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UKRAINIAN COUNTERATTACKS SLOW
RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE IN EAST

MONEY 6

INDIA GIVES LANKA \$500 MN
MORE CREDIT TO BUY FUEL

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TITANS BEAT KKR
IN A THRILLER

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NEW DELHI, SUNDAY APRIL 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4

Centre raps TV channels for scandalous coverage

Ukraine attacks, Delhi riots reporting misleading and sensational, says I&B Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday expressed "serious concern" over the manner in which television news channels, journalists and news anchors have gone about their operations while covering the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the Jahangirpuri communal violence, and conducting news debates.

In a strongly-worded advisory citing specific programmes and instances, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting termed the coverage "unauthentic, misleading and sensational with false claims, communal overtones and scandalous headlines/taglines completely unrelated to the news item."

"Many of the journalists and news anchors of these channels made fabricated and hyperbolic statements intending to incite the audiences," the



Local residents gather at a makeshift street market next to fresh graves in the foreground in an area controlled by Russian-backed separatist forces in Mariupol, Ukraine on Friday

AP I PTI

Ministry said and advised strict adherence to the Programme Code and compliance to provisions of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995.

"It has been found that in the recent past several satellite TV channels have carried out coverage of events and incidents in a manner which appears to be using socially unacceptable language and

remarks, offending good taste and decency, and obscene and defamatory and having communal overtones, all of which appear to be violative of the Programme Code and infringement of the provisions of sub-section (2) of Section 20 of the Cable TV Act," it maintained.

In particular, the advisory pointed out, attention is invited to reporting on Russia-

Ukraine conflict, certain incidents in NW Delhi and of certain news debates. "Channels have been making false claims and frequently misquoting international agencies/actors. One channel aired a news item 'Ukraine mein Atomi Hadkamp' on 18th April, 2022 during which it mentioned that Russia is planning a nuclear attack on Ukraine.

Continued on Page 2

AAP accuses BJP Govt of ordering demolition of Neelkanth temple

New Delhi: At a time when a major row rages over the demolition of a 300-year-old Shiva temple in Rajasthan, the Aam Aadmi Party here on Saturday accused the BJP-led Government of ordering the demolition of Delhi's Neelkanth Mahadev Mandir. The BJP is now running bulldozers over temples to fulfil its lust for money, AAP leader Atishi alleged.

BJP's Central Government gave orders to run bulldozers over Neelkanth Mahadev temple in Srinivasapuri," Atishi tweeted sharing an image of the letter in question. The AAP MLA said that the BJP's real face got exposed today after Centre ordered demolition of Neelkanth Mahadev Mandir in Srinivasapuri region.

Continued on Page 2

Tiranga Guinness Records



Union Home Minister Amit Shah pays tribute to Veer Kunwar Singh during Veer Kunwar Singh Vijayotsav at Jagdishpur, in Bhojpur district on Saturday (photo). Shah was a proud witness to 77,700 people simultaneously waving the Indian national flag at Jagdishpur in Bihar, where the BJP sought to make history by breaking Pakistan's record set 18 years ago. Veer Kunwar Singh, the then king of Jagdishpur who is regarded as one of the heroes of the Revolt of 1857. The event was organised as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' (See Page 2)

PTI

Jahangirpuri riot accused booked under PMLA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case against various suspects of the recent Jahangirpuri violence case, including prime accused Mohammed Ansar.

An Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR), the ED's equivalent of a police FIR, has been filed by the agency's headquarters here under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED will begin questioning of the suspects in a day or two and also undertake assessment of the assets of the accused in riots cases.

Following assessments of the properties, the agency will attach them even as Mohammad Ansar is the prime target for the money laundering probe, officials said.

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Insects down 49% in areas most affected by climate change: Study

'Local ecosystems, human health, food security at risk'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Insects are facing an unprecedented threat due to climate change and habitat loss, a team of researchers has warned and pointed out that there has been at least a 49 per cent reduction in the number of insects already reported in the most impacted parts of the world.

The study by University College London's Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research has been published in the journal Nature. The study is the first to identify that an interaction between rising temperatures and land use changes is driving widespread losses in numerous insect groups across the globe.

Lead author Dr Charlie

Outhwaite (UCL Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, UCL Biosciences) said, "Many insects appear to be very vulnerable to human pressures, which is concerning as climate change worsens and agricultural areas continue to expand. Our findings highlight the urgency of actions to preserve natural habitats, slow the expansion of high-intensity agriculture and cut emissions to mitigate climate change.

"Losing insect populations could be harmful not only to the natural environment, where insects often play key roles in local ecosystems, but it could also harm human health and food security, particularly with losses of pollinators.

"Our findings may only represent the tip of the iceberg as there is limited evidence in some areas, particularly in the tropics which we found have quite high reductions in insect biodiversity in the most impacted areas."

Continued on Page 2

Rana couple arrested for Hanuman Chalisa dare at Matoshree



Shiv Sena activists protest outside the residence of MLA Ravi Rana and Amravati MP Navneet Kaur at Khar in Mumbai on Saturday

PTI

The ongoing "Hanuman Chalisa" controversy snowballed into a major face-off between the ruling Shiv Sena and the Opposition BJP on Saturday evening, as the Mumbai Police arrested Independent MP from

Amravati Navneet Rana and her husband Badnera MLA Ravi Rana after they threatened to recite the Hindu devotional hymn in front of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's private residence "Matoshree" at Bandra in north-west Mumbai.

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CBSE drops NAM, Cold War, Islamic empires from syllabus

'To rationalise syllabus', chapters excluded'

STAFF REPORTER/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In what it termed as a move to "rationalise syllabus", the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has dropped chapters about the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Cold War era, the rise of Islamic empires in Afro-Asian territories, the chronicles of Mughal courts and the industrial revolution from the history and political science syllabi of Classes 11 and 12.

In the Class 10 syllabus also, the topic "impact of globalisation on agriculture" from a chapter on 'Food Security' has been dropped. This apart, the translated excerpts from two poems in Urdu by Faiz Ahmed Faiz in the 'Religion, Communalism and Politics - Communalism, Secular State' section have also been excluded this year. Chapters on 'democracy and diversity' too have been dropped.

Officials maintained that the changes are part of rationalisation of syllabus and are in alignment with recommendations by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

The dropped chapter "Central Islamic Lands" in the Class 11 history syllabus talks about the rise of Islamic empires in the Afro-Asian territories and its implications for economy and society, according to the description in



last year's syllabus.

The chapter focused on arenas of Islam in reference to its emergence, the rise of the caliphate and empire building.

Similarly, in the Class 12 history syllabus, the dropped chapter titled "The Mughal Court: Reconstructing Histories through Chronicles" examined the chronicles of Mughal courts to reconstruct the social, religious and cultural history of the Mughals.

The syllabus shared with schools for the 2022-23 academic session also hints at the board's decision to revert to a single-board exam in a session from the two term examination last year.

While the two-term exam was announced as a one-time special measure taken in view of the Covid pandemic, the board officials had last week said a final call will be taken in due course of time keeping in mind the situation.

"CBSE annually provides curriculum for Classes 9 to 12 containing academic content,

syllabus for examinations with learning outcomes, pedagogical practices and assessment guidelines. Considering the feedback of stakeholders and other prevailing conditions, the board is in favour of conducting the annual scheme of assessment at the end of the academic session 2022-23 and the curriculum has been designed accordingly," a senior board official said.

However, this is not the first time the board has dropped from the syllabus certain chapters which have been part of the curriculum for decades. As part of its decision to rationalise the syllabus, the CBSE in 2020 had announced that chapters on federalism, citizenship, nationalism, and secularism in the class 11 political science textbook will not be considered while assessing students, triggering a major controversy.

The topics were restored in the 2021-22 academic session and remain a part of the curriculum.

CAPSULE

2-YEAR OLD AMONG 5 OF FAMILY MURDERED

Prayagraj: Five members of a family, including a 2-year old, were killed with sharp-edged weapons in Khehraipur village in Prayagraj district, police said on Saturday. Prima facie, it appears that the deceased were hit with a stick or some blunt weapon and there are injury marks also on the head, said Prayagraj Senior Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar.

DUMP SITES IN DELHI LIKE TIME BOMBS: NGT

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has expressed serious concern over fire incidents at Ghazipur landfill site in the national Capital saying dump sites are like "time bombs". A massive fire erupted at the Ghazipur landfill site on Wednesday, the third such incident since March 28 this year, sending a dense plume of smoke into the sky and exacerbating the already polluted air in Delhi, Noida and Ghaziabad.

PAK TERRORIST AMONG 2 ULTRAS KILLED IN VALLEY

Srinagar: A Pakistani terrorist of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit was among two terrorists killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu & Kashmir on Saturday, police said.

EV BATTERY EXPLODES, 1 DEAD, 3 HURT IN AP

Amaravati: A 40-year-old man was killed when the battery of his new electric bike exploded causing fire in his bedroom in Vijayawada city in the early hours of Saturday.

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Indians break Pak’s 18 yrs old record of flag waving

77K people wave Tiranga on birth anniv of Veer Kunwar Singh

PTI ■ JAGDISHPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday was a proud witness to more than 75,000 people simultaneously waving the Indian national flag at this semi-urban town in Bihar, where the BJP sought to make history by breaking Pakistan’s record set 18 years ago.

The occasion was the 163rd birth anniversary of Veer Kunwar Singh, the then king of Jagdishpur who is regarded as one of the heroes of the Revolt of 1857. The event was organised as part of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, the 75th anniversary of India’s Independence.

Shah was joined by top BJP leaders from Bihar, including Union ministers R K Singh and Nityanand Rai, Deputy Chief Ministers Tarkishor Prasad and Renu Devi and their

predecessor Sushil Kumar Modi in waving the tricolour for full five minutes, to an instrumental rendition of the national song ‘Vande Mataram’. The attendees were made to wear bands for physical identification and camera trap was installed, with Guinness Book of World Records for supervision. The crowds applauded when the gigantic screen installed at the venue put the headcount of flag wavers at 77,700.

The previous world record was set by 56,000 Pakistanis who waved their national flag at a function in Lahore in 2004. Shah, whose role in bringing about ‘complete national integration by scrapping of Article 370’ was hailed by speaker after speaker, himself spoke for less than 30 minutes.

The former BJP chief told the gathering that reminding

the younger generation of sacrifices made by freedom fighters was a key component of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He also recalled the role of RSS ideologue V D Savarkar in highlighting the contributions of the likes of Veer Kunwar Singh. Savarkar had called the Revolt of 1857 ‘India’s first war of Independence’ and authored an eponymous book.

Seen as the party’s top strategist, Shah also recalled the role played by the BJP, along with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar by whom he was received at the Patna airport, in ridding Bihar of ‘jungle raj’.

In a veiled dig at RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Shah remarked, “Merely going about without Lalu Prasad’s posters cannot erase the memories of jungle raj.”

Shah, who is scheduled to

wrap up his Bihar tour by attending the convocation ceremony of a private university set up by BJP leader Gopal Narayan Singh, also touched upon the welfare measures taken by the Modi government, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

He said that Modi has set a target of making India number one in the world by 2047, when the nation celebrates the centenary of its Independence.

He had words of effusive praise for the people who had come out in large numbers despite “such hot weather”. Notably, this was Shah’s first visit to the state in more than two years.

His last tour of Bihar was in January, 2020 when he had addressed a rally in Vaishali district, in the aftermath of the CAA-NPR-NRC controversy.

India has its own problems: Biden on Quad, Xi’s fear

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping once told him that he was strengthening Quad against China.

China, which has territorial disputes with many countries in the strategic Indo-Pacific region, has been vehemently opposing the Quad alliance since its formation.

Biden, during a Democratic Party fundraiser event at a private residence in Seattle on Friday, said that he had indicated to Xi that “I was going to pull together the Quad: Australia, India, Japan and the United States. He said, ‘You’re just doing that to affect us.’ I said, ‘No, it’s because we’re trying to put together those folks who have an opportunity to work together in the Indo-Pacific’.”

“The point being that one of the things that the autocrats fear the most -- and India has its own problems; all those

countries have their own problems -- is the notion that somehow we can work together in concert and contrary to what are essentially dictatorships, which a lot of countries have become, particularly not only China but Russia and many other countries...The Philippines,” he said.

In February, China termed the Quad alliance as a “tool” to contain China’s rise and to maintain American hegemony.

“China believes that the so-called Quad group cobbled together by the US, Japan, India and Australia is essentially a tool for containing and besieging China to maintain US hegemony.

“It aims to stoke confrontation and undermine international solidarity and cooperation,” Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zhao Lijian had said in Beijing in February.

During the party fundraiser event, Biden said that when he got elected,

Russian president Vladimir Putin thought that he would easily be able to break up the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

“That was part of his objective from the very beginning. And I know I’ve been saying that for eight years, but it was part of his objective,” he said. But the irony of all ironies to this... He got exactly what he did not want, Biden said.

The US president said that Putin was looking for further Finlandisation (the process whereby a country is induced to favour, or refrain from opposing, the interests of a more powerful country) of Europe. Instead, he got Finland... wanting to join NATO and Sweden wanting to join NATO. His action is generating exactly the opposite of what he intended.

“I’m not suggesting that makes things all that easier. But the point is that we have a circumstance where the Ukrainian people are incredibly brave; they’re

incredibly resolved, not just the military that was trained but the people in the streets.

“They are making a lie of Putin’s theory that somehow because they’re Slavic in background and many spoke Russian that somehow there would be a welcoming party. The exact opposite has happened,” Biden added.

In November 2017, the US, Australia, India and Japan gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence, amidst China’s growing military presence in the strategic region. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. Beijing is also involved in a maritime dispute with Japan over the East China Sea.

UP may face power crisis for want of coal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is likely to face a power crisis as the electricity demand is surging and coal stock with state-owned Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam is only 26 per cent, which is only one-fourth of the minimum required level.

Sources said that in the first fortnight of April, the demand for electricity increased due to the scorching summer heat. In the last 38 years, the demand for electricity was highest in the month of April this year. While there was a power shortage of 1.1 per cent in the month of October due to the coal crisis, it was 1.4 per cent in the first fortnight of April. In Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Jharkhand, Haryana, there are power cuts ranging from 3 to 8.7 per cent.

In UP, the Anpara Thermal Power Project of 2,630 megawatt capacity, the pit head plant should have a minimum 17 days’ reserve coal stock. The other coal fired plants -- Harduaganj of 1,265 MW, Obra of

1,094 MW and Parichha of 1,140 MW -- located far away from the coal mines should have 26 days’ coal stock as per the standard norm.

According to records, 5.97 lakh metric tons of coal should be in stock in Anpara whereas at present it has only 3,28 lakh MT of coal. Similarly, the Harduaganj plant should have 4.97 lakh MT of coal in stock but at present it has only 65,700 MT of coal. Obra should have 4.45 lakh MT of coal while it has only one lakh MT of coal. In Parichha there should be 4.3 lakh MT of coal in stock whereas only 12,900 MT coal is left with it. Against the total requirement of about 20 lakh MT of coal stock for all the four thermal power plants they have only 5.11 lakh MT of coal in stock. Chairman of All India Power Engineers Federation, Shailendra Dubey, said that as per the Central Electricity Authority’s latest daily coal report, the coal stock at 81 out of a total of 150 thermal power stations using domestic coal is critical.

He said the condition of the private

sector thermal plants was equally bad as the coal stock of 28 out of 54 plants was in a critical stage.

Dubey said that in Uttar Pradesh the demand for electricity had reached 21,000 MW and the supply was around 19,000-20,000 MW.

Union Power Minister RK Singh has blamed the steep rise in the prices of imported coal due to the Russia-Ukraine war for the coal crisis as well as the lack of adequate availability of railway wagons to transport coal to power stations.

To supply coal to thermal power stations, 453 rakes are required against which 379 rakes were available in the first week of April. UP thermal power generation officials have, however, denied any impending coal crisis. The official sources, while admitting a critical level of the coal stock in thermal plants, said the Railways had stepped up the coal supply and the coal stock as per the standard norm notified by the Union Energy Ministry in October last year would be achieved soon.

UP Govt working to implement Uniform Civil Code: Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah advocated implementation of uniform civil code in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled States, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that the Yogi Adityanath Government was working towards its implementation in the state.

In a statement here on Saturday, Maurya said that the uniform civil code was necessary for the citizens of the country.

“Everyone should demand and welcome uniform civil

code,” he said.

“The Uttar Pradesh government is also thinking in this direction. We are in favour of it and it is necessary for UP and the people of the country. This is also one of the main promises of the BJP (during election),” he said.

Uniform civil code is a proposal to formulate and implement personal laws which apply on all citizens equally regardless of their religion, sex, gender and sexual orientation. Currently, personal laws of various communities are governed by their religious scriptures.

The uniform civil code

could be the next big political push for the BJP in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls as Shah has reportedly said in Madhya Pradesh that after Ram temple, triple talaq, Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and repeal of Article 370, now it is time for the governments to implement a uniform civil code.

“The BJP-ruled states should think in this regard,” he said. After Shah, the BJP leaders have also come out in support of UCC. “It is high time that UCC should be implemented not only in the states but across the country. Our Constitution says that every citizen is equal

and the government should implement laws to make all equal,” BJP vice-president Vijay Bahadur Pathak said.

“People have voted us to power to get the uniform civil code implemented and the Yogi government should do it,” Pathak said.

Earlier, Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had said that uniform civil code would be implemented in the state. He even claimed that a committee had been formed to look into the modalities.

The committee includes policy and law experts and it would submit its report soon, Dhami said.

Two fidayeen were transported to Sunjwan in veg truck, says ADGP

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after neutralising two members of the suicide squad of Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit in Sunjwan area of Jammu, the Additional Director General of Police, Jammu range Mukesh Singh on Saturday claimed the two terrorists were transported from Supwal area along the Jammu Kathua highway to Jalalabad area of Sunjwan in a mini truck by an over ground worker of the Jaish-e- Mohammad terrorist outfit on April 21.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, ADGP Mukesh Singh, flanked by DIG Jammu-Kathua range Vivek Gupta and SSP Jammu, claimed the JeM terrorists were ferried in

a vegetable truck along with a huge consignment of arms and explosives by Bilal Ahmed of Kokernag on the instructions of their Paksitan based handler.

Singh claimed a separate cavity was created inside the truck to hide these terrorists.

So far the police claimed to have arrested Shafiq Ahmed Sheikh S/o Ghulam Mohd Sheikh R/o Mir Mohalla, Tral, as he had facilitated the stay of these terrorists in Jallalabad area of Jammu with the help of his brother identified as Asif Ahmed Sheikh. Both these brothers were deeply involved with JeM terrorists and were working here in Jammu at a walnut factory located near Narwal, not very far away from the site of encounter.

After the preliminary round

of investigations in the case Jammu police have also zeroed in on another individual identified as Mohd Iqbal Rather S/o Abdul Rehman Rather R/o Ahahmadabad near Mosque DH Pora, Malwan, Kulgam for sheltering these JeM terrorists at his residence at Jallalabad.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu late Saturday evening ADGP Mukesh Singh said, during the course of investigation of case FIR No. 115 u/s 302/307/120-B, 121-A IPC, 7/27 Arms Act & 16/18/20 ULA of P/S Bahu Fort Jammu, police investigation team has succeeded in effecting the arrest of a person namely Shafiq Ahmed Sheikh hailing from Tral. Singh said he had facilitated the stay of terrorists in Jallalabad area of Jammu.

Centre raps TV channels for scandalous...

From Page 1

It further sensationalised the situation and mentioned that the attack will happen in the coming few days. The report mis-quoted international agencies also.

“Another channel claimed that Russia has given a 24 hours deadline for the Nuclear attack on Ukraine. One channel aired baseless sensational news on 18th April, 2022 titled ‘Parmanu Putin se pareshan Zelenski’, ‘Parmanu action ki chinta Zelenski ko depression’ and aired several unverified claims misquoting foreign actors/agencies. “Official Russian Media clearly states

that 3rd World war has started”. The channel even showed footage with false claims that the Russian President is carrying a “Nuclear briefcase” with him,” the advisory listed.

The Ministry recently informed the Rajya Sabha that it has initiated action against 160 TV channels while 60 channels on various social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter have been blocked. The action was on grounds that “the contents on these platforms compromised the integrity and safety of the nation”.

The Ministry further said, “Similarly on the recent

incident in North-West Delhi, the coverage by the TV channels had provocative headlines and videos of violence, scandalous and unverified CCTV footage, footage of a specific community thus aggravating the communal tensions, fabricated headlines sensationalising and giving communal colours to the actions of authority.”

It cited some instance like: “Delhi mein Aman ke dushman kaun?” (Date: 16th April); ‘Badi Sajis Dange Wali, Karauli, Khargone vaya Delhi’ (Date: 17th April, 2022); A channel repeatedly carried a

video clipping of a man belonging to a specific community carrying a sword.”

“It was also observed that in the news, some of the channels broadcast debates having unparliamentary, provocative and socially unacceptable language, communal remarks and derogatory references which may have a negative psychological impact on viewers and may also incite communal disharmony and disturb the peace at large. Some are also found to be disrespectful, passing on insulting remarks or giving reference to the different

religions or faiths or their founders,” the Ministry pointed out.

It cited how a “news channel broadcast a programme titled ‘Hunkar’ on 20th April, 2022. During the debate several speakers used unparliamentary and derogatory language towards each other. It was also found that the overall tenor and tonality of the show remains very aggressive and disturbing. Such ambience has a tendency to negatively impact the viewers especially children and may have a long lasting psychological distress and subliminal impact on them.

Jahangirpuri riot...

From Page 1

Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana had on Thursday written to the ED recommending a money laundering probe by the agency as also investigating the assets acquired by the suspects from possible proceeds of crime. He cited preliminary findings made by his officers in the case and the First Information Reports (FIRs) filed by them. The ED case stems from these police complaints, sources said.

According to sources, the ED officials will not only probe Ansar but other accused as well under PMLA. Sources said, after going through the documents submitted by Delhi Police in connection with Ansar and his role in the Jahangirpuri violence case, the ED filed a PMLA case based on the FIR in the Jahangirpuri incident. The ED will probe if Ansar or others received any funds, from any organisation or a person, which was used in the Jahangirpuri violence. The officials will also go through the bank accounts and property details of Ansar and the other accused.

AAP accuses BJP Govt of...

From Page 1

“As soon as the news came to the fore, the Aam Aadmi Party reached the spot to protect the temple from the demolition and staged a protest. The BJP is not only bulldozing the temple but the faith of crores of people just because it wants to loot money from the temple’s gullak,” she said.

“It is an established fact that this is a Government of India/L and DO land and you have unauthorisedly occupied or encroached upon this government land,” the missive adds.

Atishi accused the BJP of extortion and “gundagardi” and lashed out for following the 10-year-old Supreme Court notice. She said, “The court order mentioned in this demolition order is more than 10 years old. Why does the BJP all of a sudden remember a 10-year-old court order-- because of extortion and gundagardi all over the city. There are more examples from all over the city where the BJP, their councillors and leaders are threatening people. It’s shameful.”

Rana couple arrested for...

From Page 1

Though the Rana couple withdrew their plan of reciting “Hanuman Chalisa” in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the metropolis on Sunday, the police went ahead and arrested the couple under section 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, language etc and doings acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony). Their arrest came

after Shiv Sena activists lodged a complaint with the Khar police station.

The police will produce the Rana couple before a holiday court on Sunday.

Earlier, a high-voltage drama unfolded in front of Ranas’ Khar residence where hundreds of Shiv Sainiks had gathered to prevent the couple from stepping out of their home to head towards Thackerays’ nearby residence “Matoshree” at Bandra’s

Kalanagar locality. Interestingly enough, the Shiv Sainiks recited “Hanuman Chalisa” in front of the Ranas’ residence. The Shiv Sena workers also threatened to perform “abhishek” and give “maha-prasad” to the couple.

At the Ranas’ home, Navneet and her husband Ravi had heated exchanges with the police who wanted them to come to the police station. However, the Rana couple insisted the police produce a warrant.

Insects down 49% in areas most affected by climate change...

From Page 1

The researchers analysed a large dataset of insect abundance and species richness from areas across the globe, including three-quarters of a million records for nearly 20,000 insect species.

The team compared insect biodiversity in different areas depending on how intensive agriculture is in the area, as well as how much historic climate warming the local area has experienced. They found that in areas with high-intensity agriculture and substantial climate warming, the number of insects was 49 per cent lower than in the most natural habitats with no recorded climate warming, while the number of

different species was 29 per cent lower. Tropical areas saw the biggest declines in insect biodiversity linked to land use and climate change. The researchers found that in areas of low-intensity agriculture and substantial climate warming, having nearby natural habitat buffered the losses: where 75 per cent of the land was covered by natural habitat, insect abundance only declined by 7 per cent, compared to a 63 per cent reduction in comparable areas with only 25 per cent natural habitat cover. Many insects rely on plants for shade on hot days, so a loss of natural habitats could leave them more vulnerable to a warming climate.

Facing hardship due to barricading: Shopkeepers

Most shops remain shut in violence-hit Jahangirpuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the shops remain shut in the violence-hit Jahangirpuri on Saturday, as the shopkeeper cited that they are facing hardship in running their businesses due to the restricted movement and barricading amid heavy security arrangement. Though police claimed that they have never stopped locals from opening shops however, some movement was permitted in the region as locals, including school students, were seen using the barricaded roads and passing through Kushal Chowk on foot. Nevertheless, vehicular movement is still restricted in the area.

The situation remained calm a day after members from both the communities declared restoration of peace in the area and agreed to live in harmony during a meeting of 'aman' committees.

The shopkeepers in violence-hit C-Block said that there is no business due to barricades and that is the reason they are not opening shops.

The number of the Security personnel significantly reduced for the past days and they were seen manning the roads.

During the Aman committee meeting on Friday, DCP (northwest) Usha Rangnani had urged the people to maintain peace and clarified that she never stopped the opening of shops.

"I have never stopped the shops in H and G blocks of Jahangirpuri from opening. I do not know why these shops are closed. We will facilitate the opening of shops and businesses in these blocks," she underlined.

A majority of shop owners said that they are not opening their establishments as there is no sales due to the barricades.

Akbar, who owns a mobile shop at Kushal Chowk, alleged that he was stopped by police in the morning when he came to open the shop.

"I came in the morning to collect something from the shops, but I was stopped. So I returned home," he said.

Saddam, who runs a shop beside Akbar's, said he was not aware that he can open the store.

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Wednesday conducted a demolition drive in the violence-hit Jahangirpuri area, during which they sent in bulldozers and razed more than 20 temporary shops and kiosks, which was later stopped by the Supreme Court intervention twice.

The area witnessed stone pelting, firing and arson, as members of two communities clashed during the Hanuman Jayanti procession last Saturday.

'Jahangirpuri residents struggling to make both ends meet due to curbs'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar claimed on Saturday that the residents of Jahangirpuri are struggling to make both ends meet and suffering due to the restrictions in the area in the wake of the clashes last week.

Dastidar, who led an all-women fact-finding team of the TMC to Jahangirpuri on Friday, alleged residents of Jahangirpuri's C-Block, the epicentre of the April 16 violence, have been "caged" and are not allowed to come out. The TMC claimed that people are "under threat" and living in fear. They also complained of restricted access to water.

All points of entry to the C-Block have been heavily barricaded and security has been beefed up following the clashes. Dastidar said the TMC team managed to enter Jahangirpuri despite the restrictions and spoke to many residents before being stopped by police. Residents of the C-Block have been caged. They could not come out and were also not allowed to speak to us.

"There were some children who helped us enter the residential area. Before the police stopped us, we had already met a number of families living there. We also vis-

ited the back lane of the mosque and spoke to people who were present there when the violence took place. We have observed that people are under threat and fear," the TMC leader said.

She said that many of the residents are scrap dealers and unable to earn their daily wage due to the restrictions. "We went to extend our support to these residents. We are planning how to help them," Dastidar said.

TMC MP Saugata Roy said the delegation managed to speak to nearly 200 people in Jahangirpuri. "They will submit a report to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee by April 24 and after that, the party will take a decision. We are ready to extend help to them (Jahangirpuri residents)," Roy said. In a tweet on Friday, senior TMC leader Aparupa Poddar, who was also part of the party's fact-finding team, alleged they were stopped from meeting residents as the Centre was scared of the truth coming out.

"Police stopped the all women fact-finding team of @AITCofficial which was sent by @MamataOfficial didi for enquiring about the #Jahangirpuri incident. BJP Govt & Delhi Police is (are) scared of the truth of the violence being exposed if the delegation was allowed to meet the victims," she said.

Court extends custodial interrogation of 5 accused



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Saturday extended by eight days the custodial interrogation of five persons, booked under the stringent National Security Act in connection with the April 16 Jahangirpuri violence.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mayank Goel sent Ansar, the alleged "main conspirator" behind the violence; Sonu, who was seen in a video open-

ing fire during the clashes Salim, Ahir and Dilshad to further police custody after they were produced before the court on expiry of their earlier custody.

The court, meanwhile, issued non bail able warrants (NBWs) against accused Sanwar Kalia, Saddam Khan, Anwar, Chand and Salman after police said they were absconding. "Eight days PC (police custody) remand of

accused is granted. Accused be produced on May 1 through VC," the court said.

During the arguments, police told the court that all five arrested accused were required for further interrogation and to confront all the co-accused persons with each other.

The police said the accused were required for linking the chain of incident, to ascertain the role of each and every one of them, to find out the source

of illegal weapons which were used in the alleged offence and for tracing the other accused persons involved in the case.

"Sustained interrogation with all the accused person involved in the offence is required," the prosecution told the court. The court also sent four accused - Aksar, Mohd. Ali, Gulam Rasul and Sheikh Hamid - to judicial custody till April 30.

Delhi's R-value recorded at 2.1 this week: IIT-Madras

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of Delhi witnessing an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases once again, a new analysis conducted by the IIT-Madras has said that Delhi's R-value was recorded at 2.1 this week.

A preliminary analysis by computational modelling was conducted by IIT-Madras' Department of Mathematics and Centre of Excellence for Computational Mathematics and Data Science headed by Prof Neelesh S Upadhye and Prof S Sundar has revealed that Delhi's R-value, which indicates the spread of COVID-19, was recorded at 2.1 this week, implying that every infected person is infecting two others in the national capital.

The 'R' or reproductive value indicates the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to, and a pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below one. Delhi is witnessing an uptick in

the number of COVID-19 cases. The city logged 1,042 fresh Covid cases with a positivity rate of 4.64 per cent on Friday.

The report was shared with the PTI and according to it, Delhi's R-value this week was recorded at 2.1. India's R-value, at present, stands at 1.3, the analysis found.

Asked if it can be deduced that this is the beginning of the fourth wave of COVID-19 in Delhi, Dr Jayant Jha, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, IIT-Madras, said it would be too early to declare an onset of another wave.

"We can only say right now that every person is affecting two others....But we need to wait a bit to declare onset...We don't know about the immunity status and whether the people who got affected during the third wave in January are getting affected or not again," he told PTI.

For other metro cities —

Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, Jha said the number of cases are too low to ascertain a trend.

The Omicron sub-lineage BA.2.12 has been detected in a majority of the samples sequenced from Delhi in the first fortnight of April and it could be behind the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in the city, sources said on Thursday. However, an Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) source has claimed that Omicron variant derivative BA.2.12.1 has also been found in a few samples in Delhi which is said to be contributing to the recent rise in cases in the US.

But officials have not confirmed that it indeed was found in some samples in Delhi. An official source said, "New sub-variants BA.2.12 (52 per cent samples) and BA.2.10 (11 per cent samples) are showing high transmission and have been found in over 60 per cent of the total samples from Delhi sequenced recently."

Capital reports 1,094 fresh cases, two death

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Saturday reported 1,094 fresh Covid-19 cases and two death, while the positivity rate stood at 4.82 per cent, according to data shared by the health department of the Delhi Government.

According to the health bulletin, the total number of home-isolation cases stand to 2,532. The number of containment zones is 647 on April 23.

"There are 9,489 beds for Covid patients in Delhi hospitals and 101 (1.06 per cent) of them were occupied," it said.

Delhi's case count has now increased to 1873793 and the death toll has risen to 26,166. The Delhi government had



on Friday made masks mandatory at public places with immediate effect, and imposed a fine of Rs 500 for any violation as covid cases rise in the city again.

However, those travelling together in a private four-wheeler are out of the purview of the new rule, according to an order issued by the city's Health and Family Welfare

Department.

Coronavirus cases and positivity rate have been on the rise for the past few days in the national capital.

Delhi on Friday reported 1042 fresh COVID-19 cases and two death, while the positivity rate stood at 4.64 per cent, according to data shared by the health department of the Delhi Government.

Delhi's Ashram road underpass to be opened today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a big relief to commuters using south Delhi's Ashram road, an underpass will open for traffic movement on Sunday. The underpass project has so far missed eight deadlines since the foundation stone laying ceremony by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in 2019.

Ashram Chowk, where two major projects are being carried out by the government, has become a traffic nightmare for commuters. People passing by get stuck in traffic for hours at any time of the day. The Delhi government's Public Works Department has shut both the carriageways of the underpass for the finishing touches and preparations. The Delhi Police

has also issued an advisory suggesting the commuters to avoid the stretch due to finishing work and the opening ceremony of the underpass. The four-lane 750 metre underpass connects the Nizamuddin railway bridge and the CSIR Apartments at the busy intersection. The estimated cost of the underpass project is said to be around Rs 78 crores.

Last month Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the PWD portfolio, had said the facility will be opened for the public on March 22 but it could not be done because of non-completion of work. However, the PWD had started the trial run of the facility from March 22. Currently the underpass remains closed during the night.

Sisodia reviews maintenance works of flyovers in Delhi

Sisodia also approved the repair works and restoration of three more flyovers of the city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday reviewed maintenance works of the flyovers in the National Capital. Sisodia also approved the repair works and restoration of three more

flyovers of the city.

Sisodia, who also holds the charge of Public Works Department, during his review visit specifically asked the officials about the regular maintenance measures being taken for the flyovers spread all across Delhi.

The PWD minister also directed the officials to carry out the maintenance work of flyovers promptly so that commuters do not face any inconvenience. Along with this, the

Sisodia also approved the repair works and restoration of three more flyovers of Delhi.

"There should not be any delay on the PWD's part to carry out the maintenance work. Officials should focus on removing the bottlenecks that cause traffic jams and restrict the smooth movement of the commuters," said Sisodia.

"The three flyovers that have been added to the repairing list include Nangloi flyover, Hanuman Setu flyover and

Mayapuri flyover. The repair work of six main flyovers is already being done in Delhi and the cost of this entire project is Rs 52.35 crore," said a senior PWD official.

"Notably, the flyovers of Delhi are regularly maintained by the Public Works Department. However, due to excessive traffic pressure, minor drawbacks occur in flyovers which are maintained by the PWD's repair unit," said the official.

AAP encroached land outside party office: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has illegally encroached the land outside the party office by constructing two tin shed rooms and a kiosk and said that now one can understand that why AAP leaders are so vocal against anti encroachments drive.

The BJP spokesperson Praveen Shakar Kapoor, said that the people of Delhi are surprised to see AAP leaders protest against municipal corporation's drive against encroachment by people of Bangladeshi antecedents in

city, but we what failed to understand is the reason behind AAP leaders diatribe against anti encroachment drive. "Now as the pictures of massive encroachment on public land outside AAP office have come to light, everyone can understand why AAP supports encroachments on public land," he said.

"People of Delhi want Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to tell when and how AAP encroached the public land and constructed these two tin sheds and CM should also ask Public Works Department (PWD) officials to pull down these encroachments," he added.

Ghazipur dump fire: NGT forms joint committee

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has constituted a joint committee headed by former Delhi High Court judge SP Garg in regard to the fire at the garbage dump site at Ghazipur in Delhi and said that the situation in Delhi may be more serious with regard to the size of the garbage dump and its location in a densely populated area.

A massive fire erupted at the Ghazipur landfill site on Wednesday, the third such incident since March 28, sending a dense plume of smoke into the sky and exacerbating the already polluted air in nearby areas.

A bench headed by NGT

Chairperson Justice A K Goel said the dump sites in Delhi and in other cities are like "time bombs" because they constantly generate explosive gases like methane which may escape through vertical and lateral ways posing constant threat of explosion.

"It is a matter of concern that such incidents are taking place elsewhere also and there is potential for the same wherever legacy waste remains unremediated. It is for this reason that there is a statutory timeline expected to be followed strictly. Situation in Delhi may be more serious having regard to the size of the garbage dump and its location in densely populated areas," it said.

2 held for killing, dumping body in Northwest Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two men for allegedly killing a person over a personal issue in northwest Delhi's Karala area and later dumping the victim's naked body at a vacant plot filled with water in Vardhman Enclave near Shiv Vihar, Karala area.

The deceased has been identified as Joginder, a resident of Shiv Vihar while the accused have been identified as Kartik, a resident of Begumpur and Rajkumar, a resident of Baldev Vihar in Karala.

According to Pranav Tayal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district, on April 19, a naked dead

body is lying in a vacant plot filled with water in Vardhman Enclave and on enquiry the deceased was identified as Joginder.

"Accordingly, an First Information Report (FIR) was registered under section 302/201/34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Kanjhawala police station. During the investigation, the police arrested two people based on CCTV footage," said the DCP.

"During questioning, Kartik revealed that the deceased had used some inappropriate words for his mother and sister, and in order to take revenge, he, along with Rajkumar, beat the victim up, crushed his face."

DU to students: Take permission for protests

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University has issued a notice asking students to mandatorily take prior permission from the varsity to hold protests. Delhi University proctor Rajni Abbi said the latest notice was issued keeping in view the incidents in the last few days.

Earlier this month, the university had issued an advisory to students to maintain law and order on the campus and focus on preparations for their upcoming exams.

"A student told us that he had been sitting on a hunger strike for the last four days. We did not even know it. What do

we do if something happens to the student?" she said.

Abbi said they have made it "compulsory" for students to seek permission from the proctor's office for holding protests.

"We are not going to deny permission to anyone. There is always a possibility that outsiders might come and do something mischievous. This is also for the safety of the students. We do not want students to destroy university property and that is a new point that we have added which was not there in the earlier notification," she said. Abbi said not only has the notice been posted on the university website, but also sent to student organisations.

4 arrested for killing BJP man in Ghazipur

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested four men for allegedly killing a 42-year-old BJP member earlier this week in east Delhi's Ghazipur area.

The accused have been identified as Ujjawal alias Gaurav (26) and Saurabh Kataria (18), residents of Mayur Vihar Phase-III, Raja (22) and Bittu (29), residents of Gharoli Village.

The deceased, identified as Jitender Choudhary alias Jeetu, was the secretary of BJP's Mayur Vihar district unit.

According to police, the incident took place on Wednesday around 9.15 pm.

A man was shot dead by some unknown persons at Pocket C-1, Mayur Vihar Phase-III. Police reached the spot and found that the blood was lying there, police said.

During enquiry, it was revealed that Chaudhary, a resident of Pocket-C, Mayur Vihar, was shot by some unknown persons and had been taken to the hospital, said Priyanka Kashyap, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district.

Police reached Metro Hospital, Noida in Uttar Pradesh where the victim had already been declared brought dead.

Rajnath: India won't hesitate to cross border to punish terrorists

Def Min declares during felicitation ceremony of 1971 war veterans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI GUWAHATI

In a tough message to Pakistan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said India will not hesitate to cross the border to punish terrorists if the country is targeted from outside.

He also said the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was withdrawn from some north eastern States after the situation improved in the region. Rajnath made these observations at a function in Guwahati where veterans from Assam who fought in the 1971 war with Pakistan were felicitated. Lt Colonel Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir (Retired), a Bangladeshi veteran of 1971 war, who was awarded with a Padma Shri, was among those present. Some of the veterans of the 1965 war were also in attendance.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajnath said the government was working to wipe out ter-



rorism from the country. "India has been successful in giving out the message that terrorism will be strongly dealt with. We will not hesitate to cross borders if the country is targeted from outside," Rajnath said.

On the situation in the region, he said the eastern boundary of the country is currently experiencing more peace and stability compared to the western frontier (Pakistan), with Bangladesh being a friendly neighbour.

"The tension that India experiences on western frontier does not exist along eastern boundary as Bangladesh is a friendly country," he noted.

"The problem of infiltration has almost ended. There is peace and stability at the border (in the eastern frontier) now," the minister said.

On the withdrawal of the AFSPA, Rajnath said there was a "public misconception" that the Army always wanted the AFSPA to remain in force. "It is the situation that is respon-

sible for imposition of AFSPA, not the Army," he said. The Army wants that the situation becomes completely normal in Jammu and Kashmir so that the AFSPA can be removed from there as well, he added.

The 1971 war provided India with a strategic advantage, Rajnath said adding there has never been any tension on the Indo-Bangladesh border as seen on the western front because Bangladesh has always been India's friendly country. He credited the coordination between the central and states governments of the North-east which has ensured peace and stability on the Indo-Bangladesh border and helped the region usher into a new era of development.

On the occasion, Rajnath also released a book 'The Bravehearts of 1971'. Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma were among those present during the felicitation ceremony.

Air courier service for paramilitary, IB, NDRF resumes for 4 routes

RAKESH K SINGH ■
NEW DELHI

Air courier service for Central paramilitary forces, Intelligence Bureau (IB) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel for four routes from the Northeast to Kolkata and Delhi resumed on Saturday. The air courier service from Naxal hit Chhattisgarh to the national capital and vice versa also resumed during the day.

The air courier service for Jammu & Kashmir to the national Capital and vice versa will resume from Sunday and Indigo Airlines has been contracted for provision of the facilitation to the security and intelligence personnel.

The service will be provided by Indigo airlines and it will continue till July 31, 2023.

The air courier service has resumed on the approved routes for the Northeast and Naxal-hit Chhattisgarh, For Jammu and Kashmir it will resume on Sunday.

On the Northeast front, the services will be available for

Kolkata-Agartala-Kolkata route as also for Kolkata-Aizawl - Silchar-Kolkata, Delhi (T-2)-Dibrugarh-Guwahati-Delhi.

For Chhattisgarh, it will be available for Delhi-Raipur-Jagdalpur-Raipur-Jagdalpur-Raipur-Delhi route.

"It is to inform that as per approval received from MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs), now Air Courier Service will be operated by InterGlobe Aviation Ltd (Indigo) Airlines on all approved routes upto 31 July 2023," reads an order of the Administration Directorate of the Border Security Force (BSF).

BSF is the nodal Force for provision of the Air Courier Service and the order was issued on Thursday.

"It is requested to inform your personnel to utilize optimum allotted seats in Air Courier Service," reads the order circulated to the nodal officers of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Force (CISF) Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Assam Rifles (AR),



National Security Guard (NSG), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

The services were earlier being provided by Air India but the renewal could not be reached at the old rates after disinvestment of the erstwhile public sector airliner, officials said.

The services were discontinued for a brief spell due non-

negotiation of the facility with Air India and delay in finalization of the same with Indigo Airlines, they added.

The service is being provided to the paramilitary personnel deployed in the Northeast, Jammu and Kashmir besides Naxal-hit Chhattisgarh to reduce their travel time while proceeding to their hometowns for availing leave.

BJP, Cong spar over demolition of temple in poll-bound Rajasthan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The politics over the demolition of a temple in Rajasthan has turned hot in the poll-bound State with the BJP trying to put the Congress Government on the mat over the sensitive issue even as the other side is presenting contrasting "facts" on the controversy.

The BJP State leadership will be meeting Governor Kalraj Mishra to raise its demand for reconstruction of the demolished Shiva temple at Alwar as a five-member committee constituted by the party to probe the demolition visited Alwar in the state on Saturday and accused the Congress of carrying-out "anti-Hindu actions".

Elections are due in Rajasthan before December 2023.

The state BJP committee will prepare a factual report, and submit it to the Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Poonia.

Addressing a press conference at Jaipur, senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore accused the Gehlot government of "appeasement" at the expense of the Hindu sentiments and alleged two temples and a cowshed was demolished in the state at government orders.

He said the state leaders will meet the



governor for the reconstruction of the demolished temples and sought the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government to "apologize" for their alleged acts.

On the contrary, the Congress leaders have printedly alleged that the decision for the demolition of the Alwar temple was taken by the municipal board run by the BJP and claimed that the majority of corporators are from the BJP who voted in favor of the demolition.

It is also reported that according to the Alwar District Magistrate, the decision to demolish the temple was taken after a "consensus" was reached between the two parties.

According to the District Magistrate,

notices were given to all the trespassers personally on April 6, and an announcement was made two days before the anti-encroachment drive.

The anti-encroachment drive was carried out on April 17 and April 18, the DM said and that no legal structures were demolished and no protest took place during the demolition drive.

The cowshed demolished was also reportedly constructed illegally in the forest land. A day before BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya had attacked the Congress saying "shedding tears on Karauli and Jahangirpuri and hurting the faith of Hindus -- this is the secularism of Congress," he said.

Edible oil prices may surge further as Indonesia bans Palm oil export

This will result in loss of about 4 million tonne of palm oil every month for India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rising edible oil prices may hit new highs in coming days as Indonesia, the world's largest producer of palm oil, has decided to ban exports from April 28. A halt in supplies from Indonesia would mean a loss of about 4 million tonne of palm oil every month for India. India's sunflower oil supplies had halved to nearly 100,000 tonnes per month following the Ukraine war and this could make things worse for households. The edible oil is being sold between Rs 180-260 a kg in the retail markets across India.

Sources in the government said if suddenly, monthly supplies of around 300,000-325,000 tonnes of palm oil stop from May onwards it will cause a sharp escalation in edible oil prices which have been already on the boil due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

A data showed that of the 19 kg of edible oil consumed by an individual in India every year, more than 11 kg comes from imports. Current consumption of edible oil in India is approximately 22 million tons, out of which 13 million tonnes or roughly 59 per cent is imported.

India imports 8 million tonnes of



palm oil from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia; 3.5 million tons of soybean oil from Argentina, Brazil and USA, and 2 mln tonnes of sunflower oil from Ukraine, Russia and Argentina. Sources in the government said if suddenly, monthly supplies of around 300,000-325,000 tonnes of palm oil stop from May onwards it will cause a sharp escalation in edible oil prices which have been already on the boil due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Palm oil is used in products from cooking oils to processed foods, cosmetics and biofuels. It is the world's most wide-

ly used vegetable oil and is used in the manufacture of many products including biscuits, margarine, laundry detergents and chocolate. Indonesia, on Friday announced plans to ban exports of the most widely used vegetable oil, in a shock move that could further inflame surging global food inflation. The halting of shipments of the cooking oil and its raw material, widely used in products ranging from cakes to cosmetics, could raise costs for packaged food producers globally and force governments to choose between using vegetable oils in food or for biofuel.

Distressed UP, Punjab, Maha farmers fail to benefit from farm loan waivers

Joint study by NABARD, Bharat Krishak Samaj finds that in 3 States 40% farmers did not receive benefit from waiver in place since 2017



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A joint study conducted by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in collaboration with the Bharat Krishak Samaj has found that in the three States of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra, which had loan waivers in place since April 2017, almost 40 per cent of 'highly distressed farmers' had not received any benefit from the waivers.

The study, 'Farm loan waivers in India: assess the impact and looking ahead', also found that an average farmer of Punjab borrows four times the amount than his counterparts in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and over five times his counterparts in Maharashtra. The study showed that a marginal farmer in Punjab borrows Rs 3.4 lakh annually, as compared to Rs 84,000 and Rs 62,000 in UP and Maharashtra, respectively.

The study found that only four out of the 21 political parties lost the election following the promise and implementation of farm loan waiver schemes. These parties were the Samajwadi party in Uttar Pradesh, Telugu Desam Party in Telangana, BJP in Maharashtra, and Janata Dal

(Secular) in Karnataka. In the case of Maharashtra in 2019, Shiv Sena was a part of the alliance with the BJP when the loan waiver scheme was announced. Subsequently, in October 2019, the BJP did not form the Government but the Shiv Sena did as part of another alliance with the Congress and NCP.

The farm loan waiver scheme was expected to cost the state exchequer Rs. 36,000 crores in UP, making this the largest debt waiver to be declared in the country. About 0.86 crores beneficiaries were initially identified as beneficiaries under the scheme. According to the agricultural census 2015-16, there are 2.2 crores SMFs in the state

The study said that Punjab had the highest credit availability per operational land-holding (Rs. 6.84 lakh/holding), followed by Haryana (Rs. 3.44 lakh/holding) and Tamil Nadu (Rs. 2.01 lakh/holding). The eastern Indian states seem to have suffered on this count. The bottom five states in terms of credit availability per land-holding were from eastern India - Arunachal Pradesh (Rs. 0.08 lakh), Nagaland (Rs. 0.09 lakh), Meghalaya (Rs. 0.13 lakh), Jharkhand (Rs. 0.14 lakh) and Manipur (Rs. 0.17 lakh).

On an average, 50 per cent

of the agricultural credit disbursed in a year is accounted for by six states: Rajasthan (6.8 per cent), Kerala (6.9 per cent), Maharashtra (7 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (7.3 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (9.4 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (13.6 per cent).

On the much talked about electoral impact of farm loan waivers, the study found that since 2012, 13 states have implemented loan waiver schemes for farmers. The government must promote a healthy credit culture, invest in farming and address distortion in the agriculture sector instead of waiving farmers' loans irrespective of their distress level, the study report said.

The study revealed that the waivers increased the chances of wilful defaults by farmers (between 68 to 80 per cent respondents in the three states agreed) and the waiver pushed honest farmers to default on agricultural loans (between 72 to 85 per cent of respondents in the three states agreed).

This report makes a case for a deeper analysis and the need to address the structural factors that consistently cause distress to farmers. Loan waivers are considered a one-time solution to farmer distress. Farm loan waivers are expensive; some states fund their waivers by reducing allocations in their capital outlays while others increase their expenditures pushing up their fiscal deficit.

Growing number of political parties are finding it expedient to promise farm loan waivers particularly closer to election time," it said.

Modi meets MP CM Shivraj, discusses initiatives in State



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to discuss several issues including holding of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in Indore early next year and inauguration of Mahakal Maharaj temple complex in Ujjain besides other governance initiatives of the State government.

"Met MP CM Shri @ChouhanShivraj ji, who discussed the good governance initiatives of the MP Government and how their transformative schemes are bringing a positive change in people's lives," tweeted the Prime Minister after the meeting.

On Friday, Chouhan had

hosted Union Home Minister Amit Shah who attended several programmes in the city during his one-day stay.

Chouhan said that "Mahayagya" of good governance, development and public welfare will continue in Madhya Pradesh under the guidance of the Prime Minister.

"Met Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji and informed about the schemes of development and welfare of Madhya Pradesh. The Prime Minister provided his guidance on many subjects. Under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the Mahayagya of good governance, development and public welfare will continue in Madhya Pradesh," he tweeted.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji always has affection

for Madhya Pradesh. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister for all possible cooperation for the development of the state," he said in another tweet

Issues related to law and order besides the naxal issue, Ken-Betwa river interlinking project and several other matters also figured in their discussion, with Chouhan briefing Modi about the measures taken by his government, sources said.

It was also decided that the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference will be held in Indore on January 9 and prior to it, the Global Investor Summit will be held on January 7 and 8. The CM said the Mahakal Maharaj temple complex is ready and the Prime Minister has given his approval to inaugurate it.

My resignation letter permanently with Sonia Gandhi: Gehlot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday said his resignation letter is permanently with Congress president Sonia Gandhi amid speculation that there could be a possible rejig in Rajasthan Congress, ahead of next year's polls.

Speculation around changes in the State government has been doing the rounds following the recent meeting between Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and senior party leader Sachin Pilot in New Delhi.

Gehlot said, "My resignation is permanently with Sonia Gandhi. When Congress decides to change the Chief Minister, no one will get a hint. No deliberation will be done on it [changing CM]. Congress

high command is independent to take decisions and I would appeal to everyone to not pay heed to rumours as it affects governance."

"For the last 2-3 days, there was talk about changing the chief minister of Rajasthan. This is not right," he added.

"Rumours keep running in the media and in newspapers. You don't have to pay attention to them," Gehlot said during a state-level event of the Rajasthan Revenue Service Council here. Such rumours mislead people and governance is also affected, he said.

"The condition of the Congress should be a matter of concern for the whole country. Common citizens who never vote for the Congress also want the party to be a strong opposition in the country," the chief minister said.

Woman allegedly killed by husband in outer north Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her husband in outer north Delhi's Budhpur area. Police said that her husband punched and repeatedly smashed her face onto the floor over a trivial issue here.

The victim has been identified as Gudiya Devi, a native of Jharkhand. Devi and her husband Janm Jai Singh (35) were residing in Haryana's Ambala.

According to Brijendra Kumar Yadav, the Deputy

Commissioner of Police (DP), outer north district, on Thursday, the couple arrived at Singh's brother's house in Budhpur to pick up their daughter, who had been living in Delhi for the past 15 days. "Singh, who works at a poultry farm in Ambala, wanted to return the same day. However, his wife insisted that they spend the night in Budhpur and travel back the next day.

This led to a scuffle between the couple, and in a fit of anger, Singh punched Devi and smashed her face onto the floor multiple times," said the DCP.

Ukrainian counterattacks slowing Russian offensive in east

AP ■ KYIV

Russian troops are pressing their offensive in the eastern Donbas region in an attempt to fully seize Ukraine's industrial heartland but have made little headway as fierce Ukrainian counterattacks have slowed their efforts, Ukrainian and British officials said Saturday. Russia continues to fight for full control of the Donetsk and Luhansk areas that make up the Donbas and seeks to secure "a land route between these territories and the occupied Crimea," including by wiping out the last pocket of resistance in the besieged port city of Mariupol, Ukraine's General Staff said.

Ukrainian forces over the past 24 hours repelled eight Russian attacks in the two regions, destroying nine tanks, 18 armoured units and 13 vehicles, a tanker and three artillery systems, the General Staff said.

"Units of Russian occupiers are regrouping. Russian enemy continues to launch missile and bomb strikes on military and civilian infrastructure," the General Staff said on its Facebook page.

Luhansk Governor Serhiy Haidai said Saturday that two people were killed by Russian shelling in the city of Popasna.

He said an evacuation train for residents of the Donetsk



and Luhansk areas was expected to leave Saturday from the eastern city of Pokrovsk bound for the western city of Chop, near Ukraine's border with Slovakia and Hungary.

"In addition to the fact that street fighting continues in the city for several weeks, the Russian army constantly fires at multistory residential buildings and private houses," Haidai wrote on the messaging app Telegram.

"Just yesterday, local residents withstood five enemy artillery attacks.... Not all survived," Britain's Ministry of Defense said despite their increased activity "Russian forces have made no major gains in the last 24 hours as Ukrainian counter-attacks continue to hinder the efforts."

Russia still has not established air or sea control due to Ukrainian resistance, and

despite President Vladimir Putin's declaration of victory in Mariupol, "heavy fighting continues to take place, frustrating Russian attempts to capture the city, thus further slowing their desired progress in the Donbas," the Ministry of Defense said.

Ukrainian officials were trying again Saturday to evacuate women, children and the elderly from Mariupol after many previous attempts failed.

The effort was to get underway at midday "if everything goes according to plan," Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said on the messaging app Telegram.

Russia has pulled a dozen crack military units from Mariupol to bolster the offensive elsewhere in the Donbas, while other troops continue to keep the remaining Ukrainian troops in the city pinned in the Azovstal steelworks, the last remaining stronghold, Ukrainian officials said.

Putin is said to have ordered his forces not to storm the plant to finish off the defenders but to seal it off instead in an apparent bid to force them to surrender.

Russian forces have been pummelling the 2,000 Ukrainian fighters still huddled up inside, the mayor's office reported on Friday.

Sanctions hit Russian economy, although Putin says otherwise

AP ■ NEW YORK

Nearly two months into the Russian-Ukraine war, the Kremlin has taken extraordinary steps to blunt an economic counteroffensive from the West. While Russia can claim some symbolic victories, the full impact of Western sanctions is starting to be felt in very real ways.

As the West moved to cut off Russia's access to its foreign reserves, limit imports of key technologies and take other restrictive actions, the Kremlin launched some drastic measures to protect the economy.

Those included hiking interest rates to as high as 20%, instituting capital controls and forcing Russian business to convert their profits into rubles.

As a result, the value of the ruble has recovered after an initial plunge, and last week the central bank reversed part of its interest rate increase. Russian President Vladimir Putin felt emboldened and proclaimed - evoking World War II imagery - that the country had withstood the West's "blitz" of sanctions.

"The government wants to



paint a picture that things are not as bad as they actually are," said Michael Alexeev, an economics professor at the University of Indiana, who studied Russia's economy in its transition after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

A closer look, however, shows that the sanctions are taking a bite out of Russia's economy:

The country is enduring its worst bout of inflation in two decades. Rosstat, the state's economic statistic agency, said inflation last month hit 17.3%, the highest level since 2002. By comparison, the International Monetary Fund expects consumer prices in developing countries to rise 8.7% this year, up from 5.9% last year.

Ukraine: Russians shift elite units to new battleground

AP ■ KYIV

Russia shifted a dozen crack units from the shattered port of Mariupol to eastern Ukraine and pounded away at cities across the region. Ukrainian authorities said Friday, as the two sides hurtled toward what could be an epic battle for control of the country's industrial heartland.

Russian state TV showed the Russian flag raised on what it said was Mariupol's highest point, the city's TV tower. It also showed what it said was the tallest building at Mariupol's besieged Azovstal steel plant in flames.

The Kremlin has thrown over 100,000 troops and mercenaries from Syria and Libya into the fighting in Ukraine and is deploying more forces in the country every day, said Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council.

"We have a difficult situation, but our army is defending our state," he said.

UN SG Guterres to meet President Putin, Zelenskyy

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy next week, as he steps up diplomatic efforts to "silence the guns" in Ukraine.

Guterres will visit Moscow where on April 26 he will "have a working meeting and lunch with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and will be received by President Vladimir Putin," Eri Kaneko, Associate Spokesperson for the Secretary-General said on Friday.

The visit comes two months after Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine. Over five million people have fled the east European country, and thousands have been killed since Russia launched a 'special military operation' against Ukraine on February 24.

"Next week, I will meet with President Vladimir Putin in Russia and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Ukraine," Guterres tweeted.

Mariupol plant survivors long to see sun as Russia eyes east

AP ■ KYIV

Women and children sheltering inside a steel plant in the shattered Ukrainian port city of Mariupol said they longed to see the sun, according to a video released on Saturday, as Russian troops pressed their offensive in the eastern Donbas region against fierce resistance.

The Azov Regiment of Ukraine's National Guard, which has members holed up in the Azovstal steel plant along with other soldiers and civilians, released footage of around two dozen women and children, some of whom said they had been in the mill's underground tunnels for two months. The regiment's deputy commander Sviatoslav Palamar told The Associated Press the video was shot on Thursday.

The contents could not be independently verified.

Lankan PM dismisses calls for forming interim Govt

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday dismissed calls by protesters to form an interim government to tackle the unprecedented economic crisis in the country, saying such political formations have no use "when people with varying policies can't see eye to eye".

Thousands of demonstrators have hit the streets since April 9, as the government ran out of money for vital imports; prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed and there are acute shortages in fuel, medicines and electricity supply.

Speaking to Radio station 'Neth FM', the prime minister said: "What use of interim governments when people with varying policies can't see eye to



eye? There has to be accord which is not possible. If there is a need for an interim government it should happen only under my leadership."

Anti-government protesters in Sri Lanka are demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda as they blame government policies for the forex crisis.

Commenting on the economic crisis, Rajapaksa, 77, said, "People need to show patience to face it (the economic crisis). They can keep on protesting if

they don't want to have talks."

Last week, the ruling dispensation reached out to the Opposition parties and protesters for talks, but all efforts were rebuffed as the agitators said they want the government to resign.

The prime minister said he wasn't aware personally of anyone calling for his stepping down.

"Even if there are demands for my resignation, it would not be from the majority, it will be from a minority group who wouldn't know the political history of the country," he said.

A group of over 40 Parliamentarians from the ruling coalition have declared independence, urging the formation of an interim government comprising all political parties.

Nepal to mobilise nearly 1,68,000 security personnel during local polls

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal government is planning to mobilise a total of 168,000 security personnel from various agencies to ensure security during the upcoming May 13 local level elections.

There will be a three-tier security system in place during the local election, according to officials.

Accordingly, Nepal's security apparatus has come to the fore with the necessary security strategy to ensure that local elections are held in a free, fair, and fearless manner.

As per the strategy, the Nepal police will be in the first circle of election security, the armed police force in the second circle, and the Nepal Army in the third circle.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the security

mechanism has been mobilised by formulating an integrated as well as separate strategic security plan for the security agencies to conduct the election in a fearless and peaceful manner.

During the upcoming election, Nepal police will mobilise more than 65,000 personnel, while 71,000 personnel of the Nepal Army and 32,000 from the armed police force will be deployed.

The Nepal police have formulated an election security strategy to create a peaceful and fearless voting environment, according to Nepal Police Spokesperson Senior Superintendent of Police Bishnukumar KC.

Similarly, the National Investigation Department will also be mobilised to support the security agencies in performing their duties.

A total of 10,756 polling stations and 21,955 polling booths have been set up for the elections.

Accordingly, the government has categorised 2,946 polling stations as highly sensitive, 4,423 as sensitive, and 3,387 as less sensitive.

According to Nepal Army sources, the army teams will be deployed at various polling stations and is also responsible for the transportation of ballot papers and security of ballot boxes.

Spokesperson of the Armed Police, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Bidur Khadka said 32,000 armed police personnel have been prepared for the election security.

Some have already been deployed and some are preparing to be sent on election duty.

US Parliamentary delegation calls on Nepal PM Deuba, discusses bilateral ties

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A US Congressional delegation led by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand paid a courtesy call on Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Saturday and exchanged views on various aspects of bilateral relations, including on institutionalising democracy. Prime Minister Deuba thanked the US Congress for its continued support to Nepal, specially during the difficult times of the 2015 earthquakes and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement here.

"During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-United States relations and cooperation.

"Both sides underscored the importance of parliamentary interactions for the enrichment of the multidimensional Nepal-US friendship," it said.

Views were also exchanged on institutionalising democracy and cooperation in climate change, the statement said.

Earlier, the visiting US delegation called on Foreign Affairs Minister Narayan Khadka, during which he appreciated the longstanding US cooperation on Nepal's development endeavours and expressed hope that the visit by the US delegation to the Himalayan nation will contribute to further strengthening the bilateral relations.

"The US congressional delegation reaffirmed the commitment to working closely with Nepal on the matters of common interests," it said.

The discussion covered matters relating to agriculture and food security as well as Nepal's role in the UN peacekeeping.

US military drops appeal of Hawaii order to drain fuel tanks

AP ■ HONOLULU (US)

The US government has dropped its appeals of a Hawaii order requiring it to remove fuel from a massive military fuel storage facility that leaked petroleum into the Navy's water system at Pearl Harbour last year.

Attorneys for the US Department of Defence notified the state and federal courts of its decision. The move comes more than a month after Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the military would permanently shut down the tanks and drain all of their fuel.

The Hawaii Department of Health, which issued the order, said the decision regarding the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility was a "step forward".

"While today's announcement is good news, the work continues," the department said

in a statement. It said it would "continue to act expeditiously and proactively to oversee the safe defueling and decommissioning of Red Hill and restoration of the aquifer."

David Henkin, an attorney for Earthjustice which is representing the Sierra Club of Hawaii as an interested party in the case said his clients would remain vigilant to make sure the tanks are promptly defueled.

"It's a wonderful Earth Day gift to the people of Hawaii and in particular to all the residents of Oahu who depend on safe, clean drinking water when they turn on their tap," Henkin said.

The Navy and the Hawaii Department of Health did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

Henkin said even if Austin were to change his mind and try to keep the tanks open, the

military will now face "an enforceable, unimpeachable, unchallengeable order from the Department of Health that they need to follow".

The order from the Hawaii Department of Health requires the military to remove fuel from the tanks 30 days after it's safe to do so.

The military will have to stick to this deadline now that it's dropping the appeal, Henkin said.

The military, with oversight from the state health department and the US Environmental Protection Agency, is currently developing plans to safely remove the fuel. It's uncertain how long this will take.

Sen. Brian Schatz, a Democrat from Hawaii, said in a statement that the dropping of the lawsuit "paves the way for us to shut down Red Hill this year".

The legal challenge made it hard for the state to work cooperatively with the Defence Department, Schatz said. He said he pushed hard for the military to make this decision.

Petroleum leaked from the Red Hill tanks into a Navy drinking water well late last year, sickening 6,000 people mostly living in military housing. Medical teams treated people complaining of nausea, headaches, rashes and other symptoms. The military put about 4,000 families in hotels for several months while it cleaned its water pipes.

The tanks also pose a threat to water consumed by 400,000 on Oahu. That's because they sit 30 metres above an aquifer that serves the Honolulu Board of Water Supply, the city's water utility, in addition to the Navy's water system.

Militants in Afghanistan strike Pakistan army post, kill 3 soldiers

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

At least three Pakistani soldiers were killed after militants from across the border in Afghanistan fired indiscriminately at their military check post, the Pakistan Army said on Saturday.

The militants opened fire from across the Afghanistan border in the Dewagar area of North Waziristan, to which the Pakistan troops "responded in a befitting manner," the army statement said.

"As per credible intelligence reports, due to firing from our own troops, the terrorists suffered heavy casualties," it said.

"Pakistan strongly con-

demns the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for activities against Pakistan and expects that [the] Afghan government will not allow conduct of such activities in [the] future," it added. No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

There has been a substantial rise in the number of such attacks in this region over the last two months.

Earlier this month seven Pakistani soldiers were killed after their vehicle was ambushed by militants in Datakhel tehsil of North Waziristan district, the Dawn newspaper reported quoting Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Israeli restrictions on 'Holy Fire' ignite Christian outrage

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Christians were celebrating the "Holy Fire" ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on Saturday against a backdrop of rising tensions with Israel, which imposed new restrictions on attendance this year that it said were needed for safety.

Israel says it wants to prevent another disaster after a crowd stampede at a packed Jewish holy site last year left 45 people dead. Christian leaders say there's no need to alter a ceremony that has been held for centuries.

In the dense confines of Jerusalem's Old City, where Jews, Christians and Muslims must share their holiest sites —

no matter how reluctantly — even small changes can cause prophetic angst.

The city has already seen a week of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police at the nearby Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest site in Islam. It stands on a hill-top that is the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount.

This year major Jewish, Christian and Muslim holidays have converged against a backdrop of renewed Israeli-Palestinian violence. Tensions have soared as tens of thousands of people flock to Jerusalem's Old City to visit some of the holiest sites for all three faiths for the first time since the lifting of pandemic restrictions.

Tour boat with 26 missing in Japan after distress call

AP ■ TOKYO

A tour boat with 26 people aboard was missing in rough waters off northern Japan on Saturday after issuing a distress call and reporting to be sinking, the coast guard said.

No survivors have been found after more than seven hours of an intense search involving six patrol boats and four aircraft.

The 19-ton Kazu 1 made an emergency call in early afternoon, saying the ship's bow had flooded and was beginning to sink and tilt when it was traveling off the western coast of Shiretoko Peninsula in the northern island of Hokkaido, the coast guard said.

The tour boat has since lost contact, it said. It was carrying 24 passengers and two crew.

10 miners missing after tremor at 2nd coal mine in Poland

AP ■ WARSAW

Coal mining authorities in Poland said Saturday that contact has been lost with 10 miners following a powerful underground tremor and methane gas discharge at the Borynia-Zofiowka mine in the south of the country.

The accident at 3:40 a.m. Saturday occurred some 900 metres underground.

It was the second colliery accident in just four days in the coal mining region around the town of Jastrzebie-Zdroj, near the Czech border.

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on Twitter that this was "devastating news again" from the mining region.

He said his thoughts and

prayers are with those missing and their relatives.

Repeat methane blasts since Wednesday at the nearby Pniowek mine have killed five and left seven missing and injured dozens. The search for those missing there was suspended Friday after new blasts injured seven rescuers.

Both mines are operated by the Jastrzebska Spolka Weglowa, or JSW, company.

The company said that 52 workers were in the area of the tremor at the Borynia-Zofiowka mine and 42 of them were unhurt and were able to leave the shaft on their own.

A 12-team rescue operation has been launched for the 10 missing miners.

Aid group says tribal violence kills eight in Sudan's Darfur

AP ■ CAIRO

Tribal violence between Arabs and non-Arabs in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region killed at least eight people, including a woman and a child, said an aid worker and activists on Saturday. The clashes erupted on Thursday with the killing of two people by an unknown assailant around the Kreinik area of West Darfur province, said Adam Regal, the spokesman for the General Coordination for Refugees and Displaced in Darfur charity.

The following day, militias known as janjawed attacked a camp for displaced people just to the south of Kreinik, burning down dozens of houses and forcing large numbers of people to flee.

WHAT ABOUT THE ECONOMY?

Macron has played a key role in international talks on supporting Ukraine amid war and imposing sanctions on Russia. His prominence on the international stage at the beginning stages of the race gave him an initial poll bump but impeded his ability to campaign effectively.

Macron's government says it sent 100 million euros in weapons to Ukraine since the Russian invasion and Macron vows to continue this support and "significantly" reinforce European armed forces' capacities and cooperation.

He has supported sanctions against Russia and EU unity on the issue, and likens the presidential vote to a "referendum on Europe", claiming that his rival wishes to trigger a "Frexit" in all but name.

Le Pen has for years cultivated ties with Moscow, receiving a loan of 9 million euros from a Russian bank in 2014 and meeting with Putin in 2017. She acknowledged that Russia's invasion of Ukraine "partially" changed her views about Putin, saying he was "wrong" and it was "unaccept-

WHAT ABOUT THE ECONOMY?

A former economist and banker, Macron has championed startups and promises "full employment".

The jobless rate decreased during his 2017-2022 term to its lowest level in a generation. Some voters dub him "president of the rich" for abolishing a wealth tax and some of his comments about the poor.

He wants to progressively raise the retirement age from 62 to 65, boost the minimum monthly pension, and raise teachers' wages.

He wants companies to be able to give employees an untaxed bonus of up to 6,000 pounds and has spent billions capping energy bills.

Le Pen has tapped into frustration among working class voters over inflation, and promises to cut taxes on energy and essential goods.

She wants to maintain the minimum retirement age at 62 and proposes that anyone who began working at 20 can retire at 60. She wants to raise the minimum pension, and end income tax for under-30s.

She wants companies to increase salaries by 10 per cent, and to raise teachers' salaries over the next five years. She claims she could fund this by slashing "massive immigration".

All Concerned

Whereas in the above noted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities amount of Rs. xxx. As per record to be standing in the name of Late Sh. Suraj Prasad Sharma deceased.

Whereas the 23.05.2022 at 10'o clock the forenoon has been fixed for hearing of the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court on this 21.04.2022

SEAL

Sd/-
(Shirish Agarwal)
ACJ/CAR, District, Delhi

APARSHAKTI KHURANA

**'RADIO HAS BEEN A
PATHWAY TO MANY
THINGS IN MY LIFE'**



It would be tough call to make. But I think even though music is something that is extremely close to my heart, acting would

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AN ARTIST AT HEART AND RADIO GAVE THE ARTIST IN ME A CHANCE TO EXPRESS MYSELF. OVER THE SIX YEARS I MAY HAVE EXPLORED DIFFERENT ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS BUT THERE IS A SOFT SPOT FOR RADIO



So, before I got into radio I was actually practicing at the Delhi High Court. But somehow even after giving it 12-14 hours everyday I used to come home with a lack of contentment. I realised it wasn't something I enjoyed doing and started looking for alternate career options. Something that could help me bring out the best in me. Fortunately, I had a few seniors from my law school who were already working at a radio station. Around the same time, Rochak Kohli, the renowned music composer of today told me about the opening for a Radio Jockey. I decided to try for it and with god's blessings it worked out in my favour. People today assume that Dangal was the turning point in my life. And even though I am utmost grateful to get the opportunity to be a part of Dangal but my turning point in life was moving from a Delhi High Court to a Radio station.

ALL ABOUT MUSIC



What: Workshop
Where: Online
When: April 28, 2022
Time: 8 pm

Bollywood vibes

Dafa Kar (A R Rahman)
Saamna (Akasa)
Mast Nazron Se (Rochak Kohli)
Kya Kar Diya (Vishal Mishra)
Macha Macha Re (Mika Singh)

English Vinglish

Psychofreak (Camila Cabello)
Seven Bridge Road (Jake Bugg)
Wings Of Stone (Adam Levine)
FREE (John Legend)
Crazy (Doechii)

Masterstroke

A collection of outdoor furniture and decor, including a striped umbrella, a wicker chair, and several large, patterned poufs, arranged on a patterned rug.

The creative artisans at TRR use discarded water bottles and give them a new life as a rug that can beautify the buyer's home. The Delhi-based business house with an international presence is known for his robust manufacturing and eco-friendly products. Making outdoor and indoor art pieces while using minimum natural resources is the forte of this company and now it has taken another giant leap by recycling bicycle tubes, PET yarns extracted from recycled water bottles, recycled silk yarns, and other multi-fiber textiles, to create unique and vibrant rugs and carpets.

BECAUSE AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Some of the most important aspects of healthy ageing are within your control. It is time to get your fix of vitamins and revise your way of life. SUPRIYA RAMESH speaks with LAVLEEN KAUR to know more

Well, exercising proves to be an excellent way to not only avoid insulin resistance but also give your serotonin levels a boost. Therefore, make it a part of your daily routine to go for a quick walk or exercise to keep your arteries healthy and to relieve depression, self-



Kaur says, "Focus on saturated fats, which can be found in foods like ghee, coconut, nuts like cashew, pistachios, and walnuts, and seeds like pumpkin, sunflower, and sesame seeds, to have radiant skin." As a result, fats, in general, are not your enemy, and good fats



Vitamin A plays a number of critical roles in the ageing process, including immune function and oxidative

For beautiful skin, you can get Vitamin E directly by mixing Vitamin

QUIRKYTALE

THE WAIT IS OVER

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white shirt and white pants, standing with hands on hips.

TRANSFORMING WASN'T EASY

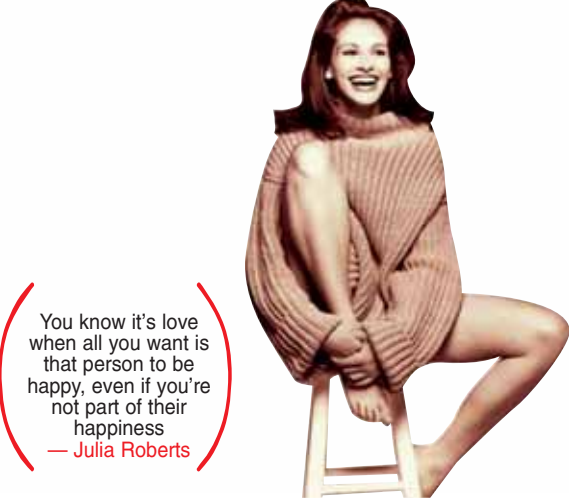
zee TV is all set to bring its viewers a new fiction offering – *Pyaar Ka Pehla Naam Radha Mohan*, a mature romance based in modern-day Vrindavan. The show will take everyone on the intriguing journey of Mohan who was once a charmer - someone who would have everyone swooning around him. But he has somehow lost that spark along the way. He has turned into an intense, brooding man with sorrow in his eyes. In fact, Mohan carries an invisible wall around him and doesn't let anyone in. The only person he is attached to is his mother, whom he loves blindly.

WELFARE FOR ALL

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

COMMITMENT IS HARD BUT FRUITFUL

One of my favourite songs, *Main Zindagi ka Saath Nibhata Chala Gaya* from Dev Anand's film *Hum Dono* sums up my life's philosophy. I would like to tell everyone that it is all about mind over matter. At 50 plus years if I can defeat asthma with minor lifestyle changes and commitment to a cause, anyone can do it!



Haryana has made rapid strides on several fronts and is well on its way to inclusive growth propelled by social justice and public welfare. Innovation and people-centricity sign off most of the state government’s policies and programmes which have made the difference in the lives of the people. Haryana has traversed the distance to emerge as a trailblazer from a path-chaser. Some of the state’s policies have been commended and recommended by the Central Government to the states to emulate. In a free-wheeling interview with **THE PIONEER**, the Chief Minister, **MANOHAR LAL**, dwells on issues as different and distinct as chalk is from cheese. These range from his innovative style of transparent and good governance and delivering hassle-free services at the doorstep of the man in the street to coming down on graft with a heavy hand and making Haryana an economic and sports power house

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE’S LIVES

Your government is credited with several achievements in over seven-year tenure.

What, in your view, is singularly most important change which has positively altered common people's lives?

Frankly speaking, the achievements are many but if you want me to single out one, changing people’s mindset is the biggest change we brought about. Change both in the way the administration delivers services and how people look at and up to the government. Drawing inspiration from the vision of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the systemic changes we introduced have helped bring services to the doorsteps of the people, and restored the faith they had begun to lose in the administration by slamming the doors shut on graft. Sniff the air and you can feel the change.

Your government bets big on e-governance. How has it worked?

Our stress on transparency explains our focus on e-governance. From day one, we decided to harness e-governance as a major instrument for changing the system. Many schemes and programmes have been digitised. And to bring all of them on a single platform, Antyodaya Saral portal was developed where 618 services and schemes of 47 departments have been made available. So far, 72.32 lakh people have been registered on this portal, which means 2.75 crore population of the state has been covered. The data of more than 82 per cent families has already been verified. All schemes and services are being linked with the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) portal. From this year, most of the government services will be available online.

Haryana is a small state from the standpoint of area and population but it has notched extraordinary achievements in sports. What has your government done to promote sports?

Haryana is both a sports power house as well as a nursery. We have sporting talent in abundance. All that the players/athletes need is modern facilities to hone their skills to face up to the best in the world. Realising this full well, we did all that was needed to spawn a sporting culture, developed facilities right up the village level, and incentivized medal winners by giving them both cash awards and government jobs. This explains how Haryana guarantees a bright future for those opting for sports as a career.

What role digital governance played in combating corruption?

When I assumed office in 2014, corruption was rampant. ‘Parchi’ (recommendation) and ‘Kharchi’ (paying bribe to get a job done) was the order of the day. We adopted zero-tolerance policy towards corruption. Conscious efforts have been made to eliminate the menace of graft and ensure that the benefits of government welfare schemes and programmes reach people swiftly and smoothly, something which was lacking. In order to minimize human intervention which left the doors ajar for graft, we introduced digital governance and the advantages started flowing to the eligible beneficiaries expeditiously. The digital governance campaign launched in 2014 has now reached PPP. I am of the firm conviction that PPP, designed after drawing inspiration from the Antyodaya vision of the Prime Minister, will prove to be a revolutionary step. It would make benefits of social welfare schemes reach the doorstep of every eligible person. He would not have to run around in government offices to get his rightful due.

Which were the main gates of corruption your government closed?

The Prime Minister says “corruption is like a termite which makes the country hollow and all the people of the country have to work together to rid the nation of it as soon as possible”. Getting guided by this, we swung into action to slam the doors shut on all sources of corruption. There were many, the big ones being recruitment to government jobs, granting permission for change of land use (CLU) and transfers. We are determined not to let anything come in the way of merit-based transparent recruitment to government jobs. We have been able to recruit over 85,000 persons on merit. For making recruitment to government jobs, we have introduced a common entrance test. The first such exam will be held in June, 2022 to fill 50,000 vacancies. We have busted the racket and imprisoned members of various gangs working as touts. In the paper leak case for



WE IMPLEMENTED ‘HARYANA ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY’ IN 2020 TO PROMOTE INDUSTRY IN THE STATE ON A BIG SCALE, IT AIMS AT CREATING 5 LAKH NEW JOBS, ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS WORTH OVER RS 1 LAKH CRORE AND EXPORTS WORTH OVER RS 2 LAKH CRORE



HARYANA IS BOTH A SPORTS POWER HOUSE AS WELL AS A NURSERY. WE HAVE SPORTING TALENT IN ABUNDANCE. ALL THAT THE PLAYERS/ ATHLETES NEED IS MODERN FACILITIES TO HONE THEIR SKILLS TO FACE UP TO THE BEST IN THE WORLD. REALISING THIS FULL WELL, WE DID ALL THAT WAS NEEDED TO SPAWN A SPORTING CULTURE, DEVELOPED FACILITIES RIGHT UP THE VILLAGE LEVEL, AND INCENTIVIZED MEDAL WINNERS BY GIVING THEM BOTH CASH AWARDS AND GOVERNMENT JOBS. THIS EXPLAINS HOW HARYANA GUARANTEES A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THOSE OPTING FOR SPORTS AS A CAREER

recruiting police constables, seven FIRs were lodged and 74 accused have been arrested.

For maintaining probity in examinations, we brought the ‘Haryana Public Service Unfair Means (Elimination) Bill 2021’. It provides for a two-year ban on taking examinations, besides imprisonment of two to 10 years and a fine of Rs 5,000 to Rs 5 lakh, on those responsible for paper leak or copying.

Another big source of graft was CLU. It had become synonymous with corruption. We have wiped off this blot by making the entire process online. For checking irregularities in the registration of land and property, the process of issuance of NOC by various departments, boards and corporations has been made online. For bringing about transparency in land records, WEB-HALRIS has been implemented across the state.

For checking malpractices in the Transport Department, the post of DTO has been created as part of ‘Operation Shuddhi’. Besides, E Nilami and E Ravana schemes have been introduced for awarding mining contracts.

We have also put an end to what had come to be known as the ‘transfer industry’. Besides, ghost beneficiaries of ration, scholarships and subsidies have been weeded out by resorting to IT services. Hundreds of welfare schemes have been linked to DBT and the amount is now directly transferred into the bank account of beneficiaries.

Throw some light on your flagship scheme Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Utthaan Yojna.

Sourced to the vision of the Prime Minister, the flagship scheme ‘Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Utthaan Yojna’ aims at identifying poor families in the state and improving their living standard. Using the data from PPP, we have

succeeded in developing a system to realise our goal. Our target is to raise the minimum annual income of each family in the state to Rs 1.80 lakh. Under the scheme, 2.49 lakh families with annual income lower than Rs 1 lakh have so far been identified. We organised 570 Mela Diwas in two phases at 156 locations across the state in which 1.22 lakh families participated.

The PPP is seen as a milestone scheme and many states have evinced interest in implementing it. What was the idea behind this scheme?

We felt that common people, particularly the poor, were unable to avail themselves of benefits of social welfare schemes as they had no time to visit government offices. If they did, they would have to forgo a day’s wages. So we decided to ensure delivery of the scheme’s benefits and services to the poor at their doorstep. This led to the making of PPPs. It facilitates people to take benefit of all welfare schemes through sole document.

The distribution of food grains under PDS is being done through the PPP and the data on births and deaths is being auto-updated. Data about youth, their skills, education and unemployment is also available on this portal. People no longer need to approach government offices for seeking old age pension; it automatically starts coming to their bank account as per the data available on the PPP. Some states have evinced interest in the scheme and sought details from us.

Despite the pandemic, Haryana remains an attractive destination for investors. What measures have been taken to attract investors, particularly foreign investors, to the state?

Yes! Haryana has emerged as a cynosure of all investing eyes, both domestic and foreign. This is the outcome of several effective steps

taken to create industry and business-friendly environment. Besides financial incentives, we ensure time-bound delivery of government services, fast-paced clearances and assure ease-of-doing business.

For providing all services and approvals to entrepreneurs under one roof, Haryana Entrepreneur Promotion Centre has been set up where over 100 industrial approvals and clearances from 20 departments can be obtained through www.investharyana.in portal. All sanctions and permission are granted within 45 days through this portal.

We implemented ‘Haryana Entrepreneurs and Employment Policy’ in 2020 to promote industry in the state on a big scale. It aims at creating 5 lakh new jobs, attracting investments worth over Rs 1 lakh crore and exports worth over Rs 2 lakh crore. Under this policy, the process of obtaining land, labour laws, environmental clearances and regulatory laws have been simplified for the ease of doing business and 56 services have been brought under the ambit of the Right to Service Act.

Five more policies have been implemented for agriculture and food processing, textiles, warehousing — logistics, retail, drug and pharmaceuticals and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

In the Nation Capital Region (NCR) are of the state, a warehousing and logistic hub is being constructed. Under this project in Gurugram, a global smart city and Mass Rapid Transit System are being developed. At Narnaul, an integrated multi-model logistic hub is being developed at the cost of \$700 million. This project is being developed with assistance from the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor project.

NOT SO SWEET FOR YOUR LIVER

Liver regulates most chemical levels in the blood and excretes a chemical called bile that helps carry away waste products from this second largest organ of the body. A recent study says that artificial sweeteners can be harmful to this vital cleaner of the body, PIONEER HEALTH reports

Think artificial sweeteners are health alternatives to white sugar? You may be doing much more harm than good to your body, especially your liver. A new study has said that sugar substitutes such as acesulfame potassium and sucralose, may interfere with liver's ability to detoxify the body.

In their study presented at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's annual meeting recently, the researchers say that these sweeteners can have negative impact on liver cells and cell-free assays.

They discovered that the sweeteners disrupted the function of a protein called P-glycoprotein (PGP), which works to help rid your body of toxins, drugs, and drug metabolites (i.e. byproducts that are formed when your body breaks down a drug).

"We think that it might interfere with the efficiency of medication or chemotherapy and increase toxicity," says lead study author Stephanie Olivier Van-Stichelen, Ph.D., an assistant professor of biochemistry at Medical College of Wisconsin. "That's where we're putting our research right now."

Olivier-Van Stichelen points out that while artificial sweeteners will show up on food nutrition labels, the actual amount isn't listed. "We don't usually know how much sweeteners we consume," she said. "It's not listed on labels for yogurts and diet soda and it's hard for people to know how much they're having."

Acesulfame Potassium is a chemical sweetener about 200 times sweeter than sugar and is typically combined with other sweeteners. It's heat-stable, so it's often found in baked goods but is also widely used in sugar-free frozen desserts, candy, and beverages.

Sucralose is another heat stable chemical sweetener that's used in many sugar-free products, including baked goods, beverages, chewing gum, gelatins, and frozen dairy desserts

"The liver is the main-but not only-detoxifying organ in your body," said Jamie Alan, associate



professor of pharmacology and toxicology at Michigan State University. (Your kidneys, lungs, and lymphatic system also play a role in detoxifying your body, along with other organs.) When something interferes with your liver's function, it "may shift metabolism to another non-toxic product and you might not notice anything," Alan said.

But, she adds, "you may build up the active compound or build up a toxic metabolite and then serious side effects or consequences may occur."

Dr Shalimar, Associate Professor Department of Gastroenterology from Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) concurs with the observations made in the study. He says that "Your Liver plays a crucial role in the detoxification process as it is essential for breaking down and clearing waste products from normal metabolism, as well as chemicals, toxins, and medications from your body."

Luckily, there are other natural sweeteners like Stevia and Monk fruits which may reduce NAFLD and help save your liver. Furthermore, these ingredients display antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity in your body

He points out that limiting your liver's capacity to do this could mean increased levels of toxins remaining in your system or impairments to metabolism.

If you are having non-nutritive sweeteners regularly, this might disrupt Gut Microbiota which is important for optimal health.

"Disruption of gut microbiota has also been linked to non alchoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), and artificial sweeteners may also have a role to play in this condition," Dr Shalimar explains and adds that it indicates that with artificial sweeteners comes NAFLD, a most common chronic liver disease characterized by a buildup of excess fat in liver that is not related to heavy alcohol use.

"But further studies are needed," he cautions. The NAFLD prevalence has been found to be high among rural and urban North Indian adults, including fibrosis or raised hepatic enzymes. The strong association of metabolic determinants confirms its linkage with

metabolic syndrome, a study conducted by Dr Shalimar among others, too have found. The study is published in PLoSOne.

The health expert from the AIIMS further shares that when NAFLD goes untreated, it can develop into Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH). NASH is marked by inflammation in the liver and can set the stage for severe liver damage.

Dr Paul Kasenene, medical doctor and nutrition expert too advises that one should not quit sugar only to go to sweeteners. "Most times they are worse than sugar. Rather train your tastebuds to appreciate the subtle natural sweetness in most foods. Say No to sugar and No to artificial sweeteners. Don't wait for diabetes to take you off sugar," he says on twitter.

So, next time if you find you have high NAFLD or is on the borderline of diabetes/obesity, do keep a watch on sugar substitutes you are consuming.

Anemia: indicator of many diseases

Anemia can strike anyone, anywhere and, contrary to general perception, not all anemia is due to iron deficiency. In fact, it could be symptomatic of other diseases, even certain cancers.

Take the case of Naina Bhatia. She had a history of anemia, so when she felt dizziness at an event recently, she thought that her hemoglobin level has gone down. "And that I needed to enhance my iron uptake," said the 52-year-old mother of two sons.

Soon after, she caught the flu, accompanied by severe fatigue and unexplained back pain. A round of lab tests revealed high protein levels in her blood. She was told that she had myeloma, a blood cancer that causes abnormal immune plasma cells to grow in the bone marrow.

When myeloma grows in multiple areas of the body, as it typically does, it's called Multiple Myeloma. However, good thing is that, new advances are helping many people with multiple myeloma live disease-free.

Multiple myeloma accounts for almost 2 per cent of all cancers. It more frequently occurs in people over age 65, said Dr Rahul Bhargava, Principal Director of Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplant, Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI) in Haryana's Gurugram.

"Hence, it is important that one should continue having their blood level checked."

In fact, recently, Dr Bhargava has started an Anemia clinic at FMRI Gurugram as a part of the Central Government's initiative of 'Anameia Mukht Bharat'. The FMRI plans to start such clinics Pan India to spread awareness about anemia.

"Anemia at best, impacts every sphere of one's life by rendering the victim too weak and fatigued to even perform basic tasks and at worst. It's silent killer. While the Government initiative targets women, especially adolescent girls, our aim at the FMRI is to include people from all demographics and stages of life whether infants, old, young, man and women," said Dr Bhargava.

TYPES OF ANEMIA

- Iron deficiency anemia. This most common type of anemia is caused by a shortage of iron in your body
- Vitamin deficiency anemia
- Anemia of inflammation
- Aplastic anemia
- Anemias associated with bone marrow disease
- Hemolytic anemias
- Sickle cell anemia

SYMPTOMS, IF THEY DO OCCUR, MIGHT INCLUDE:

- *Fatigue/Weakness/Pale or yellowish skin/Irregular heartbeats/Shortness of breath/Dizziness or lightheadedness/ Chest pain/Cold hands and feet/Headaches

‘Skill for Scale’ e-courses for nurses

India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre, a collaboration between the Swedish Trade Commissioner's Office, AIIMS, New Delhi and AIIMS, Jodhpur, has launched 'Skill For Scale', an e-learning initiative designed to equip nurses with hands-on practical knowledge and skills to practice latest patient care for managing non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Certified by AIIMS, Jodhpur and endorsed by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the programs will allow nurses from across the country to register for free, learn at their own pace.

In its first phase, the program is focusing on Diabetes management prevention and awareness based on a world-class comprehensive curriculum created from diverse resources available within the NCD domain following the NPDCS guidelines.

The 'Skill for Scale' program is aimed to upskill 5000 nurses across the country within this yearDr. Sanjeev Misra, Director, AIIMS Jodhpur said, "NCDs burden is increasing significantly in India

and is already accounting for more than 60% of deaths. This burden of NCDs is expected to increase further over the coming years but the number of doctors with specializations available to treat these increasing numbers are very limited. Through this initiative, we are trying to bridge the knowledge gap that exists at the point of care for patients". This e-learning mobile compatible program is pegged at two levels-basic and advanced and includes a training of 20-24 hours to be completed at the student's own pace. "The Government's recognition of this program will go a long way to deliver accurate health information and ensure safe essential health services. We will continue to focus on upskilling the health workforce and bring impactful solutions locally and globally," said Dr. Anil Kukreja, VP Medical Affairs and Regulatory, AstraZeneca India.

Cecilia Oskarsson, Swedish Trade Commissioner to India added, "ISHIC was created to address the healthcare challenges in the country through key pillars - technology, protocol & process and capability building."

FROM PAGE 1

Making a difference in people’s lives

Near Kharkhauda, a state-of-the-art industrial and commercial township spread over 3,300 acres and a 1,400-acre Industrial Model Township in Sohna are being developed. These townships, besides being closer to the KMP Expressway, are also linked to the Gurugram-Sohna-Alwar highway.

Haryana is the first state in the country to have taken the decision to develop clusters in each district. Under the mini-cluster project, 15 mini clusters have been completed and the State has plans to develop clusters at the block level.

What has been done to take care of the MSME sector?

A separate department has been set up to promote MSMEs in the state and an online facility has been created for the entrepreneurs. Not limiting our focus to the ease of doing business, we have also concentrated on the 'cost of doing business.' For cutting down the cost of industrial plants, a leasing policy has been formulated.

The 'Haryana Grameen Udyog VikasYojna' has been launched to develop micro industries in rural areas. Under the Haryana Agriculture and Food Processing Policy, 2018, approval has been granted to 15 projects worth Rs 200 crore for a food park and food processing units.

How Haryana stands to gain from being a part of the NCR?

Being a part of the NCR and proximity to Delhi has helped Haryana in a big way. The national Capital, Delhi, is surrounded by Haryana on three sides and 13 districts of Haryana form part of the NCR. The three-side connectivity with the

NCR has not only helped the state in developing a logistics hub but has also accelerated development of trade and industry.

You know that the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and the western dedicated freight corridor of railways pass close to Gurugram. Work is already in progress on the Gurugram-Alwar road and the Centre has approved Rs 6,000-crore Haryana Orbital Rail Corridors, besides the KMP Expressway. The process of land acquisition for these projects has already been set rolling.

The biggest benefit of this connectivity has been the tremendous interest shown by investors. Business tycoons are trooping in to set up units there. So far, over 1,000 units with foreign investment have come up in Haryana. These include Siemens, Suzuki, GE Honda, Smithkline Beecham, JCB, Hollister, Harvel, Osram, Mitsubushi, IBM,Yokohama, Alcatel, POSCO, LG Perfetti, Johnson Matthey, Becton Dickinson, Capro and Harley Davidson.

Give an account of what kind of incentives your government offers to the players and medal winners?

Our government has done what no other government has to incentivize sports right from playing to winning medals and assuring the winners a secure future. We have many firsts under the belt. Haryana is the first state in India to offer maximum cash prize to medal-winning sportspersons. We have set up Haryana State Development Fund to provide cash prizes and other facilities to deserving sportspersons. During the last more than seven-year



tenure of my government, cash prizes totalling Rs 400 crore have been given to over 14,000 sportspersons and Rs 50.38 crore in scholarships to 28,643 school and college students.

Haryana is the first state in the country to provide an advance amount of Rs 5 lakh to any sportsperson qualifying for Olympic and Paralympic Games. We have enhanced the honorarium amount from Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000 per month for those winning the Arjun, Dronacharya and Dhyan Chand awards.

We have also started a monthly honorarium of Rs 20,000 to those winning the Tenzing Norgay Adventure Award and Rs 5,000 to those claiming the Bhim Award.

How many medal winners have been given government jobs so far?

The 'Haryana Excellence in Sports Service Rules, 2021' have been framed to offer

HARYANA IS ALSO WORKING ON THE CONCEPT OF PROVIDING EDUCATION FROM KG TO PG ON ONE CAMPUS. FOR PROVIDING FACILITIES IN TUNE WITH PRIVATE SCHOOLS, 113 NEW SANSKRITI MODEL SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN SET UP AND ONE COLLEGE HAS BEEN SET UP IN THE RADIUS OF 20 KM. OUR TARGET IS TO OPEN AT LEAST ONE UNIVERSITY AND ONE MEDICAL COLLEGE IN EACH DISTRICT OF THE STATE

government jobs to distinguished sportspersons. So far, 85 sportspersons have been given jobs and 550 Group 'A' and 'C' posts have been created in the Sports Department. Talented sportspersons are also being given 3 per cent reservation in Group 'C' posts and 10 per cent in Group 'D' posts.

What steps have been taken to promote sports culture and set up infrastructure?

With a view to promoting sporting culture in the state, sports calendars are prepared and sub-junior, junior and senior sporting events are organised round the year and all over the state. Besides, sports facilities and infrastructure have been developed right from villages to the state level. Two state-level sports complexes, 22 district-level stadia, 12 sub-divisional stadia and 160 Rajiv Gandhi Sports Complexes have been constructed.

Then, seven swimming

pools, nine synthetic athletics tracks, 13 hockey astro turfs and one football synthetic surface have been built. In 13 districts, sports facility centres have been constructed and these are under construction in four more districts.

Education is very important for building the future of any state. What your government has done in this regard?

Providing quality education and making it accessible to future generations tops our list of priorities. Haryana is the first state in the country to implement the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) for imparting skills and job-oriented education to youth. Education from school to the university level has been linked with skill development and technical institutes have signed MoUs with industry as per their requirements.

Haryana is also working on the concept of providing education from KG to PG on one campus. For providing facilities in tune with private schools, 113 new Sanskriti Model Schools have been set up and one college has been set up in the radius of 20 km. Our target is to open at least one university and one medical college in each district of the state.

We have set up 418 English-medium government model Sanskriti Primary Schools as centres of excellence and another 1,000 schools have been included in the programme.

Corona has underscored the need for beefing up medical care. What your government has done in this direction?

Proving affordable modern health care facilities to common people remains our primary

concern. While new medical institutes are being opened, medical facilities are being upgraded and strengthened in the existing medical institutes and hospitals.

All Corona patients are being provided free treatment and vaccination. Members of BPL families are being given free treatment in private hospitals also. Financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh is being provided to BPL families for Covid deaths and 79 families have availed themselves of this assistance so far.

Under the 'PM Jan Aarogya Aayushman Bharat Yojna', 27 lakh poor families have been provided medical insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh each. It covers 228 types of surgeries, 70 pathological tests and 21 types of dental facilities, besides 500 drugs.

The 'Mukhymantri Bal Seva Yojna' has been started for rehabilitating the Covid orphans and Rs 2,500 per month are being given to each of these children. So far, 92 children have benefited under the scheme.

Currently, there are 13 medical colleges in Haryana and our target is to set up one medical college in each district. In each of the 13 districts, a 200-bed hospital is being set up with ICU and oxygen facilities. A tertiary cancer care centre is being set up at a cost of Rs 72 crore at the Ambala Cantt Civil Hospital with the Centre-State partnership, where cancer patients will be provided all facilities.

Haryana successively bagged Category-II award from the National Quality Assurance Standards from 2018-19 to 2020-21 for providing quality facilities at the Community Health Centres and Primary Health Centres in the state.

OUTLOOK

West-led world order in its twilight years

The nations which will have the maximum impact in shaping the international affairs in the upcoming era will be the ones that could not just balance conflicting interests and rival camps but also demonstrate the capability and courage to question and cajole the West towards limiting the weaponisation of finance



SONAL SHUKLA

The end of the Cold War had led to prophecies like Francis Fukuyama's "End of History and the Last Man", declaring mankind's ideological evolution has reached a pinnacle with liberal democracy as the final form of human government. Western hegemony, globalisation, liberal international order and peace in Europe were a given. Cut to two decades later, all the above are suffering an existential crisis. Fukuyama's ultimate nightmare is a world where China supports Russian invasion of Ukraine, and Moscow, Chinese invasion of Taiwan, and the West unable to stop it, which he called as "the end of the end of history".

The onslaught on West-led world order is not temporary; it can be seen from the emphasis on Atmanirbhar Bharat by our External Affairs Minister and Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement that China-Russia cooperation has "no limits" on upholding of security and towards opposition of hegemony. Apart from Russia, China has a strong stake in creating an alternative financial system to evade Western sanctions, when it invades Taiwan or more.

The world is again splitting into two rival camps: the West versus Russia-China with few allies, leaving the rest of the developing world gasping amid geo-political hostilities, sanction regimes, food shortages, skyrocketing energy and commodity prices, supply chain disruptions, gloomy global economic outlook that jeopardise their developmental needs.

De-globalisation and the de-dollarisation

The "weaponisation of finance" by the West on Russia has sounded a death-knell to globalisation, threatening the technological developments, efficiency of production and all other benefits and prosperity ushered by it. Among other sanctions, freezing of Russian Central bank's foreign reserves, cutting Russia off the SWIFT financial payment system, and institutions of international finance, including IMF and foreign banks, were historic and unthinkable, their consequences unpredictable. Raghuram Rajan has called these economic weapons of mass destruction.

Now, situations are building up for secondary sanctions against nations that refuse compliance with the primary. Most nations are themselves adopting import-substitution policies for de-risking.

Alternative financial systems are building up; Chinese-SWIFT CIPS (Cross-Border Interbank Payment System) and the Russian-SWIFT SPFS (System for Transfer of Financial Messages) are expected to merge. Petro-dollar could be a thing of the past as Saudi Arabia is willing to sell oil to China and others in national currencies and Iran is to follow suit. Russia will trade with China, India and Iran in national currencies. Developing countries like India and Israel are diversifying their forex away from dollars. Move away from dollar and euro is fueled not just due to the fear of western dictats, but also expected depreciation of these currencies owing to lower demand.

Cryptocurrency is being used for transferring assets internationally. Russia is preparing to launch digital Ruble which would be used for trade internationally bypassing the dollar-based system. Russia has been lobbying in SCO, BRICS and other forums for using national currencies for trade, integration of payment systems and cards, financial messaging system and creation of an independent BRICS rating agency. In times to come, more trade will happen in national currencies, and developing nations will find new avenues to limit exposure to western currencies like gold, innovative assets in oil and metals or even crypto-currencies if they stabilise.

Post-American hegemony

To measure the decline of any superpower it is needed to gauge the incapability to check a disruptive or destabilising event. A declining power can also continue to reign the world if it has a realistic assessment of its own power and is ready to make compromises to maintain peace



and stability. However, Washington today along with all its allies and their collective might lacks strength in not just having failed in preventing the war but even bringing in a ceasefire. The loss of esteem is visible in Gulf monarchies not taking US President Joe Biden's phone call and Beijing demanding a role in maintaining world peace and stability.

Inflation is expected to hit a four decade high in the US at 8.4 per cent, three decades high in the UK at 8 per cent and at record 7.5 per cent in Europe. The Federal Reserve's increasing interest rates to tackle the inflation is expected to send the country into a recession. The largest US banks are reporting their biggest slowdown in investment banking revenues in years due to the war. Europe too is expected to fall into recession, with the World Bank predicting the impact of the war on the economy to be twice as devastating as the Covid impact.

Indo-Pacific: New centre of world

China, though slowing down, is still predicted to grow by 5 per cent this year with inflation at 1.5 per cent. India's GDP is set to grow at 8 per cent this year, though with high commodity and energy prices, inflation in India has reached a worrying 7 per cent. The South Asian economy is poised to grow at 6.6 per cent and East Asia at 5 per cent. Both the regions are expected to return to the economic growth rates they experienced before the pandemic. Beijing and New Delhi are clearly the two actors that received massive attention from the West over Russia, with China engagements being more confrontational for its clear support to Russia, India tactics being of carrot and stick, but reflecting understanding. The Indo-Pacific will not just be the centre of economic growth in the present times but also geo-political heft and centre of gravity.

Militarised-Inward looking Europe and rise of the middle powers

As Germany, Sweden, Finland, Romania, Latvia, Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK decide to increase their defence spending, a militarised Europe is set to give up the advantage of devoting its finances to infrastructure development and socio-economic welfare of their citizens. This will have consequences for their prosperity and quality of life. A Europe lost in continental hostilities, mistrust, weapons race and sanctions will not just be economically weaker but also possesses even lesser appetite for engaging in larger world affairs, more so in confronting China.

Multi-polarity will be the defining theme of the changing world order with nations like China, France, Germany, India, Turkey and Israel, together with other middle powers like Gulf states, and maybe Brazil and South Africa playing greater role in influencing world affairs.

The nations which will have the maximum impact in shaping the international affairs in the upcoming era will be the ones that could not just balance conflicting interests and rival camps but also demonstrate the capability and courage to question and cajole the West towards limiting the weaponisation of finance.

If this world, especially the developing truly neutral nations, seeks and deserves peace, it will have to shoulder the responsibility of not just nudging Russia, but also calling out a stop at further membership of NATO if not its complete de-bundling, when nations like Finland and Sweden make a beeline for it. It ceased being an internal matter for concerned nations, Europe or NATO, the moment the rest of the states became victims of its grave consequences especially as the planet faces its greatest challenge of climate change.

Evolution, seldom linear, is the never-ending process of Fukuyama; to proclaim an ideological end point is the sheer under-estimation of the potential of man, for the good or bad.

(The writer is a foreign policy expert and a lawyer)

India's non-aligned politics on Ukraine crisis

India has been carefully negotiating the fast-moving geopolitical tectonic plates set in motion by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On April 1, 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi before his departure. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated that the dialogue specifically concerned the impact of the Ukraine crisis on India's economy, noting "that as a developing economy, global volatility in different domains is of particular concern to India. It is important for both countries that their economic, technological and people to people contacts remain stable and predictable".

Tensions

Lavrov's visit synchronised with India's efforts to maintain a neutral position on Ukraine. Not only has India abstained from all five votes in the United Nations to condemn Russia's military operation in Ukraine, it has also refused to participate in Western sanctions aimed at isolating and crippling Russia's economy (Russia has lost \$300 billion of foreign exchange reserves due to these sanctions). At a press conference after his bilateral talks, Lavrov remarked, "I have no doubt that a way would be found to bypass the artificial impediments with illegal unilateral sanctions by the West." This made it clear that Russia and India would go ahead with their plan to use national currencies rather than the dollar-based international system.

India's persuasion of an independent policy with Russia has perturbed the diplomatic martinets of the Global North. Hours before Lavrov arrived in Delhi, US Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) Daleep Singh, the main designer of the sanctions against Russia, said that there will be "consequences" to countries that "actively attempt to circumvent the sanctions". However stressing that "friends don't set red lines", he added, "We are very keen for all countries, especially our allies and partners, not to create mechanisms that prop up the ruble and attempt to undermine the dollar-based financial system".

PERSPECTIVE

Reviving traditional medicine

The inauguration of the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) on April 19, 2022 in Jamnagar, Gujarat, with the support of World Health Organization (WHO) has paved the way for the traditional medicine in India, including *desi dawai*, Ayurveda, Yoga and naturopathy, Unani, Sowa-Rigpa, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH).

Sidelined by the advent of modern medicine (western medicine) over the past century owing to the lack of scientific evidence regarding the efficacy of traditional medicine despite its legacy of widespread application in healthcare, the recent upsurge of Covid-19 cases has led to the increasing use of the traditional medicine in the world.

It is understood that the move will help in revival and further global acceptance of the most practised form of health treatment since ages: Ayurveda which has the foundation since 2nd century BC, laid by Vaisheshika (ancient teachings/school of the Hindu) and Nyaya (the school for logic).

Ayurveda has been accepted to be divine and bliss by Hindu over the ages, from Brahma, the Hindu God as the "creator of the universe". It is in the common parlance that the knowledge (Vedas) on holistic healing power of these medicines through 'Shlokas' have been passed from Brahma to the sages and then to the generation for the betterment of mankind.

These are based on four important aspects of knowledge of Hindu beliefs as "Yajur Veda, Rig Veda, Sam Veda, and Atharva Veda". 'Atreya' is considered as the hub of knowledge received from Lord Indra through Lord Brahma and who has scripted these messages in the Atharva Veda and Rig Veda. Among these Vadas,



The US Deputy NSA's arrival to India was preceded by the visits of the EU special envoy, the German NSA and the UK Foreign Secretary, all of whom were critical of Indo-Russian cooperation. The particularly sharp exchange between Jaishankar and UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss highlighted the divergent perspectives that India and Euro-Atlantic nations had on the instabilities in Ukraine. Taking a jibe at the moral hypocrisy of the West, Jaishankar said: "I think what we saw happening in Afghanistan last summer had a very, very strong impact here, certainly in India. I probably would say it didn't have the same impact in Europe... They didn't identify with the people who are affected in the same way. So you know, the truth is that, many of us have similar or shared beliefs, values, but there is ability to relate, the ability to identify, some of it is proximity... the intensity of the reaction may not be the same all over the world."

Declining US hegemony

India's non-aligned response to the Ukraine crisis is similar to the attitude of other Third World nations. On March 2, 2022, non-binding UN resolution that condemned Russia's intervention in Ukraine, populations represented by governments that did not vote for it were much more likely to come from the nations of the Global South. In fact, the UN condemnation of Russia was endorsed majorly by rich, white nations that

represent only 41 per cent of the world's population. What explains this global divide? The countries of the Third World are all too well acquainted with the West's history of bombings, invasions, coups, assassinations, destabilisation campaigns, colour revolutions, etc, to join the latter's supposedly "democratic" chorus against Russia. Instead of this militarist rhetoric against the bogeyman of Russian "authoritarianism", most of them have chosen to adopt the path of diplomatic de-escalation. And in this process, they have weakened Western unilateralism.

The trading partners of Russia, which is one of the world's largest exporters of oil, gas, wheat, and fertilizers, have developed alternative payment mechanisms to bypass Western sanctions. Russian financial institutions have been encouraging clients to open accounts in Chinese yuan - a policy direction that is a continuation of the two countries' decision in 2019 to settle all trade between them in their respective currencies. China and the Eurasian Economic Union consisting of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Armenia are also evolving a new monetary system. Saudi Arabia — partly concerned by the way the West arbitrarily seized the dollar holdings of Russia — has indicated that it might designate its oil sales to China in Yuan and not dollar. After 1974, this is the first time Saudi Arabia would sell oil in a currency other than the dollar. Russian

relations with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar in OPEC+ agreements, and the Gulf states' increased sovereign wealth fund investments in Russia are also contributing to the weakening of the dollar's monetary power.

Presently, the EU gets 40 per cent of its natural gas from Russia; the Kremlin has demanded that Europe pay for this gas in Russian rubles. India has now joined this emerging contestation of US-centered financial architecture by agreeing to a rupee-ruble trade agreement with Russia. For India, the use of non-dollar transaction methods is not new. In 2018, India and Russia entered into an agreement under which Russia agreed to supply five S-400 Triumf air defence systems.

To sidestep the American sanctions imposed under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), the two countries agreed that the mode of payment will be in Indian currency. India used a similar system for buying Iranian oil. Through the United Commercial Bank, payments for 30 per cent of the crude oil that India imported from Iran was settled in rupees, which Iran then used to import goods from India.

Unless the core countries of the Global North come to the negotiating table, the attrition of the dollar-dominated system will keep progressing, slowly but steadily. First, given the different kinds of commodities that Russia supplies to

The countries of the Third World are well acquainted with the West's history of bombings, invasions, coups, assassinations, destabilisation campaigns, colour revolutions, etc, to join the latter's supposedly "democratic" chorus against Russia. Instead of this militarist rhetoric against the bogeyman of Russian "authoritarianism", most of them have chosen to adopt the path of diplomatic de-escalation. And in this process, they have weakened Western unilateralism



JAWAID IQBAL

the world and the demand from developing economies like China, India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and those in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, strategic expert Ng Weng Hoong writes that "it is only a matter of time before traders develop an alternative system to make and settle payments without using US-controlled global financial and payment services".

Moreover, USA's treatment of Russia like a vassal state — visible in the financial weapons it has deployed — has made it evident that the American empire will very well bully nations into following the so-called "rules-based order" if the need arises. This had made countries realise that de-dollarisation is important for the protection of political autonomy. In this global conjuncture characterised by multipolarisation, the Indian Government needs to strengthen and expand its non-aligned posture.

(The writer is Dean, Faculty of International Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh)

The treasures in our ancient wisdom regarding the Indian system of medicine have not been exhaustively explored and scientifically validated. The Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar is an effort towards making traditional medicine a scientifically proven system of medicine



PRATAP C MOHANTY



KAMAL SHARMA

(Dr Pratap C Mohanty teaches Economics at IIT Roorkee. He is the principal investigator of the research grant on 'Medical Pluralism in India', sponsored by ICSSR, Govt of India; Kamal Sharma is a research associate)

