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India, UK agree to scale up defence ties, ink FTA

Modi, Johnson discuss Ukraine, Indo-Pacific; UK PM calls Modi khaas dost

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom on Friday agreed to scale up their relationship with a special focus on a new defence partnership and a free trade agreement.

Giving the go-ahead to these crucial pacts in the summit-level talks here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting British Prime Minister Boris Johnson reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral ties. The two leaders also discussed the situation in Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific region. Johnson described Modi as his "khaas dost (special friend)".

The proposed defence partnership will see Britain cooperating with India in the domain of fighter jet technology and propulsion systems for the warships. This will enable India to acquire frontline "know-how" to shore up its defence manufacturing capabilities within the country.

Addressing the media after the talks, Modi said, "While India is celebrating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the UK Prime Minister's visit is historic."

He also said the two countries had established a Comprehensive Strategic



UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson with Prime Minister Narendra Modi prior to their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Friday

Partnership last year. Also, to give direction to our relationship in this decade, the two nations launched an ambitious "Roadmap 2030" and the two sides on Friday reviewed the progress made in this roadmap, and also set some goals for the future, the Prime Minister said.

As regards the free trade agreement, he said teams of both the countries are working and efforts are on to conclude the FTA by the end of this year.

Johnson said the two countries wanted to wrap up the pact before Diwali in October.

On the ties in the sphere of defence and strategic affairs, Modi said both the leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in the defence sector. He welcomed the UK's support for "Self-reliant India" in all areas, manufacturing, technology, design and development in the defence sector.

Continued on Page 9

Delhi, London to deepen cooperation on cyber domain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Given the emerging threat of cyber warfare, India and the United Kingdom on Friday firmed up a partnership to develop capabilities to counter this challenge with a focus on cyber governance, deterrence, resilience and capacity building.

Underlining the importance of cyber domain, the two countries issued a joint statement after the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The statement said the two countries will work in partnership to increase mutual cyber resilience, taking a holistic and whole-of-society approach.

The two countries will complete joint work to identify shared vulnerabilities and promote effective public-private partnerships, with a view to ensuring decisions on systems design and deployment

take into account public safety protections and increasing the awareness and ability of the public and infrastructure owners, to increase resilience against the malicious cyber activity.

"We will continue to work closely with industry and through international standards organisations to ensure the Internet of Things connectable devices are secure by design. We will support efforts to increase the availability and diversity of cyber skills in our workforce and promote people-to-people and educational links to enhance awareness in the domain of cyberspace," it said.

In May 2021, Modi and Johnson agreed to an Enhanced Cyber Security Partnership, it said, adding today, "India and the United Kingdom outline our commitment to a joint programme of cooperation to deliver this partnership, focused on cyber governance."

Continued on Page 9

Nitish at RJD's iftar party heats up Bihar politics

Lalu gets bail in fodder case

PNS ■ PATNA / NEW DELHI

A day before Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to visit Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar sprang a big surprise by attending an iftar party hosted by former Chief Minister Rabri Devi and leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav.

The day held special significance for the RJD as the Jharkhand High Court gave party supremo Lalu Prasad bail in the Doranda Treasury case in which a CBI special court had sentenced him to five years in prison and he is expected to be released in the next 24 hours.

73-year-old Prasad is in custody following his conviction and sentencing by a CBI court in February in a fodder scam case involving embezzlement of over ₹139 crore from Doranda treasury.

"The Jharkhand High Court has accepted our petition for suspension of the sentence and has granted bail. We had pleaded that he has served more than half of his five-year sentence in this case."

Lalu has already served 41 months in jail... We had submitted the trial court's certified copy in this regard. The court



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with RJD leader Rabri Devi at an Iftar party in Patna on Friday

has granted bail," Prabhat Kumar, counsel of Lalu, said. BJP leader and Industry Minister Shahnawaz Hussain, Assembly Speaker Vijay Sinha, LJP (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan, VIP president Mukesh Sahani, State Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha too were present.

Interestingly, neither Rabri nor Tejashwi were present at the iftar party hosted by Nitish just a week ago. The RJD was represented by senior leader Ramchandra Purve.

Virtually mobbed by TV channel reporters, Nitish walked the small distance from his 7 Circular Road bungalow to Rabri's 10 Circular Road residence to attend the event.

Images of Nitish sitting

and interacting with RJD leaders Tejashwi and Tej Pratap Yadav went viral on social media. Rabri was seen attending to the guests.

Nitish is seen as a master of "messaging" and his latest move is seen as a clear signal to the BJP that his options were open if the saffron leadership mounted pressure on him to vacate the CM's chair for a BJP nominee.

Commenting on the political significance of Nitish's presence at the iftar party, RJD leader Mritunjaya Tiwari said Bihar is set to see a major upheaval in the days to come. "I don't want to say anything more. Nitish is definitely feeling suffocated within the NDA," he said.

Continued on Page 9

Shivpal meets Azam in jail, fuels speculations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid speculations over jailed Samajwadi Party stalwart Mohammad Azam Khan contemplating to desert the party, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief Shivpal Singh Yadav met the former in Sitapur District Jail on Friday.

Shivpal Yadav accused his nephew, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, of not taking up Khan's cause and said that he would soon place the matter before Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The PSP's chief endorsed the tirade by Muslim leaders of Akhilesh Yadav and expressed disappointment that the SP chief did not launch any agitation in support of its incarcerated leader.

Despite his love-hate relationship with nephew Akhilesh

Yadav, Shivpal had contested and won the recent assembly election from Jaswantnagar seat of Etawah as a SP candidate.

Earlier, Azam Khan's media in-charge had accused Akhilesh Yadav of ignoring his senior colleague and also the Muslim community, sparking speculations of a rift within the party. After Friday's meeting, the political rumour mills have started churning a probable third front being launched amid Shivpal Yadav's growing bonhomie with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Shivpal Yadav's visit to Sitapur District Jail assumes significance as it came at a time when close aides of Azam Khan have criticised the SP over its lack of activism in favour of the Rampur MLA in particular and the Muslim

Continued on Page 9

Court has power to review remission: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said that the court has the power to review the decision of the Government on the acceptance or rejection of remission and is also empowered to direct it to reconsider its decision.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Aniruddha Bose said the executive power cannot be exercised arbitrarily even though the Government has the discretion to suspend or remit the sentence. The apex court also said the prerogative of the executive is subject to the rule of law and fairness in State action embodied in Article 14 of the Constitution.

"The Court has the power to review the decision of the Government regarding the acceptance or rejection of an



application for remission under Section 432 of the CrPC to determine whether the decision is arbitrary in nature," the bench said. The observations of the top court came on a plea filed by a convict Ram Chander who is undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for life upon being convicted for the commission of offences punishable under Section 302 (murder) read with Section 149 (unlawful assembly) of the Indian Penal Code.

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Hardik Patel lauds BJP for strong leadership

Ahmedabad: Unhappy with the Congress leadership over his treatment, Gujarat leader Hardik Patel set an alarm for the party by praising the BJP for its strong leadership.

Hardik listed the BJP Government's staunch decisions like construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, etc, to justify his assertions.

In an interview given to Divya Bhaskar, the youth Congress leader said he is a true "bhakt of Ram", but scotched the speculation that he may switch over his loyalties to the saffron party.

Summing up his pent-up anger with the Central leadership of the Congress, he claimed he had expressed his grievances against the party's Gujarat leadership, but the party did nothing to redress the issues but affected just an expedient change at the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee top post.

300-yr-old temple bulldozed in Raj; Cong, BJP trade jibes

Jaipur: In a bid to widen road in Rajgarh, an anti-encroachment drive was launched. Two temples including one of 300 years old and some shops were demolished early this week on Sunday and Monday. Officials described the action as part of an anti-encroachment drive to widen a road in the municipal town. They said the demolition was approved by the Rajgarh Nagar Palika Board.

The BJP and Congress on Friday traded charges over the demolition of two temples during an anti-encroachment drive in Alwar district's Rajgarh town this week. Rajgarh is a BJP-run municipality in Congress-ruled Rajasthan.

While Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia accused the Congress of being behind the demolition, state Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra asserted that it was the decision of the city's municipality headed by the saffron party. The BJP targeted Rajasthan's Congress government over the demolition of temples, saying that the party



A bulldozer being used to demolish a 300-year-old Shiva temple at Sarai Mohalla in Alwar district of Rajasthan on Friday

will have to face its consequences. Claiming one of the demolished temples to be 300-year-old, Poonia said in an interview that the videos on social media showed a bulldozer demolishing the ancient Shiv temple.

"It is in the public domain that all these actions were taken at the behest of the state

government," he said. He said the state BJP had decided to send a party delegation, comprising Sikar MP Swami Sumedhanand, party's state vice president Narayan Singh Dewal and MLA Chandrakanta Meghwal, to Rajgarh. They will give me a report in three days," he said.

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BJP deserters facing ire of Yogi's bulldozers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The leaders who left the Bharatiya Janata Party before the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections are now facing the ire of Yogi Adityanath's bulldozer as some of them have received notices of illegal construction or part of their properties has been demolished on the ground that they were constructed illegally.

On Thursday, the Shahjahanpur administration demolished a building owned by former BJP MLA Roshan Lal Verma on the ground that it was illegal. Verma had joined the Samajwadi Party before the UP assembly polls.

Verma was the one who had carried Swami Prasad Maurya's resignation letter from the Yogi cabinet to Governor Anandiben Patel. Outside Raj Bhawan, he had claimed on January 11 that Yogi's tyranny would end on March 10 — the day the results of the assembly elections were announced.

Three months later, on April 19 to be precise, Verma praised Yogi but this did not save him from the ire of Yogi's bulldozers as Tilhar Sub-Divisional Magistrate Himanshu Upadhyay said that revenue records showed that the construction of the building was carried out on government land.

Shahjahanpur District Magistrate Umesh Pratap Singh said that the building was constructed on 450 square feet of government land. Three bulldozers were used to demolish the illegal construction, he said, adding that another plot



VERMA WAS THE ONE WHO HAD CARRIED SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA'S RESIGNATION LETTER FROM THE YOGI CABINET TO GOVERNOR ANANDIBEN PATEL. OUTSIDE RAJ BHAWAN, HE HAD CLAIMED ON JANUARY 11 THAT YOGI'S TYRANNY WOULD END ON MARCH 10 — THE DAY THE RESULTS OF THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WERE ANNOUNCED

"grabbed" by the former MLA had been razed.

The same day, former Uttar Pradesh minister Dr Dharam Singh Saini was issued notices for constructing shops on an encroached land.

He has been given seven days' time to submit his reply

otherwise the shops would be demolished.

Saini, a four-time MLA from Nurur constituency of Saharanpur, was a minister in the Yogi government I.O. When Swami Prasad Maurya resigned from the Yogi cabinet, Saini along with Dara Singh

Chauhan also resigned and joined the SP. He contested the 2022 assembly poll from Nurur as Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance candidate but lost the election.

Saini claims he has all the documents and the construction was carried out only after the layout map was passed by the nagar panchayat. He said a reply to the notice was being sent to the administration along with documents. The said shops have been constructed near Chilkana bus station in Saharanpur.

Additional District Magistrate (Enforcement) at Saharanpur, Archana Dwivedi, said the notices were served following a complaint by one Pramod Kumar of Chilkana on April 7.

Meanwhile, local authorities in Banda district served a show-cause notice on former BJP MLA Brajesh Prajapati, who also switched to the SP, for constructing a multi-storey structure without proper sanction.

Last week bulldozers demolished part of a petrol pump of SP MLA Shazil Islam Ansari in Bareilly on the ground that the construction was on illegal land. He has also been served notices for the construction of marriage halls and residential complexes. Incidentally, this MLA was earlier booked for objectionable comments against Yogi Adityanath.

Samajwadi Party state president Naresh Uttam said it was an act of political vendetta. He said the Yogi government was targeting those leaders who had left the BJP before assembly elections.

Infighting in UP Congress intensifies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The ongoing feud between party veterans and the personal staff of Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi managing the affairs of UP Congress does not seem to be heading for an end anytime soon, as heated exchange between UP Congress media cell members and Priyanka's personal staff surfaced once again on Thursday.

The fresh fracas occurred when one of Priyanka's personal staff, who was earlier embroiled in a major tiff, abused the present media team for not working properly.

UP Congress media cell chairman Naseemuddin Siddiqui hurriedly convened a meeting of the media unit to douse the issue on Saturday.

A member of the UP Congress media cell said that Siddiqui would only try to silence the media team and apprise them that any further escalation against Priyanka's personal staff would only spell trouble for them, like it did for some senior leaders in the past.

The Congress leader revealed, "Priyanka's personal staff and a senior media unit member almost came to blows after which Siddiqui intervened and assured of setting things in order in the media unit." He apprehended that some other media unit members may well be on their way out.

Besides the confrontation with media unit member, party sources confirmed that Priyanka's staff also issued instructions to keep senior leaders, who dissented against some of Priyanka's decisions, away from the UP Congress headquarters.

"Priyanka's staff in question got an order issued which said that all chairs on the campus for workers and leaders should be removed immediately and no one would be provided a chair on the campus except in cabins of party office-bearers," claimed another senior UP Congress leader.

He claimed that it was a clear message that either they should not visit UPCC or sit with those who were responsible for the present situation within the party.

Sources also said that a new guard room at the UPCC gate was erected and within the next few days, everyone visiting UPCC would have to take permission from inside before entering the UPCC campus.

Min reviews UPSIDA projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' reviewed the works being done and the efforts being made by UPSIDA to attract industrial investment in the state.

The minister also inspected the UPSIDA head office.

During the meeting, a presentation was made on the activities being undertaken by UPSIDA, mentioning the major achievements of the last five years during which investment of more than Rs 10,000 crore was attracted by the industrial development authority thereby creating employment for about one lakh people. About 1,100 acres of land has been allotted by UPSIDA during this period. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, proposals for investments of more than Rs 3,000 crore were received from seven countries, while Rs 3,000 crore investments were attracted from 13 states and more than 20,000 employment opportunities were created.

In the last five years many mega projects like AB Mauri (Rs 1,100 crore investment and five thousand jobs), ACC Ltd (Rs 50 crore investment and

200 jobs), SLMG Ltd. (Coca-Cola) (Rs 300 crore investment and 450 employment), Berger Paints India Ltd. (Rs 200 crore investment and 1,100 employment), Varun Beverages Ltd. (Rs 260 crore investment and 560 employment), Shailvis Specialties Ltd. (Rs 250 crore investment and 1,500 employment) and many other such units have been set up or are being set up.

These investments are well distributed in all the four regions of the state - Purvanchal, Madhyanchal, Paschimanchal and Bundelkhand. From Saharanpur in the west to Deoria in the east and from Pilibhit in the north to Chitrakoot in the south, many reputed entrepreneurs have established or are setting up their major projects with investments.

The presentation also highlighted the major projects being developed by the UPSIDA, which include 1,139 acres in Prayagraj and 1,000 acres in Agra as integrated manufacturing clusters with in-principle approval from NICDC, development works in Agro Parks in Baheri and Baranasi, Trans-Ganga City Unnao, Kosi Kotwan, Banthar and Pilibhit.

Apart from this, the authority was apprised about plots provided on priority to oxygen manufacturing companies like INOX, Air Liquide, Kribhco, Prabha Industries etc. with the aim of establishing oxygen grid to ensure supply of oxygen in the entire state. The Authority has allotted land to 30 oxygen plants in 18 districts attracting investment of more than Rs 600 crore.

The minister was informed that since 2018, inflow of investment in industrial areas of UPSIDA across the state had doubled and there was a 2.1-fold increase in employment generation despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The UPSIDA has also simplified policies and to bring in transparency in its working. The minister was informed that allotment of plots was being done in a transparent manner through online Nivesh Mitra portal or online e-auction and no offline applications were being accepted. The minister was also apprised about other policy reforms such as time extension policy, decrease in interest rates etc. and that 30 services of the UPSIDA were made online and these applications were disposed of in a time bound manner.

Yogi govt to develop sports grounds, open gyms in 100 gram panchayats

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is soon going to become a dreamland for aspiring sportspersons in the country as the Yogi Adityanath government has started preparations for developing sports grounds and gymnasia in 100 gram panchayats across the state.

"In order to promote sports talent and hone the skills of players coming out from small villages and districts, the Yogi government, in its second innings, has prioritised provision of sports facilities to all the players," a government spokesperson said.

He said the focus of the state govern-

ment, which was engaged in realising the Khoob-Khelo-Khoob-Badho mission, was mainly on players coming out of the villages. He said the government was ensuring that the players, who had the potential to bring laurels to the country, should not be deprived of any facilities.

The Youth Welfare department is engaged in arranging sports fields and open gyms from village to village at the gram panchayat level under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme.

On the other hand, the government is also making efforts to nurture sports talent and intensify sports competition within the state. The aim of the government is

to establish Uttar Pradesh as a leading state in the country in sports.

Better training is being given for developing sports talent in the state. Specialist coaches have been appointed to impart training. Along with increasing the convenience of the players in the hostels, construction of new stadiums is also being done at a rapid pace.

It is worth mentioning that during the previous tenure, the Yogi government built more than 44 hostels for the training of 16 sports in 19 districts. The amount for sports kits has been increased from ₹1,000 to ₹2,500. Many gifts have also been given to the players who brought medals at the Olympics.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

Be it Known to all that earlier my Name was **RANJEET YADAV** which is now changed to **RANJEET**. In future I shall be known as **RANJEET RANJEET S/O Jang Bahadur Yadav 4/11, LIG Colony, Preetam Nagar, Dhoomanganj, Allahabad.**

NOTICE

Due to mistake my daughter's name written in School Records as **Asna Parvej**, whereas her correct name is **Asna Parvez**. Please correct accordingly. **Yunus Parvez S/O Mohd. Yousof 544D/25 Narain Garden, Hardoi Road, Balaganj, Lucknow.**

Security of vital installations beefed up after IB alert

Lucknow (PNS): An alert by the Central intelligence agencies has put the Uttar Pradesh Police on its toes and security has been further beefed at vital installations.

A search operation was also carried out in some public transports on inputs that some members of ultra outfits could execute a terror plan.

Sources said that the sleuths of Intelligence Bureau (IB), through an advisory, alerted the UP Police on possible terror strikes at some important public places, vital installations including the Taj Mahal and Gorakhnath temple.

This was enough to put the police brass in a tizzy as recently, an IIT graduate, Ahmad Murtaza Abbasi, had struck at Gorakhnath temple and injured two PAC personnel before being overpowered. In subsequent quizzing the investigators concluded that he might be a part of some terror module.

Soon after the IB alert, the UP Police along with Central agencies, launched an extensive checking drive in several places across the state, including Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (DDU) railway station on Thursday night.

"Railway stations and airports are the most vulnerable areas and we need to ensure air tight security to avoid any kind of infiltration into the city. The intelligence apparatus and police informants have been activated to trace any suspicious element," sources in the UP Police claimed.

A joint team of Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) conducted extensive checking at DDU railway station and urged the passengers to remain vigilant about any unclaimed object or suspicious-looking person.

Confirming the IB security advisory, a senior RPF officer said, "Security has been beefed up and a joint RPF and GRP team carried out an extensive checking drive at Deen Dayal Upadhyaya railway station on railway platforms, foot-over-bridge (FOB), yard area, booking office and station portico, parcel office, waiting halls and other places. During the search, everything was found in order, but we are not leaving anything to chance and keeping a strict tab on the movement of people."

Bareilvi Sunni sect leader targets SP for ignoring interests of Muslims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After Samajwadi Party's Muslim AMPs and MLAs hit out at their party president Akhilesh Yadav for ignoring the interests of the Muslims, prominent Muslim cleric Maulana Taukeer Raja Khan, who represents the numerically significant Bareilvi sect of Sunni Muslims, has targeted the SP on the same issue.

Maulana Raza Khan praised UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the recent state government decision to not permit new religious processions and to limit the volume of loudspeakers installed at religious places.

He said it was a good decision by the government to permit religious procession only after the organiser submitted an affidavit to the administration.

"Samajwadi Party owes its existence to the overwhelming support of Muslims in recent UP assembly elections. The Muslims should now recognise the true face of Akhilesh Yadav and should never support his party," Maulana Taukeer Raja Khan said and added, "Samajwadi Party has no role in the victory of three dozen Muslim MLAs as they were elected to the assembly on the strength of Muslim votes."

The cleric, however, criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party for the demolition drive in Delhi's Jahangirpuri area where communal violence broke out recently. The cleric has given a call for a *jail bharo* agi-

tation after Eid if the government does not "mend its ways", alleging that a one-sided investigation was being conducted in the case.

The cleric also took aim at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that if the prime minister, like Dhritarashtra (the blind king in the epic Mahabharat) remained deaf and blind to the atrocities committed against Muslims then no one would be able to stop another 'Mahabharat' from happening in India.

"People who love their country will be a part of the agitation. Ten days are left for Eid. After that, we will start a country-wide *jail bharo* agitation. Both Hindus and Muslims who love their country will be part of the agitation," the cleric said.

Maulana Taukeer Raza Khan, who also heads a political party, Ittehad-e-Millat, also claimed that 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' has become nothing more than a slogan which is not being practised.

"After Eid, our meeting will be finalised. The government should correct its actions.... Only 10 days are left, the government should fix its ways of working. Otherwise, we will announce from Delhi and start a 'jail bharo andolan' after Eid," he said.

"The day Muslims come to the streets, one must understand that they will be uncontrollable. This is my warning to the Modi government," the cleric said.

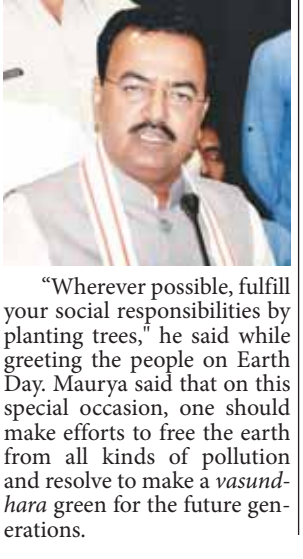
Keshav Maurya call to protect environment

Lucknow (PNS): Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Friday planted saplings in his office on the occasion of the World Earth Day and called on the people to contribute towards protecting the environment.

Planting the saplings of Ashok and mango besides performing 'bhoomi puja', Maurya said that on the occasion of World Earth Day, it was the duty of every individual to make efforts to save the environment.

"We all celebrate the Earth Day but we should also be sensitive towards the natural environment and make important contributions towards protecting the greenery as it plays an important role in our lives," Maurya said while claiming that it was the responsibility of everyone to save the environment for the coming generation.

"Save every drop of water, recycle the waste, plant trees wherever possible," Maurya said, while making an appeal to consider how much Mother Earth gave and make the earth green for environmental protection and promotion.



"Wherever possible, fulfill your social responsibilities by planting trees," he said while greeting the people on Earth Day. Maurya said that on this special occasion, one should make efforts to free the earth from all kinds of pollution and resolve to make a *vasudhaha green* for the future generations.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Under the instruction of Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, Lucknow, I hereby informed the general public that Sri Mahendra Kumar Soni along with Smt. Nirjala Soni, Sri Rahul Kumar Soni, Smt. Sneha Soni, Sri Veerendra Soni are the absolute owners of House on Plot No. 49, Khasra No. 250 Mirzi, area 105.018 Sq. mtr./1130 sq. ft., situated at Village-Buhar, Ward-Healdganj, Tehsil & District-Lucknow and regarding the ownership the original sale deed in chain dated 30.06.2014 executed by Sri Tullial in favour of Smt. Arfa Banu vide Book No. 1, 21d No. 9680, Pages on 371 at 390 at SI. No. 7160 in the office of Sub-Registrar-V, Lucknow and sale deed dated 08.03.2016 executed by Smt. Arfa Banu in favour of Mohd. Afzal Khan vide Book No. 1, 21d No. 11259, Pages on 357 to 398 at SI. No. 2408 in the office of Sub-Registrar-V, Lucknow have been lost somewhere. Whereas Sri Mahendra Kumar Soni along with above-mentioned are intended to avail a loan against the aforesaid property from Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, Lucknow. Anybody having claim or claiming any prior rights or interest in any manner in this property or has raised loan by depositing the aforesaid sale deed to any person/Bank/Corporation/Financial Institution may submit objections in writings within 7 days from the date of public notice. After the expiry of the period of this notice no claim shall be entertained and such claim shall have no value in the eyes of law. It shall also be deemed that nobody has any objection for mortgaging the aforesaid property with Axis Bank Ltd., Lucknow. **Vivek Srivastava (Advocate)** Office/Resi-3/40, Vastu Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010 Ph: 9839485155

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आप सभी को सूचित किया जाता है कि पर्यावरण एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा मेसर्स रीजेन्सी इंस्टिट्यूट लि., प्लॉट नं. 3 ब्लॉक-सी, सर्वोदय नगर, कानपुर उ.प्र. - 208005 को ई.सी.आई.डी.एफिकोरेशन नं. C22B038UP190966 दिनांक 01.01.2022 के द्वारा परियोजना के निर्माण हेतु पर्यावरण स्वीकृति प्रदान की है। पर्यावरण एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी पर्यावरण स्वीकृति की प्रति विभाग की वेबसाइट <http://moef.nic.in> (<http://environmentclearance.nic.in>) एवं उ.प्र. प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के पास उपलब्ध है।

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Covid experts for vaccination of kids in 5-11 yrs age group

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■
LUCKNOW

Covid experts have stressed on the idea of vaccinations of children in the age groups of 5-11 years. They feel that in the current situation when the cases are rising, it is important to vaccinate this group as they have been left out as the most vulnerable part of the population.

Dr Surya Kant Tripathi, who is the ambassador of Uttar Pradesh National Health Mission for Covid vaccinations, said he also suggested the government to get children in this age group vaccinated.

"This is the right time when we should also protect the smaller children. The government may be possibly mulling over this. This is important because schools, shops and malls/markets are open and children are frequently going out. This is the right time when they should be vaccinated," he said.

Regarding the slight spurt in cases, Dr Surya Kant Tripathi said they have not observed any significant hospitalisation or mortality and there have been no ICU care facilities required, which is a good sign.

He said if the children in



Passengers being tested for Covid at Charbagh railway station

Pioneer

the age group of 5-11 years are vaccinated, it will lead to 100 per cent confidence in the community which is being protected. "Kids in this age group with comorbidities are more prone to contracting infection," he added.

OMAG (Organised Medicine Academic Guild) secretary Dr Ishwar Gilada said the data which has come up shows that in places like Delhi, 27 per cent of the fresh

cases needing hospitalisation have been children, which is a little higher than in the previous three waves. "Children are the most vulnerable unlike others who are either vaccinated or infected," he pointed out.

"When 95 per cent of the population is having either infection or vaccination, those who are not vaccinated are vulnerable," he said.

He said that BCGI has

taken a decision that these children should be vaccinated but there is yet another committee which has to make a decision. "When there is a panic situation, only then things start happening. The better strategy is to vaccinate these children since vaccines are already available," he said. He added that if these children are vaccinated, there would be less panic amongst people and in schools too.

Man tied to tree, beaten to death by 4 siblings

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two women among four siblings were arrested in Bagriamau village under Gosainganj police station on Friday morning on the charges of beating Rudra Kumar, a resident of the same village, to death after tying him to a tree over a petty issue. Those arrested were identified as Kuldeep Rawat, Murli Rawat and their sisters Saloni & Anita. The incident was reported around 9:30 pm on Thursday and Rudra succumbed to injuries at KGMU Trauma Centre on Friday evening.

Wife Sarita Rawat lodged a complaint at Gosainganj police station, alleging that her husband was beaten up with lathis and hockey sticks after being tied to a tree. She said she rushed her husband to the community health

centre from where he was referred to KGMU Trauma Centre.

Meanwhile, police claimed to have arrested three auto drivers in the last 24 hours. They were identified as Adil (19) of Awadh Vihar Colony, Ranjeet Yadav (20) of Kamalpur village and Satish Rawat (21). Three motorcycles were recovered from their possession.

Adil and his accomplice were picked from service lane near Kanousi bridge under Manak Nagar police station. Adil told the police that the motorcycle which he was using was a stolen one while another was parked in their hideout in Sarojininar area.

Rawat was picked up near the railway crossing beside Sahara Hospital after he failed to produce the documents of the vehicle. During interrogation, he told the police that it was a stolen bike.

Deputy CM inspects 3 CHCs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak inspected Sitapur, Mehmoodabad and Barabanki CHCs on Friday. He expressed anger over unhygienic conditions in the CHCs and reprimanded the officials concerned for this. He also inspected the arrangements of water for patients' kin, registration counters and the OPDs. He told the staff to maintain hygienic conditions and ensure attendance at the hospital.

Sounded a warning to the staff, he

asked them to mend ways or be prepared for a show-cause notice. He also called the director general of health services and directed him to prepare a list of the staff playing truant for a long time.

He said the faulty X-ray machines at the Mehmoodabad CHC should be rectified. He also inspected the operation theatre there. Pathak expressed anger over unhygienic conditions in the OT. He said that doctors should consider patients their relatives. He also directed the staff to make arrangements of drinking water for patients.

Shaheed Path to be given facelift

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Shaheed Path is all set to undergo a facelift complete with elegant looks, well planned indicators and street lamps. A sum of Rs 13 crore has been sanctioned for the purpose. The Lucknow Development Authority administration has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) with the technical assistance of Public Works Department (PWD).

The tender will be floated in the first week of May and the civil work is likely to commence by June. Contractors will be selected in accordance with the NHAI parameters while PWD will provide technical assistance. The project is likely to be completed in six months' time.

The Central government has already given its approval on the condition that the civil work will be completed and within deadline. The condition of Shaheed Path has

deteriorated and road mishaps claiming lives of people are being reported almost on a daily basis, thanks to big craters and potholes.

A high-level committee was set up in 2021 to assess the problems and it suggested effective steps. The findings were submitted in January earlier this year. LDA chief engineer IS Singh said it would be a total facelift. Indicators and street lamps would be installed to guide the drivers and to check mishaps.

Call to keep earth clean, green

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Earth Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in the state capital on Friday. The department of Geography, Avadh Girls' Degree College, celebrated the day under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, an initiative of the UP government. Under the guidance of vice-principal and head of the department U Chaturvedi, the students organised a poster-making competition to highlight the significance of Earth Day.

Prof DS Singh from the department of Advanced Studies of Geology, University of Lucknow, delivered a talk on earth and environment. He implored the need to plant saplings, use renewable energy resources and refrain from using plastic. He cited his researches in the Himalayan glaciers as well as in the Arctic and said that the main problem was lack of proper land use planning due to increasing population. The poster by Manisha Rajput was adjudged the best while Aditi Nigam and Kavya Singh Sengar grabbed second and third spots respectively. Tanya Kesarwani, Khushi Sachdeva, Kalpana Dhani and other students actively helped in organising the event.

All the five branches of SKD Academy celebrated Earth Day by planting saplings. The children and their parents planted a variety of saplings and vowed to keep the earth green. A programme on conservation of environment and earth was



Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh taking part in a clean-up campaign on the bank of Gomti river on the occasion of Earth Day on Friday

Pioneer

also organised on the occasion.

Pre-primary students participated in a painting and colouring competition while primary students in slogan writing and junior section students gave the message to save earth through poems, songs and speeches. A 'No polythene' campaign and paper bag distribution demo were held by the students in nearby areas.

Regional Science City, in association with Ministry of Earth Sciences, organised a mega painting contest on 'Save Our Planet' along with a collage contest. A plantation drive was also organised on the occasion.

Besides, a popular science lecture on 'Invest in Our Planet' was delivered by Prof Vibhuti Rai from the department of Geology, Lucknow University. He said chil-

dren can play an important role in taking initiatives to ensure safety and conservation of earth. He suggested seven important points like conserve water, reduce, reuse, recycle process, reduce power consumption, eat sustainable foods and more plantations in and around the city.

Meanwhile, people lined up with 'Save Soil' placards for a walk from 1090 crossing to Lohia Park and back. The activities included a bare foot walk and dance performances among others to generate awareness about the urgent need to fix the soil that is fast losing its organic content. While some walked bare feet, some applied mud on the face and others dressed up as earth, trees and farmers. Students of Delhi Public School, Shaheed Path, and their teachers also participated in the activity.

Efforts on to increase zoo footfall

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow zoo is making all-out efforts to increase the footfall of visitors, said director Ashok Kumar for whom the priority is to make the zoo independent and self-sustainable.

"For increasing the footfall, we will be adding all star varieties of animals. We now have the zebras from Israel who have got acclimatised to the new environment and put on display," he said.

He added that this is a new addition that has happened after a long time. The director pointed out that they would be adding more interpretation

There are zebras from Israel who have got acclimatised to the new environment and put on display

centres at the zoo which will be constructed shortly and there were more things in the pipeline. "Because of Covid, the footfall was less at the zoo but now it has increased to a large extent since January," he said.

He added that they are into an exchange programme and have exchanged animals

with the Nagaland zoo. "We have transferred hog deer and gharial to Nagaland zoo and brought a Himalayan bear and a primate as well as a leopard cat from there. These animals have already arrived and they will be put on display soon," he pointed out.

The director said they get a grant of Rs 6 crore from the state government which will help in maintaining the zoo. Salaries of the employees come from the income of the zoo. When there is something new to be constructed, we request the government for grants. We also get grants from the Central Zoo Authority," he added.

New initiative by airport for convenience of passengers at Terminal-2

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport has launched a new initiative to ensure passengers' convenience. A spokesperson said they are arranging trolleys near the baggage belt in the arrival hall of Terminal-2.

"We are at the forefront of introducing various services for passengers' convenience. In continuation of the same, the airport has started a new initiative to place trolleys around the baggage belt in the arrival hall of Terminal-2. The arrangements are made by the customer service executives (CSEs) before the arrival of each flight," he said.

Earlier, passengers had to get the trolleys on their own. But from now onwards, they will not have to do it. As part of the new initiative, the CSEs place the trolleys at a certain distance around the conveyor belt even before the passengers arrive.

The airport has three conveyor belts for delivery of luggage by the airlines in the arrival hall. "The airlines deliver luggage on the respective conveyor belts as per the direction of Air Operation Command Centre. From now onwards, passengers will just have to take their luggage, load



it on the trolley and proceed towards the exit," the spokesperson said.

"A dedicated team has been deployed for placement of the trolleys. While another team is tasked with collecting the vacated trolleys and bringing them back to the arrival hall. This way we plan to maintain the availability of trolleys for passengers," he pointed out.

Earlier, the airport had started a passenger-centric initiative of self-check-in through a common-use self-service (CUSS) machine. Under the initiative, a trained team of CSEs help passengers to print their boarding passes and check in their luggage.

Passengers can save time and proceed towards security checks faster. The printing of baggage tag can be done if the weight of the luggage is within the prescribed limit of respective airlines.

Groundwater exploitation continues unabated

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government may have made it mandatory for people to seek permission for installation of submersible water pumps and tubewells, the ground reality is entirely different. In Lucknow alone, over 200 submersible pumps are being installed in a month while Jal Nigam and Jal Kal department have largely been

unable to stop this unauthorised practice. The ever-increasing real estate activities have made matters worse and there has been huge exploitation of groundwater. "On an average, we sell around 200 submersible pumps in a month and the number often goes up," Bala Datt from Poorvanchal Electricals said.

The condition of water table across the country is poor shape

and it is going down by 4-8 ft in Lucknow every year. Using submersibles is the only solution for people who have developed private colonies or have their houses in villages or remote areas, thanks to no water connections by authorities concerned.

Another seller pointed out that the market is witnessing a lot of activity with people from northern and western parts tripping over

each other to purchase submersibles. General manager, Jal Kal, SK Verma said they have no control over the use of submersibles, and it could lead to serious problems in the long run.

General manager, Jal Nigam, Anil Kumar said there is no law which can be invoked to stop installation of submersibles even as water levels have receded in all parts.

CITY BRIEFS

ADVANCE COURSE AT SGPGI

The department of Nephrology, SGPGIMS, is organising the 8th Advance Course in Renal Nutrition and Metabolism on April 22 and 23. The course is being organised with the purpose of educating physicians, nephrologists and dietitians to skillfully detect malnutrition, prevent it from advancing with nutritional intervention in patients with chronic kidney disease. The course will apprise delegates of the renal condition-specific nutritional management of patients. The course will be attended by delegates from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and England. Organising secretary Dr Anita Saxena from the department of Nephrology said malnutrition is a major challenge in chronic kidney disease (CKD). "The main cause of malnutrition is uremia (high urea level in blood) induced anorexia (loss of appetite) because of which the patient is not able to eat and hence develops malnourished and chronic wasting (loss of

lean mass) develops," she said. The Society of Renal Nutrition and Metabolism, which was established in 2014, is dedicated to spreading awareness on prevention of malnutrition in patients with CKD.

BOOK RELEASE

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on Friday released a book titled 'The Real Thakur'. The book, authored by Pradeep Tandon, highlights the problems and discrimination faced by young females deprived of exposure and opportunities to showcase their talent. It also talks about the goodness of

human values and plutonic love to prevail over casteism.

MAHILA SAMASYA NISTARAN DIWAS

District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash has launched a new initiative called 'Mahila Samasya Nistaran Diwas'. The DM was all ears as women shared their grievances with him on Friday. All government departments in Lucknow organised 'Mahila Samasya Nistaran Diwas'. In one of the cases, Nagina Devi approached the DM as she had been allotted a flat by DUDA but she was not being given the possession. The DM helped her get the possession.

FELICITATED

Founder-director of City Montessori School Bharti Gandhi was felicitated on Friday for her contribution to girl education and women empowerment at the conference of chairpersons of State Commission for Women organised under the aegis of National



Commission for Women at MIT World Peace University, Pune. Additional DGFT of the department of Maharashtra, Meeta Rajeev Lochan felicitated Bharti Gandhi with a citation and a stole.

KGMU docs, staff to be trained in anger mgmt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

King George's Medical University is all set to start training in anger management for doctors, nurses and other staff for better patient care. Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri said that being overworked, the response of the staff to work-related problems can be overbearing and what is required at all times is self-control and introspection. "These are psychology templates available which help you understand and control your person and reaction to problems. Different people respond differently to issues. The idea is to get people on to this platform and understand and handle stress better with the help of appropriate anger management," he said.

He added that this is again an art which can be picked up and help put things in perspective. "The response to critical situation can get better with this training," he said. The vice-chancellor said it will be an ongoing training programme for all healthcare professionals such as nurses, doctors and technicians. "It is the healthcare professionals who get burdened with humongous amount of work and when you have such a lot of work, you react differently to different situations. This is something which involves soft skills and empathy. It requires a huge amount of self-control while dealing with patients," he pointed out. He said that training will be carried out by the department of Psychology but eminent people from the field will be called to deliver talks.

"I have asked the department concerned to look for eminent people who have the knowledge and we will keep quantifying knowledge information from time to time. This has to be an ongoing thing and has to be carried out from time to time to address all sections of the staff repeatedly. It normally dissipates problems and the situation becomes less volatile," he said, adding the aim is to minimise the conflicts between doctors and patients. "We keep doing these exercises from time to time. Nearly 50 per cent of the issues can be resolved by good communication skills, which means you talk to them, gain sympathy of the patients and that is when you win half the battle," he added.

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| Regd. A/D | FORM NO. 5 | D.R.T./Lucknow |
| THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW (Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal) | | |
| Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication | | |
| No. | Date: | Fix For: |
| (Summons to defendant under section 19(4), of the Recovery of debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993) | | |
| Application No. & Year Original Application No. 228 of 2020 | | |
| BANK OF MAHARASHTRA | VERSUS |Applicant |
| M/S RITU MOBILE CENTRE AND OTHERS | VERSUS |Respondents To, |
| 1. M/S RITU MOBILE CENTRE through its proprietor Mr. Saurabh son of Sri Ravi Kumar resident of 4-1/41, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow | | |
| 2. Mr Saurabh Kumar son of Sri Ravi Kumar resident of: 4-1/41, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow | | |
| In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book from in two sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 10.08.2022 at 10.30 A.M., failing which the applicant shall be heard and decided in your absence. | | |
| | | Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow |

| | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| Regd. A/D | FORM NO. 5 | D.R.T./Lucknow |
| THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW (Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal) | | |
| Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication | | |
| No. | Date: | Fix For: |
| (Summons to defendant under section 19(4), of the Recovery of debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993) | | |
| Application No. & Year Original Application No. 340 of 2020 | | |
| BANK OF MAHARASHTRA | VERSUS |Applicant |
| DECO PRIMA & OTHERS | VERSUS |Respondents To, |
| 1. DECO PRIME through its proprietor Mr. Sabha Pati Mishra Office at 629/1, Navbasta Kala, Dewa road, Chhatra, Lucknow | | |
| AND resident of A-911/8, Sector-8, Indira Nagar, Lucknow | | |
| 2. SMT. BHARTI MISHRA Wife Of Sri Sabha Pati Mishra resident of A-911/8, Sector-8, Indira Nagar, Lucknow | | |
| In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book from in two sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 10.08.2022 at 10.30 A.M., failing which the applicant shall be heard and decided in your absence. | | |
| | | Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow |

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|---|------------------|
| Form No. 5 | |
| DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW (Area of Jurisdiction part of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand) | |
| 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow | |
| G.A. No. 411 of 2020 | Date: 17.02.2022 |
| Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication | |
| (Summons to defendants through publication Under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993). | |
| Unit Bank of India (Corporation Bank) | |
| M/s Abdi Enterprises (Unit Golden Cold Storage) | |
|Defendants and others | |
| To, | |
| 5. Dr. Mariyam Fatima, W/O Dr. Shifaat Hussain, R/o:- A-1, ZA Complex, Napier Colony-II, Thakur Ganj, Lucknow-226003. Also At- H.No.-24, Alia Colony, Peer Bhukhara Chowk, Lucknow | |
|DEFENDANT | |
| In the above noted Original application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly Authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons with in 30 days from the date of service of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 13.05.2022 at 10.30 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. | |
| Given under my Hand and Seal at Lucknow on this 14 Day of Feb. 2022. | |
| Registrar, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow. | |

DM directs officials to visit cow shelters

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Neha Sharma said sanction of bills and financial audit of cow shelters will be carried out by a three-member committee set under Chief Development Officer (CDO) Dr Mahendra Kumar. She also directed the committee to table the detailed financial audit report in one weeks time. She also directed the officials to visit the cow shelters regularly.

She said as per the directives of the Uttar Pradesh Government strict action will be taken against the officials and employees if there was any report of neglect of cattle in cattle shelters. She directed to register an FIR against secretary of Gram Sarsaul, Maharajpur, Puneet Mishra so that legal

action can be taken against him. Similarly she found massive irregularities in cow shelters in Deepapur and issued strict warning to the secretary.

When the team visited Dipapur and Maharajpur cow shelters it was found that out of the eight caretakers only one was present. The team found massive irregularities in the cow shelters. The team found dry hay only in the cow shelters but there was no wheat bran and green fodder seen on the premises.

The team questioned that when wheat bran and green fodder was not found how come the bills had been forwarded for sanction. Similarly in the third cow shelter there was total absence of green fodder and the bills for green fodder had been raised.

The team found massive irregularities and apathy of the caretakers. DM directed that ACM IV, Chief Treasury Officer, Deputy Director Agriculture to scan the bills and ensure that transparently a report was put up in a weeks time. Green fodder as per norms was must for all milk cattle in cow shelters but massive bungling was being carried out in its purchase and of wheat bran.

Green fodder was an economic source of nutrients for the dairy animals and was highly palatable and digestible as micro-organisms helped in improving digestibility of crop residues under mixed feeding system. Besides it also helped in maintaining good health and improving breeding efficiency of animals.

Divisional Commissioner visits adopted school

PNS ■ KANPUR

Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar on Friday visited one of the adopted schools of Composite Kanya Vidyalaya in Kanpur Nagar. He said the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had recommended the implementation of the ambitious scheme 'Kayakalp' under which the basic facilities and amenities in the government schools were ensured, including the quality of education so that more and more students joined the schools in urban and rural areas. He was accompanied by the Kanpur CDO, Municipal Commissioner and BSA and a few more.



Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, visits an adopted school in rural Kanpur brought under 'Kayakalp' programme on Friday, Pioneer

Divisional Commissioner had adopted seven government schools, two in Kanpur Dehat and one each in Etawah, Auraiya, Farukhabad, Kannauj, Kanpur Dehat and the visit was aimed at ensuring an all round improvement of the schools, especially infra-

structure and quality education to be taught in the schools. The adopted schools were Kanpur Nagar: Composite Kanya Vidyalaya, Purana Kanpur, Kanpur Outer: Primary School Dhamna, Sarsaul, Kanpur Dehat: Samvilyan Vidyalaya Siyodha in Sarvankhedha,

Etawah: Composite Vidyalaya, Kripalpur in Basarehar, Auraiya: Primary School Gauri Ganga Prasad in Bhagyanagar, Farukhabad: Junior High School Bahorikpur in Kamalganj and Kannauj: Primary School Fagua in Kannauj block.

These schools were a combined school from class I to VIII and there are total 175 students. He said as of now around 100 students come for the schools on regular basis. He said there were nine teachers, four regular and five Shiksha Mitras. He said one teacher was found absent. He said it was also found that two teachers signed the evening/closing time signature also in the morning time. The Commissioner raised an objection and directed the BSA to look into it.

Dr Shekhar said the school was originally established in the year 1922 and was completing around 100 years. He said the old building (now not in use) was 100 years old and the new structures and building were constructed in 1990s. He said now they also need repair and renovation. He said it was found that Mid Day Meal (MDM) was being served through an NGO on a daily basis. He said it was also

informed that there was an agreement between Government and Akshay Patra Organisation in the year 2019 for supply of MDM for all children in Government schools and said the total strength of the students was somewhere around 50,000. He said since the last three years, Akshay Patra was not able to start the supply of the MDM there was a need to construct a building for which KDA had given land. The Commissioner then asked DM to look into it and to get the issues resolved soon. Dr Shekhar then interacted with the students and teachers and took a feedback for what improvement could be carried out for facilities and quality education. He said many students were not in uniform and were not wearing shoes. He then directed the CDO to organise a parent-teacher meeting (PTM) in all schools and to see that all students attended school in proper uniform. He directed the officials to

Three shops in Chaubeypur gutted in fire

PNS ■ KANPUR

Three shops, including a sweetmeat shop on the footpath, were gutted in a fire that broke out in Chaubeypur police area late on Thursday night. After coming into contact with the fire a gas cylinder lying in a shop also exploded. Goods and property of over Rs 10 lakh were gutted in the fire. Resentment was there among the shopkeepers when the fire brigade reached the spot three hours after the incident.

Around 2 am three shops, including Krishna Hotel and a furniture shop situated on the footpath at Bandi Mata Tiraha suddenly caught fire. Sources informed that the fire first broke out in the hotel wherein, after the exposition of the gas cylinder, it spread up to other adjacent shops. The fire was brought under control after around two hours of efforts. Victim Arvind Yadav said the cause of incident could not be ascertained. However, the entire goods and property of the hotel

worth around Rs 7 lakh were reduced to ashes. SHO Krishna Mohan Rai said on receipt of the information, force was deputed on the spot and with the help of villagers the fire was brought under control.

Meanwhile, a mason sustained serious burns when, following the growing demand for electricity and rising mercury, a power transformer suddenly exploded on Bangali Colony Road under Sachindi police area on Friday afternoon. He was admitted to a nearby pri-

private hospital. Officials of Electricity department rushed to spot and set up a probe in the incident. The injured mason was identified as Uttam Bahadur, a resident of Bangali Colony, Sanjay Nagar. He had gone to Bhaunti Pratappur to collect ration.

On return as he reached the Bangali Colony Road, the power transformer installed on the electricity pole on the roadside suddenly exploded and the splinter of its boiling oil caused serious burns.



Three shops were gutted in fire in Chaubeypur. Pioneer.

One held in loot case

PNS (Prayagraj): With the arrest of a wanted robber, Pratapgah police claimed to have worked out the trader loot case of Sheetlaganj area and recovered Rs 2,500 from his possession. The arrested robber has been identified as Arman, a resident of Mahuar in Kotwali area of Pratapgah.

Police said that three robbers had on April 15 looted Rs 17,000 from a grocery trader store at gunpoint near Sheetlaganj Market area under

the limits of Kandhai police station of Pratapgah district. Following the incident, a case under section 392 of IPC was registered. On Friday, a team of Kandhai police nabbed one of the wanted robbers while he was planning to escape from the town.

The arrested robber confessed to the police that he got Rs 5,000 out of the looted Rs 17,000 and two of his accomplices had escaped with the rest of the money.

Purvanchal Vidut Vitaran Nigam Limited Vidut Nagar, P.O.—DLW Varanasi-221004 E-Tender Notice E-tender are invited for the following material. The tender will be accepted up to at 15.00 hrs. Please visit our website www.etender.up.nic.in for details/download and for any other corrections/amendments/ modifications/extensions till the date of submission of bids. Sl. No. 1. Tender specification on No. EAV-11/2022-23 Name of Material 400 KVA Copper Wound Distribution Transformer Qty. (Nos.) 94 Earnest Money (Rs.) 7,39,000.00 Tender Fee (Rs.) 5,000.00+GST @ 18% Last date & Time for online submission of tender document 23.05.2022 15.00 Hrs. Date & Time for opening of tender part-I 24.05.2022 15.00 Hrs. Superintending Engineer (MM-I) No. 1115 Dt. 21.4.22 'Save Electricity in the interest of Nation'

मध्योच्च विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड ई निविदा सूचना अयोध्यासहरी द्वारा विभिन्न कार्यों हेतु कार्य में अनुभवी व दक्ष विद्युत टेक्नीशियन से निम्नांकित ई-निविदाये (क्रमांक, निविदा संख्या, खण्ड का नाम, कार्य का नामकार्य की अनुमानित लागत, निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क एवं घरोहर राशि) आमंत्रित की जाती है। (1) 27/वि०वि०मं०बा०/2022-23, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-हैदरगढ़, बाराबंकी के अंतर्गत खण्ड/उप खण्ड/बिलिंग काउण्टरों पर स्थापित फ़िटर की कार्टिज रिफिलिंग। 2.00 लाख, 1180/-, 2000/- (2) 28/वि०वि०मं०बा०/2022-23, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-हैदरगढ़, बाराबंकी के अंतर्गत जमा योजना में कार्य किये जाने हेतु कार्यदायी संस्था का चयन कार्य। 10.00 लाख, 3540/-, 10000/- (3) 29/वि०वि०मं०बा०/2022-23, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-रामनगर, बाराबंकी के अंतर्गत 11 केवी स्वीचग्रीड की मरम्मत का कार्य। 6.00 लाख, 1180/-, 6000/- ई निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 04.05.2022 को सांय 5 बजे तक उग्र सरकार की वेबसाईट https://etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड किये जा सकते हैं। ई निविदा का प्रथम भाग दिनांक 05.05.2022 को प्रातः 11 बजे पूर्णतः से खोला जायेगा। ई निविदा का प्रथम भाग उपयुक्त पाये जाने की स्थिति में ई निविदा के द्वितीय भाग खोला जायेगा। निविदा प्रपत्र मध्योच्च विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड की वेबसाईट www.mvnl.in पर भी देखे जा सकते हैं। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तारण तथा शुद्धिपत्र से संबंधित सूचना यदि कोई होगी तो केवल वेबसाईट पर डाली जायेगी। अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेबसाईट को नियमित देखें। अधीक्षण अभियंता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, बाराबंकी पत्रांक 981 दिनांक 22.4.22 राधकृष्ण में बिजली बचाये।

Illegal construction demolished

PNS ■ KANPUR

Under the ongoing drive KDA's enforcement squad demolished illegal construction from around 10000 sq mtr land worth Rs 80 lakh in Satbari village (Zone 4) on Friday. These illegal constructions were carried out on the dry ponds and other land in Arazi Nos 303, 305 and 308. After the drive on the directive of KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Kumar, a TS survey was immediately conducted to regularise the vacant land and sell among general masses through e-auction. Besides, the squad demolished the illegal construction on plot No 412A in sector 5 in Swarn Jayanti Vihar and immediately handed over the possession to its original allottee on the spot. Likewise, in zone 2, Maqsoodabad village, illegal plotting done on Arazi Nos.544 and 544G and on around 7 bighas of land in other areas was also demolished. Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh has directed to continue the drive against illegal construction in future also. He said any laxity on this account on the part of KDA officials would attract penal action against them.

Meanwhile Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) on Thursday got land worth around Rs 12 crore vacated from unauthorised construction in Bingawa. The team reached the spot with one dozen bulldozers (backhoe loaders) and demolished the new construction. Officials



Illegal construction being demolished on Friday. Pioneer.

directed the residents to vacate the place by pasting a notice to this effect on their old houses. On around 10 bighas of land a real estate company had illegally allowed possession to 88 persons. Most of them had even got three or four storeyed buildings on their plot. KDA has now started initiating action against the alleged real estate company under the provisions of Land Mafia and Gangster Act. Over 10 bighas land of Bingawa village in Vidhnu falls under urban ceiling. Despite this a real estate company in connivance with the employees of the Revenue department illegally allowed possession by 88 persons. The matter came to light after a recent attack on the Revenue

department employees involved in sale-purchase of the official land which prompted the KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh to initiate action against the guilty.

Accordingly, a team led by the Officers-on-Special Duty Sat Shukla and Avneesh Singh reached Bingawa on Thursday and demolished the newly-constructed and under-construction structures on Arazi Nos. 318, 318, 319, 320, 321 and 322. Within four hours the team got the land worth around Rs 12 crore vacated from unauthorised construction. Prior to launching the drive, employees of the real estate company VACL attempted to protest the move but failed in their mission due to

presence of heavy police force. Police had to caneharge the protesting mob to pave way for the squad to bulldoze 45 under-construction structures and boundary wall. KDA officials said the real estate company VACL was engaged in handing over illegal possession to innocent people on KDA lands in some other areas also. Efforts were on to lodge FIR against VACL under the Goonda Act and Gangster Act by declaring the real estate company a land mafia, they said.

During the demolition drive, officials of engineering, enforcement, land bank departments, tehsildar (sadar) and nayab tehsildar (sadar) were present.

Academic complex inaugurated

PNS ■ KANPUR

The biggest academic complex constructed on 35000 sq mtrs area at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, was inaugurated on Thursday. The Chairman of IIT-K Board of Governors and former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Padma Bhushan Dr K Radhakrishnan inaugurated this complex.

IIT-K Director Prof Abhay Karandikar informed that the building had been

named Diamond Jubilee Academic Complex. It was the biggest academic building of the institute which will be used for various undergraduate, postgraduate laboratories, lecture halls, design department and sustainable energy engineering departments.

This will help the students a lot in carrying out their research work and experiments. Board Member Pradeep Goyal, IIT Deputy Director Prof S Ganesh, many founder members and

faculty were also present. The Director informed that under the many projects launched three years ago for development of the infrastructure of the Institute, the construction of this building was one of them. Other remaining projects were likely to be completed this year, he said and added that with the availability of better infrastructure, it will be easier to provide best facilities to students along with meeting the growing demand for teaching space.



Chairman, IIT-K Board of Governors Dr K Radhakrishnan inaugurating the Diamond Jubilee Academic Complex. Pioneer

World Earth Day: IIT professor advises students to conserve water

PNS ■ KANPUR

The combustion of hydrocarbon fuels released carbon dioxide as well as other greenhouse gases that contributed to atmospheric pollution and climate change. Unlike fossil fuel impurities that resulted in byproduct emissions, CO2 was an unavoidable result of hydrocarbon combustion. Different tech-

niques were used to extract hydrocarbons, depending on the type and location. Despite our gains, the world still had a long way to go in terms of halting environmental degradation and slowing climate change. Earth Day is an opportunity to emphasise these primary concerns that impact every individual. This was stated by Prof Javed N Malik, Department of Earth Sciences, IIT-Kanpur

while delivering a lecture on 'Earth Day' at Woodbine Gardenia School on Friday.

He said this year the focus of Earth Day was to directly attribute to human activity specifically to indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels such as coal, petrol, diesel and natural gas. He said today the climate crisis was at the heart of all environmental action and Earth Day had paved way for the people to

become aware of the severe problems that global warming involved.

He said the key aspects posed by climate change as the temperature of Earth's atmosphere rise were increasing sea levels, ecosystem collapse, greater aridity and drought, increased floods and wildfires, more frequent and stronger heatwaves and more frequent and severe weather conditions. Prof Malik

said it was clearly evident in the current times that issue of global warming was a genuine and growing threat to humanity and the environment. He suggested reduce, reuse and recycle. He also emphasised on educating the younger generation so that it can convince elders and future generations to understand the importance and value of our natural resources.

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1. Tender No: T-03/OMC-IV/EMD-I/BTPS/22-23 online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Routine maintenance and housekeeping of 400/220/132KV Switchyard area Obra". E-tender has been uploaded on 13.04.2022 on http://etender.up.nic.in Estimated cost of work is Rs. 17,80,836.00 only, Time period one year, E.M.D. cost Rs. 36,000.00 Tender Cost Rs. 1180.00 Last date of submission 13.05.2022 at 12.00 PM. SE, O&MC-IV
Total Quality of work, tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Concerned superintending engineer has right to cancel any or all e-Bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.
पत्रांक : 42/जो सड का०/निविदा दिनांक 22.04.2022
"Save Electricity in interest of Nation"

World Earth Day celebrated at National Sugar Institute

PNS ■ KANPUR

World Earth Day 2022 on the theme 'Invest in our Planet' was celebrated at NSI on Friday. The key speaker was Director Prof Narendra Mohan, who called upon for carrying out vigorous efforts and creating more awareness about the dire need to protect our environment.

He said on this special day one should emphasise on increasing environmental problems, including overpopulation, loss of biodiversity, depleting ozone layer which all resulted in rising pollution.

Prof Mohan said the day was important in the context of the Indian sugar industry also which was the second largest agro-based industry of the country. He said the indus-

try can help in reducing carbon and green house gas emissions by providing bio-energy in the form of electricity, ethanol and compressed biogas.

Anoop Kanaujia said distilleries were also working extensively on capturing carbon di-oxide from fermenters to use it as dry ice rather than releasing it to atmosphere. He said while ensuring zero liquid discharge from distilleries, for effective solid waste management, the ash from distillery incineration boilers was being converted and used as potash rich fertiliser. He said NSI had also taken up the task of replacing the existing process of sugar production with a more environment friendly process which would also lead to superior quality sugar. A massive tree

plantation drive was carried out on the institute premises.

DELEGATION WELCOMED: Director, National Sugar Institute (NSI), Prof Narendra Mohan, Director, welcoming the delegation comprising Karnataka State officials, governing council members and scientists of S Nijlingappa Sugar Institute, Belagavi, Karnataka on Friday assured delegates for all possible help from the institute in developing the sugar industry in Karnataka and the institute as well.

He said the B/Tech (Sugar Science and Technology) had also been added as one of entry qualification for carrying out post graduation in Sugar Technology from National Sugar Institute, Kanpur, and volun-

teered to further explore possibilities for conducting short term training programmes for technical personnel from Karnataka sugar factories in the times to come. The delegation later visited various laboratories, experimental sugar factory, farm and other facilities to observe the ongoing activities. The delegates expressed their keen interest to know more facilities developed for providing hands on training to the students and observed working of automatic flow and temperature control units in Instrumentation Engineering division. Ashok Garg, assistant professor of Sugar Technology and education incharge and other faculty members accompanied the delegates during visit to various divisions.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Le Pen /a France

The French presidential hopeful is quite a handful for a few European nations, it seems

Marine Le Pen says it is Macron or France. Europe tells the French it is Le Pen or Europe. The vote on Sunday to elect the next French President is now as much an internal matter of France as it is of the European Union. In the last presidential election in the US, there were rumours of Russian intervention. Even mere speculation about an external force interfering in the democratic process of another, thus violating American sovereignty, was enough to raise the hackles of the liberals. However, here is a case of some European nations — Germany, Spain and Portugal — openly asking the French people not to vote for Le Pen, the far-right rival of sitting President Emmanuel Macron. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Spanish Premier Pedro Sanchez and Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa penned a joint article in *Le Monde*, the French daily, describing Le Pen as one “who openly joins ranks with those who attack our liberty and democracy”. No tears are yet being spilled anywhere for such an open interference in France’s internal affairs. Those who believe in democracy are all honourable men and women. Why does the European Union hate Le Pen so much? It is her third bid to become President. She has a running crusade against Islamic fundamentalism. Her attitude towards European Union, however, raises the latter’s hackles. She insists that the sovereignty of France cannot coexist with the diktats of EU bureaucrats.



She does not walk away with all the credit for integrating the princely states at the cost of Nehru. Distinguished historian and columnist Patrick French in his book *Liberty or Death* has revealed what common sense applied to the limitations of the 1940s could have made possible. Maharaja Hari Singh was generally considered a progressive ruler, though the scope of his political reforms was limited. Patrick French writes that during the weeks leading up to Independence, India’s last Viceroy Mountbatten had tried to persuade the Maharaja to decide about Kashmir’s future, which the latter refused to discuss seriously. Ostensibly, the Maharaja’s deferment of a decision on what to do after the British had left stemmed from his firm conviction — voiced to his son yuvraj Karan Singh as late as July 1947 — that the British were never really going to leave India.

Events, however, overtook the Maharaja and his State. Come August 15, 1947, and Hari Singh faced a hostile dispensation. The leader of the pro-Congress All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Sheikh Abdullah, had close links with Nehru, whose hostility towards Hari Singh was no secret. A revolt had begun in the southwest of the State in Poonch, which had always historically been antagonistic towards the Maharaja’s rule. Muslim farm workers there rose against their Dogra landlords, killing some local Hindus and driving others from their homes. This was the beginning of post-Independence

PICTALK



Citizens and students hold placards during a rally to mark the World Earth Day, in Bengaluru

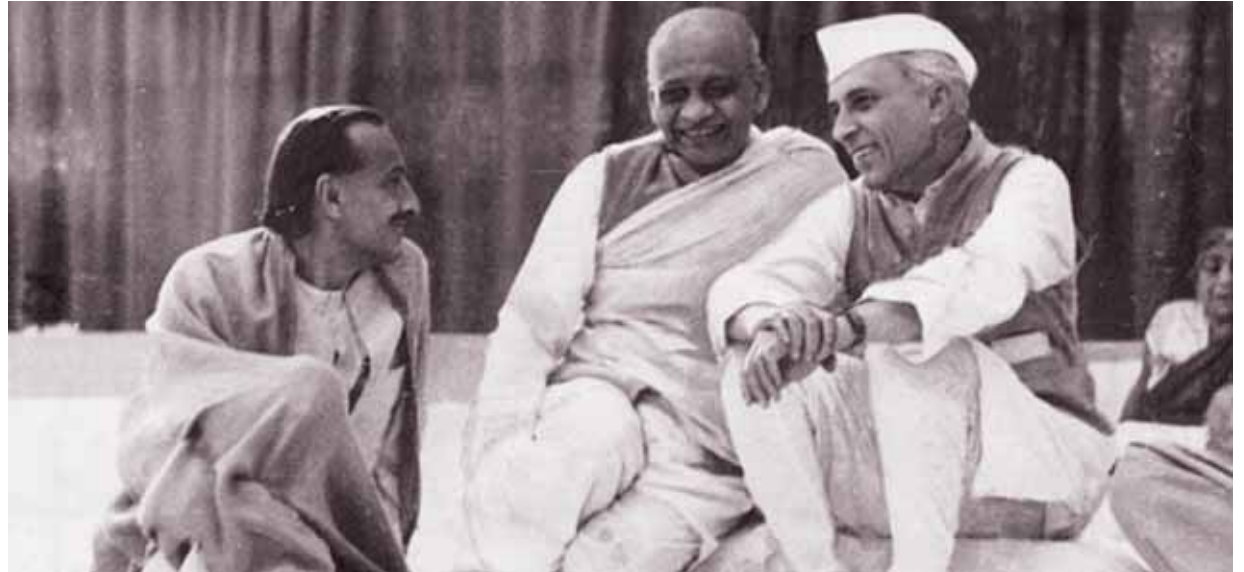
Sardar Patel’s role in saving Kashmir



PRAFULL GORADIA

After the beginning of post-Independence anti-Hindu violence in J&K, Patel was the only solid politician who helped conjoin it to India

anti-Hindu violence in J&K. Maharaja Hari Singh slowly began to incline towards India. He realised that his State would be destroyed if he joined Pakistan. By mid-October 1947, Kashmir had been thrown into a serious crisis. The uprising in Poonch was joined by Pakistani armed brigands, with official encouragement from the Pakistani regime. However, it now comes to light that India wasn’t oblivious of the looming threat. For several weeks, Delhi had been secretly supplying weapons and ammunition to the State’s armed forces and making preparations for a military advance. The tipping point came with the armed invasion of several thousand Pathan tribesmen. On October 22, accompanied by a few hundred Poonchis, a ragtag army began to proceed towards Srinagar. The Pathan raiders were acting on Pakistan’s direct orders, though Pakistan denied any complicity in it. On reaching Baramulla, Uri, Pattan and Muzaffarabad, the raiders murdered, raped and looted anybody and anything they could lay their hands on. British nuns of Franciscan convent at Baramulla too were not spared.



While Hari Singh’s royal dynasty despaired of having lost Kashmir, India would not. The Government of newly independent India set about recovering the territory. Mountbatten reportedly was convinced of the righteousness of India’s case. He told Patel that he had heard from a British officer, who had heard from another British officer, that the invading Pathans were “very definitely organised”. A fortnight later, Mountbatten wrote to King George VI: “It was unquestionable that, if Srinagar was to be saved from pillage by invading tribesmen, and if the couple of hundred British residents in Kashmir were not to be massacred, Indian troops would have to do the job... I therefore made it my business to override all the difficulties which the Commanders-in-Chief, in the course of their duty, raised to the proposal.” Thus, the indispensability of India’s role in saving Kashmir was acknowledged at the outset.

But a military thrust into a territory which in those days was accessible only with difficulty required weeks, and possibly months of planning. It was only some time later that Viceroy Mountbatten realised the extent of preparations that must have been made by India, the credit for which goes to Patel. It appears



PATEL SAID, ‘JAWAHARLAL, DO YOU WANT KASHMIR, OR DO YOU WANT TO GIVE IT AWAY?’ NEHRU SAID, ‘OF COURSE, I WANT KASHMIR’... AND BEFORE HE COULD SAY ANYTHING, SARDAR PATEL TURNED TO ME AND SAID, ‘YOU HAVE GOT YOUR ORDERS’

Patel had kept Nehru in the dark about procedural details. An Indian Army officer present at a meeting of the Defence Committee in New Delhi later that day said Nehru still had doubts about intervention and “talked about the United Nations, Russia, Africa, Godalmighty, everybody, until Sardar Patel lost his temper. He said, ‘Jawaharlal, do you want Kashmir, or do you want to give it away?’ Nehru said, ‘Of course, I want Kashmir’... and before he could say anything, Sardar Patel turned to me and said, ‘You have got your orders.’”

The Indian Army drove out the Pakistani Pathan raiders, chasing them all the way to Mirpur. India was militarily well-positioned to recapture the entire State but Nehru, concerned more about his image internationally, erred grievously in taking the matter to the UN, which imposed a stalemate that plagued India for seven decades. With Article 370 having been laid to rest by the Modi administration, it is time to recognise Patel’s role in saving Kashmir for India.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE PERILS OF DELIVERING SOPS

Sir — Delivering a lecture at the Delhi School of Economics recently, the 15th Finance Commission chairman NK Singh has made certain startling revelations regarding the perils of the freebie culture, which has recently gained traction in order to woo voters. Disregarding fiscal prudence by doling out freebies can put a severe dent on the State exchequer. Moreover, in the long run, future generations will have to bear the debt burden without any long-term gains of such lavish spending. For instance, Punjab is already reeling under the impact of debt amounting to around ₹3 lakh crore. Several States like Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have a high debt-to-GSDP ratio that requires fiscal prudence.

The constitutional framework also makes no provision regarding such doles. So it is not just the economics and politics of freebies that are deeply flawed but these affect virtually all sectors as it will have a direct bearing on the future prospects of our nation. The money should be spent on infrastructural and other social infrastructures. In this context, one can learn a lesson or two from the Sri Lankan crisis. The Centre and State Governments must devise laws discouraging politicians from spending public money lavishly.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

THE UK’S BID TO CONVINCING INDIA

Sir — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s statement that any peace talks with Russia over Ukraine will fail as Russian President Vladimir Putin is a crocodile and dealing with him was like “a crocodile when it’s got your leg in its jaws” and the western countries continue arming Ukraine to attack Russia in the ongoing war. The UK PM will encourage his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to end its neutrality over the war in Ukraine and end its longstanding ties with Russia, which is impossible for India.

Boris Johnson said the world leaders, including US President Joe Biden, agreed

The rising trend of COVID-19



Even before people could heave a sigh of relief after COVID restrictions were eased, the rising trend of cases has been creating panic. When the cases were peaking, Maharashtra accounted for a large number of COVID cases and deaths. The State had reportedly seen 60,000 cases a day earlier. The Maharashtra Health Minister says that wearing face masks is not mandatory but he cautions senior citizens and those with comorbidities to cover their face when they venture outside as a precautionary measure. The

Centre has advised Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra and Mizoram to maintain a strict watch and take pre-emptive action.

In 2020 and 2021, the month of March witnessed high positivity rates and the Corona curve was flattening by September. COVID-19, which surfaced for the first time in India on March 24, 2020, could be brought under control only after long and dreary months. There has not been a single COVID-free day since its outbreak. The vaccination coverage must be ramped up to the target of 100 per cent vaccination has to be achieved among schoolgoing children, starting from LKG. The Prime Minister has already asked people not to lower their guard against the pandemic. Karnataka Health and Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar has warned people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour. The same is true in respect of the nation as a whole.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

to continue to supply Ukraine with weapons, including artillery against Russia, which has intensified attacks on Ukraine, which is likely to lead to the third world war. Ukraine and Russia have not held face-to-face peace talks since March 29 and the atmosphere has soured over Ukrainian allegations that Russian troops carried out atrocities in the town of Bucha near Kyiv. India, which is the world’s biggest buyer of Russian weapons and imports its oil, abstained in a United Nations vote condemning the invasion and has not imposed sanctions on Moscow and does not have the guts to go against Russia.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WIMBLEDON’S DOUBLE FAULT?

Sir — Wimbledon, the tennis’ most prestigious Major, strictly plays by its own rules. It has a dress code all of its own and no play in the middle of Sunday. Sometimes Wimbledon’s self-rule works to its benefit, like it cancelled the 2020 edition as it had the good sense to purchase the anti-pandemic insurance. But by bar-

ring Russian and Belarusian players from taking part in this year’s edition of the tournament because of the ongoing war in Ukraine, Wimbledon appears to have committed a huge unforced error. Most directly, the ban will impact some top-ranked players from these two countries, like Daniil Medvedev, Andrey Rublev, Aryna Sabalenka and Victoria Azarenka. On current rankings, more than 20 players from both the countries (far more in doubles and juniors) cannot take part. On the second weekend in July, Wimbledon will crown its winners of the year 2022. But before that, the story of this event is already being foretold. The most foundational requirement for tennis is an even playing surface, literally. And the prestigious Wimbledon event has just undone that. And, instead, it has created a slippery slope for itself, its name and the prestigious event itself.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

It’ll be good if his (Prashant Kishor’s) experience is used in uniting the Opposition.



Rajasthan CM — Ashok Gehlot



You (Speaker) said to party leaders that ask him (Prez) to step down, he is ready for it.

Sri Lanka Oppn leader — Sajith Premadasa



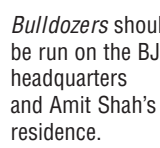
I would like to apologise. With all humility, I step back (from endorsing a paan masala brand).

Actor — Akshay Kumar



Virat Kohli is overcooked. If anyone needs a break, it’s him.

India ex-coach — Ravi Shastri



Bulldozers should be run on the BJP headquarters and Amit Shah’s residence.

AAP leader — Atishi

PK!

Like it or hate it, the Opposition will gain strength if Congress gets the role of an axle

Each day, we hear about markets opening lower. Or, after flimsily pushed up so-called gains, these tanking in the late afternoon session. There could be reasons that the Government experts attribute it to more convincingly: The Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Wholesale Price Index, inflation, the latest strain of COVID-19 or the recent violent conflagration in several Indian States on the occasions of Ram Navami and Hunuman Janmotsav, leading up to the razing of structures in Jahangirpuri. But ultimately, it all boils down to one thing: The State seems to be failing its citizens. Politicians are one thing: Rahul Gandhi, Mayawati, Asaduddin Owaisi, Akhilesh Yadav, KCR, Stalin and the ever-fiercely Mamata Banerjee targeting the Centre for what they collectively call the BJP-led NDA Government’s ‘failure’ in handling the situation. It looks like the case of Nero merrily playing the flute, but we won’t say anything about Rome! The interesting thing is that the Opposition, though seemingly united in its travails, its joint understanding of personal vendetta and grief,

and generally repeated drubbing at the hustings, is not actually standing united. Didi says the Congress has had its chance, so it’s better for all the satraps to stand up together rather than waiting for the ‘queen bee’ to issue orders on how things should or should not be done. Then stands up Sharad Pawar and, maybe rightly, points out that there’s no future for the case of an Opposition coalition in India unless the Congress is part of it. This is where enters master strategist Prashant Kishor, who dons the old hats of several political parties and is on record to have delivered most of his promises. Buoyed by his confidence, which is like the much-needed ‘external’ COVID booster shot rather than the ‘self-built immunity’ that any body needs to overcome setbacks, the Congress seems to be happily considering inviting him into the cosy fold. However, as they say, there’s many a slip t’wixt the ‘chup’ and the ‘yip’! Suddenly, the Congress — rather than getting more cohesive on account of a ‘thinking’ force joining them together — is now talking strange. Dear old hand Digvijaya Singh has been reported as saying that “there are differences” over PK’s entry into the Congress. And then there’s the entire G-23 list; there’s no way of knowing which way a camel will turn!





FIRST COLUMN

EARTH DAY 2022: LET'S INVEST IN THE PLANET

Governments and environmental bodies must accelerate solutions to protect planet earth



KOTA SRIRAJ

This year the Earth Day theme is "Invest in Planet" and focuses on the effects of climate change, its adverse impacts on the planet and the real time efforts being done to mitigate the same. The theme encourages governments and environmental bodies the world over to accelerate solutions to protect planet earth against immediate environmental threats. The three pillars of this year's theme are Act (Boldly), Innovate (Broadly) and Implement (Equitably). These are very relevant for the world's environmental conditions which urgently require solutions for pressing problems. But India probably needs the materialisation of these pillars even more as after the COP26 at Glasgow it has become apparent that the government alone cannot solve the environmental crisis arising out of climate change and needs



support from grassroots level. This assistance from the population, especially from all walks of life can help create the much-needed green economy and help counteract the inaction and even obstruction being experienced in protecting the environment. In almost every sector, India is trying to set benchmarks for environmental protection and ecological conservation, however given the pace of climate change the same is neither sustainable nor sufficient. Given this the government must utilise Earth Day event to recruit the valuable support of activists, artists, innovators, inventors, investors and scientists and encourage them to develop green alternatives and solutions and help restore the environment and enable a smooth transition to green economy. Educators especially can be made to play a sterling role in heralding the green economy. India with its robust education system and academic research capabilities can help create a new generation of climate leaders with specific skills to guide the nation in its evolution from conventional economy to a green economy.

Earth Day can also be a call to action for the general population to increase their awareness level regarding the environment and impacts of climate change. The government must positively incentivise usage of Eco-conscious brands and products instead of penalising the general public for using non-biodegradable material. Sometimes such a change in strategy can help provide better results than before. These initiatives can truly help extracting the planet from an environmental "code red" condition. On the eve of Earth Day, India must recognise and appreciate the compelling success stories from the corporate world in the field of environmental conservation as they set an inspiring example for all to follow. Many tech companies for instance are leagues ahead of government efforts in implementing solutions to lower their respective carbon footprints. Infosys for example turned carbon neutral 30 years ahead of the Paris Agreement's 2050 deadline. Similarly, Intel India's buildings across India are LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified that's are equipped with sensors to track and optimise temperature, lighting, energy consumption in relation to occupancy levels. This enhances energy conservation and reduces carbon footprint. Capgemini too has decided to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025 and has installed a 9.6 MW captive solar power plant across its India campuses to increase the usage of green power. With endless examples such as these it is clear that the fight against climate change is being spiritedly fought by the IT companies in India setting an inspiring example for others to follow. The above examples show that positive will is followed by positive change. The government has no dearth of funds nor expertise for saving the environment and fighting climate change. What is lacking is a strong will that supersedes politics and red tape. When the nation is able to prioritise environmental goals over petty politics and bureaucracy India will celebrate Earth Day not annually but every single day.

(The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Ayushman Bharat for universal health care



PREETI SUDAN

Wellness is now a key aspect of service delivery while its range is expanded to include non-communicable diseases, among other things

In 2017, the Government of India announced the National Health Policy that envisioned the provision of comprehensive health care with integration of preventive and curative services at all administrative levels, development of primary health care in stages and creating a system of medical education to include preventive and social medicine.

Within a year, in 2018, we saw the operational manifestation of the policy with the announcement of Ayushman Bharat (AB) with its two pillars of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs).

Under PMJAY, the government becomes a payer of hospital expenses upto Rs 5 lakh per family for about 50 crore citizens. The AB-HWCs were set up to deliver universal comprehensive primary health care and have multiple components that are rooted in two fundamental premises: One, introduce wellness as a key aspect of service delivery and to ensure that the spectrum of preventive, promotive, rehabilitative and palliative care received as much attention as curative care. Two, expand the range of services to include non-communicable diseases, mental health, ENT, ophthalmology, oral health, geriatric and palliative care and trauma care apart from the ongoing focus on maternal, newborn child care and identified communicable diseases.

It is with these two fundamental premises as the focus that on 14th April 2018, India embarked upon the journey of comprehensive, preventive and promotive health care with Hon'ble Prime Minister inaugurating the first Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWC) in remote Jangla of Bijapur district in Chattisgarh. It is with pride that we note that the country has not only reached the set target of 1.1 lakh AB-HWCs by March 31, 2022 but also over-achieved to have 1,17,440 AB-HWCs already operational.

The transformation of SHCs, PHCs and UPHCs to AB-HWCs is a 9-point reform spanning all aspects of the healthcare systems such as expanded package of services, human resources with the introduction of a new cadre of mid-level health care providers viz. Community Health Officers, financing, access to an expanded range of essential medicines and diagnostics, creating IT systems to facilitate continuum of care and paradigm shift in services delivery, community participation, ownership and governance.

Why are AB-HWCs important and different from the present sub centres and primary health care centres? The four pillars of Primary Health Care, including community participation, appropriate technology, equitable distribution and inter-sectoral coordination are being anchored in and around AB-HWCs to allow every citizen of India access to quality healthcare, free of cost near to their homes. AB-HWCs is a major transformation of primary health care from disease-centric to a whole-of-



TODAY, AFTER FOUR FRUITFUL YEARS, WITH THE METICULOUS EFFORT PUT TOGETHER BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND THE COMMUNITY, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TACKLE THE ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES IN IMPROVING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

(The writer is former Union Health Secretary, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.)



society approach.

The thrust of primary health care till recently has been on maternal & child healthcare needs. The HWCs that are operational are now providing services not only for pregnant women, mothers, newborns and children, but also for communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health, geriatric and palliative care and for acute simple illnesses. Screening for primary prevention of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and common cancers, also show an encouraging trend. With more than 85.87 crore footfalls in the HWCs at the end of March 2022, 17.95 crore have been screened for hypertension, 14.87 for diabetes and 17.75 crores for three cancers: oral, breast and cervical cancer. The increase in number of women accessing the HWCs for non-communicable disease services is particularly heartening as hitherto these services were not easily accessible to them.

Availability of free essential drugs especially for chronic diseases in the HWCs not only reduces patients' sufferings but also has the potential to decrease out of pocket expenditure and preventing secondary complications, thus ensuring wellness and healthy lives for many.

Yoga and wellness are an integral part of India's culture, so, integrating it as a part of healthcare service delivery framework has been long overdue. In September 2019, at the first ever high-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage in the United Nations, the Prime Minister called preventive health care as the first pillar. Through HWCs, Government of India has mainstreamed India's rich tradition of the indigenous health system and Yoga into the healthcare delivery system. Yoga and wellness sessions are

being organized at AB-HWCs and as of April 14, 2022, a total of 1.05 crore wellness sessions have been organised at AB-HWCs across the country. Health and Wellness Centres are also becoming the locus for other physical activity, (such as regular yoga sessions, organizing cyclathons and marathons) meditation, laughter clubs, talks on Eat Right campaign and Fit India movement, cessation of Tobacco and drugs and a place for exchange of best practices amongst the community. Through an Annual Health Calendar, planned activities at these centres for a range of lifestyle modifications are resulting in increased public awareness and preventive measures for fitness. In addition, schoolteachers are being trained as Ayushman Ambassadors or Health and Wellness Ambassadors to enable integration of lifestyle changes in the formative years, which has the potential of preventing or delaying the onset of chronic diseases in adulthood.

The sustenance and impact of AB-HWCs largely hinges on the community ownership of the facilities and people's trust in the services. Jan Arogya Samitis (JAS) at AB-HWCs are being established to the citizens. Each JAS has nearly 20 members with the local government elected representative being its chair. This provides the citizens with an opportunity to reap benefits of the public health resources that they rightfully own. These JAS should work in tandem with community-based platforms like Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSNCs) in rural and Mahila Arogya Samitis (MAS) in urban

areas, to enhance action on social and environmental determinants of health and enable village health planning at the local level. Social Audit through self-help groups will enhance both local accountability of the centres and sense of ownership of the community. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Jal Jeevan Mission are the interventions that are bound to contribute positively to India's journey to wellness. The enhancement of the untied fund to Rs.50,000 for the Sub-Health Centre Health and Wellness Centre is a welcome move in this direction.

The celebrations of the 4th anniversary of AB-HWCs have begun on April 16, 2022. Nationwide felicitations are being conducted under the theme "eSanjeevani HWC- Health and Wellness through teleconsultation". The theme echoes the vision laid down in the early years of Ayushman Bharat Scheme - reaching the unreached by leveraging technology. It is amazing to know that more than 2.47 crore teleconsultations have been conducted across 94,049 AB-HWCs as on 12th April 2022 and are increasing by the hour.

Today, after four fruitful years, with the meticulous effort put together by the Government, the healthcare workers and the community, we have been able to tackle the anticipated challenges in improving primary health care. Personally, for me, it is fulfilling to see this vision now in mission mode. Even though, the journey has been long, the 4th anniversary of AB-HWCs is an opportunity to honour India's march towards Universal Health Coverage acknowledging and celebrating the health warriors who have been working relentlessly to "reach out to the unreached", committing to a healthier and happier India.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

IT'S DEMOLITION OF INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES. THE GOVT MUST SWITCH OFF BULLDOZERS OF HATE AND SWITCH ON POWER PLANTS. — CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



HE IS DOING NO GOOD TO THE COUNTRY BY SOWING THE SEEDS OF HATRED. HE'S MALIGNING THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE. — UNION MINISTER ANURAG THAKUR

Be SMART in your financial goals

Prioritise and plan for a comfortable future

Every year April brings new beginnings for most Indians through festivals like Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Vishu and many more. A new year is the harbinger of new hopes and new goals, both personal and financial. Setting goals helps you to develop a way to measure your progress and to be on the right track; and having a financial goal will push you to have a different view about your money. But why should you have a financial goal?



HIMA BINDU KOTA

plined and accountable, provide motivation and commitment to achieve your goals and improve the chances of success. When is a financial goal more achievable? You are more likely to achieve your financial goals when they are SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timebound. Let us look at a SMART financial goal.

Having SMART financial goals helps you set target and make an action plan. In the above example, you will have to save ₹10,000 per month for 5 months to create a family emergency medical fund to meet any untoward expenses. From this perspective, what can be some of the financial goals that you can aim for in 2022?

Pay off your expensive debt. Chaos in the world doesn't

| SMART Goal Components | What are they achieving ? | Illustration |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| S (Specific) | Why are you saving ? | To meet family emergency medical expenses |
| M (Measurable) | How much are you planning to save ? | ₹50,000. |
| A (Attainable) | Can you achieve your goal? | Yes |
| R (Relevant) | How critical is the goal? | Very important |
| T (Timebound) | By what time will the goal be met? | In 5 months |

seem to stop any time soon. As we were limping back to normalcy from Covid pandemic, uncertainties and inflation arisen out of Russia-Ukraine war are playing havoc. So, now is a good time to have a financial goal to completely be free from expen-

sive debt. Create a SMART goal to be absolutely debt-free in a specific period of time.

Research and be ready to invest. Now is also a good time to research about great companies to invest in. Always remember one of the golden rules of



investing - invest in businesses, not stocks. Take this opportunity to identify fundamentally strong companies and focus on long term. Now wait for the right time to buy the shares of these companies, when they are selling at discount at the stock market. Choppy financial markets in 2022 may provide great deals and stocks at discount for investors. Saving and being ready with funds to invest wisely can be one of the financial goals of 2022.

Plan your retirement. Retirement planning is one of the most essential financial goals. It is important to have a comfortable and secure retirement without compromising on the quality of life. A thorough and SMART planning can help build the financial cushion to achieve your retirement goals. A clear idea about your time horizon, expected expenses and accepted level of risk tolerance is the starting point.

Create an emergency fund. In these uncertain times, it is imperative that you create an emergency to the tune of three to six months of your earnings. An emergency fund is a fund that helps you tide over necessary expenses without taking the burden of unplanned loans and increasing the credit card bills. If your monthly earnings are Rs.

50,000, then the emergency fund can be somewhere between ₹1,50,000 - ₹3,00,000. The extent of your emergency fund is also dependent on the type of family you have. If you are a single-earning member or have school going kids and dependent parents, the savings in an emergency fund should be higher. You can create an emergency fund in a number of ways - cash, savings account, fixed deposits with a shorter maturity, liquid mutual funds or a combination of all.

Goals, both personal and financial, have a tendency to be abandoned before accomplishment. Therefore, it is crucial to develop SMART financial goals and take small positive steps towards achieving your financial goals and improving your overall financial health.

(The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)

PK likely to join Cong as 'election strategist'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prashant Kishor, in all likelihood, will join the Congress to play a full-time national level role of "election strategist" soon after former party chief Rahul Gandhi returns next week from abroad.

The group of senior Congress leaders has given its recommendations to party president Sonia Gandhi and left it to her to take a call on them and initiate organisational changes. However, they feel Kishor will have to completely dissociate from all other political parties and remain a dedicated Congress person or professional.

The fourth round of meeting scheduled between Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Kishor could not be held on Friday. Party insiders said Rahul's decision is awaited, especially against the backdrop that Kishor has been in regular

touch with the Gandhis including Priyanka. Sources said the panel of eight leaders formed by the Congress president has discussed at length Kishor's strategy plan and deliberated with several senior leaders while giving their suggestions to Sonia and taking it forward in order to revive the grand old party. Some leaders of the party would meet again on Monday for holding further deliberations on the party's revival and strategy plan.

Senior party leader Digvijay Singh along with Priyanka, Ambika Soni, K C Venugopal, Mukul Wasnik, Jai Ram Ramesh, P Chidambaram and Randeep Surjewala are among those in the panel formed by Sonia, who sat for several hours and held many rounds of deliberations during this week. They have also met many senior Congress leaders and Kishor during these deliberations. Kishor and his organization

IPAC had earlier worked with former Punjab Chief Minister and ex-Congressman Capt Amarinder Singh, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSR Congress, DMK and TRS helping them victories in their states. One of the senior Congress leaders and a confidant of the Gandhis, Digvijaya Singh said some leaders might have reservations about Kishor's past association with regional outfits and his political journey has been from one party to the other and in fact had also been a member of Nitish Kumar's party JDU.

"But now that he has come forward with some concrete suggestions and the presentation that he has shared with the Congress seems to be exciting when we think to take on the night of BJP and Modi (Prime Minister Narendra Modi)," Digvijay said.

SC censures Delhi Police for hate speech case affidavit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed its displeasure over a Delhi Police affidavit which had said that "no hate speech was made" during an event held here last year and directed it to file a "better affidavit." Delhi Police had told the apex court that "no specific words against any community were uttered" at an event organised here by the 'Hindu Yuva Vahini' on December 19 last year.

"The affidavit has been filed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police. We hope he has understood the nuances. Has he merely reproduced the inquiry report or applied mind? Is it your stand as well or the reproduction of inquiry report of sub-inspector level officer?", a bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Abhay S OKa asked.

The bench questioned can such a stand be taken on an affidavit before the court and wanted to know who verified the affidavit and if Delhi Police was accepting it as a correct



finding. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) K M Nataraj, appearing for the Delhi Police, said they will have a "re-look" of the matter and file a fresh affidavit.

"The ASG seeks time to get instructions from authorities to file a better affidavit... Two weeks time prayed for. List this matter on May 9. Better affidavit be filed on or before May 4," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a petition filed by journalist Qurban Ali and former Patna HC judge and senior advocate Anjana Prakash, who has also sought a direction for an "independent, credible and impartial investigation" by an SIT into incidents of hate speeches against the Muslim community. As the hearing commenced, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners,

drew the attention of the bench towards extracts of the speech and the enquiry report of the Sub Inspector (PS Okhla Industrial Area). "The counter affidavit of the Delhi Police says an inquiry has been conducted and that the persons had gathered to 'save ethics of their community'..."

"In the speech in question, they say, 'We are ready to kill! And the Delhi Police say it is to 'save the ethics of the community? Your Lordships may fix it for hearing and decide what constitutionally ethics are...'" Sibal said. The bench then asked the law officer if any senior officer has verified the affidavit. "Some superior officer has seen it? Who has verified it? Has there been an application of mind as to if this stand can be taken on affidavit before the court? This affidavit is filed by the deputy commissioner of police? He accepts this position? Is this his understanding or only a reproduction of IO's report? We want to understand from you the affidavit filed before this court," the bench said.

SC refuses bail to Nawab Malik in money laundering case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to grant bail to Maharashtra Cabinet Minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik facing money laundering charges, saying the probe is at a nascent stage.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said it will not interfere with the Bombay High Court order of March 15 but Malik can avail the remedy available under the law before the trial court.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Malik, said he was arrested in 2022 for something that happened in 1999. He said there is no case under the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) made out as there is no predicate offence. The bench said the investigation is at a very nascent stage and that it will not interfere with the High Court order. On March 15, the Bombay High Court had rejected Malik's interim application seeking immediate release in a case of money laundering, saying just because the special PMLA court's order remanding him

in custody is not in his favour; it does not make that order illegal or wrong. The Enforcement Directorate had arrested Malik in February under provisions of the PMLA after which he had filed a habeas corpus plea in the high court, claiming his arrest by the ED and the consequent remands were illegal.

The HC had said Malik's counsel had argued before the PMLA court and vehemently opposed the ED's request for the Minister's custody. Yet, the Special Court had remanded him to ED's custody and subsequently to judicial custody based on valid legal grounds. The High Court had said that the Minister still had the option to apply for bail in the case before the special court.

Malik was arrested by the ED over a property deal allegedly linked to the aides of gangster Dawood Ibrahim. The central agency has accused Malik of being part of an alleged criminal conspiracy to usurp a property in Mumbai's Kurla area which currently has a market value of ₹300 crore and belongs rightfully to one Munira Plumber.

EC mulls electronic postal ballot facility for overseas voters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) is considering the introduction of an electronically transmitted postal ballot system (ETPBS) facility for overseas voters. Lamenting that the number of registered overseas voters is "abysmally low", Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra has told members of the Indian community in South Africa and Mauritius that the facility to extend postal ballot or ETPBS to overseas voters is being contemplated.

As of now, overseas Indians are free to cast their votes in constituencies they are registered in.

In a statement, the EC said that a delegation led by Chief

Election Commissioner of India, Sushil Chandra visited South Africa and Mauritius from April 9-19, 2022. CEC Chandra also interacted with members of the Indian community during his official visit to the two countries and urged them to register as overseas voters as the present numbers are "abysmally low".

In 2020, the EC had proposed to the government to extend the ETPBS facility to eligible overseas Indian voters as well.

In a letter to the legislative secretary in the law ministry on November 27, 2020, the commission had said that with the successful execution of ETPBS in case of service voters, it is now "confident" that the facil-

ity can also be extended to the overseas electors. The EC, the Union Law Ministry and the Ministry of External Affairs are trying to hammer out certain issues related to extending the facility to overseas Indian voters.

Overseas electors are allowed to register in their respective constituencies using form 6A that is available online. Their names are added at the end of the electoral list of their respective polling station. At present, non-resident Indians (NRIs) can cast their ballots only at their respective polling booths.

Sources said that a large portion of the registered voters belonged mostly to Kerala, Telangana and Andhra

Pradesh, while a smaller population of registered voters also came from Gujarat and Punjab.

According to official estimates, at least 60-65 percent of the 1.26 crore people residing overseas are likely to be eligible to vote in Indian elections. It is estimated that nearly 112000 overseas Indians are registered as voters.

During the visit to the two countries, a briefing cum interaction was organized with the NRI community at Cape Town on 10th April; Johannesburg on 12th April and at Port Louis on 18th April 2022. CEC Chandra shared the Indian experience of conducting elections with the members of the diaspora.

CBI files 2 cases in AIIMS Rishikesh tender award irregularities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered two separate cases against faculty members of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh and private companies for irregularities in the award of tender for procurement of Road Sweeping Machine and alleged corruption in setting up of a chemist shop on the campus of the institute.

The agency on Friday conducted searches at 24 different locations including at Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi.

The agency has named the then Additional Professor in Microbiology Department Balram Ji Omar, then Professor Anatomy Brijendra Singh, then Professor, Assistant Professor Anubha Agarwal, Administrative Officer Shashi Kant, Accounts Officer Deepak Joshi and Puneet Sharma, proprietor of Delhi-based Pro-Medic Devices in the first case involving procurement of the

road sweeping machine worth Rs 2.41 crore.

In the second case, the CBI has booked partners of Triveni Sewa Pharmacy Pankaj Sharma and Shubham Sharma, besides the company for the contract worth Rs 2 crore.

It was alleged that the officials violated government norms of tendering process, dishonestly screened out reputed bidders on bogus grounds and allowed insignificant firms who had misrepresented facts in their tender documents, to remain in the fray, the CBI said in a statement.

"It was also alleged that the accused deliberately ignored the existence of cartel formation in these tenders. The accused thereafter allegedly caused the disappearance of crucial evidence of the offence. An alleged loss of Rs.2.41 crore (approx) in the procurement of a road sweeping machine and Rs.2 crore (approx) in the award of tender for setting up of a chemist shop was caused to AIIMS," the CBI said in a statement.

HC Judge pulls up advocate for her charge of 'bias' against court

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious cognisance of the "reckless" allegations of "bias" made against a judge, Justice Anuja Prabhudesai of the Bombay High Court has pulled up Advocate Anjali Patil for her "unprofessional" and "unbecoming" conduct, by saying that the advocate as an officer of the court had to maintain dignity and decorum of the Court and that "there is no room for arrogance and there is no licence to intimidate the Court".

In a rare reprimand that came after Patil alleged that the court was not fair and was biased in its approach and threatened to lodge a complaint against the judge with the chief justice of high court, Justice Prabhudesai noted in her two-page order that the

advocate concerned "has grossly overstepped the limits of propriety when she made imputations of partiality and unfairness in open Court. The conduct was highly unprofessional and unbecoming of an advocate" "It has to be borne in mind that casting scurrilous aspersions not only has inevitable effect of undermining the confidence of the public in the judiciary but also has the tendency to interfere with the administration of justice," Justice Prabhudesai said in her written order passed on April 19.

Disapproving the manner in which Patil — who had sought urgent circulation of a bail application — conducted herself in an open court when the court asked whether there was any urgency as to take the matter out of turn, the Judge

noted that the advocate "went totally off the tangent and made allegations that this Court is giving priority to certain matters and to certain advocates and thus insinuated that the Court was not fair and was biased".

Placing on record "unprofessional" conduct of the advocate concerned, the Judge said: "She (the Advocate) also complained that the litigants do not get justice from the Court. She went on with the tirade in full presence of the litigants and lawyers without allowing the Court to proceed with the matter in hand or to take up the other matters."

"She (the Advocate) further threatened that she would lodge a complaint before the Hon'ble Chief Justice about the conduct of this Court and further sought time to place

the facts on record on the affidavit," Justice Prabhudesai noted.

In her ruling, Justice Prabhudesai observed: "The advocate has every right to protect the interest of his/her clients. An advocate is answerable to his/her clients and the frustration of an advocate when the matter gets adjourned for whatsoever reason or does not reach the board is understandable."

"At the same time, an advocate as an Officer of the Court is under an obligation to maintain the dignity and decorum of the Court. There is no room for arrogance and there is no licence to intimidate the Court, make reckless accusations and allegations against a Judge and to pollute the very fountain of justice," the Judge noted.

Mumbai court grants bail to lawyer Sadavarte, 115 MSRTC employees

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nearly a fortnight after the attack on NCP chief Sharad Pawar's south Mumbai residence, a Mumbai sessions court granted bail to lawyer Gunratn Sadavarte and 115 Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) employees who were booked for their involvement in the incident.

The court granted bail to Sadavarte, who is allegedly the mastermind behind the attack on Pawar's residence on April 8, on a personal bond of Rs 50,000, while the court ordered the release of 115 others against a bond of Rs10,000 each.

Sadavarte and 109 MSRTC employees were arrested on April 8, while six other MSRTC employees were arrested later. On April 9, the court had remanded Sadavarte in police custody and others in judicial custody.

Sadavarte and other accused have been booked under Sections 142 (being

member of unlawful assembly), 145 (joining or continuing in unlawful assembly, knowing it has been commanded to disperse), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 333 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter public servant from his duty) and 334 (voluntarily causing hurt on provocation) of the Indian Penal Code

On April 19, the Prosecution had moved the court seeking police custody of Sadavarte. The Prosecution had told the court Sadavarte had blown up Rs 2 crore collected from 95,000 striking employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) even while claiming that he was fighting their case free of cost.

Seeking fresh police custody of Sadavarte, the Special

Public Prosecutor Pradip Gharat had told the court that the accused purchased the two Mumbai properties in the past few months, while he had bought a high-end car worth around Rs. 23 lakh. "We would like to investigate the source of funds used for the purchase of two prime properties in Mumbai," he had said.

Making a disclosure to this effect while making a forceful plea for fresh custody of Sadavarte, Gharat had told the court that the police had — during the search of Sadavarte's home — seized a currency note counting machine, some three dozen incriminating documents and a green register detailing the manner in which the money would be collected from MSRTC's 250 bus depots in the state.

The Special Public Prosecutor informed the court that the police investigations had revealed that Sadavarte had allegedly invested the collected money from the MSRTC employees for purchasing properties in Parel and Byculla and a high-end car.

Naqvi slams UK Labour MP for 'Islamophobia' during Boris visit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Friday reacted strongly to British labour MP Naz Shah seeking British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to raise the issue of "Islamophobia" during his visit to India by asking her not to convert her "prejudiced agenda of 'India Phobia into Islamophobia'". Shah, Labour Party MP from Bradford West and shadow Minister for crime reduction, took to Twitter on Thursday to convey to Johnson that the UK's foreign relations must not just be based on trade and internationalism but also on human rights.

"My plea to the @10DowningStreet is to raise the growing issue of Islamophobia with the Modi Government," Naz, the British parliamentarian of Pakistani origin, said. In a long series of tweets, Shah said the rising tide of "everyday hate and mob lynching" against Muslims in India is becoming worrying.

Panel warns Govt against trade in captive elephants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel has warned the Government against encouraging the sale and purchase of captive elephants and recommended the need to strike a careful balance between tradition and conservation.

Headed by former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh, the committee, in its report on the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021, said it is "deeply conscious" of the fact that a number of religious and cultural institutions in some states own elephants which play a crucial role in daily worship and rituals. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, specifically prohibits trade in wild animals

including captive and wild elephants. Under sections 40 and 43 of the law, transfer, acquiring and receiving of a live captive elephant is permissible only with the prior approval of the chief wildlife warden. However, such transfer, acquisition and receiving of an elephant should not involve any commercial transaction.

The panel said that it is in "broad agreement" with the amendments proposed for the improved care for seized and surrendered wild animals.

The panel also said that "Non-official members should also be part of the state wildlife board committee proposed to assess infrastructure projects in and around protected areas." The standing committee of the state board for wildlife, if formed, should be represented

by several non-official members — at least three wildlife institutions and the director of the Wildlife Institute of India or his/her nominee, the panel said in its 254-page report.

It highlighted several concerns regarding the legislation and urged the Union environment ministry to consider the recommendations of scientists and conservationists mentioned in the report. The wildlife bill was introduced in LS by Union Env Min Bhupendra Yadav in December last year. However, soon after its introduction, several wildlife and legal experts criticised some of the clauses in the Bill, citing several loopholes that could be exploited and saying they were counterintuitive to the objectives of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

On the Government proposal to set up a standing committee of the state board for wildlife (SBWL), to be headed by its vice-chairperson, a post to be held by the state's forest minister, and should not have more than 10 members nominated by the panel chief, the Parliamentary committee said that "If a standing committee of SBWL is formed, then it must have as its members, at least one-third non-official members, at least three institutional members (like the National Tiger Conservation Authority), and the director of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) or their nominee."

This should also be the quorum for the standing committee of the national board for wildlife, which gives a final nod to projects, the report added.

Rajnath, Naravane given EV demo for use in Army in peace areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the army proposing to use electric vehicles (EV) in peace areas, a demonstration of such vehicles was given to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on Friday. Army Chief General M M Naravane and other senior officers were present at the occasion. Electric Vehicle manufacturers from Tata Motors, Perfect Metal Industries (PMI) and Revolt Motors showcased their EVs and briefed about the enhancement in technology and range of operation achieved during the past few years, officials said here. Rajnath has appreciated the Army's initiative to induct EVs and reduce dependency on fossil fuels in line with the government policies. The government's policy of FAME I and II

have given tremendous boost to infrastructure development for sustaining the EV ecosystem in India. Setting up of EV charging stations has been delicensed by the government to facilitate the EV adoption. Naravane believes that the future in transportation is EVs and Indian Army has to be a torch bearer and lead the way in adoption of this technology even if the world armies are still only contemplating introduction of EVs. Based on the directions of the Chief of Army Staff, a Board of Officers was detailed under Director General of Supplies and Transport (DGST) Lieutenant General Manoj Kumar Singh Yadav as the Presiding Officer to formulate a definite time bound road map for introduction of EVs in Indian Army.

Kolkata Police unearth ₹2k crore chit fund scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Yet another chit fund scam exploded in the face of Bengal administration with the police on Friday arresting scamster Shanti Surana who duped hundreds of people a whopping Rs 2,000 crore sources in the Economic Offence Wing of the State police said.

The Police arrested the fraudster on Thursday night from his plush Queen's Place apartment at posh Ballygunge locality in South Kolkata.

Unlike the other masterminds of Sharada and Rose Valley companies that mostly targeted the poor and the middle class Surana duped the

super rich with none of his victims investing less than Rs 2-3 crore in his company, sources said. "Rs 25-50 lakh would not matter much for him and so he would not accept such 'small' investment... he always played beyond a crore," said Nitin an investor and a senior citizen adding "most of his clients were senior citizens."

The fraudster had "offered the investors regular incomes in the form of dividends apart from double of the invested amount after 5 years," another investor said.

The Alipore district Court remanded the scamster to a 3-day judicial custody; sources said adding police were investigating into a larger network if there was any.

Two JeM terrorists neutralised by security forces

One CISF ASI was martyred; nine security personnel were hurt in gunfight

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Two member suicide squad, possibly belonging to a Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit, were neutralised near Sunjwan army camp during an intense gunfight on Friday. The security forces too suffered collateral damage in the gunfight which erupted shortly before 4.00 a.m. A CISF assistant sub-inspector, identified as SP Patel, sacrificed his life while nine security personnel were injured in the encounter. This is the third strike in the area in the last two decades and second in a span of four years.

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police

(DGP) Dilbag Singh after visiting the encounter site told reporters, "the attack in the Sunjwan area of Jammu was a larger conspiracy to disturb peace in Jammu and sabotage the prime minister's visit to the region". PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Jammu to attend Panchayat day event in Palli Panchayat of Samba district on April 24.

Singh also informed both the members of the fideyee squad were wearing fideyee vests and were tasked to carry out a major suicide strike to sabotage the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said both the slain belong to Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit and were part of a fresh infiltration bid.

Meanwhile, mobile internet services remained suspended and schools were shut in the vicinity of the encounter site as a precautionary measure. The main markets in the area also



were a deserted look as shopkeepers avoided opening their shops due to prevailing chaos in the area.

Elaborating the DGP Singh said late last night, acting on information about the presence of terrorist in Sunjwan area of Jammu, a cordon was laid by the police, CRPF and CISF personnel in Sunjwan area.

Singh said, during the operation when these terrorists attempted

to break the cordon and escape the area firefight erupted in which some of our jawans received injuries and one of the CISF officer later succumbed to his fatal injuries.

DIG, CISF SK Sinha told reporters at the encounter site, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) bus carrying personnel for their morning shift initially came under attack in the Sunjwan area. The terrorists

fired at the bus and lobbed grenades, killing Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) S P Patel and injuring two other occupants of the bus. The force retaliated effectively, the officer said.

According to officials, after the attack on the CISF bus, the terrorists took shelter in the house of Mohd Anwar in the area and were eliminated after four hour long gunfight. A senior police officer who participated in the operation told The Pioneer, "the terrorists attacked the CISF bus from two different directions leading to an encounter in the wee hours of Friday". Another com-

mando of the Jammu and Kashmir police said, "I barely escaped the bullet injury as I managed to duck in time. He showed blood stains on the stairs of a nearby shop where other police personnel took shelter after receiving bullet injuries. He said, "a CISF bus and two police gypsies were

damaged in the encounter".

Some of the security personnel who participated in the encounter revealed the terrorists were well trained and used rocket propelled grenades to target the security forces. The members of the fideyee squad were armed with suicide vests and also knew how to handle IEDs. Before getting eliminated the JeM terrorists had laid booby trap inside the house to cause fatal injuries to the security forces. We had to defuse IEDs while sanitising the entire area.

Earlier, on February 10 in 2018, three JeM terrorists had barged inside the Sunjwan army camp in which two JCOs were martyred and seven others including family members of the soldiers were injured. All three terrorists were also neutralised in the operation.

The security forces recovered three AK-47 rifles, grenades, magazines, eatables, medicines, energy drinks etc from the encounter site. The

postmortem of the terrorists were conducted at the encounter site by the team of doctors before performing their last rites.

CISF martyr given farewell Security forces on Friday bid farewell to CISF officer S P Patel who was killed in a pre-dawn gunfight with terrorists in Jammu city.

Led by Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh, top officers of the police, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) laid wreaths at the send-off ceremony at district police lines.

"ASI Patel laid down his life while fighting terrorists. CISF party was part of a cordon operation to track down terrorists. In the firing, the ASI achieved martyrdom," the DGP said. The nation will remain forever indebted to Patel for his supreme sacrifice and devotion, a senior CISF officer said.

Ultras attack 2 non-local labourers

PNS ■ JAMMU

Two non-local labourers were again targeted by 'unidentified' terrorists in Nowgam area of Srinagar late Friday evening.

According to police the labourers have been identified and hailed from West Bengal.

In a tweet Kashmir zone police said terrorists fired upon two outside labourers in Nowgam area, outskirts of Srinagar City late Friday evening. Both of them have been shifted to hospital.

The entire area has been cordoned off and searches were going on in the area to track-down the footprints of terrorists.

Jahangirpuri: TMC fact-finding team stopped; party slams BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Friday attacked the BJP Government for robbing the opposition of its democratic rights after a fact-finding team of the Bengal ruling outfit was allegedly prevented from entering the areas affected by recent communal riots in Delhi's Jahangirpuri area.

The TMC team constituted MPs Kakoli Ghoshastidar, Shatabdi Roy, Aparupa Poddar and former MP Arpita Ghosh. "The entire area was barricaded like a fort by the Delhi Police... we were not allowed to enter the area... fortunately however we were helped by a local woman and a child who navigated us through a narrow

lane," Ghoshastidar said "We were told by a frightened lot of locals how they were attacked and how their properties were destroyed," she said adding the police "pounced upon us when they came to know that we had managed to enter one of the by lanes evading their eyes... then they forced us to leave the area."

Another TMC leader Arpita Ghosh said that an atmosphere of terror prevailed in the area. "The people... many of who are from Bengal are absolutely terrorized... there is an atmosphere of terror in the area... people are not willing to talk... the properties of the poor people have been completely demolished... we have seen and have taken pho-

tographs of the area and will submit our report to our leader Mamata Banerjee."

On Delhi Police's alleged "misdemeanor" of not letting the opposition MPs enter the area senior parliamentarian Sudip Bandopadhyay said that "Delhi Police is acting undemocratically." The minimum "democratic culture that is expected from an elected Government is allowing the opposition some democratic space... some right to ask questions and see things itself... but here the police not only prevented the opposition MPs but misled them through some other route."

In Kolkata TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said that the Bengal Government was far better than the BJP Government as "in Bengal the BJP's fact finding teams were allowed to visit Bagtui village in Rampurhat and Hanskhali village in Nadia district... this proves that the TMC Government is a democratic Government which has nothing to hide and the one in Delhi is a despotic regime."

Several people had died in Rampurhat arson and carnage in an intra-TMC clash last month and at Hanskhali a minor was gang-raped — and cremated without medical certificate and post-mortem being conducted on her after she died — by the relatives of a local TMC leader.



Bollywood actress Dia Mirza participates in a cleanliness drive on the occasion of Earth Day, at Carter Road in Mumbai on Friday. Earth Day is observed on April 22 every year with an aim to protect the Earth's environment. Photo | PTI

FROM PAGE 1

INDIA, UK AGREE TO SCALE UP DEFENCE TIES, INK FTA

On the geopolitical situation, Modi said both sides stressed free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. India welcomes the UK's decision to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, he said.

Reiterating India's stand on Ukraine, the Prime Minister said, "We have stressed on dialogue and diplomacy in Ukraine for an immediate ceasefire and resolution of the problem. We also reiterated the importance of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries."

Giving details of the talks later, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said both the leaders discussed Ukraine and Modi expressed deep concern over the situation and mounting humanitarian crisis. He also reiterated his call for an immediate cessation of violence in Ukraine, Shringla said.

He said during the talks there was no pressure applied from the British side regarding sanctions on Russia and Johnson shared his views on the Ukraine issue.

Modi asserted that India was "on the side of peace" and wanted that the conflict should end soon through dialogue and diplomacy.

Johnson said the UK was creating an Open General Export Licence (OGEL) for India to "reduce bureaucracy and slashing delivery times" for defence procurement. The British Prime Minister said both sides agreed to work together to meet new threats across land, sea, air space, and cyber domains and that the UK will partner with India on new fighter jet technology as well as in the maritime sphere to detect and respond to threats in the oceans.

Johnson described the talks as wonderful and said the partnership between the UK and India is one of the "defining friendships of our time."

Noting that "threats of autocratic coercion" are growing, the British Prime Minister said it is vital that both India and the UK further deepen their cooperation.

"Today, we are announcing new measures to make it easier to export UK-made medical devices to India and ensure mutual recognition of UK higher education qualification," he said.

The visiting Prime Minister also said the UK did not tolerate extremist groups operating in the country and targeting other nations. He made this assertion in the backdrop of India's concerns over Khalistani elements there.

Asked about India's position on Russian aggression against Ukraine, he said, "You have to recognise that India came out strongly against what happened in Bucha."

"The way in which the situation is not just in Ukraine but around the world is obliging the UK and India to do more. The position on Russia India has is well known. It is not going to change," he said in a Press conference after talks with Modi.

On the possibility of war in Ukraine stretching till the end of the year and Russia

ultimately winning, the British Prime Minister said. "It's a realistic possibility. Putin has a huge army... the only option he has now is to continue to use his grinding approach led by artillery."

However, Johnson said, "Putin will not be able to conquer the spirit of the people of Ukraine."

The British Prime Minister also informed the UK will reopen its Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine next week. "The UK and our allies will not watch passively as Putin carries on this onslaught," he said.

Asked about reports of rights violations in India, Johnson said India is a great democracy and has constitutional protection. The two Prime Ministers also discussed new cooperation on clean and renewable energy. Johnson said it was aimed at supporting India's energy transition from imported oil and increasing its resilience through secure and sustainable energy.

Johnson also said the United Kingdom has ordered the extradition of Vijay Malloya and Nirav Modi and "we want them taken back to India for trial." He said this in response to a question on attempts to get the duo to face charges of fraud.

"...there are technicalities that have made it very difficult (but) the UK Government has ordered their extradition and, from our point of view, we want them taken back to India for trial," Johnson said. "We don't welcome, I want to make it absolutely clear now, people who want to use our legal system to evade the law in India," he said.

"Our objective is to bring back those economic fugitives who're wanted in India to face justice in the country. The matter was discussed during the bilateral talks," Shringla said.

DELHI, LONDON TO DEEPEN COOPERATION IN CYBER DOMAIN

The statement said, "Our 2030 vision includes revitalised and dynamic connections between our people and enhanced defence and security cooperation that brings a more secure Indo-Pacific."

Through cyberspace, there is a digital living bridge that allows our citizens, students and businesses to interact and promote our shared prosperity. As we take advantage of the new opportunities this creates we must also protect ourselves against evolving threats, it said.

The two sides said the rules-based international order must be upheld online, just as it is offline. India and the United Kingdom are concerned by the increased willingness of States and their proxies to undertake malicious cyber activities contrary to identified norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, they said.

"We will deepen coordination on mitigation strategies against Advanced Persistent Threats as well as cooperation on tackling cybercrime," the statement said. India and the United Kingdom recognise the vital role of voluntary and non-

binding norms of responsible state behaviour in reducing risks to international peace, security and stability as reaffirmed by the 2021 reports of the UN Sixth Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace, they said.

"We draw attention to the norms prohibiting the use of cyber tools to intentionally damage or impair critical infrastructure and the obligation of States to respond to appropriate requests to mitigate malicious ICT activity aimed at the critical infrastructure of another state emanating from their territory," the statement said.

As per the statement, the two countries will work to elaborate under the UN framework a comprehensive international convention on countering the use by criminals of ICTs to increase international cooperation on preventing, deterring, mitigating, investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes, ensuring speedy justice for the victims of cybercrime and taking into account the need for appropriate safeguards including data protection.

NITISH AT RJD'S IFTAR PARTY HEATS UP BIHAR POLITICS

During the last few weeks, the relation between the BJP and JD(U) has gone from bad to worse with leader of both sides taking pot shots at each other on the possibility of Nitish's exit as the Chief Minister.

Shah will be in Patna on Saturday to attend rally in Jagdishpur, 80 kms from the State capital, to mark the anniversary of freedom fighter Veer Kunwar Singh.

Meanwhile, the State politics took another interesting turn when senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi criticised his own party's decision-making and went public with it. He said it was worrisome that BJP's traditional voters were deserting it and NDA's decision to bet on Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras to keep Paswan voters in its kitty has not brought desired results. He said the Dalit community was seen as more sympathetic to Chirag Paswan during his various programmes.

Sushil gave voice to this feeling with a series of tweets on Thursday, saying the loss of 10 sitting seats for the BJP-JD(U) alliance in the recent MLC polls coupled with the BJP's defeat in Bochahan Assembly bypolls to the RJD is a matter of deep introspection.

He said the drift of a section of extremely backward castes and upper castes away from the party in the bypoll was unexpected. Sushil was apparently referring to the erosion of the BJP's votes among Nishad, a backward community of boatmen, and Bhumihars, a traditional support base of the party.

A few party leaders from the State, who did not want to be named, said what cannot be ignored that three winning RJD candidates in the MLC polls were Bhumihars, igniting the prospect of the landed com-

munity warming up to the Lalu-led party after fiercely opposing it for decades.

SHIVPAL MEETS AZAM IN JAIL, FUELS SPECULATIONS

community in general.

Shivpal Yadav, who realigned with his nephew before the 2022 UP assembly election only to grow distant again, has once again expressed displeasure with his nephew.

Talking to media persons after meeting Azam Khan in Sitapur District Jail, Shivpal Yadav extended his support to the SP leader who has been incarcerated for two years.

"Even though Azam bhai is a senior and 10-term MLA and a founder member of the Samajwadi Party, he is not getting any help. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha. These are trivial, fake cases. I am with Azam bhai and he stands with me. Had the SP staged a protest under Mulayam Singh Yadav's leadership, the prime minister would have responded. The nation knows very well that the prime minister respects Netaji a lot. Khan's incarceration should have been raised in the Lok Sabha too. After all, samajwadis are identified with protests. Now, only one case is remaining against him and I stand with Azam bhai," the PSP chief said.

On being quizzed whether the two senior leaders would come together to form a separate front, Shivpal said, "The question does not arise at this stage. First, let Azam Khan come out of jail. All these decisions will be known to you at the right time."

Shivpal Yadav had recently met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his assertion that the SP did not do enough for the jailed Azam Khan has triggered fresh speculations. On Thursday, he had dared his nephew to sack him from the party.

COURT HAS POWER TO REVIEW REMISSION: SC

The convict sought the issuance of a writ directing the Chhattisgarh Government to grant him pre-mature release.

The Bench said though the court can review the decision of the Government to determine whether it was arbitrary, it cannot usurp the power of the Government and grant remission itself. On the issue of the opinion of the presiding judge of the court for deciding remission, the apex court said that the appropriate Government should not mechanically follow the opinion of the presiding judge.

"In the present case, there is nothing to indicate that the presiding judge took into account the factors which have been laid down... These factors include assessing (i) whether the offence affects the society at large; (ii) the probability of the crime being repeated; (iii) the potential of the convict to commit crimes in the future; (iv) if any fruitful purpose is being served by

keeping the convict in prison; and (v) the socio-economic condition of the convict's family," the bench said.

The apex court directed that the petitioner's application for remission should be re-considered. "We direct the special judge, Durg, to provide an opinion on the application afresh accompanied by adequate reasoning," it said.

"We further direct the State of Chhattisgarh to take a final decision on the petitioner's application for remission afresh within a month of receiving the opinion of the special judge, Durg," the bench said.

300-YR-OLD TEMPLE BULLDOZED IN RAJ; CONG, BJP TRADE JIBES

Refuting Poonia's allegations, PCC chief Datasra accused the BJP of misleading people and playing politics over religion.

He said even during the rule of the former BJP government headed by Vasundhara Raje, hundreds of temples were demolished in Jaipur.

Datasra said the proposal of demolition was passed by the Rajgarh municipality board headed by the BJP which alone is responsible for the demolitions.

"It is the habit of the BJP and RSS to commit wrong and spread communal frenzy. One temple was private and idols were removed and the second temple was partially demolished but its sanctum sanctorum is safe," he said.

Datasra asserted that the Congress government does not target any religious place.

On the demolition in Rajgarh, Alwar collector Nakate Shivprasad Madan said the proposal was passed by the Nagar Palika board and the action was taken in accordance with the decision of the local administration in the presence of police.

"In the meeting of the board headed by its chairman, a proposal to remove encroachments was passed. The executive officer accordingly issued notices and then the demolition was done," the collector said. Another officer said the Nagar Palika's executive officer had issued notices to 86 people on April 6 to remove encroachments from the road and they were given time. The action of demolition of over 100 structures was taken on April 17 and 18.

He said one temple was completely demolished but the owners of the temples had removed the idols. The second temple was partially demolished but its sanctum sanctorum is safe, he added.

"The one-km stretch of the road is 50 to 54 feet wide in the master plan but it had been reduced to 25-28 feet at present due to encroachments. Encroachments from half of the road were removed earlier and the remaining encroachments were demolished on Sunday and Monday," Rajgarh SDM Keshav Meena said.

Other encroachments were mainly due to shops, he added.

2,451 new Covid cases, 54 deaths in 24 hours across India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Led by the national Capital Delhi, India on Friday recorded 2,451 fresh Covid cases, the highest since March 18, according to the data updated on the Union Health Ministry website. In the last 24 hours, 54 deaths were recorded from across the country. India's overall death count now stands at 5,22,116 and overall cases have risen to 43,05,425.

The number of active cases jumped to 14,241 and currently comprises 0.03 per cent of the overall cases registered so far. There was an increase of 808 in the active caseload, the Ministry data showed.

Over the last 24 hours, 1,589 people recovered from the viral disease. With this, the recovery rate fell marginally to 98.75 per cent.

It was 98.76 per cent on the previous day. With the nationwide tally seeing an uptick, the daily positivity rate jumped to 0.55 per cent, according to the Ministry. The weekly positivity rate stands at 0.47 per cent.

The national Capital remained the top contributor to the fresh nationwide infections. Delhi recorded 1,042 cases on Thursday, according to the State health department's daily release. The city has a positivity rate of close to 5 per cent.

Taking a cue from Delhi and Haryana, the Tamil Nadu Government on Friday reintroduced levying penalty on those who do not wear a face mask in public places. Delhi also issued guidelines to the schools asking them that students and staff should not be allowed to enter school premises without thermal scanning.

Overall, the number of people who have recovered so far stands at 4,25,16,068, the Ministry stated.

Meanwhile, scientists in the US have found the mechanism that the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron sub-variants use to escape antibodies and spread rapidly, an advance that could lead to new therapeutic targets and help update Covid-19 vaccine formulations. The researchers found that the two dominant sub-lineages of Omicron have unprecedented numbers of spike protein mutations, with BA.1 having 33 and BA.2 having 29 variations. These mutations are what lead to their increased transmissibility and enhanced ability to evade the immune system, they said.

Satellite images show possible mass graves near Mariupol

AP ■ KYIV

Mounds of dirt seen in satellite imagery that Ukrainian officials say indicate new mass graves highlighted the savagery of a war that showed no signs of abating on Friday, as Russia pounded targets in eastern Ukraine in a new offensive to take the country's industrial heartland.

Cities in the Donbas came under Russian fire overnight, and the attacks interfered with attempts to evacuate civilians in one area, according to a regional official. The region, home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories, is bracing for what could be a decisive campaign as Russian President Vladimir Putin attempts to salvage an 8-week-old war already widely seen as a blunder and a humanitarian



disaster. On Thursday, the Russian leader claimed victory in the battle for Mariupol, even though an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian remain holed up at a giant steel mill in the strategic city.

Putin ordered his troops not to storm the stronghold but to seal it off — in an apparent bid to free up troops for the broader campaign in the east.

Hours later, Maxar Technologies released new satellite images that it said showed more than 200 graves in a town near Mariupol, and local officials accused Russia of burying thousands of civilians there.

Russia said again Friday that "second phase" of the war was underway — but instead of a full-out assault, scattered towns in the east have experienced the intimidating thuds of incoming shells that drive citizens out in panic.

Slovyansk, a city of about

100,000 in eastern Ukraine, came under fire during the night, according to Mayor Vadym Lyakh, who said no injuries were reported.

But he urged residents to leave and said a convoy of buses would be organized for Friday. In Rubizhne, Russian fire prevented attempts to bring buses in for civilian evacuation, according to Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai.

More intensive shelling was also heard overnight in Kharkiv, a northeastern city that lies outside of the Donbas but has seen strikes repeatedly recently. If successful, the campaign in the Donbas would give Putin a vital piece of the country and a badly needed victory to show the Russian people amid the war's mounting casualties and the economic hardship caused by Western sanctions.

But analysts say Russian forces have yet to have any

major breakthroughs there. A senior US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the Pentagon's assessment, said the Ukrainians were hindering the Russian effort to push south from Izyum, which lies outside of the Donbas.

"Russian forces continued offensive operations in eastern Ukraine but made only marginal gains," according to the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, which has chronicled the campaign on a daily basis.

Despite that, a Russian official repeated Friday that its forces aim to take full control of eastern and southern Ukraine, noting the latter would provide land corridor to Crimea, which Russia seized in 2014. Rustam Minnekaev, a senior military official, said such a move would also open the way to Moldova, where Russia backs the breakaway

region of Transnistria. Moldovan officials are warily watching Putin's actions in Ukraine

The battle for Mariupol has been seen as key to the eastern assault. But the institute said in an assessment published late Thursday that Russian forces in the city were likely heavily damaged and thus Moscow would struggle to redeploy them quickly to the larger campaign in the east.

Mariupol has seen some of the worst suffering of the war, and the satellite images released Thursday hinted at even more.

In the images, long rows of dirt mounds stretch away from an existing cemetery in Manhush, outside Mariupol. Local officials accused Russia of burying up to 9,000 Ukrainian civilians in mass graves in an effort to conceal the slaughter taking place in the port city, which has been under siege since the early days of the war.

"The bodies of the dead were being brought by the truckload and actually simply being dumped in mounds," Piotr Andryushchenko, an aide to Mariupol's mayor, said on Telegram.

There was no immediate reaction from the Kremlin on the satellite pictures. When mass graves and hundreds of dead civilians were discovered in Bucha and other towns around Kyiv after Russian troops retreated three weeks ago, Russian officials denied that their soldiers killed any civilians there and falsely accused Ukraine of staging the atrocities.

UN rights chief 'sees horror story' of violations

AP ■ BERLIN

The United Nations' human rights office on Friday pointed to what it said is growing evidence of war crimes since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, declaring that humanitarian law appears to have been "tossed aside."

Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said that "our work to date has detailed a horror story of violations perpetrated against civilians."

Her office's mission in Ukraine so far has verified 5,264 civilian casualties, including 2,345 deaths, since the war began on Feb. 24. It said that 92.3% of those were recorded in Ukrainian government-controlled territory. The office uses strict methodology and has long acknowledged that its confirmed figures are far short of the real numbers.

"The actual numbers are going to be much higher" as more details emerge from places such as Mariupol where there is intense fighting, Bachelet said.

"Over these eight weeks, international humanitarian law has not merely been ignored but seemingly tossed aside," she added. Her office said in a statement that "Russian armed forces have indiscriminately shelled and bombed populated areas, killing civilians and wrecking hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure — actions that may amount to war crimes." It added that the U.N. Mission also has "documented what appears to be the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects, causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects, by Ukrainian armed



forces in the east of the country." Bachelet said that "the scale of summary executions of civilians in areas previously occupied by Russian forces" is emerging.

On April 9, U.N. Human rights officers visiting Bucha documented the unlawful killing, including by summary execution, of some 50 civilians, her office said. The U.N. Mission has received more than 300 allegations of killings of civilians in previously occupied towns in the Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy regions.

Russian officials have denied that their soldiers killed any civilians in Bucha and other towns around Kyiv from which they retreated three weeks ago, and accused Ukraine of staging the atrocities.

The U.N. Rights office said its mission also has recorded 114 attacks on medical facilities "although the actual figure is likely to be considerably higher." "We estimate that at least

3,000 civilians have died because they couldn't get medical care and because of the stress on their health amid the hostilities," Bachelet said. "This includes being forced by Russian armed forces to stay in basements or not being allowed to leave their homes for days or weeks."

The U.N. Mission so far has received 75 allegations of sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys by Russian soldiers, most in the Kyiv region. The human rights office said detention of civilians "has become a widespread practice" in areas controlled by Russian forces and affiliated groups, with 155 such cases reported so far.

It said it also received information about "alleged arbitrary and incommunicado detentions" by Ukrainian forces or people aligned with them. And it pointed to videos put out by both sides apparently showing the intimidation, interrogation, torture or killing of prisoners of war.

US officials land in Solomons to discuss China pact concerns

AP ■ WELLINGTON

A senior US delegation arrived Friday in the Solomon Islands to express its concern that China could send military forces to the South Pacific nation and destabilize the region.

The visit comes days after China and the Solomon Islands confirmed they had signed a security pact, a development which has alarmed neighboring countries and Western allies who fear a military buildup in the region. The US delegation is led by Kurt Campbell, the National Security Council Indo-Pacific coordinator, and Daniel Kritenbrink, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

During the visit, the US will also discuss plans to reopen an embassy in the capital, Honiara, as it tries to increase its presence in the strategically important country amid growing concerns about Chinese influence. The embassy has been closed since 1993. The broad nature of the security agreement leaves open the door for China to send in military forces, US officials said.

"We do not believe importing security forces from the People's Republic of China and their methods will help Solomon Islands," the statement by the US Embassy in Papua New Guinea said. "Instead, doing so will fuel local, regional, and international tensions and increase concerns over Beijing's expansion of its internal security apparatus to the Pacific." It added that the US worries about what implications the pact will have for the autonomy of the Solomons. A draft of the pact, which was leaked online, said Chinese warships could stop in the Solomon Islands for logistical replenishment and that China could send police and armed forces there "to assist in maintaining social order." The Solomons and China have not released the final version of the agreement. In an address to lawmakers this week, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said the pact wouldn't undermine the peace and harmony of the region. He said it was about strengthening the nation's internal security.

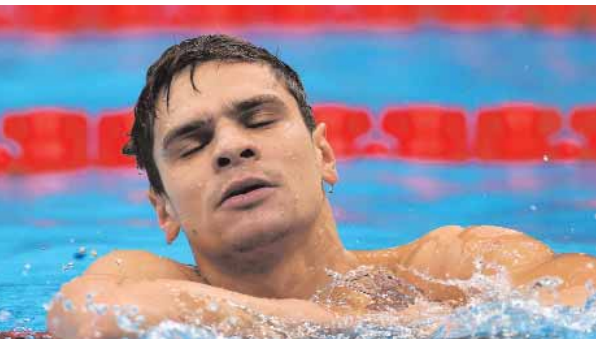
"Let me assure the people of Solomon Islands that we entered into an arrangement with China with our eyes wide open, guided by our national interests," he said.

Russian swimmer Rylov banned for appearing at Putin rally

AP ■ LAUSANNE

Russian Olympic gold medalist swimmer Evgeny Rylov has been banned from the sport for nine months for appearing at a rally in support of President Vladimir Putin and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Rylov stood on stage with medalists from other Olympic sports at the event last month and wore a jacket with a "Z" on the chest. The letter isn't part of the Russian alphabet but has become a symbol of support for Russian troops after it was used as a marker on Russian



armored vehicles operating in Ukraine. A brief statement from swimming's world governing body, FINA, on Thursday said

it "acknowledged" an earlier, as-yet unpublished ruling from a disciplinary panel to ban Rylov "following Mr. Rylov's atten-

dance and conduct at an event held at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow."

Rylov was the star of Russia's swim team at the Olympics in Tokyo last year with two gold medals. His ban began Wednesday and covers any international competition. The effect on Rylov is likely to be mostly symbolic since FINA also extended its decision to exclude competitors from Russia and its ally Belarus from all international events for the remainder of 2022.

FINA previously banned Russia and Belarus from the

world championships in Hungary and June and July but left it possible for them to enter other events. At the time, FINA said Russia planned to boycott all international events anyway, something Russia denied. That position has now been clarified.

"The Bureau also confirmed its position that Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials will not be invited to any FINA event through the end of 2022," FINA said Thursday.

FINA's remit covers a range of aquatic sports including swimming, diving, water polo and artistic swimming.

Why Washington is boosting heavy arms for Ukraine



AP ■ WASHINGTON

Eight weeks into the war, the Biden administration's decision to dramatically ramp up delivery of artillery guns to Ukraine signals a deepening American commitment at a pivotal stage of fighting for the country's industrial heartland.

It also brings into stark relief Moscow's warning that continued US military aid to Ukraine would have "unpredictable" consequences, suggesting that Russia sees the international wave of weaponry as a growing obstacle to its invasion as well as a Western provocation.

"We're in a critical window" of time now, President Joe Biden said Thursday in announcing he had approved an additional \$800 million in battlefield aid that includes 72 of the U.S. Army's 155mm howitzers, along with 144,000 artillery rounds and more than 120 armed drones that will require training for Ukrainian operators.

This brings to \$3.4 billion the amount of security assistance provided since Russia began its invasion Feb. 24.

That is an extraordinary total of U.S. Military aid for a country to which the United States has no defense treaty obligation. A look at the U.S. Assistance and U.S. Expectations for what it will accomplish:

Why is artillery so important now?

Heavy weapons such as artillery are shaping up as a key feature of the unfolding battle for Ukraine's eastern region known as the Donbas.

The relatively flat terrain is suited for what the military calls maneuver warfare — the

movement of tanks and other ground forces backed by long-range guns like the 155mm howitzer.

The Russians have been deploying their own additional artillery to the Donbas region in recent days, along with more ground troops and other material to support and sustain what could be a long fight for terrain in Ukraine's industrial heartland.

The howitzers the U.S. is sending to Ukraine will be the latest American model, known as the M777, used by the Army and the Marine Corps.

Smaller and more maneuverable than the older model, the M777 can be deployed on the battlefield by heavy-lift helicopters and moved relatively quickly between positions by seven-ton trucks that also are being provided by the Pentagon.

"What makes it important is the kind of fighting that we expect in the Donbas. Because of the terrain, because it's open, because it's flat, because it's not as urban, we can expect the Russians to rely on long-range fires — artillery in particular," said John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary. "So we know that this is going to be part of the Russians' playbook."

A senior U.S. Defense official said the first of the 72 howitzers are expected to begin moving to Europe by this weekend.

Of 18 other 155mm howitzers that Biden approved last week for shipment to Ukraine, an unspecified number already are in Europe, and U.S. Howitzer training for Ukrainian personnel began Wednesday in an undisclosed country outside of Ukraine.

Zelensky thanks US for USD 800M in military aid



AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the United States for the new package of USD 800 million in military aid, which he said was "just what we were waiting for."

The latest military aid, announced Thursday by President Joe Biden, includes heavy artillery, ammunition and drones for the escalating battle in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

Zelensky has urged Western countries to speed up the deliveries of weapons to help Ukraine fend off the Russian offensive.

"The occupiers continue to do everything possible to give themselves a reason to speak about at least some kind of victory," Zelensky said late Thursday in his nightly video address to the nation.

"They are building up their forces, bringing in new tactical battalions and trying even to begin a so-called mobilization in the regions they occupy in Ukraine," Zelensky also warned Ukrainians living in areas of southern Ukraine under the control of Russia troops not to provide them with their IDs, which he said could be used "to falsify a so-called referendum on our land" to create a Moscow-friendly government.

War in Ukraine spurs bid to take closer look at UN vetoes

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Two days into Russia's attack on Ukraine, a majority of UN Security Council members voted to demand that Moscow withdraw. One thing stood in their way: a veto by Russia itself.

It was the latest in decades of vetoes — on issues ranging from the Korean War to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to climate change — that at least temporarily stymied the council that was designed to be the UN's most potent component.

A round of venting followed over the veto power afforded to just five of its 15 members: China, the United States, Russia, France, and Britain. Each has used that power over the years.

Proposals to change the council's structure or rein in



vetoes have sputtered for more than half a century. But now, a new approach — simply subjecting vetoed matters to scrutiny by the full UN membership — appears to be gaining traction.

Spearheaded by Liechtenstein, the measure has more than 55 co-sponsors, including the US. The 193-member General Assembly is due to consider the measure Tuesday.

"This is really an important initiative," said Thomas

Weiss, a City University of New York Graduate Center political science professor and Chicago Council on Global Affairs distinguished fellow who specializes in UN politics. To him, the proposal promotes transparency and challenges the idea that a few powerful countries can tank Security Council initiatives without so much as an explanation.

"It does, in important ways, suggest that the veto is not sacrosanct," he said.

The proposal wouldn't limit vetoes, but they would trigger public debates in the General Assembly. Whichever country or countries had cast a veto would be invited to say why.

The assembly wouldn't have to take or even consider any action.

'Constitutional amendments will not solve Lanka's crises'

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Bringing in a raft of constitutional amendments and abolishing the presidential system of governance is not the panacea for the current crises in debt-ridden Sri Lanka, former Army Chief Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka has said, as he underscored the need for "a change in the political culture" in the island nation.

Sri Lanka's principal Opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), on Thursday presented a constitutional amendment bill that among other provisions seeks to abol-

ish the presidential system of governance, in existence in the country since 1978, and replace it with a system that reinforces constitutional democracy.

"You have to take action against a school principal whenever he abuses a child in the school rather than abolishing the principal's post," Fonseka, now a SJB legislator, told Parliament on Thursday.

The move by the SJB came in the backdrop of massive protests demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his Sri Lanka Podujana (Peramuna)-led government over the country's worst economic crisis.

The SJB presented the draft 21st constitution amendment bill to the secretary-general of parliament with proposals including the abolition of the current executive presidential system. "I don't see how a constitutional amendment would help Sri Lanka. What we need is a change in the political culture. Neither a constitutional amendment nor the appointment of an interim government is going to help Sri Lanka at that moment," the Daily Mirror newspaper quoted Fonseka as saying in Parliament.

Fonseka, 72, said the ruling party and the opposition are

taking pot-shots at each other and taking refuge in unnecessary blame-game because of which there has been no solution to the ongoing political and economic crisis in the country. "Our country is in debt to the whole world and we have even said we are bankrupt indirectly at official levels," Fonseka told Parliament.

Sri Lanka's economic crisis has turned into a full-blown political crisis after a March 31 protest turned violent with the police attacking protesters. The protesters are demanding President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation.

The opposition has been

Auba takes Barca to 2nd

AP ■ BARCELONA

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's early goal proved enough as Barcelona sealed a 1-0 win over Real Sociedad on Thursday to tighten their grip on a top-four finish in La Liga.

But Barca's run-in could be hampered after their defence was almost completely wiped out by injuries at Anoeta, with Dani Alves, Ronald Araujo and Gerard Pique all going off with problems, while Jordi Alba appeared to play on in discomfort.

Victory leaves Xavi Hernandez's side second, six points clear of Real Betis in fifth, with a game in hand, and two ahead of Atletico Madrid in fourth. Atletico were held to a goalless draw by Granada on Wednesday.

Sevilla sit third after they held on for a 3-2 win away at Levante, Tecatito scoring twice in Valencia.

Real Sociedad might have had an outside chance of joining the race for the top four if they had beaten Barcelona, but defeat surely leaves them looking to secure a spot in the Europa League. They are six points behind Atletico in fourth.

Aubameyang's goal was his 11th for Barca since he joined the club in January, and this one was particularly important, with his team eager to overturn an unexpected dip in form.



Xavi challenged his players on Wednesday to escape the "negative dynamic" after back-to-back defeats by Eintracht Frankfurt in

VICTORY LEAVES XAVI HERNANDEZ'S SIDE SECOND, SIX POINTS CLEAR OF REAL BETIS IN FIFTH, WITH A GAME IN HAND, AND TWO AHEAD OF ATLETICO MADRID IN FOURTH

the Europa League and Cadiz at Camp Nou.

Pique's early touches were whistled by the Real Sociedad crowd, who jeered again when the 35-year-old was substituted in the 82nd minute.

Alves had already gone off in the 66th and Araujo in the 55th, with Barca now crossing their fingers the problems are not serious.

The decisive moment, though, came in the 11th minute as Ousmane Dembele hit the post when free in the area. The ball cannoned out and La Real looked safe to clear until Gavi robbed the ball back and chipped it to Ferran Torres, whose looping ball across allowed Aubameyang to nod in.

Real Sociedad might easily have grabbed an equaliser but kept running into the Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who enjoyed an inspired night in the Barcelona goal.

Alexander Isak went close, while Alexander Sorloth missed La Real's best chances, firing wide at the back post from Nacho Monreal's cross and then taking too long after being picked out in the area by Adnan Januzaj.

Sorloth had another sight of goal late on, but his finish from the angle was brilliantly stopped by Ter Stegen, this time his left foot allowing Barca to hold on for an important victory.

No Kobel, Witsel for Bayern showdown

AP ■ MUNICH

Borussia Dortmund will be without first-choice goalkeeper Gregor Kobel and midfielder Axel Witsel for Saturday's showdown at Bayern Munich, who can secure a tenth straight Bundesliga title with victory at the Allianz Arena.

Kobel is out with an injured ligament and Witsel has an infection.

Second-placed Dortmund are already missing Mats Hummels, Donyell Malen, Mahmoud Dahoud, Thomas Meunier, Thorgan Hazard and Giovanni Reyna.

A home win would leave Bayern an unassailable 12 points ahead of second-placed Dortmund with three games left.

Despite their lengthy casualty list, Dortmund intend to deny the hosts securing a tenth straight Bundesliga crown.

"We want to try to prevent that. That's the task, that's the goal," said Dortmund coach Marco Rose.

The German media refers to Bayern-Dortmund matches as 'Der Klassiker' (The Classic).

Yet Bayern are chasing an eighth straight win in the series, having scored 30 goals, conceding just five.

Dortmund have winger



Raphael Guerreiro back from injury.

They hope to collectively slam the brakes on Bayern's attack, spearheaded by former Dortmund striker Robert Lewandowski who has chalked up 32 goals in the Bundesliga alone this season.

"We have to defend against their attacking power and create our own chances," said Rose.

Meanwhile in Munich, most of the Bayern squad is fit with a sell-out crowd of 75,000 expected.

There is a question mark over winger Kingsley Coman, who is carrying an ankle knock, while defender Niklas Sule is fit and set to face future employers Dortmund, who he joins next season.

Pogba unlikely to play for Man Utd again: Rangnick

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United interim manager Ralf Rangnick believes Paul Pogba has played his final match for the club after suffering an injury just weeks before his contract runs out at Old Trafford.

The World Cup winner, who is a free agent from July 1, came off with a calf problem early in Tuesday's chastening 4-0 loss at Liverpool, which makes a top-four Premier League finish unlikely.

"With Paul, as it seems after the scan we did the day before yesterday, it is very unlikely he will play until the end of the season," Rangnick said on Friday.

The France midfielder came through the youth set-up at United and returned from a successful stint with Juventus in 2016 for a then world-record fee.

Although Pogba has won the Europa League and League Cup in his second spell at United, he has largely been a disappointment, with his lacklustre displays and repeated links with other clubs serving to irritate fans.

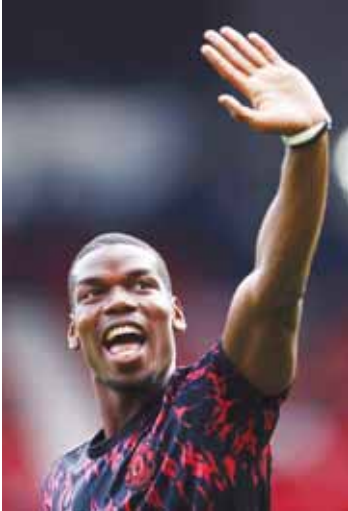
The 29-year-old was booed off the pitch when he was substituted during the recent win against Norwich. Asked if Pogba has played his final match for United, Rangnick said: "The doctor told me it will take four weeks minimum for him to recover and the last game is the end of May."

"I don't think that it is very likely that he will be able to play again."

Rangnick was speaking the day after United confirmed Ajax manager Erik ten Hag would become the permanent boss at Old Trafford at the end of the season.

"I knew that Erik was one of the candidates the board spoke to," he said. "Obviously I told them, at least from what I have seen and known from people who had worked with Erik, that I think he would be a good choice."

"I still believe that he is a very good choice."



Conte 'very happy' to see Eriksen again

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham boss Antonio Conte admits he will be "very happy" to see Brentford's Christian Eriksen this weekend after the Dane's brush with death.

Conte signed Eriksen from Tottenham when he was in charge at Inter Milan in 2020 and the playmaker was a key figure in their Serie A title triumph.

Eriksen is now at Brentford having made an incredible comeback since suffering a cardiac arrest while playing for Denmark at the European Championship last year.

The 30-year-old comes up against his former club for the first time on Saturday as Brentford host

Tottenham in the Premier League.

"I'm very happy to see him play football again. In June it was terrible, those images were terrible for everybody. We suffered a lot for him and his family," Conte told reporters on Thursday.

"To see him for a game will be a pleasure for me. It's incredible because of what happened not long ago."

"To see him playing again makes me very happy because I know football is life."

"To have this opportunity is great for him and his family because now they come back to have a normal life."

There will be no time for sentiment once the game gets underway, however, with Tottenham

desperately needing a win to boost their bid for a top four finish.

Arsenal's 4-2 victory at Chelsea on Wednesday moved them level on points with fourth placed Tottenham, who are ahead of their north London rivals on goal difference.

With six games left, the race to qualify for the Champions League is set to go down to the wire.

"We have to stay in this race until the end," said Conte. "We know very well the difficulty to compete with other teams."

"I don't think Chelsea is in this race. They are in this moment on a different level. They are there because they missed some games but they don't stay in this race."



Burnley win to boost survival bid

AP ■ BURNLEY

Burnley improved their chances of avoiding relegation from the Premier League as Connor Roberts' superb strike inspired a vital 2-0 win against Southampton on Thursday.

The Clarets won for the first time since Sean Dyche's sacking thanks to Roberts' sublime curler and Nathan Collins' header.

Roberts' first goal for Burnley following his August move from Swansea came early in the first half at Turf Moor and proved the key moment.

It was just their fifth league victory this term, in interim manager Mike Jackson's second game since Dyche's surprise sacking last week after 10 years in charge.

Third bottom Burnley remain in the relegation zone but they are now just one point behind fourth bottom Everton, who have a game in hand.

Burnley host Wolves on Sunday and, with Everton facing quadruple chasing Liverpool the same day, Jackson's team are in with a chance of climbing out of the bottom three this weekend.

Hamilton ready to invest in Chelsea takeover bid

AP ■ LONDON

Seven-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton on Friday said that being part of a consortium bidding to take over English Premier League club Chelsea was too great an opportunity to pass by.

Hamilton, along with American tennis star Serena Williams, could each invest up to £10 million, according to Sky News, as part of a consortium led by former Liverpool chairman Martin Broughton.

"Chelsea is one of the biggest clubs in the world and most successful," said Hamilton, who professed a life-long love of football, "the biggest sport in the world."

"When I heard about this opportunity, I was like wow, this is this is one of the greatest opportunities to be a part of something so great."

Hamilton, speaking ahead of Sunday's Imola Grand Prix, added that from the age of five or six he had been a supporter of Chelsea's bitter city rivals Arsenal.

"But my Uncle Terry is a big Blues fan so I've been to so many games with him to watch Arsenal and Chelsea play,"



he said.

Hamilton said he had been contacted by Broughton after the announced sale of the European champions by Russian owner Roman Abramovich.

"Martin took time to speak to me on the phone and explained his and his team's goals if they were to win the bid, which was incredibly exciting, and it was very much aligned with my values,"

said Hamilton.

Aside from Broughton's candidacy, which also has World Athletics president Sebastian Coe — an avid Chelsea fan — on board, two other bids have been registered, headed up by Todd Boehly, co-owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team, and Steve Pagliuca, co-owner of the Boston Celtics basketball team.

Djoker reaches Serbia Open semis

AP ■ BELGRADE

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic dug deep for the second match in a row to reach the semifinals of the Serbia Open with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 win over Miomir Kecmanovic on Thursday.

Kecmanovic won the opening set without facing a break point, but Djokovic finally showed signs of getting back to his best in the second and then won the final four games of the decider in what was just his sixth match of the year.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion stretched his winning streak against compatriots to 10 matches going back to a loss to Janko Tipsarevic in Madrid in 2012.

Djokovic next plays third-seeded Karen Khachanov, who defeated Brazilian qualifier Thiago Monteiro 7-5, 6-4.

Djokovic also endured a tough game on Wednesday when he rallied from a set down to beat compatriot Laslo

Djere 2-6, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (4).

He joked that he's happy he would not have to face another Serbian in the semifinals.

Earlier on Thursday, second-seeded Andrey Rublev defeated Jiri Lehecka 4-6, 7-6 (1), 6-2 and Fabio Fognini enjoyed a 6-2, 6-3 win over Aljaz Bedene to reach the quarterfinals.



TSITSIPAS ADVANCES

Top-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas beat Grigor Dimitrov 6-1, 6-4 to advance to the Barcelona Open quarterfinals.

Tsitsipas converted six of eight break point chances to stay on course to claiming a second consecutive clay-court title after winning Monte Carlo last weekend.

After a short break, the fifth-ranked Greek is scheduled to face local favorite Carlos Alcaraz. The 18-year-old Alcaraz saw off fellow Spaniard Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-3. Second-seeded Casper Ruud eased past Emil Ruusuvuori 6-2, 6-2.

He will face Pablo Carreno later after he outlasted Lorenzo Sonego 6-2, 5-7, 6-2.

Raducanu in Stuttgart QF

AP ■ STUTTGART

US Open champion Emma Raducanu defeated Germany's Tamara Korpatsch 6-0, 2-6, 6-1 at the Stuttgart Open on Thursday to set up a quarterfinal match against top-ranked Iga Swiatek.

It will be the 19-year-old Raducanu's first match against a top 10 opponent.

Raducanu, who won at Flushing Meadows as a 150th-ranked qualifier last year, could break into the top 10 herself if she wins the Stuttgart title in what is her first professional tournament on clay. She's currently ranked 12th.

Earlier, second-seeded Paula Badosa defeated Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (4) and will face Ons Jabeur in the quarterfinals. Jabeur defeated Daria Kasatkina 6-3, 6-3.



Third-seeded Aryna Sabalenka defeated Canada's Bianca Andreescu 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 and will face Anett Kontaveit or Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Fourth-seeded Maria Sakkari retired against Laura Siegemund as the German was leading 6-4, 3-1. Siegemund next plays Russian player Liudmila Samsonova, who defeated Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 6-4.

Indian recurve mixed pair confirm second medal

PTI ■ ANTALYA

Shrugging off their disappointment in the team events, the recurve mixed pair of Tarundeep Rai and Ridhi Phor downed Spain 5-3 to advance to the final and confirm a second medal for India in the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Friday.

The fifth seeded Indian duo started with a 2-0 lead but faced some resistance in the middle sets before sealing it 5-3 (38-35, 36-39, 38-38, 36-35) in a four-setter.

Rai and Phor will face 11th seed Britain in the recurve mixed team Gold medal clash on Sunday.

India has been assured of another medal in the ongoing tournament. The compounded men's team of Abhishek Verma, Rajat Chauhan and Aman Saini had advanced to the final on Wednesday.

They will take on France in the summit clash on Saturday.

Sikki Reddy, Ashwini withdraw from Uber Cup due to injury

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian women's doubles pair of Sikki Reddy and Ashwini Ponappa on Friday withdrew from the forthcoming Uber Cup tournament due to the former's injury, Badminton Association of India (BAI) said.

The tournament is scheduled to be held in Bangkok from May 8 to 15.

"Sikki Reddy has suffered a Grade 2 Tear of the Abdomen (abdominus rectus) as confirmed by an MRI and has been advised 4-6 week rest by the doctor," the BAI said in a statement.

"Under the circumstances the said pair has withdrawn from from the Uber Cup as well as from the upcoming BAC and the selectors have decided to include Simran Singh and Ritika Thakkar in their place as they were fourth in the ranking during the selection trials," said BAI general secretary Sanjay Mishra.

The development comes a day after the BAI announced Indian teams for the upcoming Asian, Commonwealth Games



and Thomas and Uber Cup. The teams were named by BAI following six days of selection trials at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here.

Besides Sikki Reddy and Ashwini Ponappa, the 10-member women's team for the Asian Games and Uber Cup comprised PV Sindhu, Parupalli Kashyap, Ashmita Chaliha, Hooda, alongside the other two doubles pairs from the trials — Treesa Jolly-Gayatri P and Tanisha Crasto-Shruti Mishra.

RO (ROHIT) HAS BEEN HITTING THE BALL REALLY WELL, HE GETS GOOD STARTS, 15-20 RUNS, LOOKING GOOD AND THEN NOT BEING ABLE TO CONVERT

— MAHELA JAYAWARDENE

Buttler takes Royals to No.1 position

PTI ■ MUMBAI

opener Jos Buttler struck his third century of the ongoing IPL to power Rajasthan Royals to a 15-run win over Delhi Capitals in a dramatic match here on Friday.

Buttler and Devdutt Padikkal shared a 155-run stand for the opening wicket to help RR to the highest team total of the season, 222 for two, after being sent into bat.

Buttler, enjoying the form of his life, smashed 116 off 65 balls with the help of nine boundaries and as many hits over the fence to lay the foundation of the imposing total in the company of Padikkal, who hit 54 off 35 balls with seven fours and two sixes.

It turned out to be tall task for DC as RR restricted them to 207 for eight. Chasing the imposing total, DC made a brisk start with Prithvi Shaw (37) and David Warner (28), adding 43 runs in 4.3 overs before the latter edged a Prasad Krishna delivery to skipper Sanju Samson behind the stumps.

Shaw and skipper Rishabh Pant (44 off 24 balls) then added 51 runs off 29 balls for the second wicket to keep DC abreast with the asking rate.

But just when it seemed the partnership was blossoming, R Ashwin struck a vital blow in the form of set piece that was holed out at the deep to Trent Boult as DC reached 99 for three after 10 overs.

Pant raised DC's hopes before being holed out to Padikkal off Krishna in the 12th over.

Axar Patel (1) also failed with the bat, so did Shardul Thakur (10) as Lalit Yadav (37 off 24) waged a lone battle before perishing.

Rovman Powell (36 off 15) struck a few lusty blows towards the end to raise DC's hopes.



Krishna in the 12th over.

With 36 needed off the last over, Powell clobbered Obed McCoy for three consecutive sixes in the first three deliveries to raise the hopes of an improbable win for DC before the West Indian bowler got his acts together to take his side home.

But the win came after a bit of drama as the DC team argued with the onfield umpires, claiming for a possible waist-high no ball but to no avail. Earlier, Pant's decision to field first backfired big time as the duo of Buttler and Padikkal struck 155 runs in 15.5 overs for the opening stand.

► pointstable

| Po. | TEAM | M | W | L | NR | Pts | NRR |
|-----|------|---|---|---|----|-----|--------|
| 1. | RR | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 0.432 |
| 2. | GT | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 0.395 |
| 3. | RCB | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 0.251 |
| 4. | LSG | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0.124 |
| 5. | SRH | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 8 | -0.077 |
| 6. | DC | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0.715 |
| 7. | KKR | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0.160 |
| 8. | PBKS | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 6 | -0.562 |
| 9. | CSK | 7 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 4 | -0.534 |
| 10. | MI | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | -0.892 |

► boundarymeter

| | |
|----|-----|
| 4s | 979 |
| 6s | 515 |

Buttler looked in ominous form and was particularly severe on Yadav, hitting the off-spinner for two sixes and one four to pick up 18 runs from the 13th over.

DC's spin attack cut a sorry figure as Axar and Kuldeep too leaked runs with Buttler and Padikkal going hammer and tongs.

Padikkal brought up his fifty in 31 balls with a boundary, cutting Axar behind square on the off side.

High on confidence after two centuries in the ongoing edition of the IPL, Buttler continued his onslaught, smacking in-form Kuldeep Yadav for two maximums in consecutive balls and a four in the 15th over.

Power-hitting was at its best display as Buttler, in particular, treated all the DC bowlers with disdain.

Padikkal soon perished, caught plumb in front of the wicket by Khaleel Ahmed in the 116th over as DC got their first breakthrough, albeit late in the innings.

Buttler finally got out in the penultimate over, holed out to David Warner at long-on off Mutafizur Rahman.

Towards the end, skipper Sanju Samson (46 not out off 19 balls) played a little cameo to help RR cross the 200-run mark and register the highest score of the season.

balls. It was raining fours and sixes for both Buttler and Padikkal as both the batters played confidently to deny success to DC bowlers.

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Struggling Kolkata face stern Gujarat Titans test

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Kolkata vs Gujarat
Live from 3:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1

Former champions Kolkata Knight Riders will be desperate to bring their flagging campaign back on track when they face leaders Gujarat Titans in the IPL here on Saturday.

Having suffered three defeats in a row, the Shreyas Iyer-led outfit has slipped to seventh in the table and the task gets tougher against the Titans, who have been a revelation in their maiden season.

The Hardik Pandya-led Gujarat Titans have been firing on all cylinders, with their batting prowess and bowling might.

Pandya pulled out of their last match against Chennai Super Kings owing to a groin injury but it was business as usual for the Titans as stand-in skipper Rashid Khan led the team to a three-wicket win over the four-time champions.

The biggest plus in their win against CSK was Rashid's sensational form with the bat as he smashed a 21-ball 40 to help his team chase down the target with a ball spare.

GT's opening combination may not have given them the desired start and most of the times the middle-order has rescued the Titans.

It was David Miller (94 not out from 51 balls) who anchored the show against Chennai after half the side were back in the pavilion with 87 runs inside 13 overs.

According to Rashid, Pandya's injury was "not serious and there's nothing to be worried about."

Pandya has been in super-

lative form with 228 runs from five innings at an average of 76.00.

The onus would be on Kolkata's bowlers to seize the momentum and stop the Titans' three-match winning run.

KKR's pace attack led by Pat Cummins and Umesh Yadav and spinner Varun Chakravarty (30 runs from two overs) were taken to cleaners by the Rajasthan Royals batters in their last match.

It remains to be seen if the team think-tank would bring back Tim Southee in the XI as the key lies in getting early breakthroughs and giving Sunil Narine a perfect stage to restrict the flow of runs.

Narine, a vital cog in KKR's wheel for long, has once again been their go-to man and boasts of the best economy rate of 5.03 after seven matches.

The batters have stopped taking risks against the Trinidadian and he would hope that their pace battery gives some early breakthroughs to make the task easier for the wrist spinner.

The game also throws an interesting match-up between former KKR batter Shubman Gill and Narine.

Gill had a fine start to the tournament and scored 84 (vs Delhi) and 96 (vs Punjab) but has gone quiet since then.

As for KKR batting, captain Iyer is fresh from a fine 85 against Rajasthan Royals, but he would hope their opening issue is resolved.

Ponting isolated for 5 days after family member tests COVID +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A family member of Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting has tested positive for COVID-19, forcing him to go into a five-day isolation, the IPL franchise said on Friday.

Ponting, though, has tested negative for the virus, the franchise that has been battling a slew of COVID cases over the past few days announced hours before its IPL match against Rajasthan Royals.

The family has now been moved into an isolation facility.

"Ponting himself has tested negative twice subsequently. However, in the best interest of the team, the management and medical team has decided that he will remain in isolation for five days, as he was a close contact," the Delhi Capitals said in the statement.

"He will, therefore, not be present at the ground for tonight's game against Rajasthan Royals. The franchise requests for Ponting and his family's privacy to be respected in the current scenario," it added.

The condition of all individuals in the bubble who have tested positive so far is being closely monitored. "The team looks forward to everyone's speedy recovery."

MI need to grab crunch moments: Sachin

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians team mentor Sachin Tendulkar has called T20 a "cruel" format where small margins are crucial and suggested that the struggling five-time IPL champions go out and win the crunch moments to arrest their slide.

Mumbai Indians have had a disastrous campaign this season. The Rohit Sharma-led side remains winless, having lost all its seven matches so far.

"Let's first understand that in this format there isn't a team who has not experienced what Mumbai Indians have experienced this season," Tendulkar told Matthew Hayden during a chat on 'Star Sports'.

"This format can be cruel. And those crucial moments in a match which don't go in your favour then literally the margin is like... you lose a game by two or three runs or sometimes even the last ball."



"And those smaller margins, we need to go out and conquer those moments, those crunch moments in the match are what we have to win. And they haven't gone our way," he said. The cricket icon said the players especially the youngsters will take some time to settle in.

Jayawardene backs struggling Rohit, Ishan

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene has backed out-of-form openers Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan, saying a turnaround is certainly possible and he would be concerned only if the duo was not hitting the ball well.

Rohit Sharma hasn't been his usual self, the destructive batter that used to pummel the opposition attacks to submission.

Rohit, who could not open his account against CSK on Thursday night, has managed only 114 runs from seven innings this season.

"It has been up and down. To be honest, Ishan batted really well in the first couple of games, and then a bit of a slide. Ro (Rohit) has been hitting the ball really well, he gets good starts, 15-20 runs, looking good and then not being able to convert," Jayawardene said.

gone our way," he said.

"This is a new team, a young team. It may take a little more time to settle down, but these phases are such where you have to ride through these phases, stick together as a team and find the solution."

Sunrisers square up against RCB

PTI ■ MUMBAI

RCB vs Sunrisers
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1

Umaran Malik's raw pace and Bhuvneshwar Kumar's consistency will be put to test against Dinesh Karthik's explosive batting and the finesse of Faf du Plessis when Sunrisers Hyderabad clash with Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL, here on Saturday.

Malik has caught everyone's attention with his fiery deliveries this season. His tear-way pace has even troubled established batters such as Shreyas Iyer.

Alongside senior teammate Bhuvneshwar, the 22-year-old formed a match-winning partnership to defeat Punjab Kings by seven-wickets in their previous outing.

Sunrisers, who are targeting a top-4 position, also have yorker-specialist T Natarajan and South African Marco Jansen in their ranks. Jansen has also been able to tease batters with his angles and variations.

But the seasoned Du Plessis and Karthik have pummelled the best in the business.

The new RCB skipper roared back to form with a fine 96 as he anchored his team's innings after the top order once again collapsed against Lucknow Super Giants.

However, the veteran South African batter missed out on a much deserved maiden IPL hundred in the 18-run win on Tuesday.

On the other hand, Karthik is enjoying one of his best seasons in the league. The wicketkeeper batter has taken the centre stage with his heroics for RCB.

With scores of 32 not out, 14 not out, 44 not out, 7 not

the rut of low scores.

Opener Anuj Rawat, who apart from a 66 against Mumbai Indians, has failed to capitalise on the opportunity provided to him, S Prabhudessai and Glenn Maxwell too will be hoping to provide substantial contributions with the bat.

Their bowling unit, however, is their strong suite, which was not the case in the previous seasons.

Josh Hazlewood has quickly become an irreplaceable piece in the RCB set up. The Australian quick has managed to dominate opposition batters with his consistent line and lengths.

In Hazlewood, Harshal Patel, Mohammed Siraj and Wanindu Hasaranga, RCB have four match-winners, while Maxwell and Shabbaz Ahmed have also played their part well.

They will be up against a SRH batting unit where every batter has taken the responsibility to take their side over the line.

Promoting Abhishek Sharma to the opener's spot has done wonders for the youngster, who has been fabulous at the top, providing SRH aggressive starts.

Skipper Kane Williamson is also back among runs while Rahul Tripathi has shown he too can win matches with the bat when he struck a 37-ball 71 against KKR.

And if the top order fails, the duo of South African Aiden Markram and swashbuckling Nicholas Pooran are there to finish off matches or set huge targets.

A win for Sunrisers will elevate them to the top-4 while a victory for RCB will help them grab the top spot.

A win for Sunrisers will elevate them to the top-4 while a victory for RCB will help them grab the top spot.

It's very good that Dhoni is still hungry: Jadeja

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

MS Dhoni "is still hungry" Mand Chennai Super Kings stay afloat in IPL-15 after the legend's latest Houdini act at a death. And they are all that matter to skipper Ravindra Jadeja.

Five defeats from seven outings became a thing of the past after Dhoni turned back the clock to script a memorable three-wicket victory for CSK against MI on Thursday.

"It's very good that he is still hungry (for runs and wins)," the new CSK skipper said after Dhoni's 13-ball 28 propelled the team to an epic win over their arch-rivals.

"His touch is still there. And looking at it, all of us remain calm, that if he is in the middle and stays till the final over, he will win the game," added Jadeja.

"We were tense but had a belief that he (Dhoni) was out there, he would finish the game and come. He has won so many games for India, in the IPL, we knew that he would finish the game."

Dhoni (28 off 13) batted like the finisher of his hey days to help CSK get the required 17 runs off the final over to win their second game of the season and extend Mumbai Indians' winless streak to seven games.

He smashed a six and four off third and fourth ball off

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Jaydev Unadkat before maintaining his calm to put one past short-fine leg for the match-winning boundary, leaving the bowler and the rest of his Mumbai teammates shattered.

"Look we were in pressure and the way the match was going, I believe there was pressure in both the dugouts. As the world's best finisher (Dhoni) was out in the middle."

"Somewhere we knew that if he (Dhoni) stays till the last ball, then definitely he would win the game for us. We had the belief that he wouldn't miss the final two-three balls and luckily that happened," Jadeja said at the virtual post-match press conference.

Anshu, Radhika clinch Silver in Asian C'ship

PTI ■ ULAANBAATAR

Anshu Malik finally lost in the title clash after winning three earlier bouts in a dominant fashion to clinch a Silver in the 57kg category at the Asian Wrestling Championships here on Friday.

Radhika also won a Silver in 65kg category while Manisha bagged a Bronze in the 62kg division.

Anshu lost to Tsugumi Sakurai of Japan by fall in the Gold medal bout.

The Indian was dominance personified as she won all her three earlier bouts by technical superiority before losing to Sakurai in the 57kg final.

assure herself a third Asian Championship medal.

She had won a Bronze in the 2020 edition at home and won the 57kg title last year in Almaty.

Anshu, who became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the World Championship final last year, began with a win over Uzbekistan's Shokhida Akhmedova and followed that up with another dominating victory against Singapore's Danielle Sue Ching Lim, who appeared at sea against her superior Indian rival.

Anshu hardly gave her rivals time to think or strategise as she pulled off move after move with ease to bamboozle them.

She overpowered Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the semifinals, beginning with a four-point throw that ensued from a double-leg attack.

Amir set to play for Gloucestershire

PTI ■ LONDON

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir is set to make a surprise return to First-Class cricket less than two years after announcing his international retirement as he has signed a short-term contract with Gloucestershire to play in the County Championship.

The 30-year-old pacer was signed by Gloucestershire for a three-match deal and will be available for selection for County Championship matches against Surrey, Hampshire and Somerset.

"The overseas signing will provide Glos with an experienced seam option as cover for the absent Naseem Shah, who will be unavailable for selection until the T20 Vitality Blast campaign," Gloucestershire said in a statement on Friday.

"Amir has linked up with the Gloucestershire squad in Lancashire and will be in-line to



make his first-team debut for The Shire against Surrey at the Seat United Stadium in Bristol, on Thursday 28 April." It added. Amir, who has played 36 Tests and picked up 119 wickets after making his debut in 2009, had announced his retirement from international cricket in December 2020 due to his

ICC appoints Wasim Khan as its GM-Cricket

DUBAI: The ICC on Friday appointed Wasim Khan, the former chief executive of Pakistan Cricket Board, as its General Manager - Cricket to succeed Geoff Allardice. Khan, who will take up his post next month, was also previously the Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Cricket Club and Chance to Shine. He last held the post of PCB CEO. He will take over from Allardice who spent eight years in the role before being appointed as the ICC CEO. PTI

differences with the then national team coaching duo of Misbah-ul-Haq and Waqar Younis.