

Passing out parade of third batch of Agniveers to be held at INS Chilka

NEW DELHI, Mar 14 (ANI)

THE passing-out parade of the third batch of Agniveers is scheduled to be held at INS Chilka, a navy base in Odisha, on March 15. The POP marks the successful culmination of training for about 2,600 Agniveers, including women Agniveers who have undergone rigorous training at Chilka.

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, will be the Chief Guest and review the post-sunset POP. Vice Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, will also be present for the POP, an



official statement said.

This momentous event will be witnessed by the proud family members of the passing out Agniveer course. Besides this, various high-achieving veter-

ans and sports personalities will also be present during the ceremony, inspiring the Agniveers with their remarkable achievements, the statement added.

US co Qualcomm in talks with Adani over 5G, chips

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Chennai: US semiconductor major Qualcomm is holding discussions with Adani group in 5G, broadband and semiconductor sectors.

Qualcomm president and CEO Cristiano Amon told reporters in Chennai on Thursday that they were excited about the digital transformation happening in India. "We have been working in the telecom sector in partnership with companies

such as Jio and Airtel in 5G and opportunities in broadband. We have been working with Tata and Mahindra in the automotive sector. As we continue to expand into industrial, you will see that it is natural that we will have opportunities also with the Adani Group. There are a couple topics... One, of course, is the evolution of 5G and broadband. The other is semiconductors," he said.

Responding to a query on whether major announcements are expected over re-

cent discussions with the Adani group, he said, "We are not making any announcements, but we are very very encouraged about the partnerships and discussions."

Amon said Qualcomm has made an investment of more than \$1 billion in India. "Outside our headquarters of San Diego in the US, India is the largest R&D site. Investments that are happening in India are very significant excess of \$1 billion. It is a significant investment that we have made," he said.

India ranks 134 out of 193 in UNDP's '22 HDI, a notch higher than in '21

New Delhi: India ranked at 134 on a list of 193 countries in 2022 as per the latest Human Development Index, a notch higher than 135 out of 192 countries in 2021, attributed mainly to improvement across all HDI indicators over the previous year – increase in life expectancy from 67.2 to 67.7 years, expected years of schooling going up to 12.6 from 12 and per capita gross national income increasing from \$6,542 to \$6,951, among others, reports **Ambika Pandit**.

According to UNDP's Human Development Report 2023-24, India showed progress in reducing gender inequality, ranking 108 out of 166 countries in Gender Inequality

NORDIC TOPPERS

- With HDI value of 0.644, **India in '22 figures among 'medium human development' countries (134/193)**. Its HDI value & rank in '21 was 0.633 (135/192)
- **Top 3 Countries:** Switzerland: 0.967; Norway: 0.966; Iceland: 0.959
- **Pak (164) & Af (182)** figure in 'low human development' category; **China (75)** and **Sri Lanka (78)** in high category

ty Index (GII), as compared with 122 out of 170 nations in 2021. With a GII value of 0.437 in 2022, India fared better than the global average of 0.462 and South Asian average of 0.478.

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Panel for simultaneous polls in 2 stages, with cutoff date

2 Amendments Needed, One For States To Ratify

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In an ambitious move to reconfigure the electoral system, the high-level committee on 'One Nation One Election' has recommended moving to a synchronised poll mechanism for all three tiers — Parliament, state assemblies and local bodies — and laid out a clear roadmap in a bid to improve governan-

▶ **EDIT PAGE: One Nation, Many Poles**

ce and reduce disruptions caused by frequent polls.

The plan for synchronisation of elections is to transition in two stages by first combining the date for assembly and parliamentary polls; and, as the second step, holding elections for panchayats and municipal bodies within 100 days of the general elections. The polls will be synchronised by setting an 'appointed date' and curtai-

HOW, WHAT & WHEN OF JOINT ELECTIONS

How will elections be synchronised?

In 2 stages, says panel report.

Step 1: Simultaneous polls to be held for Lok Sabha, state assemblies. **Constitutional amendment needed, but no ratification by states required.**

Step 2: Local body polls to be held **within 100 days of LS & assembly elections.** Amendment for this will require ratification by at least half the states.

How will a cutoff date be fixed and varying assembly tenures adjusted?

President will, through a



Former President Kovind gives report to President Murmu

notification, bring simultaneous polls into force on the date of first sitting of Lok Sabha after a general election. This becomes the 'appointed date'. Assemblies for which elections

are held after this date will have tenure only till next Lok Sabha elections (which will be simultaneous)

What happens if there is a hung House or governing party loses trust vote?

Elections will be held for the remaining period of the five-year term

When will simultaneous elections kick in?

After legislative changes are undertaken, President will notify the 'appointed date' on the first day the newly elected LS sits

▶ **Aimed at dismantling Constitution: Oppn, P 28**

ling assemblies to coincide with LS elections.

The switchover, however, will be a time-consuming exercise. Centre can move to simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly polls through a constitutional amendment, without having to get it endorsed by state legislatures, but synchronising local body polls will need the concurrence of at least half the state assemblies. Accordingly, so-

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me consensus-building may be required as several states will see their five-year terms cut short whenever the change is implemented.

PM Narendra Modi's backing for the plan, which culminated in constitution of the committee, means BJP, if it returns to office, can push through the amendments with its implementation likely to be promised in its election manifesto this ti-

▶ **Who's for, who's against joint polls, P 28**

me round. BJP-led NDA also has govts in more than half the states.

Less than 200 days since it was set up on Sept 2 last year, the committee, headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind, submitted its report to President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday, underlining the keenness to move ahead with the change.

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Putin asks voters in Russia & annexed Ukraine to unite

Kyiv Calls Polls In Its Territories Void; Ramps Up Border Strikes

President Vladimir Putin appealed Thursday to voters, including in annexed parts of Ukraine, to be united in determining Russia's future by casting ballots in this week's presidential election, which he is all but certain to win.

"I am convinced: you realize what a difficult period our country is going through... It is vital to underscore our cohesion and resolve and move forward together. Every vote you cast is valued and meaningful," Putin said in a video address first shown in the Russian far east and reported by national news agencies. "I therefore ask you in the coming three days to exercise your right to vote." Putin (71), who has been in power as president or PM since 2000, faces three challengers in three days of voting beginning on Friday. None of the challengers has criticised him.

In his video remarks, Putin said all voters wanted to see a strong, prosperous and free Russia "in order to raise living standards and the quality of life. And that is how it will be". The very act of voting, Putin said, was a "demonstration of patriotic feeling". And this, he said, was particularly felt in areas of eastern and southern Ukraine now held by Russian forces—some since the launch of the Feb 2022 invasion, others taken over by Russian-backed separatists in 2014.

Putin said the patriotic choices were clear to residents of areas in Donbas in eastern Ukraine and Novorossiia—a tsarist term for parts of southern Ukraine—who had voted for annexation by Russia in 2022 referendums denounced by Western countries as illegal. "(They) voted in a referendum in the most difficult of conditions for unification with Russia and will again in the coming days make their choice," Putin said. "Those participating in the special operation

RUSSIA VOTES FROM TODAY

Russia will hold prez election on March 15-17, which President Vladimir Putin is certain to win



Russian dolls depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and predecessors Dmitry Medvedev, Boris Yeltsin, Mikhail Gorbachev and Leonid Brezhnev

PUTIN IN POWER TILL 2036?

An ex-KGB Lt colonel, Putin (71) was made acting prez on last day of 1999. He then served two 4-year terms from 2000-2008 before becoming PM from 2008-12. He returned to presidency in 2012 once prez terms were extended to 6 years, & again in 2018. In 2020, constitution changes allowed Putin to serve 2 more 6-year terms from 2024. His win in this election will mark 5th term. He can be re-elected in 2030, extending rule till 2036

EYEING STALIN'S RECORD?

Putin has already served as president for longer than any other Russian ruler since **Josef Stalin**, beating even Leonid Brezhnev's 18-year tenure. Stalin ruled Soviet Union for 29 years



TOKEN RACE | Putin is running against Communist **Nikolai Kharitonov**; **Leonid Slutsky**, leader of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party; & **Vladislav Davankov** of the New People party. They support Kremlin policies & are unlikely to get enough votes to mount a challenge

will also vote. They are an ex-amples to all Russians."

Ahead of the vote, Kyiv has ramped up its aerial bombardment of Russian regions just across their shared border. At least two people were killed and several more wounded in a wave of attacks on the Russian region of Belgorod Thursday. And the Russian national

NO ANTI-WAR CANDIDATE

Boris Nadezhdin and Yekaterina Duntsova, who gathered tens of thousands of signatures to support candidacies, were ruled ineligible



Navalny's widow Yulia Navalnaya has called for massive election day protest

OPPOSITION SUPPRESSED

Alexei Navalny died in an Arctic prison that aides say was a political murder. Two more opposition figures – Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kaza-Murza – are in jail for criticising Ukraine war

HOW RUSSIA CHOOSES PREZ

ELIGIBILITY
First, candidates must be a Russian citizen, at least 35 years old and have lived permanently in Russia for the past 10 years

NOMINATION
Then, a candidate must be nominated in one of three ways:



By a political party in the State Duma



By a political party outside the State Duma (with 1,00,000 supporter signatures)



By a group of at least 500 people (with 3,00,000 supporter signatures)

CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Then, the Central Election Commission must review a candidate's application before placing them on the ballot

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

One candidate receives more than 50% of vote

No candidate receives more than 50% of vote



President of Russia

A second round of the top candidates from first round

112.3M ELIGIBLE VOTERS



Vote to be held in Russia-occupied parts of Ukraine, a move denounced by West

67.5%
Turnout in 2018 election

PUTINISM POPULAR?

West casts Putin as a war criminal, a killer and a dictator, but opinion polls at home show that he has approval ratings of 85%

FIRST 3-DAY VOTE |

This is the first vote that lasts three days instead of one. It is also the first time voters in 29 regions can vote online

FREE & FAIR? Observers have criticised extending the vote over several days and allowing online balloting, saying such tactics further hinder election transparency

guard said it was fighting off attacks from pro-Ukrainian militias in Kursk, the latest in a string of border clashes.

Kyiv says staging polls on Ukrainian territory is illegal.

Early voting is underway in occupied territories of Ukraine, and the vote will also take place in Crimea, the peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014—a

move that most of the global community has refused to recognise. In occupied city of Mariupol, officials opened pop-up polling stations at small tables in the street and on the hoods of cars. Banners were unfurled sporting a red, white and blue "V" logo—an army symbol used as a sign of support for the military offensive. REUTERS & AFP