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Death rains on Kerala, toll mounts to 26

Military, NDRF out; PM assures CM of all help

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The toll taken by heavy rain, flooding, and landslides rose to 26 in Kerala on Sunday even as hundreds of personnel from the Army, Navy, the Indian Air Force (IAF), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the local administration were trying to save lives and ferry trapped people to safety.

The State Revenue Minister K Rajan said the rescue workers have recovered 15 bodies from the debris and slush of the landslides that had hit various places in Idukki and Kottayam districts on Saturday.

"The rescue workers have recovered 15 bodies till now. This includes 12 bodies from Kootickal in Kottayam, one body from Peerumedu, and two which were recovered yesterday from Kanjar in Idukki district," Rajan told PTI.

Idukki District Collector Sheeba George said three bodies were recovered from Kakkayar in Idukki district on Sunday, a hilly region that was



Fishermen fishing from the overflowing Kumari dam following heavy rain in Kanyakumari district on Sunday

PTI

heavily hit by Saturday's devastating landslides.

"The search is on for five missing people," she said. Officials said the bodies of three children buried under slush were recovered after intense rescue efforts.

The children, aged eight, seven and four, were found holding on to each other, officials said.

While the Army, Navy and

the IAF have stepped in to help the civil administration, the NDRF has decided to deploy 11 teams to carry out rescue operations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Pinarayi Vijayan and offered all possible help from the Centre to tackle the devastation.

"Spoke to Kerala CM Shri @vijayanpinarayi and discussed the situation in the wake of

heavy rains and landslides in Kerala. Authorities are working on the ground to assist the injured and affected," Modi tweeted. "I pray for everyone's safety and well-being," he said.

Expressing his condolence to the bereaved families, he said, "It is saddening that some people have lost their lives due to heavy rains and landslides in Kerala. Condolences to the bereaved families."

India to host NSAs' meet on Af situation

New Delhi so far reluctant to extend invitation to Taliban

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As a major stakeholder in ensuring peace in Afghanistan, India is likely to host next month a meeting of the National Security Advisers (NSA) of the countries in the neighbourhood including Pakistan. However, New Delhi is so far reluctant to extend the invitation to Taliban.

The meeting is likely to be held in the second week of November here in person between the NSAs of countries, including Uzbekistan, Pakistan, China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Incidentally, Russia has invited India to take part in dialogue in Moscow where representatives of the Taliban will also be present.

India has accepted the invitation for the talks on October 20. A Joint Secretary level officer of the Indian Government may be present in the meeting.

This will be for the second time that India will meet the Taliban on an international platform.

The first official contact between New Delhi and the Taliban was on August 31 when the Ambassador of India



to Qatar, Deepak Mittal, met Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the head of Taliban's political office in Doha. The meeting took place at the Indian Embassy in Doha at the request of the Taliban.

Sources said here on Sunday India has invited Pakistan NSA Moeed Yusuf for the proposed meeting of the NSAs. However, Islamabad is yet to confirm its participation. Also, Pakistan has all along insisted that talks on Afghanistan must have the presence of the Taliban.

Sources said the meeting between the NSAs was in the pipeline even before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. The corona pandemic delayed the crucial meet regarding that nation.

Confirming the Indian

participation in the forthcoming talks in Moscow, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said two days back, "We have received an invitation for the Moscow format meeting on Afghanistan on October 20. We will be participating in it."

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said Moscow had invited representatives of the Taliban to international talks on Afghanistan on October 20.

After Kabul's fall in August, India raised questions on the lack of inclusivity in the new Taliban regime, rights of minorities, women and children, and also voiced concern on terrorism emanating from Afghanistan.

CAPSULE

SINGHU LYNCHING: 3 SENT TO POLICE REMAND

Chandigarh: Three people allegedly involved in the lynching of a labourer at the farmers' protest site at Singhu border were remanded to six days in police custody as the Haryana Police set up two Special Investigation Teams to probe the incident.

17 MISSIONARIES KIDNAPPED IN HAITI

San Juan (US): A group of 17 US missionaries, including children, were kidnapped by a gang in Haiti on Saturday, according to a voice message sent to various religious missions by an organisation.

JAISHANKAR IN ISRAEL, TO HOLD HIGH-LEVEL TALKS

Tel Aviv: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said that he is looking forward to a "great visit" as he arrived here on a five-day official trip during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership to mutually prepare a roadmap for further enriching the strategic ties.

BODY OF SECOND PILOT FOUND AFTER 75 DAYS

Jammu: The body of the second pilot of an Army helicopter that crashed into the Ranjit Sagar Dam lake has been recovered after a gap of 75 days.

According to a Jammu-based Defence PRO, Lt-Col Devender Anand, "persistent efforts by Indian Army and Navy for 75 days which were going on day and night to recover the body of Capt Jayant Joshi has finally succeeded and body has been recovered from the lake bed using hi-tech equipment".

MeT red alert for heavy rain; Badrinath yatra halted

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Badrinath yatra, one of the famous Char Dham yatras, has been halted at Pandukeshwar while the Uttarakhand Government on Sunday urged all devotees undertaking Char Dham yatra to postpone it by a day or two due to incessant rainfall and drop in temperature as the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for heavy to very heavy rains in the State for the next three days.

Keeping in view of heavy rainfall, the State Government has decided to close the State on Monday while there will be a ban on trekking, mountaineering, and camping activities in the high altitude areas of the State till Tuesday as a precautionary measure. Higher reaches of Kedarnath also received snowfall after incessant rainfall on Sunday.

The IMD has issued a red alert for heavy to very heavy rains in all the 13 districts of Uttarakhand for October 17, 18 and 19 and advised people not to move anywhere for at least two days.

'Final call on kids' vaccination for Covid on scientific rationale'

Says task force chief after need for vaccinating kids questioned

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government will take a final decision on vaccinating children and adolescents against coronavirus on the basis of overall scientific rationale as well as the supply situation of vaccines available for those below 18 years, Covid Task Force head Dr VK Paul said on Sunday. His comments came after a few experts said that there was no need to vaccinate healthy kids.

Dr Paul also cautioned that even though infections are coming down and the second wave is subsiding, it will not be fair now to say that the worst is over since many countries have seen more than two waves.



Covid Task Force head Dr VK Paul

Currently, three vaccines — Covishield, Covaxin and Sputnik V — being administered in the country are only for those above 18 years of age. All of them are two-dose vaccines.

Zydus Cadila's indigenously developed needle-free Covid-19 vaccine ZyCoV-D is set to become the first vaccine that will be available in India for those in the age group of 12-18 years. It has received Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA).

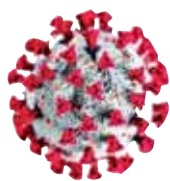
Kin of Covid victims to get relief from govt

LUCKNOW (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday directed officials to pay Rs 50,000 to family members of persons who had died after contracting COVID-19 in the state.

In a statement issued by the UP government, the Chief Minister ordered officials to issue detailed guidelines about financial relief to be given to family members of those who had succumbed to COVID-19.

He also said it should be ensured that no eligible family is deprived of their entitlement and detailed guidelines in this regard should be issued soon. A team should be formed in every district under the district magistrate for proper implementation of distributing financial relief.



'Sabka Saath, lekin unke parivar ka vikas', CM slams opposition

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hitting out at the opposition for neglecting the overall development of society and working in their own interest, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that his government worked to realise the goal of 'welfare for all'. Yogi Adityanath said this while addressing the Backward Class convention organised by the state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party in Lucknow.

"Before 2014, the slogan of those who ruled was 'Sabka saath, lekin unke parivar ka vikas'. They did not care about the development of society and the nation. We worked to fulfill the resolve of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas'. Even if a single person remains deprived in society, the society cannot prosper. The basis of the prosperity of the society is formed only when the development of all sections of society is done," he said.

In the convention, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath listed the achievements of the state and the Central government's stance regarding the welfare of

the backward classes and the positions they had been given in the party organisation.

"BJP believes in the nationalist ideology. Its basic mantra is 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhin: Sarve Bhavantu Niramayah', which is wishing everyone happiness, wishing for everyone's health. It is a matter of happiness that the schemes of the government are becoming the basis of self-reliance of the society," the chief minister asserted.

Launching a scathing attack on the previous governments for causing hindrance in the development of the state, the chief minister said that Uttar Pradesh used to burn in communal fire and this was the reason that the state was lagging so far. "The situation worsened, unemployment increased, the state was completely burning with riots and clashes all around," he said.

The chief minister said that earlier, during festivals, when it was time for business, curfews were imposed in the state due to riots and clashes happening under the government's nose in the state and the

previous government used to give shelter to the rioters.

"The people of the state were harassed by the riots, false cases were filed. The festival was pushed into darkness," he said while pointing out that not a single riot happened in the last four-and-a-half years.

Giving a stern warning to the rioters, the chief minister said, "If you disturb the peace and tranquility of the state, then your next seven generations will compensate for it. Now there can be no riots in the state, festivals are being celebrated with joy in the state."

Mentioning the work done in the state, the chief minister said, "Today, the state is witnessing development in every way. Our government has constructed 2.61 crore toilets and also community toilets are being built in villages. Houses are being constructed for 42 lakh people under the PM Awas Yojana."

Highlighting the achievement of the government, he said that earlier only four out of the total 75 districts had electricity but today, although

there was a crisis of coal, the government was buying electricity and providing light to the homes of the poor.

Describing how the government helped the underprivileged class overcome their struggles, the chief minister said that after the BJP came to power in UP in 2017, the Mati Kala Board was formed. "Earlier, our idols used to come from China, the people of our Prajapati society used to sit back without any work. Now, we are not getting idols from China, rather we are making them on our own. Lamps are also being made on Deepawali. This time we will light nine lakh lamps in Ayodhya on Diwali," he added.

BJP state president Swatantra Dev Singh, Minister of State for Industrial Development Dharmveer Prajapati, National Commission for Backward Classes Vice Chairman Dr Lokesh Kumar Prajapati, state president of OBC Morcha Narendra Kashyap, BJP state general secretary Priyanka Rawat were also present during the convention.

Petrol, diesel cost 30% more than ATF as price hiked again

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices on Sunday were hiked again by 35 paise a litre and the auto fuels now cost a third more than the rate at which aviation turbine fuel (ATF) is sold to airlines.

The fourth straight day of 35 paise per litre hike sent petrol and diesel rates to record highs across the country. The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of ₹105.84 a litre and ₹111.77 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of State-owned fuel retailers. In Mumbai, diesel now comes for ₹102.52 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs ₹94.57.

With this rise, petrol is now at ₹100-a-litre mark or more in all State capitals while diesel has touched the 100-mark in over a dozen States. Diesel crossed the



₹100-a-litre mark in Bengaluru, Daman and Silvassa.

Petrol used in two-wheelers and cars now costs 33 per cent more than the price at which ATF is sold to airlines. ATF in Delhi costs ₹79,020.16 per kilolitre or ₹79 per litre. The costliest fuel is in the border town of Ganganagar in Rajasthan where petrol comes for ₹117.86 a litre and diesel for ₹105.95.

2 labourers shot dead by ultras in Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two more non-local labourers from Bihar were shot dead by terrorists near Wanpoh area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district late on Sunday evening. Another critically-injured labourer was rushed to the nearby hospital in a pool of blood and was undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

This is the third-consecutive attack on labourers and street vendors since October 5 in Kashmir Valley.

In a tweet Kashmir Zone Police said, "Terrorists fired indiscriminately upon non-local labourers at Wanpoh area of Kulgam. In this terror incident, two non-locals were killed and one was injured. Police and security forces have

cordoned off the area."

Official sources said that the terrorists fired indiscriminately on Raja Reshi Dev and Jogindar Reshi Dev, both from Bihar — leaving them dead on the spot while wounding one another person. The injured man was shifted to GMC Anantnag. The injured has been identified as Chun Chun Reshi Das son of Teju Das of Bihar.

Reacting to the attack, Srinagar Mayor Junaid Azim Mattoo tweeted, "In the strongest of terms condemn yet another barbaric terror attack in Kulgam resulting in the death of two non-local workers. Madness! Senseless and barbaric! My heart goes out to the families of the two deceased and I pray for the recovery of the third injured victim."

It's 'All About Alcohol' in India's first liquor museum in North Goa

ANI ■ PANAJI

India's first museum dedicated to alcohol has opened its doors to "spirited" enthusiasts in Goa. The museum "All About Alcohol", set up by local businessman Nandan Kudchadkar, is in North Goa's Candolim village.

The museum houses hundreds of artefacts linked to feni, including large, traditional glass vats in which the local cashew-based alcohol used to be stored centuries ago.

The idea behind the museum was to make the world aware of Goa's rich heritage, especially the story of feni - the strong local drink. Kudchadkar, who is a collector of antiques, said,



"When I thought of creating a concept like this, the first thought that came to my mind was whether there is an alcohol museum in the world. There is absolutely no place where you

can see the kind of stuff pertaining to alcohol anywhere in the world. If you go to Scotland, they are very happy about their waters, about their drinks, etc. Similarly, in Russia, the people

feel happy to showcase the drinks they have," he said.

"When we come to India, we project alcohol differently. Following my instincts, I decided to set up India's first museum dedicated to alcohol," he said.

"One of our prominent drinks is Kaju Feni and it has been put on display here. This drink is fermented naturally. For Goans, the consumption of alcohol was a symbol of hospitality," Armando Duarte, CEO, Alcohol Museum said.

"The amount of information preserved here is amazing. I am dazed and awestruck with the place. The amount of information, they have kept here for visitors to see is super amazing," a tourist said.

PM to inaugurate much-awaited Kushinagar Int'l Airport on Oct 20

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The stage is set for the inauguration of the much-awaited Kushinagar International Airport by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 20.

The grand inauguration ceremony of the airport, which is being seen as a major conduit in the Buddhist circuit to boost tourist inflow, will be attended by Sri Lankan President Lt Colonel Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and a host of dignitaries, including ambassadors of around 15 countries to India.

The airport will also witness the arrival of its maiden international flight from Colombo with the president and a 125-member delegation accompanying him on board, including Buddhist monks and pilgrims, on the occasion.

With the opening of Kushinagar airport, the inflow of international tourists as well as outbound tourism are expected to increase by 15 to 20 per cent in the coming years, because of its strategic location near Buddhist sites in both Uttar Pradesh and north Bihar.

The airport will facilitate hassle-free movement of tourists from countries with sizeable Buddhist population in East Asia and South East Asia to the six Buddhist sites in Uttar Pradesh located in Kushinagar, Sarnath and Shravasti because of its better connectivity to these places, as well as Buddhist sites located in north Bihar. In Bihar, Kesaria Stupa, the largest Buddhist stupa in the world, and Vaishali are not far from Kushinagar and those willing can cover these sites in one visit with the opening of the Kushinagar airport.

CM launches 144 projects worth Rs 221 crore in Bahraich

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing satisfaction over the pace of development works in Bahraich and Shravasti districts, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that the people of both the districts had elected representatives who were working towards the development of the area. This is the reason that in these two aspirational districts, people are getting directly benefited from the schemes of the government, he added.

In his address to the local people after the inauguration and laying foundation stones of 231 development projects worth more than Rs 611 crore for Bahraich and Shravasti districts through a virtual medium, the chief minister also regretted not being able to reach both the districts due to bad weather. The chief minister informed the public that he had come to Bahraich by helicopter along with Bharatiya Janata Party state president Swatantra Dev Singh, but the weather conditions were not favorable for landing the chopper.

While launching around 87 development projects worth Rs 390.45 crore in Shravasti, the chief minister said that Gautam Buddha had spent a maximum holy period of Chaturmas (time for devotion, penance, bathing in holy rivers, performing sacrifices,



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath virtually launching 144 projects in Bahraich

and charity) in this area. He said realising the importance, the government was making several efforts for tourism and infrastructure development in this area.

Mentioning the historical and mythological importance of Bahraich district while launching 144 projects worth Rs 221 crore, the chief minister said that this area was the holy place of worship of Saint Balark.

"Bahraich also witnessed the bravery and valor of King Suheldev. The Central and

state government is making all arrangements for the all-around development of this place," he said.

The chief minister further informed that two years ago, a medical college was established here and it played a crucial role in providing better health facilities to the people during the COVID-19 period. Soon a medical college would be established in Shravasti on PPP (public-private participation) model, he added.

The chief minister said that Prime Minister Narendra

Modi had laid the foundation stone for the construction of a grand memorial of King Suheldev. "Justice may not have been done to him in history, but this memorial will acquaint the future generation with the glory of King Suheldev," he added.

Appreciating the participation of local public representatives, the chief minister said that they made every effort to serve their people during the coronavirus pandemic and flood times. He said that the result of the efforts made in the

...orders prompt relief to farmers

Lucknow (PNS): To give prompt relief to the farmers, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh will provide compensation to about two lakh farmers for their crop loss due to rains and floods. In pursuance of the directives of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the required assessment of the damage caused to crops like paddy and sugarcane due to rain has been completed. There are about two lakh farmers whose crops have been damaged due to excessive rains and floods in the state. After the survey by the Revenue and Agriculture departments, compensation will be given to the farmers.

While reviewing the progress of crop compensation assessment, the chief minister said, "Any farmer, whose crop is damaged, should be compensated as per rules at the earliest. The Revenue and Agriculture departments should complete this work on a priority in coordination with each other."

Ensuring that no eligible beneficiary is deprived of the assistance, the Uttar Pradesh government machinery is taking all the required relief and rehabilitation measures to the rain-affected areas. An amount of Rs 68 crore will be provided to the farmers whose agricultural produce has been damaged due to floods.

last seven years under the guidance of the prime minister was that today all the three districts of Devipatan division were undergoing complete transformation.

Referring to the transformation of the area as a result of the welfare schemes of the Central and state governments, the chief minister said on Sunday 1.36 lakh people got their homes in rural areas of Bahraich, while 8,000 families got houses in urban areas.

"Toilets were built in 4.85 lakh houses in Bahraich that proved to be a means of ensuring health security and safeguarding the dignity of women

fraternity. About Rs 755 crore has been given as a part of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, while loans of more than 98,000 farmers were waived. Over 52,000 farmers got the benefit of crop insurance," he said.

The chief minister said that seven years ago Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and accordingly, for the past four-and-a-half years with non-discriminatory and non-partisan work culture, the state government had been providing opportunities for development to every section of the society.

take off of flights at the airport has passed the trial successfully.

Meanwhile, a large workforce is being trained to enhance tourists' experience under the Ministry of Tourism's Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Programme. These collective efforts are expected to boost the tourism sector in the region and will generate direct and indirect employment for thousands of people.

According to tourism industry experts, the Kushinagar International Airport will give a fillip to the development of Eastern UP with aviation, tourism and hospitality industries set to boom.

The Buddhist circuit in India, including sites located largely in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are a big draw for Buddhist pilgrims, particularly from East Asia and South East Asia. However, the flow of tourists has severely been affected lately due to novel coronavirus pandemic.

According to the available figures, Kushinagar received 8.98 lakh, 9.3 lakh, 9.7 lakh and 10.96 lakh tourists in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively, which dropped to 3.23 lakh tourists in 2020 due to the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. Similarly, Shravasti received 2.2 lakh, 2.58 lakh, 11.32 lakh and 12.71 lakh tourists in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively, which dipped to mere 0.17 lakh in 2020.

According to the programme on October 20, Prime Minister Modi, President Rajapaksa and the accompanying delegation as well as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also visit the Parinirvana (nirvana-after-death) site of Lord Buddha at Kushinagar.

Agarwal, Verma file nomination papers for Dy Speaker's post

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MLA Nitin Agarwal, backed by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, filed his nomination papers on Sunday for the post of deputy speaker of Uttar Pradesh assembly. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and senior ministers and BJP leaders were present on the occasion.

Nitin Agarwal was elected as Samajwadi Party candidate from Hardoi assembly constituency in March 2017 elections and later he defected to the BJP.

UP Assembly Speaker Hriday Narayan Dikshit had recently rejected the Samajwadi Party's petition seeking disqualification of Agarwal from the membership of the House.

"I have submitted four sets of nomination papers. Those who have proposed my name are Congress MLA from Harchandpur Rakesh Pratap Singh, BSP MLA from Purva Anil Singh, Cabinet ministers Suresh Khanna, Swami Prasad Maurya and Ashutosh Tandon, Minister Chhatrapal Singh, and MLA Rajpal Verma," Nitin Agarwal said.

After filing the nomination papers, Agarwal said that he was yet to formally join the BJP. The only other candidate is Narendra Verma of the Samajwadi Party, who claimed to be the official candidate of the opposition parties.

However, none from the other opposition parties -- Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress -- was present when he filed his papers.

The voting for the deputy speaker's election will be held on Monday in the mandap of the state assembly.

After the polling, Uttar Pradesh will get its first deputy speaker of the legislative assembly.



MLA Nitin Agarwal filing the nomination paper in the presence of CM Yogi Adityanath

Assembly special session today

Lucknow (PNS): The one-day-long special session of Uttar Pradesh Assembly has been convened on Monday. The main agenda of the session is the election of deputy speaker of the state assembly. This will be the third session of 2021. The state cabinet had recently adopted a resolution in this regard. Following this, Governor Anandiben Patel gave her consent for the special session and the notification was issued on Monday last.

UP Assembly Speaker Hriday Narayan Dikshit on Sunday presided over a meeting

ing of the business advisory committee of the House. He said the committee approved the agenda of the House for the Monday session. He said two members, Nitin Agarwal and Narendra Singh Verma, had filed the nomination papers for the post of deputy speaker of the assembly.

Dikshit said as per the agenda, the House would first take up the obituary references followed by the voting for the election of the deputy speaker.

He said after over 18 months, the members of the media would be allowed to

cover the proceedings of the House from the press gallery.

The meeting of the business advisory committee was attended by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna, leader of opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary, Rakesh Pratap Singh, Bahujan Samaj Party leader Shah Alam and Aradhana Mishra of the Congress. The other Bharatiya Janata Party leaders in the meeting were Ramapati Shastri, Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary and Sidharth Nath Singh (all cabinet ministers) and minister of state Gulab Devi.

ident Swatantra Dev Singh were present at the time of filing of nomination by Nitin

Agarwal.

Agarwal wore a blue-coloured 'patka' bearing 'Jai Shri Ram' at the time of filing his nomination papers. His father and former UP minister and Rajya Sabha member Naresh Agarwal was also present.

On the other hand, SP nominee Narendra Verma accused the BJP of 'twisting' the established parliamentary conventions and said the post should go to the opposition.

"I am the SP candidate and the post of deputy speaker as per traditions goes to the principal opposition party. Hence, it should go to us. Nitin is my younger brother. He won on a Samajwadi Party ticket and after winning the polls, he started working against the SP. Tradition wise, this post should go to the opposition, but the BJP is breaking and twisting the parliamentary traditions. We do not expect anything from the ruling party," he said.

Verma was accompanied by leader of opposition in UP assembly Ram Gobind Chaudhary and rebel BSP MLAs.

As per traditions, an MLA of the principal opposition party is made the deputy speaker of the legislative assembly. The last deputy Speaker of UP legislative assembly was the BJP's Rajesh Agarwal, who was elected unopposed in 2004.

Nitin Agarwal said if elected as the deputy speaker of the assembly, he would discharge his duties as per provisions of the Constitution. "The government's priority is that everything should be transparent. My priority as a deputy speaker will be to ensure the same," he said. Principal Secretary of UP Vidhan Sabha, Pradeep Dubey, said voting would take place on Monday.

BSP demands CBI probe into killing of Dalit at Singhu



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati has demanded a CBI probe into the gruesome killing of Dalit at Singhu border. In a couple of tweets on Sunday night, Mayawati said, "There is no doubt that BSP has always given full respect to all the saints, gurus and great men of the Sikhs and this respect will remain in the future too."

She further said, "But keeping in mind the serious things that are now coming out in this case regarding the murder of a Dalit on the Delhi- Singhu border,

der, now a CBI enquiry is required. Hence BSP demands a CBI probe from the Central government in the incident." BSP is contesting the Punjab assembly election in alliance with Akali Dal.

PARADIP PORT TRUST
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
Name of the work: "Connecting open drain and septic tanks to STP of capacity 2.00 MLD at Bhimabhol colony".
Estimated cost: Rs. 5,63,61,035/-
Last Date & time of submission: 27.10.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.
Refer our website for details: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>
Executive Engineer PHD(M), PPT
PPT/PR/118/21-22 Dt. 14.10.2021

Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd
Registered Office: Plot No 59 & 60-23,22nd Cross, 29th Main BTM 2nd Stage, Bengaluru 560076. www.vistaarfinance.com
DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002
NOTICE is hereby given by Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd (VFSP), that the following borrowers who have availed loan against property from Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd and failed to pay Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs) of their loan to and that their loan account has been classified as Non-performing Asset as per the guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India. The Borrowers have provided security of the immovable property towards the loan, the details of which are described herein below. The details of the loan and the amounts outstanding and payable by the borrowers to Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd as on date are also indicated here below. The borrowers as well as the public in general are hereby informed that the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd, the secured creditor has initiated action against the following borrowers under the provisions of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the SARFAESI Act). If the following borrowers fails to repay the outstanding dues indicated against their names within 60 (Sixty) days of this notice along with further interest and other charges if any, the undersigned will exercise any one or more of the powers conferred on the Secured Creditor under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, including power to take possession of the property and sell the same. The public in general is advised not to deal with property described here below.

Account No	Name of the Borrowers and Co-Borrowers	Total Loan Outstanding (in INR)	Total Loan Outstanding As On
0199SBM L00893	1. Mr/Mrs Santosh Kumar 2. Mr/Mrs Kanchan Devi	Rs. 21,57,525/-	05-09-2021

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing One Part of Plot Arazi No. 1742 & 1744 Master colony Dadiya pura Tehsil and Distt. Jhansi Measuring 76.06 Sq. Mtr. East: 15 Feet Wide road, West: House Of Gupta Ji, North: Plot Of Santosh Kumar, South: House of Guptaji & Plot of Sahuji Another Plot Arazi No. 1742 & 1744 Master colony Dadiya pura Tehsil and Distt. Jhansi Measuring 76.06 Sq. Mtr. East: 15 Feet Wide road, West: House Of Gupta Ji, North: Plot Of Kamlesh Gupta; South: House of Guptaaji;

Date: 18-10-2021
Place: Jhansi

For Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd,
Authorized Officer

Notice under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act)

S. NO	Name of Borrower(s) (A)	Particulars of Mortgaged property/ (ies) (B)	Date Of NPA (C)	Outstanding Amount (Rs.) (D)
1	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLN0100441488 1. SUNIL KUMAR SINGH 2. MANJU SINGH 3. DHEERAJ KUMAR SINGH 4. SHALINI 5. S S GUSAIN	FLAT NO. 206, SECOND FLOOR, TOWER P, STELLAR JEEVAN, PLOT NO. GH-03 SECTOR 1 GREATER NOIDA(WEST), NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH - 201307	24.06.2021	Rs.29,62,803/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakhs Sixty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Three and Paise Sixty Seven Only) as on 24-Jun-21

That the above named borrower(s) have failed to maintain the financial discipline towards their loan account (s) and as per books of accounts maintained in the ordinary course of business by the Company, Column D indicates the outstanding amount. Due to persistent default in repayment of the Loan amount on the part of the Borrower(s) the above said loan account has been classified by the Company as Non Performing Asset (as on date in Column C) within the guidelines relating to assets classification issued by Regulating Authority. Consequently, notices under Sec. 13(2) of the Act were also issued to each of the borrower.

In view of the above, the Company hereby calls upon the above named Borrower(s) to discharge in full his/their liabilities towards the Company by making the payment of the entire outstanding dues indicated in Column D above including up to date interest, costs, and charges within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the Company shall be entitled to take possession of the Mortgaged Property mentioned in Column B above and shall also take such other actions as is available to the Company in law.

Please note that in terms of provisions of sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, "A borrower can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Secured Creditor only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Further it may also be noted that in case Borrower fails to redeem the secured asset within aforesaid legally prescribed time frame, Borrower may not be entitled to redeem the property."

In terms of provision of sub-Section (13) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of his business) any of the secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of secured creditor.

Place:NOIDA/KASGANJ/GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR

For INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Authorized Officer

the pioneer
CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE
NOTICE
We Ashutosh Nandan Shukla & Suman Shukla have lost the our 5 original receipts i.e GDN/CRB/00225/0814, GDN/CRB/00083/1114, GDN/CRB/00098/1016, GDN/CRB/00099/1016, GDN/CRB/00002/0217 issued by DLF Limited against the payment of plot no A-187 in Garden City, Lucknow. If found please contact 7905907902

BSP leaders RS Kushwaha and Kadir Rana join SP

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party leader RS Kushwaha and former party MP Kadir Rana joined the Samajwadi Party on Sunday ahead of the Uttar Pradesh polls due next year.

RS Kushwaha, former state president of the BSP, said, "Today I am joining the Samajwadi Party along with my friends and accepting the ideology of the party. The government has made tall claims in the last five years but none of them has been fulfilled either by the UP government or by the Centre."

Kushwaha recently had a long meeting with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav which had led to specu-



lations about his joining the SP.

Talking about the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, he said, "I have been an MLA from Lakhimpur Kheri and the way farmers were run over by cars, everybody

is suffering. Everybody is looking for a chance to elect the Samajwadi Party to power,"

He said, "As BSP deviated from the ideology of Baba Saheb, most of the party members are sad and hence they are joining the Samajwadi Party in large numbers."

Former BSP MP from Muzaffarnagar Kadir Rana also joined the Samajwadi Party in the presence Akhilesh Yadav at a function held at the state office of the SP.

In 2009, Rana was elected as MP from Muzaffarnagar Lok Sabha constituency. He had contested from the Morna assembly constituency in 2007 on Rashtriya Lok Dal ticket and won.

Elderly woman hammered to death, wrist slit

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An elderly woman was found murdered at her house in Kanshi Ram Colony under Para police station area. Police suspected role of some insider. The victim was identified as Saroj (60), who was a native of Barabanki. The victim had head injuries at her wrist was slit. The incident took place some time on Saturday night and a neighbour informed victim's son Radhe Shyam, who lives in Barabanki, about the incident around 4:30 am on Sunday. Earlier, Saroj's 6-year-old grandson Raunak had informed neighbours about the incident. A team consisting of a dog squad, forensic scientists and police personnel were yet to get any clue about the accused. Preliminary probe revealed that Saroj was staying with Raunak while her son Radhe Shyam and his

wife live in Barabanki. Saroj's husband had passed away five years back. Raunak told investigators that two men dressed as lawyers visited the house on Saturday night. He said the visitors locked him inside a room and attacked his grandmother with a hammer and then slit her wrist. As Raunak cried for help, neighbours reached the scene and the killers escaped.

The neighbours told the interrogators that Saroj was lying on the floor in a pool of blood. The investigating team collected finger prints and other evidence from the crime scene. They also collected blood samples.

Radhe Shyam said advocate Om Prakash had made several calls to him, asking him to reach Lucknow. However, he did not name the advocate in the FIR which he lodged. He lodged a case of murder against unidentified accused.

Meanwhile, a 30-year-old labourer was found dead at his house in Ashiyana police station area on Sunday. The body appeared to be 4-5 days old. Police said the man died due to electrocution. However, the body was sent for autopsy for confirmation of the cause of death. The deceased was identified as Ravindra Lodhi of Khwajapur Aurangabad locality in the area. The incident came to light when Ravindra's brother-in-law Rakesh of Aurangabad Khalsa visited the house as he did not hear from Ravindra for a long time.

Rakesh said he found Ravindra lying on the floor unresponsive. There was a putrid smell in the house where Ravindra lived all alone. "His body was touching a wire connected with a heater. A roti was also found close to the body," Rakesh said, adding that Rakesh might have died of electrocution.

Rains make weather pleasant, more in store

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sunny skies turned cloudy all of a sudden on Sunday and rains lashed several parts of the city, resulting in a pleasant weather. The Met department has forecast moderate rains in Lucknow and heavy rains in western parts of UP.

Met director JP Gupta said heavy rains are expected over the state on October 18 as well. "Western disturbance as a cyclonic circulation over southern parts of Afghanistan and neighbourhood caused the rains. A low-pressure area over north Telangana and neighbourhood with the associated cyclonic circulation is likely to move north-north-westwards towards west UP and interact with the western disturbance. Due to the interaction between the western disturbance and strong lower-level easterlies, the west UP will receive heavy rains" he said.

Light to moderate rains are likely at most places over west UP and at many places over east UP on Monday. Heavy to very heavy rains at isolated places occurred in Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, Badaun, Lakhimpur Kheri, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Ghaziabad, Hapur, GB Nagar, Bulandshahr,



Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Bijnor, Amroha, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Sambhal, Bahraich, Sitapur and Hardoi districts on Sunday.

Heavy to very heavy rains are likely in Lakhimpur Kheri, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Hathras, Kasganj, Etah, Hapur, GB Nagar, Bulandshahr, Mainpuri, Bijnor, Amroha, Hardoi, Aligarh, Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Etawah, Auraiya, Jalaun, Hamirpur and Mahoba on Monday.

Dastak campaign to kick off tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dastak campaign, which includes door-to-door surveillance of fever cases, will kick off in Lucknow from October 19. Giving this information, a senior official from the CMO office said the campaign would be carried out till November 1 and there would also be a communicable diseases campaign between October 19 and November 17. Stickers will be pasted on houses with children below the age of 15 years. The campaign will also witness handwashing and chlorination demonstration. The official said that the campaign would be carried out by ASHA, Aanganwadi and NGO workers who would be looking for fever patients in each household. "People having a fever will be made to undergo dengue, malaria and Covid tests. If there is anyone with cough for more than two weeks, with the constituent symptoms resembling those of TB, relevant tests will be done," he said, adding

that it is basically a detailed surveillance programme.

It will be followed by the 'Sanchari Rog Abhiyaan' in which 9-10 government departments will carry out various activities. The department will include Agriculture, Panchayati Raj and Animal Husbandry apart from Nagar Nigam. They will have their own set of activities and the basic purpose and focus of all will be improving personal and social sanitation and cleanliness. Covid surveillance will go on simultaneously.

People who have not been vaccinated against Covid yet will also be identified. District Immunisation Officer Dr MK Singh said it is an important part of the Dastak campaign. "The records will be maintained of these people and vaccination will be carried out on priority basis. In a particular village if we find that there are a hundred unvaccinated people, we will arrange for a vaccination camp," Dr Singh said.

Be alert in view of 'Rail Roko' agitation: CP to subordinates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Commissioner of Police, Lucknow, DK Thakur directed all his subordinates to remain alert in view of the 'Rail Roko' agitation call given by different political parties and farmers organisations on Monday.

In an official communique, the CP urged the citizens not to be mobilised by those who have given the 'Rail Roko' call. He also appealed to them inform police in case they were compelled to take part in the agitation. Terming this anti-national, the CP ordered police officers to initiate action under stringent sections of IPC.

The communique read

that such act was not admissible in the interest of country and the CP expected the cops to initiate action action. It was further said that Section 144 of CrPC was already imposed in the city.

The CP said violations of Section 144 of CrPC would not be tolerated at any cost and the police could slap NSA on those violating the instructions. He said the police were identifying political leaders or farmer leaders or workers who could take part in the agitation.

Thakur said the police would be compelled to take punitive action if anyone was found to be involved in the 'Rail Roko' agitation.

Meanwhile, the railways

has made ample arrangements to avert any kind of disruption of train operations on Monday. The railway officials said adequate number of personnel from Government Railway Police and Railway Protection Force will be deployed at the railway stations falling in Lucknow and other districts of UP. The security officials will also man the entry at the railway stations in view of security.

The security officials entrusted with the job in railways will be conducting track patrolling and trains will be run with additional number of cops of GRP and RPF on Monday. The staff of train operation wing also have been sounded to remain alert.

Handwashing, immunisation bring down diarrhoea, pneumonia cases by 40%

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Various studies carried out recently have pointed out that the stress on handwashing and regular immunisation over the past five years has brought down diarrhoea and pneumonia cases by 40 percent.

Senior paediatrician Dr Piyali Bhattacharya (SGPGI) said sanitation and hygiene can help prevent health crisis in a major way. "It indicates that lesser people are falling ill with respiratory infections, lesser number of children are dying from diarrhoeal diseases, and pregnant women and newborns are protected from sepsis. Worldwide, these rates must quadruple to reach universal hygiene by 2030. In the less developed countries, the

rate of progress has to increase ten-fold. It would need to accelerate by a factor of 23 as per UNICEF report," she said.

Dr Bhattacharya said that in common households, the norm which is followed is washing hands only with water and not with soaps, which should be enforced.

"Since 2015, we have been emphasising on this and the latest statistics show that diseases like diarrhoea and pneumonia have decreased by 40 percent. But vaccine introduction both for diarrhoea and pneumonia by the government at national level as part of free vaccinations in the universal immunisation programme has also made a difference. These were costly vaccines but when they were introduced as a part of the programme, they gave

dual benefits," she pointed out.

She said handwashing has helped the newborns in a big way. "If newborns are touched without hands being washed, they might develop septicemia and even die since they have very low levels of immunity," she said.

Head of the Microbiology department, SGPGI, Dr Ujjawala Ghosal said so many diseases are transmitted through hands and various studies have shown that the instances of gastrointestinal diseases have decreased because of handwashing.

"All the GI infections spread from one person to another. Even respiratory disease, including Covid, is spread through the hands. One coughs and sneezes and pricks nose and then shakes hands with

others, thus causing the spread of the disease. Many studies have been conducted in this regard and 40 percent dip is the average taken out," she pointed out.

She said that one has to be careful about how to wash hands and it should not be done casually. "There are steps regarding how it should be done so that the soap reaches every part of the hand," she said.

"Doctors should also wash their hands because they see one patient and then the second one, and diseases can be transferred this way too," she said. Handwashing, she pointed out, is a cheap and effective method. She added that correct and proper handwashing techniques have also resulted in a dip in Covid cases.

Dist admn gears up for Diwali Mela



District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash during inspection of Jhulelal Park on Sunday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The district administration is gearing up for holding 'Diwali Mela' at Jhulelal Park on October 28, as per the directions of the state government. District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash inspected the park on Sunday. He was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner Ajay Dwivedi.

The DM also held a meeting at the Collectorate where he said that 'Diwali Mela' would showcase several cultural programmes, food & entertainment zones for children. He said that the fair would provide opportunities to sellers to sell their

items. Those registered under the Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana will be provided a place to sell their items and the street vendors will also get a chance to be a part of the fair.

A discussion also took place for organising a mushaira, kavi sammelan, magic show, talent & music band shows. The stalls will be put up by self-help groups, ODP and also by banks for the promotion of various schemes. The DM directed all the departments to finish their work by October 26. He also directed the Lucknow Development Authority to make lighting arrangements and to Nagar Nigam to ensure barricading.

Thieves make off with cash, valuables from house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thieves made off with Rs 10,000 in cash and ornaments worth Rs 5 lakh from a house in Indiranagar. The inmates had gone to their native home for 'terahvi'. As per reports, Yogesh Kumar Dubey of Parmeshwar Enclave in Indiranagar left for Ayodhya to cremate the body of his father who died on October 12. Dubey then left for his native home in Green City (Gorakhpur) for further rituals. On October 13, he sent his maternal uncle to his house in Indiranagar to park the car there and take his motorcycle. Dubey's uncle found the locks broken and articles lying strewn across the floor. He made a video call to Dubey. "The thieves made off with all the silver and gold ornaments," he said.

Meanwhile, a girl student was duped of Rs 15,000 in an online fraud in Gudamba. Sunaina Verma said she was told about deduction of money from her bank account on October 13 when she sought to inquire her balance. "My ATM card was with me and I did not get any message of transaction on my registered mobile number. I lodged a complaint with the cyber cell and also got the ATM card blocked," she said.

MARK YOURSELF AS A MEN OF PLATINUM WITH KASHI JEWELLERS

Kanpur, October 2021: Kashi Jewellers, one of the leading jewellery retail brands in Kanpur with a legacy of design excellence, quality of workmanship and innovation, has announced the launch of its latest collection of platinum jewellery for men. The unveiling of this new collection from Men of Platinum marks an important milestone in the association between Kashi Jewellers and Platinum Guild International, making it widely accessible across the retailer's stores in Kanpur.

Men of Platinum as a brand stands true to a differentiated success narrative in today's world. Where success is defined not just by the acquisition of material wealth and status but is about values and meaning as 30 times rarer than gold, platinum is progressively becoming the metal of choice of young men who want to stand apart from the crowd. Platinum to them stands for success, style and is a symbol of exclusivity. Platinum's rarity also makes it an ideal marker of personally significant milestones in their life. Extremely strong, dense and naturally white; this metal maintains its colour through the passage of time, never losing form or shape through it. With the promise of 95% purity, platinum jewellery delivers the finest qualities that the metal has to offer. These rare properties of the stunning white metal are similar to today's men of character who

innovative designs. It prides itself in providing exemplary and luxurious customer service and offers clients the option of customizing its products to their satisfaction. Armed with a fully integrated business model, Kashi Jewellers deals in the production and distribution of gemstones and precious metal jewellery through its export, wholesale and retail channels. As one of the oldest establishments of its kind in India, this industry legend is known for the wide array of gold, diamond, kundan, polka(uncut diamond) and silver jewellery it produces; as well as items such as small diamond nose pins which are uniquely important to the Indian culture.

ABOUT PLATINUM GUILD INTERNATIONAL (PGI) Platinum Guild International (PGI) is a marketing organisation with the vision to develop the global platinum jewellery market as a new demand source for platinum. It was formed in 1975 with specialist teams dedicated to growing the global platinum jewellery market through consumer and trade-facing programmes in the four key jewellery markets of China, India, Japan and USA. Since then, jewellery development has demonstrated a strong track record in delivering results. Through various programmes, both direct-to-consumer and in collaboration with jewellery retailers and manufacturers, PGI creates consumer ounce demand by first identifying opportunities for platinum in jewellery, and then developing them with partners. It also aims

to build an enduring commitment to platinum in jewellery. PGI's consumer marketing and educational programmes are focused on developing awareness and an appreciation for platinum's unique properties as a precious metal for fine jewellery. In addition, PGI works globally with collaborative partners running extensive marketing programmes in the four main

other jewellery. A Unique Identification Number is also stamped on the jewellery in addition to the detailed description of the piece you choose for yourself. Our quality assurance programme is in place to ensure transparency and that the platinum the consumer buys is of the highest quality. After all, that is what true value is all about.

PURITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM PGI has partnered with TUV India Pvt Ltd to implement a robust audit programme to ensure the purity of platinum under its programme. TUV is one of the country's first certification bodies and has been closely associated with the quality revolution in India. Under Platinum Guild India's quality assurance programme, each individual piece of jewellery has an assured purity as high as 95%. And as a proof of this assurance, every piece is stamped 'Pt950' and comes with a tamper-proof quality assurance card that distinguishes authentic platinum from



platinum jewellery markets of China, Japan, USA and India. These markets are staffed with experts in strategic planning, marketing, retail, design and business development. Since 2015 PGI has been head quartered in Hong Kong. PGI is funded by the leading platinum producers of South Africa, as well as through co-funded programmes with the jewellery industry.

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Add : 24/44, Birhana Road, Kanpur.



well. Men of Platinum are those who stand true to their values no matter what the odds. When at the crossroads they make choices that hold up their beliefs. These choices become defining moments of truth and only a rare few come through on them with their principles intact. They are men of rare character. This collection pays tribute to such men and offers a wide range of intricately designed pieces that include platinum chains, rings and wrist wear. True to platinum the collection is cast with clean, bold lines. Its design language includes distinctive emblems, crests in solid forms and aerodynamic elements. Intricate details with different facets & incisions embellish the solidity of form.

believe in themselves, stay true to their ideals, and emerge stronger out of every situation.

The latest Men of Platinum collection sees KL Rahul tie-up with the brand. Every statement jewellery piece in this collection can be paired with a variety of menswear outfits right from formalwear for corporate events, to festive Indian wear or even with casual wear making it a perfect addition to every man's wardrobe.

The latest Men of Platinum Collection is available across Kashi Jeweller stores in Kanpur. **ABOUT KASHI JEWELLERS** Kashi Jewellers is a heritage jewellery company that was founded in 1955 in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, with the vision to offer finely crafted jewellery with



to build an enduring commitment to platinum in jewellery. PGI's consumer marketing and educational programmes are focused on developing awareness and an appreciation for platinum's unique properties as a precious metal for fine jewellery. In addition, PGI works globally with collaborative partners running extensive marketing programmes in the four main

Active Covid caseload drops to 119; 42 dists now Covid-free

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Maintaining the positive recovery trend -- high recoveries and low fresh COVID-19 cases -- has reduced the active coronavirus caseload in Uttar Pradesh to 119, while the percentage of active cases as against the total confirmed cases in the state is 0.01 per cent.

According to the official spokesman of the state government, the active COVID-19 cases in the most populous state of the country have been brought down by over a remarkable 99 per cent from their peak capped at 3,10,783 cases on April 30. In sharp contrast, sparsely populated states like Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu account for a heavy active caseload of nearly 91,000, 30,000 and 15,000, respectively.

Out of the 1,41,543 samples tested in the last 24 hours, Uttar Pradesh limited the number of fresh coronavirus infections to 10. In the same period, another 19 COVID-19 patients recovered.

The fresh infections have also been brought down by 99 per cent from their peak which was 38,055 on April 24. Where major other states have been witnessing a greater surge of fresh coronavirus infections (daily cases ranging from 15,000-2,000), Uttar Pradesh has restricted the daily case count below 50 for over two consecutive months, the spokesman claimed.

With 42 districts with strict screening, treatment and vaccina-

tion giving a boost to Uttar Pradesh in the fight against coronavirus, the state's recovery rate has climbed up to 98.8 per cent.

The drop in fresh and active cases in Kanpur Nagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Jaunpur, Ballia, Deoria, Barabanki, Ayodhya, Sonbhadra, Amroha, Chandauli, Pratapgarh, Kushinagar, Unnao, Budaun, Sultanpur, Bijnor, Etawah, Hardoi, Shamli, Lalitpur, Hapur, Sitapur,

The drop in fresh and active cases in Kanpur Nagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Jaunpur, Ballia, Deoria, Barabanki, Ayodhya, Sonbhadra, Amroha, Chandauli, Pratapgarh, Kushinagar, Unnao, Budaun, Sultanpur, Bijnor, Etawah, Hardoi, Shamli, Lalitpur, Hapur, Sitapur, Gonda, Rampur, Basti, Bahraich, Mirzapur, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Baghpat, Mau, Sant Kabir Nagar, Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Kanpur Dehat, Hamirpur, Kaushambi, Shravasti, Mahoba, Kasganj and Hathras indicate complete elimination of coronavirus from over 56 per cent of the state

Gonda, Rampur, Basti, Bahraich, Mirzapur, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Baghpat, Mau, Sant Kabir Nagar, Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Kanpur Dehat, Hamirpur, Kaushambi, Shravasti, Mahoba, Kasganj and Hathras indicate complete elimination of coronavirus from over 56 per cent of the state.

The spokesman further said that in what comes as another relief, none of the 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh has reported fresh cases of coronavirus infection in double digits lately. Indicating signs that the dangerous virus is receding from the state, as many as 67 districts reported no case fresh coronavirus infection in the last 24 hours. It is pertinent to note that apart from Uttar Pradesh, no other

ing has particularly been expanded to reach the rural pockets of the state.

Emerging as a leader in conducting maximum Covid tests, Uttar Pradesh has tested as many as 8,13,82,986 samples for the novel coronavirus infection so far. Due to aggressive tracing and testing, Uttar Pradesh's positivity rate (TPR) -- which shows the level of infections among people -- stands at even lower than 0.01 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh has given out over 11.81 crore Covid vaccine doses so far and that is no small achievement. The impressive pace of Covid vaccination has made Uttar Pradesh the top state. In addition, the state has also achieved the landmark of administering the first dose of the Covid vaccine to over 63 per cent of the eligible adult population. Over 2.58 crore people in the state have been fully vaccinated. With this, UP has set an example in front of other states of the country, besides controlling the infection in a short time. On the other hand, Maharashtra lags with 9.13 crore doses delivered so far.

In a bid to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of the life-saving oxygen which became scarce during the second wave of COVID-19 across the country, Uttar Pradesh has ramped up its oxygen production as 501 out of the 548 sanctioned plants have become functional. Out of these, about 124 oxygen plants have been set up with funding from PM Cares.

FIR against Akhilesh; SP alleges political vendetta

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party alleged political vendetta as the police registered an FIR against party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday for violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code on October 4 after he sat on dharna outside his at Vikramaditya Marg in Lucknow residence over the Lakhimpur violence.

Yadav had staged a sit-in on October 4 as he was stopped by the police from going to Lakhimpur Kheri to meet the families of the four farmers who were mowed down allegedly by the car of Ashish Mishra, the son of the Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra, on October 3.

The former chief minister of UP was also briefly detained by the police.

The Gautampalli police have also booked Amit alias 'Master' for allegedly burning a police van in front of the police station.

SP spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary described the FIR as "an act of desperation". He said that the Bharatiya Janata Party knew it well that it was not returning to power in 2022, therefore, it was registering cases against its political opponents.

"The Samajwadi Party would not be deterred by such acts of political vendetta. We will continue to raise the voice of farmers. It was our right and duty to visit the grieving families in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident," he said.

Ashish Mishra, who is the prime accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, along with his accomplice Ankit Das and bodyguard, have been arrested and sent to jail. The opposition parties and farmers union have been demanding the resignation of Minister Ajay Mishra for a fair investigation into the case.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha leader Rakesh Tikait has also given a call for 'rail roko' for six hours on Monday.

Three sisters die in after eating puffed rice and namkeen

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, three sisters aged 8, 7 and 5 years, died after consuming puffed rice and 'namkeen'. The incident took place in the Mirza Inayatullahpur Patti village in Rae Bareilly district on Saturday.

According to reports, Naveen Kumar Singh's three daughters, Pari, Vidhi and Pihu, had bought the snacks and ate them. All three girls started vomiting and the family took them to the community health centre (CHC) where the doctors pronounced one girl dead, while two others were sent to the district hospital. The two girls also died during treatment, police said. After receiving information about the incident, a sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) reached the village and took samples of the snacks consumed by the girls. The police have detained the shopkeeper and his two sons from whom the girls had purchased the snacks. Police have sent the bodies of the girls for post-mortem.

Meanwhile, in another accident reported from Sonbhadra district late Saturday night, a Bolero driver, while trying to save a cow, lost control over the vehicle and collided with a truck coming from the opposite direction. Two people died in the accident, while two were seriously

injured. The injured were admitted to hospital. According to a report, the accident took place on the Varanasi-Shaktinagar main road near Dala Ramlila Maidan in Sonbhadra district late on Saturday night. Two occupants of the Bolero died on the spot.

The uncle and nephew were seriously injured. The local police reached the spot and somehow managed to take out the injured from the vehicle. The injured were referred to the district hospital after first aid at Chopan CHC, from where they were further shifted to the Trauma Centre of BHU. According to Dala outpost in-charge Manoj Thakur, family and relatives had gone to Varanasi on Bolero for the treatment of Ratani Devi, wife of Bhaiyaram Vishwakarma, resident of Kachnarwa village under Kon police station. Everyone was returning late on Saturday night after admitting the woman to a private hospital. At around 10:30 pm near Dala Ramlila Maidan, the Bolero suddenly collided with a truck. Those killed were identified as Ramashish (54) of Kolhinduba in Wyndhamganj, and Vinod (50), of Utari, Jharkhand. Raghunandan (26), who was driving the Bolero, and his nephew Himanshu (27) were seriously injured. A case was registered and bodies were sent for post-mortem.

Sidhu writes to Sonia, presses 13-point agenda

Says Punjab's last chance for resurrection; meets Channi

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

A day after Congress chief Sonia Gandhi suggested the party leaders in Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting to not use the media route to reach her, cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu on Sunday asked for an audience with her to press for a 13-point agenda while emphasising that this was "Punjab's last chance for resurrection and redemption".

In another important development, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Sunday evening held a meeting with Navjot Sidhu, who has been upset over several key appointments in the State Government. The meeting came days after Sidhu and Channi had separate meetings with the party high command, including Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi.

It has been learnt that Sidhu has been asked by the party high command to meet Channi to take a call on the Congress campaign in the State. Among other issues, the two leaders were to discuss several key issues, besides finalising a company that would carry out the party's campaign in the state.

The All India Congress Committee's observer Harish Chaudhary, and Cabinet Minister and Punjab Congress general secretary Pargat Singh



were also present in the meeting. Till the filing of the report, the meeting was underway.

Earlier in the day, Sidhu, shared his October 15 letter to Sonia on Twitter, highlighting issues the State Government "must deliver upon". He sought a meeting with her to present his "Punjab Model", the 13-point agenda, which can be included in the 2022 poll manifesto. The letter assumes significance as it came days after Sidhu had a meeting with Congress' national vice-president Rahul Gandhi and other senior party leaders in New Delhi, and on the day he met Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi at Chandigarh late in the evening.

It also assumes significance as ambiguity prevails over Sidhu's resignation on September 28 over the key appointments in the Channi-led State Government, including that of State Advocate-General and the State police chief. While the State party affairs general-secretary in-charge Harish Rawat has maintained that the high command received no resignation, Sidhu went public to declare his resignation.

In his letter, Sidhu mainly raised the issue of justice in sacrilege cases, State's drugs menace, agricultural issues, employment opportunities, sand mining, and welfare of backward classes, among other significant issues.

The letter also reminded Sonia of the party's 18-point agenda "given to the last Chief Minister" of Punjab saying that those were "equally relevant today".

"Today, I write to your esteemed self with priority areas among the 18-point agenda of the 2017 campaign and the manifesto promises which the State Government must deliver upon," he said in the letter.

"After multiple deliberations and consultations with party workers from across Punjab and with deep understanding of the public sentiment over 17 years of public life, I express with a lot of pain in my heart that this is Punjab's last chance for resurrection and redemption.

The issues at Punjab's heart as understood very well by you, and signified by the 18-point agenda given to the last Chief Minister are equally relevant today. I stood for each point in

that agenda through the responsibility vested in me of the organisation, keeping the executive under check, to be guardian of Punjab's rights," he said.

Describing the "13-point agenda" as separate from the manifesto by "means of its long-term vision to be implemented over a longer period, crafted through years of consultations with academics, civil society, party workers and feedback from the people of Punjab", Sidhu listed out that the people of Punjab demand justice for the 2015 police firing at Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan in Faridkot following the desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib during the previous SAD-BJP regime. On the drugs issue, the Punjab Congress chief said the "big fish, mentioned in the STF report, must be immediately arrested and given exemplary punishment".

He also maintained that the State Government must reject the Centre's "three black farm laws" "by announcing that they will not be implemented in Punjab at any cost". Sidhu also pointed that the State Government must release a white paper on power purchase agreements (PPAs), and cancellation of "all faulty PPAs as promised by us".

"Thus, I request you kindly consider these points and give your august direction to the State Government to act in the best interests of the people of Punjab immediately," he wrote. In the letter, Sidhu sought a meeting with Sonia to present to her a "Punjab Model with a 13-Point Agenda to be part of the Congress manifesto for the 2022 Assembly Elections".

‘Sun rays to illuminate sanctum sanctorum of Ram temple

New Delhi: The Ram temple in Ayodhya will be built in such a way that the sun rays will fall on the idol of Ram Lalla and illuminate its sanctum sanctorum on every Ram Navami, said a member of the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra Trust.

The design will be inspired by the 13th century Sun temple at Konark in Odisha, he said.

Work is underway on a proposal to design the temple in a way that the sun rays beautify Ram Lalla's idol in the sanctum sanctorum on every Ram Navami and consultation with scientists, astronomers and technologists is going on in this regard, Kameshwar Choupal, member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust told PTI.

Choupal said, "The Sun temple at Konark in Odisha is an example where the sun rays reach inside the temple. In such a situation, all the technical aspects and state-of-the-art technology are being considered regarding how the rays of the sun reach the sanctum (of Ram temple)".

The member said a committee consisting of experts from the National Institute of Building Construction, including Indian



Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, IIT Mumbai, and IIT Roorkee, has been formed to focus on the technical aspects related to the construction of the temple.

Another senior official of the trust said, "The construction work of Shri Ram temple is going on at a fast pace. Efforts are being made (to ensure) that by December 2023, the construction of the sanctum sanctorum should be completed and people can have darshan."

He informed that the first phase of foundation has been completed, while the

second phase will be over by mid-November.

During the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, several aspects, including geological, geographical and ecological conditions, are being taken into consideration, he said.

Chaupal said according to the geological classification, Uttar Pradesh is prone to earthquakes and there is a river near the temple complex while the entire area comes under the Himalayan region.

"From November 15, the work of construction of the plinth (the base part of the pillar) will also start. The construction of pillars and overhead structure on the plinth is expected to start from April 2022," he said.

Some changes have been made in the earlier model regarding the construction of the temple, Chaupal said, adding that three floors would be constructed now instead of the two planned initially.

Chaupal informed that the temple will have a museum, archives room, research centre, auditorium, gaushala, tourist centre, administrative building, yoga centre and other facilities. **PTI**

CITYBRIEFS

ASTRONOMICAL EVENT

Indira Gandhi Planetarium, Council of Science and Technology, organised a sun-watching and night sky-watching event at the Center of Bio-Medical Research on SGPGI campus on Saturday. The planetarium installed two telescopes for sun-watching and three telescopes for night sky-watching. In both the events, more than 200 people participated including CBMR director Prof Akol Dhawan, Prof Neeraj Sinha, many students and their families. The event was organised by Swapnil, Sankalp, Utkarsh, Shweta, Abhimanu, Amit, Mohit, Hozaifa, Shubhashish, and many other new members of Uttar Pradesh Amateur Astronomers Club, Lucknow, run by Indira Gandhi Planetarium. "It was the first public event organised by UPPAC in Covid times. With this event, the planetarium has started astronomical events for the public. The next public event will be organised at St Mary Public Inter College, Para Road.

CUSTOMER OUTREACH

State Bank of India, Lucknow Circle, is organising a customer outreach credit programme in its all 58 districts. The programme will be organised in all SBI main branches of 58 districts. Complete information of bank's different products and government sponsored scheme loans will be given and loans will be disbursed to the applicants. Visitors can open new SB account through YONO app and for other type of accounts, application forms can be obtained. The visitors will have an opportunity to choose flats/cars



of their liking. They will also get the facility of in-principle loan approval. In Lucknow, the programme is being organised at the main branch on Moti Mahal Marg.

CMS FOUNDER FETED

Founder of City Montessori School Dr Jagdish Gandhi was felicitated for his contribution in the field of education and for bringing fame to the city at the international level. Minister for Jal Shakti Dr Mahendra Singh was the chief guest while former DGP and Chancellor of Noida International University Vikram Singh the guest of honour at the ceremony organised by the Uttar Pradesh wing of Media Federation of India. The event was organised to celebrate the achievement of Dr Jagdish Gandhi, who has been conferred an honorary doctorate by Hillary Clinton, Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast.

GOLD MEDAL

Pranshu Kumar Pandey, a class XI student of City Montessori School, Kanpur Road Campus, won the gold medal in Queen's Commonwealth Essay Writing Competition. The event was organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society, London, wherein students from 54 countries participated. With his exceptional writing skills, Pranshu projected an ideal world order and suggested peaceful and innovative methods for resolving world problems. While acknowledging his global and scientific vision, the Royal Commonwealth Society awarded Pranshu the gold medal and a certificate.



World Trauma Day: Stress on saving lives of children

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The department of Paediatric Orthopaedics, KGMU, organised a public awareness programme on the occasion of World Trauma Day on Sunday. Head of the department Prof Ajai Singh said that World Trauma Day is observed every year on October 17.

"The day focuses on the importance of saving and protecting lives during emergencies. It's also a day to provide education on how to avoid traumatic injuries and deaths," he said. He explained how to give first aid to an injured child at home and what not to do.

Dr Suresh spoke on prevention of paediatric injuries, especially in schools and at playgrounds. Dr Faisal explained about safe transfer of an injured child to a nearby health centre.

CMS Prof Shankhwar emphasised on the importance of such programmes as paediatric trauma constitutes about 25-30% of KGMU Trauma Centre load. "It can happen to any child, anywhere at any time, and there is no time to travel long distances to the "best" place for care. Chances of survival are the greatest if prompt and expert medical treatment is received within a short period after a severe injury. Statistics show that an injured child has a 25% better chance of survival if he or she is treated at a trauma centre. Caring for an injured child requires special knowledge, precise management and scrupulous attention to detail. Surviving paediatric trauma can

also be difficult," Prof Ajai Singh said.

He said effects can potentially change the physical and mental ability of a child for the rest of their lives, resulting in emotional and social issues affecting parents, siblings and other family members, friends, educators, future employers and many others.

"Paediatric trauma is a serious health issue which is being addressed through prevention, but there are many ways to save the lives of injured children from the moment they are hurt by improving the education and techniques of first responders, nurses, doctors, surgeons and other medical staff. We are passionate about preventing the death of children after they are injured. We hope to drastically reduce the number of children that die each year from paediatric trauma by increasing research, education and awareness about the issue," he added.

ISA urges NMC to increase PG seats in Anaesthesiology

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Indian Society for Anaesthesiologists (ISA), Lucknow Chapter, has requested the National Medical Council (NMC) for increase in PG seats and for relaxation to start superspecialty DM courses in Anaesthesiology.

President of the Society Dr Sandeep Sahu said that there is a need to increase PG seats and start new superspecialty courses in Anaesthesiology to match the unmet need of anaesthesiologists to take on Covid-like situations in future. He said they have requested for the extension of transition period for 'DM in Organ Transplant Anaesthesia and Critical Care' until an adequate number of candidates start passing each year, as has been done for other superspecialties by the erstwhile MCI, NMC.

"We have also asked for relaxation of criteria of teachers in this field to include teaching faculty with 2-3 years of experience in organ transplantation services in their parent departments. We sincerely believe if the rules are revised, it would enable better patient care, teaching, training and research in the field. It would enable us to chase the unmet need of trained manpower and proliferation of successful transplant programmes in government centres throughout the country," he said.

He added that living and cadaveric donor transplantation is at an inflection point in India with both public awareness and government support acting as tailwinds.

"There is an unmet need of trained anaesthesiologists for enabling the culmination of successful transplant programmes both in private and government sectors. There is a single centre in India with 'DM in Organ Transplant Anaesthesia and Critical Care' programme running at present in New Delhi since 2013. The present intake is three candidates per annum. Till date, only eight candidates have successfully completed the course, with the first batch passing out in 2016," he added.

People accepting importance of Khadi today, says Union Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma said that today the people had started accepting the importance of Khadi due to its purity, quality, skin and environment friendly characteristics and popularity. He was speaking at a function after inaugurating the state-level 15-day Khadi Exhibition, being organised under the auspices of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), at Rudraksh Convention Centre here on Sunday.

In the exhibition, about 1,000 artisans/ weavers are taking part. Praising their hard work and dedication, the Minister said, 'the event has been organised to give honours to their efforts so that they can work with a fresh enthusiasm and bring more innovation in their products.' According to him, the country is celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and all we know is that Khadi had played an important role in our freedom struggle. 'Once when there was poverty, no jobs, education, lack of resources and starvation in the country, the people had adopted Swadeshi and started weaving Khadi. Today, the Khadi industry is worth millions of rupees and even the rich people are preferring to use Khadi garments due to its various qualities,' he said.

Speaking on the occasion,



Union Minister BPS Verma inaugurating Khadi Exhibition in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

the guest of honour and KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said that the exhibition was being organised in view of present economic and social conditions. 'The KVIC is trying to spread its wings across the nation in view to provide more and more jobs to the people and due to qualities of skilled weavers, today Khadi products are becoming popular across the world and helping the nation earn foreign currencies,' he said, adding that Khadi industries are also helping in checking the migration of the people from villages to the urban areas.

Welcoming the guests, director/ in-charge of Varanasi divisional office of KVIC DS Bhatti threw light on the purpose of organising this exhibition. He said, 'the weavers are the backbone of Khadi industries who are working hard to make various types of garments including traditional as well as modern which are giving a strong competition to some leading brands.' Bhatti expressed hope that the exhibition would give a fresh enthusiasm among the weavers and artisans and informed that it is the first exhibition being organised at Rudraksh which was

inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently and as many as 100 stalls have been installed.

Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Bhopal) Om Prakash proposed the vote of thanks. The function was also attended by state co-convenor of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sunil Ojha, regional president Mahesh Chandra Srivastava, district chief Hansraj Vishwakarma, city president Vidya Sagar Rai, UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal, MLAs Saurabh Srivastava and Surendra Narayan Singh.

Kashi a role model in leprosy treatment: DLO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With innovation and continuous monitoring, the city has not only overcome leprosy but has also made that innovation a 'role model.' "This unique experiment done in Varanasi has been adopted in the entire state today. Work is going on in the direction of preventing the infection of leprosy on this model itself," said the District Leprosy Officer (DLO) Dr Rahul Singh.

'There was a time when leprosy was considered an incurable disease. Considering its patients as untouchables, people used to distance themselves from them. Even leprosy patients were left in a helpless condition by taking them away from their families. In view of this serious problem, the government launched a campaign against this disease. As a result, leprosy was controlled to a

great extent by 2005, but the government continued its fight against the disease,' said Dr Singh, adding that for the prevention and control of leprosy, the government started a campaign to find its patients in 2016.

According to him, during the survey conducted in Varanasi at that time, 27 new patients were found in Chiragaon-Kamauli puryev consisting of 42 houses. "Despite controlling the disease, it was surprising to find such a large number of leprosy patients at one place, but it was also a challenge. Then we started a new experiment along with starting the treatment of leprosy patients. A single dose of medicine used in the treatment of tuberculosis (TB) was given to the patient along with leprosy medicine in his family and nearby homes. Its fruitful results started coming. Not

only was the leprosy patient cured, his family and neighbours who came in contact with the patient also stopped getting infected. It was an enormous success. Then this experiment was carried out all over the district where leprosy patients were detected during the survey. As a result, the infection of leprosy was completely stopped,' he said.

Dr Singh further said that the innovation in Kashi was highly appreciated across the state and Deputy Director General (Leprosy) Dr Anil Kumar directed it to implement it in the entire state in October, 2018. 'Now work is going on adopting this model to prevent infection of leprosy not only in the district but in the entire state. The decreasing number of leprosy patients itself told this success story as there were 303 patients in the district in 2016-17 which came

down to 226 in 2017-18, 133 in 2018-19, 128 in 2019-20 and just 79 in 2020-21,' said Dr Singh.

According to him, like other diseases, leprosy is also caused by a type of microscopic germ. Light yellow, red or copper colored spots appear on the patient's skin. Along with this, there may be symptoms of leprosy in that place like numbness, hair loss, tingling in hands and feet.

'Now leprosy is no longer incurable. If patients get cured with treatment in the initial stage and they do not have disability,' he said, adding that all government hospitals and health centres have free arrangements for its investigation and treatment and free OPD is being conducted every working day from 10 am to 2 pm in Room No-321 of Pt Deendayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital.

Cop commits suicide at Police Lines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A head constable posted in rural areas in the district committed suicide at the Police Lines by shooting himself here on Sunday afternoon. He was identified as Anil Rai who hailed from Kerakat area in Jaunpur district. After receiving the news, the SP (Rural Areas) Amit Verma reached the spot to inquire about the reasons behind the suicide by talking to the cops and others present there. According to the police, there were a total of five bullets in the carbine and all of them were exhausted after the burst fire.

After informing the family, the police had started legal procedures to send the body for postmortem. According to information, in the preliminary investigation it is found that the head constable had committed suicide by shooting himself. Some cops who were present there informed the investigating team that the head constable shot himself several times with his carbine in the hostel of the Police Lines. It was also informed that the deceased cop was suffering from diabetes.

It was the second incident of suicide in recent months at the Police Lines as on September 21 last, a head constable Babban Ram, a resident of Ballia, had committed suicide by hanging himself in the barracks. Anil Rai joined the PAC in 1991 and then shifted to the police and he was issued a carbine for duty which was

not deposited.

BAN ON LIQUOR IN UP DEMANDED: A rally was taken out in Mirza Murad area here on Sunday demanding ban on liquor sale in the state. Through the rally, the rural girls also raised their voices against various social evils like female foeticide, sexual abuse, dowry and child marriage. The rally was taken out from Lalpur Chhatti to Rane village via Kosra GT Road and Mirza Murad. Scores of girls from many villages were taking part in the procession.

After the rally, under the joint aegis of Lok Samiti and Asha Trust, a Balika Mahotsav (girls' festival) was organised at Samma Mata Mandir in Lalpur (Rane) village in which the girls organised a meeting. They also presented cultural programmes on the rights of the girl child. Through a play, they highlighted how liquor spoiled the families as well as weakened the society. They also appealed to the people to stop liquor consumption.

The programme was inaugurated by District Panchayat member Rajendra Prasad, along with Mahila Chetna Samiti convener Sharmila and Shailendra Singh 'Pintu' by lighting a lamp. In the meeting, the speakers played the government for continuous sale of alcohol and said that due to liquor addiction, the women were facing a lot of problems. They also held liquor consumption responsible for the incidents of domestic violence, harassment, rape, assault etc on

women.

Dr Swapnil Srivastava of Swaraj Vidyapeeth (Allahabad) said that the girls in the villages were still facing discrimination. Social worker Sharmila said that today girls were not safe even at home as on many occasions they became victims of sexual abuse by family members and their relatives. The participants were welcomed by Rajkumari and Asha Rani and the function was presided over by Soni. It was conducted by Asha Rai, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Anita. The function was also attended by Vimala, Baby, Saroj, Rambachan, Panchmukhi, Sunil, Vinod, Sheetanshu Bhushan, Manju, Gopal Singh and Anand Gupta.

NATIONAL POSTAL WEEK CONCLUDES: The Department of Posts is constantly expanding the horizon of its services with new services and new technology, continuously reaching the last person of the society. Even in this age of mobile, email and social media, letters have their own importance. Even today all the important documents - Aadhar cards, passports, driving licenses, voter ID cards, PAN cards, cheque books of various banks and ATM cards are sent from Post Offices (POs) along with government and court related letters, said Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav while addressing the 'Customer Meet' organised on 'Mail Day' under 'National Postal Week' here

on Saturday.

On the occasion, Life Insurance Corporation of India (Divisional Office, Bhelupur), First Foreign Service and Regional Employees Provident Fund office (Paharia) were also honoured by the PMG for giving maximum business in Speed Post service to the Postal department. Yadav said, 'Department of Posts is running various types of schemes to cater to the different business groups.

These include Speed Post, Business Parcel, Business Post, Media Post, Bill Mail Service, Retail Post, Logistics Post, Direct Post, E-Post, E-payment, etc. After the establishment of the International Business Centre in the Cantt Head Post Office Complex in the city, sending mail abroad has also become much easier.'

According to him, the Department of Posts has attracted the customers by introducing many customer friendly services.

Senior Superintendent of Post Office (Varanasi East Division) Rajan, Superintendent of Posts Sanjay Verma, Assistant Director Ram Milan, Senior Postmaster Chandrashekhra Singh Barua, India Post Payment Bank Manager Mukta, Assistant Superintendent Ajay Kumar, RK Chauhan, inspector Shrikant Pal, VN Dwivedi, Shashikant Kannaujia, Indrajit Pal Including all the officials and representatives of various institutions were also present.

BJP does politics of development, not casteism, says Maurya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya is on a stay in Prayagraj these days. In an informal conversation with the mediapersons in a programme, he said that the organisation and government of the Bharatiya Janata Party do politics of development, not casteism. Bharatiya Janata Party is the only political organisation where all sections of the people are represented.

Maurya said that in our government the rights of the poor are reaching the poor. There is a pain in the stomach

of the opposition about this matter. There was a time when goonda tax was collected from the business class people. Now the BJP government is protecting the traders. The deputy C said that we are like pearls threaded on a fine thread, who are working to strengthen the Indian economy.

Maurya held a meeting with departmental officers at Circuit House for all-round development of Sangam city. During this the development works were also reviewed. It was clearly stated that the works should be done with quality. It should not be late anywhere. Under construction

projects should be completed on time. Prepare day to day reports, he added.

Apart from this, the complainants do not have to make rounds of the offices. Get the job done in one go, added Maurya. Efforts should also be made that the common man does not have to run for recommendations for any original work. This will be possible only when things are systematically according to the rules.

Meanwhile, Matri Shakti Swaroopa women sanitation workers were felicitated on behalf of Swachh Vasundhara Society at Neta Nagar Durga

Puja Park. Chief guest BJP City Unit President Ganesh Kesarwani honored the women sanitation workers by wearing angavastrams.

He said that the mother powers have a big role in the making of a clean India, a healthy India. The women of India are capable of guiding the whole world.

In such a situation, all of us should also encourage the daughters of the country. Corporators Kiran Jaiswal, Vivek Agarwal, Rajesh Kesarwani, Girijesh Mishra, Ramlochan Sahu, Ravi Jaiswal, Ajay Aghrahi etc. were present during the programme.

3 arrested for double murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the arrest of three miscreants, including the daughter-in-law, the police have claimed to have worked out the sensational double murder of a mother-daughter duo in Miyan Ka Pura village under the Industrial Area police station.

The daughter-in-law, with the help of three people, including her lover, entered the house and killed them. After gathering evidence, the police arrested the trio.

Bajrang Bahadur Patel's wife Prema Patel (55) and daughter Tanu (18) were killed with a sharp-edged weapon late Tuesday night in Chakpure Khurd Mian Ka Pura village of

industrial area in Yamunapar area. Bajrang Bahadur was also injured in the attack. His granddaughter, 6-year-old Anshika, hid behind the bed to save her life. Bajrang's nephew Raj Bahadur Patel, who lives in a neighbouring house, had filed a case against four people, including Mahesh Narayan Mishra and his son Navneel of the village itself. Since then the police have been investigating every aspect of the incident.

One angle of the investigation was also a dispute with Bajrang Bahadur's daughter-in-law Geeta. In fact, Bajrang Bahadur had married the only son Chandrashekhra seven years ago with Geeta of Ghurpur area. Chandrashekhra had committed suicide by con-

suming poison four years ago due to some domestic discord.

After his death, wife Geeta left daughter Anshika in her in-laws' house and went to Ghurpur maternal home. Since then Anshika was looked after by her grandfather Bajrang Bahadur and grandmother Prema. Anshika usually slept with her aunt Tanu. Coincidentally, she was sleeping with her grandparents on the night of the incident. When the attackers came, she hid behind the bed after hearing the voice. It was learned that a few days before the incident, she had come to pick up Anshika, but when her mother-in-law refused to send her, she had a tussle with her. When the police turned the

direction of investigation towards Anshika's mother, Geeta, her mobile call details and other evidences exposed this double murder.

When the police started interrogation by taking Geeta into custody, at first she tried to mislead the police by giving evasive answers, but after being strict and putting the evidence in front, she finally accepted that she had killed her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. The police came to know that Geeta had asked her lover to kill her mother-in-law and sister-in-law for not handing over Anshika to her.

After gathering all the evidence, the police arrested three people including Geeta on Saturday evening.

Elderly man battered to death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In a sensational incident, a sexagenarian was battered to death by some unknown goons in Mukundpur area of Holagarh police station area in Prayagraj district on Saturday night. The incident came to light in the morning.

The police reviewed the situation and questioned the family members. However, the police were still clueless as to who killed the elderly and

why. The police, however, picked up the son on the basis of the suspicion for interrogation.

63-year-old Ram Kumar Saroj, son of late Nokhai, a resident of Ramgoolam Ka Pura Majra of Mukundpur Gram Sabha of Holagarh police station area, used to earn the livelihood for his family by doing farming. On Saturday night, he was sleeping on a cot in the verandah outside the house. At some point in the

night, the killers beat him to death. He was hit on the head with a brick.

In the morning, when the housemates and villagers woke up, they saw the blood-stained body of Ram Kumar lying on the cot. Within no time a crowd gathered there. Meanwhile, someone informed the police. Holagarh SHO Amit Kumar Singh arrived on being informed. The police closely inspected the crime scene.

The SHO interrogated the

family members as well as the villagers. As of now, it is not clear as to why Ram Kumar Saroj was murdered. Police are looking for clues about the killers. On the basis of suspicion, the police have taken Hemant, son of Ram Kumar Saroj, into custody. He is being questioned at the police station. Ram Kumar Saroj has four daughters and two sons. Due to this mishap, a pall of gloom prevailed over the family members.

College principal held for paper leak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Prayagraj Unit of STF arrested two, including the principal of Dr KN Katju Inter College, for getting the paper out to help her daughter clear the financially aided Junior High School



Accused principal of Dr K.N. Katju Inter College.

Principal/Assistant Teacher Selection Examination-2021. The STF conducted the raid as soon as it came to know about copying after getting the paper out of the examination held on Sunday. The second accused arrested is an assistant teacher. The STF team was interrogating both the accused. Principal's daughter, son, solver and vice principal have also

been accused by the STF in this case and they are all absconding. On Sunday, the selection examination was held in different centers of Prayagraj for recruitment to the post of assistant teacher and principal

in aided schools. In the meantime, the STF came to know that after getting the paper out in the Dr KN Katju Inter College Examination Center, copying was being done through solver. The daughter of the principal of this college was also involved in this examination. Her examination center was in Bharat Scout Guide Inter College. It was alleged that the principal engaged his school teacher to get his daughter to copy. The teacher took the photo of the question paper in the mobile and sent it to Solver present in the Bharat Scout Guide College. When the STF came to know about this, a team was put in for arrest.

The STF first nabbed principal Ram Nayan Dwivedi and assistant teacher Ashok Tiwari.

The STF CO said that on the basis of interrogation some more people were arrested. Meanwhile, there was an uproar about the paper leak. However, STF CO Navendu Kumar said that some people including the principal have been arrested. In this case, Akash Khare, Deputy Principal of KN Katju College, Anugraha alias Chhotu, son of the arrested principal, Akanksha Dwivedi, daughter of solver, who replaced solver instead of taking the examination, and solver Virendra Kumar have absconded.

Major changes in Prayagraj City Congress Committee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Major changes have been made in the Prayagraj City Congress Committee. Due to all the controversies, the top leadership of the party has immediately removed the city unit president Nafees Anwar from the post. Pradeep Mishra Anshuman has been made the new president in his place. Its order has also been issued by the party's general secretary KC Venugopal.

In fact, since last week, the city Congress was in the headlines due to its own deeds. Recently, Congressmen had demonstrated against the arrest of Congress General Secretary Priyanka Vadra. When they tried to block the road in Civil Lines, the police took everyone into custody and sent them to the police lines. There was a dispute over two samosas between City Congress

Committee secretary Irshad Ulla and district spokesperson Haseeb Ahmed. Its video went viral the next day. In the viral video, Irshad was seen abusing. Apart from this, he was also seen threatening to kill Haseeb at the crossroads. In this video, the then City unit President Nafees Anwar was seen trying to mediate by saying that keep calm, this is not home. Police had also registered a case in this case. After this, the poster of Pilibhit MP Varun Gandhi from BJP along with Congress President Sonia Gandhi was made viral on behalf of Irshad. The opposition also took a jibe at the Congress on this. Even BJP MLC Surendra Choudhary called Congressmen jokers. City unit President Nafees Anwar, despite all this, continued to save Irshad. They only showed Irshad the way out for 15 days. Apart from this, a video of the city unit president

had gone viral during the floods, in which he was seen inciting people to steal electricity. Several other similar complaints had reached the party high command, which also said that Nafees' leadership was lacking. On this the high command made Nafees on foot. Pradeep Mishra Anshuman has been crowned in his place. In this context, Nafees says that he will continue to work according to the instructions received from the party high command.

INNER RING ROAD TO REDUCE TRAFFIC LOAD: In order to reduce the traffic load of the city, the process of construction of the inner ring road has started. The inner ring road of the first phase will be made of six lanes from Rewa road to Varanasi road. For this, lands of 44 villages will be acquired. In order to acquire land, the district administration

has issued a notification and has also sought objection from the farmers. Objections can be made within 21 days. The construction of these rig roads will start from Kanpur-Varanasi road in Kaudihar block. It will cross the Yamuna through several blocks of Bhagwatpur, making a bridge over the Ganga. Crossing the Yamuna par Rewa road, passing through several villages of Karchuna tehsil, will reach Jhansi across the Ganga. Then passing through many villages of Phulpur tehsil, it will be connected to the Varanasi road. The ring road will be 65.066 km in total but in the first phase, only 29.466 km will be made from Rewa road to Varanasi road. A total of 221.8271 hectares of land will be acquired for this. Land Acquisition Officer Indrabhan Tiwari has issued a notification for the acquisition of land.

DM stress on quick disposal of people’s complaints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Vishak G Iyer, while addressing the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas at Ghatampur, directed the officials concerned to ensure that all the complaints were uploaded on the portal and settled on priority without any compromise on quality.

He directed all the officials to hear the problems of the people patiently and settle them within the stipulated time frame.

He expressed concern over the encroachments on the government lands and warned the officials that they need to take quick action in this regard. He said no further encroachment would be tolerated and the officials would be answerable for it.

He asked the officials to carry out anti-encroachment drives at short intervals so that there was no encroachment or illegal construction and added that the land belonging to gram samaj should be freed from encroachments as per the laws.

He then inspected the Neyveli power plant under construction and said that the work should be carried out on a war footing.

He said the objective of



The District Magistrate, City, Vishak G Iyer participating in Sampoorna Samadhan Divas at Ghatampur.

Pioneer

SSD was to ensure that the grievances of the people were attended to on top priority and asked the officials to ensure people were not made to run from pillar to post.

He said once the complaints were settled they should be uploaded on the portal and

the complainant should also be forwarded the information regarding what had been done in the issue.

He directed the officials to be present on the occasion without fail so that the pace of the SSD was not retarded.

He said the UP govern-

ment was keen on settling the issues related to people and thus united efforts had to be made in this direction.

Others who accompanied the DM were SP (Outer), CDO Dr Mahendra Kumar, ADM(LA) and all the officials concerned.

‘Def cos to help in self-reliance’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated seven defence companies to the nation on the occasion of Vijay Dashmi. He later addressed the OEF officials and staff virtually. The venue had been tastefully decorated for the occasion as per the theme. The officials present on the occasion termed it a historical step which will help in self-reliance and will certainly improve production, modern technology and skill.

They expressed full faith in the TCL unit and said it would set records. Prominent among those present on the occasion were General Manager Uday Kumar, Additional General Manager CK Chaudhari, MC Balasubramaniam, Sudha Uday Kumar, Anupama Singh and Suman Chaudhari along with a large number of staff and workers.



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi virtually dedicating seven defence companies to the nation on the occasion of Vijay Dashmi

Scientist for shifting from basic farming to efficient, sustainable and productive farming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted scientist of Chandra Shekhara Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Khalil Khan, while addressing a session on World Food Day said the day was observed to raise awareness of the issue of hunger and healthy food habits for all.

He said this day marked the founding day of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). He said this year organisations like FAO, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the World Food Programme (WFP) had all joined hands.

He said India needed to shift from basic farming to more efficient, sustainable and productive farming. He said unfortunately, the present agriculture policies failed to recognise how crop choices, input costs and the supply chain were intertwined, perpetuating marginal farming. He said growing more food was not the solution to providing employment. He said the country must figure out a way to provide meaningful employment to hundreds of millions of people outside agriculture. He said the simplest means to make more money was to produce more with less input, meaning productivity.

Dr Khan said more than simple supply-demand equilibrium, the agricultural sector had many distortions and dislocations, not just middlemen, but also a very poor supply chain, with lack of cold storage and efficient transport. He said Indian agriculture was suffering from inadequate use of inputs like fertilisers and seeds. He said farmers were not apply-

ing sufficient quantities of fertilisers on their lands and even the application of farmyard dung manure was also inadequate. He said the Indian farmers were still applying seeds of indifferent quality.

He said the average size of holdings was 2.28 hectares in 1970-71 which was drastically reduced and the size of the holdings would further decrease with the infinite subdivision of the land holdings. He said the problem of small and fragmented holdings was more serious in densely populated and intensively cultivated states like Uttar Pradesh where the average size of land holdings was less than one hectare and in certain parts it was less than even 0.5 hectare.

He said another cause of concern was use of simple and conventional tools and implements like wooden plough, sickle, etc. He said little or no use of machines was made in ploughing, sowing, irrigating, thinning and pruning, weeding, harvesting threshing and transporting the crops. He said there was an urgent need to mechanise the agricultural operations so that wastage of labour force was avoided and farming was made convenient and efficient.

IIT-K RESEARCHERS LINK DLX1 GENE TO PROSTATE CANCER: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur have discovered that a particular gene (DLX1) which plays an important role in the development of jaws, skeleton, and interneurons in the brain, has an important role to play in the growth and development of prostate cancer.

The DLX1 protein is found at elevated levels in prostate cancer patients, the reason why the DLX1 protein has been used as a urine-based biomarker. Now the team of researchers led by Dr Bushra Ateeq, professor at the biological sciences and bioengineering department of IIT Kanpur has found that the DLX1 protein, which is expressed at higher levels in the prostate cancer cells, has a huge role in the growth and development of tumour and the spread of the cancer to other organs in the body (metastasis).

Using small molecules as inhibitors, the researchers have shown in mice a new therapeutic strategy to treat people with DLX1-positive prostate cancer.

First, the researchers found around 60 per cent of the prostate cancer tissues have higher levels of DLX1 protein. When the team genetically ablated the DLX1 gene that produces the protein, the ability of cancer cells to grow, develop and spread to other parts of the body was compromised. "We used mice models to further ascertain the role of DLX1 protein in prostate cancer growth and metastasis," says Sakshi Goel from IIT Kanpur and first author of a paper published in Nature Communications.

FATHER OF KILLED REALTOR THREATENS IMMOLATION: Tension prevailed after the father of a property dealer, who was killed near Ratanpur police outpost in Panki police area late Friday night, threatened to immolate himself on Sunday morning if the police failed to arrest the

named assailants. He also said the last rites of his slain son would be performed only after the arrest of the accused.

Hearing about the incident, DCP (West) and ACP (Kalyanpur) rushed to spot along with a police force and tried to pacify the agitated father of the killed property dealer. It may be recalled that property dealer Ajay (40), son of Shiva Nand Tewari of Ratanpur Colony in Panki, was beaten to death by some local youths near Ratanpur police outpost late Friday night.

Shiva Nand had alleged that his son was killed after he refused to pay Rs 500 to the assailants for consuming liquor. On Shiva Nand's complaint, police had registered an FIR against seven persons, including Dharmendra Singh, Dipu Bhadauria and Sunil Chaturvedi under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code. All the accused were found absconding after the incident. After the autopsy, the kin returned home with the body on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning, demanding early arrest of the accused, Shiva Nand refused to perform the last rites of his son. In order to avert any untoward incident, a heavy police force was deployed on the spot.

Panki Inspector Dadhibal Tewari along with DCP (West) assured the father of the deceased that the assailants would be arrested. Meanwhile, for his lackadaisical attitude in the case, Ratanpur police outpost incharge Pankaj Kumar Jaiswal was attached to the Panki police station and in his place the charge was given to Sub-Inspector Adesh Kumar.

Upset by police inaction man sets self ablaze

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Upset by police inaction, an elderly man set himself ablaze in the Chakeri police station area on Sunday morning.

The local residents rescued him and informed the police, who rushed to spot and got the seriously injured man admitted to LLR Hospital. His condition was said to be critical.

According to reports, Ishwar Chand Dixit (55) of Chanakya Puri in Shyam Nagar under Chakeri police station has been living with family on rent in the house of Radhey Shyam Tewari for the past four years. His family comprises wife Rani and three daughters Atithi, Bhumika and Vedika.

According to Bhumika, her father had purchased a 200 square yards plot in Gangapur Colony in Bidhnu from Sunita Verma of Shyam Nagar in 2017. On Dussehra (October 15), all the family members had gone to the plot to perform puja and start construction of the boundary wall. Suddenly, a youth arrived there with police and claimed ownership of the plot. Thereafter, her father filed a complaint at the Bidhnu police station and Shyam Nagar outpost but the police did not initiate any action in the matter.

Bhumika said this upset her father and he set himself ablaze after pouring petrol on his body at the Chhappan Bhog chauraha in Shyam Nagar on Sunday morning.

Station House Officer Madhur Mishra said Ishwar Chand had attempted to immolate himself following a land dispute and was admitted to LLR Hospital in a critical condition.

He said investigations were on and action would be taken against the guilty after examining the facts of the case.

KDA bulldozes illegal plottings, constructions

KANPUR (PNS): Acting on the directive of Kanpur Development Authority Vice Chairman Arvind Singh, the enforcement squad carried out a massive demolition drive in Singhpur Kachhar and Hindupur villages of New Kanpur City area on Sunday and bulldozed illegal constructions and plotting on around 35 bigha land there.

The squad reached there with five backhoes (JCBs) and carried out the drive with the help of PAC personnel, local police and the ex-Army men deployed in KDA.

The KDA squad demolished illegal plotting in Singhpur Kachhar on arazi Nos. 771, 772, 774 by Shiv Singh; arazi No. 787 by Hari Kishan Katheria and Ram Khilawan; arazi No. 02 by Alok Katiyar and Shahjadelal; arazi Nos. 319, 320 by Bhanwar Lal Kothwal and Anil Kothwal; arazi No. 788 by Sonu Yadav; arazi No. 757 by Ajay Yadav and Bhupendra Singh Bhadauria and arazi Nos. 534, 535 in Hindupur village (on Ganga Barrage-Bithoor main road).

During the drive, illegal constructions and plotting including roads, drains, sewer, electricity poles and boundary walls of plots constructed in the name of developmental works on their land were demolished.

Joint team of the KDA enforcement department and land bank was present on the spot.

The demolition drive carried out on Sunday would continue in these and many other areas also in future, said a press release issued by the KDA on Sunday.

It may be recalled that during inspection to New Kanpur City, Ganga Barrage, Singhpur, Bio-diversity Park, Ganga Theme Park etc. on October 2, the KDA vice chairman had come across massive illegal constructions/plotting there and directed the officers concerned present on the spot to soon launch a demolition drive.

He had also expressed his displeasure over the mushrooming illegal plottings without the approved layout and directed the officials to initiate stern penal action against the developers under the relevant sections of UP Urban Planning and Development Act 1973.

NCL CMD inaugurates guest house

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), a Miniratna company of the Government of India, Prabhat Kumar Sinha, inaugurated a new guest house in

ious projects of NCL, heads of departments of headquarters and other officers as well as employees were also present. In this newly constructed guest house in Block-B, kitchen, dining hall, four fully equipped rooms and toilet etc have been made. General Manager, Block



Block B recently. Sinha congratulated all Block B personnel on the inauguration of this new welfare facility and said that NCL is committed to providing world class and well equipped ultra-modern welfare facilities to its employees as well as their family members.

NCL Director (Finance & Personnel) Ram Narayan Dubey and Director (Technical/Project & Planning) SS Sinha were present on the occasion. Besides, the General Managers of various projects of NCL, heads of departments of headquarters and other officers as well as employees were also present. In this Khadi

B, Harish Duhan, welcomed all the visitors.

DISTRIBUTED: Under the guidance of chairperson of Kriti Mahila Mandal (under NCL) Sangeta Sinha, vice-chairperson Suchandra Sinha, Laxmi Dubey and Sanju Sinha encouraging women working in Khadi and Handloom Centre in Semuar village, as many as 200 jute bags made by women were bought. Besides, sarees and sweets were also distributed to all the women working there. In this Khadi

and Handloom Centre run by NCL, local women by forming self-help groups (SHGs) make many items like khadi cloth, 'gamcha' (towel), jute bags etc. Courtesy of Kriti Mahila Mandal solar lights were given to 50 needy families living in Kathas. Most of these people live outside the village in the middle of the fields and the forest due to which they were facing difficulty during the night time. Under Kriti Mahila Mandal 'Pankh Prasar' campaign slippers were distributed to 50 children in the Anganwadi located in Kathas village with which the feet of the children will be safe. It may be pointed out here that the Kriti Mahila Mandal under the leadership of Sangeta Sinha, through three different branches of the multipurpose campaign 'Prayas' — 'Jeevan Se Maitri', 'Pankh' and 'Gyan Jyoti', in NCL areas in the direction of public awareness towards health and cleanliness in daily life, health protection, environmental protection, skill development, women empowerment and self-reliance, child nutrition and child education etc is doing a remarkable work.

Frequency of trains to be reduced

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Due to operational difficulties caused by dense fog and bad weather in the coming winter, the frequency of the following trains will be reduced by the railway administration from December 1 to February 28, 2022, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

The frequency of 05036 Kathgodam-Delhi special train

(including 05356 Ramnagar-Moradabad link train) running daily from Kathgodam will be reduced. This train from Kathgodam on December 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28 and 30, on January 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27 and 29 and on February 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26 will remain cancelled on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. On the other hand, the frequency of 05035 Delhi-

Kathgodam special train (including 05355 Moradabad-Ramnagar link train) running daily from Delhi will be reduced. This train from Delhi on December 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28 and 30, on January 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27 and 29 and on February 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26 will remain cancelled on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

DM’s directive to officials

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar opined that timely disposal of complaints lodged during the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas was an indicator of good governance. Listening to the problems of complainants during the Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas on Saturday the DM disposed of one matter on the spot at Sadar



tehsil and for the remaining 87 cases directed the officials concerned to dispose them of on merit within a week. He directed that if any disposal was not found proper, the official concerned will face action. He made it crystal clear that at the time of disposal the presence of the complainant should be ensured and signature of some others on the spot was a must.

Meanwhile Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS directed the officials to dispose of the cases under IGRS on priority and upload them it on portal positively. She said all officers should be updated regarding the status of RTI-related applications. On the occasion the DM was accompanied by Superintendent of Police (SP) Ajay Kumar Singh and sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), Sadar, Chandra Bhan Singh. At Lalganj tehsil Additional District Magistrate

(F&R) Shiv Pratap Shukla and SDM Amit Shukla disposed of two complaints out of 45, at Madihan tehsil ADM (Land/Revenue) Hari Shankar Yadav disposed one out of 15 while on the other hand, at Chunar tehsil SDM Roshni Yadav six out of 44 complaints.

MEETING: OSD CEO of state Ramesh Chandra Rai while chairing the meeting at Zila Panchayat on Saturday to chalk out a plan under SVEEP said people were the power of democracy and through voting it gets strengthened. Commissioner Yogeshwar Ram Mishra and assistant nodal officer Dr AK Singh also spoke on the occasion. The vote of vote of thanks was proposed by ADM (F&R) and deputy election officer of the district Shiv Pratap Shukla.

TEENAGER DIES: A teenager died in a road accident which took place under Padari police station recently. Reports said that Abhay Maurya (18), a resident of Madanpur village, was going on a bicycle when he was hit by a tractor in his village as a result of which he died on the spot. On getting information about the matter police reached the spot and completed the necessary legal formalities. In another incident a woman run over by a truck under Ahraura police station recently. As per the reports, Reshma (55), a resident of Menhdiapur village, was on the way when he was hit by the truck at Mahuli Chauraha. On getting the information, the area police reached on the spot and completed the legal formalities. Meanwhile a woman died due to snake bite under Halia police station. Reports said that Kunjamani (55), a resident of Patehra village under the aforesaid police station was bitten by a snake and died on the spot. On getting information police team of Dramondganj police outpost reached the spot and completed the legal formalities.

One arrested in murder case

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAUIN

Police arrested one accused in connection with a murder case. On the directive of Superintendent of Police Ravi Kumar and Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Dr Rakesh Kumar Singh the police arrested the accused from Jagamanpur trijunction



in a nearby forest. He appreciated the police for collecting circumstantial evidence. The accused used to guard his nursery and when the victim, Ashish, reached there to graze the cattle an argument ensued. During it the accused hit a 'lathi' on Ashish's head

as a result of which he fell down. He then hid the victim's body. Police recovered the 'lathi' too. The team which made the arrest comprised SSI Moolchandra Yadav besides Sunil Kumar, Harendra Pratap Singh and Vijendra Singh.

DRM honours SSE for good work

PNS ■ VARANASI

At the Banaras Coaching Depot yard on Wednesday afternoon a joint exercise of successful mock drill was conducted by the Safety department along with the team of



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). In this sequence SPART incharge/SSE Banaras Subhash Chandra Yadav during the fullscale mock drill with NDRF on Wednesday along with his accident relief team in rapid relief and rescue operations by playing his role did an excellent work. At the Divisional Railway Manager's

(DRM)'s office recently, DRM Ramashray Pandey while appreciating Yadav's dedication to duty and devotion to work honoured him by presenting him a commendation letter and cash award. On the occasion Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (SDME)/ Carriage & Wagon (C&W) SP Shrivastava, Senior Divisional Safety Officer (SDSO) Rahul Shrivastava and divisional officers while congratulating Yadav appreciated the excellent performance accomplished by him.

Punia: Priyanka to be face of Cong poll campaign in UP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will be the face of the Congress' election campaign in Uttar Pradesh, the party's newly-appointed campaign committee chief P L Punia said on Sunday, October 15, 2021, asserting the AICC general secretary is the most popular political figure in the state at present.

Punia, who on Friday was named as the head of the key 20-member election campaign committee of the Congress for the UP polls next year, noted that very rarely has the Congress announced a chief ministerial face and said that not having declared one till now will not hamper the party's chances as it already has a personality like Priyanka Gandhi to lead the charge against the BJP.

It is a direct contest between the Congress and the BJP in the UP polls as both the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party have "fallen behind" and were "not in the fight anymore", Punia told PTI in an interview.

Punia said Priyanka Gandhi has fought for truth on all issues and when the Lakhimpur Kheri incident happened, she immediately left to meet the family of the victims, and was detained in Sitapur, but remained determined in her quest for justice.

He said she was "successful" in her struggle and went to Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich to meet the families of the victims.

Punia said earlier also — be it Sonbhadra, Unnao or Hathras incidents — Priyanka



Gandhi had fought for justice.

"So, the people are impressed by her and currently in the entire state, no politician is more popular than Priyanka Gandhi. As far as around whom the campaign will be centred, we are fortunate that Priyanka Gandhi is available for (campaigning) all the time," he said.

There are always demands from other states for Priyanka Gandhi to campaign and hold one or two meetings, but in UP she is available 24x7, Punia said. "Priyanka Gandhi ji hi humara ek chehra honghi jinke ird-gird poor election campaign chalega (the election campaign will be revolve around Priyanka Gandhi)," he said.

Punia also said the Lakhimpur Kheri incident and justice for farmers would be important issues in the elections, asserting that the way the farmers were "trampled upon", was a condemnable incident.

"What was more appalling was that those in power gave protection to the perpetrators (of the crime). Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said no one

will be arrested without evidence which was an indication that seeking arrest of the Union minister's son is wrong," Punia said.

Chief Minister Adityanath and Union minister of state for home Ajay Mishra were both "guilty" of protecting the accused in the case, he alleged. Punia said "real justice" will be done when the minister is removed and pointed out that a high level delegation under Rahul Gandhi has also met President Ram Nath Kovind to press for this demand.

Asked if having not declared a CM face till now would hamper the Congress' chances in the UP polls, Punia said the Congress rarely declares a CM face whether it is Uttar Pradesh or other states.

"People talk about a CM face as votes are sought on that face, for us the biggest face is that of Priyanka Gandhi and the affection that people have for her cannot be matched by any person who is declared a CM face. So for us we have such a personality who will be helpful for us in polls in every way," he asserted.

Prices of onions, tomatoes cheaper than last year: Govt data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As vegetable, diesel and petrol prices are skyrocketing across India, the Government on Sunday came out with data claiming prices of onion, tomato and potato are cheaper than last year. Presently, fruits such as apple, papaya, pineapple, orange and banana are cheaper than tomatoes and other green vegetables in metro cities. Most of the fruits are being sold between ₹50 and 60 a kg while tomato and leafy vegetables including palak (spinach), maithi patta fenugreek leaves are being sold between ₹80 to ₹100 a kg in the local vegetable markets. Dhania (coriander) prices have crossed ₹200 a kg.

The ministry of consumer affairs on Sunday said onion prices are being stabilised with the release of buffer stock, while efforts are on to soften the rates of tomato and potato. Onion stocks are being released in the market on the first-in-first-out basis in a calibrated manner from the last week of August in a bid to moderate prices and ensure minimum storage loss, it said.

"As a result of which the retail price of Onion in Delhi is viz ₹44 kg as on 14.10.2021. Similarly in Mumbai, Kolkatta and Chennai are ₹45 kg, ₹57 kg and ₹42 kg respectively. The All India retail prices of Onion on 14.10.2021 is ₹37.06 per kg while the All India wholesale price of Onion is ₹3002.25 per quintal," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, till October 12, 2021, a total of 67,3567 MT has been released in major markets such as Delhi,



Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna, Ranchi, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Kochi and Raipur. In addition, Grade-B onions (stocks which are below the Fair Average Quality - FAQ) are disposed in local markets in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

"Apart from releasing in the market, the Department of Consumer Affairs has offered onions from the buffer at Rs.21/kg to all the States and UTs for lifting from the storage locations. This would enable States/UTs to take up, by themselves, market interventions either through direct supply to retail consumers through retail outlets or release in key markets to bring down prices. The stocks are also available for supply to Central/States agencies involved in retail marketing either at ex-storage rate of

Rs.21/kg or at landed price after including transportation costs. SAFAL has been offered at landed price of ₹26/kg," it said. Onion buffer has been maintained by the department under the Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) with the objective of effective market intervention to moderate prices. In 2021-22, against the target of building 2 LMT Onion buffer a total of 2.08 LMT was procured from Rabi-2021 crop during April to July, 2021.

Similarly efforts are being made to soften the prices of potato and tomato. The retail price of Potato and Tomato in Delhi are ₹20 and ₹56 kg respectively. The All India Retail price of Potato and Tomato are ₹21.22 kg and ₹41.73 kg respectively. The All India Wholesale price of Potato and Onion are ₹1605.46 per quintal and ₹3361.74 per quintal respectively.

Decide applicability of RTI Act to Intelligence, security agencies: SC to Delhi HC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the Delhi High Court to decide the applicability of the Right to Information (RTI) Act to intelligence and security organisations of the Government while setting aside its order directing a department to furnish information to an employee on seniority and promotions.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and AS Bopanna said the high court passed the directions without deciding the objection of the government department that the RTI Act was not applicable to it.

"It is the specific case on behalf of the Department that the RTI Act was not applicable to the organisation/department. Despite the above and without deciding such an objection, the high court has directed the appellant to furnish the documents sought under the RTI Act without deciding the applicability of the RTI Act. That will be putting the cart before the horse," the bench said.

The apex court said the high court ought to have decided the issue with respect to the applicability of the RTI Act to the organisation or department first.

"We direct the high court to first decide the issue with respect to the applicability of the RTI Act to the appellant organisation/department and thereafter decide the stay application/LPA. The afore-

said exercise shall be completed within a period of eight weeks," the bench said in its recent order.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the Centre against the 2018 decision of the high court which directed the department to provide information to the employee within 15 days.

The counsel appearing on behalf of the Centre had told the high court that the Department from which information was sought is exempted as per Section 24(1) of the RTI Act, 2005. Therefore, the order of the CIC is illegal and contradictory to the provisions of the Section 24 of the RTI Act.

Section 24 of the RTI Act exempts certain intelligence and security organisations from the ambit of the transparency law except for information "pertaining to allegations of corruption and human rights violations".

The high court had said that since the employee was facing prejudices regarding seniority, he sought information mentioned above and that the information neither hampers with intelligence nor security nor secrecy of the petitioner organisation.

"Though the petitioner organisation is kept away from RTI Act, but that is not regarding the information to its employee, if any of his rights have been denied.

The information sought by the respondent from the petitioner does not come under Section 24 of the Act," the high court had said.

L-e-T funding Hazi Baba Trust to convert schools in Af into madrassas



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Tayab's front Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation is funding a little known Hazi Baba Trust to convert regular schools in Afghanistan into madrassas with a view to radicalise young students for carrying out terrorist action in that country and beyond.

While Taliban did not have problems with modern education but just wanted to ensure

that the schools must respect Islam and Islamic values. However, Taliban does not have much funds and has approached Pakistan for funding. But Islamabad did not officially fund the Taliban and instead funded the Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF) for radicalisation activities in Afghanistan, sources said.

However, the Falah-e-Insaniyat distorted the Taliban's stand on fusion of modern education with Islamic

values into converting the regular schools purely into madrassas.

The FIF has begun converting the schools in certain provinces there into madrassas.

While the educational institutions are at the brink of collapse, the terror groups like the LeT, an affiliate of Al Qaeda, is seeking to ramp up funding in the garb of imparting Islamic education. The real motive, however, is to create a cadre of radicalized youth from

Afghanistan to perpetuate the terror network there and send them to countries like Malaysia and Indonesia to further the LeT agenda there, the sources said.

The donations are also layered by the FIF through shell Non-Governmental Organisations to portray the outfit as charity fronts.

Al Qaeda and ISIS have in the past registered shell NGOs and recruited their cadres to man these social welfare organisations and deputed them to other countries for terror activities. These terror groups have in the past spotted and recruited people in other countries in lieu of humanitarian relief.

Founder President of Afghanistan Republican Salvation Front (ARSF) and counter-terrorism analyst of Afghan origin Dr Ajmal Sohail said, "This is a dangerous trend as the gains made in the past two decades will be negated through disruption of schools granting modern education. There is a need to check the trend and keep the schools and madrassas segregated."

The Taliban must ensure due diligence while apportioning relief materials and funds to the NGOs so that they are not exploited as fronts for radicalisation and recruitment. Background checks should be undertaken before funding and allowing activities by the NGOs.

4.9 cr registrations on e-SHRAM within 2 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday said the number of registrations has crossed the 4-crore mark on the e-SHRAM portal in less than two months of its launch. Odisha, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are at the forefront of this initiative with highest number of registrations.

Workers in diverse occupations such as construction, apparel manufacturing, fishing, gig and platform work, street vending, domestic work, agriculture and allied and transport sector have registered on the portal, the Ministry of Labour and Employment said in a statement.

In some of these sectors, an overwhelming proportion of migrant workers are also engaged, it stated. All workers in the unorganised sector, including migrant ones, can now take the benefits of various social security and employment-based schemes through registration on the e-SHRAM portal.

As per latest data, 4.09 crore workers have registered on the portal. Of these, around 50.02 per cent beneficiaries are female and 49.98 per cent are male.

Unorganised workers to get digital e-SHRAM card after registration

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After registration at e-SHRAM Portal, the unorganised workers shall receive a digital e-SHRAM card and they can update their profiles/particulars through portal or mobile app. They will have a Universal Account Number (on e-SHRAM card) that will be acceptable across the country and now they will not be required to register at different places for obtaining social security benefits. If a worker is registered at the e-SHRAM portal and meets with an accident, he/she will be eligible for ₹2 lakh on death or permanent disability and ₹1 lakh on partial disability.

It is encouraging that equivalent proportion of men and women have been part of this drive, it stated. There has been weekly improvement in the registrations by gender,



with men and women workers registering at comparable proportions.

Minister for Labour and Employment, Bhupendra Yadav said that by registering, the unorganised workers will be able to get the benefits of government schemes easily.

The Ministry said putting this number into perspective must be with caution as smaller states and Union territories (UTs) understandably have lesser number of registered workforce. Also, this drive needs to gain momentum in states and UTs such as Meghalaya, Manipur, Goa and Chandigarh, it said.

This registration would facilitate delivery and accessibility to crucial welfare programmes and various entitlements meant for the workers in the unorganised sector and employment. For online registrations, individual workers can use e-SHRAM's mobile application or the website. They can also visit the Common Service Centres (CSCs), State Seva Kendra,

Labour Facilitation Centres, select post offices of the Department of Posts and Digital Seva Kendras to register themselves.

The largest number of workers registered is from agriculture and construction, given the sheer volume of these two sectors in employment generation in India. Besides, workers from diverse and different occupations like domestic and household workers, apparel sector workers, automobile and transport sector workers, electronics and hardware workers, capital goods workers, education, healthcare, retail, tourism and hospitality, food industry and many more have registered at this portal.

Around 65.68 per cent of these registered workers are in the age group of 16-40 years and 34.32 per cent are in the age group of 40 years and above.

The social compositions of these workers include Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and General Castes with almost 43 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively from these categories and 23 per cent and 27 per cent being from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, respectively.

Arthritis: Timely treatment can prevent major complications

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the common belief that arthritis mostly affects elderly people, age is no barrier to this condition as babies who are just six months old, or people who are 80, are equally vulnerable, warn health experts.

Arthritis is any inflammation of the joint which causes damage to the joint resulting in pain, deformity and disability.

In fact, every one person out of four in the country is plagued with one or another type of arthritis. And a matter of concern is that there has been an exponential rise in such cases particularly among women and youth, says Dr Kiran Seth Consultant, Rheumatology, Metro Hospital & Heart Institute, Noida.

She said that arthritis is more a symptomatic indication of another ailment as over 200 diseases can hide behind symptoms of arthritis. Some of them are juvenile idiopathic arthritis,

rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus and gout, osteoarthritis and ankylosing spondylitis. "If not treated in time, arthritis can impact eyes, skin, lungs and many other important body organs," said Dr Seth stressing on prompt diagnosis and early treatment which would help in reducing the risk factors. She was sharing her views recently at an event held to mark World Arthritis Day. The theme for the day was "Don't Delay, Connect Today; Time2work".

Dr Seth who also heads Mission Arthritis India (MAI), an organization engaged in creating awareness about arthritis pointed out that RA has emerged as a major health problem in community health and in coming years, it is going to become a huge burden on society as well as the health system.

She rued that the Government is not serious about the long term health

impact of the condition. This may backfire, she warned.

MAI President Ankur Shukla too lamented that the government is yet to bring the treatment for arthritis under the ambit of health insurance, as a result many patients are being left to fend on their own and many times due to delay in treatment face debilitating health conditions for lifetime.

He asserted there is a need to spread awareness about the condition among people. The MAI on its part has decided to hold a series of awareness campaigns on a large scale so that people are aware and take adequate and timely steps.

Not only are people unaware about arthritis, there are not many experts in the sector. For instance, rheumatoid arthritis affects approximately 1% of the population of India. However, for treating nearly a crore patients, the country needs at least 10 lakh rheumatologists, which are at an extreme shortfall at present.

BJP to hold meet on Oct 18 to discuss poll, Covid

NEW DELHI: The BJP's national office-bearers will meet on Monday, October 18, 2021, to discuss a host of issues ranging from the upcoming five state assembly polls to the farmers' agitation and the Covid-19 pandemic.

BJP president J P Nadda will chair the meeting which will be attended by all its leaders who hold organisational responsibilities at the national level besides its spokespersons. The meeting assumes significance as it will take place after a considerable gap due to the Covid-19 pandemic and ahead of the party's national executive meeting next month.

Official sources said the party's campaign for the assembly elections will come up for extensive discussion in the meeting. The ongoing farmers' agitation against the three central agriculture laws, the recent violence in Lakhimpur Kheri in which eight persons, including four farmers, died and the murder of a Dalit at Singhu border, one of the protest sites, may also feature in the discussion, they said. PTI

SKM to stage stir today to seek sacking of Union Min Mishra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Sunday said 'Rail Roko' protests will be held across the country on October 18 to demand the dismissal and arrest of Union Minister Ajay Mishra in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. The SKM said during the 'rail roko' protest, all train traffic will be stopped for six hours from 10 am till 4 pm on Monday.

In a statement, the umbrella body of farmer unions spearheading the farmers' agitation against the Centre's three agri laws, said "protests will only be intensified until justice is secured" in the Lakhimpur Kheri case.

"To press for its demand for MoS Home Ajay Mishra's dismissal and arrest, so that justice can be secured in the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre, SKM has announced a nationwide Rail Roko program on Monday. "SKM put out a call to its constituents to stop rail traffic for six hours on

October 18, between 10 am and 4 pm. The SKM asks for this action to be taken up peacefully, without any destruction and damage of any kind to any railway property," it said.

Four of the eight people who died in the violence on October 3 were farmers, allegedly knocked down by a vehicle carrying BJP workers. Angry farmers then allegedly lynched some people in the vehicles.

The other dead included two BJP workers and their driver. Farmers have claimed that Ashish Mishra was in one of the vehicles, an allegation denied by him and Ajay Mishra who say they can produce evidence to prove he was at an event at that time. Ashish Mishra was arrested in the case on October 9.

The SKM also claimed that at effigy-burning events across Uttar Pradesh, several farmer leaders were put under house arrest while some were detained.

Recent flash floods, landslides clear sign of climate change: VP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said there has been an increased frequency of extreme weather events in recent times which are a clear indication of changing dynamics of the climate.

"There has been an increased frequency of extreme weather events in recent times such as flash floods and landslides in different parts of the world. These are clear signs that climate change is real and it cannot be business as usual anymore," the Vice President said at a book release function.

"Nursery Rajyaniki Raraju" is a book on the life story of the late Palla Venkanna, who is credited with transforming the village of Kadiyamb in Andhra Pradesh into a popular hub of plant nurseries.

To mitigate such weather events, Naidu said that, going

forward, it is imperative that humans co-exist harmoniously with nature.

"We must balance our developmental needs with environmental protection and make sure everyone understands the importance of sustainable living. Meaningful development is possible only when it takes into account the cost on environment", Naidu added.

The Vice President called for a people's movement to protect the environment and urged people to voluntarily participate in various conservation activities.

In particular, Naidu called upon the youth to proactively lead environmental movements from the front and motivate others to adopt sustainable practices. "They should drive the point among people that if we take care of nature, nature in turn will take care of mankind", he said.

Hands-on approach

Rahul will have to face electoral bullets if he becomes the Congress president again

It can now be said that Congress matriarch Sonia Gandhi has done everything she could to protect son Rahul. Whether that can stem the prospects of the party from dwindling further is another story. The Saturday meeting of the Congress Working Committee was unique. It witnessed, for the first time in recent memory, a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family forced to take note of growing dissent in the party organisation and handle it differently from the past when disciplinary action was the standard remedy. How times have changed. The dissidents make a large, powerful group and throwing them out would mean ejecting the entire second rung leadership. The Family runs the show thanks to irrational allegiance to the leadership that stills dissent beyond a point. Sonia Gandhi did not confront the dissidents. She reasoned with them. She explained to them that their main grouse – lack of a full-time president – was groundless as she was a “full-time” and “hands-on” president. She thus shielded them from her son who left the presidency after the 2019 election debacle and has since been reluctant to be anointed again. She then sought patience from them to await the next president. Probably, him again. They wanted an elected president and they will get one, she told them, backing her word with a time-bound organisational election schedule. What she has managed to do in the process is show exemplary shrewdness in steering the dawdling ship in the rough seas by keeping intact all hands on the oars.



From her point of view, son Rahul's high point after becoming Congress president in December 2017 was the party forming four State Governments, including one in a coalition, after the assembly elections in 2018. He quit the following year. Rahul was not president when Congress was whipped in West Bengal. He would not be there either when the Congress fights in Uttar Pradesh. The Presidential elections would pass him by too. Sonia obliquely told them that Rahul's was not a case of power without responsibility because she was the “hands-on” power. If the dissidents had an issue, they would have to deal with her, not Rahul. As much as the dissidents would have wanted an elected leader to take responsibility for failures, they were unable to tell her that to her face. And by the time they thought of doing so, Sonia Gandhi came up with aretort cloaked in reasonableness. However, Rahul, if he is president again, will have to bite the electoral bullet in December 2022 in Gujarat and four key States in 2023. So, the 2019-2022 breather does not help him before taking on Narendra Modi in 2024. Sonia realises the ultimate irony of the Congress: The dynasty may demand a Gandhi to be president but the legacy of the party demands striving for the Prime Minister's post and nothing else. There is the minor issue of the two demands converging somewhere.

PICTALK



Debris collects on Lower Lake after the end of Navratri, in Bhopal

PTI

An evil plot

The Durga Puja attacks in Bangladesh are designed to throw the country back into chaos

It is disturbing news again from a neighbour, Bangladesh. Hindu temples have been vandalised and at least three people lost their lives in the violent clashes in the People's Republic of Bangladesh. This is one of the biggest disruptions in interfaith harmony of the country that is making remarkable strides on the economic front. Sheikh Hasina's Government has been in power for quite some time. However, religious fanaticism has been on the rise in Bangladesh. It validates what writer Tasleema Nasrin has been warning about Muslim fundamentalism in the country. That the religious bigots chose Durga Puja as the occasion to rupture the social fabric of the country speaks volumes about their designs. It can have a spillover, multiplier effect and reaction in bordering India and thus it could snowball into a major issue. This would neither be good for Hasina's Government nor for her country that needs peace to prosper. If Bangladesh burns, it will be pulled back to the old days of economic hardships and misery. The Bangladesh



Government has deployed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in 22 districts after the attacks. This shows that the incidents are neither isolated nor unplanned.

So far, three people have been killed during clashes between Muslim bigots and the police at Hajiganj sub-district in Chandpur. One person died later in the hospital of injuries. The police have so far detained 43 people in connection with the violence. This is one of the biggest challenges that the ruling Awami League party is facing right now. It has a daunting task to protect the Hindu minorities while not antagonising the majority of Muslims. This indeed is a tight ropewalk for Sheikh Hasina and her party. Hindus are 10 per cent of the 169 million, largely Muslim, population. The Awami League, which led the struggle for independence, harped on the Bangla language movement, not religion. But later it fell out with the military, which consolidated its position by supporting religious fundamentalists. In 1977, Zia-ur-Rahman dropped secularism. Later in 1988, General Ershad made Islam the State religion and hobbled with the fundamentalists, laying the foundation of the current rise of religious extremism. The sporadic violence has claimed several lives ever since, though this time it is more organised and designed to garner maximum mileage.

Jinnah: Divider of the subcontinent?



PRAFULL GORADIA

The recent killings in Kashmir by Pakistan-backed terrorists remind us of what India would have been enduring had there been no Partition

Who wanted Partition? Who needed Pakistan? Certainly, the Khoja, Memon and Bohri businessmen did. They preferred competing with the Punjabi farmer than the Parsis and Banias, Marwari, Gujarati, Chettis or whichever other traditional trading communities in India. The Habibs, for example, were big grain traders in Bombay. Their junior partner Ratanlal Gandhi once asked the senior Habib why they financed the Muslim League when all their business and property was in and around Bombay? Habib's answer to Gandhi was that it was much easier to flourish against farmers than businessmen *banias*.

Others keen on Partition were the radical Muslims, wherever they were in India. An educated League leader of Madras — Mohammed Ismail — was a leading supporter not only of Partition but also an exchange of population, which meant that all Muslims ought to go to Pakistan and non-Muslims to remain in India. Ismail himself did not leave Madras. Yet another group of supporters were the students, past and present of Aligarh University which was described by M.A. Jinnah as “the arsenal of Pakistan”. For the rest, Muslims were interested but were unsure and therefore lukewarm. Punjab had a Muslim majority with a Muslim Premier and ruled by the Unionist Party led by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and his successors. These leaders saw no future in Partition as Punjab enjoyed Muslim rule with the whole of the Indian market freely available to their province.

Similarly, Bengal was in two minds and not clearly for Pakistan. One, to support Partition or to follow the reasoning of Punjab; two, to have a united Bengal as a third separate dominion, apart from Pakistan and India. Sir Abdul Rahim, Fazlul Rahman and Sarat Bose met several times to discuss the issue. Jinnah quietly supported the idea as did the Communist Party of India. The truth was no one could visualise the concept and shape of Pakistan. Not even Jinnah; he retained his magnificent bungalow Marble House on



Malabar Hill with the intent of spending his winters there. No one foresaw that relations between the two dominions would be perpetually hostile.

Hindus abhorred the idea of their motherland's division. Visionaries like Dr BR Ambedkar and Dr Munje of the Hindu Mahasabha realised that the coexistence of the two communities was difficult, and therefore not beneficial. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to realise this truth in 1946 when widespread rioting began in August of that year. Punjab had witnessed bloodshed and looting but elsewhere it was business-as-usual. Jinnah was himself not a committed Muslim. His grandfather had converted to the faith led by Sir Aga Khan called Ismaili Khojas. This denomination was declared by the Bombay High Court in 1861 as half Muslim and half Hindu because of its inheritance laws. The family continued to call themselves Jinnabhai. It was in England, where he was studying to become a barrister that he slightly altered his surname and passport to Jinnah; the ‘bhai’ was dropped. He enjoyed



JINNAH HAD TO DELIVER REVENGE ON GANDHI, AND BEGAN WITH RIOTS TO WHICH THE MAHATMA HAD NO ANSWER

pork sandwiches as well as a sun-downer (whisky) on most evenings.

Jinnah knew the cards could be loaded against him. Dead against the grain of his constitutional nature, he ordered the Great Calcutta Killing on 16 August 1946, in the hope that the riots would be retaliated against and spread in the country. Killings in Punjab alone were not sufficient. Moreover, time was running out for him. He either knew or suspected that his lungs were infected with tuberculosis (TB), which until the post-World War II period, was a fatal disease. And sure enough, TB took Jinnah's life in September 1948. He had to settle scores with Gandhi, first for resorting to taking politics to the streets and villages (which Jinnah could not cope with), and later in 1928, ignoring him at the Calcutta session of the Congress. Jinnah kept avoiding the prefix ‘Mahatma’ and addressing Gandhi as ‘Minister’. The audience did not let Jinnah speak unless he addressed Gandhi as Mahatma. There must have been similar other incidents before 1928. Jinnah had to

deliver revenge to Gandhi and began with riots to which the Mahatma had no answer except touring the affected areas and conducting prayer meetings. Nor did he have a counter-strategy. Even Patel, Nehru and others in the Congress couldn't think of how to counter the League. Non-violence could not cope with brutality and violence.

Jinnah was more a brilliant advocate than a leader. He is reputed to have suits tailored at the famous Saville Row in London but until he was elected the life president of the Muslim League in 1935, he had no *chudidar*-pyjamas nor *sherwanis* (essential Muslim attire) as his brother and my grandfather's dear friend Ahmed told the latter. The brothers did not know how to perform *namaz*. As Ahmed told my grandfather, the brothers were culturally more Parsi and less Muslim.

(This is part one of a series on Muhammad Ali Jinnah's role in India-Pak Partition.)

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STALIN SHOWS THE WAY

Sir — The unprecedented and mammoth victory of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in the local body elections is indeed a recognition the people have given to the Tamil Nadu Government, particularly for the implementation of several public welfare schemes in such a short time by the charismatic Chief Minister MK Stalin. Though the main Opposition AIADMK and its allies, particularly the BJP, tried to tarnish the image of the new Government on implementation of the election promises made by the DMK, people refused to fall into their trap, realising the sincerity with which the new Government was trying to fulfil their election promises despite the empty coffers the earlier corrupt AIADMK regime has left for them.

Looking at the manner in which Chief Minister Stalin is conducting himself, people believe that he would never let them down and make the State regain its past glory and become the number one State in the country again in all key parameters. Realising the trust of the people in them, the leaders and cadres of the DMK should also realise their responsibilities and perform their duty honestly keeping only the welfare of the people supreme in their mind.

Tharcus S Fernando |Virugambakkam

DID NOT SEE THAT COMING

Sir — The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh lauded the former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for her leadership in times of war and said it was a positive experience in harnessing women power for national development, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. His comments in such a positive approach in the era of bitter political rivalry reminds of similar sentiments expressed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee who called Indira Gandhi ‘Durga’ for leading the nation to victory in the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

Gone are the sweet memories of the yesteryears when the first Prime Minister of India congratulated his political rival young Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his maiden speech in the Parliament, forecasting

Vaccination drive in full swing



The recent release of the COVID-19 anthem in the beautiful voice of Kailash Kher by the Union Health Ministry — to mark the 100 crore vaccination target — is absolutely a victory for India in terms of mass vaccination records. At the same time, we know that this is not the end of the pandemic as about only 30 per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated yet. The lyrics “*tike se bacha hai, tike se bachega desh*” are somewhat true when it comes to life saving causes. There was a time in India when

vaccination drives for other pathogen based diseases failed miserably. Taking into consideration the size and diversity of India's population, vaccination of 100 crores is itself a record for us.

Such songs will not only help in removing vaccine hesitancy and controversies around India's domestically produced COVID vaccines, but also set an example before the world about India's potential in the medical and healthcare sector. It will develop a nationalist sense in every Indian that we are not lagging in the fight against the COVID-19. As Indians, we should celebrate the 100 crore vaccine mark, but at the same time we also must encourage people to get vaccinated and follow the COVID protocols. The whole world is eagerly waiting for the day when there would be zero COVID-19 cases; however, that can be achieved only by the efforts of the authorities and the support of the citizens.

Kirti Wadhwa | Kanpur

a great politician of the future in him. The former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had sent a gift parcel of *Dhoti-Kurta* to a prominent parliamentarian Prakashvir Shastri, as a token of request to wear Indian attire on his first foreign trip. Such moments of political bonhomie are very rare in India's current political spectrum. Country's welfare is no longer the vision but only individual interest is what the politicians seek. Had the ethos of such leaders been alive, India's social, political and economical state would have been far better.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal | Delhi

GOOD TO HAVE DHONI BACK

Sir — They say age is just a number. And that statement fits in perfectly for MS Dhoni, who led the Chennai Super Kings to victory in the IPL 2021. What is incredible is the way the yellow brigade bounced back after a supremely disappointing season in 2020, where they became the first team to be knocked out of the play-offs and, for the first time ever

in the history of the tournament, failed to make it to final four. But CSK's triumphant return this season, with pretty much the same squad, has shown why Dhoni has been so successful over the years despite being one of the oldest players in the tournament.

Just recently, Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the first player in the world to captain a team in 300 T20 games across various competitions during his side's IPL clash against KKR. Also, few days ago, India's T20 World Cup squad was announced with former skipper MS Dhoni reuniting the ‘men in blue’ as the side's mentor. MS Dhoni's appointment as India's mentor was a way to use his experience in the T20 World Cup. MS Dhoni is once again ready to contribute to the team and this comes as no surprise that he has decided not to charge a dime for mentoring the men in blue.

Shashank Patil | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

We have come a long way on the roadmap that Dr Abdul Kalam had laid out for India.



Union Minister — Hardeep Singh Puri

The way we produce, consume and waste food is taking a heavy toll on our planet...and costing us trillions of dollars a year.

UN Secretary General — Antonio Guterres

My fans have lapped up every track of mine and it's this unwavering support that pushes me to better myself with every track.

Singer — Darshan Raval

The IPL gives India an edge over other teams and makes it one of the big favourites to win the T20 World Cup.

Former India cricketer — Suresh Raina

All the party members are unanimous that Rahul Gandhi should take over as president of the Congress.

Congress leader — Ambika Soni

FIRST COLUMN

BETWEEN ROUTINE AND INNOVATION

Routine is one of the two legs of human existence, innovation is the other



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Life is full of paradoxes. The celebrated doers, thinkers, writers have a way of capturing what they have seen as the 'truth' and verbalising it. Sometimes the 'truths' are easy to understand, sometimes abstruse. Mark Twain reportedly said, "Never fail to pay yourself a compliment; it may be your only chance to get one". This is a straight forward quip with a touch of humour and irony. Some of his other, reported, quotes are a little more complex and perhaps difficult to comprehend. For instance, "For each one kills the thing he loves". One has, at times, tried to make sense of the second quote. Some claim that they can approximate what he could have meant. That is another story. The central part of this narrative is to focus on common place remarks which capture some truth in life. One of my favourite quotes is, "Keeping up with the routine is far more demanding than trying hands at innovation". When this remark is used in a public forum, sometimes, one gets reactions which total up to saying, "routine is routine, what is difficult with keeping up with it". The truth of life is that one lives in an era where amongst the buzz words, 'innovation', perhaps, tops the list. People are never tired of pleading for 'innovation' or trying to put it across as the ultimate need of life. It is a need. One does not know whether it is the



'ultimate' need or not. Of course, innovation is necessary. That is also how, change could take place to keep pace with changing requirements. However, many empiricists have found that scope for practice of innovation is bounded in many ways. This includes real world realities or time needed for the body to rejuvenate. These are two limiting items, among several constants, which cannot and will not change. It is keeping up with the routine that is so essential to keep the body as a functioning and an effective system. Similar is the story in collective living or routine of livelihood. One may move from cash to bitcoins, but the reference point of an intermediary, referred to as 'money' as a medium of exchange of goods, services, etc., is a constant. Thus, it is that life of innovation is bound by the domain of operation of the subject, nature of material, etc. It is the 'routine' which also provides formidable challenges.

The body needs a given number of hours of rest in a 24-hour cycle to repair its cells, rest its organs and unwind the stresses. This is best serviced through regular habits. Usually, the period for rest is supposed to come somewhere between sunset and sunrise, if it is in the tropical zones. The human body attuned to a 24-hour cycle needs a minimum of 6-8 hours rest. This may vary from one point of the life cycle to another, say between youth and old age. However, the range of variation remains limited. Routine is one of the two legs on which human existence walks. The other is innovation. In the interest of holistic living, almost equal thought needs to be given to the maintenance and improvement of servicing the routine requirements of life. Since the other leg on which human life moves is innovation, that too is important. As of now, it appears that the challenges and the needs of innovation are fairly well recognised. The challenges and the needs of routine need equal thought and servicing. A life well balanced, between thought through routine (serviced with determination) when balanced by innovative thinking and action, provides a good charter of success and effectiveness.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

Why is Taiwan at the mercy of China?



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

Beijing might resolve to disable Taiwan's communications and operational systems, making the resistance very low and a war relatively bloodless

Historically, China has clashed with the former Soviet Union and Vietnam, intervened in the Korean War, and waged a full-fledged war with India in 1962 despite adopting the foreign policy 'principles of peaceful coexistence'. Today, Beijing has increased its strategic footprints worldwide, especially in Africa, through UN Peace Keeping Operations. Its support to the Taliban has been a cause of worry to many liberal states. Additionally, it is involved in disagreements and maritime territorial disputes in the South and East China Sea and boundary disputes with India and Taiwan.

Concerning India, the Galwan valley clashes and border incursions along with President Xi Jinping's state visits to India strategically communicated its intent to be recognised as an economic and military power. Recent border intrusions in two states simultaneously- Ultrakhnad and Arunachal- and negatively commenting on the Indian Vice President's Arunachal visit raise questions about China's intent. A refusal to disengage beyond a certain point with India apart from repeatedly stressing its "peaceful reunification" of Taiwan by intruding into the air defence zone reflects its high running aspirations to be recognised as a great power. Further, its opaque debt trap policies pose severe challenges to the liberal world order.

The last few decades have seen China's financial and military growth which has translated into its aspiration to fulfil its 'China Dream' and has ignited its desire for hegemony. Beijing aims to attain a 'droit de regard' or "special interests" in its neighbouring areas in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region.

The questions that many ponder are will China use force against India or Taiwan? Is there a military conflict in waiting, a few days or months from now? The answer is most probably yes, but in accordance with China's suitability and its place of preference. The reason is not related to its insecurity viz-a-viz India or the U.S., but instead from its current perceived 'rightful place'. China is a classic case of misplaced nationalism. It firmly believes that once it can showcase its power well, it will gain entry into the 'great power club'. Such an objective aims to achieve appreciation and an increase in the rank of its social status. The use of force is thus an instrument, the effectiveness of which goes beyond the horizons of financial prosperity, military armaments and security. From a geopolitical perspective, high status brings with itself benefits such as deterrence from other more enormous powers merely by power projection and an acquired ability to influence the decisions of its neighbouring countries. New objectives such as norm-setting constitute the temptations of using force in foreign relations. Thus, a military conflict for social status remains a strong possibility. During the pandemic, as China faced



IF THE US DISPLAYS ITS WILLINGNESS TO GET INVOLVED IN HOSTILITIES, CHANCES OF CHINESE HESITATION FOR A FULLBLOWN MILITARY CONFLICT ON MULTIPLE BORDERS WILL INCREASE. THAT COULD MAKE INDIA A POTENTIAL TARGET THAT WILL TEST THE US COMMITMENTS

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



international isolation, it stopped with a Galwan 'clash' and kept relatively low on the question of Taiwan. As the world re-opens, those possibilities are narrowing down. Further, owing to its OBOR non-performing debts and its domestic economic crisis, apart from its financial commitments towards militarisation, there are fears that the 'bubble' can burst at any point of time. To divert its people's attention and gain another five years at the helm of the affairs in 2022, Xi might resort to force and deliberately brush aside negotiations and meaningful talks.

From another dimension, how China and Russia perceive the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is also important. Beijing had raised questions about States in South and East Asia placing their trust in America and had belittled its withdrawal in multiple statements. The decline in American commitments in finance and military may lead China to think about the feasibility of using force against its neighbours- India or Taiwan. Of the two, India has the power of responding in military terms and can ensure strong support from its European and American allies. At a strategic level, China might not want to give Russia a choice between India or itself. The Chinese stalemate with aggressive posturing will continue. However, a repeat of 'Galwan' and possible brinkmanship in various other Eastern sectors can be resorted to by China in March or April 2022, given the upcoming cold months. PLA soldiers are not physically fit

to fight in high altitude zones. A full-fledged war with India might not be its intention, and it would continue to contain India through its hybrid warfare or by using Pakistan against it. Taiwan probably will be an immediate target because of several factors. It has mild winters suitable for PLA soldiers, limited conventional offensive capabilities, and a lack of an institutionalised agreement with the US for security. Further, its non-membership in the UN, leading to its disability to speak for itself in case of open hostilities and limited outreach to the world countries also increases its risk of inviting Chinese aggression. In tactical terms, these limitations of Taiwan make it suitable for the Chinese area of action. To avoid international criticism of its Taiwan hostilities, Beijing might resolve to strike the command, control, communications and intelligence node and possibly disable the operational systems, making the resistance very low and war a relatively bloodless phenomenon leading to a 'peaceful reunification'. Such a move will send strategic signals beyond its immediate peripheries.

Moreover, it might also run a risk to hedge upon the world opinion in which no country would like to disrupt the essential supply chains because of the level of financial interdependencies with China. The warning to Germany and other European countries against adopting trade practices detrimental to its interests could also be associated with its posturing challenges. A territory that will be relatively easy to

capture and does not escalate into a significant war guides us to the Chinese concept of "local war under high-tech conditions" as outlined by the previous president Jiang Zemin. Thus, given the calculations that Beijing might have, there are considerably fewer chances that the Taiwan takeover might spill over into regional conflicts.

However, given the formalisation of AUKUS as a reinforcing organisation, the element of force might be less, and the spillover will also depend upon the US response. If the US displays its willingness to get involved in hostilities, chances of Chinese hesitation for a full-blown military conflict on multiple borders will increase. That could make India a potential target that will test the US commitments. In case the US does not commit itself, India's Arunachal Pradesh may be the next target. The Chinese ability to carry out interoperability operations in space and cyber technologies through militarisation of its artificial intelligence apart from conventional and nuclear operations poses a high risk to the democratic countries. Consequently, such conflicts have high tendencies to spiral into major ones and once initiated, it becomes difficult to limit them into a 'local area' due to the intensity of the emotions involved.

Taiwan is highlighting its plight on various world forums and simultaneously preparing for a full-scale Chinese invasion through military drills. Nevertheless, it largely remains a fault line in the security of the Indo-Pacific region.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

GOA NEEDS TO BRING 'DURGA' FROM WEST BENGAL TO ELIMINATE THE 'BHASMASUR BJP GOVERNMENT' IN THE STATE.
—GOA FORWARD PARTY PRESIDENT
KIRAN KANDOLKAR



YOU CANNOT COMPARE DURGA WITH A HUMAN BEING, SOMEONE WHO COMMITTED ATROCITIES ON WOMEN AFTER THE BENGAL ELECTION RESULTS.
—GOA CHIEF MINISTER
PRAMOD SAWANT

Priyanka's broomstick message

While the Gandhi family has not been spared criticism for its handling of Punjab, little importance has been given to the limited options they had

Paradoxically, despite Congress base in Uttar Pradesh being extremely weak, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra appear to have acted wisely in leaving nothing to chance while responding to the Lakhimpur Khericase. Protesting against her detention in Sitapur, Priyanka displayed no qualms in picking up the broomstick to "clean" the guest-house, a video-clipping of which did not take long to go viral.

As of now, though they have received ample media-coverage, chances of these communication strategies translating into Congress faring well in UP Assembly elections are dim. But yes, they certainly subdued the noise about the Congress facing a crisis of weak leadership over the



NILOFAR SUHRAWARDY

(The writer is a senior journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)

Punjab imbroglio. Congress has a lot at stake in Punjab but almost nothing in UP.

And this demands deliberation on yet another side of Congress-politics displayed in UP and in Punjab. Clearly, Congress is without any strong regional leader in UP. The situation is opposite in Punjab. Besides, the chances of BJP being pushed out of power soon in UP seem remote; the same may be said about it assuming power in Punjab. There is nothing puzzling about Congress facing a dilemma in Punjab, when viewed through "democratic" lens. It is debatable whether Congress high command "erred" or not in giving too much importance to regional leaders like Navjot Singh Sidhu. Democratically speaking, perhaps, Congress



leaders could not afford to ignore the manner in which Sidhu was raising his voice and also receiving media coverage.

Yet, it seems, the Gandhi siblings chose not to yield to all political tantrums of Sidhu. This was reflected in opting for a least expected person to take over from Captain Amarinder Singh as CM — Charanjit Singh Channi. It is possible, negative criticism

faced by Congress leaders, due to Sidhu's style of politicking, have made the Gandhi siblings wiser about not yielding too much political space to party politicians fond of making too much noise and gaining media coverage.

Besides, media attention can never be a guarantee to earning electoral support. Presumably, this reality cautioned the Gandhi family in choosing not to concede to Sidhu's desire of succeeding the Captain as chief minister. That would have only angered the Captain further, whose wife Preneet Kaur is a Congress MP from Patiala. While expressing concern over her husband being "humiliated", she specified that she is not leaving the Congress "as of now". In addition, Congress leaders cannot

be oblivious of the strong support enjoyed by Captain amidst the protesting farmers and in Punjab. Negative campaigning indulged against him by Sidhu and his political camp is not likely to turn voters against Captain.

Captain has not refrained from sending alarm signals to Congress high command through his meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah and a possible meeting with PM Narendra Modi. The prospects of BJP making any gains in Punjab on its own are limited. Nevertheless, the party leaders will be delighted if Congress fails to return to power.

In all probability, Captain is least likely to reveal his actual political plans till the very last minute. He will keep his cards close to his chest and

meticulously observe Sidhu's "tactics", with his priorities likely to be decided by the latter's success or failure.

Notwithstanding all the criticism faced by Congress leadership about their "handling" of the Punjab crisis, there is another angle to explore. Democratically speaking, would it have been fair on their part to sideline Sidhu?

In all probability, the situation may have worsened, perhaps led to a more pronounced split within the Punjab Congress. The same has apparently been averted with the resignation of Captain. Similarly, the selection of his successor may also be viewed as an astute strategy.

While the Gandhi family has not been spared criticism for its handling of the Punjab

crisis, little importance has been accorded to the limited options they had. Interestingly, in UP, their handling of Lakhimpur Kheri case has earned them laurels. Their moves, particularly of Priyanka, have certainly gone a long way in enhancing their democratic image.

However, they had no option but to lead the protest in UP. Any decision of theirs to step aside may only lead to intra-party bickering at all levels. The party crisis witnessed in Punjab may be replayed in all States and at the national level. Also, if instead of the Gandhi siblings other party members had stepped forward in Lakhimpur-Kheri, the Congress moves would not have probably attracted much attention.

MONETISATION OF ASSETS OF PRIVATISATION-BOUND CPSEs

FinMin to seek Cabinet nod for setting up company

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry will soon move the Cabinet to seek approval for setting up a company for transfer and subsequent monetisation of land and non-core assets of privatisation-bound CPSEs, an official said.

A special purpose vehicle (SPV) in the form of a company would be set up by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to hold these assets which would be monetised to fetch value to the exchequer, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

"We are talking about a company which will be there for many years, which will specialise in handling surplus land and non-core asset monetisation. We are expecting it shortly. As soon as we get Cabinet approval," Pandey told PTI. There are some CPSEs for strategic disinvestment and



"we feel certain portion of land is not really worth going with the company and those assets could be monetised", he said. Cabinet nod, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), which is now under the Ministry of Finance, will be entrusted with doing the asset monetisation.

The government is targeting to conclude strategic sale of BPCL, Shipping Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans, Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd, this fiscal.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the government announced the PSE (public sector enterprises) privatisation policy as per which all PSUs will be privatised, barring four strategic sectors of Atomic energy, Space and Defence; Transport and Telecommunications; Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals; and Banking, Insurance and financial services. In these strategic sectors, the Government will retain only a bare minimum number of PSUs.

SITHARAMAN TO CEOs OF MAJOR US GIANTS

‘Opportunities galore for investors and industry stakeholders’

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Opportunities are galore in India for all investors and industry stakeholders with the current reset in the global supply chain and clear-headed and committed leadership in the country, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has told CEOs of top American companies.

Sitharaman arrived here on Friday after her visit to Washington DC where she participated in the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Sitharaman and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen also co-chaired the eighth ministerial meeting of the India-USA Economic and Financial Partnership Dialogue in Washington.

"With the current reset in the global supply chain and clear-headed India, I see opportunities galore in India for all investors and industry stakeholders," Sitharaman said

during her address to global business leaders and investors at a roundtable organised by industry chamber FICCI and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum here on Saturday.

Startups in India have grown tremendously and many are now raising money through capital markets. This year itself, more than 16 of them will qualify as unicorns, she said.

India has fully leveraged the potential of digitisation even during the most challenging times, the finance minister said. in the financial sector is enabling pushing the frontier of financial inclusion and fintechs are playing a key role in this area, she said at the roundtable, the Finance Ministry tweeted.

Sitharaman also met Mastercard Executive Chairman Ajay Banga and Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach, FedEx Corporation President and Chief Operating Officer Raj Subramaniam.

Govt seeks applications for 20 judicial, technical members at NCLT, NCLAT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has sought applications for a total of 20 positions of judicial and technical members at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) as well as the appellate tribunal NCLAT.

As many as 15 posts, including that of 9 judicial members and 6 technical members, are to be filled up at the NCLT. Besides, applications have been invited for 3 positions of judicial members and 2 of technical members at the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). The last date for submission of the applications online is November 12, according to public notices issued by the corporate affairs ministry.

In recent weeks, the government has been filling up vacancies at various tribunals, including NCLT and ITAT (Income Tax Appellate Tribunal).

Last month, at least 31 people were appointed as judicial, technical and accountant members at NCLT and ITAT.

On September 6, the Supreme Court said the Centre

Among other requirements for the positions at NCLT and NCLAT, the applicants should be at least 50 years old

was testing its "patience" and "emasculating" tribunals by not appointing officials to the quasi-judicial bodies which are facing severe crunch of presiding officers as well as judicial and technical members. The apex court had also emphasised that it did not want any confrontation with the government.

Among other requirements for the positions at NCLT and NCLAT, the applicants should be at least 50 years old.

A person should have been a judge of a high court or a district judge for at least 5 years or has a minimum 10 years experience to be considered for the post of judicial member at the NCLAT.

In the case of a technical

member, those who have been practising as a chartered accountant, cost accountant or company for at least 15 years will be eligible.

People with a minimum of 15 years as a member of the Indian Corporate Law Service or Indian Legal Service and holding the rank of Secretary or Additional Secretary to the central government can also apply.

Besides, individuals who have served for at least 5 years as a presiding officer of a labour court, tribunal or national tribunal constituted under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 will be eligible, according to a public notice.

Those with "proven ability, integrity and standing having special knowledge and professional experience, of not less than 15 years, in industrial finance, industrial management, industrial reconstruction, investment, accountancy..." will also be able to apply for the post of technical member at the NCLAT.

The principal bench of NCLAT is in the national capital and another bench is in Chennai.

India’s coal import drops in Aug despite higher fuel demand from power sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal import registered a decline of 2.7 per cent to 15.22 million tonnes (MT) in August this year amid the country's power plants grappling with fuel shortages.

The country imported 15.64 MT of coal in the corresponding month last year.

According to data compiled by mjunction services, "Imports in August 2021 stood at around 15.22 million tonnes...Imports in August 2021 were also down by 2.7 percent over August 2020."

Mjunction CEO and MD Vinaya Varma attributed the decline in volumes to the steady increase in seaborne coal prices coupled with the initiatives taken by the domestic miners for import substitution.

However, he said, there is a spurt in demand from the power sector.

"What impact it will have on imports, given the volatility in international prices, is to be seen," he added. Of the total import during August 2021, non-coking coal was at 9.08 MT, against 10.33 MT imported during August last year. Coking coal imports were at

4.37 MT, up against 3.17 MT imported during August 2020.

India's coal imports during August 2021 through the major and non-major ports are estimated to have decreased by 6.71 per cent over July 2021.

Imports in July stood at 16.31 MT.

During April-August 2021, coal import stood at 92.49 MT, about 21.27 per cent higher than 76.27 MT imported during April-August 2020. During April-August 2021, non-coking coal import was at 60.85 MT as compared to 51.23 MT imported during April-August 2020.

Coking coal imports were recorded at 22.19 MT, against 14.38 MT imported during the same period last year. Coal India which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output had earlier said that due to skyrocketing coal prices in international markets, all the consumers have been vying for domestic coal, hiking up the demand. Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday said closure of some mines, and inundation of a few others due to monsoon led to the crisis but there is no need to panic as the situation is improving.

FPIs turn net sellers in capital markets; pull out ₹1,472 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have turned net sellers in the capital markets in October so far, reversing the trend of net investments in the previous two months, due to depreciation in the rupee and global factors, experts said.

According to the depositors' data, FPIs have pulled out ₹1,472 crore from capital markets on a net basis in the current month so far.

A trend reversal was witnessed in the debt segment in October from the big buying in the previous two months when FPIs had invested ₹13,363 crore in September and ₹14,376.2 crore in August. In October so far, they pulled out ₹1,698 crore.

"This trend reversal in debt investment is due to the INR depreciation in October," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services. In equities, FPIs invested ₹226 crore on a net basis.

"FPIs who were sellers in banking stocks in the first half of September turned buyers in the second half. But they were sellers in software services throughout September. The



strong performance by IT companies like Wipro, Infosys and Mindtree is likely to attract more flows into the segment, going forward," he added.

H i m a n s h u Srivastava, associate director - manager research, Morningstar India said that as markets touched all-time highs and valuations soar, FPI would have preferred to stay on the sidelines, adopt a wait and watch approach and continue to book profits along the way.

"There continues to be a concern among FPIs with respect to the tapering of easy liquidity after the US Fed hint of rate hike sooner than expected. Concerns such as rising oil prices and US bond yields and challenges to the

Chinese economy have also been on their radar, thus keeping them on tenterhook and preventing them from substantially investing in Indian markets," he added.

On the future of FPI flows, Shrikant Chouhan, head - equity research (retail), Kotak Securities said that Brent crude oil prices are trading at elevated levels and a sharp increase in energy prices can be a key headwind for the equity markets.

In addition, any increase in the rate by the US Fed Reserve in the near future, would also act a key headwind for overall flow in the emerging markets. Hence, FPI flows are expected to remain volatile in the emerging markets.

Gold ETFs attract ₹446-crore in Sept

INFLOW MAY CONTINUE IN COMING MONTHS ON FESTIVE SEASON DEMAND

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) attracted ₹446 crore in September and inflow may continue in coming months due to strong demand on the back of festival season in the country.

The was sharply higher than the net inflow of ₹24 crore recorded in the previous month. In July, the category saw a net withdrawal of ₹61.5 crore, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

With this, gold ETF cate-

gory has received a net inflow of ₹3,515 crore so far. The segment witnessed just one month of net outflows, which was in July.

The latest inflow helped in pushing the number of folios in the category by over 14 per cent to 24.6 lakh in September from 21.46 lakh in the preceding month. So far this year, the folio numbers have surged by 56 per cent. Market experts attributed the inflow in September to correction in the price of the yellow metal and onset of the festival season in the country.

"Gold ETFs saw a prominent inflow for the past month. In the thick of a volatile market, resorting to a safe instrument can be one of the reasons for this move, with rising gold prices being the other reason drawing attention to the instrument," Priti Rathi Gupta, Founder of LXME, said.



Country's oil import bill has risen in just 5 months of FY22

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The sharp economic recovery and rising demand post the second wave of Covid coupled with a spike in global oil prices may pose a challenge for the Government in FY22 to maintain fiscal discipline amid good growth in tax revenue.

The country's crude oil import bill that fell drastically last year in the absence of demand and soft oil prices, has risen by over 138 per cent in April-August of FY22 to \$ 42 billion, up from close to \$ 18 billion the same period of last year.

During the period, crude has jumped by about 40 per cent from \$60 a barrel to more than \$85 a barrel now. This price pressure has come when demand for petroleum products is on a rise in the country already reaching pre-Covid levels and rising.

All this has meant that India is not only importing more to meet additional demand, but is doing it at premium prices ballooning its import bill.

Quarterly earnings, global cues to dictate trends in markets this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings and global cues will be the major sentiment driver for the equity market this week, according to analysts.

Of late, Benchmark indices have been on a record-breaking run.

"Quarterly results will dictate market sentiment and will be the talk of this week as they pick up the pace. D-Street will be all ears to any management insights to forecast the future earnings trajectory.

"With the anticipation that companies would keep up their momentum from the previous quarter into the second quarter, investors may see whipsaw movements in the stock this week as results beat or miss market expectations," said Yesha Shah, head (equity research) at Samco Securities. Among major earnings to

be announced this week are from UltraTech

Cement, ACC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Asian Paints, Hindustan Zinc, IDBI, Bank of Maharashtra, South Indian Bank, Federal Bank and Reliance Industries Limited.

"If we talk about the cues for this week then quarterly earnings will dominate the market where the market will react to HDFC Bank and Avenue Supermarkets earnings on Monday.

"Ultratech Cement, ACC, HUL, Nestle, Asian Paints, JSW Steel, HDFC Life, and Reliance Industries will come out with their earnings during the week," Santosh Meena, head (research) at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

He further added that other than earnings, global cues will be important where global markets have started to do well after a period of cor-

rection.

Last week, the BSE benchmark rallied 1,246.89 points or 2.07 per cent.

The benchmark went past the 61,000-mark for the first time on Thursday.

Markets were closed on Friday for Dussehra.

"Banking will be the key sector under focus in the coming days as the sector is set to kick-start its earnings season. With the expectation of a strong recovery in corporate earnings, the Indian market is positioned to continue its bull run.

"However, any deviation from market expectation may lead to short-term correction in the respective segments," said Vinod Nair, head (research) at Geojit Financial Services.

Markets will also track the movement of the rupee, foreign institutional investors and Brent crude.

Power consumption up 3% at 57.22 billion units in Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's power consumption grew 3.35 per cent in the first half of October to 57.22 billion units (BU), showing recovery amid coal shortage at electricity generation plants, according to power ministry data.

Last year during October 1-15, power consumption stood at 55.36 BU which was higher than 49.66 BU in the same period in 2019. The data clearly shows that there is recovery in power consumption as well as demand in the country.

Amid the coal shortage at power plants in the country, the peak power shortage moderated to 986 MW on October 15 in sharp contrast to 11,626 MW on October 7.

It is to be noted that the 11,626 MW peak power shortage on October 7 was the highest during the first half of this



month.

Besides, the latest coal stock report for 135 coal-based power plants monitored by Central Electricity Authority for October 13, showed that the number of non-pithead power plants having less than four days of coal stock (supercritical coal stock) reduced to 64 from 69 on October 8 when the daily power consumption touched its peak of 3,900 million units in first half of this month.

Earlier this week, the power ministry had stated that the capacity of units under outage due to low coal stocks reduced from 11 GW on October 12 to 5 GW on October 14. Experts are of the view that there would be good recovery in power demand as well as consumption due to the government's efforts to ramp up coal supplies at plants and improvement in economic activities due to lifting of lockdown restrictions by states.

India will launch industry-led policies in space sector: ISRO chief

IANs ■ DUBAI

India is revising its existing Policies and is also in the process of bringing in new ones to increase industry participation in the space sector, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr K. Sivan said on Sunday.

Sivan, who is Secretary, Department of Space, said this, via a video message during the inaugural session on 'Future of Space - International

Participations and Collaborations' at The India Pavilion, Expo 2020 Dubai.

He emphasised that the recent reforms in the sector has ensured that the role of the private sector has evolved from being just suppliers to partners in the process.

He also highlighted that space is one of the significant areas that India is looking at for international cooperation.

"I hope space cooperation will further strengthen with

commercial and technological collaborations," said Sivan, adding that Indian industry has to play a big role in the space sector globally.

India is planning to boost the space sector in the global market.

With an aim to make the country an economic space hub in the future, it also recently launched a new industry body, the Indian Space Association (ISpA).



Bol cuts home, vehicle loan rates

Mumbai (PTI): State-run Bank of India on Sunday announced a cut in its interest rates on home and vehicle loans by 35 basis point and 50 basis points, respectively. With this cut, the interest rate on home loans starts at 6.50 per cent against earlier 6.85 per cent, and at 6.85 per cent against 7.35 per cent prior on vehicle loans, the bank said in a release. This special rate, which is effective from October 18, 2021, till December 31, 2021.

New Delhi (PTI): The National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) or bad bank will soon bring on board more directors for fair representation of shareholders and better corporate governance, according to sources.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave licence to the Rs 6,000 crore NARCL led by public sector lenders with 51 per cent stake in the entity.

There would be shareholders' representation from the private sector lenders' side, which will have 49 per cent, sources said.

Besides, the RBI has asked NARCL to submit details of the full board soon, they added.

The Indian Banks' Association (IBA), entrusted with the task of setting up the bad bank, has put a preliminary board for NARCL in place. The company has hired P M Nair, a stressed assets expert from State Bank of India (SBI), as the managing director.

The other directors on the board are IBA CEO Mehta, SBI Deputy Managing Director S S Nair and Canara Bank's Chief General Manager Ajit Krishnan Nair.

Jaishankar in Israel, to hold high-level talks

PTI ■ TEL AVIV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said that he is looking forward to a "great visit" as he arrived here on a five-day official trip during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership to mutually prepare a roadmap for further enriching the strategic ties besides exploring new areas of bilateral collaboration.

This is Jaishankar's first visit to the country as the External Affairs Minister.

"Shalom Israel! Arrived on my first visit as External Affairs Minister. Looking forward to a great visit," he said on Twitter.

Jaishankar was received at the airport by Israel's Ambassador to India Naor Gilon, Chief of Protocol at Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Gil Haskal and India's Ambassador to Israel Sanjeev Singla.

The External Affairs Minister would call on President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid during his standalone visit.

He will also be holding talks with leading academics from all over Israel, business community leaders and interacting with the Indian Jewish community.

Jaishankar will also be visiting places of historical significance to India, demonstrating its long-term presence

in the region and constructive role played in shaping the history of the region.

The visit will kick off with the External Affairs Minister paying tributes to brave Indian soldiers, who laid down their lives in the region during the World War I at the Talpiot cemetery in Jerusalem.

About 900 Indian soldiers are interred in cemeteries across Israel in Jerusalem, Ramle and Haifa.

The heroics of the Indian soldiers have prominently come to light here during the past two decades and the story of liberation of the northern coastal city of Haifa, in what most war historians consider "the last great cavalry campaign in history", has become a household tale with its inclusion in the city's local history textbooks.

The Indian Army commemorates September 23 every year as Haifa Day to pay its respects to the three brave Indian Cavalry Regiments - Mysore, Hyderabad and Jodhpur Lancers - that helped liberate Haifa following a dashingly cavalry action by the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade.

Captain Aman Singh Bahadur and Dafadar Jor Singh were awarded the Indian Order of Merit (IOM) and Captain Anop Singh and Second Lieutenant Sagat Singh were awarded the Military Cross (MC) as recognition for their bravery in this battle.



Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is greeted by the officials on his arrival in Israel

PTI

Jaishankar lays wreath at cemetery for Indian soldiers in Israel

Jerusalem: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday began his five-day visit to Israel by laying wreath at a cemetery for Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in the region during the World War I in Talpiot, Jerusalem.

About 900 Indian soldiers are interred in cemeteries across Israel in Jerusalem, Ramle and Haifa. Jaishankar, who arrived here earlier in the day on his first visit to the country as the External Affairs Minister, laid

wreath at the Talpiot Cemetery. "Visited the Indian Cemetery at Talpiot as my first engagement in Jerusalem. Paid homage to the brave Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during World War I," he tweeted.

"I am deeply honoured to pay homage to the valiant sons of India who fought with bravery and courage in this land during WWI, bringing glory to themselves, their comrades and their motherland," Jaishankar wrote in the visitors book. **PTI**

FIRST TIME SINCE COVID OUTBREAK Mecca grand mosque drops social distancing

AFP ■ MECCA

The Grand Mosque in the Muslim holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia operated at full capacity Sunday, with worshippers praying shoulder-to-shoulder for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Workers removed floor markings that guide people to social distance in and around the Grand Mosque, which is built around the Kaaba, the black cubic structure towards which Muslims around the world pray.

"This is in line with the decision to ease precautionary measures and to allow pilgrims and visitors to the Grand Mosque at full capacity," reported the official Saudi Press Agency.

Pictures and footage on Sunday morning showed people praying side by side, making straight rows of worshippers that are formations revered in performing Muslim prayers, for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic took hold last year.

While social distancing measures were lifted, the authorities said visitors must be fully vaccinated against coronavirus and must continue to wear masks on mosque grounds.

Also, the Kaaba remained cordoned off and out of reach.

Saudi Arabia announced in August it will begin accepting vaccinated foreigners wanting



to make the Umrah pilgrimage.

The Umrah can be undertaken at any time and usually draws millions from around the globe, as does the annual Hajj, which abled-bodied Muslims who have the means must perform at least once in their lifetime.

In July, only around 60,000 inoculated residents were allowed to take part in a vastly scaled down form of the annual Hajj.

The Covid-19 pandemic hugely disrupted both Muslim pilgrimages, which are usually key revenue earners for the kingdom that rake in a combined \$12 billion annually.

Hosting the pilgrimages is a matter of prestige for Saudi rulers, for whom the custodianship of Islam's holiest sites is their most powerful source of political legitimacy.

The once-reclusive kingdom began issuing tourist visas

permitting foreign visitors to undertake more than just the pilgrimages for the first time in 2019 as part of an ambitious push to revamp its global image and diversify income.

Between September 2019 and March 2020, it issued 400,000 of them -- only for the pandemic to crush that momentum as borders were closed.

But the kingdom is slowly opening up, and has started welcoming vaccinated foreign tourists since August 1.

Saudi Arabia also announced that fully-inoculated sports fans will from Sunday be allowed to attend events at all stadiums and other sports facilities, reported SPA. It has also said that masks in most open spaces are no longer mandatory.

Saudi Arabia has registered over 547,000 coronavirus cases and 8,760 deaths.

GLOBE TROTTER

BILL CLINTON TO BE RELEASED FROM HOSP
Orange (US): Bill Clinton spent a fourth night at a Southern California hospital where he is recovering from an infection but is expected to be released Sunday after making great progress, a spokesman said.

MILD QUAKE IN WEST NEPAL; NO DAMAGE
Kathmandu: A mild earthquake measuring 4.3 struck Nepal's western Gorkha district on Sunday, however no casualty or loss of property was reported, officials said. The epicentre of the tremor, which occurred at 4.09 am (03.54 IST), was located at Manabu village in the district, 145 km northwest of Kathmandu, according to the National Seismological Centre of Nepal.

COPTER CRASHES IN GERMANY, 3 DEAD
Berlin: Three people were killed when a helicopter crashed in southwestern Germany on Sunday, police said. The aircraft crash in a forested area near the small town of Buchen on Sunday afternoon, the news agency dpa reported.

MAN KILLS WIFE, 2 DAUGHTERS IN PAK
Peshawar: A 50-year-old Pakistani man allegedly shot dead his wife and two daughters on Sunday suspecting them of thievery, in the latest incident of 'honour killing' in the country, police said. The shooting occurred under the jurisdiction of Kalu Khan Police Station in Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said. Jan Bahadur suspected his wife, daughters of stealing a newborn from the Mardan Medical Complex.

US religious group says 17 missionaries kidnapped in Haiti

AP ■ SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

A group of 17 missionaries including children was kidnapped by a gang in Haiti on Saturday, according to a voice message sent to various religious missions by an organization with direct knowledge of the incident.

The missionaries were on their way home from building an orphanage, according to a message from Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries.

"This is a special prayer alert," the one-minute message said. "Pray that the gang members would come to repentance."

The message says the mission's field director is working with the U.S. Embassy, and that the field director's family and one other unidentified man stayed at the ministry's base while everyone else visited the orphanage.

No other details were immediately available.

A U.S. government spokesperson said they were aware of the reports on the kidnapping.

"The welfare and safety of U.S. citizens abroad is one of the highest priorities of the Department of State," the spokesperson said, declining further comment.

Meanwhile, a senior U.S. official, speaking on condi-

tion of anonymity, said the United States is in touch with Haitian authorities to try to resolve the case.

Haiti is once again struggling with a spike in gang-related kidnappings that had diminished after President Jovenel Moise was fatally shot at his private residence on July 7, and following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck southwestern Haiti in August and killed more than 2,200 people.

Gangs have demanded ransoms ranging from a couple hundred dollars to more than \$1 million, according to authorities.

Last month, a deacon was killed in front of a church in the capital of Port-au-Prince and his wife kidnapped, one of dozens of people who have been abducted in recent months.

At least 328 kidnapping victims were reported to Haiti's National Police in the first eight months of 2021, compared with a total of 234 for all of 2020, according to a report issued last month by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti known as BINUH.

Gangs have been accused of kidnapping schoolchildren, doctors, police officers, busloads of passengers and others as they grow more powerful. In April, one gang kidnapped five priests and two nuns, a move

that prompted a three-day protest, with Haitian now preparing for another protest scheduled for Monday to decry the lack of security in the impoverished country.

"Political turmoil, the surge in gang violence, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions - including food insecurity and malnutrition - all contribute to the worsening of the humanitarian situation," BINUH said in its report. "An overstretched and under-resourced police force alone cannot address the security ills of Haiti."

On Friday, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to extend the U.N. political mission in Haiti.

The kidnapping of the missionaries comes just days after high-level U.S. officials visited Haiti and promised more resources for Haiti's National Police, including another \$15 million to help reduce gang violence, which this year has displaced thousands of Haitians who now live in temporary shelters in increasingly unhygienic conditions.

Among those who met with Haiti's police chief was Uzra Zeya, U.S. under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights.

"Dismantling violent gangs is vital to Haitian stability and citizen security," she recently tweeted.

Rescuers: Last Jew of Kabul making his way to Israel

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The man known as the last Jew of Kabul could soon be heading to Israel, after agreeing to grant his estranged wife a religious divorce in a Zoom call — a precondition for smooth entry to the Holy Land.

Zebulon Simentov, who fled Afghanistan last month after the Taliban takeover, landed Sunday in Turkey on what his rescuers say is a final stop before traveling to Israel, perhaps as soon as this week. It caps a weeklong odyssey that included an escape from his homeland as well as a videoconference divorce procedure meant to ensure he will not run into trouble with Israeli authorities.

Under Jewish religious law, a husband must agree to grant his wife a divorce, something he had refused to do for many years. Facing the prospect of legal action in Israel, where his ex-wife lives, Simentov, after resisting for years, finally agreed to the divorce last month in a special Zoom call supervised by Australian rabbinical authorities.

The Associated Press viewed part of the proceeding. During the sometimes chaotic discussion, conducted through an interpreter who struggled to explain the procedure, Simentov agrees to sign a divorce document known as a "get" after

receiving assurances that he will not face trouble in Israel.

Rabbi Moshe Margaretten, whose nonprofit group Tzedek Association funded the journey, said Simentov had spent the last few weeks living quietly in Pakistan, an Islamic country that does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

He said his group had looked into bringing Simentov to the U.S. but decided that Israel was a better destination both because of difficulties in arranging a U.S. entry visa and because Simentov has many relatives, including five siblings and two daughters, already in Israel.

"We are relieved we were successful in helping Zebulon Simentov escape from Afghanistan and now into safety in Turkey," said Margaretten, whose group has helped evacuate several dozen other people from Afghanistan.

Rabbi Mendy Chitrik, chairman of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States, greeted Simentov at the airport in Istanbul on Sunday. He said he had an appointment to take Simentov to the Israeli consulate on Monday to arrange his entry to Israel. Under Israel's "Law of Return," any Jew is entitled to Israeli citizenship.

Russia sees highest daily new Covid cases

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia is reporting its largest daily number of new coronavirus infections, more than 70% up on the number a month ago as the country faces a sustained rise in cases.

The national coronavirus task force on Sunday said 34,303 new infections were recorded in the previous day, compared with the 20,174 reported Sept. 19. The death toll of 999 was barely lower than the record 1,002 deaths reported on Saturday.

Russian authorities have tried to speed up the pace of vaccinations with lotteries, bonuses and other incentives, but widespread vaccine skepticism and conflicting signals from officials stymied the efforts. The government said this week that about 43 million Russians, or some 29% of the country's nearly 146 million people, are fully vaccinated.

Despite the mounting toll,

the Kremlin has ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one early on in the pandemic that badly hurt the economy, eroding President Vladimir Putin's popularity. Instead, it has delegated the power to enforce coronavirus restrictions to regional authorities.

Some of Russia's 85 regions have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other venues. However, daily life is going on largely as normal in Moscow, St. Petersburg and many other Russian cities.

The highest concentrations of cases are mostly in comparatively urbanized western Russia and in the developed areas along the Pacific Coast such as Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, but the sparsely populated Siberian region of Sakha and Chukotka in the extreme northeast also show high case rates of more than 150 infections per 100,000 people over a seven-day period.

2 migrants dead, 21 missing off Tunisia in shipwreck

AP ■ TUNIS

At least two migrants died and 21 have disappeared after their boat capsized on Sunday off the Tunisian coast in the Mediterranean Sea, Tunisian officials said. Seven others were rescued.

According to the spokesman at the court in Mahdia, a Tunisian port, coast guards were alerted by a survivor. Ferid Ben Jha told *The Associated Press* that all 30 migrants onboard were Tunisian citizens who wanted to cross the Mediterranean and reach Italy.

He said prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into human smuggling.

A coast guard official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to talk publicly, said the shipwreck was probably due to bad weather and the boat being too small.

Somali-origin suspect in UK MP's murder held under Terrorism Act

PTI ■ LONDON

The suspect arrested in England's Essex following the killing of British Conservative MP Sir David Amess has been named as Ali Harbi Ali, a 25-year-old man of Somali heritage, now being held under the stringent Terrorism Act.

Amess, 69 and a member of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ruling Conservative Party, died after being stabbed several times on Friday as he was meeting his constituents in at Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

Scotland Yard's Counter Terrorism Command officers have an extended period until Friday to question the suspect under the act.

According to reports, Ali was referred to the UK's counter-terrorism deradicalisation Prevent scheme some years ago, but was never a for-

mal subject of interest to the MI5 security services.

"The man was subsequently further detained under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and he is now being held at a London police station," the Metropolitan Police said.

"On Saturday, 16 October, detectives were granted a warrant of further detention at Westminster Magistrates' Court, allowing them to keep the man in custody until Friday, October 22, when the warrant expires.

"As part of the fast-paced investigation, officers have attended three addresses in the London area and conducted searches. One of these searches has concluded and the others are ongoing," the force said. The suspect was arrested on Friday at the scene of the attack and a knife used in the attack was recovered at the scene.

The incident has been for-

mally declared as terrorism by Senior National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism Policing, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Dean Haydon, and the Met's Counter Terrorism Command is leading the investigation.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, also an MP from Essex, ordered an urgent review of the security procedures for members of Parliament.

On Sunday, Patel said "immediate" security changes are being offered to MPs after the killing and they are being asked to share their whereabouts with the police.

Asked if MPs could get the kind of close protection that they receive in Westminster, the minister said: "All these issues and options are in consideration right now."

"We have all changed our ways of working because of changing concerns, threats in society.

Celebrities to join Prince William for Earthshot Prize award

AP ■ LONDON

Celebrities will join Prince William in London on Sunday for the inaugural awards ceremony of his Earthshot Prize, an ambitious environmental program aiming to find new ideas and technologies around the world to tackle climate change and Earth's most pressing challenges.

Judges including naturalist and veteran broadcaster David Attenborough, actor Cate Blanchett and singer Shakira are expected to attend the ceremony. Actors Emma Thompson, Emma Watson and David Oyelowo will join Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, in handing out the awards.

William and his charity, The Royal Foundation, launched the Earthshot Prize last year, inspired by President John F. Kennedy's 1962 "Moonshot" speech that challenged and inspired Americans to go to the moon.

The prize, to be awarded to five winners every year until 2030, is billed as the most prestigious of its kind. Each winner will receive a grant worth 1 million pounds (\$1.4 million) to develop and scale up their ideas.

"We are alive in the most consequential time in human history," William said in a pre-recorded short film. "The actions we choose or choose not to take in the next 10 years will determine the fate of the planet for the next thousand."

"Many of the answers are already out there," he added. "But we need everyone, from all parts of society, to raise their ambition and unite in repairing our planet."

The finalists include a 14-year-old student who proposes using solar energy to replace charcoal to power millions of roadside ironing carts in India; a land-based coral farm in the Bahamas to restore dying coral reefs.



Bollywood
‘For the role of Basanti in *Sholay*, I felt that no one can do the best apart from Hema Malini.’
—Ramesh Sippy

HOLISTIC LIVING



Yoga and Ayurveda improve the quality of life and inculcate a positive attitude towards ageing, says NAMITA PIPARAIYA

In Ayurveda, a lifespan is divided into three stages — *balavastha* (childhood), *madhyavastha* (young and middle age), and *vridhavastha* (old age). It is evident that two people of the same age may have different energy levels, and a lot depends on how we take care of our body or how much we push our energy beyond its limit.

Four factors influence our ageing, such as time, nature, diet, and type of illness. Additionally, in *vridhavastha*, vata dosha (air and space element) becomes dominant. Since vata is concerned with bones and the nervous system, if proper care is not taken, the degeneration can be seen in joints along with the mind that undergoes

various cognitive issues. These are some of the first signs of age-related decline.

Here are a few ways in which Ayurveda and yoga can help in enhancing your lifestyle:

❑ Create a routine

This is the first stage of ayurvedic living. At each stage of life, we must create a routine that suits our personality-type. Having a fixed sleep schedule, starting your day by drinking water, finishing all ablutions, and making time for some mindful activities, like yoga and meditation, can help rejuvenate you in the morning itself. Plan your days and find activities that you enjoy — it helps in avoiding the



feelings of loneliness and boredom.

❑ Stay active

Moderate daily activity will keep the body and bones healthy. In the vata stage, more grounding activities

like hatha yoga or moderate weight-training are recommended. High-intensity activities like plyometrics increase vata, so it may not be suitable for everyone. Therefore, it is significant to choose your physical activities

accordingly. Balance training is particularly important for healthy ageing because it is an excellent way to tone down vata and to develop strong mind-body awareness.

❑ Focus on mental fitness

Along with a healthy body, a strong mind is also important. We often underestimate the stresses of old age, which may arise due to loneliness, fear, loss of ability, and so on. By making time for pranayama, meditation, mindful walking, and even by engaging in recreational hobbies, we can keep our minds healthy.

❑ Eat well

We must change our nutritional needs. Especially after 60, our dietary habits start catching up with our body systems. Therefore, we start seeing increased instances of issues like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart failure, electrolyte imbalances, insomnia, and so on. So, it is important to choose nutrient-rich foods, that you can get by eating a wide variety of local produce, eating more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, healthy fats, especially Omega 3s. You should avoid sugary foods, dry salty snacks, and junk food.

❑ Explore ayurvedic therapies

Not all herbs or therapies are suitable for everyone. An ayurvedic doctor will assess your body type and recommend treatments suitable for your specific conditions. This can include panchakarma, herbs, or dietary prescriptions. These are best taken after being assessed by a professional.

With a little discipline and some motivation, we can improve not only our longevity but also our quality of life. It helps in keeping a positive attitude towards ageing.

(The author is the founder of *Yoganama*, a wellness platform that emphasises on yoga, Ayurveda and philosophy for mindful living.)

WEBBED



ONE MIC STAND

The second season of the unscripted comedy original will see filmmaker, Karan Johar, novelist, Chetan Bhagat, actor, Sunny Leone, journalist, Faye D'Souza and rapper, Raftaar, attempting stand-up comedy for the first time. It will be released on October 22 on Amazon Prime Video.



AISA WAISA PYAAR

Starring Saqib Saleem, Nidhi Singh, Prit Kamani, Ahsaas Channa, Adah Sharma, Taaha Shah, Rajit Kapur, and Sheeba Chaddha, the film depicts different shades of love through four separate relationships criss-crossing each other. It will release on October 27 on Eros Now.



GIRGIT

The story unravels the secrets of each character that has an evident and sharp resemblance to a chameleon. Starring, Nakul Roshan Sahdev, Taniya Kalrra, and Trupti Khamkar, the web-show will stream from October 27 on ALTBalaji and MX Player Gold



It is exciting to portray multiple shades with layered emotions, says **SAMAR VERMANI**, on playing the role of a double-faced police officer in his new web-series, *Girgit*

The actor, Samar Vermani, who was seen in late actor Om Puri's *Lashtam Pashtam*, will be playing the role of a cop in the forthcoming web-series, *Girgit*.

Don't second-guess cops

Vermani will be playing the character of Rathod, an odd fowl-mouthed cop who doesn't believe in second-guessing.

Vermani defined his character, "Rathod is the culmination of everything raw and irreverent." This is his digital debut project, and the actor is quite excited about it.

"For an actor, it is always exciting to portray multiple shades with layered emotions,"

said Vermani, describing his role. "For the first time, I have played the role of a tough-cop card with a character like a chameleon that also resonates with the nature and title of the show *Girgit*," he added.

The actor revealed that the show's premise left him so intrigued that he asked for the script to read further. He expressed, "After reading the synopsis, I was curious to read

further, so I asked for the script. The script turned out to be even juicier, and when I read about my character, it was interesting and enticing. I couldn't be more convinced to say yes to the show."

The show stars Nakul Roshan Sahdev, Taniya Kalrra, and Trupti Khamkar in primary roles. *Girgit* will stream from October 27 on ALTBalaji and MX Player Gold.

—JANS

After an extended Covid hiatus, it is hard to stay calm. The festive season is approaching and the thought of celebrating your favourite festivals with friends and family makes you excited. As you get prepared to soak up the Navratri craze and revel in the glory of Diwali, the thrill of selecting your looks and the excitement of adorning your desired traditional attires cannot be overlooked.

When it comes to festive shopping, there are over a dozen things to put together to perfect your look(s). While this season is more about making lasting memories in your best ethnic outfit and less about fretting over burning a hole in your pocket, we have picked some of the top ensembles under ₹15,000 which aptly reflect the ethnic spirit, to make your celebrations guilt-free.

❖ Shiraz set by Gulabo Jaipur

Prized at ₹7,300, this georgette attire includes taari details and gota work, which makes it ideal for any festive occasion. The flared pants and a contrasting organza dupatta add an exclusive beauty to this traditional look. With *prêt* aesthetics at its core, this three-piece outfit is chic, elegant, minimalist, and budget-friendly.

❖ Kurta-gharara set by Global Desi

With a hot pink embroidered top and matching gharara-style pants, this attire, priced at ₹5,499, quite perfectly exudes an ethnic spirit, adding depth to the look with absolute ease. While the three-fourth sleeves and a V-neck give a boost to the style quotient, the printed intricacies on the pants



make the ensemble a fine mix of chic, classy, and trendy.

❖ Chanderi kurta-pants by Ridhi Mehra

Flourishing floral prints and a trendy silhouette, this fuchsia pink ensemble presents a trendy and feminine vibe. The *chanderi* work epitomises elegance and induces a



You can look good without burning a hole in your pocket with these traditional outfit options. By **TEAM VIVA**

sophisticated charm to the outfit. The couture label uses a combination of plush fabric, contemporary patterns, and affordable luxury to add a twist to Indian wear.

❖ Silk kaftan dress by Prints by Radhika

The ₹15,000 burgundy kaftan dress, made of pure silk, incorporates *prêt* elements that add an appealing look to the outfit. The thread tassels and the sharp neckline add subdued oomph and elegance to the attire, which is every bit chic and minimalist.

❖ Asymmetrical kurta and farshi pants by Pink City

Priced at ₹14,000, this asymmetrical kurta, with a V-shaped hemline and temple borders, flaunts a vibrant and smart vibe. It is the ideal fashion choice for an intimate occasion. While the *gota*-work in the centre adds a defining touch to the look, the silhouette brings an ethereal effect to



the attire.

❖ Ombré anarkali set by Neha Chopra

This pink ombre anarkali set entails a pink churidar and a butterfly-printed dupatta that brings a luxurious touch to Indian fashion. The set, priced at ₹12,000, has a natural and stylistic flair accompanied with minimalism and a classic appeal. The outfit's palette choice, combined with its graceful expression of individualism and ele-



gance, makes it a fine cut for the festive season.

❖ Ivory botanical tunic by Archana Shah

The floral-printed tunic mirrors subdued elegance and chic comfort. With a silk base and organza trimmings, this ivory tunic, worth ₹14,500, boasts a well-fitted silhouette and eye-catching designs. Perfect for any traditional or Indo-western do, the tunic is a celebratory marriage of Indian and modern sensibilities.



TRENDBLAZER



MILIND GUNAJI'S NEW PROJECTS

The actor, **MILIND GUNAJI**, has several forthcoming projects like *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* with Karthik Aryan and Kiara Advani, *Wings of Gold*, featuring a Bruce Lee lookalike and Ali Fazal, along with a web series.

"I feel fortunate enough to be a part of such big Bollywood projects, unlike many actors who have faded away with time. I have always loved being an entertainer, and that's what keeps me going even after so many years," Gunaji shared.

fairtalk

URVASHI RAUTELA



'I am excited to announce the title of my next film, *Dil Hai Gray*, on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashami. It was lovely working with the director, Susi Ganesan, producer, M Ramesh Reddy, and my co-stars, Vineet Kumar Singh and Akshay Oberoi. I am sure that the story will be loved by the audience. I hope my fans would bless us with their love.'

dailytalk

ANU MALIK



'Farah Khan and I had *deja vu* as Rahul Vaidya started his journey in front of us. Now, he is promoting his song. His journey has been commendable. He is one of the nicest and most talented human beings I've ever met and I really wish him all the best in his career and for his new music video, *Garbe Ki Raat*.'

ADELE'S ALBUM TO RELEASE SOON

The English singer-songwriter, **ADELE**, has announced that her long-awaited album titled *30* will be releasing on November 19.

Reminiscing old memories, she expressed, "I was willingly throwing myself into a maze of absolute mess. I have learned a lot of blistering truths about myself along the way. When I was writing it, it was my friend who came over with a bottle of wine and a takeaway to cheer me up. Now, I feel peaceful, and I am ready to release my album."



EXPLORING NEW AVENUES

The Sehgal Foundation has been assisting women in Muzaffarpur to consider goat-rearing as a mode of additional income since relying on agriculture alone provides little profit, says SARITA BRARA

For rural communities dependent on agriculture, one and a half *bighas* of land is not enough for survival. Mintu Devi and her husband from Ratanpura village in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar had only that much land. When they had almost given up on cultivation, Sehgal Foundation — a non-profit organisation — guided the couple to make the most of the resources available to them. Arrangements were made for Mintu to receive training from the Kisan Vikas Kendra and RSETI (Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes) — an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The couple were also given farm implements like a planter, on rent, to sow potato and wheat seeds.

“Earlier the input cost was more while the production was less. Now, it is the other way round, less expenditure on the inputs and more income from the production,” shared Mintu, adding that, “People would look at me with awe when I used the planters in my little farm.” While mechanisation helped in increasing the production of the two commodities, it was still not enough for a decent living.

Realising the need of additional livelihood opportunities, the foundation decided to encourage small-scale farmers to opt for additional livelihood related activity to bolster their income apart from assist them in increasing production through mechanisation. They did a pilot project and realised that goat farming or *goatery* can be a good source of income in the region, as it did not require a major investment. Goats can also be sold to procure cash in case of any emergency or to meet unexpected expenditures. However, as goats are sensitive animals, they require proper care and attention, especially during peak summer and monsoon months. Apart from the training, another formidable challenge was ensuring the availability of medical care. This was done in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry.

As it is the women usually look after cattle and Mintu was given five female, as well as one male goat. She was provided with training before and after the goats were given on



Pinki Devi, at her goat-shed



Asha Devi, tending to her goats



Mintu Devi, preparing feed for her goats

their upkeep, preparing their feed, timely vaccination and the kind of dwelling that was needed for their shelter. This was in July 2019.

In the last two years, Mintu's life has transformed. Today, she is not only the proud owner of a general store that she opened exactly a year after she began goat farming, but her *goatery* enterprise is flourishing with the third generation of 15 goats. Additionally, her earnings from agriculture have almost doubled and she has invested in more opportunities.

“I am keeping six quintals of potatoes in a cold storage at Mehshi village located a few kilometres away from our village in the hope of

selling potato seeds at a good price,” she explained. She also has a kitchen garden in which she does subsistence farming. Mintu has become an inspiration for many others in the village. She encourages other women to adopt goat-farming as an additional activity to earn more income.

“If you are able to earn income on your own, people start respecting you,” believes Pinki Devi from Kodar Ketta village. She too is one of the beneficiaries of the goat-farming project.

After an her brother-in-law's accident and the closure of their general store, Pinki and her husband found themselves at a stage where it

had become difficult to sustain life. Her husband had to take up odd jobs for two square meals. It was at this juncture that Pinki was selected as a beneficiary by the foundation. Today, she has 25 goats — six males and 19 females. “There is enough grain production from our small holding of half a bigha to grow bajra and paddy to feed the goats,” she said.

Asha Devi, a middle aged woman from Nariyar village of Motipur Block, had never been to school and was not even semi-skilled. Her husband is a daily wageer and they have six children to feed. An additional source of

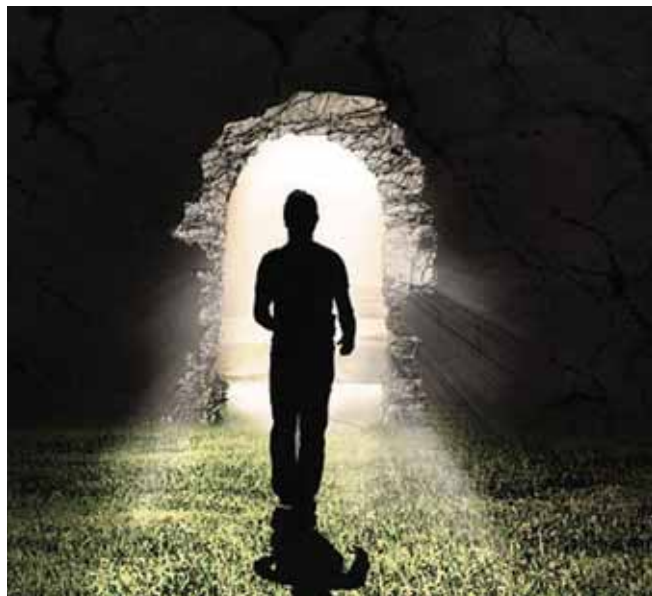
income was more than welcome in her household. Rearing goats was not a bad idea but she did not have the required money. While Asha, like other selected beneficiaries, did get the unit of five female and one male goat, it has not been easy for her as few of her goats fell sick. Despite the setback, she is hopeful that once the rainy season ends, she will be able make good money from this business.

The project is aimed at empowering women who are not skilled in any trade, help mechanise the small land holdings of marginal farmers and improve the living standard by providing goat farming units as a source of additional income.

“Women are at the centre of the development initiative undertaken in the villages,” says Rahul Kumar, the programme lead of Local Participation and Sustainability. The lives of forty women selected for this project including Mintu and Pinki in five villages of Muzaffarpur have benefited through goat farming.

If women are able to earn extra income through an activity that does not require any special skill, it can result in their empowerment and lead to their social and economic upliftment. The challenge is to ensure that these livelihood options not only continue, after initial hand-holding by the NGOs, but are expanded as well.

—Charkha Features



At the break of dawn...

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI terms the current period as cultural twilight. He believes that the darkness will soon recede and give way to light

The Present period, in the world's cultural history, is characterised by many unexpected, strange and forceful cross-currents. If we focus on the last six or seven decades, many events of unexpected nature and great significance have occurred that have led to rapid and powerful cross-country cultural influences. Let's consider how the rise of communism, before and after WW2, in many countries, brought about not only political and economic changes but also gave rise to a new set of values — positive as well as negative — and created new cultural trends. The ideology or philosophy of communism, with its explanation of world history and the economic forces, human nature, conflict between the rich and the poor, the roles played by religion and the state, and the method suggested by it to bring about a classless and stateless society, permitting violence to exterminate the exploiters, gave a new kind of value-system and divided the world into two power blocks, each willing to fight to the finish. The forces of hatred, violence, class war, arms race, political and economic alignments, suppression of human rights and freedoms were let loose and religion was confined to museums. All this influenced the outlook, attitudes, mannerisms, behaviour and beliefs of millions and replaced the older set of values and culture.

Similarly, many wars were fought among various middle-eastern nations, followed by the Gulf war, the takeover of an Asian nation by a bigger and powerful nation, and such other events have altered the traditional values and norms and brought about significant changes. The part played by the UN and its various agencies, the human rights movement and the democratic form of governance, et al also had no less significant impact. Various scientific postulates or theories, such as of Copernicus and Darwin and various philosophical and psychological dissertations, such as the ones by Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche also crucially affected the prevailing system of values and culture.

However, the greatest impact on the cultural scene has been of the multi-media. Cinema, the TV, videos, the print media, and now, of course, the internet, have worked like a cultural invasion of one country by another and also on the atmosphere at home, at the playground, in the aeroplanes and almost everywhere. The use of satellites, computers, the internet, cordless and cellular telephones, the industrial advertisements and exhibitions have demolished the cultural sanctuaries of a country. They have blurred or even effaced the cultural boundaries between various groups, communities or nations. Heritage sites, the places



known as repositories of certain cultures, have almost all fallen victims to the onslaughts of these forces. While there has been plunder of icons, artefacts and heritage objects by rich individuals and nations to replenish their private collections or museums, on the other hand, there has been great insensitivity to the objects of art, worship, religious monuments by the rapacious collectors and money-minded dealers. But while this intermix of different cultures and their impact on value systems has resulted in a moral loss on multiple counts, there have been some gains also. Science and technology, the interaction between various communities and nations, the multi-media have done some good, as a result of which we find that a new pattern of culture and values is emerging. At least there is a great voice being raised for re-establishing values. Much of it is, no doubt, negative and is polluting the human mind but, undeniably, some good features can also be observed. It is in this context that the contribution of various organisations and NGOs should be looked at.

These global institutions have not only appreciated and encouraged what is good in the international and inter-continental cultural scenario, but have also constantly worked with all sincerity to help the emergence of a global culture with universal values. Employing the means provided by science and technology, business and industry, media and communication, jurisprudence and education, health, science, yoga, religion and culture, these NGOs are trying to bring on a world-stage everything that is an all-time best in the form of a new value-system. They are involving youth and women and engaged in all professions to achieve this goal with their co-operation. The present is thus a period of cultural twilight. Soon, darkness will be receding into oblivion to give place to the light of values, virtues and unique divine culture.

Have you ever wondered what your infinite potential is?

Most of the time, it's a passing thought that we all have sometimes — a moment of brilliant clarity that teases the genius hidden within you. However, despite your best efforts, that idea of a perfect you always seems so elusive, so distant, almost impossible to reach.

But that's not true. We are all capable of achieving our infinite potential but there's a reason we fail (or worse, give up trying). It's the trap of one-dimensional well-being.

Ask an athlete and they'll tell you pushing yourself physically can help you break your barriers, ask a psychologist and they'll tell you to take care of your mental health, and if you ask a philosopher, they'll tell you to introspect and focus on your inner being.

But who is wrong and who is right? The truth is, they're all partly right.

True well-being
Well-being means the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy. It's not a singular path but a culmination of all three areas — physical, mental, and spiritual because it caters to the body, the mind, and the soul. For a person to experience true well-being, they must experi-

Be your best version

The integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being is the path to attaining infinite potential, shares NIKHIL BEHL



ence excellence in all three areas.

In the conventional sense, health and well-being was often attributed to a healthy body, one that lacks any ailments or

diseases. As science progressed and awareness spread, people realised the importance of mental health in leading healthier and happier lives.

And yet, most people still



felt distant, lost, and hopeless.

There has been a renewed interest in eastern philosophy, yoga, and other spiritual quests in recent times, especially in the west. More and more people are trying to search for meaning and purpose in their lives because the spiritual thirst needs to be quenched.

There has to be a crossroad where these three seemingly distinct roads meet because that's where true well-being resides, that's where people can find their infinite potential.

Realising your infinite potential

Infinite potential is not some abstract concept, it can help people prevent chronic ailments and lead healthier, hap-

pier lives. That's why it's important for people to take proactive steps in trying to reach their infinite potential.

Here are some practical steps to achieve your infinite potential.

For the body

- Work out for some time everyday.
- Take ample amounts of rest.
- Learn about early signs of illnesses.
- Eat a balanced, healthy, and wholesome diet.
- Have adequate portions for meals.
- Quit smoking.

For the mind

- Align yourself with your

thoughts and feelings.

- Adopt a positive attitude.
- Ask for and offer support.
- Respect time and pick up time-management skills.
- Learn stress management techniques.
- Forgive yourself and practice acceptance

For the soul

- Understand your spiritual core.
- Practice solitude and meditate regularly.
- Nurture curiosity and be inquisitive about life.
- Immerse yourself fully into everything you do.
- Live by your principles and listen to your gut.
- Set yourself, and others around you, free.
- Look at adversity as opportunity and challenge yourself.

These steps are just the beginning of your path towards tranquility and self-transformation. As you climb your way towards well-being, you'll find greater opportunities to grow and higher goals to achieve.

(The author is the co-founder and CEO of Fitza, a health and fitness app that creates pocket guides, personalised meals and health kundali to help people achieve their health goals.)

“For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories. —Plato”

DISCARDED PHONES OR GOLD ORE?

How much gold can we get from mobile phones? Leading experts say a tonne of discarded mobile phones is richer in gold than a tonne of gold ore.

Experts are calling on households, businesses and governments to get dead or unused plug-in or battery-operated products to facilities where they can be either repaired or recycled to recover a king's fortune in valuable materials and reduce the need for new resources.

This year's mountain of waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE) will total about 57.4 million tonnes — greater than the weight of the Great Wall of China, earth's heaviest artificial object.

According to estimates in Europe, where the problem is best studied, 11 of 72 electronic items in an average household are no longer in use or are broken. Annually per citizen, another 4 to 5 kg of unused electrical and electronic products are hoarded in Europe prior to being discarded. Another study estimates that 54 to 113 million mobile phones alone, weighing 10 to 20 tonnes, are sleeping in drawers and other storage spaces in French homes.



PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS LEAD TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Adolescents who had received a mental health disorder diagnosis were often excluded from the labour market and education as young adults, finds a new study.

The study indicated that almost 11 per cent of adolescents who had received a psychiatric diagnosis were excluded from the education and labour market for at least five years in their early adulthood.

For the study, published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, the team included 55,273 individuals after exclusions for intellectual disability, death or emigration.

The results are concerning because they highlight the link between mental health disorders and long-term exclusion from education and labour market.

“Vocational rehabilitation and tight collaboration between psychiatry and social services are important for enabling adolescents suffering from mental health problems to access the labour market,” said lead author David Gyllenberg, from the University of Turku (Finland).



HORNBILL — CREATOR OF ORCHARDS

Hornbills are large, endangered, fruit-eating birds found across Asian forests with only certain fleshy fruit trees and yet, they are responsible for dispersing seeds in large patches, thereby creating fruit orchards, a new study has revealed.

Scientists from the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Mysuru, and Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, studied how fruit bearing plants and hornbills influence the distribution of each other in the Namdapha Tiger Reserve, one of India's most biologically diverse protected areas.

According to a study published online by the *Journal Of Avian Biology*, hornbills help in dispersing large number of seeds in areas with rare trees. They disperse up to 12,000 large seeds per square kilometre in a day, thereby creating fruit orchards.



KIDS ACT AS SPREADERS OF COVID

Infants, children and adolescents are equally capable of carrying high levels of live and replicating SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, in their respiratory secretions, researchers have confirmed in a new study, emphasising that kids are an essential component of beating the pandemic.

According to the study, published in the *Journal Of Infectious Diseases*, the high levels of virus correspond with live, infectious virus, and that levels are highest early in the illness in both symptomatic and asymptomatic children.

The study was led by a team from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Brigham and Women's Hospital, Ragon Institute, MIT and Harvard. They studied 110 children aged two weeks to 21 years who tested positive for Covid-19 at MGH or urgent care clinics. The researchers found no correlation between the age of the children and the amount of their viral load. Reassuringly, they also found that viral load had no correlation to severity of disease in the kids themselves, but concerns remain for them and those around them.



MICROPLASTICS THREATEN MARINE LIFE

New research at Queen's University highlights the impact that microplastics are having on hermit crabs, which play an important role in balancing the marine ecosystem.

The research found that microplastics are affecting the behaviour of hermit crabs, namely their ability during shell fight contests, which are vital to their survival.

There is a strong association between hermit crabs and their shelters or shells, which are taken from marine snails to protect their soft abdomens.

The new study, published in *Royal Society Open Science*, builds on previous research by Queen's University that showed hermit crabs were less likely to touch or enter high-quality shells when exposed to microplastics. The microplastics impair both the attacking and defending behaviour of hermit crabs during contests, impeding their ability to secure the larger shell that is required for both their growth and survival.



CHHETRI CREDITS YOUNGSTERS

PTI ■ MALE

Talismanic skipper Sunil Chhetri played a pivotal role in India's eighth SAFF Championships title triumph by striking five goals but he credited the young brigade for team's victory.

The 37-year-old Chhetri, Indian football's torch bearer for the last 10 years, went past legendary Pele and equalled Lionel Messi when he scored the team's opener -- and his 80th goal -- against Nepal in the summit clash on Saturday.

"Look at the youngsters -- it feels good for all of them. It's all due to their hard work. We were here for 20 days till the final, staying on an island, riding the waves every day for practice sessions, and matches," Chhetri said in a release from All India Football Federation.

"We made it special as we were not so good in the first two games. It was tough from there to come up and play the way we did," added Chhetri after his third triumph in the SAFF Championship as a player.

Chhetri, who has won the regional tournament in 2011 and 2015 also, was referring to the draws against Bangladesh (1-1) and Sri Lanka (0-0) in the first two matches which had attracted criticism.

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIPS TRIUMPH



"Didn't start like we should have, but ended exactly how we wanted. Proud of this bunch and the way we got things on track," he later said in a tweet.

Chhetri, who scored five out of India's eight goals, was all praise of the other two Indian goal getters on Saturday -- Suresh Singh and Sahal Abdul Samad.

Sahal, on his part, said it was an "unbelievable" moment and "a miracle".

"I don't know what hap-

pened inside the box. I came in for the last 4-5 minutes. My teammates have been working hard -- it all goes to them," he said. "But I just don't remember what happened inside the box. I got it and went in. This is an amazing feeling."

Head coach Igor Stimac, who was banned from the dugout in the summit clash after being red carded in the earlier league match against Maldives, let the players

take centrestage.

"The boys have done it," he quipped.

Stimac became the third foreign coach after Jiri Pesek (1993) and Stephen Constantine (2015) to clinch the title with the Indian team.

The Blue Tigers dedicated the trophy to their two injured teammates -- Farukh Choudhary, and Brandon Fernandes, who weren't able to travel to the ground. With the title win, India extended their dom-

ination in the regional tournament. Saturday's final was the 12th for India in 13 editions.

The players leave for Bengaluru Sunday night from where they will join their respective clubs for the Indian Super League.

However, the U-23 players, including goalkeeper Moirangthem Dheeraj Singh, will stay back in Bengaluru for a couple of days before flying to Dubai for the AFC U-23 Qualifiers on October 20.

BCCI invites application for head coach's post

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A couple of days after convincing former India captain Rahul Dravid to take up the responsibility, the BCCI on Sunday issued advertisement for the post of head coach and three support staff as per Lodha Committee mandated constitution.

It is a foregone conclusion that Dravid, who is currently heading the NCA and has been the guiding force behind the India A and U-19 programmes, is set to take over unless something miraculous happens.

Dravid has already informally agreed during his discussion with top BCCI officials in Dubai on the sidelines of IPL final.

However, the BCCI needs to have a Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) in place and they will have to make a formal recommendation to the BCCI apex council, if one goes by the book. The last date of application for all posts is October 26. That is the reason the BCCI has now issued the advertisement for the head coach's post for a period of two years till 2023 ODI World Cup, along with positions for batting, bowling and fielding coaches.

Ravi Shastri, along with bowling coach Bharath Arun and fielding coach R Sridhar, will complete tenure at the end of India's T20 World Cup campaign next month. Batting coach Vikram Rathour, though he doesn't have any performance to show during his two-year tenure from 2019 till date, is expected to get an extension if he applies.

For the bowling coach's position, the long-standing India A and U-19 coach Paras Mhambrey, a trusted ally of Dravid, is expected to get the job. For the head coach's post, the incumbent will have to play either 30 Tests or 50



ODIs, along with experience of either coaching a national team for two years or any IPL team for three years. He will be in charge of team of support staff ranging between 14 to 16 people.

"The successful candidate will be responsible for developing a world class Indian cricket team which delivers sustained success in all conditions and formats, inspiring current and future generations of cricketers and stakeholders with their approach to the game," the advertisement stated.

The head coach will be responsible for reviewing, maintaining, and enforcing the disciplinary codes within the Indian men's team.

The BCCI also feels that the incumbent head coach "needs to demonstrate great organizational and tactical strengths and will be responsible for setting out and then executing short, medium and long term plans for the development of the Indian team."

Gambhir: Hardik should be picked only if he does proper bowling in warm-up games

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir is of the opinion that star all-rounder Hardik Pandya can be a part of the Virat Kohli-led team's playing XI in the T20 World Cup only if he is able to bowl at his best in the warm-up matches.

Hardik has not bowled regularly for India and his IPL side Mumbai Indians since returning after undergoing a back surgery in 2019.

Hardik was initially chosen in India's 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup as a batting all-rounder but as it became increasingly clear that he may not be able to bowl during the showpiece, the selectors brought in Shardul Thakur at the expense of Axar Patel to beef up the seam-bowling department.

"For me, Hardik Pandya gets into India's playing XI only if he does proper bowling in both warmup games, not only in the nets. There is a huge difference between bowling in the nets and against quality batsmen like Babar Azam and that too in the World Cup," Gambhir said on Star Sports show Game Plan.

"He has to bowl in the practice matches and the nets, and he has to bowl 100 per cent. If you are thinking that you will come and bowl just at 115-120 kph, I will not take that risk," the World Cup-winning former opener added.

OMAN BEAT PNG BY 10 WICKETS

PTI ■ AL AMERAT (OMAN)

Ludhiana-born Jatinder Singh smashed an unbeaten 73 as co-hosts Oman thrashed Papua New Guinea (PNG) by 10 wickets in the opening Group B first round match of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

Courtesy Jatinder's 42-ball-knock and his opening partner Aqib Ilyas's 50 not out off 43 balls, Oman chased down a modest 130-run target in only 13.2 overs.

None of the PNG bowlers could create any trouble for Jatinder and Aqib as they went about their

business in confident fashion from the onset.

While Jatinder had seven fours and four sixes in his knock, Aqib's innings was laced with five boundaries and one hit over the fence.

Very strong against slow bowlers, Jatinder would rock back and hit them er mid-wicket for sixes as he carried his form from the Qualifying tournament in 2019 where he was the highest run-getter for his adopted country.

Earlier, skipper Asad Vala struck a fine half-century before rival captain Zeeshan Maqsood returned with figures of 4/20 with his



slow left-arm orthodox which restricted PNG to 129/9.

"They were batting very well when I got the wickets. Because we got the wickets, they couldn't put on a big total. I just try to keep it tight and not give away loose balls. We knew the wicket was playing very well, we needed to make sure we didn't give away loose balls and easy boundaries," Maqsood, who was adjudged 'Player of the Match' said at the post-game presentation ceremony.

Sent into bat, PNG lost both their openers for no score before Vala smashed 56 off 43 balls with the help of four boundaries and three sixes while Charles Amini made 37 off 26 balls to stitch 81 runs for the third wicket.

But thereafter, PNG witnessed another batting collapse as they lost their next six wickets for just 37 runs.

Maqsood was certainly pick of the bowlers for Oman but medium pacers Bilal Khan (2/16) and Kallemullah (2/19) also chipped in with a couple of wickets each.

Oman will play Bangladesh in their next Group B match on Tuesday, while PNG will also take on Scotland the same day.

Neeraj records KO win

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian professional boxer Neeraj Goyat notched up a Technical Knockout win over Congo's Bebe Rico Tshibangu in the Amir Khan-supported Super Boxing League's Crypto Fight Night here.

Goyat notched up the win in the third round of his bout on Saturday night.

The triumph in the welterweight bout continued Goyat's three-year unbeaten streak in the circuit.

Goyat, after the fight, once again challenged Khan for a showdown.

Khan, when asked about it, did not give a definitive response.



"There have been talks in the media about the same and the fans, for them when this happens will definitely be exciting as this would be the hotly anticipated bout as per them," Khan, a former Olympic medalist, said.



Decision on Dhoni's retention will be taken only after knowing rules: CSK

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A call on whether to retain Mahendra Singh Dhoni for the next season of the IPL will be taken only after knowing the rules of the system, a top Chennai Super Kings official said on Sunday.

The retention rules have not been laid down as yet and two more teams are set to be added in the 2022 edition.

"The rules of retention are not clear yet...We are not sure about the number of retentions that will be allowed. And a call on that will be made once the rules are known," the official told PTI when asked about the possibility of using a retention card to retain the talismanic Dhoni.

The iconic CSK skipper is the toast of the cricketing world after guiding the franchise to a fourth IPL title on Friday in Dubai.

Earlier, Dhoni had said that he would like to create a roadmap for the next 10 years for CSK.

The skipper had said that he hadn't decided how he would fit into the retention scheme of things.

"Again I've said it before, it depends on the BCCI. With two new teams coming in, we have to decide what is good for CSK," he had said after his team defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs in the IPL final.

"It's not about me being there in the top-three or four. It's about making a strong core to ensure the franchise doesn't suffer. The core group, we have to have a hard look to see who can contribute for the next 10 years," he had said.

The CSK official also said any celebrations by the team would wait till the captain returns after finishing his role as a mentor with the Indian T20 World Cup team in the UAE.

Do it for Virat: Raina's message to India's T20 WC players

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India cricketer Suresh Raina says Virat Kohli deserves to draw the curtains on his T20 captaincy stint by winning the shortest format's World Cup in the UAE and Oman.

Kohli will step down from T20 captaincy after the World Cup and Raina said the talismanic batter deserves a befitting farewell from his teammates.

"For India, the message at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is simple -- do it for Virat Kohli.

"It will probably be his last time at this tournament as captain, so it's very important for him to make everyone believe we can do it and for us to get behind him," Raina wrote in a column for ICC.

"India fans can't wait for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 to start for this reason. We have the players, we have the momentum - we just need to go out there and execute now."

Raina feels the Indian players featuring in the IPL in the UAE could help them during the World Cup.

"All of our players have just played the Indian Premier League in the UAE and they have played themselves into top form with eight or nine games in this environment."

"This gives India an edge on all other teams and makes them one of the big favourites to win the T20 World Cup in my opinion," he said.

"The conditions in UAE are



very similar to what we play India and also in Pakistan. It's a good opportunity for the Asian teams to come and play their natural game."

Raina believes the key to India's success in the tournament lies in the performance of top three batters.

"For me, the key to success for India's batting lies in the top three. Rohit Sharma is a gun player -- he has a brilliant record at ICC events in the past and had a great IPL."

"We need Rohit, KL Rahul and Virat to bat through to 15 overs and lay the platform. They can set the momentum for the India team by doing this," he said.

"There are lots of electric combinations in the middle order and obviously Rishabh Pant is

going to play a key role there. Hardik Pandya is also very capable as a power hitter."

"But if the top three are still there at that stage of the innings, there is no target that India can't chase," Raina added.

He believes mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy is going to play a crucial role for India in the tournament, considering the slow nature of the pitches in the UAE.

"My experience in the IPL was that the wickets in UAE and Oman will be very, very challenging when it comes to the mystery spinners."

"That makes Varun Chakravarthy the main guy in the India bowling attack. He has showed he can exploit the pace of the pitches," Raina said.

IOC supports concerns over FIFA's plans

IANS ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

The international football federation, FIFA's plans to hold its flagship Men's World Cup every two years has raised heckles in the clubs' circuit. The plan to switch the Men's World Cup from a quadrennial schedule to a biennial is now causing concerns among other international federations too.

On Saturday, the Executive Board (EB) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) took note of FIFA's plans to change the football competition schedule and to hold the World Cup every two years and supported the calls for wider consultation. It has also shared its concerns over these plans.

"A number of International Federations (IFs) of other sports, national football federations, clubs, players, players associations and coaches have expressed strong reservations and concerns regarding the plans to generate more revenue for FIFA," the IOC said in a release.

Their concerns are mainly due to this move's impact on



other sports as the increased frequency and timing for the World Cup would create a clash with other major international sports. This includes tennis, cycling, golf, gymnastics, swimming, athletics,

Formula 1, and many others. "This would undermine the diversity and development of sports other than football," the IOC said in a release after the EB meeting.

It will also have an impact

on the principle of gender equality in FIFA as the increases in men's events in the calendar would create challenges for the further promotion of women's football.

The increased frequency of the World Cup will also impact players' welfare as the plans, in particular, the doubling in the frequency of the World Cup would create a further massive strain on the physical and mental health of the players, the IOC release noted.

"The IOC shares these concerns and supports the calls of stakeholders of football, International Sports Federations, and major event organisers for a wider consultation, including w'th athletes' representatives, which has obviously not taken place," the release said.

FIFA president Gi'nni Infantino's plans regarding the frequency of the Men's World Cup have been opposed by the Continental federations for Europe (UEFA) and South and Central Americas. The Asian and African confederations have supported the move.

Shafali, Radha shine in Sydney Sixers win in WBBL



PTI ■ HOBART

India's Shafali Verma struck a half-century and Radha Yadav scalped two batters in Sydney Sixers' five-wicket win in the Women's Big Bash League but Poonam Yadav's effort did not yield a desired result as her team Brisbane Heat lost its match on Sunday.

Young opener Shafali struck 57 off 50 balls with six hits to the fence in Sixers' successful run chase against Hobart Hurricanes, who made 125 for nine.

Apart from Shafali's knock, Sixers skipper Ellyse Perry hit 27 runs off 33 balls as they reached 129 for five in 19.3 overs.

Left-arm spinner Radha got rid of compatriot Richa Ghosh (46 of 46) and Sasha Moloney (22 off 16 balls) to help Sixers restrict Hurricane to a modest total.

In another match, leg-spinner Poonam dismissed experienced Beth Mooney (40) and Heather Graham (6) to help Brisbane Heat restrict Perth Scorchers to 137 for seven after inviting them to bat first.