

Nomination process ends for by-polls to 47 Assembly seats in 13 States

LUCKNOW/JAIPUR, Oct 25 (PTI)

WITH the filing of nominations for bypolls to 47 seats spread across 13 States ending on Friday, a big test awaits the opposition INDIA bloc in this crucial showdown with the BJP.

Voting will be held on November 13 in nine seats of Uttar Pradesh, seven seats in Rajasthan, six seats in West Bengal, five seats in Assam, four seats each in Bihar and Punjab, three seats in Karnataka, two seats each in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim, and one seat each in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Meghalaya. Bypoll will also be conducted in the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat that day.

Most of the seats fell vacant after the sitting MLAs were elect-

ed to the Lok Sabha as MPs while in some constituencies, the bypolls are being held due to death of the representatives.

The INDIA bloc, which failed to put up a united fight in the recently held Madhya Pradesh assembly polls resulting in the BJP winning comfortably, could not agree on a seat-sharing arrangement in Uttar Pradesh for the bypolls.

The Samajwadi Party is finally contesting on all the nine seats with the Congress deciding to opt out though it announced it will hold "joint campaigns" with its ally.

In Uttar Pradesh, bypolls are being held in Katehari, Karhal, Meerapur, Kundarki, Phulpur, Sisamau, Ghaziabad, Majhawan and Kahir.

Eight of these seats fell vacant

after their MLAs fought the Lok Sabha elections and won, while bypoll in Sisamau is being held due to the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case.

The BJP left the Meerapur seat in Muzaffarnagar for its ally RLD. The BJP put up candidates in all the remaining eight seats, an apparent slight to its other ally Nishad Party that had earlier staked claim to two seats - Majhawan in Mirzapur and Katehari in Ambedkarnagar.

Nishad Party chief Sanjay Nishad, however, sought to downplay this, saying he wants victory for the NDA and not "seats".

Those from the SP who filed nominations are Tej Pratap Yadav (Karhal), Naseem Solanki (Sisamau), Mustafa Siddiqui

(Phulpur), Shobhawati Verma (Katehari), Jyoti Bind (Majhwan), Sumbul Rana (Meerapur), Mohammad Rizwan (Kundarki), Sigh Raj Jatav (Ghaziabad) and Charu Kain (Kahir).

The BJP candidates are - Ramvir Singh Thakur (Kundarki), Sanjeev Sharma (Ghaziabad), Surendra Diler (Kahir), Anujesh Yadav (Karhal), Deepak Patel (Phulpur), Dharmraj Nishad (Katehari), Suchismita Maurya (Majhawan) and Suresh Awasthi (Sisamau). The RLD named Mithilesh Pal from Meerapur.

In Karnataka, JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy filed his nomination from Channapatna, a seat vacated by his father and Union minister H D Kumaraswamy after being elect-

ed to Lok Sabha. Bypolls will also be held in Shiggaon and Sandur after Basavaraj Bommai (BJP) and E Tukaram (Congress) resigned following their victory in the Lok Sabha elections.

BJP candidate Sohan Singh Thandal and Congress nominee Jatinder Kaur were among those who filed their nominations in Punjab, where voting will be held for the Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal (SC), Gidderbaha, and Barnala seats.

A total of 38 candidates have filed their nominations for the five seats in Assam - Dholai, Behali, Samaguri, Bongaigaon and Sidli.

The BJP is contesting in three seats leaving the rest two for its alliance partners AGP and UPPI. The Congress is contesting all the five constituencies.

Maldives discusses tourism sector prospects with India

MALE, Oct 25 (PTI)

INDIA and Maldives are discussing tourism again starting with exploring the prospects for investment and development in the sector at an Atoll south of the capital Male, a media report said on Friday.

The development comes days after Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, during his first bilateral visit to New Delhi, termed India as “one of the largest tourism source markets” for his country and hoped that more Indian tourists would visit the archipelagic nation.

During his visit, India on October 7 asserted that its friendly ties with the Maldives will continue as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Muizzu unveiled a blueprint for comprehensive economic and maritime cooperation, signalling a reset of the relationship that had hit a rough patch towards end 2023 and early 2024.

'JOIN INDIA'S GROWTH STORY'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and others during a group photo at the India-Germany CEO's Forum in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI)

INVITING German business leaders to invest in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said there is no better place for investment

becoming a global trade and manufacturing hub," Modi said, adding, today India stands on strong pillars of democracy, demography, demand and data. He further said that India is doing record investments in

India becoming a global trade and manufacturing hub and stands on strong pillars of democracy, demography, demand and data: PM Modi at Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business

than India and this is the right time to join the country's growth story.

Addressing the 18th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business 2024 here, the Prime Minister emphasised that the time was 'right' for foreign investors to participate in India's growth story, join 'make in India' initiative and 'make for the world'.

He also said the confidence that Germany has expressed in India's skilled manpower is amazing as the European nation has decided to increase visas for the skilled Indian workforce from 20,000 to 90,000 per year and this will give a further push to the economic growth of Germany.

"This is the right time to join India's growth story... India

roads, railways, airports and ports and the Indo-Pacific region is very important for the future of the world.

The conference was held on Friday after a gap of 12 years.

Modi said that the Government has prepared a roadmap for making India a developed nation by 2047 and in this important time, the German Cabinet has released a "Focus on India" document to further strengthen ties between the two countries.

He added that India is becoming a major hub for diversification, de-risking, trade and manufacturing, and it provides huge business opportunities for German firms. For investors and businesses, he said, "what could be

(Contd on page 5)

Modi, Scholz discuss Ukraine, West Asia conflicts

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia are a matter of concern and India is ready to make every possible contribution for restoration of peace.

His remarks came after talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who called upon India to contribute to find a political solution to the conflict in Ukraine that has been raging for a long time.

"The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia are a matter of concern for both nations. India has always been of the view that war cannot be a solution to problems. India is ready to make every possible contribution for the restoration of peace," Modi said after the 7th Inter-Governmental Consultations with the visiting German Chancellor.

Modi said he and Olaf agreed that the global forums established in the 20th century were

(Contd on page 5)



India, China begin troop disengagement at two friction points: Sources

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI)

INDIA and China have begun troop disengagement at the two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh and this process is likely to get completed by October 28-29, Army sources said on Friday.

The process follows an agreement firmed up between the two countries on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough to end the over four-year stand-off.

Sources said that

Patrolling status is expected to move back to pre-April 2020 level as the process is likely to get completed by October 28-29 at Demchok and Depsang Plains

patrolling will begin at the two friction points once the disengagement is done and both sides will move their respective troops and dismantle temporary structures. Eventually, they added, the patrolling status is expected to move back to

pre-April 2020 level.

The agreement framework was first agreed upon at the diplomatic level and then military-level talks took place, the Army sources said, adding the nitty-gritty of agreement was worked in Corps Commander-level talks. Adhering to agreements between the two sides, Indian troops have begun to pull back equipment to rear locations in these areas. The ties between the two Asian giants had nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

Use, threat of use of nukes 'unacceptable'

India-Germany in joint statement over Ukraine war

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI)

INDIA and Germany on Friday expressed the "deepest concern" over the prolonged war in Ukraine and its tragic humanitarian consequences, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chancellor Olaf Scholz sharing the view that the "use or threat of use" of nuclear weapons in the context of the conflict is "unacceptable".

A joint statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) after the two leaders co-chaired the seventh round of the India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations in New Delhi said they also "unequivocally condemned" terrorism and violent extremism in all forms and manifestations.

"The leaders expressed their deepest concern over the war raging on in Ukraine, including its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences.

They reiterated the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said.

The leaders also noted the "negative impacts" of the war in Ukraine with regard to global food and energy security, especially for developing and least-developed countries.

"In the context of this war, they shared the view that the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. They underscored the importance of upholding international law, and in line with the UN Charter, reiterated that all states must refrain from the threat of or use of force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state," it added.

The "Joint Statement: 7th

India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC)" said Modi and Scholz also "unequivocally condemned the Hamas' terror attacks on October 7, 2023 and expressed concern over the large-scale loss of civilian lives and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza".

The leaders underscored that as the world's two largest democracies, India and the European Union (EU) have a common interest in "ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multi-polar world".

"They emphasised the importance of deepening the India-EU Strategic Partnership, which would not only benefit both sides but also have a far-reaching positive impact globally," the statement said. Modi and Scholz also called for concerted action against all terrorist groups, including those proscribed by the UNSC.

CYCLONE DANA causes significant damage in Odisha, WB

■ Odisha claimed zero casualty, one death reported from WB

BHUBANESWAR, KOLKATA, Oct 25 (PTI)

SEVERE cyclonic storm Dana struck the eastern coast early Friday, triggering torrential rain and high-speed winds uprooting trees and electric poles and caused significant damage to infrastructure and crops in some districts of Odisha and West Bengal.

While Odisha claimed that it achieved its 'zero casualty mission,' one death was reported from Bengal.

As Cyclone Dana weakened into a deep depression and moved westward, authorities launched extensive relief and



Odisha Fire and Emergency Service personnel cut the fallen trees as the restoration work is underway amid gusty winds followed by heavy rainfall triggered by cyclone Dana in Bhadrak on Friday. (R) Indian Coast Guard personnel distribute food to affected people after the landfall of cyclone in West Bengal.



(ANI/PTI)

rehabilitation efforts on a war-footing in the affected regions.

In both Odisha and West Bengal, flights, railways and buses swiftly resumed opera-

tions soon after the storm passed as authorities worked to assess and clear any disruptions caused by the cyclone, which made landfall between

Dhamra and Bhitarkanika past midnight.

Briefing reporters in the evening, Odisha Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari

announced damage assessment work will commence on Saturday and be completed within seven days, stating that

(Contd on page 5)