

**WORLD 5**US SHOOTINGS EXPOSE  
DIVISIONS ON GUN ISSUE**MONEY 6**'THERMAL COAL DEMAND TO  
INCREASE TO 1,500 MT BY 2040'**SPORT 7**ANAND'S WINNING RUN ENDS, BUT  
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## In jolt to Cong, 4 former Mins join BJP in Punjab

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
CHANDIGARH

In yet another setback to the Congress in Punjab, four of its leaders and former ministers Raj Kumar Verka, Balbir Singh Sidhu, Sunder Sham Arora and Gurpreet Singh Kangar joined the BJP here on Saturday.

Former Congress MLA from Barnala Kewal Dhillon and former SAD MLAs Sarup Chand Singla and Mohinder Kaur Josh too joined the BJP.

They joined the BJP in the presence of Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Som Parkash, State BJP chief Ashwani Sharma, and party leaders Dushyant Gautam, Tarun Chugh, Sunil Jakhar and Manjinder Singh Sirsa.

Balbir Sidhu, a three-time MLA from Mohali, was the Health Minister, while Gurpreet Kangar, a three-time MLA from Rampura Phul, was the Revenue Minister in the Congress Government. Verka, a prominent Dalit leader from the Majha region, is also a three-time legislator and was the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. Sunder Sham Arora, a former MLA from Hoshiarpur, was the Industry and Commerce Minister in the previous Congress Government.

*Continued on Page 2*

## 6 ex-BSP MLAs backing Raj Govt throw tantrums ahead of RS polls

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

A head of the June 10 Rajya Sabha polls, trouble continues to mount for Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The six BSP MLAs who had merged with the Congress are playing the hard ball by expressing their resentment against Gehlot in public and not reaching the resort where all Congress legislators from the party are herded.

Their move comes amidst the BJP queering the pitch for the Congress by supporting media baron Subash Chandra's candidature for the fourth seat from the State.

While the Congress central leadership summoned Gehlot's arch-rival Sachin Pilot to Delhi, the BSP, which has challenged the merger in Supreme Court, first urged the Governor and Speaker to bar the defected MLAs from voting in the RS polls and later issued a whip asking them to vote for Chandra.

Pilot reached Delhi and briefed the leadership about the latest development as he was



camping in Udaipur where the party's MLAs have been lodged ahead of the crucial polls. Talking to the media there, Pilot claimed the Congress shall win all the three seats.

But the Congress is falling 11 short of the required numbers and would need the support of the BSP MLAs and Independents.

The BJP has supported Chandra as its second candidate for the RS seat which has heightened the worries of the grand old party and thus it has taken its MLAs for political fencing to Udaipur in a resort where last month the party had the Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir.

The sudden political rumbling in Rajasthan is due to the six MLAs, who were seen enjoying a safari in Sariska

Reserve while the Congress legislators were going for camping in Udaipur. In fact, they are openly speaking about their annoyance with the Congress Government.

Rajendra Gudha, Minister of State for Sainik Kalyan, attacked Chief Minister Gehlot, saying the latter talks a lot but it will be better for him if he sits down and gets "anxious" instead.

He alleged that the Congress did not fulfil the promise made to them. Expressing his displeasure, he said, "It is a fact that the respect that should have been given to us was not given. I don't know what was their compulsion? Gehlot speaks a lot in the media. Ajay Maken promised us but he did not fulfil it."

Another BSP turned Congress MLA Wajib Ali raised questions about the stance of the bureaucracy and the lack of action against complaints sent to the Chief Minister. Ali was neither made a minister nor given a political appointment despite coming from BSP to Congress.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Transfer info leak puts Pandits' life in danger

**Kashmiri Pandit teachers' new posting locations revealed on social media****MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

Against the backdrop of a spate of targeted killings, the very purpose of the Jammu & Kashmir Government's move to transfer 177 Kashmiri Pandit teachers posted in Srinagar to "safer" locations has been defeated as the list has become public. The transfer list, prepared by the Office of Chief Education Officer, Srinagar, was out on social media on Friday. The community members said it has further endangered their lives.

Raising question marks, the Kashmiri migrant employees demanded an enquiry to ascertain how the transfer list was leaked in the public domain jeopardising their security. "We are already feeling insecure due to the prevailing security situation and now our new places of posting have been made public, defeating the very purpose of shifting us to safer zones," they said.

Local BJP leader in Srinagar Altaf Thakur also demanded a thorough investigation while urging the Government to take strong note of the leak and zero in on



Jammu-based Government employees, posted in Kashmir, during a protest rally demanding their transfer to their home districts, in Jammu on Saturday

PTI

the people who made the list public at a time when targeted killings are taking place in the Valley. The BJP spokesman demanded action against the officers involved in the leak.

On the other hand, Kashmiri Pandits' protests continued in Kashmir valley and in Jammu in support of their demand for relocation to safer places outside Kashmir valley. Though the majority of employees have already shifted to Jammu, those left behind are still holding the fort in support of their demands. Tight security arrangements have been made outside these transit camps to prevent their move-

ment outside the camps.

Several Kashmiri Pandit organizations, including Panun Kashmir, are gearing up for another round of confrontation as the Government had categorically rejected the proposal of shifting these employees to Jammu region.

The Panun Kashmir leadership has urged the Government employees to return to Jammu to launch a decisive struggle. "First of all, we appeal to all the employees working under the PM's package to return to Jammu and here we will launch a stir to address the issue.

*Continued on Page 2*

Sisodia alleges PPE scam by Assam CM, Sarma threatens defamation suit

**New Delhi/Guwahati:** Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday alleged Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma gave contracts to companies of his wife and son's business partners to supply PPE kits at "exorbitant rates" in 2020, a charge rebutted by the BJP leader who threatened to file a criminal defamation suit against the AAP leader.

At a press conference in Delhi, Sisodia said two websites had collaborated on the story on the alleged "scam" and published it two days ago.

Assam Government spokesman Pijush Hazarika said the allegations against the Sarma family were "false, imaginary and malicious". He said there was no scam and asked why the two media organisations were not going to the court if they had evidence.

**Detailed report on P4**

## CAPSULE

**OVER 800 BOOKED, 24 HELD IN KANPUR CLASH**

**Kanpur/Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh Police has booked over 800 people, arrested 24 in connection with rioting and violence in Kanpur.

**HUMPBK DOLPHINS' SIGHT AT MUMBAI SHORE**

**Mumbai:** A recent pilot study conducted in south Mumbai's Backbay region has confirmed 27 sightings of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins.

## Bhojpuri star Nirahua to contest Azamgarh bypoll on BJP ticket

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday named its candidates for the Lok Sabha and Assembly bypolls, including Bhojpuri star Dinesh Lal Nirahua from Azamgarh and former SP MLC Ghanshyam Lodhi from Rampur. The seats were vacated by Akhilesh Yadav and Azam Khan, who retained their Assembly seats.

The BJP also named the Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha for Assembly bypoll from Town Bordowal in Tripura and former councillor and State unit general secretary Rajesh Bhatia for the Rajinder Nagar Assembly bypolls in Delhi.

The Rajinder Nagar seat was vacated by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Raghav Chadha after his elevation to the Rajya Sabha. The AAP has fielded the party's MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak from the constituency.



Both Nirahua, who was defeated by Akhilesh in 2019, and Lodhi are OBCs. In Rampur, SP's Azam had contested and won in alliance with the BSP and the RLD.

With these nominations Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has lost out on the tickets for both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha. His RS seat term expires on July 7.

Like Union Minister RCP Singh of the JD(U), who could not get the Upper House seat, Naqvi too seems to be sailing in the same boat now.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Corbevax approved as first common booster

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Pharmaceuticals firm Biological E Ltd (BE) on Saturday said its Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax has been cleared by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) as a booster for the 18 plus after their primary vaccination with two doses of either Covishield or Covaxin.

With this, Corbevax becomes the first vaccine approved as a heterologous Covid-19 booster. This means that adults fully vaccinated with Covishield or Covaxin can take Corbevax as their third or booster shot.

The Corbevax booster dose can be given six months after administration of the second shot of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Recently, BE furnished its clinical trials data to the DCGI which after a evaluation and deliberations with the Subject Experts Committee, granted their approval for administering Corbevax as a heterologous booster dose to people who have been vaccinated.

*Continued on Page 2*

## No monkeypox case in Ghzb, says Govt

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Government on Saturday rejected reports that a girl has been found to be suffering from the monkeypox disease in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.

However, it said as a precautionary measures, the samples from the five-year-old girl have been sent for testing for monkeypox to ICMR NIV Pune.

## 12 killed, 21 hurt in Hapur chemical factory boiler blast

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

In a tragic incident, 12 workers died while 21 others sustained injuries when a boiler exploded at a chemical factory in western Uttar Pradesh's Hapur district on Saturday afternoon and the factory was engulfed in a blaze.

As per reports, there were 25 workers present in the factory located in the UPSIDC industrial area in Dholana, around 80 km from Delhi, when the incident occurred.

The impact of the explosion was so intense that the roofs of some of the factories located in the vicinity were also damaged. It took three hours for the fire tenders to douse the blaze in the factory.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered officials to extend all possible help to the victims and their families.

*Continued on Page 2*

## YouTube, Twitter told to take down simulated gangrape ad

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry on Saturday wrote to Twitter and YouTube to remove video advertisements of a deodorant brand called "shot" by brand Layer'r that triggered outrage for "promote rape culture".

An enquiry is being held by regulatory body, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) which found the ads going against the existing advertisement codes. For her part, the Delhi Commission for Women's chairman Swati Maliwal issued a notice to the Delhi Police seeking registration of an FIR and removal of the advertisement from mass media. The police have been asked to provide a report by June 9.



The first ad starts with a couple in the bedroom. Shortly after, four of the guy's friends enter the room and ask the "boyfriend", "Shot maara lagta hai (Seems you took the shot)?" He replies that he did, leaving the woman in shock. One of them then rolls up his sleeves and begins to approach the bed saying, "Ab humari baari (Now it's our turn)".

The woman recoils in fear of being attacked but the ad

then reveals that the man was just picking up the perfume bottle from the dresser.

The second ad is shot in a grocery store where a group of men are seen having a conversation, standing behind a woman. One of them says, "Hum char aur ye sirf ek (We're four and this is just one)", when another man asks, "To shot kaun lega (Who will take the shot)?"

*Continued on Page 2*

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# Dolphins sighted 27 times along Mumbai coast in pilot study

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A recent pilot study conducted in south Mumbai's Backbay region has confirmed 27 sightings of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins, a development that has prompted the Maharashtra government to launch a detailed population study of marine mammals along the Mumbai coastline.

In what came as something to cheer for nature lovers on the eve of the World Environment Day, the Maharashtra State Mangrove Cell announced on Saturday that it would launch first-of-its-kind detailed population estimation study of dolphins along the coastline of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

The announcement follows the outcome of a preliminary research exercise carried



out by the Coastal Conservation Foundation (CCF), which was sanctioned by the Maharashtra State Mangrove Foundation, determined the population and habitat usage of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins in the Backbay region of south Mumbai. The study confirmed 27 sightings of dolphins of which the largest group comprised six individuals.

After the detailed census of marine mammals along the MMR coastline, Mumbaikars will have a clarity about the number of Dolphins along the 150 km-long Mumbai coastline.

Dolphins are endangered cetacean species, protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Mumbai's waters are known to harbour at least two

cetaceans - the Indian Ocean humpback dolphin (Sousa plumbea) and the Indo-Pacific finless porpoise (Neophocaena phocaenoides), as per anecdotal sightings and documented stranding.

Indian Ocean humpback dolphins reside in groups of up to twelve individuals, however, this number varies greatly. Sciaenid fish, cephalopods, and crustaceans make up their food. The species is listed as Globally Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Cetaceans such as dolphins that live in close proximity to coastal development and its ramifications have a high death rate owing to anthropogenic disturbances such as fishing entanglement, pollution, habitat degradation, and noise pollution.

## India's religious ethos based on common religious, spiritual foundation: Kovind

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

India's cultural ethos has a common religious and spiritual foundation from east to west and north to south, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Saturday.

Kovind was addressing the centenary celebrations of Gita Press, the world's largest publisher of Hindu religious texts. "From east to west and north to south, India's cultural ethos has a common religious and spiritual foundation. Ramayan is popular not only in Hindi but also in Tamil and Gujarati," he said.

India has a long tradition of its rulers following 'Dharm' and 'Anushaasan' (discipline).

"It is said that Dharm and governance move along together and they complement each other. And today, this is visible here. Yogi (Adityanath) ji is the chief minister of this state and also the Gorakhspeeth Peethadhiswar (chief seer). Two things imbibed in one per-

son is a big thing," Kovind said.

The President termed the Gita Press, launched in 1923 by Jaya Dayal Goyanka and Ghanshyam Das Jalan for promoting the principles of Sanatan Dharma, a "temple of literature".

"For an ordinary person like me, the perception was that this was a press. But today, it is seen that the Gita Press is not only a press, it is a temple of literature."

"The contribution our temples and pilgrimage places have made in saving the 'Sanatan Dharma', a similar contribution has been made by literature which is being published by Gita Press," he said.

The President said, "It is my honour that I am participating in the centenary celebrations of Gita Press. This must be the result of some 'punya' (good work) done in previous births. Before coming here, I also met the staff of the Gita Press. The honesty, dedication and goodwill which I saw in them is

unparalleled."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the press was established in 1923 at a facility rented for Rs 10, "And today, this has assumed the shape of a 'vattvriksha' (banyan tree) and is serving the country with 'dharma' and 'sanskara' (values)."

In 1955, the then President Rajendra Prasad had inaugurated the main door of the press, he recalled.

Governor Anandiben Patel credited Gita Press with giving people easy access to 'Bhagavad Gita' and 'Ramcharitmanas', among other religious texts.

The President later visited the Gorakhnath temple and performed worship there.

In the temple campus, folk artists welcomed him with songs and dance and the President got down from his vehicle and went among the artistes to cheer them.

The President fed cows jaggery, roti, and green fodder in the temple Gaushala.

## Over dozen buffaloes die after drinking 'toxic' water

PTI ■ MATHURA

Around 13 buffaloes died on Saturday allegedly after drinking water from a drain in Kosikalan industrial area of Mathura, officials said.

Chhata Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kamlesh Goyal said some farmers had brought the cattle here from Bayana of Rajasthan's Bharatpur for fodder and water. "Around a dozen buffaloes died after consuming water in Kosikalan industrial area," Goyal said confirming the report, and added the matter is being probed.

"If water flowing in the drain is found to be toxic, then action will be initiated against the factory owners," he said. The bodies of the dead buffaloes have been sent for post mortem at Mathura's Deendayal Pashu Chikitsa Vigyan Vishwavidyalaya.

## Hizbul terrorist neutralised in anti-terrorist operation

PNS ■ JAMMU

A top commander of pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfit has been neutralised in an anti-terrorist operation in Anantnag. During the operation three army personnel and one civilian also received injuries.

According to a police spokesman, "a joint cordon and search operation was launched in the Rishipora area of Anantnag on Friday evening. As the joint team was establishing the cordon around the suspected area, the hiding terrorist started indiscriminate firing upon the search party which was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter".

In the ensuing encounter, the hiding terrorist was killed and his body was retrieved from the site of encounter. The slain terrorist has been

identified as Nisar Khanday (Commander of proscribed terror outfit HM) and active since year 2018. In the initial exchange of fire, 03 army personnel & a civilian got injured. All the injured were immediately airlifted to 92 Base Hospital Srinagar for treatment & are stated to be stable.

As per police records, Nisar Khanday was a categorized terrorist and was part of the groups involved in several terror cases including attacks on Police/SF and civilian atrocities. According to a police spokesman, Khanday was earlier arrested in 2000 along with arms/ammunition and detained under PSA. "Before joining terrorist ranks in year 2018, the killed terrorist was working as the terrorist associate of proscribed terror outfit HM", police spokesman added.

## Hasn't made masks mandatory, but appeal people to use them: Maha Health Minister

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after State Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Dr Pradeep Vyas announced that "mask is a must in closed public spaces", Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Saturday that the state government had not decided to make masks mandatory in the state but appealed to the people to use masks when in closed spaces.

The minister's clarification about the use of mask came on a day when Maharashtra recorded 1,357 fresh daily Covid-19 cases, the highest-ever daily positive pandemic cases since February this year. The state had recorded 1081, 1045 and 1134 daily positive cases on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday respectively.

Talking to media persons in Pune, Tope said that the use of the word "must" in a three-page letter sent to local

civic bodies had caused the confusion.

"Districts like Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Pune and Raigad have seen a small surge in numbers. In this regard, the health ministry had sent a letter asking for action to be taken. The letter had the word 'must' which seems to have created confusion," Tope said.

Having taken serious cognisance of the sudden spurt in the Covid-19 cases in the state, State Health Secretary Vyas had — in a letter sent to all the district authorities in the state — had said "Masks in closed public spaces like trains, buses, cinemas, auditoriums, offices, hospitals, colleges schools is a must".

Alluding to reports in sections of the media about the state government having made masks compulsory for the people, Tope said that this was not the case. "As of now, there is no compulsion but I appeal to the

people to use masks in closed spaces. The state government is keeping a close watch on the situation and necessary action would be taken after 10 to 15 days," the Health Minister said. "Most cases being reported are mild. We have asked the district authorities to ramp up vaccination and increase testing," Tope said.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra on Friday recorded more than 1,000 daily Covid-19 cases for the fourth consecutive day since February this year.

On Saturday, the state logged 1,357 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of Covid-19 cases from 78,90,346 to 78,91,703.

With one fresh Covid-19 triggered death reported during the day, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state in March 2020 rose from 1,47,864 to 1,47,865.

## Mayawati to campaign for BSP candidate in Azamgarh bypoll

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party has released a list of 40 star campaigners for the upcoming bypoll to Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat.

The bypoll has been necessitated by the resignations of Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav after his election to UP assembly from Karhal constituency in March last.

The BSP has already announced Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamal as its candidate for the Azamgarh bypoll.

BSP chief and former chief minister of UP Mayawati will also be campaigning for her party candidate along with other senior leaders of the party for the next 15 days in Azamgarh.

The polling at Azamgarh will be held on June 23. Samajwadi Party and

Bharatiya Janata Party have also declared their candidates for the Azamgarh bypoll.

The SP has announced to field Sushil Anand while the BJP has announced Dinesh Lal 'Nirahua' as its candidate from Azamgarh, making the bypoll a multi-cornered contest.

Nirahua had tweeted on Friday asking the people in Azamgarh to vote for the BJP. He was the BJP candidate from Azamgarh in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls as well.

Nirahua wrote on Twitter, "Jati dharam na kauno bharam na kauno manbad ke liye. Kamal ka button dabai bhaiya Azamgarh ke liye. (Not for caste or any strongman, push the button of lotus for Azamgarh)."

Apart from Nirahua, pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home

Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BJP president JP Nadda were also on the poster that was tweeted by him.

Those whose names have been included by the BSP in the star campaigners' list include BSP chief Mayawati, Bhim Rajbhar, Munquad Ali, Vijay Pratap, Rajkumar Gautam, Umashankar Singh, Manoj Kumar, Harishchandra Gautam, Onkar Shastri, Baliram, Indalram, Amarnath, Vinod Chauhan, Vijay Kumar, Santosh Ram, Sangeeta Azad, Azad Arimardan, Shalim Ansari, OP Tripathi, Arvind Kumar, Jitendra Kumar Bharti, Raj Vijay, Ashwini Kumar, Ram Vilas Bhaskar, Chetai Ram, Ramji Saroj, Hariram Bhaskar, Chandradhari Suman, Shailendra Maharaj, Shailendra Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, and Chandra Prakash Vimal.

## Vlogger booked for abusing Mamata over KK's last concert

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A case was filed against vlogger Roddur Roy on Saturday for allegedly abusing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over KK's last concert, police said.

The case was lodged under relevant sections of the IPC after a complaint was filed by TMC spokesperson Riju Dutta at Chitpur police station, they said. "An investigation has been started in the matter as per the relevant sections of the IPC. He has been summoned as a part of the probe," he said.

Roy, who widely uses expletives in his social media posts, used a barrage of abuses against Mamata.

## Crime Branch of Delhi Police arrests 3 for supplying drugs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In two separate incidents, the Crime Branch of Delhi Police has arrested three people, including a Nigerian national indulging in supplying and selling drugs in the national Capital. Police said that they have also recovered contraband worth around Rs 21 crore from them.

The accused have been identified as Ankush, a resident of Timarpur, Anthony, a native of Nigeria and Sanjay, a resident of Uttam Nagar.

According to K P S Malhotra, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Crime Branch, in the first incident, specific inputs were received on May 25 regarding drug peddling by Ankush.

"Thereafter, a trap was laid near main Keshav Nagar and he was arrested. A total of 505 grams of fine quality heroin was seized from his possession," said the DCP.

"During interrogation, Ankush revealed that his father was involved in sale of illicit liquor. His mother was also previously involved in drug trafficking," said the DCP adding that he used to procure the drugs from Sultanpuri.

In another operation on May 27, acting on a tip-off, a trap was laid near power house, Dabri Mahavir Enclave. The Nigerian national and Sanjay were held from the spot, said the DCP.

Three kilograms of heroine were seized from the duo's possession. Anthony was the mastermind of the syndicate.

## 13K lives saved by Samaritans: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday claimed that about 13,000 lives have been saved by good samaritans under the Delhi government's 'Farishtey Dilli Ke' scheme.

The scheme, launched in October 2019, encourages people to rescue those who have met with road accidents.

Addressing an event at the Thyagaraj Stadium, Kejriwal said, in some cases it becomes difficult for medical aid to reach an area during an emergency because of congestion.

"But, under our 'Farishtey Dilli Ke' scheme, this issue is being addressed. About 13,000 human lives have been saved so

far, under this scheme," he said.

Under the scheme, the Delhi government incurs the expenditure for treating eligible road accident victims and gives incentives to those who helped them.

In February 2021, Kejriwal tweeted that over 10,000 lives had been saved under the scheme.

"People are coming forward to help each other. You should also help those who met with any road accident. To save someone's life is a pious act," Kejriwal had tweeted.

The Delhi chief minister, while launching the scheme, had said that at least 3,000 lives were saved during the pilot project of the initiative which ran for 18 months.

## Ministry of Road Transport and Highways implements IRAD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to reduce the road accidents in the national capital, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has implemented Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD) project which will work as a watchdog of road accidents. This IRAD mobile app will help in analysing the black spots where most of the accidents take place, which will help the stakeholders to take necessary steps regarding the issue.

The major stakeholders in the IRAD project are Delhi Police, Transport department, health department and Highway department.

## UP on way to become defence production hub

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is on its way to becoming a defence production hub as BrahMos Aerospace will produce 80 to 100 new BrahMos missiles every year at their Lucknow facility starting mid-2024.

According to BrahMos Aerospace CEO and MD Atul D Rane, construction work is in full swing in Lucknow.

"Production of the current version of BrahMos can start once the facility is set up. Assuming all things are smooth in the set-up and professional attestation of the facility, the first BrahMos of the current version can be rolled out by mid 2024," he said.

The BrahMos missile was the center of attraction in the exhibition at the ground-

breaking ceremony. The prestigious BrahMos missile autonomous launcher is displayed at one of the 110 stalls in the exhibition at the venue of the third ground breaking ceremony held in the state capital on Friday.

Rane said that the feasibility study of the missile was nearing completion and once these preliminary studies were over, a detailed design of the system would start. He said if things went on smoothly, the joint venture of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) India and NPOM of Russia planned to finish detailed designing within two years followed by system trials.

The timeline to roll out the future generation of missiles (BrahMos-NG) will be 5-7 years from now.

## Transfer info leak puts...

From Page 1

We will mobilise the whole community and organise a series of protests to raise our voice across different quarters," a senior Panun Kashmir activist told a gathering here in Jammu on Saturday. On the other hand, Jammu-based employees of reserved categories deployed in Kashmir valley have also intensified their agitation in support of the new transfer policy. The employees camping here for the last one week disrupted traffic on the main Tawi bridge and demanded the Union Territory administration to immediately frame a new transfer policy as per which they should be accommodated in their own home districts. "We are serving in Kashmir valley since 2007 and till date we have not been transferred even once. We are not going to resume our duties till the time the UT administration comes up with the new transfer policy," the employees demanded.

## YouTube, Twitter told...

From Page 1

The girl, overhearing the conversation, turns around in anger and fear when the ad reveals they were discussing the last remaining bottle of the body spray.

In emails to Twitter and YouTube, the Ministry said the ads violate the Rule 3(1)(b)(ii) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021. The Government said the video has been "viewed close to a million times and also shared on other social media platforms." The emails called the attention of the social media platforms to "certain videos which appear to be an advertisement of a company, and are being posted by several users on the intermediary platform Twitter" and the "video titled 'LAYERR SHOT MALL 15 OPT2 HINDI SUB HD' published" on June 3.

"The above-mentioned video is detrimental to the portrayal of women in the interest of decency or morality, and in violation of the rule 3(1)(b)(ii) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which inter-alia provides that the users shall not host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any information which is insulting or harassing on the basis of gender," the emails to both the platforms noted. The Ministry said the ASCI too has found the videos in violation of its guidelines and asked the advertiser to suspend the advertisement on an immediate basis.

Maliwal has also written to Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur demanding that the "misogynistic" advertisement being played on mass media be taken off air. The DCW said the advertisement "promoted gang-rap culture".

According to Twitter users, the ads were broadcast during the England vs New Zealand cricket match.

## Bhojpuri star Nirahua to contest....

From Page 1

BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said the Central Election Committee has approved the names for the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly bypolls.

In Tripura, new Chief Minister Saha will contest from Town Bordowali, Dr Ashok Sinha (Agartala), Swapna Das Paul (Surma) and Malina Debnath (Jubrajnagar).

Besides, Gangotri Kujur is BJP candidate from Mandar Assembly constituency of Jharkhand and Gundlapalli Bharath Kumar Yadav from Atmakur assembly seat in Andhra Pradesh.

June 6 is the last day of filing of nomination for Lok Sabha and Assembly bypolls. Polling will be held on June 23 and counting of votes will take place on June 26.

## Corbevax approved as first...

From Page 1

The BE's clinical trial data showed that its Corbevax booster dose provided significant enhancement in immune response and excellent safety profile required for an effective booster. Mahima Datla, Managing Director of Biological E Ltd, said, "We are very happy with this approval, which will address the need for Covid-19 booster doses in India. We have crossed yet another milestone in our Covid-19 vaccination journey. This approval reflects once again the sustained world class safety standards and high

immunogenicity of Corbevax."

Biological E cuts price of its Covid vaccine to Rs 250 per dose. Biological E had earlier said the price of Corbevax has been reduced to ₹250 from ₹840 a dose, inclusive of GST, for private vaccination centres.

It would result in end users paying a price of ₹400 a dose, including taxes and administration charges, the company had said in a statement.

Previously, in private vaccination centres the overall cost to end users of the vaccine was ₹990 a dose, including taxes and administration charges, it added.

## 12 killed, 21 injured...

From Page 1

Yogi conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families. The senior police officials and district administration officials were at the spot and were carrying out an investigation.

Earlier, Inspector General of Police Praveen Kumar said that eight persons lost their lives in the incident. Out of the 17 remaining workers, 15 were hospitalized while the rest of the workers suffered minor injuries. The factory is located adjacent to a CNG pump.

## In jolt to Cong, 4 former Mins join BJP....

From Page 1

Balbir Sidhu's brother Amarjit Singh Sidhu, who is the mayor of Mohali corporation, too joined the BJP. Earlier in the day, Verka, Arora, Kangar and Sidhu were seen with the BJP leaders Sunil Jakhar and Manjinder Singh Sirsa in Chandigarh.

However, Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring wished a sarcastic 'good luck' to the members who quit the party and said that he is "grateful" for the seats to be vacant for young leaders. "Best of luck for joining BJP. Grateful that the 'elite' who enjoyed all the privileges in the party have vacated the space for the younger leadership from the common background," he tweeted.

## 6 ex-BSP MLAs backing Raj...

From Page 1

This is considered the main reason for his "displeasure".

Apart from Gudha and Ali, two other BSP-turned-Congress leaders including Lakhman Singh (Karauli MLA) and Sandeep Kumar (Tijara, Alwar) are also yet to reach Udaipur. Also missing are Girraj Singh (Bari, Dholpur) and Khiladi Lal Bairwa (Basari, Dholpur).

Sources said Chief Minister Gehlot has taken the charge to bring all MLAs to Udaipur.

Ali further has left the Chief Minister red-faced by denying his claim. Gehlot a day earlier had told the media that the Central Government has issued notice to Congress MLA Ali and is threatening the MLAs during the Rajya Sabha elections.



# HC stays order that allowed lawyer's presence during ED quizzing of Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has stayed a trial court order allowing the presence of a lawyer at a visible but not audible distance during the interrogation of Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

Justice Yogesh Khanna observed that when there is credible material to indicate the real and live apprehension of a possible threat or coercion being employed at the time of recording of statement, such a direction may be passed but since there is no apprehension raised in the present matter, the direction ought not to have been given as a matter of right.

The judge, who had on June 3 reserved its order on the Enforcement Directorate's plea challenging the direction, further noted that since there is neither any FIR nor a complaint against the respondent (Jain) thus he cannot as a matter of right claim to have the presence of his lawyers during the course of recording of his statement. Even otherwise recording of the statement is videographed and audiographed which would dispel the apprehension of any coercion and threat, the court added.

The stay order was passed on a plea by the ED challenging the trial court's May 31 order allowing the presence of



a lawyer, at a distance, during Jain's interrogation in its custody from May 31 till June 9.

"In view of the above since there is neither any FIR nor a complaint against the respondent (Jain) thus he cannot as a matter of right claim to have the presence of his lawyers during the course of recording of his statement..."

Even otherwise, admittedly, his entire recording of statement is videographed and audiographed which certainly would dispel the apprehension of any coercion, threat to the respondent," noted the court in its order released on Saturday.

"If a litigant in a particular case is able to produce credible material to indicate the real and live apprehension of a possible threat, coercion being

employed, while recording his statement, this court can always permit at visible, but not an audible range during the course of recording of the statement but since there is no apprehension raised in the present matter, hence as a matter of right such direction ought not to have been given in the recording of statement.

Thus, the impugned direction in para No.26 of order dated 31.05.2022 stands stayed," said the court which listed the matter for further hearing on August 24.

Jain was arrested on May 30 under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the trial court on May 31 remanded him to the ED's custody till June 9.

While remanding Jain to the ED's custody, the trial court had allowed his plea that during the time of enquiry/investigation of the accused, one advocate of the accused shall be allowed to remain present at a safe distance where he can see the accused but not hear him.

The ED had assailed the order before the high court on the ground that it was contrary to various decisions of the Supreme Court and the law.

Lawyers representing Jain had opposed the agency's plea and said it was an "extraordinary case" as the prosecution has filed the petition despite the law being against them.

## CM: Centre admitted in HC that Jain not accused

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday slammed the Centre over calling Minister Satyendar Jain corrupt. He said the Centre has itself admitted in the court that Jain is not an "accused".

Addressing the media, Kejriwal said the huge conspiracy against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders has been exposed as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) submitted in Delhi High Court that Jain is not an accused.

"The Centre has itself admitted in the court that Jain is not an 'accused', when he is not an accused then how can they call him corrupt?" Kejriwal said. Delhi CM also took it to Twitter and wrote, "Centre has itself admitted in the court that Satyendar Jain is not an 'accused'."

When he is not an accused then how can they call him corrupt? Manish Sisodia has revealed what corruption looks like. He has exposed large scale corruption of the BJP." Meanwhile, AAP senior leader and Rajya Sabha Member



Sanjay Singh said the ED has itself admitted in the High Court that there is no complaint or FIR registered against Delhi Health Minister Jain.

BJP-controlled Centre's ED is transforming into an institution that humiliates and imprisons opposition leaders. "Major corrupt business tycoons like Vijay Mallya, Lalit Modi, Nitin Sandesara, and Yeddyurappa, Vyapam scammers, and Eshwarappa are not prosecuted by the Modi government's ED, while opposition is baselessly targeted."

The BJP is envious because the Delhi government's Mohalla Clinics are praised all over world, hence they had Health Minister jailed on a fake charge," Singh concluded.

Rajinder Nagar bypoll: Former councillor Rajesh BJP candidate



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday nominated former councillor Rajesh Bhatia as its candidate for Rajinder Nagar Assembly bypoll in Delhi. The AAP has fielded Durgesh Pathak from Rajinder Nagar while the Congress is yet to declare its candidate for the seat.

Bhatia, who belongs to the Punjabi community that forms a large chunk of votes in Rajinder Nagar, is also a former general secretary of the BJP's Delhi unit. Later, he was elevated to the post of general secretary.

He was elected as a councillor in 2012 from the Rajinder Nagar municipal ward of the erstwhile North Delhi Municipal Corporation. The assembly seat fell vacant after MLA Raghav Chadha, a senior leader of the AAP party was elected to Rajya Sabha from Punjab. The BJP had last won seat in 2013. The by-elections in high-profile Rajendra Nagar constituency in national capital will be held on June 23.

## DCP involved in bar brawl relieved of duty

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Shankar Choudhary has been relieved from his duty" after his name cropped up in a bar brawl in which a woman was allegedly injured.

The incident came to light on the intervening night of Friday-Saturday when a woman reached Max hospital for treatment of a head injury. Her husband later made a PCR call claiming a DCP-ranked officer had assaulted his wife at a Delhi club. The complaint, however, was withdrawn later.

"Shankar Choudhary IPS 2011 is hereby relieved from his duty as DCP/Dwarka, Delhi with immediate effect and directed to report to police headquarters for further orders."

This issues with the approval of Commissioner of Police, Delhi," an official order issued by Delhi Police Commissioner, Rakesh Asthana office read.

The complainant had said that the injury took place at a private club named 'Uncultured Club' in south Delhi. DCP Shankar Choudhary was also there with his family..

"On the intervening night of Friday-Saturday, a woman received an inflicted injury on her head after a glass was thrown in a private birthday party in Kailash Colony. Her husband later called police and alleged the involvement of the officer," a general diary entry stated. According to police,

Greater Kailash police station received information in the wee hours of Saturday in which it was mentioned that a DCP rank officer of the Delhi Police has assaulted a woman at a birthday party in a private club named 'Uncultured Club' in south Delhi.

A video clip of the victim was received where she stated that she along with her family was celebrating the birthday party of a family member. The concerned officer was also present along with his family, a senior police officer said.

During the function, a glass fell upon the woman and she was injured. The husband of the woman got infuriated upon this as one person in the party was playing with the glass at that time, the officer said.

"Due to a miscommunication, the name of the DCP cropped up in the ensuing commotion. The matter has been resolved as it was a family issue," said a senior police official.

But hours later the statement by police, the DCP, Dwarka was asked to report to the Police headquarters.

"An internal enquiry was initiated in the matter after the incident came to light," said police officials. The complainant, in a purported video, termed taking the name of DCP as "miscommunication".

"The DCP and his wife had come to the party but after one or two hours they left the party."

## LG acting like dummy of BJP Govt: AAP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday once again slammed the Lieutenant Governor over calling another meeting of Delhi Jal Board (DJB) officers. They (AAP) also said the LG is acting like a dummy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government.

Addressing the media, AAP legislator of the Kalkaji constituency Atishi said the LG

is continuously making a mockery out of Delhi's constitutional arrangement. He called another meeting of DJB officers without informing the CM.

"The Supreme Court's constitutional bench has clearly stated that the LG only has power over land, law and order and police; everything else is under the elected government. Delhi's law and order situation is in shambles since the new LG took oath, there have been dozens of shameful incidents like sexual harassment on the metro, and rape in areas," she said.

"I request the LG to pay attention to the cleanliness of Delhi, giving shelter to the people and law and order and safety of women instead of interfering with the jurisdiction of the state government. The LG himself is in a constitutional post, it does not suit him to flout the Constitution," Atishi

said. "On 30th May, LG called a meeting of DJB officers. Two days after that, AAP raised questions on the legitimacy of the meeting."

At that point we thought that the LG was newly-elected and perhaps therefore, he was not aware about the constitutional provisions," she stated. "But today, he once again ille-

gally chaired another meeting of the DJB, without informing the elected state government, without informing the Chief Minister of Delhi. He summoned the officials of DJB and also went on an inspection to two sites, Pappankalan sewage treatment plant and Dhansa regulator." She concluded.

## LG OK's 918 posts in hospital in Dwarka

New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has approved the creation of 918 posts at the Indira Gandhi Hospital in Dwarka and the conversion of 76 temporary posts at Dr Baba Sahib Ambedkar Medical College into permanent ones.

According to a statement, 144 posts of teaching faculty, 44 of junior residents, 369 of nursing staff, 58 of administrative

staff and 273 of support staff (technicians, assistants, nursing orderlies, security supervisors and security guards) have been created at the Indira Gandhi Hospital.

The hospital had been facing a shortage of staff due to various reasons and the decision will put an end to adhocism in appointments on regular government posts, the statement said. SR

## Kejriwal forms committees to look after high-mast Tirangas

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said his Government has formed volunteers-based committees to look after all the 500 high-mast tricolours that are being installed on flagpoles across the city under its 'Deshbhakti Budget'.

"Each flag's condition will be monitored, cared for by the respective five-member Tiranga Samman Samiti in Delhi. Tiranga Samman Samiti will report to PWD officials if a flag gets torn, soiled or has any blemish due to dust, storm or pollution. The samiti will ensure that the tricolour is there as per the flag code,"

Kejriwal said at an event organised to address the volunteers of Tiranga Samman Samiti at the Thyagaraj Stadium. "Under this initiative, the Delhi Government will also ensure that every Delhiite has a Tiranga in their hand," he said.

"The committees formed to look after the Tirangas will ensure that it complies with the flag code and protocols and if it gets dirty or torn, they will get it fixed immediately. Tiranga is not just a cloth and a pole, but a manifestation of the Bharat Mata," said Kejriwal.

"I suggest that all Samman Samitis should meet every Sunday at 10 AM and salute the Tiranga while singing the national anthem. All the com-

mittees should enroll one thousand young volunteers for Bharat Mata and I will have dinner with every committee that enrolls one thousand volunteers," said Kejriwal.

"Around 375 'Tiranga Samman Samitis' have been formed for the upkeep of the tricolours, in the coming time their number will be increased to 500. One volunteer shall act as coordinator for each such committee and will share a weekly activity report with the officials," said Kejriwal.

"About 400 flagpoles have been installed by now, with 200 Tirangas flying high in glory. By 15th August, Delhi will have 500 Tirangas all over the state," said Kejriwal.



Women use umbrellas to protect themselves from the heat on a hot summer day, in New Delhi

PTI Photo

## 13-yr-old boy regains speech after 7 years post remedial surgery

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 13-year-old boy, who had not spoken a word nor eaten normally for the last seven years, underwent a complicated but successful surgery at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Shrikant who breathed through a tracheostomy tube for over 10 years, suffered a head injury and had to be kept on a ventilator for a long time.

The long-term ventilation narrowed his windpipe. He then underwent a tracheostomy in which doctors inserted a tube into the windpipe by creating an opening in the neck.

Due to a long period of tracheostomy and a missing portion of the windpipe, there was no airway for him to breathe normally. According to Dr



Manish Munjal, Senior Consultant, ENT Department, "When I first saw the patient,

I felt it was going to be a very complicated airway and voice box surgery."

I had not seen anything like this in my 15 years of practice. The child had 100 per cent stenosis (blockage) of the cricoid and tracheal complex (air pipe)."

The hospital formed a panel of doctors from the departments of Thoracic Surgery, ENT, Paediatric Intensive Care and Anaesthesia to perform this rare and complex procedure.

Dr. Sabyasachi Bal, Chairperson, Department of Thoracic Surgery, said, "We decided to attempt complete 'Crico-tracheal resection' of the affected disease airway segment."

This is a complicated and challenging surgery and there

is a high risk of failure which sometimes may also lead to death. But the child did not have any other option and the same was explained to the family." On April 23, the boy was wheeled inside the operation theatre. The team of doctors worked together for six and half hours.

"Since 4 cm of windpipe near the voice box was completely destroyed and non-recoverable, our first challenge was to reduce this gap by bringing the upper and lower segments of airway as close as possible."

For this, 'Laryngeal Drop' procedure was performed to bring down the voice box from its normal position," Dr Munjal said. "Simultaneously, the lower part of the windpipe was released from its surrounding

attachment in the chest and pulled towards the voice box," Dr Bal added.

The most important and difficult part was to operate on the badly stenosed (blocked) cricoid bone. Located below the voice box, it is a horseshoe shaped bone which has minute nerves on both the sides and is responsible for voice and airway protection.

"We used a system of drills to widen the severely stenosed portion of cricoid bone. We had to be extra careful to preserve the very minute laryngeal nerves (voice nerves). Had these been damaged, the child's voice would have never come back," Dr. Munjal said.

Finally, re-fashioned segments of both upper and lower sides of the airway were brought together and joined.

The surgery was successful, but there were more challenges. The post-surgery management was very important, the doctors said.

According to Dr. Anil Sachdev, Director Paediatrics Intensive Care, Department of Paediatrics, Shrikant had a very high risk of airway leak into the chest wall, which could have been lethal.

Therefore, he was kept in neck flexion (chin locked down towards the chest position) for three days.

"Also, he was kept on low pressure oxygen support so that he did not develop any traumatic air leak. He was also kept in ICU for three days and the recovery was uneventful" the doctor said. Shrikant has been discharged and is in a stable condition.

## Passengers want DTC bus conductors to reach them for issuing tickets

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

After transport department officials told to travel in bus at least once in a week, commuters of Delhi Transport Corporation buses have urged the authorities to ensure bus conductor go to every passenger to issue ticket.

The DTC commuters face several hardships in buying tickets during peak hours, as the conductor remains seated on their seats and the commuters have to approach them. However, in all the other States, the conductors take a round to ensure that every passenger has the ticket.

"Why should DTC bus conductors make passengers come to them for issuing tickets, rather than get up and go to each traveller? This system is 40-50 years old and this should be changed. Like State roadways bus conductor who go to every commuter to issue tickets. The onus should be on DTC conductors that passengers should not be without ticket. The Conductor's duty is to ensure that every passenger who is travelling has the tickets, and if not they should issue him one," said a commuter travelling on 118 bus service plying between Mori Gate and Mayur Vihar.

Another DTC commuter who boarded the bus to cover the distance of around 400 meter to Model Town, said that the conductor in the bus did not even get up from the seat to issue the ticket. I was unable to reach the conductor as the bus was overcrowded and there

was no space for me to get him. On the next stop the ticket collectors boarded the bus and caught me for not having the ticket and fined me even after I told them about the situation. In other states, the conductor themselves approach the passengers to give the ticket but in Delhi it's the major problem for a daily passenger."

A person who did not wished to be named, boarded the bus from Karkardooma to Laxmi Nagar, said that the marshal who was present in the bus was sitting on the seat, while the women passengers were standing in the bus and when he asked the marshal to offer his seat to women passenger, he refused and misbehaved.

The difficulties of the commuters does not end here, as after buying the ticket, they have to keep their pockets safe from thieves, even after marshal appointed by state government, to maintain law and order situation in buses. Instead of discharging their duties they enjoy the bus ride and remain seated on their seats. The women commuters still does not feel safe, while traveling in the bus as the marshals of the buses failed miserably in fulfilling their duties.

The Managing Director (MD) of the DTC, Neeraj Semwal told The Pioneer that no complaint regarding the conductors has been received by the DTC. We will do an inspection regarding the issue and take strict action against the conductors who are performing this kind of activity."



# Sisodia accuses Assam CM of corruption in PPE supplies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP versus BJP war transcended Delhi boundaries on Saturday to reach far-off Assam. Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia came up with allegations of corruption against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Sarma in procurement of PPE kits from his wife and son's business partner's companies in 2020 when he was Health Minister and dared the BJP to get arrest Sarma arrested just as they had his Cabinet colleague Satyendar Jain, Sarma and his wife both said the PPE kits were donated for free to the Government. The Assam Chief Minister also threatened to take criminal defamation against Sisodia. At a press conference here, Sisodia claimed that while the Assam government procured PPE kits for Rs 600 a piece from other companies, Sarma



gave urgent supply orders to the firms of his wife and son's business partners for Rs 990 a piece "taking advantage of the Covid-19 emergency". The firm belonging to Sarma's wife does not even deal in medical equipment, he alleged. "While the contract given to the firm of Sarma's wife was cancelled as the company could not supply PPE kits, another supply order was given to the firm belonging to the business partners of his son at a rate of Rs 1,680 per kit," Sisodia said citing a media report. He said

two websites had collaborated on the story and published it two days ago. Sisodia's statement came hours after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the former would make a huge revelation against a top BJP leader soon, while sharing a tweet on Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on money laundering charges. The AAP leader asked why the members of the BJP were silent on corruption by a chief minister of a state ruled by the saffron party. "They talk of corruption and level baseless allegations against members of opposition parties. I want to probe their understanding of corruption... Want to ask them if they consider this (Assam case) corruption or not," Sisodia added. He said the Enforcement Directorate arrested Jain on

"bogus" charges of corruption and the Centre told the court on Friday that he is "not an accused". Responding to Sisodia's charges, Sarma took to Twitter to defend his wife. He wrote, "At a time when the entire country was facing the worst pandemic in over 100 years, Assam hardly had any PPE Kits. My wife took the courage of coming forward and donating around 1500 free of cost to the govt to save lives. She didn't take a single penny." Sarma said, "While you Sisodia at that point of time showed a completely different side. You refused my multiple calls to help Assamese people stuck in Delhi. I can never forget one instance when I had to wait 7 days just to get a Assamese covid victim's body from Delhi's mortuary. Stop sermonising and I will see you soon in Guwahati as you will face criminal defamation," Sarma wrote on Twitter.

# US envoy to Pak calls disputed Gilgit-Baltistan part of Pakistan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, has made a statement that draws an inference that the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan is a part of Pakistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan region is considered by India as part of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and the US assertion runs counter to the projected strategic ties between the two countries. India is yet to react on the issue and a specific query did not elicit a response from the Ministry of External Affairs till filing of the report. However, the office of the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is seized of the matter. During a public speech in Pakistan, Blome said he wants to travel from Karachi to Lahore and Peshawar to Gilgit-Baltistan. Blome has also posted a one minute 25 seconds

video of his speech on Twitter. The speech begins with Arabic greeting as-salamu alaykum and concludes with thanks in the same language as a shukriya. From the verified official Twitter handle @usembislamabad, the US Embassy in Islamabad tagged a video of Blome's speech, saying, "We have a long-standing partnership and rich history with Pakistan. Ambassador Donald Blome has a message for Pakistan and Pakistanis near and far as he begins his tenure as the US Ambassador to Pakistan.#PakUSAt75" The tweet was posted at 12.30 pm on Saturday. In his speech, Blome said, "As-salamu alaykum! I am Blome and I am honoured to represent the United States as the new Ambassador to Pakistan. We are proud of our longstanding partnership with Pakistan. In fact, our rela-



tionship began 75 years ago, very shortly after Pakistan gained its Independence. "We live today in a world full of challenges. We can address those challenges most effectively by working together side by side. :I look forward to deepening the connections between the Pakistani and American people which have a rich history and an even brighter

future. I also look forward to exploring Pakistan from Karachi to Lahore, Peshawar to Gilgit Baltistan and other places in between.....Shukriya" The move is an explicit doublespeak of the US which considers Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory but terms the portion of Kashmir under the control of Islamabad as a territory of Pakistan.

# PM to launch lifestyle for green movement via video conferencing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch a global initiative 'Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement' on Sunday via video conferencing. He will also deliver keynote address during the programme. The launch will initiate 'LiFE Global Call for Papers' inviting ideas and suggestions from academics, universities and research institutions to influence and persuade individuals, communities and organisations across the world to adopt an environment conscious lifestyle. The programme will also witness participation of Bill Gates, Co-Chairman Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Lord Nicholas Stern, Climate Economist; Prof. Cass Sunstein, Author of Nudge Theory; Aniruddha Dasgupta, CEO and President World Resources



Institute; Inger Andersen, UNEP Global Head; Achim Steiner, UNDP Global Head and David Malpass, World Bank President, among others. The idea of LiFE was introduced by the Prime Minister during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow last year. The idea promotes an environment conscious lifestyle that focuses on 'mindful and deliberate utilisation' instead of 'mindless and destructive consumption', according to a press statement from the PMO.

# Plea in SC challenges provision of NCM Act, seeks district-wise identification of minorities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging a provision of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act and seeking a direction to the Centre to define "minority" and lay down guidelines for identification of minorities at the district level. The plea sought to declare the notification on minority community, issued by the government on October 23, 1993, as arbitrary, irrational and contrary to Articles 14, 15, 21, 29, 30 of the Constitution. The petition was filed by Mathura-resident Devkinandan Thakur through advocate Ashutosh Dubey. It said the petitioner is filing this PIL under Article 32 to challenge the validity of Section 2(c) of the NCM Act 1992 for not only giving unbridled power to the Centre but also being manifestly arbitrary, irrational and offending Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution. It sought direction to declare that Section 2(c) of the National

Commission for Minorities Act is void, unconstitutional and inoperative for being violative of Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution. The plea said that the facts constituting cause of action accrued on May 17, 1992, when the Act came into effect and by using unbridled power under section 2(c), the Centre arbitrarily notified five communities namely Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis as minority at national level against the spirit of the TMA Pai ruling of the top court. "Cause of action continues till date because followers of Judaism, Bahaism and Hinduism; who are real minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab, Manipur, cannot establish and administer educational institutions of their choice because of non-identification of 'minority' at state level, thus jeopardizing their basic rights guaranteed under Article 29-30", it said. The plea said that their

right under Articles 29-30 is being siphoned off illegally to the majority community in the state because the Centre has not notified them as 'minority' under the NCM Act. "Followers of Judaism, Bahaism and Hinduism are being deprived of their basic rights to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. On the other hand, Muslims are in majority in Lakshadweep (96.58%) and Kashmir (96%) and there is significant population in Ladakh (44%), Assam (34.20%), Bengal (27.5%), Kerala (26.60%), UP (19.30%) and Bihar (18%) and (they) can establish & administer educational institutions of their choice," it said. The petition said that Christians are majority in Nagaland (88.10%), Mizoram (87.16%) and Meghalaya (74.59%), and there is significant population in Arunachal, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and they can also establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.



BJP national president JP Nadda with Head of Missions (Ambassadors/High Commissioners) to India, at party headquarters, in New Delhi, on Saturday (PTI Photo)

# UP Govt rejects reports of girl suffering from monkeypox in Gzb

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Saturday rejected reports that a girl has been found to be suffering from the monkeypox disease in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. However, it said that as a precautionary measures, the samples from the five-year-old girl have been sent for testing for monkeypox to ICMR NIV Pune. UP Deputy CM and Health Minister Brajesh Pathak said that it is "unnecessary panic mongering" and that no cases of the disease have been reported from India so far. According to reports, the girl complained of itching and rashes on her body. The Chief Medical Officer of Ghaziabad said the test was just a "precautionary measure" as the girl has no other health issues and did not have close contact with anyone who has travelled abroad in the



past month. "Samples of a five-year-old girl have been collected for testing for monkeypox, as a precautionary measure, as she had complaints of itching and rashes on her body. She has no other health

issues and neither she nor any of her close contacts travelled abroad in the past month," CMO Ghaziabad said. On Tuesday, the Union Health Ministry issued "Guidelines on Management of Monkeypox Disease" to ensure advance preparedness across the country, in view of the rising reports of monkeypox cases in non-endemic countries. According to the guidelines, a confirmed case is laboratory confirmed for Monkeypox virus by detection of unique sequences of viral DNA either by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or sequencing.

# Nadda meets foreign diplomats under 'know BJP' programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing his interaction under "know BJP" programme with diplomats, BJP president J P Nadda on Saturday met ambassadors from several Countries, including Russia and Tajikistan, in the BJP headquarters here. Nadda briefed envoys about party's ideology, political and economic programme and future future road map of country's development. BJP president exchanged views with diplomats from Russia, Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey, Uzbekistan, LAO PDR (Laos), Kirgistan and Cuba. This is the third meeting of Nadda with foreign diplomats.



Nadda briefed envoys about party's ideology, political and economic programme and future future road map of country's development

In his second interaction with the diplomats in the ongoing "know BJP" programme, the BJP national president

interacted with heads of missions of 14 countries including those from the USA, Australia and Israel. Welcome address was given by Convenor of Overseas Cell Dr. Vijay Chauthaiwale. Diplomats were shown a short-film since the inception of Bharatiya Jana Sangh 1951 and the BJP in 1980. Diplomats were taken through BJP's political journey from two MPs to 303 MPs in the Lok Sabha. The BJP President spoke with the diplomats on the policies of the Modi Government as well as the party structure and its various departments and the event, according to a statement by the BJP. The foreing guests made a

number of queries during Question- Answer session on the party's ideology and political economic agenda in coming years under the current leadership. On April 6, the BJP's Foundation Day, Nadda had launched the initiative "Know BJP" specifically to address the overseas audience and had over four-hour-long interaction including question-hour session preceded by a documentary detailing party's political history, ideology, structure and programme, with the Head of Missions of 13 countries of the world. BJP intends to continue such interactions with small groups of foreign diplomats in the future too.

# IMD predicts heatwave over NW, central India for next 3 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday predicted heatwave conditions over Northwest and central India for the next two to three days. The weather department also predicted an intense spell of rainfall over northeast India for the next five days. The IMD said that heatwave conditions are very likely over Rajasthan, Jammu Division, Himachal, Uttarakhand, south Punjab & south Haryana-Delhi on 4-5 June. Vidarbha, Jharkhand, interior Odisha & Chhattisgarh will also witness a heat-wave from 4-6 June, the weather office warned. South UP and North MP's temperature is likely to rise from 4th-8th June. The IMD further said that rise in maximum temperatures by about 2°C very likely over most parts of Northwest & Central India and no significant change thereafter. "No significant change in maximum temperatures very likely over Gujarat during next 3 days and fall by 2-3°C over south Gujarat thereafter. No significant



change in maximum temperatures very likely over rest parts of the country during next 5 days," it said. Meanwhile, IMD predicted rainfall in these areas - northeast India and sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim during the next five days. The southern peninsular region will experience rainfall from June 7, it added.

The IMD has issued a yellow alert, warning of a heatwave at isolated places in the capital. The mercury may increase to 44 degrees Celsius at the Safdarjung observatory, it said. A heat wave is declared when the maximum temperature is over 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 notches above normal.

# Climate change poses serious threat to mental health, well-being

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Climate change poses serious risks to mental health and well-being, and thus countries must make it a priority while taking efforts to tackle the climate crisis, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said. The findings concur with a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in February this year. The report revealed that rapidly increasing climate change poses a rising threat to mental health and psychosocial well-being; from emotional distress to anxiety, depression, grief, and suicidal behavior. A 2021 WHO survey of 95 countries found that only 9 have thus far

included mental health and psychosocial support in their national health and climate change plans. "The impacts of climate change are increasingly part of our daily lives, and there is very little dedicated mental health support available for people and communities dealing with climate-related hazards and long-term risk," said Dr Maria Neira, Director of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health at WHO on Friday. The mental health impacts of climate change are unequally distributed with certain groups disproportionately affected depending on factors such as socioeconomic status, gender and age. However, it is clear that climate change affects many of

the social determinants that are already leading to massive mental health burdens globally. "The impact of climate change is compounding the already extremely challenging situation for mental health and mental health services globally. There are nearly 1 billion people living with mental health conditions, yet in low- and middle-income countries, 3 out of 4 do not have access to needed services" said Dévora Kestel, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at WHO. "By ramping up mental health and psychosocial support within disaster risk reduction and climate action, countries can do more to help protect those most at risk." The new WHO policy

brief recommends five important approaches for governments to address the mental health impacts of climate change. These are: integrate climate considerations with mental health programmes; integrate mental health support with climate action; build upon global commitments; develop community-based approaches to reduce vulnerabilities; and close the large funding gap that exists for mental health and psychosocial support. "WHO's Member States have made it very clear that mental health is a priority for them. We are working closely with countries to protect people's physical and mental health from climate threats," said Dr Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum, WHO climate lead, and an IPCC lead author.







# Thermal coal demand to increase to around 1,500 MT by 2040: Joshi



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

To address the country's energy demand which is set to double by 2040, thermal coal requirement would go up to around 1,500 million tonnes in the next 18 years, Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Saturday.

The minister added that there was a need to be conscious about the environment and keep in mind the sustainable mining goals.

"While the expected electricity generation by 2040 would be approximately 3000

billion units, India's energy demand was set to double by 2040. To cater to this demand, thermal coal demand by 2040 would increase to approximately 1500 million tonnes," the minister said.

Though best efforts are being made to balance the dependence on coal and lignite with development of renewables, the transition to green energy will mostly be gradual, Joshi said during his maiden visit to NLC India Ltd at Neyveli. NLC India, in a statement, said that Joshi emphasised on the importance of coal in the country's energy security today.

India has a balanced energy mix and this is helping the country move steadily towards its energy-environmental goals, the minister added. He also commended the significant role played by the company in fighting COVID.

# Amazon retail CEO Dave Clark resigns after 23 years

**IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO**

Amazon has announced that Dave Clark, its CEO of worldwide consumer business, is leaving the company after 23 years. Clark played a key role in developing Amazon's expansive and speedy supply chain.

"After 23 years with Amazon, Dave Clark has decided to leave the company to pursue other opportunities. His last day in the office will be July 1," Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said in a statement late on Friday.

The company also declared the move in a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Clark will be resigning to "pursue other opportunities".

Clark joined Amazon's Operations Pathways Programme in May 1999 – just a day after graduating from his MBA programme -- and helped the company build and scale the consumer operations. "He's led teams who've designed several generations of FCs, built out Amazon's transportation network from scratch, and has developed significant talent throughout the



organisation," said Jassy. Clark said that 23 years ago, he took what felt like a big personal bet when he joined Amazon out of grad school.

"We were a small company with only six fulfillment centres that year, but growing fast. I was drawn to the opportunity at Amazon because of the people I met when I came to Seattle," he said.

"We have a great leadership team across the Consumer business that is ready to take on more as the company evolves past the customer experience challenges we took on during the COVID-19 pandemic," he added. Clark oversaw online stores, physical stores, the marketplace of third-party sellers and the Amazon Prime subscription business.

# IIFL equity dealer found guilty in front-running case, 5-yr ban imposed

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

Capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Friday passed its final order in the IIFL group front-running case, finding the group's equity dealer Santosh Singh guilty of wrongfully using his knowledge of impending orders of its group entities. Front-running is the practice of dealing on advance information provided by their brokers and investment

analysts, before their clients have been given the information is called front running. The SEBI also found his friend Adil Suthar guilty, thereby penalised the accountholders whose accounts were used by the duo for placing those front running trades.

Additionally, Singh and Sutar would be barred from 5 years, while slapped with Rs 10 lakh and Rs 8 lakh penalties, respectively, which must be paid within 45 days time.

# Vedanta to raise up to ₹4,089 crore via NCDs

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Vedanta Ltd on Saturday said a committee of directors has approved raising up to Rs 4,089 crore via debentures on a private placement basis.

"An authorised committee of directors at its meeting held today i.e. June 4, 2022, considered and approved offering for subscription... Up to 40,890 nos secured, rated, listed, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of face value Rs 10,00,000 each aggregating up to Rs 4,089 crore," the company said in a filing to BSE.



**IAN S ■ CHENNAI**

About 2,600 workers of Ford India Pvt Ltd's plant at Maraimalainagar continue their protest demanding better compensation as the company has decided to shut down its Maraimalainagar plant near

# Indices settle almost steady in volatile trading session



**New Delhi:** Domestic equity benchmark indices settled almost steady with downside bias on Friday even though there was a sharp volatility in trade throughout the session.

Sensex closed 0.09 per cent lower at 55,769 points, whereas nifty closed 0.26 per cent lower at 16,584 points.

Intraday low for sensx was at 55,719 points, whereas high at 56,433 points, data showed. On Friday, Reliance Industries was the top gainer among Nifty50 companies, rising nearly 2 per cent, whereas

Grasim Industries the top loser at 6.5 per cent. "There are still some uncertainties about global markets, but there are some pockets that may continue to outperform.

Investors are advised to stay invested in quality stocks while the current rally is an opportunity to exit stocks that have fundamental concerns," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research at Swastika Investmart. Meena is bullish on corporate facing banks, capital goods, infrastructure and housing sector. (IAN S)



# Vice President hopeful of 'significant' growth in India-Senegal trade ties

**PTI ■ DAKAR**

India's bilateral trade with Senegal has touched a record USD 1.65 billion in 2021-22 despite the coronavirus pandemic, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has said, expressing hope that the figure grow significantly in the coming years.

Naidu, who is here on the second leg of his three-nation tour to Gabon, Senegal and Qatar, on Friday addressed an India-Senegal business event.

"The Vice President noted that despite the pandemic, there was a welcome growth in economic and trade ties between the two countries and bilateral trade has crossed a record high of USD 1.65 billion in 2021-22," his office tweeted. He hoped that the trade would grow significantly in the coming years, it said.

As to the bilateral trade basket, major items of export from India include textiles, food items, automobiles and pharmaceuticals. The main items of import from Senegal are phosphoric acid and raw cashew.

Naidu earlier on Friday termed Senegal as India's "natural development partner," and appreciated the African nation for its democratic ethos, as he held delegation-level talks with the President of the National Assembly of Senegal Moustapha Niasse.

Naidu, who is also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, emphasised the important role of legislature in the life of a nation, and said that a strong, effective & responsive parliament lies at the core of good governance.

He also appreciated Senegal's democratic ethos, making it India's natural development partner," his office tweeted. India and Senegal are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

# India to contest for re-election to ITU Council

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

India will contest for re-election to International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council, Ministry of Communications said in a statement on Saturday. New Delhi has also underlined its firm commitment to the UN telecom body's goals and vision for a connected society, and enabling ICTs to achieve Sustainable Development

Goals-2030, the statement quoted Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan as saying.

He was speaking during World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2022 held from May 31 to June 3 in Geneva, Switzerland. He said India has been at the forefront of global digital transformation, achieving excellence in development, and use of information and communications technologies

(ICT). Speaking at the reception event for introducing India's Radio Regulations Board (RRB) candidate and ITU Council candidature of India for re-election, Chauhan said the country shares the vision of ITU for a connected society and enabling ICTs, to accomplish SDGs 2030.

Proposing the name of M Revathi as India's candidate for Member, RRB, the minister said she has a proven track record of professional expertise, leadership capabilities, commitment to deliver time-bound tasks, systematic problem-solving capability, and framing regulations, for inclusive ICT development.

The minister reiterated India's firm commitment to contributing to the realisation of ITU's goals and appealed to the participants to support India's candidature for ITU Council as well as Revathi's candidature for RRB, the statement said.

WSIS is co-organized by ITU, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in close collaboration with other UN organisations. It is an ongoing process since WSIS Summit in 2003, to take forward initiatives in building the information society for the world community.

# Elon Musk plans 10% staff cut at Tesla, freezes hiring



**IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO**

Elon Musk is reportedly planning to axe 10 per cent of Tesla staff, along with freezing hiring amid stalled Twitter deal, global macroeconomic conditions like chip shortage, rising inflation and high interest rates. A Reuters report said on Friday that Musk has emailed Tesla executives, telling them the electric car-maker needs to pause hiring worldwide and cut its workforce by about 10 per cent.

Tesla has nearly 1 lakh employees worldwide and Musk cites his "super bad feeling" about the economy for reducing the workforce. Tesla cut hundreds of workers in October 2017, about 9 per cent of staff in June 2018, and about 7 per cent in January 2019.

It also cut salaries and furloughed employees in April 2020. Tesla has faced shutdowns at its China gigafactory

due to Covid-19 lockdowns. Musk is also facing a "crypto winter" and his favourite cryptocurrency Dogecoin has seen its value dip by nearly 60 per cent over the last six months.

Earlier this week, Musk gave an ultimatum to Tesla employees to either return to office or get out, saying they "should pretend to work somewhere else" if they disagree with the company's policy.

He sent a series of emails that asked employees to come back to the office or be terminated. "Anyone who wishes to do remote work must be in the office for a minimum (and I mean \*minimum\*) of 40 hours per week or depart Tesla.

# NCLAT allows withdrawal of insolvency proceedings against Kanoria Sugar

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The NCLAT has permitted withdrawal of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) against Kanoria Sugar and General Manufacturing Company.

A two-member bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) permitted Punjab National Bank (PNB), the financial creditor of Kanoria Sugar, to withdraw its insolvency plea after a settlement with the company.

"We permit the Creditor to withdraw the Section 7 Application filed under Section 7. In result, the CIRP initiated vide Order dated April 27, 2022 stands terminated," said the two-member bench comprising Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan and Member Naresh Salecha.

Earlier on April 27, the Allahabad bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) admitted the plea filed by the public sector lender PNB to initiate insolvency proceedings against Kanoria Sugar and General Manufacturing Company.

PNB had got the CIRP initiated for dues of Rs 49.65 crore. The NCLT order was challenged before the NCLAT. The appellate tribunal had on May 23 passed an order staying the constitution of the Committee of Creditors (CoC).

Later, an interim application was jointly filed by both the parties along with a copy of the One Time Settlement (OTS) proposal dated May 31. The bank has accepted OTS for Rs 40 crore against the outstanding amount of Rs 49.65 crore.

**The Project Manager Construction Unit**  
**Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645**

**Letter No. 1030 / NIVIDA / 134**      **Date: 04.06.2022**

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING**

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for the following works-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work
1	Construction of Food Godown at Chaukhutiya, District - Almora.	73.28 Lacs.

The tender form can be downloaded from e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 04.06.2022 at 17:00 hrs. to 24.06.2022 at 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or obtained from office or phone no. 05966 220690 of office of tender inviting authority.

**Project Manager**

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**Branch: Ganaur**  
**PH: 0130-2460700, Mobile: 8397002323/8397002600**

**NOTICE TO THE LOCKER HIRERS**

We hereby inform that the Karnataka Bank Branch at **Ganaur (407/9, Near Ganaur Police Station, Main Railway Road, Ganaur, Dist-Sonipat, Haryana-131 101)** is proposed to be shifted to new premises at **Railway Road, Opp. Sharma Hospital, Near Vishwakarma Mandir, Ganaur, Dist-Sonipat, Haryana-131 101** on 13.06.2022. Hence all the customers of our Bank are requested to vacate the articles kept in the locker in order to avoid damage to the same. In case locker is not vacated before 10.06.2022, 4 p.m., the locker unit will be shifted with its content at the sole risk and responsibility of the hirers.

Please also note that we are not responsible in any way for damage or loss of the above articles arising out of any reason or cause whatsoever.

Place: Ganaur      **Sd/-**  
Date : 04-06-2022      **Branch Head**

# RBI launches annual survey on foreign liabilities, assets of MF, AMC

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

The Reserve Bank of India has launched the 2021-22 round of its annual survey on "Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Mutual Funds and Asset Management Companies", the central bank said in a statement on Thursday.

The survey collects information from mutual fund companies and asset management companies on their external financial liabilities and assets as at the end of March of the latest financial year.

The survey results are released in the public domain besides being used for compilation of balance of payments statistics and other uses. Asset management companies



(AMCs) are required to submit the annual return on Foreign Liabilities and Assets (FLA) online through the web-based portal (<https://flair.rbi.org.in>) by July 15, 2022.

In addition, mutual fund companies (MFs) are required to fill the survey schedule, which is available on the RBI's website both in Hindi and English formats, and sent via e-mail by July 15, 2022, the statement said.

# ONGC applies for mining licence to discover oil fields in Bihar's Samastipur, Buxar

**IAN S ■ PATNA**



Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), citing possibility of crude oil fields in Buxar and Samastipur districts of Bihar, has applied for the petroleum exploration license before the state government.

As per officials, the state mining department has initiated the process to provide a license to the company for digging in these two districts.

Harjot Kaur Bamhras, additional chief secretary cum commissioner of mining department said: "ONGC has filed the application for open area mining and we have initiated the process to provide a license.

The company has also deposited fees along with initial survey reports of these

two districts for the license." "Under the provision of the mining department, we will provide a license for 4 years. There would also be a provision of extending it further," she said.

ONGC claimed 308.32 square km area of Ganga basin in Samastipur district and 52.1 square km area in the basin of

Ganga river Buxar district "may have" oil fields. "We have informed the administrative officials of both the districts," she said. If ONGC would obtain the license for mining, it would initiate the process of analyzing gravitational force and magnetic force of the surveyed areas using earthquake data recording techniques.



# Singharaj, five others denied visas, will miss Para Shooting WC in France



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Six members of the Indian para shooting contingent, including double Paralympic medallist Singharaj Adhana, on Saturday failed to travel to Chateauroux, France for the World Shooting Para Sport World Cup after they were denied visas, despite the intervention of the Indian government.

The matter came to light after Tokyo Paralympic Games gold medallist shooter Avani Lekhara took to twitter, seeking help following denial of visa to

her escort and mother Shewata Jewaria and coach Rakesh Manpat.

But talking to PTI from the airport, chief national coach and chairman of Indian Para Shooting Jai Prakash Nautiyal said Lekhara and her coach Manpat's visas were cleared.

"Avani and her coach's visas were granted but her escort, who is also her mother didn't get her visa," Nautiyal said.

"Besides, three para shooters -- Singharaj, Rahul Jhakhar and Deepinder Singh (all para pistol shooters) and two coaches Subhas Rana (national

coach) and Vivek Saini (assistant coach) did not get their visas.

"The French embassy didn't mention any reason, simply said there is a huge surge for visas. We applied for our visas on April 23 and were sure of getting all cleared. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also intervened and were helping us

but despite that visas of six members were rejected," he added.

The event to be held from Jun 4 to 13 is of significance for Indian para shooters as Paris Paralympics quota places were on offer there.

"We are now going with a 22-member contingent, which includes 14 shooters. We were

quite confident of getting visas of all members cleared since Paris will be the host for the next Paralympics and there are 18 2024 Paralympics quota places on offer in the tournament," Nautiyal said.

Replying to Avani's tweet, the Sports Authority of India termed the incident as unfortunate.

## Norway Chess: Anand's winning run ends, but still in joint lead with Carlsen

PTI ■ STAVANGER (NORWAY)

India legend Viswanathan Anand's winning run in the Classical event of the Norway Chess tournament came to an end after suffering a loss against American Wesley So in the fourth round here on Saturday.

The 52-year-old former world champion now shares the lead with Magnus Carlsen on 8.5 points each.

The regular Classical game between Anand and So ended in a draw in 28 moves.

The American then beat the Indian GM in 46 moves via the Armageddon (sudden death) game.

The Indian ace had posted wins over France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Vasilin Topalov of Bulgaria and China's Hao Wang in the first three rounds.

Meanwhile, Carlsen defeated Dutchman Anish Giri in the Classical game to pick up three points and join Anand in the lead.

In another decisive game in round four, Azerbaijan's Shakhriyar Mamedyarov defeat-



ed Hao Wang, while Teimour Radjabov and the experienced Topalov won via the Armageddon against Vachier-Lagrave and Aryan Tari (Norway) respectively.

In the ongoing Norway Chess tournament, the players take part in a Armageddon (sudden death) in case of a draw in the classical game.

So had won the Blitz event ahead of the Classical event.

# ICC chair warns of reduction in volume of Test cricket in future

PTI ■ LONDON

The ever-increasing domestic T20 leagues are squeezing bilateral ties and Test cricket runs the risk of witnessing a reduction in its volume in a decade's time, warns ICC chair Greg Barclay.

Barclay, who was appointed as ICC chair in November 2020, said the world body will face a serious challenge in deciding the next Future Tours Program starting next year.

"There is a men's and women's event every year and the growth of domestic leagues are forcing things from the bottom and ... What is getting squeezed is bilateral cricket and so we are trying to fit everything in," Barclay told BBC's Test Match Special during the ongoing first game of the three-match series between England and New Zealand at Lord's.

"There will be some unfortunate consequences from a playing experience and a revenue point of view for some of those countries who won't get the amount of cricket they might hope to have and they won't get exposure, particularly against India and to a lesser extent Australia and England. So we will see a squeeze.

"In 10-15 years time I still see Test cricket being an integral part (of the game), it may be that there is less of it," he added.

Barclay hinted that the "big three" of world cricket -- India, Australia and England -- will be largely unaffected by the adjustments in Test cricket. "Some countries may have to make room and play less Test cricket.

Some of the smaller full members will have to accept that they can't play the amount of Test cricket that they wanted to, so we may see a lessening of that - four or five a year - whereas England, Australia and India, I think, will be playing Test cricket as they are now."

The ICC chair, however, doesn't see the longer format evolving in women's cricket at a significant pace.

"To play Test cricket, you've got to have structures domestically that allow you to play



long-form cricket and they don't really exist in any of the countries at the moment, so I can't really see women's Test cricket or long-form cricket evolving at any particular speed at all," he said.

"That's not to say that those countries that choose to play Test cricket - Australia and England - who provide that to the women can't do so, but I don't see it as part of the landscape moving forward to any real extent at all."

The Kiwi feels white-ball cricket is the future due to its popularity among fans and broadcasters.

"If you look at strategically the way that cricket is going, there's no doubt that white-ball cricket, short-form cricket, is the way of the future. "That's the game that's sought after by fans, that's where the broadcasters are putting their resource, it's what's driving the money," Barclay concluded.

## Serena, Venus Williams not on Wimbledon entry lists



AP ■ WIMBLEDON

Serena and Venus Williams did not appear on the women's singles entry list released by Wimbledon.

It is possible that either player could request a wild-card invitation to the Grand Slam tournament, which begins on June 27.

Serena Williams has won

seven of her Open era record 23 major singles championships at the All England Club, most recently in 2016. The 40-year-old American was the runner-up there in 2018 and 2019 and has not competed anywhere since injuring her right leg and needing to stop playing in her first-round match a year ago.

Venus Williams is a five-time singles champion at Wimbledon and has seven major singles trophies in all. Her most recent match on tour came at Chicago last August. She turns 42 in two weeks.

Also missing from the entry list is Leylah Fernandez, the 2021 U.S.

Open runner-up who injured her right foot during a loss at the French Open this week.

## Denmark upsets France, Netherlands thrashes Belgium

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Denmark stunned titleholder France 2-1 in their opening Nations League match at the Stade de France, ending the world champion's seven-match winning streak.

After Karim Benzema put the hosts in front, substitute Andreas Cornelius scored twice to earn Denmark its first win over France since the 2002 World Cup. Cornelius leveled with a fine volley then hit the winner in the 88th minute.

France was unbeaten in its past 20 matches. It will next travel to Croatia, which lost to Austria 3-0 at home in Group A1.

Meanwhile, Memphis Depay scored twice as the Netherlands produced its first win against bitter rival Belgium in 25 years by 4-1 in Brussels, in another group of the top-tier League A.

A week after the Champions League final was marred by crowd chaos, there were no reported incidents at the Stade



de France this time.

France was under pressure in the opening 10 minutes but gradually found the right balance and created its first good chance in the 13th minute through Benzema, back at the Stade de France a week after he claimed the

Champions League trophy for Real Madrid.

The move signaled a good spell of dominance for France, with Benzema and Kylian Mbappé combining well to unsettle Denmark's defense.

Denmark managed to keep the

hosts at bay by closing down space.

Mbappé, who appeared to pick up an injury, was replaced by Christopher Nkunku after the break. He had an immediate impact and in the 51st minute set up Benzema, who dribbled his way past defenders and shot low for his 37th international goal.

But Cornelius beat the offside trap and volleyed into the net in the 68th. Christian Eriksen came close in the closing stages but France keeper Hugo Lloris made a decisive reflex save to deny his low strike. Cornelius then gave Denmark the win after connecting with a lofted ball. He resisted defender William Saliba's challenge and fired into the top corner. In Brussels, Belgium started well but quickly faded as its preparations for the World Cup began with a worrying defensive display in the absence of their first-choice goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

"Mostly we were really distracted," Leandro Trossard said. "We gave them way too much space."

## Ruud tops Cilic; into 1st Slam final

AP ■ PARIS

Casper Ruud has become the first Norwegian man to reach a Grand Slam singles final by eliminating 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 at Roland Garros.

The eighth-seeded Ruud is 23 and never had been past the fourth round at any major tournament until now.

His father, Christian, was a professional tennis player from 1991 to 2001.

Ruud has shown that he can play well on clay, with tour highs of seven titles and 66 match wins on the surface since the start of 2020.

## France's Benzema drops appeal over sex tape conviction

AP ■ PARIS

France and Real Madrid forward Karim Benzema has dropped his appeal against a conviction for complicity in blackmail in a sex-tape case that rocked French soccer, his lawyer said Saturday.

The Versailles court gave Benzema a one-year suspended jail sentence and a fine of 75,000 euros (\$80,000) in last year's trial, convicting him of involvement in an attempt to blackmail France teammate Mathieu Valbuena in 2015. Benzema was also ordered to pay Valbuena 80,000 euros in damages.

The initial scandal put Benzema's international career on hold for more than five years, though he has since returned to playing for France,



and the conviction has not kept him off the field. He claimed the Champions League trophy with Real Madrid last week and scored France's only goal in a 2-1 Nations League loss to Denmark on Friday night.

Benzema's lawyer Hugues Vigier told The Associated Press that the player decided to abandon his appeal but continues to deny wrongdoing. The appeals trial had been sched-

uled to open June 30. The Versailles court said on Saturday that it was awaiting the formal notification from Benzema's legal team.

Vigier described Benzema's weariness after years of legal round procedures and said the 34-year-old player "doesn't want to talk about it anymore. It's enough." "Karim continues to contest the slightest blackmail," Vigier said.

"He is guilty under the law, that's true. But judicial truth is different from reality."

After receiving preliminary charges in November 2015, Benzema was dropped from France's national team by coach Didier Deschamps. Benzema was called back to play for the delayed Euro 2020 tournament and has played regularly since.

## Vani, Amandeep make cut, as Tvesa exits after second round in Italy

PTI ■ FUBINE MONFERRATO

India's Tvesa Malik went nine shots better than her first round but still missed the cut while her compatriots Vani Kapoor and Amandeep Drall ensured weekend action at the Ladies Italian Open.

Missing the cut alongside Tvesa (80-71) were Ridhima Dilawari (77-73) and Neha Tripathi (80-74). Vani (73-72) and Amandeep (74-71) were the only Indians of the five to make the cut.

Vani had two each of birdies and bogeys and carded 72 to make the cut, while Amandeep had an eventful round with five birdies against four bogeys for 1-under 71.

## Tickets for India's Asian Cup qualifying round match sold out in 10 minutes, AIFF issues more

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Tickets for India's upcoming Asian Cup qualifying round match against Cambodia at the Salt Lake Stadium on June 8 were sold out within 10 minutes, forcing the AIFF to issue more.

Chhetri had on Friday urged the state government authorities to allow more people than the mere 12,000 tickets allowed for the Asian Cup qualifiers final round matches.

While the All India Football Federation has made all the tickets "complimentary", the state government has "allowed just 12,000 tickets" in the 70,000-capacity Salt Lake Stadium to avoid any law and

order problem.

"They (opposition teams) should feel it. If in a stadium of almost 90,000 people if only 10-15,000 what's the point of having a home advantage?" Chhetri had asked.

"I hope they (state government) will allow it, otherwise it will be a chaos and they will barge in." After Chhetri's reaction made headlines, there was a meeting between the state government and the AIFF this morning and it was "decided to open up the stadium as long as there's demand". "Whoever quoted the number 12,000, spoke out of his hat, it's all rubbish", a reliable source, who attended the meeting, told PTI.

## ESFI seeks Thakur's intervention after Rajasthan Govt Clubs Esports along with fantasy games in new Bill

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Esports Federation of India (ESFI) has raised questions on Rajasthan government's move to include Esports in fantasy gaming category in the recently announced Virtual Online Sports (Regulation) Bill 2022 released by the Revenue Department of the state.

ESFI has termed the bill as "detrimental to the growth of Esports in India".

In the upcoming Asian Games, India will be sending teams in five Esports games.

The ESFI has also requested Sports Minister Anurag Thakur for his immediate intervention in the matter.

"It's important to understand that not all games played



electronically are Esports. The outcome of any Esports match is solely and purely dependent based on the skills (physical & mental), and performances of the Esports athletes are just like cricket, badminton etc." ESFI President Vinod Tiwari said in a release.

# Shame that Delhi Capitals couldn't make it to IPL final: Mitchell Marsh

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Delhi Capitals all-rounder Mitchell Marsh feels that it's a "shame" that his team couldn't make it to the IPL final after losing final league encounter to wooden spoons Mumbai Indians.

DC's five-wicket defeat enabled Royal Challengers Bangalore to make it despite an inferior net run-rate throughout the tournament. "It was a shame we couldn't get into the (IPL) finals," the 30-year-old said here ahead of the three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka, beginning on June 7.

Australia will meet Sri Lanka in a five-match ODI series.

Marsh overcame a bout of COVID-19 in the first-half of the tournament and formed the backbone of Delhi top-order with his Australian teammate David Warner.

Coach Ricky Ponting entrusted him with batting at No 3 as he scored 251 runs at a strike-rate of 132.80.



"Everyone speaks about him (Ponting) so much and what he's achieved in the game. But I got a real sense of how much he cares for his players - I guess that's probably what he was like as a captain and a leader of a team," he said.

"I got the real sense for how he (head

coach Ricky Ponting) cares for his players and that was probably how he was as a captain and a leader of a team -- it's the way he makes you feel. He made me feel like a really important player for Delhi," he added.

On overcoming COVID-19, he said: "After my first couple of weeks, there I thought that I was cursed in India," he said.

"I got through my initial injury - which was very minor - but then to play one game and get COVID, it was a bit of a shaky start but once I got going it was nice to put a few consistent performances on the board. I absolutely loved my time there."

He further said he would like to continue batting at No 3.

"I have loved batting at number three, and I've been there a bit over 12 months now. I certainly feel like that's my best positioning in T20 cricket, and I've loved batting in the power play, I've batted a lot with David Warner and had some great partnerships with him - it's been really enjoyable."

## Lahiri misses cut by one sho, Smith leads at Memorial Tournament

PTI ■ DUBLIN (US)

India's ace golfer Anirban Lahiri carded a disappointing one-over 73 to miss the cut by one shot at the Memorial Tournament here.

Lahiri, who shot 74 on the first day, finished at three-over 147 and missed the cut on Friday at Muirfield Village.

Two missed par putts from inside five feet on fifth and 12th saw Lahiri miss the cut for the second start in a row. He had earlier missed the weekend action at the US PGA Championship at Southern Hills.

Lahiri's will most likely next play at the Travelers Championship.

Cameron Smith, playing some of his best golf, moved into the lead. His highlight was a hole out with a downhill chip from beyond the green on the par-3 12th that carried him to three-under 69.

Smith was one shot ahead of Denny McCarthy and KH Lee at the end of the 36 holes.

In six previous appearances, Smith only made the cut twice and on both occasion finished outside the top 60. His best round was a 71.

But Smith, now a winner of THE PLAYERS Championship and the Sentry Tournament of Champions, is in a different frame of mind and in some superb form. His rounds of 67-69 gave him a total of eight-under 136.

Billy Horschel had a birdie chance at almost every hole but ended with four-under 68 that left him in the group two shots behind with Torrey Pines winner Luke List, PGA TOUR rookies Cameron Young and Davis Riley, and Jhonattan



Vegas.

Rory McIlroy, with a 69, was three shots behind defending champion Patrick Cantlay, who closed in with two big par putts for a 69 and was at three-under 141.

The cut fell at two-over 146.

Among those missing out on the weekend action were Bryson DeChambeau and Harris English, both of whom were coming back from injuries.

Jon Rahm, winner here in 2020, had a 70 and was at two-under 142, six shots behind. He was six shots ahead after three rounds last year until his positive COVID-19 test forced his withdrawal.

Korea's Lee stayed on Smith's heels. Lee traded four birdies, which included a 40-foot monster putt, against two bogeys for a two-day total of seven-under 137 as World No. 3 Smith stepped up his bid for a third victory of the season.

Another Korean, Sungjae Im kept himself in contention with a second successive 70 to lie four back.



**'IN THIS SHOW, LIFE IS  
BEING PORTRAYED TO ITS  
TRUEST POSSIBLE SENSE'**



In school, it is totally different environment and experience. It introduces you to the world. Your friends and teachers become part of your life and it is a great stepping ground to not just get the bookish knowledge but gain a lot more than that. It is something you get to experience for a certain period of time and is a lifetime achievement. I believe that everyone should live that phase irrespective of the marks they get in school. One should install their foundation of knowledge and learn more things as they come along. Otherwise life teaches you everything. That's the biggest teacher.



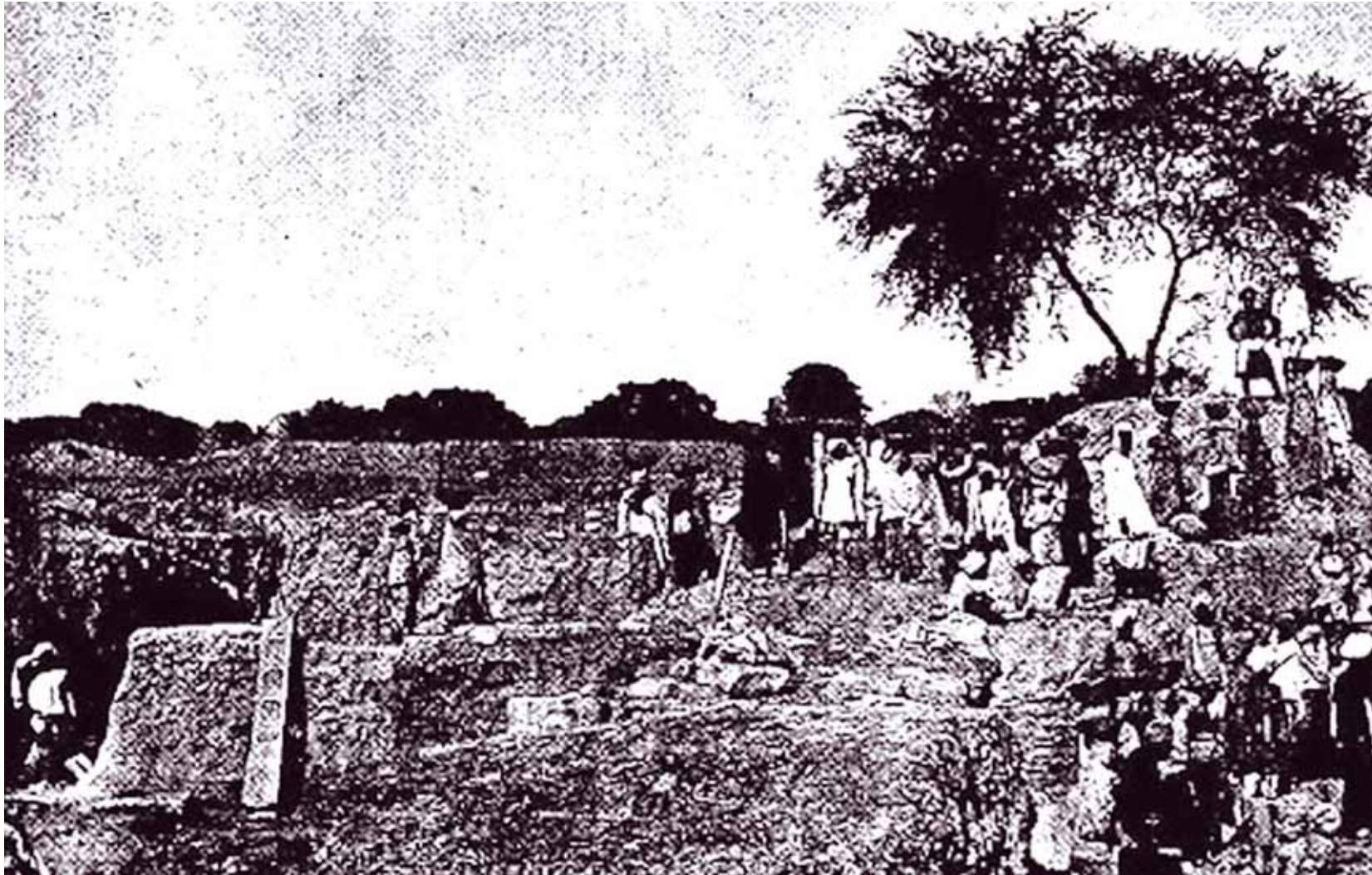
This World Environment Day, adopt a greener and sustainable way of carrying things out. Small contribution and tiny steps can be of great benefit for all. Here are a few practices that can help protect and conserve environment

# RESTORE THE HEALTH OF OUR PLANET



Irfan Pathan, Co-Founder & CEO, Pi Green Innovations





# MATHURA BACK IN FOCUS

The piece of land in Mathura, where today the Shai Idgah and the Krishna temple complex stand, has a long history of conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities, writes SUSAN MISHRA

Mathura- the birth place and abode of Shri Krishna and one of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Mahapuris) holds immense significance and is of great religious eminence for the Hindus. This site of paramount religious importance has been embroiled in controversy centring on Hindu Muslim contestation for scared space. The piece of land, where today the Shai Idgah and the Krishna temple complex stand, has a long history of conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities. The history of the current 20th-century temple can be traced to the beginning of the 19th century when Mathura came under the British dominion. The series of events leading to the construction of the current temple is fascinating. In 1815 the entire land of Katra Keshav Dev measuring 13.37 acres was put for auction sale by the British authorities. Raja Patni Mal of Banaras was the highest bidder. After the acceptance of his bid in the auction, he became its owner.

The objection raised by Muslims against the ownership and possession of Raja Patni Mal over the land of Katra Keshav Dev was rejected by the Court as well as by the administration. More than six decrees were passed between 1875 and 1877 which were in favour of Rai Narsing Das, the heir of Raja Patni Mal, who held possession of the compound. Thereafter, a number of cases were filed by Muslims, questioning the auction sale, ownership, and possession of Raja Patni Mal, but all of them were dismissed. Rai Kishan Das filed a Civil Suit in 1928 and the Hon'ble High Court in Second Appeal of 1932 vide judgment dated 2.12.1935 declared Raja Patni Mal and his heirs as the rightful owners of 13.37 acres of land of Katra Keshav Dev. Also, the judgment stated that Muslims had no right over any part of the said land.

Shri Jugal Kishore Birla had taken a pledge to construct a glorious temple at Katra Keshav Dev glorifying the birth place of Lord Shree Krishna, and for this purpose, he had purchased the land of Katra Keshav Dev in the name of revered Hindu leader Pt. Mahana Mandan Mohan Malvia, Goswami Ganesh Dutji, and Bhikhen Lalji Aattrey in 1944. He also decided to create a trust for the development of the land associated and the 'Shree Krishna Janmbhoomi Trust' came into existence on 21.2.1951.

The crucial location of Mathura and its historical and religious significance invariably led to its being attacked and plundered numerous times. These attacks also centered on the destruction of the temples of Mathura. The onslaught of the invading armies by no means fettered the spirit of the faithful. This holy Hindu site repeatedly came out victorious—every time a temple was destroyed, the faithful worshippers of Shree Krishna built a new one.

The evidence for the earliest temple at Mathura comes from an inscription known as the Vasu Doorjamb Inscription dated to the early 1st century CE. The Sanskrit inscription

in Brahmi script was found on a red sandstone temple doorjamb dumped in an old well in Mathura. The doorjamb is about 8 feet long, 1.24 feet wide and 8 inches thick. The inscription is dedicated to the deity Vasudeva clearly indicating Vaishnavite affiliation. The inscription reads, 'a gateway of stone and the railing was erected at the... of the great temple of Bhagavat Vasudeva. May Bhagavat Vasudeva, being pleased, promote (the dominion or the life and strength) of svamin mahakshatrapa Sodasa'. This piece of evidence is significant as it confirms that the large temple building tradition was in vogue in the Mathura region at a very early period. Another inscription from Mora, 11 kilometers from Mathura, testifies the early religious significance of the area for Vishnu worshippers in and around the sacred land of Mathura. It records the construction of a stone temple for the installation of the Pancha Vrishni Viras, by a lady called To?a. This inscription is dated to the 1st century CE and these five heroes ( Pancha Vrishni Viras) have been identified by J.N. Bannerjea as Vasudeva, Sa?kar?a?a, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha, who were the scions of the Vrishni family and closely related to each other. Furthermore, the find of more than two dozen four-armed Vasudeva Krishna images from the Kushana period in 1950's and joint images of Krishna his brother Balarama and sister Ekanamsa, all from Mathura between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, leave no doubt about Mathura's sanctity in the ancient past.

The narratives relating to Shree Krishna's life are described in the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata Purana, the Bhagavad Gita and the Harivamsha Purana, a later appendix to the Mahabharata with a detailed version of Krishna's childhood and youth. He also finds mentioned in the Chandogya Upanishad which has been dated to 8th to 6th centuries BCE. The question that arises is that is there any historical evidence pertaining to the existence of a settlement at Mathura at such an early date? In fact the excavations carried out at Mathura seem to attest the literary tradition, as seen in the presence of particular pottery known as Painted Grey Ware (PGW). This pottery is dated between 1200 to 600 BCE and has been found in many sites referred to in ancient texts – Hastinapur, Mathura, Kurukshetra, and Indraprastha. The period roughly corresponds to the later Vedic and Upanishadic periods. The excavations were carried out by the ASI in the 1950s with the trial trench laid 500 feet to the north of the superimposed Aurangzeb Mosque. Excavations revealed that the vast settlement at Mathura can be dated as far back as the 6th century BCE, if not earlier on basis of the finds of PGW. The site was occupied till 2nd century BCE. After a brief period of inactivity, it was again occupied from 100 CE to about 6th century CE. It is interesting to note that found among material remains were a coppersmith's furnace and beads of crystal, agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli and jasper.



THIS SACRED SITE WAS IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD PLUNDERED AND TEMPLES WERE DESECRATED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION, BUT EACH TIME THE SANCTITY OF THE SITE WAS RE-ESTABLISHED BY THE BUILDING OF A NEW TEMPLE. MAHMUD OF GHAZNI ATTACKED AND PLUNDERED MAHABAN, AND AL UTBI DESCRIBES IN HIS TARIKH-I-YAMINI THE NEIGHBORING HOLY TOWN WHICH IS IDENTIFIED AS MATHURA



This sacred site was in the medieval period plundered and temples were desecrated on more than one occasion, but each time the sanctity of the site was re-established by the building of a new temple. Mahmud of Ghazni attacked and plundered Mahaban, and Al Utbi describes in his Tarikh-i-Yamini the neighboring holy town which is identified as Mathura- "In the centre of the city there was a huge and magnificent temple, which the people believed wasn't built by men but by the angels." Temples were burnt down, demolished and the gold and silver idols and wealth plundered and taken away. A stone inscription in Sanskrit records that in the 12th century, a person named Jajja built a Vishnu temple at Mathura which was described as being brilliantly white and touching the cloud. This temple too underwent destruction in the 16th century CE under Sikander Lodi and this is described by Abdullah in Tarikh-i-Daud. In 1636 with lavish sponsorship by Vir Singh Bundela of Orccha, the Keshavaraya temple in Mathura was built in red sandstone and worship at the site was quickly restored. The temple was the recipient of a Mughal grant in

Akbar's farman of 1598, and Prince Dara presented a stone railing to this temple at Mathura. The Keshavaraya temple underwent destruction on the orders of Aurangzeb. But this did not hinder the continued sanctity of site as an important pilgrimage centre. Brajnath's Shri Braj Parikrama, suggests a revival of pilgrimage, shortly after Aurangzeb's destruction. In addition to the much-contested Shahi Idgah, apparently, another structure in place of an earlier temple is the Jama mosque. A Muslim officer under Aurangzeb named Abdul Nabi had destroyed a temple and erected a mosque on its ruins in 1661. According to reports of late 19th century sculptures found in a mound near the Gatasram Temple in Mathura City together with others amply testify to the earlier presence of Vishnu and other temples and a Hindu sacred landscape at Mathura.

Interests in tracing the past of Mathura attracted the attention of archaeologists as early as the late 19th century CE. Their exploration and excavations brought to light the presence of Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu remains and the existence of the Mathura School of Art. Dr Führer while digging at the back of the Masjid traced the plinth of some old brick substructure, which, according to the popular belief, marks the ground floor of the sanctum of the once famous and imposing temple of Keshava visited and described by the French travellers Tavernier (1650) and Bernier (1663). About 50 paces to the northwest of this plinth a trial trench was dug, in the hope of exposing the foundations and some of the sculptures of this ancient Keshava temple. Dr. Führer mentions that, at a depth of 20 feet he came across a portion of the circular procession path leading around a stupa. On the pavement, composed of large red sandstone slabs, a short dedicatory inscription was discovered, according to which this stupa was repaired by the Kushana King. In 1853 regular explorations were started by General Cunningham on the Katra and continued in 1862. They yielded numerous sculptural remains; most important among them is an inscribed standing Buddha image 3 feet in height.

The Mathura region is most strongly associated with the legend and worship of Krishna, but between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE, its religious landscape was extremely diverse. The details of sculptural and inscriptional discoveries in the 19th and early 20th centuries enable us to identify the location of some of the shrines. For instance, Katra Mound was the site of a Buddhist vihara from the early 2nd century CE, the Jamalpur/Jail Mound was the site of a Buddhist establishment, a shrine of the Naga deity Dadhikarna existed and a Jaina establishment stood on the Kankali Tila from the 2nd century BCE onwards.

The writer is a research scholar, worked as Project Associate and recipient of Devangana Desai Senior Fellowship CSMVS Mumbai. She has also co-authored two books



# EVERY SECOND COUNTS

KRISHNAKUMAR KUNNATH, popularly known as KK, passed away last week shortly after performing at a concert in Kolkata. Doctors said KK, who had a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) could have been saved, had he been given cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on time. Every year, the first week of June (1st- 7th) is being observed as **CPR Awareness Week**. Learn how to do CPR and save someone’s life. The HEALTH PIONEER reports

Last month i.e. on May 27, low-cost carrier Go First shared on Twitter how its four cabin crew members assisted a doctor in saving the life of a passenger who suffered a cardiac arrest mid air. The team, the doctor and one of the crew members, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the passenger and, with AED (Automated external defibrillator), helped him recover from the health crisis.

Similarly, last year in February, a CISF personnel saved the life of a 45-year-old man, who fell unconscious at a Delhi metro station, by performing the CPR medical procedure on him. However, many like KK are not lucky to get the timely CPR. In fact, at least 12 lakh people die in India due to the SCA. Says Dr. Rohit Goel, Interventional Cardiology doctor from Fortis Hospital In Gurugram, Haryana: “CPR is used when there is SCA of a person leading to loss of consciousness and pulse and blood pressure are not recordable. In such a situation immediate medical attention is needed but due to logistic issues it takes time in Indian settings.

“It is important to know that if CPR is not given within three minutes and blood circulation is absent, the patient can die. Therefore, its important to offer medical help immediately. Survival of a patient can be increased by 2-3 times. All the citizens should be trained in basic CPR by licensed organizations both public and private.”

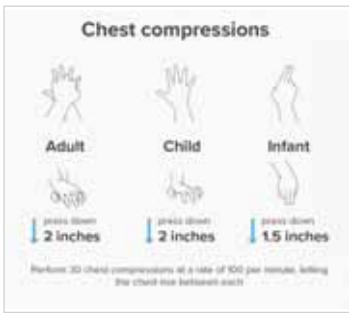
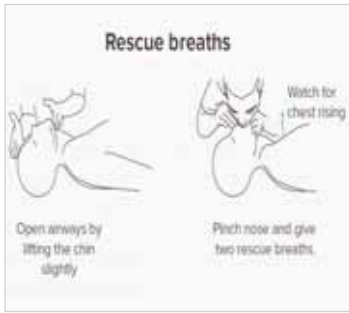
Because sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anybody and at any time, learning it properly can help save somebody’s precious life.

As also, was stated by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu at an event in Vijayawada March this year. He had urged the schools, local bodies, panchayats and NGOs to organise regular camps on CPR to acquaint the youngsters with the life-saving procedure. “The training must also form a part of the high school or college curriculum,” Naidu suggested.

In the case of cardiac arrest, which can occur suddenly, the heart stops functioning due to problems in the electrical system of the heart, disrupting the pumping action and the blood flow to brain and other parts of the body stops. As a result, the supply of oxygen to the tissues gets obstructed. Lack of oxygen



## HOW TO PERFORM A CPR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



- ◆ Check the surroundings for safety
- ◆ If the patient is unresponsive, check for bleeding or for breathing
- ◆ If the patient does not respond and continues to gasp and not breathe, call for medical help immediately
- ◆ Until then, place the patient on the back on a flat surface
- ◆ Give 30 chest compressions with hands centred on the chest and place them on top of each other
- ◆ Keep the shoulders over the hands

- with elbows locked
- ◆ Compress the chest at 100-120 beats per minute
- ◆ Give two mouth-to-mouth breaths after opening the airway
- ◆ Ensure that each breath lasts one second and raise the chest
- ◆ Allow air to be exhaled before the next break
- ◆ Repeat sets of 30 chest compressions and two breaths
- ◆ Do not panic around the patient

## WHEN SHOULD YOU NOT DO CPR?

- ◆ If someone is having a SCA but is alert with a steady heartbeat, CPR is not appropriate. In a case like this, you may do more harm to the heart than if you did nothing and waited for paramedics to arrive.
- ◆ Also, if you have been performing CPR and the person shows signs of life, such as open eyes and regular breathing, stop CPR immediately. Allow the person to recover, but be prepared in case the individual’s heart stops beating again.



## SPEAKS ON CPR

@pseudo\_sapiens: As a doctor, for me KK’s death is a tragedy that we may have avoided IF - We could have had timely bystander CPR, if instead of taking him to the hospital he could have revived first aid on site which is very much possible with a equipped ACLS ambulance with a doctor and + #KK

@RajayNarain : Timely #CPR & #AED could have saved one of India’s biggest talent ! There should be more training for CPR in general population & more AED in public places. Time for more awareness &

screening for risk factors for #heart diseases.

@American\_Heart: About 90% out-of-hospital cardiac arrests are fatal. CPR, especially if performed immediately, can double or triple the chances of survival.

@sanjaynagral: What we will discuss ; stress, genetics, fitness, checkups, angiograms

What we could do; train bystanders to feel pulse & start CPR, install AED’s at public places, start rx in ambulances, get people to hospital in an hour

## EUREKA! TRACKING SLEEP WITH A SELF-POWERING SMART PILLOW

The human body needs sleep as much as it needs food and water. Yet many people fail to get enough, causing both mind and body to suffer. People who struggle for shut-eye could benefit from monitoring their sleep, but they have limited options for doing so.

In a new study in ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces, one team describes a potential solution: a self-powering smart pillow that tracks the position of the head.

To construct the smart pillow, the researchers Ding Li, Zhong Lin Wang and their colleagues formulated a flexible, porous polymer triboelectric layer. Movement between the head and this layer changes the electric field around nearby electrodes, generating a current. They strung together several of these self-powering sensors to create a flexible and breathable TENG (FB-TENG) array that can be placed atop an ordinary pillow.

This smart pillow could have uses beyond tracking sleep, the researchers say. For example, the system could monitor patients with diseases that affect the movement of the head, such as the degenerative neck disorder cervical spondylosis. What’s more, the smart pillow could be adapted to offer an early warning system for those at risk of falling out of bed, they say.

Studies have linked chronic lack of sleep to physical ailments, such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as mental health issues.

# Got Diabetes? Keep An Eye On Eyes

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, you must schedule a comprehensive eye exam at least once a year. People with diabetes have a higher risk of not only losing sight but also developing other eye diseases such as cataract and glaucoma, writes Dr Rohan Chawla, Additional Professor, Dr RP Centre, AIIMS, Delhi, exclusively for The HEALTH PIONEER.

Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) is an eye condition that causes vision loss and blindness in diabetic people. It affects the blood vessels in the retina. If you have diabetes, it’s important to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once in a year.

Unfortunately, people are unaware of the risk threats that come with diabetes. No wonder, we are getting a lot of DR cases. In fact, India is heading to become the Diabetes capital of the world with perhaps one of the largest number of diabetics patients living in the country. It is predicted that about 5 to 10% of these patients are bound to develop DR over time.

Considering a large population of diabetic patients, this number will run into millions. I feel that, at present, we do not even have the infrastructural capacity in the government as well as the private sector to handle so many patients. Hence, it is all the more important that we become more aware of this diabetes-induced eye disease and take preventive steps against this disease.

In my OPD, on an average, more than 30-40 percent of patients have diabetes-induced eye vision problems. Many of them were never aware that diabetes could lead to

blindness. Had they been told very early when diabetes had just set in that it needs to be controlled well, a regular eye check-up would have helped detect this disease early and prevented devastating complications. In many of them, blindness would have been prevented.

Even the WHO has taken diabetes as one of the diseases of importance for prevention of blindness.

DR is a preventable cause of blindness. If we keep diabetes under control, DR will not occur. So one needs to understand what is actually happening due to uncontrolled diabetes. High blood sugar levels lead to damage of the retinal blood vessels i.e the blood vessels which supply blood to the most sensitive part of the eye on which image forms, what we call as retina. Once these blood vessels start getting damaged there occurs a leakage of fluid and then blood in retina and image formation suffers leading to loss of vision.

It can be from very mild to very severe so as to cause total blindness. And since it’s a systematic disease, it generally tends to affect both the eyes.

You can reduce the risk of developing DR or stop it from getting worse by keeping your blood sugar,



EVEN THE WHO HAS TAKEN DIABETES AS ONE OF THE DISEASES OF IMPORTANCE FOR PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

cholesterol and blood pressure under control. This can be done by making healthy lifestyle choices and proper diabetes medication.

### DOCTOR’S ADVISE

- ◆ Patients do not have early symptoms because the most sensitive part of the retina will not get affected initially. Thus annual eye check up recommended for diabetics even if vision is okay
- ◆ Diabetic eye disease can be prevented if we can control sugar levels. The average blood sugar level (HbA1c) should be kept less than 7
- ◆ Blood pressure also worsens this disease. Hence, BP needs to be controlled.
- ◆ High cholesterol level, associated anemia and kidney problems are other risk factors
- ◆ Early screening of eyes is important. Yearly eye exam is a must. If no changes are found, then the test should be repeated next year
- ◆ If changes are noticed in the retina then as per the advice of the ophthalmologist, investigation and treatment should be undertaken
- ◆ One should exercise daily and maintain a proper balanced diet chart which needs to be followed religiously.

## BEYOND THE STETHOSCOPE

When not pursuing their profession, a breed of doctors prefer to wear different hats to keep themselves fit and centered. The HEALTH PIONEER tries to catch up with them every week.



Dr. Prashant Mehta

## ‘DIL BESABRAA’ FOR MORE

As a kid, Prashant had just two choices. Follow the footsteps of his father Chander Mehta, who was a trained Hindustani and Ghazal singer. Or, become a doctor, which most parents wanted their wards to be, and allow his ‘in-born singing talent’ to perish.

It, indeed, was a tough choice, he recalls: “Like most parents, my father, who besides being a singer also worked with a PSU, wanted me to study medicine and become a good doctor. But since music was in my genes, my heart was always into singing. Moreover, I was also inspired by my father’s singing talent who was my first music teacher.”

One who doesn’t shy away from taking difficult decisions in life, Prashant went for both the choices and destiny too favoured the brave. His instincts were bang on, proving many of his critics wrong. None had predicted he would excel in the two extremely different streams. But for Dr Prashant Mehta, it was only then that he realised that music complements the medical profession.

“Music is a great stress-buster. Music therapy does heal and improve the quality of life for patients. For patients with chronic diseases and even cancer, music can reduce pain perception and provide palliation.

“I do believe strongly that music should get a space in holistic care of patients with chronic diseases,” says Dr Prashant (39), a well known oncologist at Asian Hospital in Haryana’s Faridabad and a promising singer who released his debut music album ‘Besabraa’ online last year.

There’s no stopping him. Five of his songs are lined up for release with music label, Dhamaka records, supported by singers like Priyaank Sharma, Paras Mehta, Padmini Kolhapuri and Shraddha Kapoor.

He knows pretty well what his audience wants, the challenges from various social media platforms and the fast changing preference of the listeners who have very less attention span.

“Recall value depends on melody, context and content (lyrics). To keep music relatable for the new generation music composers, singers have to keep changing all the time. Old classics have a great recall value due to the context, warmth, lyrics and minimalist arrangement. But the problem is, if songs with similar sound and structure are created in this era, the new generation will not be able to connect.

“See how the length of songs is reducing every day. Instagram reels are in and we want instant gratification. Old songs are also being repackaged with a new feel and sound to stay relatable. The composers and singers in this era are also brilliant and versatile,” he points out.

Dr Mehta cites the examples of AR Rehman, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, Himesh Reshamiya, Vishal and Shekhar, Amit Trivedi and some newer ones like Vishal Mishra. “They are amazing. Indie music is also doing well and Prateek Kuhad and Aditya A have been making waves. Singers like Arijit, Jubin, Sunidhi, Nikita Gandhi and many others have given a new sound to the music industry and have been part of some amazing and classic creations,” he says excitedly.

Then there non-Bollywood Initiatives like Coke studio which have produced some legendary songs, avers the father of a 3-year-old kid.

The medico, who has recently also delved into philanthropy, feels that music can not only help reduce pain perception, but also help raise funds for treatment of needy patients. His wife, Dr Swati Pabbi Mehta, too inspires him in this direction, says the dating husband.

“Singers like Palak Muchhal have already raising funds. I personally have been able to do the same by doing shows and my album ‘Dil Besabraa’ is dedicated to people with cancer,” the singer, performer, doctor underlines.

—As told to Archana Jyoti (Medicos may write to us at healthp100@gmail.com)

## NEWS BRIEF

## UP brings BMT under Ayushman scheme

There is good news for Ayushman Bharat cardholders in Uttar Pradesh. The services under the Ayushman Bharat scheme will now also include bone marrow transplant (BMT), which is often recommended to patients afflicted with cancer or blood disorders like hemophilia and Sickle Cell.

“Medical literature shows that patients in need of this transplant, especially those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, do not opt for the procedure on account of the cost factor. Thus, it has been included in the list of services provided under the umbrella of Ayushman Bharat,” said Sangeeta Singh, CEO of state agency for comprehensive health insurance and integrated services for implementation of the scheme in Uttar Pradesh.

She said the role of medical colleges was crucial to helping patients avail the benefits of Ayushman Bharat.

Dr Nita Radhakrishnan, Associate Professor of Paediatric Hematology-Oncology at Post Graduate Institute of Child Health, Noida (Child PGH), called it a good initiative. “Upfront inclusion in Ayushman helps a lot. Patients do not have to wait for financial sanction from other Government sources to undergo BMT,” she added.



PERSPECTIVE

# Invincible gun lobby in US



MANAN DWIVEDI

At first, the gun lobby ignores the protest of the gun control lobby. But if the recriminations and protestations do not die out on their own, then the most prominent gun lobbyist National Rifles Association launches an all-out offence which is unbridled and unmitigated in nature, content and expanse

Gunrunning and gun-related violence, especially at offices, schools and malls, has become a repulsive feature of the US society. From the Sandy Hook killings in 2011 to the Uvalde school shooting last week, the rampage has left the American homeland dazed and President Joe Biden determined to fight against the powerful gun lobby. One can latch onto the scenario in the Chicago city wherein gun shops are conspicuous amid isolated mansions and apartments.

The condition of gun trade was much worse in the yesteryears when any individual could literally walk into a shop and buy automatic and semi-automatic weapons without the need of a psychiatric check or an age certificate. The scenario has changed for better, but the rising number of shooting cases clearly manifests that much needs to be done by the Government of the day in tandem with the NRA (National Rifles Association) and the very powerful and all pervading realm of the gun lobby.

Earlier, drug abuse, marijuana usage and tobacco consumption received a great deal of attention from the legal fraternity, now on a similar strain the frequent massacres at the hands of deranged shooters make one sit up and take up deft notice. All in all, in the contemporary American context, a few law firms and the American legal fraternity have filed suits against the norms through which guns have entered the stable and peacenik lives of the American neighborhood with dogged impact. Akin to anti-cancer initiatives, the anti-gun lobby too has been spawned with vast resources of funding but not in the same bracket as the National Rifle Association and the attendant gun lobby.

President Biden too in a state of exasperation has contended that, “When in God’s name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby?” The first lady and President Biden visited the shooting site in Uvalde and empathised with the families of the victims as the first couple contended that they can very readily relate to the sense of loss felt by the bereaved families as they too had lost a son in a car accident.

*Al Jazeera* reports about the fundamental contours of the gun lobby in America very pithily and tersely. The news portal contends, “The so-called gun lobby in the US is a broad term that encompasses efforts to influence both state and federal policy on guns, usually through supporting candidates who have pledged opposition to gun control measures. It includes direct contributions to legislators, efforts to independently support elected officials, and campaigns to sway public opinion on issues related to firearms. Such lobbying is often carefully calibrated to navigate laws. Several investigations have shown that major anti-gun control lobbying groups — notably the most prominent the National Rifle Association (NRA) — have close ties with the multibillion-dollar firearms industry in the US.”

It has also been investigated and research has shown that the National Rifle Association is in cahoots with the firearms industry in the United States and it utilises every massacre with a deft legerdemain of media management to boost the sales of firearms. The initial trajectory of action of the gun lobby is that they ignore the protest of the gun control lobby. But if the recriminations and protestations do not die out on their own, then the NRA launches an all-out offence which is unbridled and unmitigated in nature, content and expanse all across the length and breadth of the US gun-running firmament.

The gun lobby counter attacks by contending that how can the gun control lobby vitiate the political ecosystem of the larger nation and its hoi polloi by adding a political tinge to the larger spectrum of events. Thus, the gun lobby lobs the accusation of politicisation upon the vestiges of protestations and contestations adhered to by the gun control groups. The second amendment was also being utilised in the past by adhering to the larger dictum of harking back to the right of the American citizens to own and bear arms in self defence.

A significant shift in the approach of the White House occurred a few years back when psychiatric check of the prospective gun owners was made part and parcel of the entire gamut of the gun debate in the besieged US.

Jonathan M Metzl Kenneth and T Maclesh contend in the *American Journal of Public Health*, “Four assumptions frequently arise in the aftermath of mass shootings in the US: (1) that mental illness causes gun violence, (2) that psychiatric diagnosis can predict gun crime, (3) that shootings represent the deranged acts of mentally ill loners, and (4) that gun control “won’t prevent” another Newtown, Connecticut school mass shooting. Each of these statements is certainly true in particular instances.”

What needs to be incisively comprehended is the idiom that the medical veneer of gun violence is the key factor underpinning the scourge of gunrunning in the American homeland. The often deft striving to relegate the term “medical condition” and “psychiatric checks” to compartmentalisation of public health defeats the objective of the medical illness factor in the context of larger gun violence witnessed since the last decade in the US. Both the newspapers of the order of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have contended that undiagnosed schizophrenia and manslaughter are terms which are not given the kind of required preponderance in developing a process of mitigating and constraining the menace of incivility in the form of gun violence.

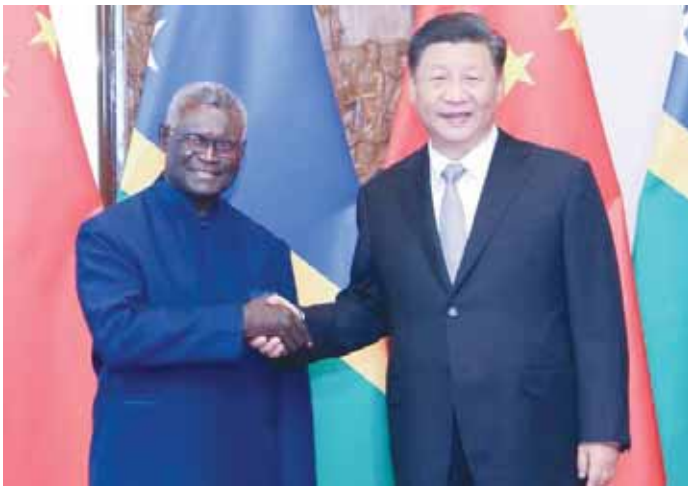
It has been recorded that 44 per cent of the Republicans and their supporters contend that they are proud and fortunate owners of guns. While in the same trending proportionality, 20 per cent of the Democrat party members and their supporters contend that they too own guns. Thus, it’s all ingrained and embedded in the larger political debate of the American nation that a mainstream, corporate and nationalist ethics pave the way for a reformed and controlled gun culture in the nation. How can a nation forget the crack of guns and the echo of the horses’ hooves as and when a cowboy marches across daintily and disdainfully upon the terrain of the Oregon Trail?

Also, the scintillating remembrance of gun touting patriots arranging for guns and engaging the British colonists in the marshlands of Pennsylvania has become part and parcel of the patriotic zeal of the nation all anointed by the halo of the revolutionaries who fought under the iconic leadership of George Washington.

(The writer teaches at International Relations and International Organisations, IIPA, New Delhi)

# China encircling Pacific Islands

China is interested in the Pacific Islands as these thinly populated but resource-rich small islands are rife with geostrategic, diplomatic and economic opportunities. Certainly, once ties are established with these vital nations, Beijing’s larger goal of encompassing the Indo-Pacific can be easily achieved



China is on a mission to reach the entire globe to attain its ulterior goals. And to achieve the target, China under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, popularly called the reincarnation of Chairman Mao Zedong, is trying hard to reset the world order.

Its latest round of expansion in the Pacific Islands is creating ripples both in the West and in its immediate neighbourhood such as Australia. With an eye to spreading China’s influence and to thwarting the US plan in the region, Xi is reaching out to these vital island nations.

In the midst of troublesome US-China relations, China’s nearness to the Pacific Island community is further straining the bilateral ties. Today, China is the third largest aid donor, and the second largest trading partner in the Pacific region. And more importantly, China is investing heavily in almost all the island nations in the region.

At the same time, China is becoming more assertive in its foreign policy goals and interested in demonstrating the country’s military might on many occasions (like the attack on Indian soldiers in June 2020 in Eastern Ladakh). Significantly, the expatriate Chinese business leaders are exercising strong influence over other nations like Australia and New Zealand. Precisely, the Chinese state power is at odds with the traditional and dominant powers in the Pacific region such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the US and France.

Why is China interested in the Pacific Islands? For China, these thinly populated but resource rich small islands are rife with geostrategic, diplomatic and economic opportunities. Certainly, once ties are established with these vital nations, Beijing’s larger goal of encompassing the Indo-Pacific can be easily achieved. The three of the major groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean are Micronesia,

Polynesia and Melanesia. China has already figured out critical trading outlets in the Pacific. Together these nations have more than 199 million square kilometres of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). With a population of 1.4 billion, the pressure on both used and potential resources in China is growing very fast. For example, China has overused fishing. And also because of some of the unsustainable practices prevalent in many areas in the country, its fish reserves are depleting very fast. As a result, the commoners are experiencing skyrocketing prices in the fish markets. Further, this has forced the Chinese fishing business community to encroach EEZs of neighbouring nations and at times moving far to the South American nations like Argentina simply to catch the most prized tuna.

These far-flung islands are now receiving economic aid and diplomatic support from China. But all these are coming with multiple challenges for both Beijing and the rest of the Pacific community. It is clear that these islands are completely devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic. So the aid and loans coming straightway from China are a huge source of sustenance for them. In return, all of them have to pay the price.

Many of them are fast turning into China’s overseas colonies. Like in the South China Sea (SCS), where Beijing is trying to control one of the busiest sea communication lines in the world, it seems it is planning for a similar model for the Pacific Islands and probably for a long haul in these tiny nations. Some of the US Congressmen are voicing concerns and saying this would be detrimental for these island territories and for the US and its allies in the region. A US Congressman rightly echoed two years back: “China is directly interested in expanding its power and influence and I would submit, creating dependence in the Pacific Islands.” This is what is worrying the immediate neighbours such as Australia and New Zealand. These expansionist moves launched by the Communists in Beijing are not out of any sense of humanitarian concern for the Pacific Islands but it comes out of a sense of competition with the US.

Solomon Islands came to the limelight the last month as China signed a security treaty with the nation. Under the security agreement signed between the Solomon Islands and China, the former may request the latter to send forces to stabilise the situation in that country. It also allows China to offer a ring of security umbrella to its

diplomats, businessmen and diaspora in the event of unrests similar to those of April 2004 and November 2021. What is raising fears is that this may gradually lead to the establishment of a Chinese military base in the island, like the one Beijing set up in Djibouti, in the Horn of Africa, in July 2017.

The recent visit of US President Joe Biden to the Indo-Pacific has once again reassured all the allies of America’s commitment to Asia. His visit to Asia in the last month clearly spoke out the fact that America’s long term foreign policy goal is solely directed towards Asia. But for now, the Biden Administration is focussing temporarily on Europe as Russia has invaded Ukraine, bringing the continent close to the Third World War.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has underlined his country’s strategy towards China immediately after Biden’s tour to the Indo-Pacific. He termed Beijing’s geopolitical ambitions as the “most serious long-term challenge to the international order”. Considering the initiatives so far taken by the Xi regime, the world is fast approaching a new turning point wherein the West is closely rebalancing its interests with that of China’s.

For years, China has been working to establish an alternative global order against the US-led liberal order. And now it is gradually reaching out to the Pacific community. It’s a warning sign not only for the island leaders but also for the traditional power players in the region. Now a new Labour Government in Australia under the leadership of Anthony Albanese, with Foreign Minister Penny Wong reaching out to the Pacific Island nations, might be able to bridge the trust deficit between the neighbours.

Much more than the stiff power competition between China and the US, the biggest challenge for the low-lying Pacific Islands is climate change. Thus, realising the

immediate threat to the island community, Henry Puna, the former Prime Minister of the Cook Island and the current Secretary General of the Pacific’s top regional body, the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), stressed the need to immediately acting on the climate goals. He rightly says, “Our forum leaders have identified climate change as the single greatest threat facing our Blue Pacific region.” Again, he reiterated that “action to keep our world below 1.5 degrees is vital for the future prosperity and wellbeing of our region”. It must be pointed out here that instead of giving an anodyne welcome and bland formalities to the recently visited Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to the region, (a country that is recorded today as the biggest carbon polluter of the world), Puna made it clear to him what the Pacific community is looking for.

The Pacific Islands are another battleground for big power rivalry. As China is growing, it is trying to bully the rest, particularly its neighbours like India. Meanwhile, America is mostly withdrawing from its traditional war fronts and crisis zones in the West and Central Asia. Washington knows well that today its major threat emerges from Beijing. Hence it is gathering all its resources and allies to focus on China whether through the Quad, the AUKUS or by pressing more engagements with the Pacific Islands. Keeping all these factors in the background, one can simply conclude that China’s recent forays into the Pacific are adding a fresh challenge to the US and its allies in the region.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the *Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal*)

LOOKBACK

# Growing India-US ties in critical & emerging tech

India and the United States recently announced the launch of a new India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) to facilitate outcome-oriented cooperation. The iCET would focus on forging closer relationship between the government, industry and academia of the two countries in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, 5G/6G, quantum computing, biotech and space technologies. The initiative, which will be co-led by the National Security Council Secretariat in India and the US National Security Council (NSC), plans to join six of India’s Technology Innovation Hubs to support at least 25 joint research projects in areas such as AI and data science in 2022. It marked a major development in the bilateral technology partnership which will define innovation processes, economic and security landscape of the 21st century ahead.

The announcement comes at a time when the major powers are competing to develop and deploy critical and emerging technologies (CET) to shape economic and military balance to their advantage. While concerns over technology competition and rivalry between the US and China, and China’s use of newly acquired technological and military power in support of its expansionist goal are increasing, India and the US increasingly share a common objective of a strong partnership in CET. The US supports “India’s emergence as a leading global power and vital partner” and expects that India’s rise would help balance assertive China. It wants to become India’s “partner of choice” in the field of defence and strategic technologies. India’s growing economy, largest consumer market, demographic dividend and its strive to become a global hub for emerging technologies provide enormous opportunities for building a robust bilateral partnership in CET.

At their first in-person summit in Washington DC in September 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden underscored the growing importance of “critical and emerging technologies in delivering economic growth and achieving strategic priorities”. At their second in-person meeting on the sidelines of the fourth Quad Leaders’ Summit in Tokyo on May 24, 2022, the two leaders described defence and security cooperation as a crucial pillar of the India-US bilateral agenda and expressed strong resolve to work closely to deepen and strengthen their cooperation in CET. PM Modi also invited the US industry to participate in the “Make in India” and “AatmaNirbhar Bharat” programmes, which can be of mutual benefit. Importantly, the two leaders are increasingly emphasising on the use of emerging technologies to address the 21st century challenges such as climate change, health, energy, education, cyber, defence and security.

In this endeavour, the newly created US National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, in its October 2020 report, urged the Department of Defence and Department of State to formally negotiate with India on developing partnership in CET. The NSCAI asked the US administration to create a US-India Strategic Tech Alliance with an objective to make India a focal point of its foreign policy. The Biden administration in its March 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and February 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States also expressed desire to develop strong partnership with India in CET and focused on India’s increasingly important geopolitical role in an overarching Indo-Pacific strategy.

As a result, the two countries launched the US-India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative in March 2021 to scale up science and technology cooperation. The USIAI focuses on AI cooperation in critical areas that are priorities for both countries such as healthcare, energy, education, agriculture, smart cities and manufacturing sector. It is an initiative of India-US Science and Technology Forum which was set up during the historic visit of then US President Bill Clinton to India in March 2000. It is funded by India’s Department of Science and Technology and the US Department of State. In June 2020, the two countries also joined the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence as a founding member to support the responsible and human centric development and the use of AI.

On Semiconductor, both the Modi Government and Biden administration have renewed their efforts to address the growing demand for semiconductors amidst the chip shortage caused by the pandemic-related global supply-chain disruptions. In a big step towards realising the vision of “AtmaNirbhar Bharat” in electronics and semiconductors, the Modi Government in December 2021 announced Rs 76,000-crore (around \$10 billion) production linked incentive scheme, covering up to 50 per cent of project’s costs, to set up semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem in India. The Biden administration has earmarked \$52 billion for semiconductor manufacturing and research through the CHIPS for America Act to reclaim US leadership in the chip manufacturing industry as its share of global chip manufacturing has fallen from 37 per cent in 1990 to 12 per cent 2020.

Meanwhile, the Indian Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) and the United States Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) on April 12, 2022, signed an MoU to identify potential areas of collaboration between the two countries in the semiconductor sector. Under the MoU, the two countries will assist each other on semiconductor-related matters and the MoU will help strengthen India’s semicon-

ductor ecosystem.

Moreover, the two countries have expanded their health and science cooperation since the Covid-19 pandemic began. A robust technology partnership in the health sector would be imperative for tracking the spread of future pandemics. The two countries can work together to create a health database of their citizens which would help effectively and efficiently address the emergence of pandemics.

Notably, the United States recognised India as a major defence partner in 2016 to build a comprehensive and mutually beneficial defence relationship; elevated India’s status to Tier I of the Strategic Trade Authorization (STA) licence exception in 2018 to increase advanced technology trade with India; and, the two sides have concluded several defence agreements, i.e., the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement in 2016, Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement in 2018, a Memorandum of Intent between US Defence Innovation Unit and Indian Defence Innovation Organisation-Innovation for Defence Excellence in 2018, Industrial Security Agreement in 2019, and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation in 2020.

The recent meeting between PM Modi and President Biden in Tokyo added “depth and momentum” to the India-US strategic partnership. PM Modi called the partnership “a partnership of trust” and it will continue to be a “force for good” for the world whereas President Biden expressed his commitment to make the “partnership among the closest on earth.” Nevertheless, India-US relationship has been transformed into a “Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership” based on the two countries’ shared values and growing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. While India-US

trade in goods and services increased to over \$159 billion in 2021 from \$19 billion in 2000, Defence trade increased to over \$21 billion in 2021 from almost negligible before 2008. The US has emerged as a key supplier of defence and strategic technologies to India. The relationship also enjoys strong popular and bipartisan support in both the countries. It indeed reached a new height under the Modi Government.

A strong India-US partnership in CET therefore would not only benefit the people of the two countries, but the world at large. It would help advance economic growth, create jobs and help address the emerging challenges of the 21st century, including health, energy, climate change, cyber, defence and security. It will also help counter the growing technological dominance of China which poses threat to their economic as well as national security interests. However, the two sides need to sharpen their focus on transfer of technology and joint design, development and production of CET because no worthwhile strategic partnership can be built unless they make substantial progress in this field. This will remain a critical measure of the India-US strategic partnership and the “acid test” of US commitment to build a strategic tech-alliance in the 21st century.

(The writer is a strategic affairs analyst with main research focus on the USA, India-US relations and Indo-Pacific)



SAROJ BISHOYI



