions like lack of ventilation and

However, he added, that analysis could

The lack of high quality national data

not conclude if women staying indoors

cooling agencies, Debnath highlighted.

put women at higher risk of heat stress.

also has impeded the team's understand-

ing of whether Indian women could be at

a higher risk due to socioeconomic chal-

lenges or physiological conditions. This

is the data equity gap that we are raising

The analysis provides preliminary in-

sights but could not provide a causal in-

ference on whether women are more

Insufficient data granularity in both

time and space hindered a more detailed

analysis. The team called for optimal

datasets with adequate resolution to cap-

ture volatile changes in mortality and ex-

The available mortality data at an an-

nual scale, the team noted, fails to factor

in how fluctuations in temperature imme-

It also does not reflect how deaths

might be affected by long-term factors

such as advances in healthcare or changes

in population demographics. (Courtesy:

in this paper, the author explained.

susceptible to heat stress.

treme temperature conditions.

diately affects mortality.

"Staying indoors add a higher vulnera-

tively to extreme temperature risks.

time indoors than men.

Further, most evidence was gathered

As for the Global South, among the 16

mortality linked to temperature across the

Extreme heat affects Indian

women more than men;

analysis finds spike in deaths due to high heat since 2005

the country.

world

the genders.

posite.

paper.

compared to men.

By: Rohini Krishnamurthy

when it comes to coping with ex-

treme heat. Women, according to the

analysis, are significantly more vulnera-

ble to extreme temperature conditions

Since 2005, data shows a concerning

rise in heat-related deaths among women

in India, said the analysis published in

Significance Magazine, a journal by

analysis that publicly available data for

India shows that females exhibit a height-

ened susceptibility to extreme tempera-

ture conditions (specifically heat)

compared to males," Ramit Debnath, uni-

versity assistant professor and an aca-

demic director at the University of

Cambridge, and one of the authors, told

Debnath and his colleagues initiated the

analysis to see if women in India face a

higher risk of mortality from extreme

detail) and high quality national data on

temperature related health and healthcare

This, according to the team, is prima-

rily because there is no standardised

methodology to report mortality and mor-

bidity (illness) due to temperature

So, the team relied on 30 years of ex-

They extracted mortality and popula-

tion data from the Global Burden of Dis-

ease (GBD), the largest and most

comprehensive effort to quantify health

loss across 204 countries, territories and

The authors point out that while the

GBD database provides annual estimates

for gender-specific temperature-related

mortality rates from 1950 to 2019 in

They also collected data on India's

daily temperature data (mean, maximum

and minimum) from 1990-2019 recorded

by India Meteorological Department

Their analysis showed that men showed

a gradual decline in deaths with certain

spikes linked to temperature, whereas for

women, it showed a gradual increase

The percentage relative change in mor-

For women, the percentage change in

Debnath said the team could not iden-

mortality rate increased by 4.63 per cent

in 2000 to 2010 and 9.84 per cent be-

tality rates decreased by 23.11 per cent

for men from 2000 to 2010, and 18.7 per

India, the data still lacks granularity.

sub-national locations and over time.

treme-temperature-related mortality data

to find answers and identify gaps.

But the country lacks granular (level of

"We find through descriptive statistical

compared to men.

Down To Earth.

data.

change

(IMD)

from 2005.

cent from 2010 to 2019.

tween 2010 and 2019.

temperatures in India.

Royal Statistical Society.

new study has revealed a trou-

bling gender disparity in India

What is endometrial cancer?

By: Yvette Brazier

ndometrial cancer starts in the layer of cells dendometrium. It is a cancer of the womb, or uterus.

Most uterine cancers start as endometrial cancer. Another type of cancer, uterine sarcoma, starts in the muscles and tissues of the uterus. Endometrial cancer and uterine sarcoma usually have different treatments.

Uterine cancer is the most common gynecological cancer in the United States. In 2020, the National Cancer Institute estimate that there will have been approximately 65,620 diagnoses of endometrial cancer and 12,590 deaths from this disease in the U.S.

Symptoms

Early symptoms include unusual bleeding, such as after menopause or between periods.

Endometrial cancer can also cause pain in the pelvic area, less commonly during sexual intercourse. Some people also experience pain when urinating or difficulty emptying the bladder.

As the cancer progresses, there may be:

- a feeling of a mass or heaviness in the pelvic area
- unintended weight loss
- fatigue
- nausea

• pain in several parts of the body, including the legs, back, and pelvic area

These symptoms can also stem from other, noncancerous health problems, such as fibroids, endometriosis, endometrial hyperplasia, and polyps in the uterine lining. It is important to rule out endometrial cancer if another condition is causing similar symptoms.

Staging

If tests detect cancer, the doctor will assess the grade of the tumor to see how rapidly the cells are dividing and how quickly the cancer is likely to A higher-grade tumor is more likely to grow

quickly and spread to other parts of the body.

The best course of treatment depends, in part, on the stage, or how far the cancer has spread. Doctors may use the following definitions when staging endometrial cancer:

Stage 0: Cancerous cells remain where they started, on the surface of the inner lining of the uterus

Stage 1: The cancer has spread through the inner lining of the uterus to the endometrium and possibly to the myometrium — the middle layer of the uterine wall.

Stage 2: The tumor has spread to the cervix.

Stage 3: The tumor has spread through the uterus to nearby tissue, including the vagina or a lymph node

Stage 4: The cancer has spread to the bladder or an intestine, and possibly to other areas, such as the bones, liver, or lungs

When endometrial cancer spreads from the endometrium to other parts of the body, doctors say that it has "metastasized."

Below, find an interactive 3D map of the stages of endometrial cancer. Explore it using the mousepad or touchscreen.

Treatment

The best approach to treatment depends on:

• the person's age

• their overall health

• the grade and stage of the tumor

The options include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and hormone therapy. It is important for the doctor to describe all of these treatments in detail.

Surgery

Surgery usually involves a hysterectomy, which

flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness. **Radiation therapy**

Radiation therapy uses powerful beams to kill

volves placing a small device that contains radia-

Doctors may also use radiation therapy to:

to remove • eliminate any remaining cancer cells after sur-

gery • relieve symptoms and improve the quality of

Adverse effects Side effects of radiation therapy can include:

- burns in the affected area
- hair loss
- ٠
- diarrhea

After the treatment has finished, the side effects

Chemotherapy uses medication to destroy cancer cells. Combined with radiotherapy, it can kill a tumor or remove any cells that remain after sur-

It can also slow the progression of late-stage cancer and prolong life expectancy. For people

Adverse effects

- Possible side effects include a reduction in healthy blood cells. This can increase the risk of:
- bruising
- bleeding

• anemia

• fatigue

- infections
- Anyone who experiences any of these should
- contact their doctor.
- Chemotherapy can also cause:
- hair loss • gastrointestinal problems
- a low appetite
- lip and mouth sores
- Less commonly, it can cause:
- swelling in the legs and feet
- joint pain balance problems
- hearing difficulties
 - a rash
 - - numbness and tingling in the hands and feet These adverse effects typically go away after the treatment ends.
 - **Targeted therapy**
 - This type of treatment uses substances that target specific cancer cells.
 - They may do this by:
 - producing antibodies that fight cancerous cells • preventing the growth of blood vessels that
 - supply a tumor blocking signals that tell cells to reproduce ex-
 - cessively Unlike radiation therapy or chemotherapy, targeted treatments only affect cancerous cells, not
 - healthy cells. For this reason, they are less likely to cause side effects throughout the body.
 - Hormone therapy Some hormones encourage cancer cells to grow. Hormone therapy for cancer blocks or re-
 - moves these hormones. The main hormone involved in the treatment is progestin. Other options are tamoxifen

cancer cells. It damages their DNA so that they can no longer multiply. If a person receives external radiation therapy, a machine directs radiation

at their pelvis and other areas with cancer. Brachytherapy, or internal radiation therapy, in-

tion into the vagina for a few minutes at a time.

- shrink a tumor before surgery, making it easier
- life, when it is not possible to remove the tumor

- fatigue
 - nausea

usually resolve.

Chemotherapy

gery

with endometrial cancer, doctors usually administer chemotherapy intravenously, with intervals between treatment sessions to allow the body to recover.

is the removal of the uterus, the fallopian tubes, and the ovaries.

A person who has a hysterectomy before menopause will no longer menstruate and will not conceive. After the surgery, a person may experience symptoms of menopause, such as hot ment for people with advanced endometrial

(Nolvadex), an estrogen receptor modulator, luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone agonists, and aromatase inhibitors.

The side effects depend on the specific medication. Doctors usually recommend hormone treat-

Source, according to the American Cancer Society. It is 95% if a doctor diagnoses the cancer at its earliest stage.

• imaging tests, such as MRI scans

To reduce the risk, the National Cancer Institute recommend exercising regularly, having a healthful, balanced diet, and avoiding smoking. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

tify the reason behind the gradual increase in temperature-related fatalities in women. "But an intuitive reason is increased reporting of female mortality in India," he said.

The decrease is male temperature-re- **Down To Earth**)

Botox for hair

By: Shahnaz Husain

air Botox, this non-invasive treatment has gained popularity in recent years due to its ability to treat a variety of hair concerns such as frizziness, split ends,

Hair botox' is a term used to describe a hair treatment that aims to rejuvenate and restore damaged and broken hair fibres.

The hair on your head loses fullness and elasticity as it ages, just like your skin due to pollution, lifestyle, stress and heat on strands. It's perfect for those with dry, brittle, and color-damaged hair.

Hair Botox acts as the ultimate deep conditioning treatment that coats hair fibres with filler, such as keratin making it a safe

socio-cultural attitudes towards violence against and painless process. older women that are It helps people steeped in ageism, harmful who are seeking stereotypes, and discrimisolutions for natory cultural norms that split ends, prevent them from sharing damaged hair, frizz and dry-The WHO briefs make ness. Hair lacking volume or sheen, and naturally wavy or curly hair. Hair Botox treatment doesn't

require any surgery or a significant amount of downtime.

Besides taming the frizz, the treatment also adds moisture and shine to the hair. It suits everyone regardless of hair type. It works equally well on any type of hair, from fine and straight to thick and curly.

The procedure involves a specialised formula containing proteins, amino acids, vitamins, antioxidants, and, in some cases, hyaluronic acid is used. These ingredients penetrate the hair shaft and repair damage while

also providing hydration and improving hair health.

The treatment allows the ingredients to penetrate deep into the hair shaft, infuses the hair with intense hydration while replacing/filling in the lost cuticle layers, creating a protective barrier, coating the hair shaft in essence, gluing the cuticle layers down, and temporarily filling in/replacing lost cuticles.

Your hair first will be needed to be given a thorough wash to get rid of the excess oil, dirt and chemicals.

A post-hair botox shampoo should be mild, gentle and free of sulfates, sodium chloride, silicones, and parabens that will keep hair cuticles closed and smooth. Besides, a moisturizing conditioner should be formu-

lated with natural seed oils, hydrolyzed proteins, and other plant extracts. You can apply a hair mask once a week to moisturize the hair. Your hair will then be dried in sections and the botox treat-

ment will be applied thoroughly through your hair, from the roots to the tips. The treatment is then left on for about 60 minutes, after

which a soft hair cleanser is used to wash the botox off.

Your hair will be dried first, and then heat- straightened to help seal in the treatment in the fibers of your hair.

The infusion of nourishing ingredients restores the natural hydration balance, leaving the hair noticeably softer and more manageable. It rejuvenates hair by infusing it with powerful nutrients, proteins, and moisture,

revitalizing even the most damaged strands.

This results in stronger, smoother, and more manageable hair that looks healthy and vibrant. Botox hair treatment provides long-lasting results. Botox is supposed to last around 4 months making it a cost-effective and preferred choice for those seeking sustained improvements in hair texture although the exact time frame will vary from person to person.

However, results can differ based on the person's hair type, the product used, and the professional applying it. Always discuss it with your health care professional or dermatologist beforehand.

The treatment fills in any broken or thin areas on each hair strand to make the hair appear more full and lustrous.

With its ability to reduce frizz, restore shine, and improve manageability, hair botox has become a sought-after solution for those seeking to revive and nourish their hair to its full, healthy potential.

Various plants extracts, such as aloe vera, green tea, or chamomile, may be included in hair botox products for their soothing, antioxidant, or anti-inflammatory properties. These ingredients can increase hydration, improve texture, reduce frizz, and make styling an easier feat.

Hair Botox is considered safe for use, although as with any hair treatment, there is a risk for skin irritation, burns or an allergic reaction.

To reduce the risk of damaging side effects, the treatment shouldn't come in contact with your skin.

Always choose a reputed salon and professional to do the procedure. Be sure to share any allergies or sensitivities you may have with them. Use a patch test to check for allergies or adverse reactions before using the product all over your head. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

lder women and women with disabilities experience abuse that is unique to their demographics, yet they are underrepresented in national and global forms. databases, according to findings shared by the World Health Organization

homes.

and sexual abuse.

ances that are not

sufficiently captured in the

studies due to their limita-

Violence against older

women can manifest in

other ways as they and

tions.

By: Naureen Hossain

(WHO). On Wednesday, WHO and UN-Women released two new briefs, the first in a series that will discuss neglected forms of violence, including genderbased violence. The two briefs, titled Measuring violence against older women and Measuring violence against women with disability, investigate the types of violence that these groups face through data available. the Through reviewing existing studies into violence against women, the research team was able to synthesize the information available on this topic and its scope across different countries.

As was noted by Dr. Lynnmarie Sardinha, Technical Officer at WHO and the UN Special Programme on Human Repro-(HRP) duction for Violence against Women Data and Measurement, and author of the briefs. The limited data on older women and women with disabilities undermines the

ability of programmes to their partners/perpetrators the telephone. meet their needs. "Underage. standing how diverse women and girls are differently affected, and if and how they are accessing services, is critical to ending violence in all its

One in three women is affected by gender-based violence in these forms. For older women-aged 60 years and over-and women with disabilities, they are also subjected to other forms of abuse and neglect, usually at the hands of caregivers, family members, or healthcare institutions such as nursing Examples of this include controlling behaviors such

WHO asks for data on abuse against older women and

women with disabilities information gaps detected

as withholding medicine and assistive devices, and against women. financial abuse. Though Only 6 percent of the these forms of neglect and

abuse have been observed. the studies that the briefs reviewed seemed to focus more on intimate partner violence through physical The briefs acknowledge, are,

against women should not only be exemplified by inof violence women. timate partner violence. The prevalence of this ex-Data collection proceample hints at further nu-

dures may not be designed to accommodate women with disabilities or prevent them from self-reporting, such as deaf or hard-ofhearing women who are unable to participate in

surveys conducted through

Although women aged 15–49 are at higher that women who live with risk of intimate partner and lifelong disrespect and sexual violence, older neglect may not recognize women are still likely to the specific forms of vioexperience it, and this can lence, which could account shift towards other forms for fewer instances being of abuse, such as neglect, reported. This could also economic abuse, and psyapply to older women. where surveying and rechological abuse. The brief on older women reveals. porting mechanisms are however, that there is limgeared towards women of

ited data to definitively state its prevalence. This is particularly the case for low- and middle-income countries; the data that was compiled for this brief comes largely from highincome countries, a gap that the reports are aware of. Older women are repre-

sented in only ten percent of the data on violence

studies reviewed for women with disabilities included measures of violence specific to this group. The lack of questions specific to this demographic indicates that they perhaps uncon-

however, that violence sciously, unaccounted for when measuring the scale

several recommendations to address the evidence gaps. Among them are extending the age limit for survey participation and incorporating questions that relate to different

zen)

types of violence. Data collection should also account for cultural-specific contexts of violence and against abuse across different countries. Women with disabilities should be consulted in research at every stage when designing surveys targeted at them, which will allow for a broader spectrum of disabilities to be accounted

for. (Courtesy: The Citi-

-🐼-

The briefs also suggest and lack of shine.

World

Biden to meet Japan's PM amid shared concerns

about China and differences on US Steel deal

Preliminary hearings held on Monday & Tuesday are focused solely on Nicaragua's request for so-called provisional measures including a court order for Berlin to halt military & other aid to Israel and reinstate funding to the UN aid agency in Gaza

Germany rejects allegations that it's facilitating acts of genocide in Gaza at UN court

THE HAGUE, April 9: Germany on Tuesday strongly rejected a case brought by Nicaragua at the United Nations' top court accusing Berlin of facilitating breaches of the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law by providing arms and other support to Israel in its deadly assault on Gaza.

"The minute we look closely, Nicaragua's accusations fall apart," Christian Tams, a member of Germany's legal team, told the 16-judge panel at the International Court of Justice.

On Monday, Nicaragua urged judges to order a halt to German military aid to Israel, arguing that Berlin's support enables acts of genocide and breaches of international humanitarian law in Gaza.

The head of Germany's legal team, Tania von Uslar-Gleichen, said Nicaragua's claims "have no basis in fact or law. They are dependent on an assessment of conduct by Israel, not a party to these pro-

Preliminary hearings held on Monday and Tuesday are focused solely on Nicaragua's request for so-called provisional measures, including a court order for Berlin to halt military and other aid to Israel and reinstate funding to the UN aid agency in Gaza.

Tams said that Germany had licensed only four exports of weapons of war to Israel since October, "three of which concern test or practice equipment." Showing judges a photo of German aid being airdropped over Gaza, Tams added that Berlin continues to provide humanitarian support to Palestinians "every single day under extremely difficult conditions, constructively engaging with international partners.

Nicaragua's case is the latest legal attempt to rein in Israel's offensive by a country with historic ties to the Palestinian people, after South Africa accused Israel of genocide at the same court late last year. It also comes against a backdrop of growing calls for



Israel's allies to stop supplying the country with weapons and as some supporters, in-Convention.

cluding Germany, have grown more critical of the war. At Monday's hearings, Nicaragua's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Carlos José Argüello Gómez, accused Germany of "failing to honour its own obligation to prevent genocide or to ensure respect

of international humanitarian However, another lawyer for Germany, Samuel Wordsworth, argued that the court could not rule Germany was violating the obligation to prevent genocide because its

judges have not ruled that Israel is breaching the Genocide In a preliminary phase of

the case brought late last year by South Africa, the UN court has said that it is "plausible" the convention.

that Israel's actions in Gaza could amount to breaches of

"How can it be said that there was a failure to ensure respect of a third state, if the failure on the part of that third state to respect is not established in the first place?"

> Wordsworth said. The court will likely take weeks to deliver its preliminary decision, and Nicaragua's putes to the court. (AP)

case will probably drag on for years.

Israel strongly denies that its assault amounts to genocidal acts, saying it is acting in self defense after Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on October 7, killing some 1,200 people.

Indo-Pacific policy. Kishida will be the fifth Since then, more than world leader honored by Biden with a state 33,000 Palestinians have been dinner since he took office in 2021. killed in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry. set to visit Arlington National Cemetery and Its toll doesn't differentiate bestop by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Tuestween civilians and combatday. Biden and Kishida on Wednesday will ants, but it has said women hold talks and take part in a joint news conferand children make up the maence before Biden fetes the Japanese leader

jority of the dead. with the state dinner in the East Room. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research address a joint meeting of Congress on Thurs-Institute, Germany is second day. He will be just the second Japanese leader only to the US in supplying to address the body; Shinzo Abe gave a speech arms to Israel - but it would be to Congress in 2015. harder, if not impossible, for the US to be brought before month that he opposes the planned sale of

the court because Washington Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel to Nippon Steel of does not recognise the ICJ's Japan, exposing a marked rift in the partnerpower to compel countries to to reinforce it. Biden argued in announcing his appear before it. The US also has not signed a protocol to opposition that the U.S. needs to "maintain strong American steel companies powered by the Genocide Convention that allows countries to bring dis-American steelworkers."

Ambassador Rahm Emanuel, Biden's envoy to Tokyo, sought Monday to downplay the impact of Biden's opposition to the U.S. Steel acquisition to the relationship.

WASHINGTON, April 9: Japanese Prime

Minister Fumio Kishida begins a much-anticipated visit to Washington on Tuesday aiming to spotlight shared concerns about provocative

Chinese military action in the Pacific and at a

rare moment of public difference between the

two nations over a Japanese company's plan to

House Tuesday evening ahead of Wednesday's

official visit and formal state dinner as Presi-

dent Joe Biden looks to celebrate a decades-

long ally he sees as the cornerstone of his

Ahead of the White House visit, Kishida is

The prime minister has also been invited to

The visit comes after Biden announced last

ip at the very moment the two leaders aim

Kishida and his wife will stop by the White

buy an iconic U.S. company.

Emanuel noted that in February the Biden administration approved a plan that would drive billions of dollars in revenue to a U.S.based subsidiary of the Japanese company Mitsui for crane production in the United States

"The United States relationship with Japan is a lot deeper and stronger and more significant than a single commercial deal," said Emanuel, the former mayor of Chicago, in a joint appearance at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies with Japan's chief envoy to Washington. "As we



would say in Chicago, you got to chill."

Nippon Steel announced in December that it planned to buy U.S. Steel for \$14.1 billion in cash, raising concerns about what the transaction could mean for unionized workers, supply chains and U.S. national security. Shigeo Yamada, Japan's ambassador to Washington, declined to comment on whether Kishida would raise the Nippon-U.S. Steel deal with Biden.

Biden has sought to place greater foreign policy focus on the Pacific even while grappling with the fallout of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the grinding Israel-Hamas war. Last year, Biden brought together Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, a historic summit between leaders of two countries that have a difficult shared history.

Biden has honored Yoon with a state visit and picked Kishida's predecessor, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, as the first face-to-face foreign leader visit of his presidency.

The administration has been pleased by Japan's strong support for Ukraine. Tokyo has been one of the largest donors to Kyiv since Russia's February 2022 invasion, and Japan has surged its defense spending amid concern about China's military assertiveness.

Yamada suggested in his joint appearance with Emanuel that Kishida would underscore Japan's support for Ukraine during his appearance before Congress, and lay out why the conflict in Eastern Europe matters to his country. Biden is struggling to get House Republicans to back his call to send an additional \$60 billion to Kyiv as it tries to fend off Russia.

Kishida has warned that the war in Europe could lead to conflict in East Asia, suggesting that a lax attitude to Russia emboldens China. "The prime minister's conviction is today's Ukraine could be tomorrow's East Asia," Yamada said. (AP)

Pakistan's ex-PM and PPP leader Gillani becomes Senate chairman; PML-N's Nasir gets deputy role

ISLAMABAD, April 9: Senior Pakistan Peoples Party leader and former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani was elected unopposed as chairman of the Senate on Tuesday, amidst protest from lawmakers from jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party.

Saidal Khan Nasir of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was elected as the deputy chairman.

No one had filed nomination papers against the two candidates supported by the ruling alliance led by the PML-N.

The Senate met amidst protest by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers who were demanding that the session, during which the chairperson and deputy chairperson would be elected, should be postponed until the election of senators from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province where polling was scheduled to be held on April 2 but postponed due to the controversy over the oath of members elected on reserved seats.

Early this month, elections were held in Islamabad, Punjab and Sindh, but not in PTI-ruled KP province

- where Senate polls were delayed on 11 seats due to provincial assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati's refusal to administer the oath to opposition lawmakers on reserved seats.

These seats were allotted to the PPP, PML-N, and other parties after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) rejected a plea by the PTI and Sunni Itehad Council (SIC) for the allocation of these seats. After the session began, 41 newly-elected senators were given oaths. The total strength of the Senate is 96. but currently, only 85 senators are its members as elections for 11 senators from KP are still pending.

European court hands down mixed rulings on 3 cases seeking to force countries to meet climate goals

STRASBOURG, April 9: Europe's highest human rights court threw out cases on Tuesday brought by six Portuguese youths and a French mayor aimed at forcing countries to meet internathe weekend. tional obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but sided with a group of senior Swiss women who also sought such measures.

The European Court of Human Rights came down with decisions in a trio of cases brought by a French mayor, the six Portuguese youngsters and more than 2,000 members of Senior Women for Climate Protection, who say their governments are not doing enough to combat climate change

Lawyers for all three had hoped the Strasbourg court would find that national governments have a legal duty to make sure global warming is held to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, in line with the goals of the Paris climate agreement. But

Judge Siofra O'Leary, the president of the European Court of Human Rights, came down with mixed judgements. Judgments from the European Court of Human Rights aren't legally binding for all 46 of the European Council's member states, but they set a legal precedent against which future lawsuits would be judged

court building to cheer and wave European Convention of Human Rights. It could be overturned if flags, including climate activist Greta Thunberg, who was coming Tuesday's decision concludes there is no legal obligation for off of multiple arrests during a demonstration in The Hague over "We're nervous. Nervous and excited," said Cláudia Agostinho,

a 24-year-old who is one of the in the Netherlands. six Portuguese who brought the case to the Strasbourg court. The decisions have "the poten-

tial to be a watershed moment in the global fight for a livable future. A victory for any of the three cases would be one of the most significant developments on cli-

mate change since the signing of the Paris Agreement" said Gerry Liston, a lawyer with the Global Legal Ac-Network, tion which is supporting the Portuguese students. The European

> Union, which doesn't include Switzerland, currently has a target to be climateneutral by 2050. Many

countries to combat climate change. "A court ruling is binding on all countries," said Dennis van Berkel, who represented Urgenda Such considerations were not predominantly on the mind of 16year-old André dos Santos Oliveira of Portugal. show of support against Western democracies "The extreme heat waves, the

rainfalls, followed by heat waves, it is just choking us with greenhouse effects. And what worries



do?" she said. Together with five more young people, Santos Oliveira took Por-

BEIJING, April 9: Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday in a sign of mutual support and shared opposition to Western democracies amid Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"We would like to express our highest appreciation and admiration for the successes that you have achieved over the years and, above all, over the last decade under your leadership," Lavrov told Xi, according to Russian media.

past decades, the two have closely aligned their foreign policies, held joint military exercises and sought to rally non-aligned states in groupings such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Xi meets with Russian Foreign Min Lavrov in

Lavrov held a news conference earlier Tuesday with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at which they reaffirmed solidarity in international affairs. Lavrov said Russia and China oppose any international events that do not take Russia's position into account.

others most important diplomatic partners, both holding permanent seats on the United Nations security council and working together to block initiatives by the US and its allies to spread democratic values and human rights from Venezuela to Syria.

While China has not provided direct military support for Russia, it has backed it diplomatically in blaming the West for provoking Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to launch the war and

With the election of the chairman and his deputy, the ruling alliance further solidified its grip on power as now it controls both Houses of Parliament.

The Senate is the upper house of Pakistan's bicameral Parliament. The senators are elected for six-anda-half-year with half of the house up for election every three years. They are elected by the provincial and National Assemblies.

Almost a month ago, the Upper House became dysfunctional following the retirement of half of its members. (PTI)

Although activists have had the government to cut emissions successes with lawsuits in domesby at least 25% by the end of tic proceedings, this was the first 2020 from benchmark 1990 levtime an international court ruled els. on climate change.

Ahead of the ruling, a large brought the case, relied on the crowd gathered in front of the

governments have said that meettugal and 32 other nations to ing a 2030 goal would be ecocourt, arguing the failure to stop nomically unattainable. emissions violated their funda-

The groups were confident that mental rights. Their case was thrown out. But judges ruled in the 17 judges would rule in their favour, but the mixed decision favour of a group of Swiss recould undermine a previous rultirees also demanding their goving in the Netherlands. In 2019, ernment do more. Senior Women for Climate the Dutch Supreme Court ordered

Protection, whose average age is 74, say older women's rights are especially infringed on because they are most affected by the ex-The Urgenda decision, refertreme heat that will become more ring to the climate group that frequent due to global warming. (AP)

We are sincerely pleased with these successes, since these are the successes of friends, although not everyone in the world shares this attiany realities". tude and are trying in every

Zelensky has called for the withdrawal of Russian forces possible way to restrain the and the return of all occupied development of China - in fact just like the development of Ukrainian territory, but is Russia," Lavrov said. heavily reliant on support

Russia's growing economic from the US, where the Republican Party majority in the and diplomatic isolation has made it increasingly reliant on House of Representatives has China, its former rival for been holding up a new milileadership of the Communist tary aid package. bloc during the Cold War. In China and Russia are each

He said Ukrainian President refrained from calling it an in Volodymyr Zelensky's "sovasion in deference to the called peace formula" was Kremlin. "completely detached from

China has also said it isn't providing Russia with arms or military assistance, although it has maintained robust economic connections with Moscow, alongside India and other countries. amid sanctions from Washington and its allies

At their joint news conference Wang repeated China's calls for a ceasefire and "an end to the war soon". (AP)

Bulgarian parl formally approves caretaker govt to run country until June 9 elections

SOFIA, April 9: Bulgaria's parliament on Tuesday formally approved an interim government to run the EU member country until snap parliamentary and regular European Parliament elections on June 9.

Dimitar Glavchev, 60, was sworn in as interim prime minister in a ceremony at the National Assembly, where his ministers were also taking the oath of office. He was picked by Bulgarian President Rumen Radev under recent constitutional amendments that limited his choice to just a few senior state officeholders.

Glavchev, the head of the National Audit Office and a former legislator from the center right GERB party and speaker of parliament, said the ministers he selected for his interim Cabinet are "equally distant from all political parties.'

The move comes after the two largest political groups ----GERB and reformists led by We Continue the Change failed to find common ground to continue their uneasy coalition after nine months in office.

Cabinet.

ous local elections.

The coalition's collapse in March helped pave the way toward a snap parliamentary election, the sixth since April 2021, which is expected to



deepen the political crisis and been part of past election cyput on hold key reforms. cles.

Disagreements between the Glavchev's main task will two former coalition partners be to organize a fair election in continued over some of the the graft-ridden Balkan country of 6.5 million, which has ministers in the interim government. The reformists comthe worst income inequality in plain that their opponents the 27-member European dominate the new Cabinet and Union

may use their positions to Analysts predict that June's clinch an unfair election vicearly election will probably tory. Reformist leader Kiril lead to another fragmented Petkov said the choice of Inteparliament, which would bring rior Minister Kalin Stoyanov more political instability and dash hopes for full admission in the interim government "is outrageous and offensive, a to the EU's visa-free Schengen poor attempt to cover up the area and the euro zone, and to various dependencies in this secure the release of billions of euros in EU recovery funds.

Civil groups have alleged Opinion polls suggest the that Stoyanov was responsible upcoming vote could bolster for vote-buying during previthe presence of nationalist and pro-Russian parties that are Elections in post-Commuexploiting fears in Bulgaria nist Bulgaria have been generand benefitting from disinforally free and democratic, but mation from Moscow that has issues like vote-buying and created deep rifts in society. corporate voting have often (AP)

Vatican's top diplomat begins a 6-day visit to Vietnam aimed at normalising relations

HANOI, April 9: The Vatican's top diplomat began a six-day visit to Vietnam on Tuesday as part of ongoing efforts to normalise relations between the two sides.

Richard Gallagher, the Holy See's foreign minister, will meet with his Vietnamese counterpart Bui Thanh Son and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and visit a children's hospital in the capital, Hanoi, state media Vietnam News Agency reported.

Gallagher will also hold Mass in Hanoi, in Hue in central Vietnam and in the financial hub of Ho Chi Minh City in the south.

Last December, Archbishop Marek Zalewski became the first Vatican representative to live in the Southeast Asian country and open an office there.

Vietnam described that appointment as a "historic moment," underscoring a stronger relationship that could have implications in the future for the Holy See's ties with China.

The Vatican's relationship with Vietnam has long been seen as a model for its relations with China. Beijing severed diplomatic ties with the Vatican in 1951 after the communists rose to power and expelled foreign priests.

Vietnam and the Vatican still don't have full diplomatic relations. Their ties were severed in 1975 after the Communist Party established its rule over the entire country following the end of the Vietnam War. Relations have been strained ever since, although the two sides have had regular talks since at least the late 1990s. Catholicism is officially the most practiced religion in Vietnam, with 5.9 million or 44.6% of the 13.2 million people who identified as religious in a 2019 census saying they were Catholic. That works out to more than 6% of the country's population.

Diplomats have speculated that Pope Francis could visit the country, but no official announcements have been made by the Vatican or Vietnam. (AP)

by Pak Army chief ahead of Eid ISLAMABAD, April 9: Ahead of Eid, at least 20 people sentenced by military courts for their involvement in the May 9 violence that erupted after the arrest of former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan last year have been released by the military authorities following a pardon by Army chief General Asim Munir.

The decision was shared by the federal government on Monday with the Supreme Court, which has been hearing a set of intra-court appeals (ICAs) against its October 23, 2023, unanimous ruling nullifying the military trials of civilians.

A six-member bench of the apex court, including Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Azhar Hasan Rizvi, Justice months Shahid Waheed, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, has been hearing the ICAs. 9.5 months. As most of them had

The case is about the trial of 103 civilians for their alleged involvement in the attacks on key Army installations during the riots that erupted after the arrest of Khan, the founder of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.

Dozens of military installations and government buildings, including the military headquarters in Rawalpindi, were damaged or torched during the riots. Over 100 vehicles of police and other security agencies were set on fire.

During the last hearing held on March 28, the court conditionally allowed military authorities to announce verdicts of only those May 9 suspects who could be released before the Eid festival. The report furnished before the Supreme Court stated that in pursuance to its March 28 direc-

tions, the military courts were al-

lowed to resume trial and

therefore sentences in cases of

served around 10 months in jail,

the remaining period of their

punishment was remitted by the

Among them, four belong to

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while the

other 16 are from Punjab. They

were released in their respective

The office of the Attorney

General for Pakistan furnished a

list of 20 individuals before the

Supreme Court to be made part

provinces on April 7 and 6.

have served

Army chief.

of the record.

May 9 riots: 20 convicts freed after reprieve

bench comprising Justices Ijazul Ahsan, Munib Akhtar, Yahya Afridi, Syed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Ayesha Malik had unanimously declared on Oct 23 last year that trying the accused civilians in military courts was against the Constitution of the country. The bench had also ruled they should be tried in civilian criminal courts.

A set of ICAs followed and the

court on De-



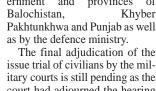
cember 13 last vear suspended the verdict by a 5l majority till the adjudication of the appeals. The appeals were filed by the then-caretaker federal gov-

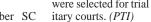
ernment and provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab as well as by the defence ministry.

issue trial of civilians by the military courts is still pending as the court had adjourned the hearing

Hundreds of Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf party workers and leaders were arrested after the riot but only those allegedly involved in attacks on Army installations were selected for trial by the mil-

Earlier, a five-member SC





until the last week of April.



NORTHEAST

Biplab Deb should tell people why he had to resign as Tripura CM: CPI(M) leader



AGARTALA, April 9: BJP's Tripura West candidate Biplab Kumar Deb should tell people the reason behind his resignation as the chief minister a year before the 2023 assembly polls, leader of the opposition Jitendra Chaudhury said on Tuesday.

Addressing an election rally in Badharghat, the CPI(M) state secretary also sought to know why Union minister Pratima Bhoumik was not re-nominated from the Tripura West Lok Sabha seat.

"We don't indulge in personal attacks but the people have the right to know why Biplab Deb was removed suddenly. It is still unknown why he was forced to quit as the chief minister even as he dreamt of staying in the post till 2047," Chaudhury said.

"People also have a right to know why Pratima Bhoumik was

Sabha seats for the BJP to "pay re-

spect" to the decision to abrogate

Addressing an election

rally in South Tripura's

Hrishyamukh, he asked party

Article 370 in Jammu and

Kashmir, Tripura chief minis-

ter Manik Saha said on Tues-

day.

denied a ticket in the Lok Sabha

polls," he added. Deb, who guided BJP to a massive victory in the 2018 assembly polls bringing an end to the CPI(M)-led Left Front government of 25 years, resigned as the CM abruptly in 2022, following

which Manik Saha took over. Chaudhury alleged that there was no internal democracy within

the BJP. "They don't hold organisational elections be it at the national level or the state level. JP Nadda selected Rajib Bhattacharjee (state BJP president) and he then selected the mandal presidents," he claimed.

Maintaining that the INDIA bloc was formed to "save the country", Chaudhury urged people to vote for Congress candidate Asish Kumar Saha in the Tripura West seat. (PTI) PM targets 370 seats to 'pay respect' to

China's move to rename 30 places in Arunachal will not alter ground reality, says Union defence minister What if we rename parts of China: Rajnath on Beijing changing names of Arunachal areas NAMSAI, April 9: Defence minister Raj-

nath Singh on Tuesday criticised China for renaming several places in Arunachal Pradesh, and wondered whether a similar attempt by India will result in those areas of the neighbouring country becoming parts of our territory.

Addressing an election rally at Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh East Constituency, Singh said China's move to change the names of 30 places in the northeastern state will not change the ground reality.

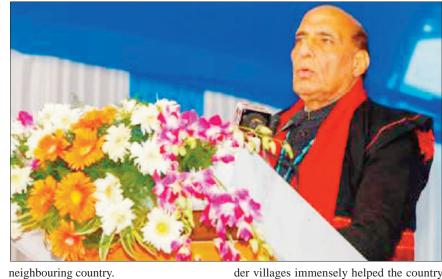
Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India, he asserted.

"I want to ask China if we change the names of various states of the neighbouring country, will those be parts of our territory? Because of such activities, the relationship between India and China will deteriorate,7 Singh said.

"We want to maintain good relations with all our neighbours. But if anybody tries to harm our self-respect, India has the capability to give a befitting reply," the defence minister asserted

India had earlier this month outrightly rejected as "senseless" China renaming some places in Arunachal Pradesh, and asserted that assigning "invented" names does not alter the reality that the state "is, has been, and will always be" an integral part of India. Beijing had recently announced Chinese names for 30 more places in Arunachal Pradesh, which the neighbouring country

claims as southern part of Tibet. Singh alleged that the Congress was never interested in developing the border areas and as a result, the country lost around 1000 square kilometres of its territory to the



der villages immensely helped the country "I assure you that India will now never during the war with China in 1962.

its neighbour," Singh said in the rally.

northeast during its 60 years of rule, he said

that the grand old party used to consider

every border village as the last village of the

country while the Modi government consid-

Congress since 2014 after our party came to

power and initiated infrastructure projects in

border areas so that our borders are secured.

For the NDA government, border villages

Singh added that the residents of the bor-

are strategic assets of the country," he said.

"We have rectified the mistakes of the

ers it as the first.

allow even an inch of land to be captured by "Their contributions will always be remembered by the country and we will re-Accusing the Congress of neglecting main grateful to them forever," the minister Arunachal Pradesh as well as the entire said

> Referring to the quantum of investment made in the northeast in the 10 years of the BJP-led NDA government, Singh claimed that the amount of funds pumped into the region was much more than the amount sanctioned during the Congress rule.

> "We have launched the UNNATI scheme for the northeast with a total investment of Rs 10,000 crore. The youth of the region will get employment through it," he said.

The UNNATI scheme aims to boost development of new industries in the region

and generate employment. It will also promote trade and commerce with Southeast Asia.

Singh said that Modi's guarantee is to make three crore lakhpati didi in the country through various women self help groups.

"Modi does whatever he says. All the projects whose foundation stone were laid by the Prime Minister were completed on time. While the Congress laid foundation stones for several projects in the region as an election plank, but the projects failed to see the light of the day," he said.

Earlier, India failed to get recognition in the world but today, what the country says, the world listens and it was only because of Modi, he added.

"After the Modi's government came to power the status of around 25 crore poor people in the country improved. This is not our claim but revealed in a survey carried out by reputed organisations including the Niti Aayog," he said and added that the 21st century is going to be for India.

Singh also referred to the Prime Minister's effort to safely evacuate thousands of Indian students from war-ravaged Ukraine and also brought home eight former Indian Navy officers who were served with death sentences in Qatar.

Stating that Arunachal Pradesh is strategically important for India, the defence minister said that the BJP government initiated various projects in the state including the Sella Tunnel, Dibang multi-purpose power project, the biggest in the country.

Alleging that the Congress has been spreading false narratives about the CAA, he said people should ignore it. (PTI)

This may be published in Newspapers and TV from the day following the last date for withdrawal of candidature and upto two days before the date of poll Format C-1

(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: JONES INGTI KATHAR, D.C. COLONY DIPHU, K/A, ASSAM-782460

Name of Political party: INDEPENDENT (Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election: GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LOK SABHA-2024

*Name of Constituency: 6-DIPHU (ST) PERLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

I JONES INGTI KATHAR (name of candidate), a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases

workers to work hard to achieve the target "At the BJP's national executive meet-

LOST

(General Secretary of

Jakve Asong NGO), S/o

Rensing Timung, R/o Di-

I, Shri. Nobin Timung

AGARTALA, April 9: Prime Minister ing in Delhi, PM Modi set the target for Narendra Modi set the target of 370 Lok the BJP to win 370 seats to pay respect to the abrogation of Article 370. He also

emphasised the need to work hard to achieve the target," Saha said. He said that in accordance with the direction of the PM, BJP workers will visit every house in the state and seek "blessings" for him.

"We are aiming to visit every house to seek blessings for the PM. Wherever we are going, we are wit-

nessing people's faith and love for PM

NFR surpasses target of track renewal works in 2023-24

<u>HT Bureau</u> GUWAHATI, April 9: In a bid to maintain

sle free movement of road and rail users, 19 manned level crossings have been eliminated railway tracks in proper condition and pro- as well as 20 road over bridges (ROB) and 48

abrogation of Article 370: Tripura CM Modi," he said. Hailing the 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme, Saha claimed that world leaders

were surprised to see how a prime minister could reach out to the people and solve their problems.

Criticising the opposition, he said they have formed a platform -- INDIA, aiming to oust the PM who "made the country a global leader".

"They have failed to bring together the anti-BJP forces in West Bengal and Kerala. They will not be able to stall a third consecutive term for Modi," he said. (PTI)

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Sd/-Principal Controller of Examinations, Assam Public Service Commission, Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.	

NATION

Congress, the prime minister ac-

being worshipped in the country,

Congress are speaking about uproot-

'Shakti' will forgive the INDI al-

('daldal') of appeasement that it can

never get out of it. The manifesto

Gandhi's remarks on 'Shakti'.

cused it of insulting 'Shakti'.

Modi also asserted that his gov-

Amid the various difficulties

ernment is working towards the goal

being faced by the world now, India

is showing that there is nothing im-

possible for it to achieve, he said,

adding this has been possible due to

"No matter how difficult the goal

is. if India is determined to achieve

it, it will definitely achieve. Today,

with this inspiration and energy, we

are working towards the resolution

tire world, India is showing that

there is nothing impossible for it,"

"Amidst the difficulties of the en-

Modi said that there was a time

when the Congress government

used to ask for help from the world,

but during the Covid pandemic,

medicines were made available to

"When India became the world's

fastest growing economic power,

were vou (people) proud of it or not?

When our Chandravaan hoisted the

tricolour on the moon, were you

proud or not? The grand G20 sum-

mit held in India was praised all

over the world. We also honoured

our sacred values by bringing Guru

Granth Sahib from Afghanistan with

the whole world from India.

of a developed India," he said.

he said.

every single vote of the people.

of making a developed India.

Cong slams Amit Shah for giving 'clean chit' to China on 'encroachment' on Indian soil

NEW DELHI, April 9: Slamming Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks that China couldn't encroach upon a "single inch" of land, the Congress Tuesday accused the Modi government of giving a "clean chit" to the country and asserted its encroachment will be halted decisively when the party comes to power. AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh said each time the BJP gives a clean chit to China, the ruling party make it harder for India to deal with China's illegal encroachment.

He underlined that in its manifesto. the Congress has clearly acknowledged the occupation of land and the threat posed by China and articulated a clear plan to strengthen the country's defences.

His remarks came after Home Minister Shah asserted that China couldn't encroach a "single inch" of land under the Narendra Modi government. He claimed that people will never forget how former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said "bye-bye' to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh during the 1962 Chinese aggression. Reacting to Shah's remarks, Ramesh said, "On June 19th, 2020, at the allparty meet on China, the Prime Minister declared that not a single Chinese soldier had crossed over into Indian territory. The Prime Minister's lie was used by the Chinese all over the world to deny their encroachments onto Indian territory."

"Now, the only man who can give the Prime Minister competition in lying and falsifying facts - his Home Minister - has also given a clean chit to China. He has claimed that China 'couldn't encroach a single inch of land' under the Modi government'." "These are the facts that the PM and HM are denying -- China has occupied 2,000 sq km of Indian soil. China has taken over 26 out of 65 patrolling points in Ladakh. China has built complete villages 50-60km deep inside Arunachal Pradesh, a fact confirmed by satellite imagery and raised by BJP MP Tapir Gao on the floor of the Lok Sabha," the Congress leader said

"This is the reality of the prime minister's 'Lal Aankh' -- cowardly statements that insult our soldiers and martyrs by giving a clean chit to China," Ramesh said.

"Each time the BJP gives a clean chit to China, they make it harder for India to deal with China's illegal encroachment. In our Nyay Patra (manifesto), the Congress Party has clearly acknowledged the occupation of land and the threat posed by China, and articulated a clear plan to strengthen our defence." he said.

From June 4 onwards, the Chinese encroachment on Indian soil will be halted decisively, Ramesh asserted, referring to the Lok Sabha election results date. The seven-phase Lok Sabha polls will begin on April 19 and end on June 1. The results will be declared on June 4.

Addressing an election rally in Lakhimpur, Shah said the BJP-led government at the Centre secured the country's border with Bangladesh and stopped infiltration.

"During the Chinese aggression of 1962, Nehru had said 'bye-bye' to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. People of these states can never forget that." Shah said. (PTI)

Cong insulted Lord Ram by refusing invite for 'pran pratishtha' ceremony: PM Modi

INDI alliance of SP-Congress does not care about India's heritage'

PILIBHIT (UP), April 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the Congress of making several attempts to stall the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and for insulting Lord Ram by rejecting the invitation for the 'pran pratishtha' ceremony.

Addressing an election rally here, Modi also said that the Congress is immersed in the swamp of appeasement and that "owing to the pressure of appeasement", the Congress and SP are opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) as well. The "INDI alliance of SP-Congress does not care about India's heritage," the prime minister said.

"The Congress made several efforts so that the Ram temple is not constructed. But when the people of the country made such a beautiful temple by contributing every penny, and when the temple people forgave all your sins, and invited you for 'pran pratishtha', you insulted Lord Ram by rejecting the invitation and expelled leaders, who attended it, for six years. I still cannot understand that there is so much venom in their mind," he said.

"Somebody worships Ram, and he is expelled from the party, what type of party is it? Do not forget these people who had committed the sin," he said. "Every family of the country contributed according to their devotion. The people of Pilibhit also gifted a huge flute to Ayod-

case against Hemant Soren



prepared by the Congress seems to hya. But, the people of INDI alliance had hatred even before the be that of the Muslim League rather construction of Ram temple and than that of the Congress. they have hatred even today," he "Owing to the pressure of ap-

said. Sharpening his attack on the peasement, the Congress and SP are opposing the CAA as well," he said, while noting that Hindus and Sikhs "Today, the 'Shakti', which is were compelled to flee from foreign soil owing to atrocities committed that 'Shakti' has been insulted by the on them and asked who will give them citizenship if India does not. Congress. The 'Shakti' before which

we how our heads, the leaders of the He also asked many such families living in Pilibhit to apply for citizenship, and "guaranteed" that "they ing that 'Shakti'. No worshipper of will permanently be liberated from problems."

liance for this insult," he said referring to Congress leader Rahul "You will proudly be able to live as a citizen of India." the PM as-Modi further said that "The Conserted gress is so immersed in the swamp

"But the Congress and SP have objections to this as well...What that Congress had done to our Sikh were not present at the rally.

brothers and sisters in 1984, nobody can forget that, he said referring to the anti-Sikh riots.

The BJP stands firmly with the Sikhs, he said while drawing attention to the BJP government removing 'langar' items from GST, and the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

The 550th Prakash Parv of Guru Nanak Dev, 400th Prakash Parv of Guru Teg Bahadur, and 350th Prakash Parv of Guru Gobind Singh were celebrated by the BJP government," he said and added that the "Congress and its INDI alliance do not feel ashamed in insulting great personalities of the country".

He also slammed Congress and SP leaders for not visiting the Statue of Unity to pay tributes to Sardar Vallabhbahi Patel.

"The leaders of Congress and SP have time to celebrate holidays in foreign countries, but do not have time to visit the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who united the country and boycott him," he said.

What can be expected from the INDI alliance, which is conspiring to divide India," Modi said.

Today, the BJP is once again seeking the blessings of the public to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country, he said in the constituency where the the party has fielded Jitin Prasada replacing Varun Gandhi. The sitting MP from Pilibhit and his mother Maneka Gandhi

TMC leaders continue dharna at Delhi's Mandir Marg police station

utmost devotion," he added. "When the country becomes strong, the world listens to it," he added. (PTI)

BJP takes 'Kejri ED makes fresh arrest in money laundering Corruption Kranti[°] jibe

NEW DELHI, April 9: The BJP on Tuesday seized the Delhi High Court's rejection of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea against his arrest by the ED and its critical observations to attack the AAP convener, claiming the movement which began with the Indian Against Corruption stir has now "Kejri Corruption turned into Kranti"

The BJP also pushed for the chief minister's resignation, with its Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva asking if he is now left with any moral right to continue while he remains under arrest.

BJP's national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited several observations of the high court to slam the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its chief, accusing them of trying to politicise investigation and judicial processes.

In a setback to Kejriwal, the high court on Tuesday dismissed his peRANCHI, April 9: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has made a fresh arrest in connection with its ongoing alleged land grab linked money laundering investigation against former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren, official sources said Tuesday.

Mohammed Saddam Hussain was lodged in jail as part of a separate money laundering case linked to a similar alleged land scam case of Jharkhand and the central agency took his custody in the instant case after an application was made to the court, the sources said. This is the third arrest in the case after 48-year-old Soren and former state government revenue department sub inspector Bhanu Pratap Prasad

Saddam is alleged to have "forged" land records related to the 8.86 acre land in Ranchi that the ED has alleged was illegally acquired by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader. The ED had arrested Saddam in the first money laundering case in April last year after it recovered some hand-written diaries allegedly from his and some of his associates' possession. These diaries, according to the ED, "cash payments" made to Prasad were mentioned.

Soren was arrested by the ED in January shortly after he resigned as the chief minister. He is currently lodged at the Birsa Munda jail at Hotwar in Ranchi under judicial custody. A charge sheet was filed by the ED against Soren, Prasad, Soren's alleged "frontmen" Raj Kumar Pahan and Hilariyas Kachhap and an alleged associate of the former chief minister, Binod Singh, on March 30 before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court here.

The ED has also attached the Ranchi land and requested the court for confiscation of the 8.86-acre plot. The money laundering investigation stems from multiple FIRs registered by Jharkhand Police in land "scam cases against several persons including state government officials

The prime accused in the case is Prasad, also a custodian of government records, who is alleged to have "misused" his official position by providing assistance to several persons including Soren in their activities linked to illegal occupation, acquisition and possession of proceeds of crime in form of landed properties, the agency had said in a statement. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, April 9: Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders who were detained by Delhi Police while staging a dharna outside the Election Commission's office continued their protest at Mandir Marg police station on Tuesday morning.

AAP leaders, including Saurabh Bharadwaj, met the protesting TMC leaders who camped overnight at the police station. The TMC leaders had met the full bench of the EC on Mon-

day, demanding that the heads of the Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency and Income Tax department be changed as they were allegedly acting at the behest of the ruling BJP.

The TMC leaders later announced they were sitting on a 24hour dharna outside the EC office. The delegation comprised Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien, Mohammed Nadimul Haque, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale, Sagarika Ghose, MLA Vivek Gupta, former MPs Arpita Ghosh, Santanu Sen and Abir Ranjan Biswas and TMC West Bengal students' wing vice-president Sudip Raha. The leaders were later detained by Delhi Police and forcefully evicted from the site.

Police said they released the TMC leaders on Monday night. However, the leaders stayed put at the police station through the night and continued their dharna.

'Today, they again came back to the police station. They are still allowed to go but they are not leaving the police station,' a police officer said. In a post on X on Tuesday, Gokhale said the party leaders were continuing their protest at the police station

"We 10 MPs & former MPs from the TMC started a 24hr peaceful dharna outside the Election Commission last evening... We were manhandled by Delhi Police, detained, taken around Delhi, and finally dumped at Mandir Marg Police Station. "As we said - our protest is for 24 hrs. We're all at Mandir Marg Police Station, where we were detained, silently carrying on our protest," he said.

"Modi, Shah, & BJP are brazenly using Central Agencies as their campaign tools & going after the Opposition," Gokhale said. In another post, he thanked AAP leaders for their support. While all TMC leaders sat inside the police station premises, Haque and Ghose, who had gone out briefly, were not allowed to re-enter. They sat on a dharna outside the boundary of the police station. "I was here all night and had gone home in the morning. Now we are not being allowed to enter the police station," Haque said.

"They're saying we'll not allow you to join the protest... My point is that a police station is a public place. If an MP is not being allowed inside, what about the common people," he said. Asked about the police statement that the TMC leaders were released from detention on Monday evening, Haque said, "We had announced a 24-hour dharna. They did not allow us to sit in front of the EC and brought us here. So, we are sitting here,' he said. AAP's Bharadwaj condemned the police action against the TMC leaders.

"TMC leaders went to the EC to demand that the attacks on opposition by agencies like ED, IT (department) and CBI be stopped. Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) is campaigning across the country every day while raids are being carried out against opposition leaders so that they can't campaign," he said. (PTI)

tition challenging his arrest in a money laundering case stemming from the alleged excise scam, saying there was no contravention of legal provisions.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma said the Enforcement Directorate was in possession of "enough material" which led to Kejriwal's arrest, and the trial court remanded him in the custody of the agency by a well-reasoned order.

"The court is of the view that the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal was not in contravention of legal provisions. The remand can't be held to be illegal," said Justice Sharma while delivering the verdict.

Trivedi also cited the court's stand that the law applied equally to all and courts were concerned with constitutional morality and not political morality, apparently referring to the claim by Kejriwal and AAP that he was arrested to jeopardise his party's Lok Sabha poll campaign. The court's decision has smashed the arrogance of the Aam Aadmi Party, the BJP spokesperson said, noting that the judge also observed that the material brought by the Enforcement Directorate has shown that Kejriwal "conspired" in the framing of the excise policy and was "involved" in the proceeds of the crime.

The ED can't be directed to carry out the investigation as per the convenience of the person, and there can't be one law for the common man and another for a chief minister, he said, referring to the court's decision. It has further "exposed" Kejriwal's garb of a common man as he has already gone back on many assertions he had made when he entered politics, the BJP leader said. The agitation which began with the India Against Corruption movement, he said in a reference to the anti-graft campaign spearheaded by social activist Anna Hazare in which Kejriwal played a critical role, has now turned into "Keiri Corruption Kranti".

Then an activist, Keiriwal rode the popular traction that the movement gathered to enter politics and swept to power in the national capital later, projecting himself as an outsider and a common man who kept away from the trappings of power. (PTI)

Antony says his son and BJP candidate Anil should lose LS polls Kejriwal to move SC against Delhi HC order

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/PATHANAMTHITTA, April 9: Veteran Congress leader and former defence minister A K Antony said on Tuesday that his son, Anil K Antony, who is contesting as a BJP candidate in the Pathanamthitta Lok Sabha seat in Kerala, should not win the election. Antony said that his son's party should lose, and his rival, the Congress candidate in the south Kerala constituency, Anto Antony, should win with an absolute major-

"The Congress is my religion", Antony said, reacting to repeated queries about his son's politics.

The 83-year-old former Kerala Chief Minister said he has put his health issues aside to address the media as he thought he has to come out and make his stand clear as this is an election to "safeguard the idea of India and its constitution."

"It is a do-or-die battle," said Antony, who is also India's longest-serving Defence Minister. He cited health issues as a reason for not traveling out of

Thiruvananthapuram for campaigning for the Congress party and said that even if he did not go for campaigning in Pathanamthitta, Anto Antony would win with an absolute majority.

"For me, family and politics are different. This stance isn't

new; I have maintained it since my days in KSU," Antony said. The Kerala Students Union (KSU) is the student organisation of Congress in Kerala.

Sharply reacting to his father's remarks. Anil Antony said that the Congress has outdated leaders and only sympathises with his father, a former defence minister, for backing sitting MP and Congress member Anto Antony, who had recently stirred up controversy by making statements on the Pulwama terror attack. Talking to reporters, Anil further stated he will emerge victorious in Pathanamthitta.

A K Antony's stand comes as a big boost to the Congress, as the party has been on the defensive after Anil and late Congress stalwart K Karunakaran's daughter, Padmaja Venugopal, switched over to the BJP in Kerala.

There were allegations from certain quarters of Antony's political opponents that Anil had moved to the BJP with the silent blessings of his family, especially after a video of his mother, Elizabeth Antony, speaking at a church meeting where she said she knew her son would join the BJP, surfaced.

In one of his lengthy press conferences post-COVID-19, Antony took on the BIP and the Left Front government in Kerala, reiterating why people should rally behind the Con-

gress to 'reinvent' India and to protect the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

The party that rules at the Centre has been trying to destroy the very concept of India, and the important question is how to stop this danger," Antony said. He said the golden years of BJP in Kerala are already over, and the NDA will finish in the third place in all constituencies in the state.

"Please write this down and keep it. They will finish in the third place in all constituencies in Kerala," Antony said.

He said the golden era of BJP was during the 2019 General Elections due to the Sabarimala women's entry controversy, and they could garner some additional votes.

"This year, there is no factor that favours BJP, and they are going to get a reduced share of votes," Antony said.

Taking a dig at Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Antony said neither Vijayan nor his party has anything to do with the creation of India's Constitution, and the whole credit for its creation goes to the Indian National Congress and Dr B R Ambedkar.

"His party (Communist) claimed that the independence India got was not independence and called for an armed rebellion against the Nehru government through the Calcutta Thesis," Antony alleged. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, April 9: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will approach the Supreme Court against a high court order dismissing the plea against his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering case linked to the excise policy, the AAP said on Tuesday.

Hours after the high court decision, the AAP said the "so-called excise policy scam" is the "biggest political conspiracy" to finish off the party and Kejriwal. Senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said at a press conference, "We respect the institution of the high court but we respectfully submit that we do not agree with its order and will move the Supreme Court against it."

He claimed that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have failed to recover even one rupee of illegal money in the "so-called excise policy case". "The entire matter is not related to money laundering, rather it's the biggest political conspiracy of the country. It's a conspiracy to crush and finish off chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP governments in Delhi and Punjab," he said.

Bharadwaj said they are hopeful that the Supreme Court will provide relief to Kejriwal in the same way it granted bail to AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh in the case.

Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed Kejriwal's plea.

"The court is of the view that the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal was not in contravention of legal provisions. The remand can't be held to be illegal," said Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma while delivering the verdict.

Besides his arrest, Keiriwal, who is currently in judicial custody, also challenged his subsequent remand in ED custody. The matter pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in formulating and executing the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.

Kejriwal was arrested by the ED on March 21, hours after the high court refused to grant him protection from coercive action by the federal antimoney laundering agency. (PTI)

India's first vertical lift bridge over sea in Rameswaram faces 'curve' test

NEW DELHI, April 9: A sharp curve in the upcoming Pamban railway bridge, India's first vertical-lift bridge connecting the country's mainland with Rameswaram island, has become an additional challenge for the Railways besides its mechanical peculiarity and a rough sea.

The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), which is constructing this 2.08-km-long bridge, is facing a huge challenge in moving a lift span, which is 72.5-m-long, 16-mwide and weighs 550 tonne, from the Rameshwaram end to 450 m in the sea to fix it to the bridge.

"We started moving this lift span on March 10 and till date, we have moved the 550 ton lift span 80 m towards the centre of the bridge. The biggest challenge is the 2.65 degree of curved alignment of the bridge. Had it been straight, we would have moved it faster," a senior official of RVNL said, adding the curved shape was essential due to various alignment changes.

The movement of lift span to its final fixing point shall be completed by the end of

said. He added, "This lift span can be lifted up shouldn't be disrupted.'

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from Spanish firm TYPSA and it was manufactured at Sattirakkudi Railway Station, which is 20 km away from the sea coast.

sembled it here at the coast because it was not possible to carry such a huge structure from the manufacturing point," the RVNL official said.

the mainland and Rameswaram island were suspended on December 23, 2022 after the existing rail bridge, which was built in 1913, was declared non-operational from the safety point of view.

"When the Pamban bridge was operational, trains used to move to the bridge and reach Rameshwaram. They used to move slowly on the Pamban bridge and reach the

pilgrimage town in about 15 minutes," a Southern Railway official said.

At present, all trains terminate at Mandapam and people use road routes to reach Rameswaram. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the new bridge, parallel to the old one, in November 2019 and the work was started in February 2020 by RVNL.

It was supposed to be completed by December 2021, however, the deadline was extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Southern Railway, the

2.08-km-long bridge will allow the Indian Railways to operate trains at a higher speed and it will also increase traffic between the mainland of India and Rameswaram island.

Till a road bridge was constructed in 1988, train services were the only link connecting Mandapam to Rameswaram island situated in the Gulf of Mannar.

According to the Southern Railway, the substructure of the bridge has been built for the double lines and the navigational span will also have provision for double lines. (PTI)

more

to meet it.



cision at each step," the official said.

to make the bridge operational and its offi-

cials say that they are trying their level best

ing work is no big deal," an RVNL official

"Once the lift span is fixed, the remain-

May, as it still has to be carried 370 m

automatically up to 17 m for ships to pass. It will take 5 minutes to go up and the same time to come down and will be scheduled in such a way so that train services

The RVNL got this lift span designed

"We brought it in various parts and as-

"Once we cross the curved portion, we can expedite its movement. We have taken The train services between Mandapam in a huge precaution while moving it in the sea as its size and weight requires great pre-The RVNL has set a deadline of June 30

NATION

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THE HILLS TIMES 9

West Bengal Police issues summons to NIA officer in Bhupatinagar attack case

KOLKATA, April 9: West Bengal Police on Tuesday issued summons to the NIA officer who was injured in the alleged attack during the central probe agency's raid in Purba Medinipur district last week, to appear before the investigating officer of the

Bhupatinagar police station on April 11, an official said The Bhupatinagar police sta-1 0 investigating officer has also

asked the NIA to

bring the vehicle

which was dam-

aged allegedly

during the attack

on

Saturday

scam. (PTI)

stating that they want to conduct a forensic test of it, he said.

The police officer has also summoned three villagers from Bhupatinagar for questioning in connection to the attack on NIA officers when they went to arrest the two main conspirators in connection with a blast that took place in 2022 at Bhupatinagar in Purba Medinipur district in which three persons were killed.

"The NIA officer has been asked to appear before our officer on April 11. We have also asked them to send

the vehicle which was damaged during the attack. We plan to conduct a forensic test on it," he told PTI. The villagers have been asked to appear in two to three days, the officer said.

A team of the NIA was allegedly attacked by a

mob on Satur-The restrictions were being lifted day when it vent to arrest wo main suspects in the 2022 blast case in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district, sparking political slugfest with Chief Minis-

ter Mamata Banerjee accusing the investigators of assaulting villagers. One NIA officer was injured and a

vehicle was damaged in the attack on Saturday

The attack on the NIA team happened around three months after villagers and locals assaulted a team of Enforcement Department (ED) officers when they went to raid the residence of, now arrested TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh on January 5 in connection with the alleged ration

PM Modi also inaugurated and laid foundation for three National Highway projects

Leh admin lifts prohibitory orders imposed ahead of 'border march'

LEH, April 9: Authorities in Leh on Tuesday ordered withdrawal of prohibitory orders banning rallies imposed earlier in an apparent move to counter a march to the China border announced by Leh Apex Body (LAB).

as "now there is no imminent apprehension of breach of peace and public order", according to an official order. The order, issued by Leh District Magistrate Santosh Sukhadeve, directed for withdrawal of the restrictions under prohibitory orders with immediate effect. The proposed border march on

April 7 to Changtehang near the China border was called off by the organisers to "avoid any sort of confrontation with the law enforcement agencies" after the administration imposed prohibitory orders in this district of Ladakh under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and directed that no procession, rally or march should be taken

without prior approval. "Whereas, certain restrictions were imposed under Section 144 of CrPC (on April 5) to prevent any breach of peace and disturbance to public tranquility... the Senior Superintendent of Police, Leh, has re-

he said



ported that now there is no imminent apprehension of breach of peace and public order and has recommended that the restrictions imposed under Section 144 of the CrPC may be withdrawn," read the

Leh on April 6, the LAB leaders, including its chairman Chering Dor-

jay and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, called off the border march, stating that it has already achieved its objective to create awareness among the people of the country about the plight of farmers, who are allegedly losing prime pasture land to huge industrial plants to the south and "Chinese encroachments" to the north.

The LAB, along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), is spearheading an ongoing agitation to demand statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The LAB leaders said they will continue with their struggle in a peaceful manner through chain hunger strikes and protests. (PTI)

Thousands throng Vaishno Devi shrine on first day of Chaitra Navratri

JAMMU, April 9: Thousands of devotees from across the country thronged the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir as the nine-day long 'Chaitra Navratri' commenced on

'Shat Chandi Maha Yagya', a special havan organised by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), was performed at the holy cave amidst the serene aura besides other rituals on the auspicious occasion, a spokesperson of the board said.

He said the sacred rituals at the shrine, located atop Trikuta hills, spanning across the Navratri are being performed to foster harmony, abundance and good health for all.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, along with other board members and officials attended the yagya ceremony, apart from the pilgrims, the spokesperson said.

The havan is being telecasted live on MH1 Shraddha channel from 12 noon to 1 pm daily for the nine days, he added.

The shrine has been specially decorated for Navratri with intricate colourful lighting, floral arrangements, coupled with traditional motifs and embellishments.

The spokesperson said the board has made elaborate arrangements as per the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of SMVDSB, to facilitate the large number of pilgrims expected to visit the temple during the Navratri.

These arrangements include round-the-clock water and power supply along the tracks leading to the shrine, sanitation and medical facilities and availability of special fasting food' at the board's 'bhojanalayas', he said.

"For the ease and comfort of pilgrims, facilities such as accommodation, battery-operated vehicles, passenger ropeways and helicopter services have been provided and are operating smoothly," he added.

Free meals will also be available to the pilgrims at Tarakote Marg and Prasad Kendra at Sanjichatt, besides the 'langar sewa' at Bhairon Ji.

To facilitate the smooth pilgrimage for differently-abled pilgrims, the board is providing free pony and battery car services to the shrine, the official said.

Other special features of the Navratri celebration in Vaishno Devi shrine include 'bhajan' and 'atka aarti' by renowned artists, he added. (PTI)

Can't escape liability to pay ₹ 1.64 crore for security during house arrest: SC to Gautam Navlakha



NEW DELHI, April 9: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said activist Gautam Navlakha cannot escape the liability of paying ₹ 1.64 crore towards expenses for the Maharashtra government making available police personnel for his security during his house arrest, as he himself had requested the house arrest.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told a bench of justices M M Sundresh and S V N Bhatti that Navlakha, arrested in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, is required to make a payment of ₹ 1.64 crore towards expenses for security.

The counsel representing Navlakha said there is no difficulty in paying per se but the issue was with respect to calculation

The ASG said Navlakha had earlier made payments of over ₹ 10 lakh for this and now he is avoiding making payment

"There is no question of avoiding," Navlakha's counsel said. His counsel said the NIA's plea, challenging the December 19, 2023 order of the Bombay High Court which had granted bail to Navlakha,

was also required to be heard. The high court had granted him

"We had said if he will be put in house arrest at a place where he wanted to be lodged, then it require police personnel round-the-clock... He said 'I will pay the cost'," Raju said, adding, "Every day, it is mounting. He can't escape" He said Navlakha cannot avoid

making the payment in the guise of saying that he wanted to calculate. "As long as you continue to have this facility, the figures are going to fly higher and higher. What we are today thinking is, instead of allowing it to touch the highest level, we will give one week time," the bench told

Navlakha's counsel. It said Navlakha's counsel can see the calculation and tell the court about

The bench, which said the interim stay granted on January 5 shall continue, posted the matter for hearing on April 23.

On March 7, Navlakha's lawyer had disputed the figure in the apex court and accused the agency of "extortion" Raju had strongly objected to the

use of the term "extortion". Navlakha is under house arrest at a

public library in Mumbai since November 2022

INDORE, April 9: The Indore administration has

cancelled the permission for a prayer meeting of the Christian community scheduled here on Wednesday, citing law and order situation, officials said on Tuesdav.

the keynote speaker at the meeting.

Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh, in an order issued on Sunday, cancelled the permission for the

ing from Hindu outfits and other social organisations. who have filed a complaint in this connection with the poll officer. After the complaint, the in-charge of theTukoganj police station here submitted a report on the law and order situation, based on which the permission given earlier was cancelled.

In the complaint by representatives of different Hindu organisations to the assistant election officer on April 5, it was alleged that the prayer meeting is being organised with an intention to mislead people of the Hindu community and encourage them for conver-

"There is a strong possibility that the event might disturb peace," the complaint said, adding that its permission should be cancelled.

ganising committee, rejected the allegations of the

the Christian community who live in Madhya Pradesh

banner of 'National Prayer and Ministry Alliance', an outfit led by Christian preacher Dr Paul Dhinakaran, who was going to participate in the programme as the keynote speaker.

Madhya Pradesh High Court challenging the administration's order to cancel the permission for the prayer meeting at the last moment.

be true that the intention of the petitioner to convene such meeting must be purely religious in nature, however, the concern raised by the respondents can also not be said to be unfounded, looking to the various objections they have received from other religious organisations," the bench said.

ment Directorate (ED) on Tuesday

Tamil Nadu as part of a drugs traf-

ficking-linked money laundering

investigation against sacked DMK

functionary Jaffer Sadiq and oth-

As many as 25 premises in state

capital Chennai, Madurai and

Tiruchirapalli are being searched

by the ED officials, accompanied

by an escort of central paramilitary

Some documents and electronic

The action is being undertaken

as part of a case registered under

the provisions of the Prevention of

Money Laundering Act (PMLA),

The premises of Sadiq, who is

Sadiq, 36, was arrested by the

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

last month for his alleged involve-

ment in the smuggling of about

3,500 kg of pseudoephedrine with

a street value of more than ₹ 2,000

The ED took cognisance of this

The NCB has said Sadiq's links

NCB case and some other FIRs to

file the money laundering case

with Tamil and Hindi film finan-

ciers, some "high-profile" people

and some instances of "political

DMK in February after his name

and purported links to the drugs

network were mentioned by the

DMK leader S Regupathy had as-

serted last month that his party had

Sadiq being given membership in

the party despite his alleged links

to a separate and old narcotics

case, Regupathy told reporters that

his party has over two crore mem-

bers and it is not practically possi-

ble to check the antecedents of

no links with Sadiq.

Tamil Nadu Law Minister and

Talking about the the issue of

Sadiq was expelled by the ruling

funding" were under its scanner.

against Sadiq and others.

also a producer of Tamil films, film

director Ameer and some others

are being covered, they said.

gadgets have been seized during

the operation, they said.

the officials said.

ers, the officials said.

forces.

crore

NCB.

carried out multi-city raids in

Indore administration cancels nod for Christian

Chennai-based Christian preacher Dr Paul Dhinakaran was slated to address about 8,000 persons as

An assistant election officer of the Indore Lok

prayer meeting, for which nod was given on April 5. The order stated that there is opposition to the meet-

sion

Suresh Carleton, chairman of the prayer meet's or-

Hindu organisations. "In our prayer meeting, only those 8,000 persons of

were invited. In the meeting, we were going to pray collectively for the happiness, peace and harmony of the country," he told PTI. He said the prayer meeting was to be held under the

Carleton had filed a petition in the Indore bench of

After hearing both the sides, the bench of Justice Subodh Abhyankar rejected the petition on Monday. "This court is of the considered opinion that it might

"In such circumstances, the possibility of apprehension raised by the respondents of disruption of the law and order situation can also not be said to be unsubstantiated," the order said. (PTI)

prayer meet citing law and order situation

DM's order. Addressing a press conference in

"If you have sought for it, you have to pay," the bench told the counsel representing Navlakha.

"The liability, you know, you can't escape because you asked for it (house arrest)," the apex court observed.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S V Raju, representing the NIA, said ₹ 1.64 crore is due and 70year-old Navlakha has to make the payment for the security provided during his house arrest.

Terming the order of house arrest as "unusual", Raju said a large number of police personnel have been deployed round-the-clock for security during his house arrest.

bail but stayed its order for three weeks after the NIA had sought time

to file an appeal in the top court. On January 5, the apex court had extended the stay imposed by the high court on the operation of its order granting bail to Navlakha.

During the hearing on Tuesday before the apex court, the ASG said earlier, Navlakha himself had asked for house arrest and whether the bail is allowed or not, he has to make the payment for the expenses incurred for round-the-clock security.

"The issue of bail is slightly different. He had first said 'put me in house arrest because I am not well'. Now he is hale and hearty, everything is okay," his deteriorating health. (PTI)

While ordering his house arrest on November 10, 2022, the apex court had directed Navlakha to deposit $\overline{\mathbf{x}}$ 2.4 lakh towards the expenses to be borne by the state for deploying police personnel to effectively place him under house arrest. Later, it had again directed

Navlakha to deposit another \mathbf{E} 8 lakh as expenses for providing police personnel for his security. On November 10, 2022, the top court had allowed Navlakha, who was then lodged in Navi Mumbai's Taloja prison in connection with the case, to be placed under house arrest owing to

Pak issues 2,843 visas to Sikh pilgrims on the occasion of Baisakhi celebrations

NEW DELHI, April 9: The Pakistan high commission on Tuesday said it issued 2,843 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India to facilitate their participation at the Baisakhi celebrations. Under the provision of a bilateral protocol on visits to religious shrines, Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan every year. Pakistani pilgrims also visit India every year under the protocol.

"On the occasion of Baisakhi celebrations, the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued 2,843 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India to participate in the annual festival scheduled to be held in Pakistan from April 13 to 22," the high commission said.

"The pilgrims would, inter-alia, visit Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib," it said in a statement. Charge d'Affaires at Pakistan high commission Saad Ahmad Warraich. extended his heartfelt felicitations to all those celebrating this auspicious festival and wished the visiting pilgrims a "fulfilling" yatra. (PTI)

India likely to record normal monsoon this year: Skymet

NEW DELHI, April 9: India is likely to experience a normal monsoon this year, private weather forecasting agency Skymet said on Tuesday and predicted more rainfall in the second half of the season. Scientists at the India Meteorological Department (IMD) have also detected early signs of a favourable monsoon season this year with fading El Nino conditions and reduced snow cover over Eurasia. The Met office will issue a monsoon forecast later this month

However, normal cumulative rainfall does not mean uniform temporal and spatial distribution of rain across the country, with climate change further increasing the variability of the rain-bearing system. Climate scientists say the number of rainy days is declining while heavy rain events -- more rain over a short period -- are increasing, leading to frequent droughts and floods.

Skymet said the upcoming monsoon is expected to be "normal", accounting for 102 per cent (with an error margin of 5 per cent) of the long-period average (LPA) of 868.6 mm for the four months from June to September.

Rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the LPA is considered normal.

Skymet expects sufficiently

good rains in the south, west, and northwest regions. The core monsoon rain-fed zones of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh will receive adequate rainfall.

However, the eastern states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal are at risk of deficit rainfall during the peak monsoon months of July and August. Northeast India is likely to observe less than normal rains during the first half of the season

According to Jatin Singh, the

managing director at Skymet, "El Nino is swiftly flipping over to La Nina. And, monsoon circulation tends to be stronger during La Nina years. "Also, the transition from Super

El Nino to strong La Nina has historically tended to produce a decent monsoon. However, the monsoon season may start with a risk of impairment, attributable to the remnant effects of El Nino. The second half of the season will have an overwhelming edge over the primal phase," he said.

India received "below-average" cumulative rainfall -- 820 mm compared to the long-period average of 868.6 mm -- in 2023, an El Nino year. Before 2023, India recorded "normal" and "abovenormal" rainfall in the monsoon season for four years in a row.

El Nino conditions -- periodic warming of surface waters in the central Pacific Ocean -- are associated with weaker monsoon winds and drier conditions in India.

IMD officials earlier this month said La Nina conditions, associated with a favourable monsoon in India, are likely to set in the second part of the season

Three large-scale climatic phenomena are considered for forecasting monsoon season rainfall.

The first is El Nino, the second is the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which occurs due to differential warming of the western and eastern sides of the equatorial Indian Ocean, and the third is the snow cover over the northern Himalayas and the Eurasian landmass, which also has an impact on the Indian monsoon through the differential heating of the landmass.

A preliminary forecast of a positive IOD this season will work in tandem with La Nina for better monsoon prospects, Skymet said. Nonetheless, the start of the sea-

son is expected to be aberrated due to the quick transition from El Nino to La Nina. Also, the rainfall distribution is likely to be diverse and inequitable for the season as a whole, it said.

The southwest monsoon delivers about 70 per cent of India's annual rainfall, which is critical for the agriculture sector. Agriculture accounts for about 14 per cent of the GDP and employs more than half of its 1.4 billion population. (PTI)

ED raids multiple locations in TN in drugs money laundering case against ex-DMK functionary

CHENNAI, April 9: The Enforce- every single person who sought admission into it.

Sadiq was called by the NCB as the alleged "mastermind and kingpin" of a trans-national pseudoephedrine smuggling racket spread across Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia from India. The case came to light after the NCB along with the special cell of the Delhi Police raided a godown located in Delhi on February 15 and arrested three persons.

This action came on a tip-off the NCB received towards the end of 2023 from the Australian and New Zealand authorities about "large quantities" of pseudoephedrine concealed in desiccated coconut powder and mix food powder being smuggled into their countries from India.

The NCB claimed the three arrested persons and Sadiq informed them that a total of 45 pseudoephedrine consignments were sent by them over the last three years, containing about 3,500 kg of pseudoephedrine valued at over Rs 2,000 crore in the international market.

Sadiq, according to the NCB's claim, pumped and invested his alleged drugs trade earned money into his "front or cover businesses' of movie production, real estate and hospitality among others.

A Tamil film named 'Mangai' was "entirely funded" by the accused from the drugs money. He also constructed a hotel in Chennai, a senior NCB officer had told reporters during a press conference in Delhi last month.

According to the NCB, Sadiq allegedly used to get ₹ 1 lakh per kg 'cut" (commission) from the smuggling of narcotics.

The anti-narcotics agency has questioned some more people linked to the case since it arrested Sadiq

Pseudoephedrine is a highly addictive synthetic drug, and even though it has some legal uses, it is classified as a controlled substance in India, bringing strict regulation on its production, possession, trade, export and use. (PTI)

Entertainment

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

AKSHAY-TIGER'S 'BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN' & AJAY'S 'MAIDAAN' TO NOW RELEASE ON APRIL 11

MUMBAI, April 9: Action film "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", starring Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff, and Ajay Devgn-led "Maidaan" will now release on April 11, the makers have announced. The two films were earlier scheduled to be make their debuts in theatres on April 10 but as the festival of Eid will be celebrated on April 11, the makers decided to shift the release

Akshay and Tiger shared the news of their film's new release on their respective Instagram pages on Monday evening. "Bade aur Chote aur poori 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' ki team ki taraf se aap sab ko advance mein Eid Mubarak. Dekhiye #BadeMiyanChoteMiyan on Eid with your entire family, now releasing on 11th April only in cinemas," read the post on Akshay's page.



MARRIED STATUS **NO LONGER MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN INDUSTRY:** PRIYAMANI

MUMBAI, April 9: Actor Priyamani says it is a welcome change in the Indian film industry where female actors are not relegated to supporting roles post marriage.

The National Award-winning actor praised her contemporaries Nayanthara, Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Kajal Aggarwal for making some great career decisions.

"Once upon a time, married actresses, at least in the south, were reduced to doing. They said, 'once the actress is married, fans will not be there. Probably your body shape will change.

"They were reduced to getting mother or sister or sister-in-law's roles to actors who were earlier their co-stars," Priyamani added.

The actor is currently looking forward to the release of her upcoming Hindi movie 'Maidaan", in which she stars alongside Ajay Devgn.

The film, which chronicles the golden years of Indian football in the early 1950s-60s through the eyes of the team's coach Syed Abdul Rahim, played by Devgn, is directed by Amit Sharma of "Badhaai Ho" fame.

Priyamani is aware of the limited screen time allotted to her character Saira, who she described as Rahim's confidante and emotional support system.

"The camaraderie between both of them is actually like friends. The family dynamics

are very important ... All of them have a significant part to play in the film," Priyamani said, adding, she shot for the film for 15 days

Produced by Zee Studios, Boney Kapoor, Arunava Joy Sengupta and Akash Chawla, "Maidaan" is set for a theatrical release on the occasion of Eid on April 11. Priyamani is equally thrilled about kick-

starting work on the third season of the critically-acclaimed OTT series "The Family Man". It is headlined by Manoj Bajpayee and directed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK.

"I would not say it is a cakewalk to play the character . I'm definitely very careful. I don't know what season three has in store for us. We are also waiting to start shooting. We will be called for the reading very soon,' she said.

Priyamani said she also wants to collaborate with Vidya Balan, who is her second cousin.

"I would love to collaborate with her. It is something that even I' manifesting. Let's hope we sisters get to work together. I met her recently at a party in November, it was a fleeting moment, she came and left in ten minutes," the actor said.

Going forward, the actor said she has been quite picky about choosing her next role.

"I'm very choosy about what I do. I hope I get to do something nice here . There are a lot of offers which are led by female protagonists but I'm just taking my time and choosing . I don't want to just keep doing everything and anything that is being of-fered to me," Priyamani said. (PTI)

Scarlett Johansson, Channing Tatum's 'Fly Me To The Moon' to release in Índia in July

"Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" is directed by Ali Abbas Zafar of "Sultan" and "Bharat" fame, and produced by Pooja Entertainment in association with AAZ. The film, which also stars Prithiviraj Sukumaran, Manushi Chhillar and Alaya F, will see Akshay and Tiger perform death-defying stunts as they play two elite soldiers who embark on a mission to recover a stolen AI weapon. Devgn also announced that "Maidaan", a period sports biopic on Syed Abdul Rahim, will release on April 11. "Mark your calendars! #Maidaan release across cinemas in India on 10th April, with special previews starting 6pm onwards. Full scale release to follow on the Eid holiday on 11th April. Reserve your seats now," the actor posted. "Maidaan" is directed by Amit Sharma and produced by Boney Kapoor. (PTI)



LOS ANGELES, April 9: Hollywood stars Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum's romantic comedy "Fly Me To The Moon" will make its debut in Indian theatres on July 12, Sony Pictures Entertainment India announced on Tuesday.

Described as a "sharp, stylish comedy-drama set against the high-stakes backdrop of NASA's historic Apollo 11 moon landing", the movie is directed by Greg Berlanti.

Sony Pictures shared the news of the film's release date on its official social media handles along with its trailer on Monday evening.

"The whole world will be watching. Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum star in #FlyMeToTheMoon - exclusively in cinemas July 12," the stu-

Johansson plays the role of marketing maven Kelly Jones, who is brought in to fix NASA's public image. "Sparks fly in all directions as Jones

dio posted on X.

wreaks havoc on launch director Cole Davis's (Tatum) already difficult task. When the White House deems the mission too important to fail, Jones is directed to stage a fake moon landing as backup and the countdown truly begins. The film will finally put to rest to the question – Did the USA fake the moon landing?" read the official logline. "Fly Me To The Moon" will also feature Nick Dillenburg, Anna Garcia, Jim Rash, Noah Robbins, Colin Woodell, Christian Zuber, Donald Elise Watkins, Ray Romano, and Woody Harrelson. (PTI)

PRESSURE TO MAKE ACTION FILM WITH ACTION HEROES MORE AS EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGH: ALI ABBAS ZAFAR

-🐼-

MUMBAI, April 9: When there are two top action stars like Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff shouldering a stunt-intensive film, the pressure to deliver is more, says Ali Abbas Zafar, who has directed the duo in "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan".

"Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" will see Akshay and Tiger perform deathdefying stunts as they play two elite soldiers who embark on a mission to recover a stolen AI weapon from a notorious enemy. The film hits the screens on Thursday.

Ali, known for stylised action in films like "Tiger Zinda Hai", and "Bharat", said he felt compelled to present the actors in a never-beforeseen avatar. "There's actually more pressure when you make an action film with an action hero as the expectation is already very high. So, with

them the idea is to show the audience something that they've never seen before, whether it's hand-to-hand, or chase sequence. So, the bar has to be higher because they are known as action heroes," the director told PTI in an interview here.

Having already directed superstars like Salman Khan, Katrina Kaif, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, and Anushka Sharma in separate films, Ali said working with a popular actor these days comes with its own set of challenges.

"Today, my biggest worry is that all of them are such big superstars and with such a huge fan base. You can't do frivolous work with any of them. The script needs to be good and it should be of their level.

"For me, that wow factor needs to be there in a script, whether I go to

Akshay Kumar sir, Salman Khan sir, SRK, Aamir Khan or anyone. They should feel that the material I brought to them is 'worth their time'." he added.

Ali recalled when producer Jackky Bhagnani asked him to helm the movie, he immediately accepted the offer.

According to Ali, he invests almost a year-and-a-half writing a script.

"Once my script is ready, everything else is a cakewalk, I start preproduction, so I'm not wasting the time. If the script is good and even if you make a bad film, your film will not be a flop, but if the script is not good, even if you make the best film it will not work," he added.

When it came to casting the antagonist, the filmmaker said he was eager to work with a superstar from a different industry. Enter Malayalam star Prithviraj Sukumaran, who Ali pursued for over a month.

"The beauty of the film is that when you've a stronger villain, then automatically your heroes become stronger, it's all through writing. I was sure from day one that I wanted to cast a superstar from another industry for the role of a villain.

"I've been a very big fan of Prithvi because of the way he has handled his stardom in Malayalam cinema, which is commercial and critical both," he said, heaping praises on Prithviraj's latest release "Aadujeevitham'

Ali said he wasn't particularly concerned about Akshay's recent box office setbacks, with "OMG 2", which featured the actor in a pivotal role, being an exception. (PTI)



SPORTS

THE HILLS TIMES 11

Candidates chess: Indians in hunt, but Nepomniachtchi clear favourite on first rest day

TORONTO, April 9: The of 14, there are 10 more games great Viswnathan Anand felt Indians were "a long shot" in the Candidates Chess Tournament but the duo of D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa have done surprisingly well to withstand the early storm as the prestigious event took its first rest day of the ongoing edition.

The Indians were never the favourites in the bigger scheme of things but yet, Gukesh has held his own and so has Praggnanandhaa. However, the same cannot be said about Vidit Gujrathi, who became a favourite after his stunning win over world No.3 Hikaru Nakamura.

With four rounds done out

still to play. Things have been going well for the Indians but

not in the purest way possible. Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, who has to play under the FIDE flag due to sanctions against his country, is sitting firmly at the top of the table on three points out of a possible four and he could not have hoped for a better start to his campaign.

With victories against Gujrathi and Firouza Alireza of France and two draws, the Russian got a heads-up to what could possibly be a third atsupport. tempt to fight for the crown of

world champion. Historically, no one has ever won the candidates three times

Nepomniachtchi became the first sole leader in the event following his second victory with white pieces and he is now followed by Fabiano Caruana and Gukesh on 2.5 points apiece.

Praggnanandhaa is not far behind on two points holding the fourth spot while Gujrathi, Abasov, Alireza and Nakamura have an identical 1.5 points each. The youngster has his mother, Nagalakshmi, travelling with him like usual and counts her as a big emotional

"It's important to have someone in the room, especially when you lose. I am grateful for her support," he said in an



interaction with FIDE's official website

about his start in the tournament, he would probably have settled for 2.5 out of four but then it is hard to imagine that man's land kind of position. His chances depend on whether or not he collapses after a bad day.

One person who gives a knee-jerk reaction to bad result is the 18-year old Prag-

Bouncing back from a bad loss against Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa has earned the respect he deserves at the highest level and his chances will depend on his acumen to deal with any position that ar-

rives on board. Caruana still remains a feared contender given his history and pedigree. However, one cannot rule out the fact that he has not had a dominat-

favourite and top seed. Nakamura, who is also an ardent streamer, does not seem as focused as others but still a couple of good games can see him bouncing back in the

scheme of things. For Gujrathi, the road might be tough but as everyone saw in the FIDE Grand Swiss, the Indian has too much fire power and will come back roaring.

Pairings round 5: Firouza Alireza (FRA, 1.5) vs Hikaru Nakamura (USA); D Gukesh (IND) vs Nijat Abasov (AZE); Vidit Gujrathi (IND) vs Fabiano Caruana (USA); R Praggnanandhaa (IND) vs Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE). (PTI)

India eye cohesive effort to keep 5-Test hockey series alive against Australia

PERTH, April 9: The Indian men's hockey team would aim for a cohesive effort to avoid a hat-trick of losses when it takes on a formidable Australia in the third Test of the five-match series here on Wednesday.

The Indians were drubbed 1-5 and 2-4 by Australia in the first two matches of the series, which is a part of preparations for this year's Paris Olympics for both the sides.

The tour is of huge significance for India as it will provide valuable inputs about the areas to improve to chief coach Craig Fulton.

And the first two matches have already done that as the Indian defence was put under continuous pressure by quick turnovers by the Kookaburras.

The Indian defence, led by skipper Harmanpreet Singh, did not have the best days in the first two games as it wilted when put under pressure and conceded both penalty corners and soft field goals.

The lack of ideas from the forwards inside the opposition circle is another area the Indians would need to address.

The likes of Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Gurjant Singh and Sukhjeet need to make use of the chances they get if they are to outplay a strong side like

started that which was evident ever, has been decent so far. Vice-captain Hardik Singh in the last two games. build attacks but failed to has been the backbone of the From short and brisk passing mid-field, which combined well hockey using the flanks to fence. with the strikers, to create

plenty of opportunities. India coach Fulton was exto try diffe

counter-attacking moves, all these gameplans were on full display from the Indians in the

breach a resolute Australian de-With a world renowned dragflicker in skipper Harmanpreet,

the tour came from set pieces. But Fulton would be expect-

ing more direct strikes from his penalty corner specialists. Jugraj Singh, Sanjay and Amit will be played here on April 12

for NZ T20I series LAHORE, April 9: Having re- crime," Wahab said. versed their decisions of retiring from international cricket, fast bowler Muhammad Amir and leftarm spinner Imad Wasim were recalled to the 17-member Pakistan squad for the five-match T20I se-

ries against New Zealand, starting April 18. The 10-day series will feature

three games in Rawalpindi and two games in Lahore. Amir, who was convicted for

spot-fixing charges and also briefly did jail time in England, had last played international cricket in 2020 before calling it quits to ply his trade in T20 leagues. He retired from international cricket due to his differences with erstwhile coaches Misbah ul Haq and Waqar Younis. Imad, a spin all rounder had retired from international cricket in November 2023 but took back his retirement after persuasion from the board and selectors after he had a productive Pakistan Super League in which the team won the title

"I trust that both players will The fourth match of the series continue their upward trajectory, Azam in this case and the head sparing no effort in proving themcaptain's trust and confidence," selector Muhammad Yousuf said. The selection committee comprising Yousuf, Abdul Razzaq, Asad Shafiq, Wahab Riaz and Bilal Afzal told media those who have performed consistently have been rewarded. They also called up uncapped batsmen Usman Khan, Irfan Khan

recalled to

Pakistan squad

Wahab also said Amir was recalled from retirement as he had been bowling very well in leagues and secondly the selectors wanted to manage the workload of all pace bowlers.

"The decision to include Imad and Amir was a straightforward one, given their availability for selection and considering Haris Rauf's injury and Mohammad Nawaz's current form.

"Both Amir and Imad possess undeniable match-winning capabilities, and we trust they will consistently deliver strong performances to bolster the team's objectives," Wahab added.

Yousuf said that in a recent meeting with all the players, the selectors had clearly communicated their selection policy and strategy to all elite players, and there is complete alignment within the group.

Wahab also said that they is no internal politics in the Pakistan camp. The PCB selection committee has no chairman and under a new policy, the captain, Babar coach are also on the committee

aerial lobs from the deep to ners and all their three goals in

If any one had asked Gukesh ahead of him. However, the Indian stalwart is close and has shown steely nerves especially when he beat Praggnanandhaa out of a no

ing start despite being the hot Amir, Imad

he would have envisaged Nepomniachtchi being just

gnanandhaa.

The Indian mid-field, how- during the tour and he already

India boast the final c the ran follow The Indians also used long of a potent force in penalty cor- April 13. (PTI)

Indian performance satisfactory so far, say GMs Barua and Thipsay

TORONTO, April 9: Indian jrathi. Grandmasters Dibyendu Barua and Pravin Thipsay are quite impressed with how the country's five-strong contingent, led by the prodigal R Praggnanandhaa, has performed so far at the prestigious Candidates Chess Tournament here.

The Candidates tournament has a rest day after four rounds of intensive chess with Ian Nepomniachtchit from Russia leading the standings. India's D Gukesh is a joint second on the table with Praggnanandhaa at fourth along with Vidit Gu-

With 10 rounds still to go, Barua feels that Koneru Humpy can still strike back in the women's competition after succumbing to her first defeat at the hands of lowest seed and youngest participant Nurgyul Salimova of Bulgaria,

"Vidit can bounce back and Gukesh can score well. I would not rate Humpy out of equations as yet, she has the acumen and a great will to won, we will know in a few days," Barua, a three-time national champion who was sec-

ond Indian chess player after year-old.

Viswanathan Anand to become a GM, told PTI. women's section, R In Vaishali holds the joint third position. Humpy slipped to joint Gukesh," he said. sixth on 1.5 points. Grandmaster Pravin Thipsay

said the Indians are in with a good chance. "Nakamura is not motivated

so that leaves the Indian trio plus Nepo and Fabio Caruana," Thipsay said. Praggnanandhaa's long-time trainer R B Ramesh said that it's

a good beginning for teh 18-

"I think Pragg did exceptionally well coming out with that loss and I also feel bad that he could have done better against When asked about his ab-

sence from Praggnanandhaa's corner, Ramesh said that it was a conscious decision.

In the Women's event Tan Zhongyi of China has taken the early lead with. A full point behind is R Vaishali, Praggnanandhaa's sister.

Aleksandra Goryachikina might feel threatened as of now

as the rating favourite in the section as she the one trying to compete desperately with Tan. The women's section may see a lot of turnaround as the matches progress but on everyone's mind is Tan who has steely nerves and the will to win.

Pairings women round 5: R Vaishali (2) vs Anna Muzychuk vs Aleksandra Goryachkina (Fid, 2.5); Tingjie Lei (Chn, 1.5) vs Kateryna Lagno (Fid, 2); Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 3) vs Nurgyul Salimova (Bul 2). (PTI)

Niazi and spinner Abrar Ahmed. Wahab defended Amir's selection, who was roundly criticised recently by former Test captain and commentator, Ramiz Raja for his role in the 2010 spot-fixing scandal

Ramiz had said if he had been in charge and even if his son had done spot-fixing he would never have allowed him back into the (Ukr, 1.5); Koneru Humpy (1.5) team. "I think Ramiz Raja's comments were very negative and you can't say such things about an individual. Even our religion allows a second chance to even someone who has been convicted of a

with data analyst, Bilal Afzal.

Interestingly, Afzal was a former caretaker minister for planning and co-ordination in the cabinet of former caretaker CM of Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, who now heads the PCB.

There is no known cricket background of the former minister but he was appointed on the selection committee last month.

The team selection was done by majority voting the first time this has happened in Pakistan cricket history as in the past the chief selector had final say.

The New Zealand squad coming for the series is without ten of their first choice selections including Kane Williamson, Tim Southee, Trent Boult, Michael Santner, Glenn Phillips, Tom Latham, Darvl Mitchell, Matt Henry, Will Young, Henry Nichols who are either busy in the Indian Premier League or English county cricket or have taken a break. (PTI)

Injuries are mentally challenging, delighted to be back in competition: Mirabai Chanu

-🐼

heaved her lowest weight in years at the World Cup recently but Olympic silver-medallist Mirabai Chanu is actually quite chuffed about her performance as she managed it on the back of just one month's training after enduring a challenging injury breakdown.

With only four months to go for the Paris Olympics, Chanu, who was competing in her first tournament since her Asian Games breakdown, finished 12th at the IWF World Cup with a total effort of 184kg (81kg+103kg), a whopping 33kg behind China's Hou Zhihui, who will look to defend her Olympic title.

"I was delighted to be back in competition. Everything is okay now, recovery is good. I'm training at 70 per cent," Chanu told

NEW DELHI, April 9: She PTI. After watching her opponents raise the bar by breaking records in the 49kg weight class, Chanu's confidence received a significant boost when she heaved the barbell after just a month of training.

"It felt very good. After the injury (at Asian Games), I lifted weights after 4-5 months and I got a lot of confidence," she said.

"Weightlifting is different, there is always fear as to what will happen. I felt confident that I was able to make a recovery so fast," added Chanu, who is exclusively managed by IOS Sports.

An Asian Games medal is the only one that Chanu, who has a personal best of 88kg in snatch and 119kg in clean and jerk, hasn't been able to get her hands on. She has stood on the podium



at the Olympics, World Cham-Commonwealth pionships. Games and the Asian Championships

In the 2022 edition of the continental showpiece, she not only missed a medal in Hangzhou but also suffered hip tendonitis, with less than a year to go for the Olympics.

What ensued was a dark and challenging period for the 29year-old as she could only do upper-body exercises and relied on her mother, who travelled to Patiala, for emotional support.

When we returned from the Asian Games, the doctor said I need to rest. But even after that, it didn't get okay. I used to feel pain while squatting. Injury always leads to mental disturbance. You keep on thinking what will happen in the future? Will I be able to train?

"I called my family, my mother stayed here with me. That gave me a lot of support. I relaxed my mind and did the exercises that I could in 4-5

months. Chanu's perseverance paid off and she was able to make a relatively quick recovery.

"I only just started training...hardly one month. Given that, I was able to perform well. But now we know what I have to work on and what needs to be done. Everything is going well and if things continue I will give my best in

Paris. Only wrestler Sushil Kumar and shuttler PV Sindhu have won back-to-back medals in individual sports for India at the Olympics.

'This time 200kg won't fetch a medal. There will be a tough

fight. Plans are in place for a 205kg plus total but execution needs to be perfect.

"The daily training will determine how the total will be in Paris," chief coach Vijay Sharma said.

At the Tokyo Games, a total effort of 202kg was enough for Chanu to fetch the silver. But with competition increasing, Sharma reckons a 205kg plus total is the minimum she will have to lift.

"We need to work really hard for a medal. Because of the injury, we have to go slow. Every training session is important. We don't want to risk anything by going fast.

'The main training is left. 184kg was an easy task. The most important thing is to go from 184kg to 205kg. A lot of things need to be done. (PTI)

SPORTS

Jaiswal's form a concern as RR look to keep winning juggernaut rolling



JAIPUR, April 9: Yashasvi Jaiswal would be desperate to let his bat do the talking when an unbeaten Rajasthan Royals take on an under pressure Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League here on Wednesday.

RR could not have asked for a better start to the season, registering four consecutive wins from as many games

But Jaiswal, who has been terrific for the national team of late, has tallied just 39 runs in four games.

If he is back amongst the runs, it will be icing on the cake for RR as his opening partner Jos Buttler returned to form with an unbeaten century against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Sanju Samson has been leading RR from the front, scoring 178

runs from four games including two fifties. But it is Riyan Parag's performance with the bat that has been a revelation for RR. The all-rounder from Guwahati is the third highest run-getter in the tournament so far with 185 runs, including two un-

beaten half-centuries. The likes of Shimron Hetmyer and Dhruv Jurel also needs to contribute more in the middle-order.

Rajasthan also boast of potent bowling attack in the form of pacers Trent Boult and Nandre Burger, and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who has been their stand-out per-

former with eight wickets, the second highest so far. But Ravichandran Ashwin's

patchy form is a surprise. He has taken just one wicket from four matches while giving away eight runs per over. GT, on the other hand, witnessed a mixed bag campaign so far with

two wins and and three loses out of five games The Shubman Gill-led side would look to avoid a hat-trick of losses on Wednesday but it would be easier said than done against an opponent on rampage. They would be looking to bounce from back after a 'poor' effort with the bat

against Lucknow Super Giants. Gill, personally, have had a decent outing with the bat so far, scoring 183 runs from five games with a strike rate close to 147. His opening partner B Sai Sudharsan too has been among runs but is yet to register a fifty in the

tournament. He replaced Wriddhiman Saha at the top in the previous and is expected to bat alongside Gill also on Wednesday

Veterans Mohit Sharma and Umesh Yadav have been the standout performers with the ball for GT but they fell flat in front of littleknown Punjab Kings cricketers Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma in a thrilling tie.

The Afghan trio of Azmatullah Omarzai, Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad also need to raise their game.

Teams (from):

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

Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Matthew Wade, Wriddhiman Saha, Robin Minz, Kane Williamson, Abhinav Mandhar, B Sai Sudarshan, Darshan tion with Gaikwad. Nalkande, Vijay Shankar, Azmatullah Omarzai, Shahrukh Khan, Jayant Yadav, Rahul Tewatia, Kartik Tyagi, Shshant Mishra, Spencer practicing and he came and told Johnson, Noor Ahmad, Sai Kishore, Umesh Yadav, Rashid Khan, Joshua Little, Mohit Sharma the post-match press conference and Manav Suthar Kolkata Knight Riders here on

Match starts at 7:00 PM. (PTI)

Was told about leading CSK We could have assessed the in 2022, just want to keep the pitch better: Varun team culture going: Gaikwad

> bowling changes with Gaikwad last year.

"It was nothing new to me or a surprise or a shock. I know how to control the game. I know how the game progresses, which change (to make), and what to do when, as I was doing for the state team (Maharashtra) as well.

"Even last year, Fleming and I used to discuss captaincy after every game, about how I felt, what changes, bowling changes what I felt we needed to do, this or that. Every game, we had one-on-one conversations so that really helped." When asked what change had he

brought in as skipper, Gaikwad asserted that he believes in continu-

"Captaincy-wise, I don't want to back in 2022 and he has been ready ever since even though there be a specific kind of character. Just were no "deep conversations" belet things flow and keep the culture tween the two on how to lead one of CSK going. The success that we of the most successful IPL units. had and the things we have been Gaikwad, who led from the front doing, I don't want to change a sinin the win against Kolkata Knight gle bit of it.

Riders on Monday night, was stun-"I just want to come here, make ningly appointed CSK captain a my own decisions and just give as day before the IPL opener on much freedom as possible because that's what has been happening The team's earlier leadership exfrom when I joined CSK. Nothing really changes and I'm enjoying a periment with Ravindra Jadeja did

not work but the CSK think-tank has been bullish about Gaikwad's Gaikwad's batting as the skipper this season has not been at his long-term reign. Dhoni is known for his no nonsense approach and usual best but he made an unbeaten that is how he discussed the transi-67 against KKR

When asked if captaincy had "To be honest, not really deep compelled him to make some conversations. I feel it was in a changes to his batting, he said, "Sometimes there are phases sation I would say. Just we were where you get good balls. Sometimes there are phases where you are slightly unlucky. Sometimes me all this stuff," Gaikwad said in there are phases where things don't after the seven-wicket win over really fall in shape.

"So, you don't really need to think on that. I always felt I was in good shape, starting really well, good headspace, so I wasn't really worried.

"And captaincy, while batting, is a totally different approach. Even when I was playing my first game, or the first fifty I scored for CSK, I think (it was a) similar kind of situation

"We were chasing 140 and I always wanted to stay till the end and make sure I finish the innings so pretty much same. Nothing really changes even though I am cap-



CHENNAI, April 9: Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakaravarthy says misreading the pitch contributed immensely to their downfall against hosts Chennai Super Kings here.

The pitch used for the game on Monday behaved differently compared to the ones used for the first two games.

KKR managed only 137/9 and CSK chased it down in 17.4 overs. "When I saw the wicket, it ap-

peared to be a flat one. But the way it behaved was totally different,' said Chakaravarthy in the postmatch media interaction.

"We could have assessed the pitch better because it was very slow initially. It was tough to connect the ball, but I felt 160 would have been a par score.

"Also, there was a lot of dew. The last over that I bowled to (Shivam) Dube made a lot of difference since the seam was very wet, and I couldn't grip the ball much," said the mystery spinner.

The seven-wicket defeat on Monday was KKR's first loss of the season.

Chakaravarthy failed to get a single wicket, finishing with figures of 0/26, but he was the most economical of the lot.

"We have plans for every batsman, but the most important thing is to execute them. In every team, some batters are going to dominate, and you have to find a way to counter them," he said.

CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad too felt strokeplay was tough on the surface.

"The wickets in the last two games were really good. It came on to the bat really well, and we kept playing our shots.

"(In this game), the ball was slightly holding in the second innings, and there was some amount of dew as well. I believe the sudden climate change, with a lot tain or not," he said referring to the more humidity and dew played a part," said Gaikwad. (PTI)

Azhar Mahmood likely to be named Pakistan assistant coach across formats

LAHORE, April 9: Former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood is likely to be named assistant coach of the national team across formats.

Mahmood was on Monday named the interim head coach for the home series against New Zealand beginning April 18 as the board is yet to announce finalise long-term deals with foreign coaches Australian Jason Gillespie and South African Gary Kirsten.

Half-century against KKR will help Ruturaj's decision-making as captain in coming games: Morgan

CHENNAI, April 9: Chennai Super Kings skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's 58-ball 67 against Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL game here will not only make him a confident batter but also an assured captain, feels World Cup winning former England skipper Eoin Morgan.

Gaikwad, who has taken over leadership duties from the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni, had scores of 15, 1, 46 and 26 in the first four games before striking big against KKR on Monday, whi was his first half-century of the current season.

"This innings (67 vs KKR) will build a huge amount of belief and



"Obviously, everyone, others on the outside, would think they are big shoes to fill, but I feel I would always be myself and I would like to continue the culture that has been going on. "I remember in 2022 when he told me, 'Probably not next year, but after that, you might get a

Monday

March 22.

chance to lead, so be ready for it'. So, obviously after that, I was always ready for it," said the opener. A franchise like CSK is quite meticulous with its planning and

very chilled state. Just one conver-

CHENNAI, April 9: The charis-

matic Mahendra Singh Dhoni told

Ruturaj Gaikwad to be prepared

for Chennai Super Kings captaincy

that is why head coach Stephen Fleming was discussing field and 138-run target set by KKR. (*PTI*)

Long jumper Sreeshankar to begin season in Shanghai/Suzhou DL

NEW DELHI, April 9: Top Inong jumper Murali



While Gillespie has been picked to be head coach for the red-ball format, Kirsten will be head coach for the white-ball formats.

Indications are that Mahmood will be assistant coach to both of them in all three formats.

Mahmood, who has worked as bowling coach with the Pakistan team. is based in the United Kingdom and is a certified coach with English and Wales Cricket Board.

Besides Mahmood, the board has also named Muhammad Yousuf who is also a national selector, as batting coach for the New Zealand series.

And interestingly it has named two managers for the five-match series with a special post of senior team manager created for another selector, Wahab Riaz, while the longserving Mansoor Rana will be the team manager.

Saeed Ajmal will be spin bowling coach for the fivematch series against New Zealand. (PTI)

confidence for him (Gaikwad) in his game. Playing an innings like this, early in the tournament will give him a lot of reassurance on his decision-making and pass on a message to the team," Morgan, a

JioCinema TATA IPL expert, was quoted as saying in a press release. Morgan, who had led KKR to the final of the 2021 IPL, was

happy to see the CSK skipper in sublime touch. "He is a classy player, we have

seen that for a long time now and it is great to see him in such touch. He had a great game, right from the toss to captaincy decisions, getting the spinners on after the powerplay, he was exceptional today. " Among other experts, former India pacer RP Singh lauded Jadeja for bowling with exceptional control.

"The best part about Jadeja's bowling is he bowls at a good length and the pace at which he bowled today was great. He left no doubt as to who the best performer of the match was, took a couple of catches, got three wickets, and gave an all-round performance." His former India teammate Robin

Uthappa was happy to see Daryl Mitchell slowly fitting into the shoes of Ambati Rayudu, who was stellar during his time at the CSK.

"This is what you want from a player coming in at number three and play the role that Ambati Ravudu did for CSK, playing aggressively, maintaining the momentum of the game while building important partnerships for the team and he played that role

well today," Uthappa said. "He (Mitchell) was very pro-active in his innings today. Before this innings, he took a little bit more time but today he adjusted the attack, took the pressure off Gaikwad, especially in that over where he played the reverse-sweep at the end," Uthappa concluded. (PTI)

shankar will compete in back-to-back Diamond League Meetings in Shanghai/Suzhou and Doha on April 27 and May 10 respectively to begin action in a crucial Olympic year.

The 25-year-old Sreeshankar last year became only the third Indian to finish in top-three in a Diamond League Meeting in the Paris leg on June 9 with a third place finish, after Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and former discus thrower Vikas Gowda.

He had won a silver in the Hangzhou Asian Games last year but disappointed with a qualifying round exit in the 2023 Budapest World Championships.

"TeamIIS athlete Sreeshankar Murali will begin his 2024 season at the ShanghaiDL, and then make his way to Qatar for the DohaDL. Let's do this, Sree!," said a tweet from Inspire Institute of Sport where Sreeshankar trains.

In Doha, Sreeshankar will be joined by Chopra and another Indian javelin thrower Kishore Jena in a star-studded field. Both

Chopra and Jena are starting their season in Doha Meanwhile, 2022 Commonwealth Games silver medallist

triple jumper Abdulla Aboobacker will compete in the season's first Diamond League Meeting in Xiamen, China, on April 20. (PTI)

Donyell Malen to miss Dortmund's Champions League game at Atletico Madrid

DORTMUND, (GERMANY), April 9: Dutch forward Donyell Malen did not travel with Borussia Dortmund for Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal game at Atletico Madrid after he failed to recover from a thigh injury in time.

Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl said Tuesday that Malen, who has 13 goals in all competitions this season, had not been fit to travel.

Kehl said. "He wasn't available to us at the weekend and has also picked up a bug. It's a shame, but everyone else is on board." Dortmund previously said Malen suffered a blow to his thigh while playing for the

Netherlands against Germany in a friendly last month. He missed Dortmund's 2-0 win over Bayern Munich on March 30 and the 1-0 loss to Stuttgart on Saturday. (AP)

"Unfortunately he hasn't been able to make it,"



NEW DELHI, April 9: Former Indian men's boxing coach Blas Iglesias Fernandez has backed world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg) to bag a medal at this year's Paris Olympics but feels that Tokyo Games bronze-medallist Lovlina Borgohain's (75kg) chances will boil down to her level of aggression in the ring.

The 68-year-old Cuban, who served for over two decades as the men's coach and also became the first and only overseas Dronacharya awardee, has been appointed by the Sports Authority of India as High Performance Coach for a two-year period.

Fernandez is stationed at the National Boxing Academy in Rohtak, Harvana

Speaking recently on the sidelines of the multi-nation camp for junior boxers at the National Centre of Excellence in Rohtak, Fernandez evaluated India's chances at the upcoming Summer Games.

"I love the boxing (style) of Nikhat. She is very intelligent. She has good ring tactics. She knows when she is winning and when she is losing," Fernandez told SAI Media.

"This is Nikhat's time to prove herself. It's true that she had lived in the shadows of Mary Kom but now it's her chance to prove herself and make India proud," he said.

The Cuban was a part of the Indian men's coaching staff when Vijender Singh claimed the first Olympic medal in the country's boxing history back in the 2008 Beijing edition.

He also hit the headlines in 2014 for coping a disciplinary ban for losing his cool after L Sarita Devi's controversial semifinal loss in the Asian Games.



The veteran says he sees potential in across more purposeful, especially Borgohain too but she has to come when the chips are down in the ring.

"Lovlina has to show more killer instinct. I have seen some of her bouts and I think she lost them because Lovlina was not aggressive and proactive enough.

If she can box to her potential, she can finish among the medals in Paris," said Fernandez.

The 26-year-old Borgohain has endured a mixed run after her Tokyo medal. She moved up from 69kg to 75kg and did not finish among the medals at the 2022 World Championships and the Commonwealth Games

But the tall Assam girl bagged her Paris ticket after winning the silver medal at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games before being crowned world champion last year.

Zareen and Borgohain are among four Indian women boxers who have qualified for the July-August Summer Games in Paris.

The others are Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Parveen Hooda (57kg).

Fernandez is hoping that India's male boxers will also qualify for the Paris Games. It will depend on how they fare in the second and final world qualifiers in Bangkok from May 23 to June 3.

Up to 51 Paris quotas will be up for grabs and Indian boxers can potentially clinch nine more Paris spots.

"I reckon Nishant Dev and Amit Panghal can bag Paris quotas. They both have the potential to do this. Men's boxing is very tough and should not be compared with women's where the competition is relatively easier. I will like to see Indian men breaking the Olympic jinx," said Fernandez. (PTI)

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