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12 SPORT

Uddhav offers to quit as Maha CM & Sena chief

In signed letter to Guv, 34 MLAs reaffirm trust in Shinde leadership

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After 34 rebel MLAs submitted a signed letter to the Governor "re-affirming" that their leader Eknath Shinde "is and continues" to be leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Wednesday that he was prepared to quit both his posts as the CM and the party chief if the rebels were to meet him and express their lack of confidence in his leadership.

Within hours after the rebel Sena MLAs, led by their leader Minister Eknath Shinde, flew from Surat to Guwahati by a special charted aircraft, a letter was submitted on their behalf to the office of Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Deputy Speaker and Secretary of the State Assembly, declaring that Shinde continues to be the leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party (SSLP). The resolution that the rebel MLAs submitted to the Governor in the form of a letter carried the signatures of 34 rebel MLAs.

On part, Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray played an emotional card as he went live on Facebook and spoke to the people of Maharashtra, wherein he made it clear: "I have no greed for power. Nor would I remain stuck to the chair. Let the rebel MLAs come and tell me that I am not good enough to hold this position. I will quit as both the Chief Minister and the party chief. You all know that despite my lack of administrative experience, my government performed extremely well during the Covid-19 period".

In his first reaction on the rebellion that his rocked the Shiv Sena after his number-two minister and senior party Eknath Shinde took away a group of 30-odd party MLAs, including three ministers, to a hotel at Surat in Gujarat, Uddhav said: "But why go to Surat or some other places to say this… He (Shinde) could have just come to me and talked to me as what he had in his mind. I would have quit my post immediately".

Uddhav said that both the NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress president Sonia Gandhi had supported right through and continued to support him. "But, what can I do if my own people do not want me to continue as the CM. I am ready to resign as the CM. Let the rebel MLAs come and tell me that they do not want me.

Continued on Page 9

Maharashtra CM and Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray virtually addresses the people of the State, in Mumbai on Wednesday PTI

Uddhav leaves CM house with bag & baggage

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday night moved from his official residence in south Mumbai to family home in suburban Bandra, hours after offering to quit the top post amid rebellion by Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde.

The CM moved out of "Varsha", his official residence, for Matoshree, the private bungalow of the Thackeray family, amid high drama as the political crisis that has rocked his Government after Shinde's revolt two days ago, showed no signs of ebbing.

Earlier, bags containing his personal belongings were seen being loaded in cars.

Continued on Page 9

2 MLAs run away from Shinde's Surat camp, 1 recounts heroic escape

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a drama that unfolded after senior leader Eknath Shinde staged a massive rebellion and virtually spirited away 30-odd party MLAs to Surat in BJP-ruled Gujarat, two Shiv Sena MLAs — who had been allegedly "kidnapped" by the rebel camp — returned to Maharashtra on Wednesday, less than 36 hours after they were taken away by the rebel camp members.

On their return, the two Sena MLAs — Nitin Deshmukh from Akola and Kailas Patil from Osmanabad — said they were "misled and taken to Surat against their wishes" by the rebels group late on Monday, but they succeeded in escaping from the watchful eyes of those managing the rebel Shinde camp.

Both Patil and Deshmukh said that they were much with Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and that there was no question of their indulging in rebellion or joining the rebel faction led by Eknath Shinde.

Recounting the ordeal he faced and sensational escape that he made from the rebel Shinde camp, Deshmukh claimed he was "kidnapped" from Mumbai and then taken to Surat along with other rebel Sena MLAs who landed at Le Meridien Hotel at Surat on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday.

Talking to the media in Nagpur where he landed after his dramatic escape from the Shinde-led Sena rebel camp, Deshmukh recalled: "Around 3 am on Tuesday, I managed to escape from the hotel. I went out of the hotel to hitch a ride from some passing vehicles. I was pursued by 100-odd Gujarat policemen who prevented me from sitting in any vehicle and they forcibly took me to some hospital".

"At the hospital, the doctors performed some medical procedure on my body, tried to prove that I had 'suffered a heart attack' and gave him some injection, though I was perfectly healthy," he said.

"They treated me like some terrorist… Somehow I managed to flee from the hospital and here I am — absolutely fit and fine. I have no heart issues as the police contended," Deshmukh said.

Earlier, Deshmukh's wife had lodged a missing complaint with the police that she suspected threats to his life as he was not available on phone after 7 pm on Monday.

Continued on Page 9

Over 1,000 killed in deadliest Af quake

In this photo released by a set-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans look at destruction caused by an earthquake in the province of Paktika, eastern Afghanistan, on Wednesday AP/PTI

AP ■ KABUL

A powerful earthquake struck a rugged, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, killing at least 1,000 people and injuring 1,500 more in the country's deadliest quake in two decades, the state-run news agency reported. Officials warned that the already grim toll may still rise.

Information remained scarce on the magnitude 6.1 temblor near the Pakistani border, but quakes of that strength can cause serious damage in an area where homes and other buildings are poorly constructed and landslides are common.

Experts put the depth at just 10 kilometers - another factor that could lead to severe destruction.

The disaster posed a major test for the Taliban-led government, which seized power last year as the U.S. Planned to pull out from the country and end its longest war, two decades after toppling the same insurgents in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Rescuers rushed to the area by helicopter Wednesday, but the response is likely to be complicated since many international aid agencies left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

Reaching rural areas even in the best circumstances remains difficult in Afghanistan, a landlocked nation just smaller than Texas with rutted mountain roadways that may now have sustained significant damage.

In light of those difficulties, a Taliban official asked for international help. "When such a big incident happens in any country, there is a need for help from other countries," said Sharafuddin Muslim.

"It is very difficult for us to be able to respond to this huge incident."

Neighbouring Pakistan's Meteorological Department said the quake's epicentre was in Afghanistan's Paktika province, some 50 kilometers southwest of the city of Khost.

Buildings were also damaged in Khost province, and tremors were felt some 375 kilometers away in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

Footage from Paktika showed men carrying people in blankets to waiting helicopters. Others were treated on the ground. One resident could be seen receiving IV fluids while

Continued on Page 9

MVA an 'unnatural alliance', Sena must exit it: Shinde

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde on Wednesday said the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra was an "unnatural alliance" and it was imperative for his party to walk out of the coalition with the NCP and the Congress for its own sake and that of party workers.

Shinde's reaction came hours after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray reached out to the rebels, saying he would quit his post if even one Sena MLA comes and tells him on his face that he was incompetent. The Sena strongman, a Cabinet minister, said the MVA, formed in November 2019, was beneficial only to alliance partners the Congress and the NCP, while ordinary Shiv Sainiks have suffered the most in the last two-and-a-half years of the coalition's existence. "It is necessary to quit the unnatural alliance for the sake of Shiv Sainiks and the Shiv Sena. It is important to take a decision in the interest of the state," said Shinde.

Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde with other MLAs at a hotel in Guwahati on Wednesday PTI

DHFL promoters held in biggest-ever bank fraud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the biggest-ever bank fraud case registered by the CBI, the agency has booked DHFL and its promoters Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan in a fresh bank fraud case worth ₹34,615-crore. The CBI also conducted searches at a dozen locations in Mumbai.

The CBI registered a case on complaint from Union Bank of India, Industrial Finance Branch, Mumbai, against private (borrower) company Deewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL), Bandra (East), Mumbai, its promoters Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan and others for allegedly cheating a consortium of 17 banks led by Union Bank of India to the tune of over ₹34,615 crore.

The individuals and entities are accused of siphoning off loans availed from these banks and falsifying the books of DHFL besides creating shell companies/false entities, which subsequently came to be known as "Bandra Book Entities".

"It was alleged that the said private company (DHFL) and its promoters had created a number of shell companies and fictitious entities (the Bandra Book Entities) and siphoned off huge funds by disbursing funds to such fictitious entities," the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that separate audits conducted by other private audit accounting organisations had identified multiple instances of diversion of funds by the accused for personal benefits and falsification of books of accounts to camouflage and conceal dubious transactions, it further said.

The audits also identified several instances where large value loans were provided to such fictitious entities without due diligence and without securities. Instances of sanction and disbursement of loans, merely by e-mail communications were allegedly found for which no loan files were maintained in the DHFL.

Searches conducted at 12 locations in Mumbai on the premises of the accused which led to recovery of incriminating documents and further investigation is continuing, it added.

Continued on Page 9

JD(U), BJD back Murmu for Prez race

Jharkhand ex-Governor and NDA's Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu sweeps at Purnandeswar Shiv temple in Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj, on Wednesday PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the BJP named tribal leader and former Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu as its Presidential candidate, the Janata Dal(U) and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) extended her their support, giving her more than a clear edge against Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha.

Murmu is expected to file her nomination on June 24, accompanied by the BJP's top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced his party JD(U)'s backing to Murmu, who could be the first tribal and the second woman to occupy the top Constitutional post.

Nitish's support to Murmu is crucial since both the JD(U) and the BJP are engaged in a bitter tussle in Bihar.

Nitish, who took diverse positions in the Presidential election in the past, has expressed "delight" over the announcement of Murmu as the NDA's presidential poll candidate.

In a statement, Nitish said he received the news over the telephone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday night, whom he thanked for choosing a "tribal woman" for the country's highest Constitutional office.

"Many thanks to the Prime Minister for choosing a tribal woman who has proven her mettle as a Minister in Odisha and during her gubernatorial stint in Jharkhand," said Nitish.

Continued on Page 9

CAPSULE

LANKA PM: ECONOMY HAS COLLAPSED

Colombo: Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said its debt-laden economy has "collapsed" after months of shortages of food, fuel and electricity, and the island nation cannot even purchase imported oil. "We are now facing a far more serious situation beyond the mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food. Our economy has completely collapsed. That is the most serious issue," said the PM.

12 DIE, 55L AFFECTED BY ASSAM FLOODS

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Wednesday as 12 more people were killed and 55 lakh people affected across 32 districts with the rising Brahmaputra and Barak rivers inundating new areas, officials said.

PM to visit Germany for G-7 meet on June 26-27

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the G-7 summit in Germany on June 26 and 27 where issues like the ongoing Ukraine conflict and the situation in the strategically important Indo-Pacific are likely to figure prominently.

After he visits Germany, Modi will travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to pay his condolences on the passing away of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the former President of the Gulf nation.

His visit to Germany comes against the backdrop of the majority of the members of the G-7 group criticising Russia for its military action in Ukraine. So far, India has abstained from voting against Russia in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). India has also all along favoured dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict.

Giving details of the Prime Minister's schedule, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday said Modi will visit the Alpine castle of Schloss Elmau in southern Germany on June 26 and 27 to attend the annual summit of G7. He had last visited Germany on May 2 to attend the meeting of the sixth edition of the India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations.

Modi is attending the G-7 summit following an invitation by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Germany is the current chair of G7, a grouping of the world's seven richest nations. It comprises the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the US.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Schloss Elmau, Germany, at the invitation of Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, for the G7 Summit under the German Presidency on June 26 to 27," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

US President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are among the top leaders attending the summit.

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6 cops stabbed inside Delhi police station

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Five Delhi Police personnel and one home guard were stabbed by a man in Shahdara Cyber Cell police station on Wednesday afternoon.

Police said that they have arrested the accused who has been identified as 28-year-old Bharat Kumati.

According to police, the man entered the police station and started recording a video. When he was obstructed by one of the policemen and asked the reason behind recording the video, the man suddenly took out a knife and stabbed him and other policemen.

According to R Sathyasundaram, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Shahdara district, around 12.45 pm on Wednesday, Bharat came to the police station's reception and started arguing with the policemen.

"He started to shoot video and police officers there asked him to not shoot a video but Bharat took out a knife and started attacking police personnel," said the DCP, adding that one home guard, who also tried to stop him, got knife injury on his cheek.

"Police personnel immediately closed the main gate of the police station and the accused was overpowered while he was trying to escape. The five police personnel and one home guard injured were rushed to hospital," said the DCP.

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CM asks people to follow Covid protocol

...682 more test positive in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The number of COVID-19 cases increased by 200 as 682 more people tested positive for novel coronavirus infection in Uttar Pradesh in the last 24 hours against 487 cases reported on Tuesday, forcing Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to issue an appeal to people to maintain Covid protocol.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is not over. The number of cases is on the rise therefore the need of the hour is to be vigilant and cautious," the chief minister said during the review meeting held here on Wednesday.

The chief minister was apprised that in the last 24 hours, 682 new cases of coronavirus infection had been reported in the state. During this period, 352 COVID-19 patients were discharged after successful treatment.

At present, there are 3,257 active cases in the state.

The chief minister ordered close monitoring of COVID-19 cases.

"The functioning of medical equipment, proper availability of doctors and paramedical staff in all hospitals should be thoroughly examined. Medicine kits should be prepared and the public should be made aware through public address systems about the need to wear face masks in public places," he said.

Yogi said that progress of the Covid vaccination campaign in the state was satisfactory.

He directed officials to expedite administration of booster doses to people above 18 years of age. He said the second dose should be given to the children on time.

The chief minister was apprised that 33.73 crore doses of Covid vaccine had been administered in the state and more than 14.15 crore people in the age group above 18 years had been provided Covid protection by giving both doses of the vaccine.

In this way 95.99 per cent people have taken both the doses of Covid vaccine in UP, the officials said.

The chief minister said that a state-wide campaign was being started from July 1 for effective control of communicable diseases and there was a need to increase awareness regarding cleanliness, fogging and sanitisation in rural areas.

"All necessary preparations should be made for the successful implementation of the campaign.

The cooperation of public representatives should also be taken," Yogi said.

The chief minister said that drains should be cleaned in view of the rains so that silt does not accumulate and there is no water-logging in the rain.

Covid vaccine cover given to nearly 99 pc population

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the sustained efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government in keeping the pace of Covid vaccination and ensuring timely provision of vaccine cover, Uttar Pradesh will soon be home to 100 percent fully vaccinated individuals.

Government records suggest that UP has been successful in providing vaccine cover to nearly 99 per cent population in every set category -- health workers, frontline workers, senior citizens, adults, children in the age group 15-17, and children in the age group 12-14 -- in the state.

The Uttar Pradesh government is providing vaccination cover to all children between 12 and 17 years of age in a time-bound manner. So far, over 2,58,68,145 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of 15-17 and over 1,32,43,675 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of 12-14 in the state.

Uttar Pradesh has so far administered over 33.75 crore Covid vaccine doses. Out of these, over 17.53 crore are first doses while over 15.87 crore individuals are fully vaccinated.

Committed to providing additional protection cover to the people, Uttar Pradesh started administering booster shots (precaution dose) from January 10. Over 34.56 lakh 'precaution doses' have been administered in the state so far.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that aggressive vaccination was an integral part of the comprehensive strategy of the government to contain the pandemic, along with adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour.

Polling in Rampur, Azamgarh today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Polling for the by-elections to Rampur and Azamgarh parliamentary seats will take place on Thursday.

Over 35 lakh voters are eligible to cast their votes in these two bypolls in which 19 candidates are in the fray from the two constituencies considered to be the strongholds of Samajwadi Party.

The polling will take place between 7 am and 6 pm on Thursday, according to Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Ajay Kumar Shukla.

The bypoll to the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat was necessitated due to resignation from Lok Sabha by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav following his election to UP assembly in March this year while the Rampur parliamentary seat was vacated by Mohammad Azam Khan for the same reason.According to the chief electoral officer, 13 candidates are in the fray from Azamgarh, where 18.38 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise, while Rampur has six candidates and 17.06 lakh eligible voters.

Campaigning for the bypolls ended on Tuesday evening.

From Rampur, the Bharatiya Janata Party has fielded former SP legislator Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi who recently joined the ruling party, while the SP has nominated Asim Raja, handpicked by Azam Khan. The Bahujan Samaj Party is not contesting from Rampur. The Azamgarh constituency is witnessing a triangular contest between BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua', a famous Bhojpuri actor-singer, SP's Dharmendra Yadav and Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali of the BSP.

The BJP is eyeing to bolster its strength in the Lok Sabha further through these bypolls, while the SP faces the challenge of retaining both the seats. In Azamgarh, there are 18.38 lakh voters -- 9,70,249 males,, 8,67,942 females and 36 third gender electors.

According to officials, 2,176 booths have been set up at 1,149 polling stations of the constituency where an estimated 15 per cent of the residents are Muslims. All the five assembly segments of the parliamentary constituency - Azamgarh, Mubarakpur, Sagdi, Gopalpur and Mehnagar -were won by the SP in the recent assembly election.

During the 2019 Lok Sabha election, there was an alliance between SP and BSP, and Akhilesh Yadav had won easily from Azamgarh, securing 6.21 lakh votes against BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav who polled 3.61 lakh votes.

For the BJP, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath spearheaded the election campaign and sought votes for the BJP candidates on the two seats. However, Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple did not campaign in the bypolls. "We are winning both the Azamgarh and Rampur seats," SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary said.

The Rampur parliamentary constituency, which has almost an equal population of Hindus and Muslims, is considered a bastion of SP's prominent Muslim face, Azam Khan. Yadavs, Sikhs and Dalit voters are also in a position to influence the outcome of the bypoll to the Lok Sabha seat.

In the 2019 Lok Sabaha election, Azam Khan had polled 5, 59,177 votes to defeat BJP candidate Jaya Prada who secured 4, 49,180 votes. Congress candidate Sanjay Kapoor had lost his deposit.

The Rampur Lok Sabha constituency comprises five assembly segments -- Rampur, Suar, Chamraua, Bilaspur, and Milak. In the 2022 assembly elections, the SP won from Rampur, Suar and Chamraua assembly constituencies while the BJP bagged the Bilaspur and Milak seats.

Voters terrorised, intimidated in Azamgarh, alleges Akhilesh

Lucknow(PNS): The Samajwadi Party has petitioned the Election Commission of India that voters are terrorised and intimidated in Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats which go to polls on Thursday.

In a complaint filed to the ECI, the SP has demanded a direction to the district officials for conducting polling in a free, fair and transparent manner. Former chief minister of UP and SP president Akhilesh Yadav said here on Wednesday that the Bharatiya Janata Party knew that it could never win the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat and was therefore misusing the official machinery and Samajwadi Party leaders and workers were being framed in false cases. He alleged that in Rampur, many SP workers had been detained in police stations without any charges against them.

The SP alleged in its complaint that party cadre and village pradhans were being intimidated in Sagdi, Gopalpur and Mehnagar assembly seats falling in Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency.

The SP also alleged that the BJP leaders had given a list of the SP supporters and voters to the local police station officers to prevent them from casting their votes on Thursday. The SP alleged that in both the Lok Sabha constituencies, ministers of the BJP government had directed the lekhpals and panchayat secretaries to ensure that the votes from their villages were cast in favour of the BJP candidate.

Meanwhile, Akhilesh Yadav appealed to the voters to ensure the victory of SP candidate Dharmendra Yadav from Azamgarh. He asked the voters to be vigilant against the disinformation campaign by the BJP through various means, including social media.

"I and my father Mulayam Singh Yadav are no strangers to voters of Azamgarh and both of us are members of the larger Azamgarh family," Akhilesh Yadav said.

The SP chief issued a similar appeal to the voters of Rampur, urging them to ensure the success of the party candidate Asim Raza from Rampur.

Maya predicts victory of BSP candidate in Azamgarh

Lucknow (PNS): Predicting the victory of her party candidate, Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati, on the eve of bypolls, appealed to the voters to vote in favor of the BSP candidate for the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat.

Mayawati expressed her hope in a tweet in which she said that she was convinced by the public support that the victory of party candidate Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali was certain in Azamgarh.

Mayawati tweeted on Wednesday that the way the BSP was getting support from people of all sections in the elections to be held on Thursday for Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat, was very encouraging. "By staying away from the gimmicks of the opponents, this public support will definitely convert into votes, such is the full belief of BSP candidate Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali," she said.

Due to Jamali always being helpful to the people rising above the local and party politics, his credibility and popularity is more than that of the opponents, which is likely to have a good effect on the election result, she added.

Even a day earlier, Mayawati, while creating an atmosphere in favour of BSP candidate Guddu Jamali in the Azamgarh Lok Sabha by-election from Lucknow, had given him the title of a very civilised person along with describing him as a local resident.

Regarding Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali, who was MLA from Mubarakpur assembly constituency of Azamgarh, Mayawati had said that by ensuring the victory of Guddu Jamali in Azamgarh, people could kill two birds with one arrow. The BSP supremo had said that this was the first time that the BSP was contesting a by-election in Azamgarh and this bypoll was important for the people in the sense that they could defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party to teach it a lesson for its anti-people policies like Agnipath. She said along with this, SP could also be punished for its "internal complicity" with the BJP as both were two faces of the same coin.

She also made a strong appeal to the voters to participate enthusiastically in the voting.

Bahujan Samaj Party has fielded Guddu Jamali from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat, while the party has not fielded its candidate for Rampur Lok Sabha seat.

Mau admn to confiscate property worth Rs 3 cr of Mukhtar's wife

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Continuing the crackdown on mafias and their family members, the Mau administration has now ordered to confiscate property worth over Rs 3 crore acquired illegally by Afshan Ansari, wife of gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari.

The action is being taken to confiscate these illegally acquired properties on behalf of Mukhtar's family members, who are facing charges under the Gangsters Act.

According to the district magistrate of Mau, a campaign is underway to attach illegal properties in the district. Taking action under the Gangsters Act, District Magistrate Arun Kumar has issued an order to attach property worth Rs 3.76 crore illegally acquired by Afshan Ansari wife of Mukhtar Ansari, resident of Yusufpur under Muhammadabad police station of Ghazipur district.

The huge property is situated in Sheikhpur Pargana of Sadar tehsil in Ghazipur district. The market value of this land is around Rs3 .76 crore, the officials claim. A case has been registered against Afshan Ansari in various police stations of Ghazipur district, besides in Mau police station, Sarayalkhansi police station and South Tola police station.

The land to be attached was purchased by Afshan Ansari with illegally earned money.

The district magistrate said that as per the direction of the government, action was being taken against the movable and immovable properties acquired using the ill-gotten money in the district.

The district administration is identifying all people involved in illegal activities. There are sufficient grounds to take action against those who have created a large number of movable and immovable properties from illegally acquired money, under the Gangsters Act, he claimed.

Woman found murdered in Meerut

... army jawan killed in celebratory firing

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mystery shrouds the death of a 35-year-old woman who was found murdered inside her house in Meerut.

The woman had bullet injury marks and the incident came to light when some neighbours heard the cries of the 7-year-old daughter of the victim.

According to police, when neighbors first entered the house, they saw the woman's body lying in a pool of blood and her daughter wrapped around her mother's body.

Superintendent of Police (City) Vineet Bhatnagar said that Saima (35), a resident of Shyamnagar in Lisadigate area, was shot in the head by an unidentified person. He further said that when there was no sound from the house, the neighbors went inside the house and saw that Saima had died. Also her seven-year-old daughter Layba was sleeping in her lap. Not only this, the woman's body was covered with a sheet.

Saima was married in 2014 with Shahzad, a resident of Sadiq Nagar and they got divorced about two years ago. Since then Saima was living on rent in a two-storey house in Shyamnagar.

According to Bhatnagar, prima facie it appears that some acquaintance may have killed Saima. He said that two people residing in the house had been taken into custody and interrogated. He said that the police were taking further action in the matter and the body was sent for autopsy.

Meanwhile in Sonbhadra, a 35-year-old Army jawan was killed in celebratory firing during a wedding in the Brahmnagar area of the district.

Additional Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar said, "The jawan was on leave and got fatally injured in the firing at the function. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead."

"Yadav was currently posted in Jammu and had returned to his village on leave a couple of days ago," Kumar said. The body was sent for postmortem and investigations are underway to identify the accused.

Police are yet to identify the person who fired the shot. The cops are scanning the video footage of the function for any breakthrough.

Meanwhile, seven persons were killed in three separate accidents reported since Tuesday night.

In Basti, a pickup truck coming from Dumariyaganj, collided with a motorcycle coming from the opposite direction at Dubauli stop located in Sohna police station area on Basti-Dumariyaganj road on Tuesday night.

Reports said that Sarwan Kumar (25) and Sunil Kumar (25) both brothers residing in Asanhara, were going to Mahuara village of Siddharthnagar district on Tuesday night with their brother-in-law Rajkumar (24), a resident of Santram, Latia police station area of Bhawaniganj in Siddharthnagar by a motorcycle. They were going to attend a feast organised at a relative's place after the mundan ceremony.

As soon as the trio reached near the Dubauli halt, a pickup coming from Dumariyaganj rammed into a roadside tree and hit the motorcycle. The pickup driver, Kedarnath Chaudhary of Rajabazar police station area in Old Basti was seriously injured. Bike riders Sarwan, Sunil and Rajkumar also suffered serious injuries.

Police outpost in-charge Asanhara Ramdev, who reached the spot after getting information from passers-by, took the four injured to community health centre in Bewa, Siddharthnagar, where the doctor pronounced Sarvan dead. Sunil Kumar died during treatment at the district hospital in Basti while Rajkumar died on the way from Basti to Gorakhpur.

In Sultanpur, on the Ayodhya-Prayagraj National Highway in Tatia Nagar of Gosaiganj police station area of the district, three students riding a motorcycle were hit by a Roadways bus coming from the opposite direction. While two youths died, the third was critically injured and referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre Lucknow.

The three motorcycle-borne youths were going from the city to KNI College in Faridipur on Wednesday morning. As they reached Tatiya Nagar, the speeding Roadways bus hit the motorcycle. The deceased students were identified as Rajeshwar Singh (23) of Saifabad police station in Basti and Shivakant Singh (23), from Bahela in Jaunpur. The injured was identified as Kuldeep Yadav.

In another mishap in Kannauj, a DCM hit motorcycle riders going to attend a wedding ceremony, killing both of them.

According to the reports, Vivek Kumar (21) of Gura village under Kotwali police station in Auraiya and his friend Niloj Kumar (25) were going to Ruppur village on motorcycle to attend a friend's wedding on Tuesday night. As they reached near the expressway underpass on the Saurikh-Bidhuna road, the speeding DCM hit their motorcycle, killing both of them.

Six held in Sitapur for running WhatsApp group against Agnipath

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Forming a WhatsApp group to register protest against launch of Agnipath scheme for recruitment in Indian Army and also loading objectionable remarks by circulating photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has landed half a dozen youths in trouble as the local police in Sitapur registered a case and arrested them on Wednesday.

Reports said that the youths created a WhatsApp group 'Indian Army Uttar Pradesh' and posted comments on the group and spread rumours of ruckus in Sitapur district and in Bakshi-ka-Talab in Lucknow with the aim of opposing the Agnipath scheme.

They also posted objectionable photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and made objectionable remarks against them.

The cops of city Kotwali police station in Sitapur took cognisance of this WhatsApp group with the help of cyber cell and registered a case against all members of the group, including the group administrator of the Indian Army Uttar Pradesh group.

The police registered a case against these six accused under sections 153A, 505 (1), 504,506,67 of the Indian Penal Code and arrested them by conducting raids at their houses late on Tuesday night.

The police arrested Yogendra Yadav, group administrator of the WhatsApp group, Ayush Maurya, a resident of Kotwa Bakshi Talab, Bhanu Yadav, a resident of Vikramnagar, Lucknow, Deepak Singh, a resident of Janki Nagar, Ataria, Radhavendra Baghel, a resident of Lalpur, Ramkot, and Abdul Latif, a resident of Sureshpur village of Manpur.

Inspector Kotwali,Tej Prakash Singh, said that on Wednesday all the accused were sent to jail and legal proceedings had been initiated against them.

Meanwhile in Saharanpur, six people accused of cow slaughter were arrested after an encounter, the police said on Wednesday.

THE COPS OF CITY KOTWALI POLICE STATION IN SITAPUR TOOK COGNISANCE OF THIS WHATSAPP GROUP WITH THE HELP OF CYBER CELL AND REGISTERED A CASE AGAINST ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP, INCLUDING THE GROUP ADMINISTRATOR OF THE INDIAN ARMY UTTAR PRADESH GROUP

Police recovered slaughtered cattle, butchering tools, a country-made pistol along with a few live cartridges from the possession of the accused. Those arrested were identified as Akram, Shehzad, Imran, Akbar, Israr and Arshad. Two other accused are absconding.

Superintendent of Police (City) Rajesh Kumar said, "Acting on an intelligence input, our team raided a house under the Deoband police station limits. Eight people were found to be involved in cow slaughter there. Six of them have been arrested."

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from kartikeya Singh to Kartikey S Chauhan for all future Purpose, Kartikey S Chauhan S/O Shailendra Singh R/O Village Jalalpur Nagin, Kanpur Dehat

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Moolchand To Moolchand Bachani for all future Purpose, Moolchand Bachani S/O Basudeo R/O 7, Basant Vihar Coloney Naubasta Kanpur Nagar

खोया–पाया

मैं संध्या सिंह पुत्री श्री अमरेन्द्र प्रताप सिंह निवासी सी–2001/39 इन्दिरा नगर लखनऊ का आवास विकास परिषद का भू. स. 11/20 वृन्दावन योजना का मूल एलाटमेंट लेटर खो गया है। जिसका किसी के द्वारा प्रयोग अवैधानिक होगा।

NOTICE

After marriage my name has changed from Priyanka Sharma to Priyanka Pawar, in future I will be known and recognized as Priyanka Pawar - Priyanka Pawar W/o Shri Pankaj Pawar R/o H. No. 149/5, Babu Purwa Colony, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Sandhya To Sandhya Kathariya & DOB 05/07/1981 To 05/07/1977 for all future Purpose my name is Sandhya Kathariya & DOB 05/07/1977 W/O Jai Karan Singh is correct EWS, 5106 Aawas Vikas No.3 Kalyanpur Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was HASEEAN UDDIN which is now changed to HASEEN UDDIN. In future I shall be known as HASEEN UDDIN. HASEEN UDDIN S/o SAMEER UDDIN 108, Chakiya CTB Nagar, Allahabad.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was SHWETA JASLEENA PAUL which is now changed to SHWETA UPADHYAY. In future I shall be known as SHWETA UPADHYAY. SHWETA UPADHYAY W/o AMIT KUMAR UPADHYAY 570, Mutthiganj, Allahabad.

NOTICE

I Amit Kumar Singh States That The Original Allotment Letter dated 01/03/2008, Possession Letter dated 15/12/2017 & Power of attorney dated 22/03/2016 Of My House No. L-1/122 Sector LIG-I Scheme/ Mohalla Chandra Nagari Kanpur Nagar. Has Been Misplaced, Hence Its Use By Any Person for Any Purpose Should be Considered illegal.

सूचना

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FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1 University Road Near Hanuman Setu Mandir Lucknow-226007
(Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication
Date:
(Summons to defendant under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal Procedure Rules 1993)
Original Application NO. 302 of 2022
Bank of Baroda — Applicant
Versus
Mrs. Maya Pandey & another — Defendant/s
To:
1. Mrs. Maya Pandey w/o Mr. Vijay Pandey 645A/57-P-15 Janki Vihar Sector I Jankipuram, Lucknow 226 021
2. Mr. Vijay Pandey 645A/57-P-15 Janki Vihar Sector I Jankipuram, Lucknow 226 021
In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 27.09.2022 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Registrar,
Debt Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

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CM to UP Board toppers: Develop habit of facing challenges in stress-free manner

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath felicitating a UP Board meritorious student in Lucknow on Wednesday

Stressing that they were the brightest Intermediate students of 10 schools of UP Board, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while interacting with students here on Wednesday, said they had to work hard if they wanted to perform better in their life in future.

Yogi Adityanath said there was no alternative to hard work but one should work in a positive manner and in the right direction as this would bring in the required results. He advised students to develop the habit of facing challenges in a stress-free manner as it would make the challenge of examinations very easy.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met the UP Board toppers, their parents and the principals of their schools. He said that if the students answer the question papers with confidence, they would be able to solve them properly.

He said that the atmosphere at home affects the school and each one affects the other and hence it was important to pay attention to this.

During his interaction with the toppers, Yogi asked the students if they visited libraries regularly and read newspapers, especially the editorials.

"Develop the habit of reading the full news which includes the heading as well as the content because there is a wide difference between the two. The editorial of a newspaper is a treasure of news of the world because it carries the views of the world that are contemporary and very good for general knowledge," he said."

The chief minister told the students that they had cleared the Intermediate examination and entered the graduate classes and thereafter they would be preparing for competitive examinations and if they did not update themselves, the competitions would become tough, hence it was important to update themselves from now itself. "It is always important to know what is happening in the country as well as the world," he added.

Yogi enquired from the students about the Abhyudaya Yojana and whether they were watching it physically and virtually and told them that the Uttar Pradesh government had for every category of students, whether it was NDA (National Defence Academy) or NEET, IITJEE, UPSC or any other Central government and state government services, provided for free coaching services through this scheme.

"The unique aspect of this project is that the people running it have passed the examinations themselves. For example, all the new IAS officers who have been posted in the district find time for teaching this scheme. IPS and PCS and PPS officers also teach in these classes and the virtual classes can be viewed by all, though for the physical classes there are limited numbers of students who are selected through competition," he said.

He asked the students about the International Yoga Day and how many of them participated in it. He said five crore people from UP joined the yoga celebrations and all students should have been part of the celebrations because it was held in every public place and park.

The chief minister also enquired from the toppers about the time they woke up in the morning. "It is important to be disciplined because that is the first requirement for being healthy. Secondly, one should practice yoga aasans regularly as they provide both physical and mental health. It is not important to only see that you do well academically but also to have the motivation to do something for the country and make a working strategy accordingly. If you carry out various activities in time only then will you be able to move forward," he added.

Yogi told the students that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had started the Swachhata Mission as wherever there was cleanliness there was health. He also asked the principals present whether they apprised the students of the schemes of the Central and UP governments and told them that the students should be informed about all the government schemes such as Start-Up project, Stand-Up project in the morning assembly through a half- hour presentation.

"The children can be told how these government schemes can help them because students and all those for whom the schemes are meant have no knowledge about the schemes. Educational institutes should have all the knowledge about these schemes. The effort should be to keep at least all English newspapers in all the schools," he said, Yogi said that principals should also give feedback to the Central government and the state government about it.

Yogi asked the students to read the book written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it would free them from all problems related to examinations. "The prime minister has given very important information through this book. A successful person is one who looks into small things and resolves problems in time and the one who is careless and thinks that he knows is always be unsuccessful," he said,

The chief minister directed the officials concerned to call a meeting of all the principals and make a presentation of all the meritorious students of all the government, private and aided schools vis-à-vis how these children got a meritorious position and what was done by the school to see that they were in the merit list so that others could see where they lacked behind and a healthy competition could be carried forward. He said that schools should be provided details of the state and the Central government projects and schemes in every meeting held on Sundays.

He said that sometimes it was seen that the applications for scholarships were not submitted by some schools till the time the portal was open and once the portal was closed they started running to submit the applications.

Yogi said that preparations for felicitating 100 toppers of all education boards were being made at the district level also in the state.

Brain dead man's liver transplanted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team of King George's Medical University doctors retrieved the liver of a 50-year-old male brain dead donor admitted at Apollomedics Hospital Lucknow and transplanted it in a patient suffering from cirrhosis of liver since last one year

The donor had sustained head injury in a road accident on June 17 this year and was declared brain dead on June 21 by the brain death committee at the Apollomedics Hospital Lucknow.

The liver was retrieved by a KGMU team comprising Dr Abhijit Chandra, Dr Vivek Gupta and Dr Sandeep Kumar Verma from the gastrosurgery department. The recipient is a 39-year-old male patient from Pratapgarh. An engineer by profession, he was suffering from cirrhosis of liver since the last one year.

"Two kidneys were also retrieved during the procedure and transplanted at various institutes of Lucknow. Liver was transported to KGMU from Apollomedics Lucknow in about 14 minutes through a green corridor created by the Traffic Control Room, Lucknow," the KGMU spokesperson said.

The transplant team was led by KGMU Vice-Chancellor Lt Gen (Dr) Bipin Puri. The surgery team was led by Dr Abhijit Chandra including, Dr Vivek Gupta and Dr Sandeep Kumar Verma from the gastrosurgery department, Dr Rajesh Raman and Dr GP Singh from the anaesthesia department, Dr Avinash Agarwal from the critical care medicine department and Dr Sumit Rungta from the gastromedicine department.

Dr Jagdish and Dr Vivek from Max Institute, New Delhi, were also present during the procedure. Other critical services were provided by Dr SN Sankhwar (chief medical superintendent), Dr Tulika Chandra (blood transfusion), Dr Amita Jain (microbiology), Dr Neera Kohli (radiology) and Dr Wahid Ali (pathology).

It was the 16th successful liver transplant (fourth cadaveric) in the history of KGMU.

Meanwhile, Appollomedics Hospital said it was a tough call for the family but showing utmost courage at this crucial moment, they decided to donate the brain dead man's organs.

Giving details about the kidney transplant, a senior doctor said, "Patient was admitted in the emergency with severe traumatic brain injury with multiple complications. On the eve of June 20 the attendants were briefed on a possibility of brain death. Subsequently all necessary steps were initiated for the confirmation of the declaration of brain death around midnight. The attendants were apprised about the situation and were requested for donation of organs. The wife, a teacher, along with her son and brother of the deceased consented to the donation stating this as supreme sacrifice by an ex-army man."

In the wee hours of June 21, the kidney transplant began and the recipient was a 36-year-old female, mother of two young girls, with a diabetic husband and no possible suitable donor in the family. It was nothing less than a miracle for the lady and the family who had lost all hopes." he added.

The surgical team consisted of Brig (Dr) Anand Srivastava, Dr Aditya Sharma, Dr Shashikant Gupta and Major (Dr) Sujeet Shekhar Sinha.

DyCM to directly enquire about health of patients in state hosps

Lucknow (PNS): The state government will be starting the scheme of Swasthya Aapka Sankalp Sarkar Ka" in which Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak will directly interact with two patients from 10 districts daily in a bid to see that best of the health services are being provided to the patients in Uttar Pradesh.

This was stated by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak at a press conference held on Wednesday in the state capital.

Pathak showed to the media persons the recording of the conversations which he had with the patients on Tuesday. He said that they were doing this because when this kind of message would go amongst the people then the state would get a good image throughout the country. Pathak stressed that the state government was with the people at all levels and would help the serious patients. He said that those who were in private hospitals would also get the required help from the chief minister and he was preparing a list in this regard.

Pathak said that the government was monitoring the hospitals continuously.

He said that all the hospitals were being physically inspected for which he was personally visiting the hospitals in a proactive manner.

"I have visited 43 hospitals and I myself have seen the health services being delivered but reaching all places would be difficult in the state," he said. The deputy chief minister said that the government would find a means to get feedback from the patients so that patients also felt that the government was thinking about their welfare. He said that at all hospitals they made it clear that doctors and paramedical staff should look upon the patients as god and make all facilities for them.

Woman attacked by goons at food joint in Chowk

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified car-borne goons attacked a woman and her family at a food joint in Chowk police station area late in the night on Tuesday.

The woman lodged a report against the goons and also gave the registration number of their car.

As per reports, the woman, a resident of Thakurganj, along with her brother-in-law had gone to a food joint close to KGMC in Chowk to purchase food. She was on a scooty. A little later her husband also reached there in a car.

The woman alleged that a white car reached the scene after her husband reached the food joint and its driver blew the horn. This led to a verbal spat and the youths used abusive language which was opposed by the victim's husband.

"The miscreants lost their cool and they attacked my husband. When I intervened, they scuffled with me and pushed me down from the scooty. They also threw a brick at my husband's car, damaging its windscreen and lunged at me with nefarious design. I had to run towards a nearby police outpost to save my dignity," she alleged.

The police swung into action after a video showing a woman and her family members being attacked by goons went viral. A spokesman said the incident was reported at around 1 am on June 22 and a case was registered around 9 am on Wednesday. He said the police had registered a case for eve teasing, for thrashing the woman and her family members and also for damaging their car.

"Attempts are on to nab the miscreants. We are conducting raids," he said.

GROCER COMMITS SUICIDE

A 45-year-old grocer ended his life at his house in Bazaar Khala police station area on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Sayed Mohammed Jalil Ahmad of Joshi Tola locality in the area. He was found hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around his neck on Wednesday morning. The family saw him hanging from the ceiling in a room in the morning and rushed him to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. The deceased's family told police that Ahmad took the extreme step sometime in the intervening night of June 21/22. His wife is a tutor.

Police sent the body for autopsy. In another incident, a 26-year-old woman, identified as Suman Devi of Bhola Khera in Nigoha, was found hanging at her house on Tuesday night.

Suman's husband, Ram Kumar, and in-laws said she committed suicide. However, her parents alleged that she was killed and hanged.

The police said the woman had written a suicide note in which she requested the police not to hold anyone responsible for her death. The police said she ended her life due to depression.

THEFT: A maid stole Rs 3 lakh from the house of her employer in PGI police station area. She was hired through a company providing maids.

As per reports, Jasneet Singh of the area had hired the services of Lorag Dung of Jharkhand as a maid through a company providing workers. Jasneet alleged that the woman stole cash from the house on June 16, two days after she started working in their house.

Police are investigating the case. Meanwhile, thieves made off with Rs 40,000 and ornaments worth several lakh rupees from the house of a woman teacher in Sairpur police station area in the city.

Ashwini Kumar of Krishna Vihar Colony in the area said in his report that he had gone to Sitapur to drop his wife at her school and the house was locked on June 20.

"I returned home around 3 pm and found my house burgled," he said.

Police registered a case and started the investigation.

Two held for Chinhat loot and murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The police on Wednesday arrested two robbers who had killed a man and looted cash from him in Chinhat police station area.

The miscreants were identified as Deepak Sonar (24) and Rajesh Pathharkat (20), both of Mahanagar. The police recovered over Rs 5,000 out of Rs 20,000 which the miscreants confessed to have looted.

ADCP (East) Qasim Abdi said the police started an investigation after the body was recovered on June 17. He said the footage of a CCTV camera installed at a dhaba close to the crime scene showed the suspects following the deceased. "We collected their details and later arrested them," he said.

He said efforts were being made to identify the deceased.

The miscreants disclosed during interrogation that they were planning to loot cash from some person when around 2:40 am on June 14, they saw some diners going towards a place where a water cooler was installed.

The miscreants said they hid behind the shrubs near the water cooler and after some time they saw the victim going towards the water cooler and also spotted his back pocket which was bulging with a purse full of cash.

Dists to be made financially self-sufficient to boost GDP

Lucknow (PNS): In a bid to give gross domestic product (GDP) a boost, the Uttar Pradesh government has directed the officials to understand the potential of every district and regularly review ways to make them financially self-sufficient.

Issuing this directive, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing a high-level meeting on Wednesday, said to take advantage of the potential of every district, efforts should be made in a planned manner. He said the urban bodies would have to make concerted efforts to increase the income of all the districts.

"In order to strengthen the municipal bodies, municipal corporations and gram panchayats that are incurring losses at the moment, the government machinery is ensuring 100 per cent recovery of other taxes like house tax and water tax," he said.

Efforts are also being made to make urban bodies efficient and financially self-reliant through the schemes of the Central and state governments.

"With the strengthening of the municipal bodies, we will be able to ensure that all the districts are clean and people are getting all basic facilities," he said The state government issued strict instructions in view of the coming rainy season.

"The authorities must ensure that the drains are properly cleaned and there is no silt in drains. Steps should be taken to ensure that there is no water-logging in any area of the state. The works done so far under the AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) scheme should be thoroughly reviewed. Instead of just trying to keep the cities clean, we should also focus on making them beautiful," the chief minister said.

The Yogi Adityanath government has also directed the officials to seek help from people, public representatives and social organisations to make the districts clean and beautiful. Furthermore, the government is also taking energy conservation very seriously and has instructed the officials to ensure street lights are turned on and switched off in a timely manner.

The chief minister said that in view of the changed industrial environment of the state, a large number of entrepreneurs from across the country and the world were investing in Uttar Pradesh. He said according to the needs of the industry, a new industrial policy, a new electronic vehicle policy and a better warehousing and logistics policy should be prepared. He said industry representatives may also be consulted while formulating revised or new policies as required. The chief minister said that after Purvanchal Expressway, the state was going to get the gift of Bundelkhand Expressway very soon.

CITYBRIEFS

CONVENTION

"Vigyan Bharati" is going to organise its fifth national convention in AKTU to take scientific activities and scientific contribution to the general public. Sangathan mantri of Awadh province Shreyansh Mandloi said that the convention will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on June 25. More than 600 scientists, thinkers, technologists, educationists, policy makers, teachers and students from India and abroad will take part in the convention. There will be a scientific conference, scientific exhibition and brainstorming on the scientific challenges and opportunities before the country. A souvenir will also be published to display the research work, developed technology and scientific achievements of laboratories, universities of various states.

HINDI OLYMPIAD

Vidit Singh and Dhatri Tiwari of City Montessori School, Aliganj Campus II have brought laurels to the city by securing a silver and a bronze medal respectively in National Hindi Olympiad. The Olympiad was organised under the auspices of Hindi Utkarsh Mandal. The organisers rewarded them with medal and certificates appreciating their knowledge and talents.

RDSO

To meet the demand of passengers opting for night journey by trains, a tender to purchase 200 train sets is in advance stage while a specification for 100 trains set (based on Train 18 theme) equipped with 200 kmph speed aluminum light weight body facility has been sent to railway board. This was stated by RDSO Director General Sanjeev Bhutani on Wednesday during a press conference called to brief news persons about the activities and achievement of the premier research and design organisation of the Railways. He said a specification for development of hydrogen fuel cell based hybrid power train to prove the technology success of 1200 KW DEMU had been sent and Northern Railways had issued contracts. He said the Indian Railway had taken an important initiative to provide opportunities to startups to promote innovation under the Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India. He said startups would be given a maximum grant of Rs 1.5 crore on an equal sharing basis.

UP govt all set to develop apparel park in Noida

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to improve investments and exports in the garment sectors, the Uttar Pradesh government is all set to develop an apparel park in Noida.

"If we look at the data for the financial year 2021-2022, the share of textiles and apparel in the goods exported from Uttar Pradesh was 9 per cent which comes out to Rs 12,996 crore," a government spokesman said here on Wednesday. The electronic and electrical products are in first and second slots in export while apparel is in the third place. "Talking about growth, there was an increase of about 40 per cent in textiles and apparel exports compared to 2020-2021. This growth was more than the products of electronics and electrical and meat during the same period. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, logging such a staggering increase in exports is indeed remarkable," he said.

The share of Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad in the state's top 10 export cities is 41 per cent and 11 percent, respectively. "The exporting apparel industry is also largely populated in these districts. Most of these are in the unplanned area. To provide them with all facilities in one place, the Yogi Adityanath government will develop an apparel park in Noida," he said.

About 115 export-oriented units of readymade garments are targeted to be set up in this park. According to an estimate, an investment of Rs 3,000 crore is expected to come. Soon the process will be started in this regard. The target is to lay the foundation stone in July and start commercial production in all the units by September 2025. Apart from this, the government also plans to develop five textiles and apparel parks on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. For this, the tender process will be initiated after identifying the land by September next year. The target is to start production by 2026.

"In order to organise this industry, the government will set up factories in or around the cities where there is a rich tradition of readymade garments. In the first phase, Kanpur Nagar, Gorakhpur and Agra have been selected for this. Keeping in view the possibilities of the cluster approach, the government will also establish a textile industry as per the tradition of that area in the industrial corridors to be built along all the expressways. In the future, such clusters will be developed in each block under the National Handloom Development Programme at a cost of Rs.500 crore," the official said.

He said there was also a plan to set up a world-class textile park at a cost of Rs 10,000 crore under the PM Mitra scheme. In order to make Uttar Pradesh a global textile hub through the new policy, best infrastructure, skill development of weavers and cluster approach, the government will also lay emphasis on the marketing of finished goods for Brand UP.

Advocate threatened by woman for giving consultation to hubby

Lucknow (PNS): An advocate was threatened by a woman for giving legal consultation to her husband who is fighting a domestic violence case filed by her in a court. As per reports, the victim is giving legal consultation to his acquaintance Shubham of Saadatganj, who is married to one Poonam Saini who has accused him of domestic violence. "I have known Shubham for a long time. My decision to help Shubham by giving consultation backfired as Poonam became hostile to me. Since I started giving consultation to Shubham, Poonam has been making attempts to stop me from giving consultation. She used to pass comments on me whenever she saw me on the way but I ignored it," he said.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

Regional Office Kanpur Dehat Region : 118/330, 2nd Floor, Kaushalpuri Gumti No. 5, Kanpur -208012

Possession Notice Branch : Adarsh Nagar, Unnao

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date

Borrower : M/s Shiv Timber, Address : 128/329, Y-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur, **Partner :** Shri Keshav Sharma S/o Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma and Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma S/o Shri Devideen Sharma, Both R/o : 136, Sahjani, Shuklaganj, Majhra Peepar Kheda, Ehet Mali, Tehsil & Distt. Unnao.
Demand Notice Date: 14-02-2022 • Date of Constructive Possession: 18-06-2022
Property : Bhumi No. 517 at Mohalla Shekhpur, Andar Palika City & Distt. Unnao in the name of Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma S/o Shri Devideen Sharma, **Area :** 139.40 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded- North :** Plot Paramdeep, **South :** Arazi Mukir, **East :** Road 20 Ft. Wide, **West :** Arazi Mukir.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 42,00,481.39+Intt. + Others Charges

Date : 23-06-2022 **Place : Kanpur / Unnao** **Authorised Officer**

SIT arrests restaurant owner

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a major breakthrough, the Special Investigation Team (SIT), set up to probe the June 3 Kanpur violence, has arrested the owner of Baba Biryani Restaurant Mukhtar Baba on Wednesday. After quizzing at the SIT's Colonelganj office, the accused would be produced in the court and sent to jail.

After the Friday prayers on June 3, a massive violence had erupted in Parade area in protest against the alleged anti-Prophet statement of suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma. There was stampede after the forced shutting down of shops on the Bazar Bandh call given by the national president of MMA Jauhar Fans Association Hayat Zafar Hashmi. During the violence, the mob belonging to a particular community had indulged stone-pelting, firing and lobbing bombs targeting residents of Chandreshwar Hata on Nai Sarak. As many as seven persons were seriously injured in the violence while over 25 people had sustained minor injuries. Since then, police have so far sent 58 protesters to jail, including the key accused Hayat Zafar Hashmi. During questioning of Hayat Zafar Hashmi taken on remand a few days ago, police had come to know about the involvement of owner of Baba Biryani Restaurant Mukhtar Baba and builder Hazi Wasi in funding the rioters. Both were also found involved in the violence allegedly in a bid to divert the attention of district administration and police authorities from initiating the ongoing penal action against them for securing illegal possession on various enemy and disputed properties in the city. During investigation it was revealed that as Chandreshwar Hata was mostly occupied by Hindu families surrounded by Muslim localities it prompted Hazi Wasi and Mukhtar Baba to terrorise the members of the former community forcing them to leave the place and make a fast buck by constructing multi-storyed buildings there. Accordingly, SIT called Mukhtar Baba to its Colonelganj office on Wednesday morning and after quizzing for around two hours, arrested him. Joint Commissioner of Police Anand Prakash Tewari said Mukhtar Baba was found involved in many cases lodged against him the details of which were being collected. The accused would be produced in the court and sent to jail in due course, he said.

Training programme concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A special 15-day training programme on 'Upgradation of knowledge and skill in processing and value-addition of horticultural crops' which was jointly organised by Department of Horticulture, Naini Agricultural Institute, SHUATS and Centre of Food Processing and Preservation, Government of UP, Prayagraj, concluded on Tuesday. Prof VM Prasad, Department of Horticulture started the function with the opening prayer and welcomed the dignitaries. Fifty six trainees from Allahabad University, ANDUAT Ayodhya and SHUATS successfully participated in the programme. Its valedictory function was organised on June 20. The function was presided over by Prof S Herbert, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PMD) as chief guest and Prof Arif A Broadway, Director Extension, Prof Shailesh Marker, Director Research, Dr B Mehra, Associate Dean, NAI, Dr Pankaj Shukla, Deputy Director (Horticulture), Department of Horticulture and Food Processing, UP Government, as guests of honour. VP Srivastava, incharge, Centre of Food Processing and Preservation, Prayagraj, Government of UP, was also present in the event. Dr Vijay Bahadur Head, Department of Horticulture informed that 56 trainees (online and offline mode)participated in the course and 14 value-added products were prepared, displayed and evaluated by distinguished guests. Trainees were also taken to the preservation industries for exposure to the operating business models in and around the Prayagraj.

S Herbert Pro-V-C (PMD) laid emphasis on developing new strategies, planning, marketing management, thought process and skilled technologies regarding preservation, processing, management of horticultural crops to prepare and develop value-added products. During the training course, participants acquired knowledge and skills on processing, post-harvest management and value addition of horticultural crops, commercial horti-business avenues i.e. business avenues in post-harvest technologies, ventures for post-harvest and its processing.

POSSESSION NOTICE - (for immovable property) Rule 8-(1)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of IIFL Home Finance Limited (Formerly known as India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) (IIFL HFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, a Demand Notice was issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the borrowers / co-borrowers mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of IIFL HFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

"The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, If the borrower clears the dues of the "IIFL HFL" together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred, at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured assets shall not be sold or transferred by "IIFL HFL" and no further step shall be taken by "IIFL HFL" for transfer or sale of the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower(s) Lucknow BRANCH	Description of secured asset (immovable property)	Total Outstanding Dues (Rs.)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession
Mr. Paramjeet Singh Chandok, M/S Nimmi Telecom and Mrs. Manpreet Kaur (**Prospect No. 921675 and 837094**)	All that piece and parcel of: Entire 3Rd Floor, House No-120/137, Area Measuring 41.805 Sq. mts., Lajpat Nagar , Kanpur Nagar, 208005, Uttar Pradesh,India	**Prospect no. 921675 Rs. 6,39,132/-** (Rupees Six Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand One Hundred Thirty Two Only) **Prospect no. 837094 Rs. 53,42,359/-** (Rupees Fifty Three Lakh Forty Two Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Nine Only)	13-Apr-2022	20-June-22

For, further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office: 306,3rd Floor,Sai Square,Bhargava Estate, Civil Lines, Kanpur-208001/ or Corporate Office : Plot No. 98, Phase-IV, Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana.

Place: Kanpur Date: 23/06/2022 **Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Limited**

यूको बैंक UCO BANK
सम्मान आपके विश्वास का
Honours your trust

Zonal Office : 75/4, Siddhi Sadan, Halsey Road Near Badshahi Naka Police Station, Kanpur - 208001
E-mail : zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [See proviso to Rule – 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is Where is", "As is what is"** and **"Whatever there is"** basis on **11-07-2022**, for recovery of Bank's Dues from Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) to **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date / Possession Notice Date	Description of Immovable Property(ies) with known encumbrances, if any	Bank's Dues	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit
Branch:- BKD Jhansi, District -Jhansi; Contact Number(s):- +91-9473566919, +91-9639662842; Email Id:- bundel@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in					
1.	**Borrower(s): Shri Pavan Kumar Rai S/o Shri Balak Das Rai, R/o,** 384 Toriya Rai Mohalla Shankar Ji ke Mandir Ke Uper Hansari Gird -2 Jhansi-284135 and **Smt Sushma W/o Pavan Kumar Rai, R/o,** 384 Toriya Rai Mohalla Shankar Ji ke Mandir Ke Uper Hansari Gird-2 Jhansi 284135	**29.07.2021** / **23.11.2021 (Symbolic Possession)**	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land (Residential) measuring **167.29 sq. mtr.** as per Bahi No. **1**, Zild No. **5239**, Page No. **373-396** ,Sl. No. **3065**, registered on **13-04-2015** at **Sub-Registrar Jhansi**, situated at **Maouza Hansari Gird Tehshil and District Jhansi** standing in the name of **Shri Pavan Kumar @ Pavan Kumar Rai S/o Shri Balak Das Rai** resident of **384 Toriya Rai Mohalla Shankar Ji ke Mandir Ke Uper Hansari Gird -2 Jhansi-284135** **Details of Boundaries (As per Deed)** East: **6.10 Mtr wide road,** West: **Plot of Seller,** North: **Plot of Shri Dheeraj Khateek**, South: **Plot of Seller** Known Encumbrances, if any - **Nil**	**Rs. 20,31,699.00 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Thirty One Thousand Six Hundred Ninty Nine Only)** as on **05.07.2021** (inclusive of interest upto **30.09.2020)** plus further interest thereon at the contractual rate, costs, charges and expenses etc. till date of payment.	**Rs. 24,00,000/-** / **Rs. 2,40,000/-**

Last Date for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for Bid : 10.07.2022 upto 4:00 PM as per (IST)
Date & Time of E-auction :- 11.07.2022 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM as per (IST) with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each with Bid Incremental Amount of Rs. 10,000/-

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the websites **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp** & **https://www.ibapi.in**
The Borrower's and/or Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section 8 of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.
Note:- Hindi & English versions of this Notice are being published in Hindi & English Newspapers respectively. It is clarified that in case of any contradiction in Hindi and English version of the Notice, the English version of the Notice will prevail.

Date :- 23.06.2022 **Place :- Jhansi** **Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)**

बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक Baroda U.P. Bank
(पूर्ववर्ती काशी गोमती संयुक्त ग्रामीण बैंक) (Sponsored by Bank of Baroda)
प्रधान कार्यालयः बुध्द बिहार व्यावसायिक योजना, तारामंडल, गोरखपुर- 273016
क्षेत्रिय कार्यालय-चौक, आजमगढ़, उत्तर प्रदेश

सार्वजनिक नीलामी 28.07.2022

बिक्री सूचना (अचल सम्पत्ति हेतु)

वित्तीय आस्तियों की प्रतिभूतिकरण एवं पूर्ननिमार्ण तथा प्रतिभूति हित के प्रवर्तन अधिनियम, 2002 की धारा 13 (4) (सरफेसी अधिनियम, 2002) के साथ में पठित प्रतिभूति हित (प्रवर्तन) नियम 8 (6) के अधीन नीलामी सूचना

यह कि बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक प्रधिकृत अधिकारी के द्वारा वित्तीय आस्तियों का प्रतिभूतिकरण एवं पूर्नगठन और प्रतिभूहित प्रवर्तन अधिनियम (सरफेसी एक्ट 2002) की धारा 13 (12) सपठित नियम 8 व 9 प्रतिभूतिहित (प्रवर्तन) नियमावली के अन्तर्गत प्रदत्त शक्तियों के अनुप्रयोग में विभिन्न ऋणकर्ता (ओं) गारंटीकर्ता (ओं) बंधककर्ता (ओं) को माँग पत्र जारी किया गया है जिसमें बकाया धनराशि के ब्याज सहित कथित सूचना के 60 दिनो के अंदर भुगतान करने की मांग की गयी है। यह कि निम्नलिखित ऋणकर्ता (ओं) गारंटीकर्ता (ओं) बंधककर्ता (ओं) बैंक की बकाया धनराशि का भुगतान करने में असमर्थ रहे अतः एतद्द्वारा ऋणकर्ता (ओं) गारंटीकर्ता (ओं) बंधककर्ता (ओं) और सर्वसाधारण को यह सूचना दी जाती है कि प्रधिकृत अधिकारी बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक ने उक्त अधिनियम की धारा 13 (4) के तहत उनको प्रदत्त शक्तियों के अनुप्रयोग में नीचे वर्णित सम्पत्तियों का अधिपत्य ग्रहण कर लिया है, जिसका , विवरण अधोवर्णित है ऋणकर्ता (ओं) गारंटीकर्ता (ओं) बंधककर्ता (ओं) को विशेष रूप से तथा और सर्वसाधारण को सामान्यतया सूचित किया जाता है कि इस सम्पत्ति में किसी भी प्रकार का लेन-देन न करें यह सम्पत्ति बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक के प्रभार के अध्याधीन है जिसमें नीचे लिखित राशि, ब्याज और अन्य खर्चे देय है यह कि एतद्द्वारा सर्वसाधारण एवं ऋणकर्ता (ओं) गारंटीकर्ता (ओं) बंधककर्ता (ओं) को पुनः यह सूचना दी जाती है कि प्रधिकृत अधिकारी ने हित प्रवर्तन अधिनियम 2002 के अन्तर्गत स्थावर सम्पत्तियों की निविदा/बिड्स/कोटेशन आमंत्रित करने का निर्णय लिया है। सम्पत्ति की बिक्री निम्नानुसार वर्णित तिथित के अनुसार "जो है जैसे है" तथा "जहाँ है जैसा है" के आधार पर की जायेगी। अतः निम्नलिखित शर्तो को पूरा करते हुए इच्छुक व्यक्ति अपना टेंडर बंद निविदा के माध्यम से निांक 27.07.2022 तक बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक, क्षेत्रिय कार्यालय- चौक, आजमगढ़- उत्तर प्रदेश में प्रस्तुत कर सकते है। सार्वजनिक निविदा तिथि 28.07.2022 को दोपहर 11.00 से 4.00 बजे तक बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक क्षेत्रिय कार्यालय- चौक, आजमगढ़- उत्तर प्रदेश में खोली जायेगी।

क्रम सं0	बकायेदार/जमानतदार का नाम, पता	सम्पत्ति का विवरण/स्वामी का नाम	मांग सूचना तिथि अधिग्रहण की तिथि/प्रारूप सांकेतिक/भौतिक	बकाया राशि	आरक्षित मूल्य/ ई.एम.डी
1.	**ऋणी-** प्रदीप कुमार सिंह पुत्र रामनाथ सिंह, पता- पल्हनी, पो0- सदर, जिला- आजमगढ़ **शाखाः चौक, आजमगढ़** **खाता सं0: 111366810024433**	भूमि/भवन, गाटा/ प्लॉट सं0 - 38, क्षेत्रफल- 0.039 एकड़, परगना- निजामाबाद, ग्रा0- पल्हनी, तहसील- सदर, आजमगढ़। स्वामी श्री प्रदीप कुमार पुत्र राम नाथ सिंह चौहद्दी - उत्तर- रास्ता, दक्षिण- नाली, पूरब- महेन्द्र सिंह की जमीन, पश्चिम- उमेश चन्द अग्रवाल की जमीन	**31.12.2021** **10.05.2022** **सांकेतिक कब्जा**	**RS. 19,82,895.08 As on 23.05.2019 + ब्याज एवं अन्य खर्च**	**6144503.00 आरक्षित मूल्य** **614450.00 ई.एम.डी**

विक्रय के नियम एवं शर्ते-1. इच्छुक निविदाकर्ताओं को अपनी निविदा बंद लिफाफे में (जिसके ऊपर बिड क्रम संख्या तथा प्रकाशन का दिनांक अंकित हो) देना है। 2. निविदा प्रस्तुतकर्ता को आरक्षित मूल्य का 10 प्रतिशत (धरोहर राशि) अग्रिम रूप से बैंकर्स चेक डिमांड ड्राफ्ट द्वारा जो प्राधिकृत बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक के नाम देय हो निविदा पत्र के साथ संलग्न करे। अधिकतम नीलामी धनराशि (जो आरक्षित मूल्य से कम न हो) वाले निविदाकर्ता को सफल घोषित करते हुए असफल निविदाकर्ताओं की धरोहर राशि बिना ब्याज के एक सप्ताह के अन्दर वापस कर दी जायेगी। 3. सफल निविदाकर्ता को निविदा राशि का 25 प्रतिशत (धरोहर राशि को छोड़कर) 24 घंटे के अन्दर अंतरण के माध्यम से जमा करना होगा तथा खरीद राशि का शेष 65 प्रतिशत का भुगतान उनको बिक्री के लिए स्वीकृति पुष्टि के 15 दिनों के अन्दर पत्येक दशा में जमा करना होगा। यदि सफल निविदाकर्ता शेष राशि निर्धारित अवधि में जमा करने में असफल रहता है तो उसके द्वारा जमा की गयी समस्त राशि जप्त की जा सकती है। 4. प्राधिकृत अधिकारा को बिना कारण बताये अथवा पूर्व सूचना के सबसे ऊँची/समस्त निविदा को स्वीकार/अस्वीकार/स्थगित/निरस्त करने का अधिकार है। प्राधिकृत अधिकारी नीलामी की तिथि को आगे बढ़ा सकता है। 5. प्रधिकृत अधिकारी विक्रय सम्पत्ति से संबंधित किसी चार्ज , लियन, भार, प्रोपर्टी, टैक्स, सरकारी ड्यूज, अन्य के प्रति जिम्मेदार नहीं होगा। प्राधिकृत अधिकारी किसी प्रकार के तृतीय / अन्य पक्ष कार के क्लेम अधिकारी एवं देनदारियों के प्रति उत्तरदायी नहीं होगा। 6. सम्पत्ति उसके आरक्षित मूल्य से कम पर नहीं बेची जायेगी। सफल निविदाकर्ता सभी स्टाम्प, रजिट्रेशन शुल्क आदि का वहन स्वयं करेगा। 7. यदि दो या दो से अधिक निविदा एक धनराशि की आती है तो प्राधिकृत अधिकारी को यह अधिकार होगा कि वह उनके बीच आपस में पुनः बिडिंग करा ले। 8. निविदा/विक्रय बैंक के द्वारा पुष्टि होने के अधीन होगा। सम्पत्ति की नीलामी "जो है जैसी है" तथा "जहाँ है जैसी है" के आधार पर की जायेगी। 9. यदि कोई ऋणी/जमानतदार/बंधककर्ताओं नीलामी की तिथि के पूर्व बैंक को देय राशि का पूरा भुगतान कर देता है तो उसकी सम्पत्ति की नीलामी रोक दी जायेगी। इस प्रकार Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 (By the Security Interest (Enforcement) Amendent Rules, 2002) धारा 13 की उप धारा (8) के अन्तर्गत ऋणी/जमानतदार/बंधककर्ताओं की नीलामी तिथि से पूर्व बैंक को देय राशि का पूरा भुगतान कर देने की दशा में बंधक प्रतिभूति आस्ति को उन्मोचित कराने सम्बन्धि सभी अवसर उपलब्ध है। 10. यह निविदाकर्ताओं का उत्तरदायित्व है कि नीलामी में भाग लेने से पूर्व सम्पत्तियों का निरीक्षण कर पूर्ण रूप से संतुष्ट हो ले, सम्पत्तियों के निरिक्षण हेतु सबंधित शाखा से पहले से समय ले कर किसी भी कार्य दिवस को दोपहर 2.00 बजे से 5.00 बजे तक सम्पर्क कर सकते है। 11. यह सेल नोटिस ऋण कर्ता (ओं) / गारंटी कर्ता (ओं)/ बंधक कर्ता (ओं) के लिए विशेषरूप से तथा जनता/सर्वसाधारण के लिए सामान्य रूप है।

सरफेसी एक्ट 2002 के अन्तर्गत विक्रय हेतु 30 दिवसीय वैधानिक सूचना

उपरोक्त ऋण ग्रहिता/ जमानतदारों/बंधककर्ता (ओं) विधिक उत्तराधिकारियों को नोटिस दी जाती है कि वे नीलामी की तिथि से पूर्व उपरोक्त राशि का भुगतान बैंक को कर दे, इसमें असफल रहने पर बंधक सम्पत्ति की नीलामी नियत तिथि को कर दी जायेगी तथा शेष बकाया राशि, यदि कोई हो, की वसूली आपसे ब्याज व लागत सहित ली जायेगी।

नोटः प्रकाशन सावधानीपूर्वक किया गया है। किसी प्रकार की त्रुटि होने पर सम्बन्धित शाखा से सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

दिनांकः 23.06.2022 स्थानः आजमगढ़ प्राधिकृत अधिकारी,बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक

DC expresses concern over slow pace of work at new airport terminal building

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar expressed concern over slow pace of work at the new airport terminal building at civil side of Chakeri Air Force which was one of the most important project of Government of India and the UP Government. He said it is a very important project for the overall socio-economic growth of Kanpur city also. He said the UP government had suspended two general managers and one project manager of UPRNN (Rajkiya Nirman Nigam) incharge of the projects.

During the inspection of the site on Wednesday, the DC said the project got delayed by almost two years now. He said during the earlier visit important instructions were issued for timely completion of the project. He said after the site visit it was found that the physical progress of the Project (main building) was around 75 per cent as on date. He said it was 65 per cent last month and in last one month the work was done expeditiously. Commissioner reiterated that the earlier deadline of completion of the main building was by August 15 this year. The officials in presence of GM Civil AAI assured Commissioner that the main building works would be completed by August 15. The officials informed that more staff will be deployed which will work in two to three shifts as required. GM Civil AAI Shiv Raju said the taxi stand link work to runway and electrical cable work will take 135 days more as a MoU would be signed between the Air Force and AAI in the next three to four days. He said all payments to defence estate officer (DEO) were done by the state government one month back. Chief Engineer PWD updated Commissioner that the connecting road from the Prayagraj National Highway to the New Airport building was in progress and it would be completed by August 31 this year. He said there were some problems in availability of soil and sand but now the issue was resolved and the road construction work would be completed by August end this year. Additional Nagar Ayukt said nala construction work was in progress and it would be completed in the next two months. The Commissioner directed Nagar Nigam to complete the work by August end. When Commissioner asked about the fund availability, GM Civil AAI and officials of RNN told Commissioner that there was no issue of fund and sufficient fund was available for the project as required. Looking into the above progress and commitment dates given by AAI, RNN, Nagar Nigam, KESCO and PWD, Commissioner directed DM Kanpur Nagar to visit the site and review work progress by July 15. He also directed ADM LA to visit the site once in a week and update the progress to the DM. The next review at the site will be on August 15. Many officials from various departments accompanied the DC.

TRIAL RUN OF BOAT CLUB TO BE HELD ON JUNE 25

Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar while addressing a meeting at his camp office on Wednesday said that the trial run of Boat Club will be held on June 25, and the inauguration will be done by Speaker Satish Mahana. He said this was in fact a trial so ensure that its full dedication to the nation in the real sense can be done on a future date. He said the programme for the trial run has been decided and thus it will be carried out in an orderly manner where various contests will also be held and PAC band will assist in the march past. He said this Boat Club will conduct water sports, tourists boating 'Ganga Nadi Vihar' and other sports will be carried out in the inaugural run. He said in the trial run a march past of raft boats, dragon boats and motor boats will be held and a display of tourist ride on these boats. He said other category competitions will be kayak, canoe and rowing boat as well. He said water skiing will be and added attraction and a special Ganga Aarti will also be performed.

The DC said this project was decided in the year 2007 and this was in fact a totally different kind of event and this expert advice had been taken at every step from national level organisation linked to Olympics. He said expert teams had been invited on umpteen occasions to ensure that the project was moving in the right direction. He said this specialist team will take care of the event likely to be held in future. He said the inaugural programme will start at 4.00 pm on June 25 and continue till 7.30 pm. Key person of the project Neeraj Srivastava was also present.

Canara Bank organises MSME credit camp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Canara Bank organised a MSME credit camp at its regional office as part of the ongoing Amrit Mahotsav. The camp was held under the supervision of Assistant General Manager and Regional Manager Mukesh Malhotra. Addressing the gathering he emphasised on the need for better customer service and advised that the bank should disburse more loans which will help the needy and in turn lead to economic progress of the country. He said Canara Bank, Jhansi main branch had mainly arranged this loan distribution camp under which 11 branches of Jhansi cluster participated. He said apart from this other branches had at their level arranged for loan distribution camps in 27 other branches. He said a total of 69 applicants had been distributed a total loan of ₹5.90 crore under MSME sector. He said through this camp people of MSME sector like micro, small and medium industries were able to avail themselves of the loan facility. Divisional manager, Regional Office 2, Kanpur, Kumar Gautam, inaugurated the Jhansi cluster credit camp. He informed customers about various schemes of the bank and advised the beneficiaries to ensure that they repay their loans timely. Divisional Manager, Regional Office 2, M Farooq, also gave a detailed briefing about the credit camps to other participating banks. Regional manager proposed the vote of thanks for the successful conduct of the loan distribution camp.

'Yoga can support healing process'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Director of National Sugar Institute (NSI) Prof Narendra Mohan, while addressing the Yoga Day celebrations at the institute on Tuesday appealed to the faculty and students to practice yoga regularly as it offered physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages. He said yogic therapy worked with patients and put together individualised plans that worked together with their medical and surgical therapies. He said yoga can support the healing process and help a person experience symptoms with more centeredness and less distress. He said it was good to see the huge crowd of faculty and students who had come to take part in Yoga. He said Yoga improved strength, balance and flexibility and slow movements and deep breathing increased blood flow and warmed up muscles while holding a pose can build strength. He said it had been medically proved that Yoga was as good as basic stretching for easing pain and improving mobility in people with lower back pain. He said gentle yoga had been shown to ease some of the discomfort of tender, swollen joints for people with arthritis as well. Yoga trainer Ashutosh Dixit said today the world was performing yoga and the credit for this went to PM Narendra Modi. He said regular yoga practice can reduce levels of stress and body-wide inflammation, contributing to healthier hearts. He said several of the factors contributing to heart disease, including high blood pressure and excess weight, can also be addressed through yoga.

UP STATE LEATHER INSTITUTE: Principal of UP State Leather Institute, Dr Richa while inaugurating the Yoga camp on Tuesday appealed to students and faculty to adopt it in principle. She said there were umpteen benefits on physical and mental health and added that those who performed yoga regularly slept better. She said Yoga can mean more energy and brighter moods and one may feel an increased mental and physical energy, a boost in alertness and enthusiasm and fewer negative feelings after getting into a routine of practising yoga. She said for students it was highly essential to practice as it improved mental health which was essential factor for one's career. She said participating in yoga classes can ease loneliness and provide an environment for group healing and support. She said during exams it relaxed the mind for a better performance in examination. She added that for students Matsyasana, Virasana, Suryanamaskar, Bhramari pranayam and Vajrasana was highly beneficial. The yoga session was conducted under the guidance of Satyendra Singh.

Locked house burgled

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The locked house of a health worker was burgled in Shashtri Nagar locality in Punkhrayan under Bhognipur police area of Kanpur Dehat. The victim alleged theft of jewellery of ₹30 lakh and cash of around ₹1.25 lakh from his house. District Coordinator of TB Hospital, Shashtri Nagar, Punkhrayan, Anurag Tewari said he had gone to his ancestral village, Dilwal Khanpur, in Mangalpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat with family on Sunday. Miscreants broke into his locked house through the main gate and committed the theft. On return on Tuesday afternoon, he found the main gate of house open and locks of rooms broken. Miscreants had stolen cash and jewellery from there, he said. Police rushed to spot and carried out investigation. SSI Ranjit Singh said FIR had been lodged. Cash and jewellery worth ₹31.25 lakh were reported to have been stolen, he said.

SIX INJURED: Six persons were seriously injured when two speeding auto-rickshaws collided with each other near Bakothi village on GT Road under Bilhaur Kotwali police station area on Wednesday afternoon. All the injured were admitted to CHC. When an auto-rickshaw after collecting passengers from Kannauj, was going to Bilhaur, another speeding auto-rickshaw, carrying goods, knocked it from behind near Bakothi village due to which it overturned. On hearing the screams, trespassers rushed to the spot and rescued the passengers. Police immediately rushed to the spot and sent the injured to the CHC on an ambulance. They included Akhtar, son of Ishaq of Gursahaiganj (Kannauj), Javed, son of Rashid and Imran, son of Riyaz of Chhibramau, Yogesh, son of Shivram Singh, his wife, Meena and daughter Kushi (3) of Joth (Mainpuri). After the first aid, Javed, Yogesh and Meena were referred to Kanpur hospital. Inspector Arvind Kumar Singh said both the autos had been impounded and raids were on to nab their drivers. On receipt of complaint FIR will be lodged and action will taken, he said.

Training on CPR given

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view to help the people to save lives of others, the officers and employees of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) learned the process of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) by the State Medical Officer Dr Shivshakti Prasad Dwivedi at Technical Training Centre (TTC) in BLW here on Wednesday. According to Dr Dwivedi, CPR is a medical therapy used in emergency situations, which can save life in the cases of cardiac arrest and inability to breathe. 'Sometimes a person suddenly stops breathing or if someone is unable to breathe in case of cardiac arrest, then CPR is given. Through the process of CPR, oxygen is given to the lungs and this helps the oxygenated blood already present in the body start circulating,' he said, adding that sometimes a person even dies, CPR is very effective and the chances of survival increase and many lives can be saved. 'CPR is not a medicine or injection. Rather, it is a kind of process, which is done on the patient's body by jerking the chest until the breath is brought back or the heartbeat becomes normal,' he added. Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME) Amitabh and Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Pradeep Kumar Singh appreciated Dr Dwivedi for his training. The workshop was attended by Principal Financial Advisor (PFA) Yogesh Kumar Srivastava, Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Devesh Kumar, Principal Chief Engineer Hirendra Singh Rana, Chief Vigilance Officer PK Chauhary, Principal of TTC Ramjanm Choubey, Additional Chief Medical Superintendent Dr Sunil Kumar, ADMO Dr Vishal Mishra, General Manager OSD VK Kumawat and Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar.

BJP leader hails decision of state government

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Regional convenor (Kashi) of Bharatiya Janata Party (Law Cell) Shashank Shekhar Tripathi welcomed a recent order of the state government relating to transfer of property on charity basis. Terming it as an extremely important order issued by the state government, he said it is a step forward towards the Uniform Civil Code, as in this direction the demand was being raised by the Hindu society for a long time. In this direction, BJP (Law Cell) expressed its thanks to the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and decided to felicitate the UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal, who is also a local MLA.

According to Tripathi, the order regarding amendment in Section 2 of Uttar Pradesh Stamp and Registration has been made on June 18 last. Now anyone can transfer one's property on charity basis and stamp duty for such donation deeds will only be Rs 5,000 whereas earlier, a Hindu had to pay a stamp equal to the market value even for transfer of the same donation.

He said that in connection with this disputed provision, the BJP (Law Cell) had raised a demand during the last tenure of Ravind Jaiswal in the same ministry and now the demand has been fulfilled by him.

He said that the Law Cell of the party would also write a letter to the CM, expressing its thanks to him for the amendment.

"The step taken by the state government will prove to be a milestone in the direction of implementing Uniform Civil Code in the state," he added.

Symbolic prayers at Shiv temples continue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In response to the call given by Swami Avimukteshwaranand, popularly known as Swamishri and local representative of Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati, jalabhishek and prayers at various Shiv temples in the city as well as in different places across the country continued even on Wednesday, in order to mount pressure on the administration to fulfill the demand of regular prayers at Adi Vishweshwar idol found during recent survey at Gyanvapi mosque.

Devotees offering prayers at a Shiv temple in Vridkal locality in Varanasi on Wednesday. Pioneer

In this direction, prayers were offered at a Shiv Mandir in Vridkal locality in the city during the day under the leadership of city convenor Kishan Jaiswal. Prominent among others who were also present were Madhubala Mishra, Shweta Mishra, Ekta Mishra, Sangeeta Mishra, Gyasi Singh, Sandhya Upadhyay, Sheela Mishra, Geeta Vishwakarma, Sunita Tiwari, Ruby Vishwakarma, Rajkumar Yadav, Geeta Gupta, Meeta Yadav, Mansi Maurya, Janmejay Mishra, Mrityunjay Mishra, Vishweshwar Mishra, Rameshwar Mishra, Subhash Chandra Mishra and Mahendra Verma.

According to Swamishri, till the worship of Adi Vishweshwar is not allowed in Gyanvapi, the people will continue the campaign offering symbolic prayers at other Shiv temples. Swamishri had appealed to all Sanatan Dharma to worship the symbol of Lord Adi Vishweshwar at their respective places. Later, the campaign which started from Kashi is now gaining momentum in different states. The people of Punjab, Gujarat, Kolkata, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra are also participating enthusiastically in this campaign and with the desire to start worshiping soon in Gyanvapi, they are tagging their videos and photos on the Facebook Page of Swamishri. They have also expressed their support by sending the messages to Swamishri on his WhatsApp group. Earlier, under the leadership of Swamishri, Paramdharma Sansad has been formed in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh and there the campaign of symbolic worship of Adi Vishweshwar is going on in which common devotees are also taking part.

Basket of choices effective to reduce maternal and child mortality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

To reduce maternal and child mortality, 'basket of choices' is a very effective and safe means, said the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary. He also added that for better maternal health, it is necessary to plan the birth of the first child after two years of marriage and at least three years in the birth of the second child. 'The Health department has included nine tools in the basket of choices for family planning. For proper advice in this regard, the help of doctors of local health centres, family planning counsellors, ASHA workers and ANMs can be taken,' said the CMO.

ACMO (RCH) Dr Rajesh Prasad said that with the help of family planning counsellors and community health officers, the people are being given details about the basket of choices in effective family planning at 185 health units of the district. 'Information about this is also given on Happy Family Day to be held on 21st of every month, Interval Day to be held on every Thursday and Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan Day to be held on 9th of every month,' he said, adding that the male and female sterilisation, IUCD, PPIUCD, quarterly intra injection, Mala N, condom, Chhaya and ECP pills are part of the basket of choices.

A lady of Sewapuri block said that she is taking advantage of intra-trimester contraceptive injection by visiting the health centre for relief from unwanted pregnancy. 'There is no problem for her and family in this,' she added. At the same time, another woman said that to stay safe from unwanted pregnancy, she is taking a Chhaya weekly contraceptive pill and is also consulting a doctor and ANM from time to time.

According to Dr Prasad, every beneficiary adopts the means of family planning according to his needs and preferences, but the counsellors and doctors have guidelines to collect information about those aspects of the beneficiary in which a particular means is suitable for them or not. Giving the status of district in family planning, he informed that in the financial year 2021-22, 37 male sterilisation were done while 10,605 female sterilisation apart from uses of 21,418 copper-T (IUCD / PPIUCD), 7,085 quarterly intra injection, 79,854 Mala N (Oral Pills) and distribution of 7.2 lakh condoms, 26,507 Chhaya pills and 14,377 ECPs. Besides, 14,377 have come forward to get family planning service in the district. From April this year till now, the beneficiaries of male sterilization were 10, female sterilization 414, copper-T (IUCD/PPIUCD) 3,043, quarterly intra injection 2,750, Mala N (oral pills) 12,209, condom 1.24 lakh, Chhaya 4,408 and ECP 2,026.

120 model Anganwadi centres to be made

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The government is giving full emphasis for the strengthening of Anganwadi centres run under the Department of Child Development Services and Nutrition. In this direction, a plan has been prepared to make Adarsh (model) Anganwadi centres in every block of the district. Under the scheme, with the help of officials, arrangements will be made for chairs, tables, toys, weighing machines etc at these centres.

An Anganwadi centre to be made model one in Varanasi. Pioneer

District Programme Officer DK Singh said that there are 3,914 Anganwadi centres in the district and in the first phase, 120 Anganwadi centres would be adopted and the children registered there would be made malnutrition free. The main objective of the Adarsh Anganwadi Centre scheme is to make children malnutrition free, as well as to improve the level of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) for three to six years and to strengthen the basic facilities at these centres. According to him, in the first phase, three Anganwadi centres have been adopted by each officer. Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal has adopted three Anganwadi centres of Harahua block (Puarikhurd- 1, 2 and 3), while District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma three centres of Kashi Vidyapeeth block (Amra Khaira- 1, 3 and 5), Chief Development Officer Abhishek Goyal three of Kashi Vidyapeeth block (Narottampur- 1, 2 and 30 and Chief Medical Officer Dr Sandeep Chaudhary three of Arajiline block (Gaur-1, 2 and 7). The DPO himself has adopted three centres of the Arajiline block (Chandapur -2, 4 and 6). Besides, three centres each have also been adopted by other officers including Land Conservation Officer (Waste Land Improvement Scheme), Project Director, District Health Education and Information Officer, Deputy Commissioner, District Industries Centre, District Savings Officer, District Youth Welfare Officer, District Minority Welfare Officer, District Khadi Village Industries Commission Officer, District Backward Classes Welfare Officer, District Excise Officer, Project Officer NEDA, Basic Education Officer, District Probation Officer, Chief Executive Officer Fisheries, Deputy Director Agriculture Officer, District Disabled Welfare Officer, Regional Employment Officer, Chief Veterinary Officer, District Agriculture Officer, District Horticulture Officer, District Sports Officer, Executive Engineer (Rural Engineering Department), District Sugarcane Officer, District Development Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, District Inspector of Schools, District Panchayat Raj Officer, District Supply Officer, Executive Engineer (Jal Nigam VIII Varanasi), ACMO Dr Rajesh Prasad, ACMO Dr AK Maurya, ACMO Dr SS Kanojia, Additional Chief Officer (Zila Panchayat), District Training Officer and Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Registrar of Cooperative department. Along with this, letters have also been sent to all other officers.

PROPERTY GUTTED IN FIRE INCIDENT: A fire broke out in Jhunjhunwala's Pashu Aahar (animal fodder) firm located in Ashapur area, under the Sarnath police station here on Wednesday morning in which property worth lakhs of rupees was reportedly gutted. After seeing the smoke emitting from the firm premises, the local people informed the police as well as fire brigade and later on, the fire fighting personnel reached the spot and brought the fire under control after a lot of effort. By then, goods worth lakhs of rupees including AC, coolers, computer sets were burnt to ashes.

Atala violence: 21 out of 59 accused identified

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police have so far identified as many as 21 out of 59 accused whose photographs were released by police in connection with Atala violence and arson case. Police also maintained that six out of 21 accused, whose identification was made through photographs, have been arrested so far and special constituted police teams have been carrying out a series of raids to catch other wanted offenders.

The cops had sourced the photographs from the footage of several CCTV cameras and video clips of the violence at Atala and adjoining areas on June 10. Senior Superintendent of Police (Prayagraj) Ajay Kumar told reporters that after the arrest of 103 accused, including the main conspirator of violence and arson in Atala and adjoining areas under Kareli and Khuldabad police stations, we have been looking for 15 more accused whose identities have been established so far. He, however, said efforts are also underway to ascertain the identities of more accused involved in Atala violence and arson case.

SSP, meanwhile, said, "Police have also managed to get the NBW issued against five persons including corporator Fazal Khan, AIMIM district president Shah Alam, Kisan-Majdoor union leaders Ashish Mittal and Jishan Rehmani and Omar Khalid who were named in the FIR". He also said that police have been making sincere efforts to ensure their arrest and cash prizes would also be announced on their heads shortly.

SSP, meanwhile, said, "Special police teams are making efforts to ascertain the identities of more accused with the help of collected video clips, CCTV footage and intelligence inputs and assured that the identity of those providing information about these accused will be kept secret". The photographs of wanted accused have been shared on social media.

After more identification, cops will also get warrants issued against the accused and their properties would be seized, but assure that no innocent person would be booked or arrested, said the SSP. Officials, however, said normalcy is completely restored in Atala and adjoining areas. Police had registered three separate FIRs at Kareli and Khuldabad police stations against 70 named and 5,000 unidentified accused regarding Atala arson and violence on June 10. Cops are still maintaining strict surveillance in Atala and adjoining areas.

Meanwhile police is not limited to just registering a case against those who take the law into their hands and sending them to jail. Along with the administration, the police are also causing financial loss to such criminals and mafia. In the last two and a half years bulldozers have razed the illegally acquired houses and offices of such goons and mafias and property worth Rs 99 crore has also been attached.

A detailed report has also been sent to the government on behalf of DM Sanjay Kumar Khatri and SSP Ajay Kumar this week. After the violence in Atala, a report was recently summoned in this regard by the Home Department. According to the report sent to the government, in two years from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021, assets worth about Rs 93,90,74,000 were attached.

Similarly, in 2022, from January 1 to June 12, assets worth Rs 5.08 crore were attached. The matter of compensation for the damage caused during the violence after the 'Juma' prayer on June 10 in Atala has gone to the Claims Tribunal. Last week itself, the Municipal Corporation, police and PAC have submitted a claim of getting compensation of crores of rupees from the miscreants.

Alld HC transfers 619 judicial officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a big reshuffle, the Allahabad High Court has transferred as many as 619 judicial officers, including the Varanasi judge, who had directed a survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque premises by a court commissioner.

In a notification issued by the registrar general following an order of the high court, all the transferred judicial officers have been asked to hand over charge at their present place of posting on July 4.

In total, 619 judicial officers, including 213 civil judges (junior division), 285 additional district and sessions judges and 121 civil judges (senior division), have been transferred, said the notifications dated June 20.

This list of transferred judicial officers include civil judge (senior division), Varanasi, Ravi Kumar Diwakar, who had appointed a commission to survey the Gyanvapi Mosque premises and had ordered sealing of the spot where a 'shivling' was reportedly found. He has been transferred to Bareilly district court.

Civil judge (senior division) Diwakar had in April 2022 ordered an inspection of the Gyanvapi mosque premises on petitions moved by five women asking for year-long access to the idol of Goddess Shringar Gauri and other gods behind the western wall of the Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi.

On May 16 when the court presided over by civil judge Diwakar was told that the court-appointed advocate commissioner had found a 'shivling' in the Gyanvapi Mosque premises during the survey, he had ordered the sealing of the area and enhanced security on the plea of the litigants.

Subsequently, he had expressed concern regarding his safety in his order.

Earlier this month, the civil judge had also written to the Uttar Pradesh government after he received a threat letter by registered post.

42-year-old man murdered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a sensational incident, a 42-year-old man was murdered with a sharp-edged weapon by some unidentified miscreants on Tuesday night in Soraon area of Yamunapar. After investigation the police took the body of the victim into possession and sent it for the post-mortem examination. Police are yet to ascertain as to who killed the man and why. However, some suspects have been rounded up by the police for questioning.

Subhash Patel, a resident of Jamui village under Soraon police station, was murdered with his throat being slit with a sharp-edged weapon. After killing Subhash his body was dumped in the bushes by the killers. In the morning the villagers saw the body lying in the bush. When Soraon police reached the spot and talked to the family members of the deceased, they expressed some doubt on some people and was looking for them.

On getting information a crowd of people gathered there and the Soraon police also reached there. The victim was identified as Subhash Patel. Police took his body into custody and sent it for the post-mortem examination. The place where the man's body was found is only 200 metres away from his house.

The family members of Subhash Patel told the police that he had left the house on Tuesday night but did not return.

They became worried when he did not return home till late at night. On Wednesday morning some people of the village informed the family members of Subhash Patel that his body was lying in the bushes on the road leading to the village. When everyone reached the spot they saw that he was killed with a sharp-edged weapon.

IERT students create ruckus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Students of the Institute of Engineering and Rural Technology (IERT) in Prayagraj created a ruckus over the basic facilities in the institute. On Wednesday dozens of engineering students left classes and gathered on the campus and staged a sit-in at the main gate. On getting information the police reached the spot. The talks between the students and the institute administration took place in the presence of the police. After assurance, the students' anger subsided and they returned to their classes.

The students of IERT alleged that the condition of the laboratory in the institute is bad as there is no equipment, so their studies are getting hampered. The students alleged malpractices in evaluation, saying that the result of many got spoilt due to wrong assessment. Their' anger flared up on Wednesday. After this they started gathering in the institute and started creating ruckus. When a large number of students gathered, tension prevailed in the institute premises. Meanwhile, as the ruckus escalated, the police also reached the spot. The students said that they will end the protest only after getting a written assurance to improve the basic facilities in the institute.

Students alleged that the state of education in the institute is very poor. Due to shortage of teachers, their studies are getting affected. On the other hand, the officials of the institute assured to solve the problems at the earliest.

Admn planning to develop Lower Khajuri Dam for aqua tourism

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

As per the initiative of the government the district administration is planning to develop Lower Khajuri Dam for aqua tourism. Under the plan, CDO Srilaxmi VS inspected the site and found that the place already had all the basic amenities, including approach road, a guest house of the Irrigation department etc. During her visit the CDO asked the officials to prepare detailed report so that required arrangements could be made to declare the site for aqua tourism.

DIES: A girl tourist slipped from Chunar Fort and died on the spot under Chunar police station on Tuesday. Vishal Nishad (18), son of Nitya Nand Nishad, and Neha Nishad (18), daughter of Ram Surat Nishad, residents of Raipuriya village under Chunar police station, had come to Chunar Fort for a picnic when they slipped. On being informed police reached the spot and found the girl dead and the boy seriously injured. After taking the body into custody for completing legal formalities police sent the injured to the Trauma Centre, Varanasi, by ambulance.

ARRESTED: Katra Kotwali police have arrested a woman accused of murder on Tuesday. Dinesh Mishra, a resident of Belkhariya Ka Pura under Katra Kotwali police station, had lodged an FIR alleging that nine persons and six-seven unknown ones had shot at his son Mukesh (21) and brutally assaulted his friend, Vishal with the intention of murder in the house of Chunnu Yadav of Durga Bajar under Katra Kotwali police station on Monday. The complainant further informed the police that his son died at Trauma Centre, Varanasi, while the other injured was undergoing treatment. The police registered a case under relevant sections of IPC. The spot was visited by DIG RK Bharadwaj, SP Ajay Singh and other police officials concerned. SHO Naveen Kumar Tiwari said police was conducting raids when an accused was nabbed.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

First among equals

The NDA holds a distinct advantage as the presidential election nears

The ruling National Democratic Alliance has selected former Jharkhand Governor Droupadi Murmu as its presidential candidate. "I am surprised as well as delighted. As a tribal woman from remote Mayurbhanj district, I had not thought about becoming the candidate for the top post," she said at her Rairangpur residence. It did not come as a big surprise to political commentators though, for it was widely speculated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may opt for a person from either the tribal community or other backward classes (OBCs). All other major groups — Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs, women — have been represented. By choosing her as its presidential candidate, the BJP-led NDA expected to get support not just from the MPs and MLAs from tribals but also from Odisha, her native State. The BJD, which is in power in Odisha, holds over 2.8 per cent of representation in the electoral college that will elect the President. "I am optimistic of support from all members of the Odisha Assembly and MPs," she said, "I am daughter of the soil. I have the right to request all members to support me as an Odia." Her optimism is well-grounded. Odisha Chief Minister and BJD boss Naveen Patnaik is favourably inclined towards her candidature. He tweeted: "Congratulations Smt #DraupadiMurmu on being announced as candidate of NDA for the country's highest office. I was delighted when Hon'ble PM @narendramodi ji discussed this with me. It is indeed a proud moment for people of #Odisha." This will help her — and the NDA.

Equally important is the support she has got from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. "We express happiness at the candidature of Droupadi Murmu for President. She is a tribal woman and it is a matter of great happiness that a tribal woman is the candidate for the highest position in the country," Nitish Kumar said. At any rate, the top BJP leadership is active and adroit enough to have its way, as evident from the political storm raging in Maharashtra. This is bad news for the Opposition which had propped up former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha as its presidential candidate. Opposition politicians had hoped that if somehow they managed to get their candidate occupy Rashtrapati Bhawan, it would not only add momentum to the campaign to eventually oust the BJP from office. That seems to be very difficult today; developments in Maharashtra have shown that not just the anti-BJP coalition is precarious but also that Opposition leaders are flatfooted. On the other hand, the BJP top brass calibrated all its moves. Supporting a tribal woman can be criticised as tokenism, but then it is not the first time tokenism has affected presidential poll; in 2007, for instance, the Congress selected Pratibha Patil, who was not a political heavyweight or household name, as its candidate. The BJP has been playing that game, and bagging rich dividends. And it is likely to get the President of its own choice.

PICTALK

A view of the swollen Jhelum river following incessant rain, in Srinagar PTI

Trouble next door

India will do well to learn lessons from the goings-on in its immediate neighbourhood

There are several political developments taking place in our neighbourhood, and all of these portend to our own polity, what may be wrong with it, or what should be corrected. Sri Lanka is burning. Pakistan is in the black. Afghanistan remains simmering under its newfound cloak of civility. Nepal, under the new Prime Minister, has just about found its step after the former communist-leaning Premier was ousted. The suffocating situation in Myanmar is also nothing new. Now Kuwait's crown prince has dissolved Parliament and called for an early election following a stand-off between the Government and elected Assembly that has hindered fiscal reform. Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah has said that the decree would be issued for the dissolution of Parliament, the Gulf region's oldest. Even the ruling Emir of Kuwait has blessed the dissolution move. The Opposition lawmakers are staging an open-ended sit-in since last week at the Parliament complex to press Sheikh Meshal to name a new Prime Minister to replace the caretaker Premier who has faced a combative Parliament. The political crisis, which has blocked the country's economic and social progress, seems to be worsening.

Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe admitted in Parliament that its economy has "completely collapsed" and an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the only path to revival. While it is a fact that the island nation faces a far more serious situation beyond mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food, any financial rescue plan with the IMF is not expected until Colombo agrees with its creditors on restructuring its $51 billion foreign debt, which could take months. The country first defaulted on its debt in April and went cap-in-hand to the IMF, which asked Colombo to raise taxes and restructure loss-making state enterprises, but it made people angrier. To soothe the seething population, Sri Lanka's Cabinet has approved an amendment to the Constitution that could curtail presidential powers. Besides, Sri Lanka's Parliament sessions will be restricted to two days this week instead of four days amid the current fuel supply crisis. The situation in India is no better. Unemployment is rampant, inflation is rising, growth is slowing and the nation is seemingly in the throes of lumpen elements that threaten to derail our foreign relations anytime. We must seriously be on our guard!

Gulf nations must avow India's step

VIVEK **GUMASTE**

The Government has asserted its respect for all religions while the Gulf countries have often been suspect in establishing their secular credentials

The *démarche* issued by a host of Islamic nations with regard to the unfortunate Nupur Sharma incident had stirred up a hornet's nest in India and unleashed a welter of emotions. An ugly cocktail of shame, embarrassment, anger and frustration swirled and vitiated the air. There have been concerns about India's international image; some have rued over its impact on trade with the Arab world.

A former BJP leader sanctimoniously claimed that India's "image has now come crashing down". He further averred that "…(It) caused grievous damage to our image as a liberal, secular democracy…". But is this really so? Do we need to feel ashamed? And did this controversy erode our credibility as a liberal secular democracy?

We, us Indians, suffer from a deep-set flaw in our psyche; a profound lack of self-esteem and self-confidence that stems from not knowing who we are! So much so that even when two-bit nations with a combined moral quotient of zero pass adverse remarks about us, we go into a tizzy and subject ourselves to an endless bout of self-loathing. Nothing illustrates this phenomenon better than our current response.

First, one person's aberration, even if the individual belongs to the ruling party, cannot indict an entire nation, its people and its Government. Second, the Government did act to rectify the indecorum by asserting its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearer. Nupur Sharma has since apologised for her remarks.

Next, let us take a closer look at those Muslim countries that are hectoring India on morality. These include Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan, Bahrain, Maldives, Malaysia, Oman, Iraq and Libya. The majority of them are autocracies which designate Islam as the official religion; a caveat that automatically relegates all other religions to second-class status.

Countries like Saudi Arabia prohibit the construction of non-Muslim places of worship; in other Gulf countries, non-Muslims have to seek Government permission. These countries do not even afford non-Muslims the basic courtesy of dignity in death. Kuwait and Qatar do not allow cremations forcing non-Muslims to fly dead bodies out of the country to their native places. And let us not forget that Qatar is the country that indirectly endorsed MF Hussain's blasphemy against Hindu gods by honouring him with a citizenship.

In contrast, despite all the criticism that the Modi Government has been subject to, both at home and abroad, and despite all the talk of Hindu hyper-nationalism, we still remain a liberal democratic country par excellence that treats all its citizens equally. Muslims have the same rights as any Hindu. They have access to the same educational institutions, same job opportunities, the same health facilities and are beneficiaries of the same ration cards. They can build their own mosques and pray unhindered in these. We cannot be shamed by countries whose record on religious freedom is questionable. We need to be confident in our own skin and answerable to ourselves alone as the bearers of an ancient moral civilisation.

> THE MAJORITY OF THESE MUSLIM COUNTRIES ARE AUTOCRACIES WHICH DESIGNATE ISLAM AS THE OFFICIAL RELIGION; A CAVEAT THAT AUTOMATICALLY RELEGATES ALL OTHER RELIGIONS TO SECOND-CLASS STATUS

Coming to the question of trade, the Gulf Cooperation Council (consisting of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) is a major trading partner with exports of $44 billion and imports worth $110 billion (2021-22). About a third of India's crude oil needs (Saudi Arabia 18 per cent; UAE nine per cent and Kuwait five per cent) are supplied by the Gulf countries. However, since the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the equation is fast changing. Crude oil supplies from Russia have dramatically shot up reaching 3.36 million metric tonnes in May 2022 — a nine-fold monthly increase compared to 2021. India's dependence on oil from Gulf countries is significant but can be balanced by increasing supplies from Russia.

On the flip side, the Gulf countries are overwhelmingly dependent on India for their food needs. Specifically, India accounts for 84 per cent, 91 per cent and 80 per cent of Qatar's, Kuwait's and Iran's rice requirements. So, vulnerability due to trade disruption extends to both sides.

What is most concerning is that this outrage has emboldened terrorists to threaten India with attacks and encouraged anti-social elements amongst India's Muslims? It has led to calls for beheading on national television, rioting through the streets and obscene calls for Hindu genocide from mosque tops. The Government of India has done the right thing to defuse the crisis by reiterating its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearers.

The Gulf countries too must step up to the plate. After having vented their disapproval publicly, they must now show maturity if they do not want the narrative to be hijacked by radical fundamentalists. To put an end to the matter, they need to release another statement that welcomes the Indian Government's actions and acknowledges India as a genuinely secular nation.

(The author, a US-based academic and political commentator, frequently writes on current affairs in India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

START AGNIPATH ON TRIAL BASIS

Sir — While working out the financial benefits of the Agnipath scheme, national security concerns and administrative feasibility cannot be brushed aside. The moot question is whether after completing four years in uniform, they will be able to withstand the pressures of unemployment. These well-trained youths can easily be lured, recruited and exploited by anti-social elements, creating newer challenges after completing their tenure. There is no gain saying that the new recruitment scheme for jawans is being pushed in a hurry to counter the rising discontentment among the unemployed youth and ever-growing resentment against the Government.

Another rational way of revisiting the Agnipath scheme is to downsize the Army, as China did in 2015 by giving 2.3 lakh soldiers VRS as part of its modernisation drive. The poor execution of SPARSH is a case in point. The new pension system for the armed forces veterans, which was launched with much fanfare in 2021 for post-2015 retirees, also ended in a fiasco as on May 1, almost 60,000 ex-servicemen were kept deprived of their pension. Taking lessons from its poor execution, it is essential to run Agnipath on a trial basis first.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | *Nainital*

RADICAL REFORMS AFTER CONSULTATIONS

Sir — This refers to '*Some reforms may look unfair at first, but help nation in long run: Modi*' (June 21). The PM's statement is relevant because it comes against the backdrop of widespread protests against the Agnipath scheme. Irrespective of the merits and demerits of the scheme, it has turned into a burning issue. Also, it is difficult to ignore the fact that this is the third big reform by the Modi-led Government to face such serious opposition. The land reform Bill in its first term and the farm reforms Bill in its second term were withdrawn to avert likely electoral losses despite there being enough reasons to persist with these.

The issues that these two aborted reforms set out to address remain, and are likely to have a detrimental impact on the Indian economy. While it is possible the opposition to such reforms was inevitable, it is also possible that their intensity might have been diminished through a consultative process involving all stakeholders, an elaborate detailing of the contours of the reforms. However, when it comes to the adoption of radical reforms, good intentions and a majority in Parliament may not necessarily translate into instant and universal acceptance.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | *Bengaluru*

NEED TO HARMONISE WITH TECH

Sir — With great admiration and belief in the columns of your newspaper, I seek to bring to your attention the fast-growing menace of tech addiction and the resultant health scares among the youth of our country. Today, we are able to enjoy some of the most convenient gadgets to have ever existed, which offer far more information and sources of entertainment than any other. As a result, the upcoming generation has been becoming increasingly information-heavy. The number of hours an average person spends in gaining information, whether wanted or unwanted, is fast increasing, with a screen in front of our eyes showing us new wonders every minute.

And on top of that, the wonders are as per choice and preferences. All this temptation often leads young children to spend much more time on these gadgets than what's healthy. And even though we may not realise it instantly, it levies a huge load of tiredness on our brains and eyes, often leading to inexplicable stress and irritability. Hence, through the pages of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to appeal to the youth worldwide to maintain a balance of all spheres of life to fully enjoy it.

Divyansha Sharma | *Ujjain*

Comments malign Cong's image

The way in which the leaders of the Opposition Congress and its former Ministers were seen losing their cool in public meetings in the recent past, is sad. Their frustration was evident in their statements. The kind of abusive language used by Shaikh Hussain about the Prime Minister of the country in the Congress' protest public meeting in Nagpur and after that at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, by former Union Minister of Congress, Subodh Kant Sahai. It's a sad state of affairs. The Congress has been an old national party. It has had a golden history. But today, the language the senior Congress leaders are using in public meetings is not in any way in the interest of the party.

What derogatory remarks are being made by the leaders about certain constitutional posts, they don't even care about it. The Congress has ruled the country for more than 60 years and all that has been possible only because of the nation's people. It has also been the tradition of Congress to respect the sentiments of the same people. The Prime Minister is not only a leader of a political party, his is a constitutional post, leading the country in the world. Insulting any constitutional post does not suit the leaders of a national party like the Congress. Such statements will only hurt the image of the Congress.

Rajender Kumar Sharma | *Haryana*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Many reforms in the present may seem unpleasant… but over time, there are benefits.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi

This attack was just on a Gurudwara (in Kabul) but on the entire civilised population.

Afghan ambassador
—Farid Mamundzay

Music is also a form of yoga, which I have been practising since childhood.

Singer
—Sukhwinder Singh

We would have liked Rishabh Pant to score more with the bat, but it's not that concerning.

India chief coach
—Rahul Dravid

I am happy to inform you that the Indian farmers are completely protected.

Commerce Minister
—Piyush Goyal

FIRST COLUMN

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE TO STRENGTHEN UNITY

India already has a fairly uniform set of laws

RAJENDRA PRASAD **GUPTA**

In a country as diverse as India, a lot has changed during the 75 years of Independence. India is continuously climbing the ladder of success. The country is asserting itself as a major economic and military power. In such a milieu, there is an urgent need that India, like other nations, strengthens the initiative of national integration by passing a uniform civil code.

The criminal code, civil procedure code, the Special Marriage Act, etc., apply uniformly to all citizens. Barring a few exceptions, India has a fairly uniform set of laws.

The British government had entrusted the responsibility of initiating a uniform civil code to Warren Hasting in 1772 when he was conferred the civil, judicial and administrative responsibility. Later, the British government emphasised the need to compile the codification of Indian laws on various subjects in 1835, with a few exceptions.

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution gives us freedom of conscience and freedom to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, including the protection of our cultural diversity. At the same time, there is Article 44, which upholds a "uniform civil code" for citizens. It is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution.

In order to bring uniformity in law, various courts have often said in their judgments that the government should strive towards ensuring a uniform civil code.

With the passage of time, many laws have been changed in India. The demand for a uniform civil code has also been going on since the time of Independence. In fact, even the framers of the Constitution had deliberated on it, but it was put on hold due to opposition by the Muslim representatives.

India will not be the first nation to implement a uniform civil code. The US, Canada, and European nations as well as many Islamic countries like Turkey, Indonesia, and Sudan have uniform civil codes.

By promoting the politics of appeasement in India, a select few fundamentalist organisations, which are protected by political parties, are engaged in dividing the country. If one looks at the developments in history, one will find that since Independence these organisations have been involved in anti-national activities. Many conspiracies have been hatched for the purpose of precluding a uniform civil code. Owing to vote bank politics, top leaders of many major political parties started fear-mongering, telling the Muslim community that a uniform civil code would violate their rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

These politicians forget that the same Constitution has also talked about implementing a uniform civil code. They should also be aware that a uniform civil code has been in force in Goa for years, which has proved to be effective in maintaining harmony and a peaceful environment, and accelerating development there.

Therefore, it would be better if today we make meaningful efforts to solve the problem and not leave it to the future. This step will also be commendable and in tune with the motto of 'One Nation and One Legislation.'

For this it is necessary that the Centre, Parliament and state governments agree on this issue to develop a national consensus. While preserving cultural diversity, it is necessary that no person should be discriminated against. As far as possible, there should be the same law in India and a uniform civil code.

Several pending issues like triple talaq, Article 370, and Ram Mandir have been addressed in the last few years. This has raised hope that uniform civil code will also become a reality.

(The author, a professor, is the vice-president of BJP in Bihar and a member of Bihar Legislative Council)

BJP's foreign outreach serves national interest

SUMEET **BHASIN**

The outreach is an exercise to realise democratic ideals and reach out to those uninitiated and curious about our country

India is the world's largest democracy and the Bharatiya Janata Party is the world's largest political party. Despite many challenges it faces, Indian democracy remains vibrant and inclusive.

The BJP being one of the representatives of democratic ideals of India, outreach with foreign and domestic constituents has been a constant for the party over several decades. Technology has recently emerged as a force multiplier. The world has for long been watching democratic evolution in India. Foreign commentators have interpreted the noise of democracy in India in different ways. Some sections have even fallen prey to the biases which coloured their writing on India. Some, however, have been genuinely unaware of the various facets of Indian democracy for many reasons, including distance and lack of communication.

Biases, prejudices, and preconceived notions are the key challenges that the BJP has sought to address in its outreach to diverse audiences. 'Know BJP' is an initiative of the ruling party to give insights into party's functioning to foreign diplomats.

BJP president Jagat Pratap Nadda and senior party functionaries have held three interactions with foreign diplomats. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has also been present in such interactions.

In the third meeting, the BJP president gave a detailed view of BJP's policies and programmes to the envoys of six countries, including those from Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and Laos. The second part of 'Know BJP' exercise took place close on the heels of Raisina Dialogue, which was attended by foreign ministers of 14 countries, diplomats, foreign affairs commentators and other stakeholders, including those from the US, Australia and Israel.

The two events were independent of each other but complemented each other in furthering the national interest.

The latest phase of direct communication was held with the diplomatic community from the Central Asian countries with whom India has age-old ties, dating back to the first global outreach by the emperor Ashoka, whose pillars were installed in these countries. The Raisina Dialogue saw Jaishankar in his element while reiterating India's worldview and confronting the narrow perspectives of some of the key foreign commentators to the immediate flashpoint in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Indian perseverance to make the world take note of the wrongs perpetrated on the South Asian subcontinent has begun bearing fruit with the emergence of greater understanding about the pitfalls of an expansionist China. For decades, it has been causing problems on the Line of Actual Control on the eastern front of India, while Pakistan exports terrorism as its state policy on the western front.

This global understanding has come on the back of discreet but uninterrupted dialogue by the leaders of India with their foreign interlocutors. This was first set in motion by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott dialogue, which went on for several years, had laid the foundation for the Indian pivot in Asia for the US, which also augmented the global outreach of India.

> BIASES, PREJUDICES, AND PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT THE BJP HAS SOUGHT TO ADDRESS IN ITS OUTREACH TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES. 'KNOW BJP' IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE RULING PARTY

(The author is Director, the Public Policy Research Centre, the BJP's principal think tank; twitter at @sumeetbhasin)

Notably, former BJP chief and deputy PM LK Advani had set in motion the party's foreign outreach by creating a foreign cell and the overseas friends of the BJP, which are playing important roles in the outreach, who in turn have become vocal advocates of Indian national interest. Deployment of technology for outreach by the BJP in the last one decade by tapping the full potential of social media platforms has given a boost unseen in the past.

Vajpayee, being a true democrat, had the idea to connect with the Indian diaspora to tap their growing influence to work for the Indian national interest. Needless to say, increase in the Indian outreach with foreign capitals corresponds with the rise in the politico-economic clout of the Indian diaspora.

In PM Modi, the Indian diaspora got the perfect voice for Indian national interest. Predictably, the interactions with the diaspora are a regular feature during his foreign visits. So, while Vajpayee laid the foundation for the connect with the world, Modi has upgraded it by building a grand edifice of an India that's connected with every corner of the world—from developed countries to island nations, from the African continent to the developing nations and the immediate neighbourhood. He has deployed full resources to build relationships of a reliable and dependable friend.

For many, the BJP is a relatively new political party, for they have been used to seeing Congress in power for decades. The BJP gained full majority in the Lok Sabha only in 2014 under the leadership of Modi. This happened again in the 2019 general election. While Vajpayee led the government within the coalition limitations, PM Modi has the unprecedented popular mandate to unlock India's fullest potential. The Modi-led government at the Centre has carried out a legislative agenda which was earlier seen as impossible.

Revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Then the archaic practice of triple talaq among the Muslims was discarded; this caught the attention of many in the world. Such political will to carry out hard reforms is tough to find even among many world leaders. This fuels curiosity of foreign commentators in the BJP and its leadership; this has necessitated a creative outreach strategy, so that we could keep pace with the fast-changing global narrative.

The outbreak of Covid-19 tested the characters of national leaders of several countries. India with over one billion population was seen by many as too vulnerable to the deadly pandemic. But the incumbent Indian leadership proved equal to the task; in fact, it excelled in its response with two made in India vaccines that shielded not just Indians but millions in several countries. The neighbouring countries remained solely dependent on India.

PM led the outreach at the policy front, holding consultations with the scientific community to find answers to the looming challenges in the form of Covid-19. India showcased why the country is the pharma capital of the world, with the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro expressing gratitude for the medicines and vaccines by equating the efforts with Hanuman carrying the 'Sanjeevani Booti' for injured Lakshman.

The BJP's outreach with the poor during such trying times shaped the party's deep social drive in the form of distribution of dry ration kits to millions of people during lockdowns and thereafter. BJP workers ran community kitchens across the country. Blending of the social and political work further helped the endeavour.

Dialogue and dissemination are in the DNA of the BJP and its parent organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Foreign commentators have their misgivings about the RSS and the BJP because of the long-term narratives fed to them by the political rivals and the well-entrenched 'Left-liberal ecosystem.'

RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat held extensive interactions with the representatives of the foreign media at Vigyan Bhavan a few years ago where he responded to all the questions. He explained to them the worldview and functioning of the organisation.

The BJP leaders have their ears to the ground; outreach helps them know the pulse of the people. They are not the prisoners of history; they are willing to walk the tough road.

POINT COUNTER POINT

WE HAVE OPENED UP THE SPACE AND THE DEFENCE SECTORS WHICH, FOR DECADES, WERE UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.
—PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 75 YEARS, SERVICE CHIEFS ARE BEING FRONTED TO DEFEND A GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DECISION.
—LEADER OF OPPN IN THE RAJYA SABHA
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

South Africa: Anti-graft Prez faces scam charges

A politically-linked former spy hurled some not-very-convincing charges at President Ramaphosa, ruining latter's name

GWYNNE **DYER**

Once upon a time (about four years ago) Cyril Ramaphosa was seen as South Africa's last, best hope. Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the leadership of the country's ruling African National Congress (ANC) had passed from the wise and heroic Nelson Mandela to the intellectual but ineffectual Thabo Mbeki and then to the corrupt and ignorant Jacob Zuma.

But in 2018 the fractured and demoralised ANC pulled itself together, remembered its purpose, and replaced Zuma as president with Cyril Ramaphosa. Hope soared: Ramaphosa had a long record of activism in the struggle against Apartheid; he was a former trade union leader; and he was so rich that he didn't need to be corrupt. He was the ideal candidate.

(The author's new book is The Shortest History of War)

For a while it went well. The economy didn't grow much and unemployment stayed very high, but Zuma's chief cronies fled abroad, others were charged with various crimes, and even Zuma wound up in jail. Ramaphosa was at least trying to clean up the mess—but then, two years ago, there was a burglary at his wildlife game farm in Limpopo province.

Nobody heard about it at the time, because Ramaphosa didn't mention it publicly. That's understandable, because the burglars allegedly found $4 million in cash hidden in cushions on his sofa. That's not a good look for a president whose USP is fighting corruption, so no report was made to the police. Ramaphosa just swallowed the loss.

That's not as crazy as it sounds: Ramaphosa is one of the richest men in South Africa, and $4 million is less than one per cent of his wealth. He could just be trying not to draw attention to it. But then, early this month, Arthur Fraser, former head of South Africa's intelligence agency, lodged a criminal complaint with the police about the affair.

Fraser said that Ramaphosa's 'presidential protection unit' (bodyguards) had tracked down the burglars, kidnapped, and interrogated them, and then bribed them to keep quiet about the cash. Maybe Ramaphosa was just trying to protect his reputation as a man of the people, but even so he would have been breaking the law. And then Fraser outed him.

The news is now out all over town, and by this week Ramaphosa was under attack from all sides. "Criminals do not report crimes when the proceeds of their crimes are stolen," as Julius Malema, leader of the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters party, put it, and a great many other people in Parliament and in the street took the same view.

This comes at just the wrong time for Ramaphosa, who faces a leadership challenge in the ANC in December. His anti-corruption campaign within the party has not prospered, and Zuma's supporters staged riots that killed hundreds when he was jailed. Now Zuma's out of jail, and Ramaphosa is tarred with the same corruption brush himself.

There's a lot that's wrong with this story. Arthur Fraser, the former spy chief who brought the complaint against Ramaphosa, is a close ally of Zuma's. The South African President does hold regular cash auctions of his prize Ankole cattle and various game animals at his farm, but why would he hide the cash in pillows? Tax avoidance?

This is a man who has sat on literally dozens of boards and is allegedly worth $450 million. If he wants to avoid taxes, he has lawyers aplenty; he doesn't need sofa cushions. The whole 'burglary' operation, and especially the source and the timing of the 'complaint', smells like a political sting. Nevertheless, Ramaphosa is in deep trouble.

The real object of the sting would have been to highlight Ramaphosa's great and unexplained wealth. He probably didn't break the law to get it, like Zuma did, but he didn't inherit it and he didn't earn it by hard work. He just got paid huge sums to sit on boards, and invested the proceeds wisely.

Ramaphosa got on those boards as part of the ANC-sponsored 'Black Economic Empowerment' programme, one of whose purposes was to provide a reliable, low-profile income stream for its political work. Most of its supporters were very poor, but the chosen 'BEE' appointees were expected to donate much of their large incomes to the ANC.

It's less lurid than Zuma's route to great wealth via partnership with Indian 'entrepreneurs' in a project of 'state capture', but both men's riches come from their ties to the ANC. To the average voter in Alexandra township, the two men will look exactly the same.

That is why the ANC will probably lose its majority in Parliament in the 2024 election, after 30 years in power. High time, really, even though nobody knows what's coming out of the box next.

Our economy may grow by 7.5% this year: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Indian economy is likely to grow by 7.5 per cent this year "making us the fastest-growing major economy." He also said the value of the Indian digital economy would touch the $1 trillion mark by 2025.

Making this assertion in a virtual address at the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Business Forum, he also said the kind of digital transformation taking place in India was never seen anywhere in the world earlier. Highlighting the growth trajectory, Modi said there is an opportunity to invest $1.5 trillion under the national infrastructure pipeline.

The BRICS grouping brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade.

"We are expecting a 7.5 per cent growth rate this year that will make us the fastest-growing major economy," Modi said. In a 'New India' transformative changes are taking place in every sector, he said, adding that a key pillar of the country's economic recovery is technology-led growth. He also said, "We are supporting innovation in every sector."

The BRICS Business Forum took place a day ahead of a virtual summit of the five-nation bloc. Modi will take part in the 14th BRICS Summit on June 23 and 24 at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping. The summit hosted by China will be held in the virtual mode. The conclave includes a High Level Dialogue on Global Development.

The upcoming summit takes place in the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine conflict and stand-off between the armies of India and China in Eastern Ladakh for the last two years. The 13th BRICS summit was held in India in September 2021.

The BRICS has become a platform for discussion and deliberation on issues of common concern for all developing countries. BRICS countries have regularly called for reform of the multilateral system in order to make it more representative and inclusive.

Discussions during the 14th BRICS Summit are expected to cover intra-BRICS cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism, trade, health, traditional medicine, environment, science and technology and innovation, agriculture, technical and vocational education and training, and MSMEs.

Discussions are also likely on issues like reform of the multilateral system, combating the Covid-19 pandemic and global economic recovery, among others.

Demolitions in Prayagraj, Kanpur as per law: UP to SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Government has told the Supreme Court that demolitions of illegal structures were carried out by its Kanpur and Prayagraj municipal bodies as per law and were not related to punishing the accused involved in violent protests following remarks by two BJP leaders on Prophet Mohammed. In an affidavit filed on Wednesday pursuant to pleas filed by a Muslim body Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, the UP Government said, "The said demolitions referred to in the interlocutory applications have been carried out by the local development authority, which are statutory autonomous bodies, independent of the State administration, as per law as part of their routine effort against unauthorised/illegal constructions and encroachments, in accordance with the UP Urban Planning and Development Act, 1972".

It said that none of the actual affected parties, if any, have approached this court concerning the lawful demolition action. "It is humbly submitted that in so far as taking action against the persons accused in rioting, the State Government is taking stringent steps against them in accordance with a completely different set of statutes namely — CrPC, UP gangster, and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986 and Rules, 2021, Prevention of Public Property Damages Act and Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damages to Public and Private Property Act, 2020 and Rules, 2021", said UP Government in the affidavit.

The affidavit pointed out that the factum of construction being illegal has also been admitted by the two builders in Kanpur. It pointed out that the top court in a recent writ petition filed by a political party concerning the alleged demolitions in Shaheen Bagh here, noted that only the affected party and not political parties should come forward and allowed withdrawal of the petition with liberty to approach the High Court.

"Furthermore, it is submitted that even if any such alleged demolition action is to be challenged, the same is to be done by the affected party before the High Court, and not this court", the State Government said, adding that it is taking strong exception to the attempt by the petitioners to name the highest constitutional functionaries of the State and falsely colour the local development authority's lawful actions as "extra-legal punitive measures" against accused persons, targeting any particular religious community.

It said that all such allegations are absolutely false and are vehemently denied and urged the court to hold the petitioner to terms for the said false allegations without basis before this court. The UP Government further said that the petitioner has cherry-picked two demolition actions of illegal constructions in the properties of one Ishtiaq Ahmad and one Riyaz Ahmed that took place in Kanpur on June 11, 2022, in an attempt to falsely link the same to the rioting; however, it has failed to note that in both cases, certain portions of the two illegal/non-compliant structures in question took place; that both buildings were under construction and not in conformity with the permission granted.

It said that most importantly, proceedings under the Urban Planning Act against the two buildings had been initiated by the Kanpur development authority long before the incidents of rioting that took place in June 2022 - in one case way back in August 2020 itself, while in the other, in February 2022.

ED arrests MD of OPG Securities Gupta in NSE scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday said it has arrested Delhi-based broker and Managing Director of OPG Securities Sanjay Gupta in the NSE scam, four years after the agency registered an FIR against him for alleged preferential access of the market through multiple IDs and secondary servers called co-location facility.

The CBI has alleged that it received information that Gupta along with some people attempted to destroy some evidence and also tried to influence SEBI officials which were probing the NSE co-location scam case.

The agency had summoned Gupta to its headquarters and during the questioning, Gupta was "evasive" and tried to "mislead the investigation" resulting in his arrest on Tuesday night, they said.

Gupta had allegedly approached members of a syndicate to bribe SEBI officials on his behalf and influence the investigation, they alleged.

The CBI is probing whether the bribes paid to the syndicate members reached SEBI officials or not, they said.

Four years after registering the FIR, the agency began taking action following a damning SEBI report in February this year in which strictures were passed against the then NSE CEO and Managing Director Chitra Ramkrishna and Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian. It is alleged that OPG Securities consistently logged in first on selected Tick-by-Tick servers of the NSE for four years on most of the trading days between 2010 and 2014 and also had access to servers that had better hardware.

Convalescing Sonia asks ED for more time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday wrote to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) seeking postponement of her appearance in the National Herald case by a few weeks till she recovers completely. Sonia, who was discharged from hospital on June 20 after treatment of Covid complications, had been summoned by the agency for questioning on June 23 in the money laundering case. Sonia had earlier been scheduled to appear before the ED on June 8 but had sought more time from the probe agency in view of her Covid-19 infection. The agency had then issued a fresh summons.

"Since she has been strictly advised to rest at home following her hospitalisation on account of Covid and lung infection, Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi has written to ED seeking the postponement of her appearance there by a few weeks till she has recovered completely," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter.

'Nationalist' Govt weakening military via Agnipath: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After After five days of continuous grilling by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday took on the Narendra Modi Government and said he will have to withdraw the controversial military recruitment initiative just like he had to roll back the farm laws after tendering an apology. Rahul alleged that the BJP Government "which calls itself nationalist" was "weakening" the armed forces through the 'Agnipath' scheme.

Taking a dig at the Centre over the 'Agnipath' scheme, Rahul also said those who talked about 'one rank, one pension' were bringing in 'no rank, no pension'.

Addressing Congress parliamentarians and legislators from across the country who gathered at the party AICC headquarters to express solidarity with him after he was questioned by the ED, Rahul said his questioning was an "unimportant" matter and the most important issue in the country was of jobs.

Rahul and his sister, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were welcomed with slogans when they reached the AICC headquarters. Among those present were Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and his Rajasthan counterpart Ashok Gehlot. "MLAs and MPs have come to express their solidarity with Rahul Gandhi," Gehlot told reporters.

"Our MPs and MLAs are raising their voice against this conspiracy. All institutions of the Government are busy in this endeavour," his colleague Jairam Ramesh added. He said some MLAs and MPs had been stopped from coming here and the party would go ahead with the planning of its "Bharat Jodo yatra" from Kanyakumari to Kashmir starting October 2.

"The spine of the country — MSMEs— has been broken by the Modi Government. I say to all those who train in the morning to get into the Army, Navy and Air Force that the Prime Minister has broken the spine of the country and this country will not be able to give jobs to its youth," Rahul said.

"No matter what the Government does, it will not be able to give jobs as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has handed the country to two or three industrialists who cannot ensure jobs to the youth," he said. Now, they have "closed" even the last resort for the youth -- to get into the armed forces, he said.

"Now, train in the morning, get into the forces and then go home. I guarantee that after your stint in the military, you will not get any job," Rahul Gandhi said. "The Chinese Army is sitting on our land. It has snatched away over 1,000 square kilometre of our land. This truth has been accepted by the Government," he asserted.

He asserted that the Army should be strengthened but this Government is "weakening it". "When there is a war, results of this will be evident...They are weakening the Army, it will harm the country, and they call themselves nationalists," Rahul said, attacking the Government. "I had said about farm laws that Modi will have to take them back and he did. Now, the Congress is saying Modi will have to withdraw Agnipath scheme and the youth are standing with us on this," he said.

'Rubber stamp Prez won't work in India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition candidate for the presidential polls, Yashwant Sinha, initiated his campaign strategy meeting on Wednesday at the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) office in the national Capital and said a "rubber-stamp President" will not work in the country. Sinha said the presidential election is not an individual battle but a fight for the issues facing the country.

"I am thankful to all the political parties that have given me the opportunity in the presidential polls. I am glad that these parties have given me that credibility. I wish to say that this election is not an individual fight for me. There are issues that the country is facing on which the Electoral College has to make a decision," Sinha said talking to the media after the meeting.

The former Union Minister said the BJP-led Centre is moving on a road that is not good for the country, as youngsters are suffering and now, the "joke" that the Government has played on unemployment with the "Agniveer" scheme for military recruitment, the entire country is up in arms, he said.

"The President's post is extremely sensitive and I will not be under pressure from the Government," he said. Sinha will file his nomination for the presidential polls on June 27 and is most likely to begin campaigning from Jharkhand and Bihar.

"We will be going to various places in the country to campaign.... We are formulating a strategy on that. I congratulate Droupadi Murmu, but this is not me against her -- this is an ideological contest. We should not have a rubber-stamp President in the country," he said.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has named Murmu, a tribal leader from Odisha, as its candidate in the presidential polls.

Leaders like KK Sharma (NCP), Jairam Ramesh (Congress), Yogendra Shastri (Congress) and Sudheendra Kulkarni were present at the meeting on Wednesday.

Out of station MPs can inform and vote from State Assemblies: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of Parliament (MPs) who would not be present in the Capital on July 18 to cast their vote in Parliament House for the presidential election can do so from State Assemblies, provided they inform the Election Commission (EC) in advance. In a letter addressed to all members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, the poll panel has reminded them that they can cast ballots at Room No. 63 in Parliament House.

"However, on account of unavoidable reasons and exigencies of circumstances, if you cannot be present in New Delhi on the date of poll, you can opt to exercise your right to vote at the presidential election at any of the polling places situated in the State or UT of Puducherry and NCT of Delhi," the June 16 letter said.

The MPs who intend to vote from one of the State Legislative Assemblies have to send a "formal request" to the EC by filling up a form. The request should reach the poll panel "not later than ten days before the date of poll" so that necessary arrangements can be made. "It may kindly be noted that the request once made and accepted by the Commission to vote at any State Legislative Assembly will be final and no further changes will be entertained in this regard," the poll panel has cautioned.

While normally MPs vote in New Delhi and MLAs at the premises of the Legislative Assembly of each State, facilities are provided by the EC for any MP to vote in the Assembly of a State.

Similarly, an MLA can vote at the polling booth set up in Parliament House, if s/he is in Delhi on the date of poll.

India, Australia Def Mins mull ties in manufacturing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China adopting an aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific, India and Australia on Wednesday reaffirmed their shared objective of an open, free, inclusive, prosperous and rules based region.

The two sides also reviewed their Defence and strategic ties and security challenges during talks here between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and visiting Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles.

The two Ministers also explored industrial cooperation in the Defence manufacturing sector as well as ways to enhance capabilities of their militaries. Marles is on a four-day visit to India from Monday amid geopolitical upheavals triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Ukraine crisis is understood to have figured in the talks. Australia is a key partner of India and the strategic cooperation between the two sides has been on an upswing, both bilaterally as well as under the framework of the Quad or Quadrilateral coalition.

A joint statement issued after the parleys said the two Ministers reviewed the existing defence cooperation activities which have been increasing despite challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and discussed ways to enhance further cooperation. The Ministers reviewed the defence and security pillars of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. They reaffirmed their commitment towards implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership based on mutual trust and understanding, common interests and shared values, of democracy and rule of law.

They welcomed the growing diversity and frequency of defence exercises and exchanges between the two countries and undertook to build upon operational engagements through the India-Australia Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement.

Both Ministers committed to give fillip to the India-Australia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Defence Research and Materiel Cooperation, which will meet in Australia later this year.

This JWG is a crucial mechanism for boosting ties between defence industries. The Ministers discussed further opportunities for industrial cooperation between India and Australia to increase the resilience of supply chains and deliver capabilities to their respective defence forces. Rajnath and Marles also welcomed the plan to commence the landmark General Bipin Rawat Young Officer Exchange Programme in the latter half of 2022.

Wrist health trackers help detect Covid before signs appear

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Health trackers strapped to the wrist for monitoring changes in skin temperature, heart and breathing rates can help detect Covid-19 days before the first tell-tale signs of the viral disease appear, according to a study published in the journal BMJ open.

The study shows that this data could be combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to diagnose Covid-19 even before any symptoms appear.

"While a PCR swab test remains the gold standard for confirming Covid-19, our findings suggest that a wearable-informed machine learning algorithm may serve as a promising tool for presymptomatic or asymptomatic detection of Covid-19," the researchers said.

The researchers, including those from Risch Medical Laboratory, Liechtenstein base their findings on wearers of the AVA bracelet. The regulated and commercially available fertility tracker monitors breathing rate, heart rate, heart rate variability, wrist skin temperature and blood flow, as well as sleep quantity and quality.

Typical Covid-19 symptoms may take several days after infection before they appear during which time an infected person can unwittingly spread the virus.

The researchers wanted to see if physiological changes, monitored by an activity tracker, could be used to develop a machine learning algorithm to detect Covid-19 infection before the start of symptoms.

As many as 1,163 participants under the age of 51 were drawn from the GAPP study between March 2020 and April 2021. Participants wore the AVA bracelet at night. The device saves data every 10 seconds and requires at least four hours of relatively uninterrupted sleep. The bracelets were synchronised with a complementary smartphone app on waking.

Health Min to hold high-level Covid review meeting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has decided to hold a high-level review meeting on Friday with the core team of experts over increasing Covid-19 infections in the country.

As on date, 10 States — Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat — have over 1,000 active cases.

The core team of experts will include AIIMS director Dr Randip Guleria, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava and NCDC director Sujeet Singh.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary of Department of Biotechnology Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary in the Department of Pharmaceuticals S Aparna, among others, will also attend the meeting.

In a review meeting of INSACOG held last week, states/UTs were asked to submit a "larger number" of samples for whole genome sequencing from districts and areas which had seen a surge in COVID-19 cases over a period of seven days.

In the meantime, Dr Rajesh Karyekarte of B J Medical College in his study conducted on 116 patients who were infected with BA.2.38, an offspring of Omicron's sub-variant BA.2, said that, "We have done the genome sequencing of some samples from April to June and sent the report to the Government. During the analysis, we found that BA.2 is common, but its offspring BA.2.38 is also prevalent and is neck to neck with BA.2."

Nationwide 'BRO cafes' to provide comfort and jobs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tourists thronging scenic locales in remote areas of the country can now savour hot tea or coffee and local cuisine at roadside cafes. They can also park their cars or two-wheelers there and avail of first aid if need be.

Realising the huge potential of boosting tourism and providing employment to the local populace as tourists are now venturing out to the inaccessible areas due to better road connectivity, the Defence Ministry has approved setting up of "BRO Cafes' across the country, especially in border areas stretching from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

In a novel initiative to provide basic wayside amenities like first aid and comfort to tourists travelling in remote areas, the Ministry has given the go-ahead for cafes at 75 locations in 12 States and Union Territories. They will be known as 'BRO cafes' as most of them will come up on roads constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

These cafes, besides providing food and other amenities to tourists will also boost economic activities in border areas and generate employment for the local populace, the Defence Ministry said here on Wednesday. Giving details of the scheme, officials said these amenities will be located on different sections of roads with the BRO. It has its reach in the remotest border areas and besides addressing strategic needs, it has been instrumental in socio-economic uplift of the Northern and Eastern borders.

This has resulted in increased tourist influx in these scenic locations, hitherto inaccessible. In order to provide conducive and comfortable transit of tourists on these roads located at harsh climatic and geographical conditions, the need to establish multi-utility wayside amenities along the major tourist circuits in these regions was recognised. Since the inaccessibility and remoteness of these roads preclude widespread commercial deployments, the BRO, by virtue of its presence, took it upon itself to open such facilities at remote places.

The scheme provides for development and operation of wayside amenities in public private partnership mode with agencies, on license basis, which will design, build and operate the facility as per guidelines of the BRO.

Amenities like parking for two and four wheelers, food plaza or restaurant, separate restrooms for men, women and differently abled and first aid facilities are proposed to be provided. Selection of licencees will be done through a competitive process. The terms of the agreement will be for 15 years which may be further extended for a period up to five years. The 75 'BRO Cafes' will be located in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Rain fury: Panic-stricken Kashmiries evacuated

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Incessant rainfall across different parts of Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday created a flood like situation prompting the authorities to evacuate people from some of the low lying areas after the water levels touched the danger mark. Higher reaches across Kashmir valley including Amarnath cave shrine area also witnessed fresh spell of snowfall. The mercury levels in several parts of Kashmir valley reportedly dropped up to 15 degrees, lowest in the last 50 years in Srinagar.

The situation turned grim in Kashmir valley as several water bodies including river Jhelum crossed the flood alarm mark. Control rooms have been activated across affected districts to remain in touch with the local population while special teams have been constituted at the district level to closely monitor the situation.

The weathermen, however, advised people not to press panic buttons as the weather started showing signs of improvement in the second half of the day.

Due to continuous rainfall for the last four days, several areas across South Kashmir districts remained inundated disrupting the smooth movement of traffic in the interior areas. Livestock was affected badly in several parts of Kashmir. After assessing the situation on ground zero the Union Territory administration decided to shut down schools and other educational institutions.

On the other hand the National Highway linking the twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar also remained blocked since late Tuesday evening as massive landslides/mudslides and shoot stones disrupted the smooth flow of traffic.

On Wednesday the highway was blocked near Samroli, 13 kms ahead of Udhampur following fresh landslides.Shuttering of an under construction bridge near Peerah in Ramban was washed away. Road stretches between Nashri and Banihal remained blocked at around 30 locations. The frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch also witnessed flash floods while the erstwhile Doda district remained on high alert following heavy downpour in the region. Unconfirmed reports claimed several nomads, venturing in higher reaches, have gone missing. Moving swiftly, local teams consisting of Indian army/police/ district officers were rushed to trace them and

extend all possible help. "No loss of lives has been reported in the higher reaches of Rajouri.The army/Police & the adm are in constant touch, the rescue operation will start as soon as the weather becomes conducive;contact with nomads at Shopian & Kulgam also established" tweeted office of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Vikas Kundal.

An advisory was issued by the Chief Engineer Baglihar power project, to avoid going near Chenab riverbanks in view of rise in water level in the Baglihar reservoir due to incessant rains. In Ramban, Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mussarat Zia late evening visited the affected stretch on the National Highway near Mehar to take stock of the road clearing operations. By late evening over 25 blocked locations were restored and work was going on to clear the other points. The movement of stranded vehicles going towards Kashmir valley was facilitated while a massive landslide at Samroli was being cleared till the time of filing the report.The district administration in Ramban had earlier made elaborate arrangements for stranded passengers and accommodated them at allocated shelter points and fed them fresh food and snacks to keep them warm. Two columns of the Indian army also remained deployed along the National Highway to extend immediate help to the stranded passengers in distress.

Assam flood situation grim as 12 die, over 55 lakh people affected

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam continued to remain grim with rising water levels of the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers inundating fresh areas in the Sate and impacting over 55 lakh people across 32 districts, officials said on Wednesday.

Eighty-nine people have lost their lives since mid-May due to deluge, including 12 who died on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma travelled to Nagaon by train to review the situation in flood-hit areas in the district, the officials said, adding that he was also scheduled to visit a few relief camps there.

Nagaon was severely affected by the current wave of floods with over 4,57,381 people coming under the impact of the deluge and 15,188 inmates have taken shelter in 147 relief camps.

"Undertook a train journey from Guwahati to flood-affected areas in Chaparmukh and Kampur. The journey enabled me to take a closer look at the areas ravaged by flood along the railway tracks, which will help us in taking informed decisions and intervene accordingly," Sarma said on Twitter.

As the floodwaters of Kopili have inundated large areas in Nagaon district, necessary steps will be taken to prevent the recurrence of such calamity in the future, he said.

Sarma visited Chaparmukh railway station to interact with flood-affected people taking shelter there and took stock of relief materials provided to them.

"Assuring them all possible help, I asked district administration to ensure adequate relief to the affected people & be on stand-by," he said.

The flood situation in three districts of the Barak Valley - Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi - remained critical with rising water levels of the Barak and Kushiara rivers inundating vast tracts of land in the valley, the officials said.

National Disaster Response Force personnel have been engaged in Cachar districts to evacuate people to safe places, while representatives of State Disaster Response Force and other agencies were deployed in the two remaining districts.

Altogether 2,16,851 people have been hit by the flood in 506 villages in Cachar district, 1,47,649 in Karimganj and nearly one lakh in Hailakandi.

The chief minister is scheduled to visit Silchar to review the prevailing flood situation. Transport Minister Parimal Suklabaidya has been camping at Silchar in Cachar and monitoring the flood situation in the Barak valley with the local MLAs, deputy commissioners and senior officials of the three districts.

Meanwhile, Ambassador of Japan to India Satoshi Suzuki expressed sympathy to the families who lost their "beloved ones and are affected by the recent floods and landslides occurring in Assam and Meghalaya".

"Japan always stands with the people in such difficult times," Satoshi said on Twitter.

The CM thanked him for expressing his concern for the state and people affected by the current wave of floods.

"We sincerely acknowledge the support and cooperation of Japan and its beautiful people towards the development of our state," Sarma said on the microblogging site.

Oil India Ltd has contributed Rs 5 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Sarma thanked Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli and the company's chairman and managing director Sushil Kumar Mishra for the contribution and said this will "significantly aid our ongoing flood-relief work".

Altogether 55, 42,053 people have been affected by the ongoing floods in 32 of the 36 districts of the state.

Seven more people died due to the floods during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 89 and one was reported missing from Kamrup, according to a bulletin of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority.

Among the worst-affected districts are Barpeta with 12,51,359 people reeling under the floodwaters, Dhubri with 5,94,708 and Darrang with 5,47,421, according to the bulletin.

FROM PAGE 1

UDDHAV OFFERS TO QUIT AS MAHA CM & SENA CHIEF

I will oblige them and quit the post. After my quitting the post, if someone else (meaning Shinde) wants to take over as the CM can do so. But, I am opposed to the formation of another party".

Denying the allegation made by the Shinde camp that he had sacrificed the Hindutva cause by joining hands with the NCP and the Congress, Uddhav said that he was the first Chief Minister to speak about the Hindutva on the floor of the Maharashtra Assembly. "This is not time to talk about what I did not for the Hindutva cause. But, I was the first leader to speak on Hindutva on the floor of the Maharashtra Assembly," he said.

In a related development, the rebel Sena MLAs – at a parallel Shiv Sena Legislature Party meeting held at Le Meridien Hotel at Surat where they were camping till the time they left for Guwahati in the small hours of Wednesday – signed a resolution addressed to the Maharashtra Governor, Deputy Speaker, and Secretary of Legislative Assembly, re-affirming" that their leader Eknath Shinde "is and continues" to be leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party.

In the resolution signed by 34 rebel MLAs which was submitted to the Governor, Deputy Speaker and Secretary of the Assembly shortly before noon on Wednesday, the rebel Sena MLAs said that "there has been great dissatisfaction prevalent amongst the members of Shiv Sena and party cadre at large on account of corruption in the government. "Corruption by then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh (who is in Jail), and sitting Minority Minister Nawab Malik (who is also in jail for involvement with Underworld Don Dawood Ibrahim)," the letter stated.

"Apart from the above reasons, our party cadre faced tremendous harassment and distress on political as well as personal grounds from the Opposition Ideological Parties, who are now a part of the Government and were using their office and power to undermine the base and foundation of the our Shiv Sena cadre," the letter stated.

In their letter, the rebel Sena MLAs also stated that "there is enormous discontent amongst the party workers for forming the government with NCP and Indian National Congress who are ideologically opposed to the Shiv Sena"

"There has been a compromise on the principles of our party Shiv Sena. For Last two and half years, our party and its leadership have compromised party principles by aligning with the contrasting ideologies for the sake of achieving power in the State of Maharashtra," the letter read.

"The ideology of our party's leader Late Mr. Balasaheb Thackray was to give clean and honest Government to the People of Maharashtra and also without compromising on the principle of Hindutva, which was defeated at the first day itself by aligning with the opposing ideologies," the rebel Sena MLAs stated.

Alluding to the alliance reached with the BJP prior to the 2019 State Assembly polls, the letter said: "ShivSena and the BJP had forged a pre-poll alliance for the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly General Elections. They sought the blessings of the voters for this Sena-BJP alliance which the voters accepted and voted in favour of this alliance. After the results were out the Sena severed its ties with the BJP and formed an alliance with the opposing parties which they had fought against in the 2019 Assembly Elections. This Act of our party leaders had a tremendous negative impact upon the voters and the party cadre at large."

The letter claimed that the party leadership ignored the hues and cries against aligning with the NCP and the Congress and went ahead and formed a Maha Vikas Aghadi government. "For last 2 and half years, we, the Shiv Sena legislative party members, were facing tremendous pressure from their electorates/voters. We have also been subjected to a lot of criticism for being part of this corrupt Maharashtra government," the letter stated.

In one of the two resolutions passed at the rebel SSLP meeting, the 34 MLAs stated: "Eknath Shinde, who was appointed as the leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party on October 31, 2019, is and continues to be the leader of the Maharashtra Shiv Sena Legislature Party, of the 14th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (2019-2024).

In another resolution, the rebel Sena MLAs resolved that "Bharat Gogawale be elected and appointed as a chief whip of the 14th Maharashtra Shiv Sena Legislative Party (2019-2024). Appointment of Mr. Sunil Prabhu is cancelled with immediate effect".

Earlier in the morning, upon his arrival in Guwahati from Surat by a special charted aircraft along with the rebel Sena MLAs, Sena rebel faction leader Eknath Shinde claimed that he enjoyed the support of 40 Sena MLAs.

"Forty MLAs of Shiv Sena are present here. I don't want to say anything but only that we will take forward the Hindutva ideology of Balasaheb Thackeray," Shinde said. Shinde and other Sena rebel MLAs were received at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International airport by a BJP state minister and a MP who escorted them to a private hotel.

UDDHAV LEAVES CM HOUSE WITH BAG & BAGGAGE

Shiv Sena leaders like Neelam Gorhe and Chandrakant Khaire were present at "Varsha" when he was leaving the official residence. Party workers raised slogans and showered petals on the CM as he left his official house along with his family members at around 9.50 pm. During a 'Facebook Live' session in the evening, Thackeray had said he will be leaving 'Varsha' and residing at 'Matoshree'. Thackeray, who also heads the Shiv Sena, had moved to 'Varsha' after becoming the chief minister in November 2019. However, Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut asserted Thackeray will not resign following the rebellion by a section of party MLAs, and maintained the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will prove its majority in the Assembly if required. The NCP and the Congress are also part of the MVA.

2 MLAS RUN AWAY FROM SHINDE'S SURAT CAMP, 1 RECOUNTS HEROIC ESCAPE

Recounting his story of his escape from the Sena rebel camp, the second MLA Kailas Patil said that when he was being taken to Surat along with a group of Sena rebel MLAs purportedly for a party being hosted at Thane, he sensed that there was something wrong as the vehicle changed route and headed towards Gujarat from the Ghodbunder Road in Mira Road.

"Under the pretext of relieving myself, I managed to get down at Talasari near the Maharashtra-Gujarat border Police Check Post at that late hour, before entering the BJP-ruled Gujarat. I started walking briskly for around five kilometers towards Mumbai and then managed to hitch a bike ride towards Mumbai," Patil said.

"En route, I called up Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and briefed him about the impending rebellion and political crisis triggered by Shinde and others. I finally reached Uddhav Thackeray's 'Matoshri' at Bandra from where I was taken to a safe house. I am at the safe house ever since then," Patil recalled.

OVER 1,000 KILLED IN DEADLIEST AF QUAKE

sitting in a plastic chair outside the rubble of his home and still more were sprawled on gurneys.

Some images showed residents picking through clay bricks and other rubble from destroyed stone houses, some of whose roofs or walls had caved in.The death toll given by the Bakhtar News Agency was equal to that of a quake in 2002 in northern Afghanistan. Those are the deadliest since 1998, when a 6.1 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tremors in Afghanistan's remote northeast killed at least 4,500 people. In most places in the world, an earthquake of that magnitude wouldn't inflict such extensive devastation, said Robert Sanders, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.

But a quake's death toll more often comes down to geography, building quality and population density.

"Because of the mountainous area, there are rockslides and landslides that we won't know about until later reporting. Older buildings are likely to crumble and fail," he said.

"Due to how condensed the area is in that part of the world, we've seen in the past similar earthquakes deal significant damage."

The Taliban are still trying to reconstitute government ministries abandoned by staff loyal to its previous Western-backed government, and it was not clear how officials arrived at the casualty tolls reported by Bakhtar.

In Kabul, Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund convened an emergency meeting at the presidential palace to coordinate the relief effort, and Bilal Karimi, a deputy spokesman for the Taliban government, wrote on Twitter to urge aid agencies to send teams to the area.

The "response is on its way," the U.N. Resident coordinator in Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, wrote on Twitter. That may prove difficult given the situation Afghanistan finds itself in today.

After the Taliban swept across the country in 2021, the U.S. Military and its allies fell back to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport and later withdrew completely.

Many international humanitarian organisations followed suit because of concerns about security and the Taliban's poor human rights record.

In the time since, the Taliban has worked with Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates on restarting airport operations in Kabul and across the country - but nearly all international carriers still avoid the country, and reluctance on the part of aid organisations to put any money in the Taliban's coffers could make it difficult to fly in supplies and equipment.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society, however, sent some 4,000 blankets, 800 tents and 800 kitchen kits to the affected area, according to Bakhtar's director-general, Abdul Wahid Rayan.

The Italian medical aid group Emergency, which still operates in Afghanistan, said it sent seven ambulances and staff to the areas closest to the quake zone.

"The fear is that the victims will increase further, also because many people could be trapped under collapsed buildings," said Stefano Sozza, country director for Emergency in Afghanistan.

"This latest tragedy cannot but worsen further the condition of fragility and economic and social difficulties which Afghanistan has experienced for months." Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said his nation would provide help. At the Vatican, Pope Francis offered prayers for all those killed and injured and for the "suffering of the dear Afghan population."

Some remote areas of Pakistan saw reports of damage to homes near the Afghan border, but it wasn't immediately clear if that was due to rain or the earthquake, said Taimoor Khan, a disaster management spokesperson in the area.

The European seismological agency, EMSC, said the earthquake's tremors were felt over 500 kilometers by 119 million people across Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Mountainous Afghanistan and the larger region of South Asia along the Hindu Kush mountains has long been vulnerable to devastating earthquakes.

DHFL PROMOTERS HELD IN BIGGEST-EVER BANK FRAUD

Besides DHFL and the Wadhawans, one private person Sudhakar Shetty and shell companies Amaryllis Realtors, Gulmarg Realtors, Skylark Buildcon Pvt Ltd, Darshan Developers Pvt Ltd, Sigtia Construction Pvt Ltd, Creatoz Builders Pvt Ltd, Township Developers Pvt Ltd, Shishir Reality Pvt Ltd, and Sunblink Real Estate Pvt Ltd, all based in Mumbai have also been named as accused in the FIR.

JD(U), BJD BACK MURMU FOR PREZ RACE

The Bihar CM had supported outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind's election in 2017 despite then not being in the NDA, after his pitch for a second term for Pranab Mukherjee was ignored by the Congress-led UPA. Similarly, Nitish had backed Pranab Mukherjee in 2012 even though the JD(U) was part of the NDA.

Outside the NDA fold, Odisha's ruling BJD has extended support to Droupadi Murmu. The BJD's support seals Murmu's candidacy for the top post. Taking to Twitter, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik congratulated Murmu, saying, "I was delighted when Hon'ble PM @narendramodi ji discussed this with me. It is indeed a proud moment for people of #Odisha," Patnaik tweeted.

Murmu (64), a former Jharkhand Governor, will be the first person from Odisha and the first tribal to occupy the top constitutional post if she is elected.

YSR Congress leader and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Jagan Mohan Reddy is also expected to support Murmu.

Modi, several Union Ministers and Chief Ministers, and key leaders of some other supporting parties like the BJD will join her during the nomination filing as a show of support, party leaders said. The Prime Minister is expected to be the first proposer. A presidential candidate requires a set of 50 proposers and 50 seconders for his or her nomination. At least four sets of nominations may be filed in Murmu's support, sources said. BJP president J P Nadda also held a meeting with party leaders involved in the polling process. They will be travelling across the country to spearhead Murmu's campaign as she will be reaching out to the members of the presidential electoral college, which is made up of MPs and MLAs, for their support. Meanwhile, the Centre has accorded a Z+ security cover of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) commandos to the NDA's presidential candidate. The armed squad took over the security of Murmu. Officials here said soon after this announcement, the Union Home Ministry directed the CRPF to deploy its VIP security protection team to take charge of Murmu's security.

PM TO VISIT GERMANY FOR G-7 MEET ON JUNE 26-27

Modi will also hold bilateral meetings with leaders of some of the participating countries on the sidelines of the summit.

"During the summit, the Prime Minister is expected to speak in two sessions that include environment, energy, climate, food security, health, gender equality, and democracy," the MEA said.

To strengthen international collaboration on these important issues, other democracies such as Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa have also been invited, it said.

The MEA said the invitation to Modi to the G-7 summit is in keeping with the tradition of strong and close partnership and high-level political contacts between India and Germany. As chair of G-7, Germany invited Modi and leaders of some other countries to the summit as guests.

"After attending the G7 Summit, the Prime Minister will be travelling to the United Arab Emirates on June 28 to pay his condolences on the passing away of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the former UAE President and Abu Dhabi ruler," the MEA said. The Prime Minister will also take the opportunity to congratulate Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on his election as the new President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the Gulf nation, passed away on May 13 after battling illness for the last several years.

In a gesture of goodwill, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu visited the UAE to offer India's condolences over the de

6 COPS STABBED INSIDE DELHI POLICE STATION

A senior police official said that five policemen and one home guard have been injured in a stabbing incident at the third floor, Cyber Police Station, Shahdara.

"One police constable has been shifted to All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Trauma Center and other police personnel have been sent to GTB Hospital. Further investigation in the matter is underway," said the senior police official.

Meanwhile, the man later claimed that he was a complainant, but no complaint copy was found with him. Police said he also banged his head against the wall and sustained minor injuries.

Himanta's wife files ₹100 crore defamation suit against Sisodia

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, the wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has filed a ₹100 crore defamation suit against Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who had alleged malpractice in giving contracts for PPE at above market rates.

Bhuyan Sarma filed the suit at the court of Civil Judge No 1 of Kamrup Metropolitan district on Tuesday and it is likely to come up for hearing on Wednesday, her counsel Padmadhar Nayak said.

Another advocate Kishor Kumar Dutta told PTI that Sisodia while addressing a press meet on June 4 in New Delhi had made "some allegations that damaged the reputation and position" of Riniki Bhuyan Sarma.

"Sisodia unnecessarily dragged the name of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also into the controversy. That is why we have claimed that damage," he added.

Sisodia, referring to media reports had told newsmen that while the Assam government procured personal protective equipment kits for Rs 600 each from other companies, Sarma gave urgent supply orders to the firms of his wife and son's business partners for Rs 990 apiece.

The opposition Congress, CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML)-Liberation, RCPI, TMC, Raijor Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad and Anchalik Gana Morcha have demanded a CBI probe into the alleged corruption.

On June 1 digital media organisations - New Delhi-based 'The Wire' and Guwahati-based 'The Crosscurrent' had in a joint investigative report claimed that the Assam government had placed four COVID-19 related emergency medical supply orders, most likely without following proper process.

Citing a series of Right to Information replies, the medial portals claimed that all the four orders, placed between March 18 and March 23 of 2020, were bagged by three firms owned by Riniki Bhuyan Sarma and the family's business associate Ghanshyam Dhanuka.

In a tweet she had refuted any wrongdoing in the supply of PPE kits to National Health Mission and said she did not take a "single penny" for them.

The present Assam government and Sarma have separately denied all charges that the chief minister's family was involved in the alleged malpractices and termed the allegations by the two digital media as "false, imaginary, malicious and of vested interests".

Sarma was the health and family welfare minister in 2020 during the first BJP-led state government.

Ukraine journalist, soldier 'coldly executed': Press group

AP ■ KYIV

A Ukrainian photojournalist and a soldier who was accompanying him when they were killed in the first weeks of Russia's invasion appear to have been "coldly executed" as they were searching Russian-occupied woodlands for the photographer's missing image-taking drone, Reporters Without Borders said Wednesday, citing its findings from an investigation into their deaths.

The press freedom group said it went back to the spot where the bodies of Maks Levin and serviceman Oleksiy Chernyshov were found April 1 in woods north of the capital, Kyiv.

The group said it counted 14 bullet holes in the burned hulk of their car still at the scene.

The group said disused Russian positions, one of them still booby-trapped, were found close by. Also found were the remains of food rations, cigarette packets and other litter seemingly left by Russian soldiers.

Some of Levin and Chernyshov's belongings, including the soldier's ID papers and parts of his bulletproof vest and the photographer's helmet, were also recovered, it said.

A Ukrainian team with metal detectors also uncovered a bullet buried in the soil where Levin's body had lain, it said.

The group said that finding suggests "he was probably killed with one, perhaps two bullets fired at close range when he was already on the ground." A jerrycan for gasoline was also found close to where Chernyshov's burned body had been recovered, it added.

Reporters Without Borders said its findings "show that the two men were doubtless coldly executed."

Levin and Chernyshov were last heard from on March 13. A GPS tracker in their vehicle gave their last position, in woods north of Kyiv, the group said.

It said Levin had lost his drone in the area on March 10 and hadn't been able to recover it because he'd come under Russian fire. Drones have become a common tool for photojournalists to get aerial photos and video. Reporters Without Borders said Levin had on occasion shared information gleaned from his drone, including about Russian positions, with Ukrainian forces.

"But the use of his drone was first and foremost a journalistic endeavour, confirmed by his entourage and shown by the images sold to the media since the start of the Russian invasion," it said.

The group speculated that Levin may have been hunting for his drone when he and Chernyshov were killed.

The group said it turned over evidence it collected and dozens of photos to Ukrainian investigators.

The group said it was unable to confirm whether the men's bodies have been autopsied - a step it called essential for the investigation into their deaths. It also appealed for Ukrainian defense and intelligence agencies to provide investigators with whatever information they have about Russian units that had occupied the area during Moscow's failed assault on Kyiv in the initial stages of the four-month war.

Meanwhile, the reflections of a 12-year-old refugee from the Russian invasion of Ukraine will be published this fall. Yeva Skalietska's book is called "You Don't Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine." Union Square & Co. Will release her account Oct. 25.

"Everyone knows what the word war' means, but practically no one knows what this word really represents," Skalietska said in a statement released Wednesday. "I want the world to know what we have experienced."

Skalietska's book begins with her 12th birthday, shortly before the Russians attacked on Feb. 24. She had been living in Kharkiv with her grandmother when the bombing began. (Yeva's parents separated when she was a baby, and her grandmother has raised her).

Drone strike hits Russian refinery near Ukraine

AP ■ MOSCOW

A drone strike caused a fire at a refinery in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine on Wednesday, but no one was hurt and the blaze was contained quickly, officials said.

The fire engulfed industrial equipment at the Novoshakhtinsk oil processing plant in the Rostov-on-Don region. The authorities said that dozens of firefighters extinguished the flames in a half-hour and no one was hurt.

The refinery said in a statement that the fire was caused by a strike carried out by two drones, describing it as a "terrorist" act.

It didn't give further details, but the state news agency Tass said that two Ukrainian drones flew over the plant and one of them slammed into a heat exchanger, triggering the fire.

Ukrainian officials haven't claimed responsibility for the drone strike.

A video posted on a messaging app channel showed a drone flying by and hitting what was purported to be the refinery, a giant plume of smoke rising into the sky.

The authenticity of the video couldn't be independently verified.

The Rostov regional governor, Vasily Golubev, said that fragments of two drones were found on the territory of the plant. The refinery said it temporarily suspended the operations to assess the damage.

Wednesday's attack on the refinery follows a series of explosions and fires in western Russia amid Moscow's fighting in Ukraine in an operation that began nearly four months ago.

In April, two Ukrainian helicopter gunships struck an oil depot in Belgorod, according to Russian officials, causing a massive fire. Several other explosions and fires hit refineries, oil depots, and an ammunition storage facility.

Ukraine hasn't officially taken responsibility for the incidents, but some Ukrainian media have lauded them as a result of Ukrainian strikes.

US senators reach bipartisan compromise on gun violence bill

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Senate bargainers reached agreement Tuesday on a bipartisan gun violence bill, potentially teeing up final passage by week's end on an incremental but landmark package that would stand as Congress' response to mass shootings in Texas and New York that shook the nation.

Lawmakers released the 80-page bill nine days after agreeing to a framework for the plan and 29 years after Congress last enacted major firearms curbs. It cleared an initial procedural hurdle by 64-34, with 14 Republicans joining all 48 Democrats and two allied independents in voting yes. That strongly supported a prediction by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., of approval later this week. Passage by the Democratic-led House could follow quickly.

Though Republicans blocked tougher restrictions sought by Democrats, the accord marks an election-year breakthrough on an issue that pits the GOP's staunch gun-owning and rural voters against Democrats' urban-centered backers of firearms curbs. That makes it one of the most incendiary culture war battlefields in politics and a sensitive vote for some lawmakers, particularly Republicans who might alienate Second Amendment stalwarts.

The legislation would toughen background checks for the youngest firearms buyers, require more sellers to conduct background checks and beef up penalties on gun traffickers. It also would disburse money to states and communities to improve school safety and mental health initiatives.

Aides estimated the measure would cost around $15 billion, which Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut, the lead Democratic bargainer, said would be fully paid for.

Resolving one final hurdle that delayed the accord, the bill would prohibit romantic partners convicted of domestic violence and not married to their victims from getting firearms. Convicted abusers who are married to, live with or had children with their victims are already barred from having guns.

The compromise prohibits guns for a person who has "a current or recent former dating relationship with the victim." That is defined in part as one between people "who have or have recently had a continuing serious relationship of a romantic or intimate nature." An offender's ability to own a gun could be restored after five years if they've not committed another serious crime.

On another late dispute, the bill would provide $750 million to the 19 states and the District of Columbia that have "red flag" laws making it easier to temporarily take firearms from people adjudged dangerous, and to other states with violence prevention programs. States with "red flag" laws that receive the funds would have to have legal processes for the gun owner to fight the firearm's removal.

Momentum in Congress for gun legislation has a history of waning quickly after mass shootings. Lawmakers are scheduled to begin a two-week July 4th recess by this weekend.

The legislation lacks far more potent proposals that President Joe Biden supports and Democrats have pushed unsuccessfully for years, derailed by GOP opposition. These include banning assault-type weapons or raising the minimum age for buying them, prohibiting high-capacity magazines and requiring background checks for virtually all gun sales.

UK plans to rewrite human rights law; critics cry foul

AP ■ LONDON

The British government on Wednesday unveiled plans for a Bill of Rights it says will strengthen free speech and the power of Parliament - but that critics argue will rip up human rights protections for ordinary people.

The government published the bill days after courts in the UK and Europe, on human rights grounds, stopped Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative administration deporting people seeking asylum in Britain to Rwanda.If approved by Parliament - where it faces a battle - the legislation will raise the bar for bringing human rights legal claims. It will reduce the ability of foreign nationals convicted of a crime in Britain to challenge deportation on the basis of their human rights.

The government says the goal is to reduce "trivial" and "frivolous" claims.

The law will also give British courts the power to ignore rulings by the European Court of Human Rights, currently the ultimate arbiter of rights law for dozens of countries, including the U.K. It was an ECHR judge who ruled last week that an Iraqi man should not be sent to Rwanda under the government's controversial deportation plan, a judgment that led to the flight being grounded.

Justice Secretary Dominic Raab said the bill, which would replace the U.K.'s Human Rights Act, would "curb abuses of the system and inject a bit more common sense" into human rights law.

Raab said Britain would retain its "fundamental commitment" to the European Convention on Human Rights, but its move could set it on a collision course with the Council of Europe, which oversees the Strasbourg-based rights court.

The Govt depicted the Bill of Rights as an assertion of British sovereignty in the wake of the country's departure from the EU. However, the European Court of Human Rights is unconnected to the EU; it is an international tribunal supported by 46 countries.

Australian authorities declare final results after election

AP ■ CANBERRA

Authorities declared the final seats on Wednesday in a greener, more fragmented Australian Parliament following May 21 elections.

The election brought Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party to power for the first time in nine years.

The Australian Electoral Commission on Wednesday declared the Victoria state seat of Cooper was the 77th won by Labor in the 151-seat House of Representatives where parties need to control a majority to form government.

The opposition conservative Liberal Party was later declared the winner of the Western Australia state seat of O'Connor.

Labor's narrow majority means that the government will not have to negotiate with the opposition or unaligned lawmakers to get legislation through the lower chamber.

But that is not the case in the Senate, where Labor holds only 26 of the 76 seats.

If Labor got all 12 senators from the minor Greens party to support legislation, the government would only need to persuade one of the six remaining independent or unaligned legislators to reach a majority. The environmentally focused Greens held only nine seats in the previous Senate.

An early test will be when the government attempts to enshrine in legislation a new greenhouse gas reduction target on July 26 when the Parliament sits for the first time since the election.

Labor was elected on a pledge to reduce Australia's emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. The government last week formally adopted the target, but enshrining it in law would make the task of changing the target more difficult for a future administration to achieve.

The conservative coalition went to the election last month with a less ambitious target of a reduction of 26% to 28% by the end of the decade. Opposition leader Peter Dutton has ruled out the 32 opposition senators supporting Labor's 43% target.

Greens leader Adam Bandt has said he will push the government to ban new coal mines and gas projects when that target legislation is negotiated. The Greens want Australian emissions reduced by 75% by 2030.

Key CPC Cong expected to confer a rare 3rd term for Prez Xi, to be held in 2nd half of 2022

PTI ■ BEIJING

President Xi Jinping on Wednesday announced that the 20th Congress of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) will be held in the 2nd half of this year --- a high-profile party event during which he is widely expected to be conferred an unprecedented third term.

The 20th National Congress of the CPC will be held in the second half of this year to draw China's development blueprint in the next stage, Xi said, while addressing the BRICS Business Forum via video link, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Xi who turned 69 on June 15, is

widely expected to continue in power for the rare third term, perhaps for life, defying the 68-year retirement age rule followed by his predecessors.

The official retirement age for Chinese leaders is 68 or two five-year tenures at the helm.

His number two leader, Premier Li Keqiang, who will turn 67 on July 1, has already announced retirement after completing his 10-year tenure this year.

Described as the "core" leader of the party like the party founded by Mao Zedong, Xi, heading the CPC, the powerful military and the Presidency is widely expected to get endorsed by the key once-in-a-five-year-Congress.

The CPC Party Congress was due to be held in October, but based on Xi's announcement on Wednesday, it is expected to take place any time soon.

Xi's third term was regarded as a foregone conclusion after China's national legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC) removed the two-term limit for President through a key constitutional amendment in 2018.

Israel lawmakers vote for dissolving Parliament

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli lawmakers voted in favour of dissolving parliament in a preliminary vote on Wednesday, setting the wheels in motion to send the country to its fifth national election in just over three years.

The motion was the first step in a series of votes before the formal disbanding of the government.

It came two days after Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced he was disbanding his unravelling governing coalition of eight ideologically diverse parties just over a year after he took office.

The historic coalition, which unseated longtime leader Benjamin Netanyahu, was wracked by infighting and defections in recent months.

It included dovish parties committed to a two-state solution with the Palestinians, hawkish ultranationalists who oppose a Palestinian state, and a small Islamist faction, the first Arab party to join a government.

A series of proposals for dissolving parliament were passed by a vast majority of the 120 members of Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

But a final vote on at least one of the motions is still required in order to dissolve parliament, and that is expected to be held next week.

Once it passes, Bennett will step down as prime minister and hand over the reins to his ally, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. New elections are expected to be held in October.

Bennett and Lapid formed their coalition of parties united solely in their opposition to Netanyahu last year after four inconclusive elections in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Parliament was deadlocked between those who supported a Netanyahu-led government and those who refused to join forces with him while he was under indictment for corruption.

Netanyahu is on trial and faces charges of fraud, breach of trust, and accepting bribes in three high profile cases.

He has denied any wrongdoing and has repeatedly dismissed the accusations as part of a witch-hunt to oust him from office.

Early opinion polls published Tuesday project that Netanyahu's Likud party will remain the largest in parliament, but a path toward forming a majority coalition remains unclear.

Following the vote, Bennett wrote on Twitter that he would vote against proposed legislation that would disqualify a lawmaker accused of a crime from becoming prime minister.

Several senior members of his coalition said this week that they would advance such a bill, which would effectively bar Netanyahu from retaking office.

Nawaz Sharif can be arrested if he doesn't secure transit bail: Pak Min

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Deposed Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif can be arrested if the PML-N supremo does not secure transit bail while returning to the country from the UK, the country's law minister has said.

Sharif - against whom several corruption cases were launched by the government of former prime minister Imran Khan - had left for London in November 2019 after the Lahore High Court granted him four-week permission allowing him to go abroad for his treatment.

Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said Tuesday that if former prime minister Nawaz Sharif does not secure transit bail while coming back to Pakistan, he can be arrested, Geo News reported.

The 72-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is the elder brother of the current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

In 2020, Islamabad High Court's Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the PML-N supremo after he failed to return to Pakistan following the expiry of his bail.

Time and again, there have been rumours of the former prime minister's return to Pakistan, but the speculation gained momentum after the formation of the coalition government in April - as the PML-N is the major player in the coalition.

The three-time prime minister had given an undertaking to the Lahore High Court to return to Pakistan, citing his record to face the process of law and justice within four weeks or as soon as he is declared healthy and fit to travel by doctors.

He was also given bail in the Al-Azizia Mills corruption case in which he was serving seven-year imprisonment in Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

In his press conference on Tuesday, Tarar - a senior PML-N member said that if Nawaz Sharif receives transit bail, then he cannot be arrested upon arrival in Pakistan, the report added.

Saudi crown prince visits Turkey

AP ■ ANKARA

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is scheduled to arrive in Ankara on Wednesday, making his first visit to Turkey following the slaying of Saudi columnist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul.

As Saudi Arabia and Turkey press ahead with efforts to repair ties that were strained by Khashoggi's killing, the crown prince will meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the last leg of a Middle East tour that also took him to Egypt and Jordan. Erdogan said talks with Prince Mohammed, who is commonly referred to by his initials MBS, would focus on advancing Turkish-Saudi relations to a "much higher degree."

Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia in April, paying his first visit to the kingdom since 2017, a year before the gruesome Khashoggi killing.

Europe told to prepare immediately for Russia to turn off all gas exports

IANS ■ LONDON

Europe needs to prepare "immediately" for Russia to turn off all gas exports to the region this winter, according to the head of the International Energy Agency, who has called on governments to work on reducing demand and keeping nuclear power plants open.

Fatih Birol said that the reductions in supplies in recent weeks the Kremlin has attributed to maintenance work could, in fact, be the beginning of wider cuts designed to prevent the filling of storage facilities in preparation for winter, as Russia seeks to gain leverage over the region, The Guardian reported.

"Europe should be ready in case Russian gas is completely cut off," he said in an interview with the Financial Times. "The nearer we are coming to winter, the more we understand Russia's intentions." "I believe the cuts are geared towards avoiding Europe filling storage, and increasing Russia's leverage in the winter months."

EU countries are racing to refill storage sites, with Germany hoping to reach 90 per cent of capacity by November. Its stores are only half full, The Guardian reported.

Member states have also been working to reduce their reliance on Russian fossil fuels, by sourcing gas from other countries, including the US, and by speeding up the switch to renewable energy, although officials have conceded that the race to phase out Russian oil and gas would mean burning more coal and keeping nuclear plants going.

Birol said emergency measures taken by European governments to reduce energy demand had probably not gone far enough, and urged countries to work on preserving energy supplies. "I believe there will be more and deeper demand measures as winter approaches," Birol said. He added that gas supplies may need to be rationed, if Russia were to further reduce gas exports. Moscow has reduced or even cut off gas deliveries to several EU countries in recent weeks, in response to their decision to impose sanctions on the Kremlin over its invasion of Ukraine. Russian gas supplies to Europe received through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline - which runs under the Baltic Sea to Germany - have been falling, The Guardian reported.

Chinese President Xi hits out at US, EU for imposing sanctions against Russia

Beijing (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday hit out at the US and EU for imposing sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, saying the act of wilfully imposing curbs will harm people around the world.

History has shown that hegemony, group politics and bloc confrontations bring neither peace nor stability, but rather war and conflict, President Xi said in a keynote speech delivered in a virtual format at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum. The Ukraine crisis has again sounded the alarm for humanity: Countries will surely end up in security hardships if they place blind faith in their positions of strength, expand military alliances, and seek their own safety at the expense of others, Xi was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency. In his speech at the Business Forum, Xi hit out at the US and EU for imposing sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, saying the act of wilfully imposing sanctions will bring disasters to people around the world.

Describing sanctions as boomerangs and double-edged swords, Xi said those who politicise, leverage and weaponise global economy and wilfully impose sanctions by taking advantage of dominance in international financial and monetary systems will eventually harm others and themselves and bring disasters to people around the world.

SERENA MAKES WINNING RETURN

AP ■ EASTBOURNE

Serena Williams made a winning comeback after a year on the sidelines as the American legend teamed with Ons Jabeur to beat Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova 2-6, 6-3, 13-11 in the Eastbourne International doubles on Tuesday.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, was back in action for the first time since she made a tearful exit from Wimbledon last year.

The 40-year-old suffered a leg injury during her Wimbledon first round match against Aliaksandra Sasnovich and had not been seen on court since.

Before Williams made the surprise announcement of her return last week, rumours of retirement had swirled around her for several months.

But, with Wimbledon starting on June 27, Williams finally resumed her career, playing with Jabeur at the Wimbledon warm-up event by the Sussex seaside.

Williams and Tunisia's Jabeur, who is third in the WTA singles rankings, saw off Spain's Sorribes Tormo and Bouzkova of the Czech Republic in the last-16 tie.

Although Williams was far from her vintage best, she will be encouraged by her first outing for 12 months.

She and Jabeur will face Japan's Shuko Aoyama and Taiwan's Chan Hao-ching in the quarter-finals.

"It was so fun to play with Ons. We had a lot of fun and our opponents played amazing. We were happy to stay in there," Williams said.

"I called Ons, she has been playing so well and I knew I needed to play some matches and she has always been so nice to me on tour.

"Yeah, I caught some fire behind me, it was good."

Serena has been given a wildcard to play in the singles at Wimbledon as she restarts her history bid.

Williams is one Grand Slam crown away from equalling Australian Margaret Court's record of 24 singles titles at the majors.

The last of Williams' 23 Grand Slam singles titles came at the Australian Open in 2017.

Since then she has lost four Grand Slam finals, including at Wimbledon in 2018 and 2019.

Williams won the seventh and most recent of her seven Wimbledon singles titles in 2016.

Serena, who became a mother in 2017, has plummeted to 1,204th in the WTA rankings due to her period out of action.

TENACIOUS SPIRIT

Wimbledon is widely considered Williams' best chance of winning another Grand Slam and this was her first step towards that goal.

After so long away, Serena soaked up the applause during a raucous reception from the crowd when she walked onto court in the early evening sunshine.

Williams' husband Alexis Ohanian was watching from the stands as his wife made an understandably rusty start.

With Williams' groundstrokes initially lacking their usual precision, the first set quickly slipped away.

Serena was appearing in doubles competition on grass for the first time since 2016, when she won Wimbledon with her sister Venus.

The 14-time Grand Slam doubles champion was well short of peak form and Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo twice led by a break at the start of the second set.

But Williams showed the tenacious spirit that has defined her career, striking the ball cleaner and crisper as she and Jabeur hit back to level the match at one-set all.

In the match-deciding tie-break, Serena squandered a match point on her serve with a wayward forehand at 9-8 and Jabeur wasted another at 10-9.

But the pair saved a match point from Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo at 10-11, reeling off the last three points to clinch a dramatic victory in the dusk.

In the Eastbourne women's singles, last year's Wimbledon runner-up Karolina Pliskova lost 6-1, 4-6, 4-6 against Britain's Katie Boulter.

Spanish top seed Paula Badosa was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by British wildcard Jodie Burrage.

In the men's singles, Ryan Peniston also enjoyed an impressive victory on home turf, beating French Open quarter-finalist Holger Rune 4-6, 7-6, (7/5), 6-1.

Mane joins Bayern

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich confirmed the signing of Sadio Mane from Liverpool on Wednesday, as the Senegal forward signed a three-year deal with the Bundesliga champions.

Bayern have reportedly paid a fee which could rise to 41 million euros ($43 million) for Mane.

The 30-year-old won the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Club World Cup titles during six years on Merseyside.

"My agent told me that there were also enquiries from other clubs, but for me, the feeling was right from the start when Bayern presented their plan with me," Mane told German daily Bild.

"It was the right club at the right time.

"It is one of the biggest clubs in the world and the team are always fighting for all the titles."

Mane added he wants to "do everything to make sure I win titles with my teammates".

Bayern won a 10th straight Bundesliga title last season.

Mane, voted African footballer of the year in 2019, is a versatile attacker who has spent the majority of his career on the wing but can also play through the middle.

His arrival will ease the pain for Bayern if wantaway striker Robert Lewandowski leaves the club, while Serge Gnabry is also stalling over a contract extension.

"Sadio Mane is a global star, who underlines the appeal of Bayern and will increase the attractiveness of the Bundesliga as a whole," said Bayern president Herbert Hainer.

"Fans come to the stadiums to see unique players like this."

The signing of Mane takes some pressure off Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic after Lewandowski made it clear he would not extend his contract which expires next year.

Chess Olympiad Torch Relay to be a grand event in Lucknow: Sanjay

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Chess Olympiad Torch Relay event in Lucknow is going to be as grand and ostentatious as it was at its launch in Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi. "We are leaving no stone unturned to make the Torch Relay a grand success in Uttar Pradesh especially in Lucknow, where Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be handed over the torch by former world champion, Grand Master Vishwanathan Anand," said All India Chess Federation president Sanjay Kapoor.

The Torch Relay will enter Uttar Pradesh on June 25 through Meerut and will reach Lucknow on June 26 after having pit stops at Noida, Agra and Kanpur. The Torch will then move towards Prayagraj and after Varanasi, Ayodhya and Gorakhpur it will leave for Rajasthan. Ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 44th Chess Olympiad Torch Relay it has created a buzz in the state. The Olympiad is scheduled for July 28 in Mahabalipuram.

"The Torch Relay will reach Lucknow from Kanpur and the main event will be held in front of Vidhan Bhawan. I, along with Additional Principal Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi and Additional Principal Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal took stock of the arrangements made by the local administration," said Kapoor, who was felicitated by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak for making the state proud.

Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak felicitating AICF president Sanjay Kapoor

Meanwhile, Director (Sports) RP Singh said, "This is going to be the biggest event of its kind after Olympic Torch Relay, which came to Lucknow a few years back. We are determined to make it a gala show as we want chess to become more popular in the state."

Boehly named new Chelsea chairman, Granovskaia departs

AP ■ LONDON

Todd Boehly on Wednesday was named as Chelsea's new chairman to replace Bruce Buck and will act as interim sporting director after the club confirmed the departure of Marina Granovskaia.

Granovskaia is stepping down from her role as director as part of a shake-up at Stamford Bridge, leaving co-controlling owner Boehly to spearhead Chelsea's negotiations in the transfer window.

All the top Boehly-Clearlake Capital consortium figureheads have been added to Chelsea's new board following the purchase of the club from Roman Abramovich.

"As custodians of Chelsea FC, we now begin executing our long-term vision and plan for the club, creating an outstanding experience for its passionate, loyal fans, and continuing to challenge for top honours in line with Chelsea FC's dedicated history," said Boehly.

"Working together, side by side, we are firmly committed to winning, both on and off the pitch. For us, that effort has begun." Clearlake chiefs and Chelsea co-controlling owners Behdad Eghbali and Jose Feliciano have also been added to the Blues' new board.

PSG president denies Zidane talks

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi insisted he "never spoke" with Zinedine Zidane about becoming coach in an interview published by French daily Le Parisien on Tuesday, saying the club had "chosen another option".

"We never spoke with him, neither directly, nor indirectly," said Al-Khelaifi, without ruling out that others in Qatar had approached the former France star.

"When I say 'we', it's PSG. Me, I am the president of PSG and I never spoke with him."

The Qatari official said the club was keen to head in a different direction.

"We chose a coach who will be the best for what we want to put in place," said Al-Khelaifi as he confirmed talks with Nice boss Christophe Galtier.

"I hope we'll quickly find an agreement but I respect Nice and the president (Jean-Pierre) Rivere, everyone stands up for their own interests."

TEXTOR COMPLETES LYON TAKEOVER

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas said on Tuesday a deal had been struck for US businessman John Textor to complete a takeover of the seven-time French champions.

Eagle Football Holdings, a sports investment vehicle controlled by Crystal Palace shareholder Textor, is set to acquire a majority stake in the Ligue 1 club.

Delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics cost double original estimate

AP ■ TOKYO

The final price tag for last year's Tokyo Olympics was more than double the city's original 2013 estimate after a one-year coronavirus postponement added to the already hefty bill.

The organising committee said Tuesday the Games had cost 1.42 trillion yen, the equivalent of $13 billion at the time. At today's rates, with the yen at a 24-year low against the dollar, the figure would be $10.4 billion.

Tokyo 2020 was held a year later than planned because of the pandemic — the first Olympics postponed in peacetime — and spectators were banned from nearly all events, which were held under strict Covid-19 countermeasures.

The Games cost twice the 734 billion yen that the Tokyo Games organisers had predicted in their bid to the International Olympic Committee in 2013, but less than the final pre-Games budget unveiled in December 2020.

Despite losing out on ticket sales, organisers saved some cash by simplifying events and avoiding the cost of hosting millions of fans.

The organising committee, which disbands at the end of June, said the event's final cost was 200 billion yen less than projected in its pre-Games budget in 2020 and 29 billion yen less than the final slimmed-down costs prediction in December 2021.

"It's up to everyone involved in this event to pass on the legacy of the Tokyo Olympics to the next generation," said Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto.

Tokyo experienced a Covid-19 surge last year as the Olympics approached, fuelling fears the event could worsen outbreaks in Japan and possibly the world.

The northern Japanese city of Sapporo is bidding to host the Winter Olympics in 2030.

A March survey of Sapporo and the surrounding region showed that a majority of the public are in favour of holding the event.

Officials have ruled out holding a public referendum on the 2030 bid.

DE RIVIERE – PAUL MORPHY

PRAVIN THIPSAY

In my column 'Champion born this month', today I have the pleasure of presenting a beautiful game by a champion who can be called William Shakespeare of Chess. Let us see what some 'all time greats' have said about him. — "He was the most accurate Chess Player" and "He was probably the greatest genius in Chess" — Bobby Fischer. Or "He mostly played with zero inaccuracy" and "He is the only player who never made a blunder" — Garry Kasparov. Or "Finest Chess player ever existed" — Adolf Anderssen.

Though nothing much has been said about Morphy by the Soviets, most of the Soviet Chess Trainers give a lot of emphasis on teaching his way of play. In the famous book 'Miniatures by World Champions', Anatoly Karpov has dedicated more than one third of the book to the games of this all time great player.

Yes, I am talking of the undisputed Champion, Paul Morphy!

Paul Charles Morphy (22nd June 1837 — 10th July 1884) was born at New Orleans in a wealthy distinguished family. According to his uncle Ernest Morphy (a strong and imaginative player himself), no one formally taught Chess to Paul. However, at the age of 13, Paul became famous as the best player in United States. In 1850s Paul Morphy visited Europe and defeated the strongest players in the world with such an ease that he was acknowledged as the Best Chess Player in the World. (The official World Champion titles, however, started much later, in 1886). Morphy's victory over Count Carl Isouard and Duke of Brunswick of France is probably the most famous Chess game. His stunning Rook and Queen sacrifice against the then British Champion Henry Bird finds place in every book on Chess combinations.

Morphy didn't talk or write much about Chess but his simple quote "Help your pieces so they can help you" is the best advice a Chess Trainers could give to their pupils. Paul Morphy demonstrated that the safety of King and activity of pieces invariably decided outcome of a Chess game. Even today, the times of Paul Morphy are known as "The Golden Era of Chess".

Today we will see a comparatively unknown but extremely creative game by Morphy. I was lucky to see it as a child, that too, annotated by master of King side attack, Grandmaster Leonid Shamkovic. I was indeed greatly impressed by the originality of Morphy's play then but I must confess that today I stand even more impressed by the game, the planning as well as the execution.

1. e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5

This double attack on Black's f-pawn is a standard procedure of attacking 'f7'. 4...d5 5.exd5 Na5!

The classical system of counter-attack for Black. Instead of recapturing the pawn at d5, Black goes after the enemy bishop.

6.d3?!

This move allows Black to take the initiative but it was a popular choice at that time.

Better is 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 e4 10.Ne5 Bd6 though Black's lead in development compensates for the sacrificed Pawn.

6...h6

Black drives back the White knight. 8.Nd4 ...Bc5! 9.Nb3? allows Bg4! with a powerful initiative to Black.

8.Nfd2 is bad due to 8...Bg4!

8...Nxc4 9.dxc4 Bc5! 10.h3! 10...0-0 11.Nh2 Nh7?!

Black shows a very deep understanding of the position since he realizes that piece play alone will not break through White's position. He prepares a 'Pawn Storm' by pushing the f-pawn till it is stopped by White pieces. However, more accurate would have been 11...e3! 12.Bxe3 Bxe3 13.fxe3 Ne4 14.Nf1 Qh4+ 15.g3 Qf6! 16.c3 Bf5! 17.Nbd2 Nc5!;

11...c6! was a strong alternative as well. 12.Be3! was called for.

12...f5 13.Nb3 Bd6! 14.0-0

Trying to castle on the Queen side would have led to catastrophe. For example, 14.Bd2? e3!! 15.fxe3 Bg3+ 16.Kd1 Nf6! 17.Be1 Bxh2! 18.Rxh2 b5! 19.Nd4 bxc4 20.Qxc4 Nxd5 21.Nc6 Ba6 22.Nxd8 Bxc4 23.Nc6 Nxe3+ 24.Kc1 Rae8! 25.Bb4 Rf6 26.Na5 Bd5 27.g3 Nf1 etc.

14...Bxh2+! 15.Kxh2 f4!

Black has the advantage due to his active pieces and White's vulnerable king.

The knight enters the game with a gain of tempo on the White queen.

17.Qg6!? was an interesting option. For example, 17...Bf5 18.Qh5 Bxc2 19.Nd4 Bd3 etc.

17.Qd3! would have led to a complex and unclear position.

The move played -- 17.Qd4? --, allows a stunning combination followed by an unexpected finale.

Morphy clinched the issue with 17...Nf3+!!

A beautiful sacrifice which creates decisive light square weakness on White's King side.

17…Bxh3? allows White to defend with 18.Bxf4! Bd7 19.Kg1 etc.

18.gxf3 Qh4 19.Rh1!

White seems to have guarded his King side well. The obvious capture 19....Qxh3 check gives White a clear upper hand after 20. Kg1 whereas an attempt to bring the King Rook in play with 19....Rf6 allows White to move the King to safety after 20.Kg2!

However, Morphy had already planned his final assault after the Rook move as well.

The point! Now the White King has been caught in a cage with no possible escape.

20.Nc5 leaves the White Queen unguarded and is punished with 20...Rf6! 21.Bxf4 Bf5+! 22.Kg1 Rg6+

23.Bg3 Qxd4 etc.

20.Bxf4 Rxf4 21.Qxf4 Qxf4+ 22.Kxh3 Qxf3+ 23.Kh2 Qxf2+ 24.Kh3 Rf8 is hopeless.

20.Rg1? allows 20....Bf1 checkmate! 20. Kg1 allows 20....Qg5 ch, 21. Kh2, Qg2 Checkmate.

20...Rf6 21.Qxf6

21.Raf1 leads to an immediate mate after 21...Bf5+ 22.Kg2 Rg6.

21.Nc5 trying to bring the Knight for defence is too slow. Black plays 21....Rg6! followed by a deadly

discovered check by the Queen.

21.Qd3 (to stop ....Rg6) allows a similar finish as in the game. 21...Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3#

21…Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3 Checkmate!

NEW ERA STARTS FOR WOMEN IN BLUE

In 1st match after Mithali Raj's retirement, Harman-led India will take on Sri Lanka in 1st T20I

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Indian women's cricket team will be eyeing a fresh start under new all-format skipper Harmanpreet Kaur against Sri Lanka in the first T20 International of the three-match series, starting here on Thursday.

With the T20s all set to feature in the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and also at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup eight months away, India will look to begin their campaign on a high.

This will be the first international assignment for the Indian women since the disappointment at the 2022 Women's World Cup.

Notably, the Indian team, for the first time, will be without the legendary Mithali Raj, who hung up her boots earlier this month after an illustrious 23-year-old career.

On the personal front, skipper Harmanpreet will be eyeing a milestone.

The 33-year-old batter, who has amassed 2319 runs from 121 matches, needs another 46 runs to eclipse Mithali in the shortest format.

The spotlight will also be on vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet and coach Ramesh Powar, who recorded a seven-match winning streak in the last T20 World Cup before India were knocked out in the semifinals by South Africa.

Hosts Sri Lanka, on the other hand, will start the series on the back foot as they were recently whitewashed 0-3 by Pakistan in a T20 series.

However, the Indians will have to remain vigilant against the likes of Sri Lankan veterans Oshadi Ranasinghe and Chamari Athapaththu.

The Indians last played a one-off game against New Zealand in the shortest format in February this year, which they lost by 18 runs.

Going into the series, the likes of Mandhana, Shefali Verma, Deepti Sharma and pacer Pooja Vastrakar will inject enough confidence owing to their current form.

Going by current form and world rankings, India will definitely start as favourites against the Island nation and the hosts will need to raise their game by leaps and bounds to upset the Indians.

India skipper Harmanpreet said fielding is one area they are giving more emphasis on in the series against Sri Lanka.

"As a team, there are quite a few areas we are currently working on to improve keeping in mind this particular series against Sri Lanka. While our core strength lies in our batting, we are giving extra efforts to improve our fielding skills," she said.

"All our top batters and bowlers are fit for this series and we all expect to give our very best in this series," said Harmanpreet in the pre-match press conference.

The three-game T20 series will be followed by as many ODIs, scheduled to be played at Pallekele on July 1, 4 and 7.

SQUADS

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Simran Bahadur, Yastika Bhatia, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Richa Ghosh (WK), Sabbhineni Meghana, Meghna Singh, Poonam Yadav, Renuka Singh, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Radha Yadav.

Sri Lanka: Chamari Athapaththu (C), Nilakshi de Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Vishmi Gunaratne, Ama Kanchana, Hansima Karunaratne, Achini Kulasuriya, Sugandika Kumari, Harshitha Madavi, Hasini Perera, Udeshika Prabodhani, Oshadi Ranasinghe, Inoka Ranaweera, Sathya Sandeepani, Anushka Sanjeewani, Malsha Shehani, Tharika Sewwandi.

We've several top order batters, everyone will get chance: Harman

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Indian team is packed with a number of top-order batters and the new all-format captain Harmanpreet Kaur says all will get a chance to show their worth in the T20 series against Sri Lanka, starting Thursday.

Elegant left-hander Smriti Mandhana, explosive Shafali Verma, Sabbhineni Meghana and Yastika Bhatia are all top-order batters in India's 15-player squad.

In the absence of Smriti, it was Shafali and Yastika, who opened the batting against New Zealand in February.

"We do have many top order batters, including three to four of them, who can play as openers. But, when it comes to this team, everyone will have opportunity to showcase their skills," Harmanpreet said on the eve of the series-opener.

"We all are representing our country and whatever opportunity might come at some point, we must make the best use of it. We have many batters who can play at any position. We will try to give everyone the space to bat where they feel comfortable," she added.

Harmanpreet also backed talented all-rounder Jemimah Rodrigues, who was not included in the last ODI World Cup squad, but has now made a return to the side for the series against Sri Lanka.

"Jemimah is truly an experienced player. She will definitely play a crucial role in the T20 series," Harmanpreet said.

The skipper admitted that while it is not possible to give everyone an equal opportunity all the time, but, it is her responsibility to talk to everyone to find out the perfect team combination for big tournaments.

"I will ensure that everyone has enough chances to prepare. If you look at Jemimah's case, she always grabs whatever opportunities come her way. Similarly, it's very important to keep talking to other players and find out the right combination for big-ticket events like the Commonwealth Games," she remarked.

Pak recall fit-again Yasir Shah for SL Test

AP ■ KARACHI

Pakistan selectors Wednesday recalled fit-again Yasir Shah for the two Test match series against Sri Lanka next month, after the leg-spinner's career was put on hold by nagging injuries last year.

The 36-year-old played the last of his 46 Tests 11 months ago in the West Indies but has not been selected since over lack of fitness, missing a series in Bangladesh and another at home against Australia.

Yasir started his career in 2014, becoming the quickest to 200 Test wickets after 33 matches four years later, while anchoring Pakistan's spin attack.

He now has 235 wickets in 46 Tests.

Chief selector Mohammad Wasim said Yasir's inclusion would improve the team's spin attack.

"Our spin department is boosted with the return of Yasir, who proved himself as a match-winner," said Wasim.

Yasir took 24 wickets in Pakistan's 2-1 win during their last Sri Lanka tour in 2015.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Wednesday announced the schedule of Pakistan's tour next month.

"Pakistan will play a three-day warm-up match between 11-13 July in Colombo while the first Test will be played at Galle from 16-20 July," SLC said.

The second Test will be staged in Colombo from 24-28 July.

Left-arm slow bowler Nauman Ali is the other front-line spinner in the 18-man squad, which will be led by Babar Azam.

Uncapped middle-order batsman Salman Ali Agha and former skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed are also part of the squad, but opener Abid Ali was not selected despite recovering from a heart problem.

Spinning allrounder Mohammad Nawaz has also been recalled. He was named in the squad for Australia Tests but was withdrawn due to injury.

Squad: Babar Azam (captain), Mohammad Rizwan, Abdullah Shafique, Azhar Ali, Faheem Ashraf, Fawad Alam, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Yasir Shah.

Jamie Overton to make England debut vs NZ

AP ■ LEEDS

Jamie Overton will make his debut for England in the third and final cricket Test against New Zealand starting Thursday after fellow fast bowler Jimmy Anderson was ruled out because of an ankle injury.

Overton's twin brother, Craig, was also in the squad and an option to replace Anderson but England went with the more inexperienced of the siblings in the only change to the team at Headingley.

England holds an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

England captain Ben Stokes said Anderson had a "puffy ankle," and wasn't sure if he'd be healthy enough to play in next month's Test against India.

"Unfortunately Jimmy's not pulled up as well as we would have liked him to, so Jamie Overton's going to make his debut this week," Stokes said.

"It's unfortunate for Jimmy, but we've got a massive Test against India coming up as well. I'm not too sure how serious it is, to be honest."

Stokes said Jamie Overton offered a "point of difference" because of his extra pace.

"He fills a different role from Jimmy," Stokes said, "but to have someone in your back pocket who can bowl 90 mph is big for us.

"That's the only change this week. As tempting as it was to get both twins out there playing for England, Jamie's the only change."

Craig and Jamie Overton were looking to become the first set of twins to play for England.

New Zealand hasn't named its team for the match.

England: Alex Lees, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Stokes (captain), Ben Foakes, Matthew Potts, Jamie Overton, Stuart Broad, Jack Leach.

Former captain Rumeli Dhar retires

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India women's team captain Rumeli Dhar on Wednesday announced her retirement from all forms of the game.

The right-handed batter and medium pacer announced her decision through an Instagram post.

"23 years of my cricket that started from Shyamnagar in West Bengal has finally come to an end as I announce my retirement from all formats of cricket," Dhar said in her post.

The 38-year-old played four women's Tests, in which she scored 236 runs with one half-century. She has picked up eight Test wickets since making her debut against England in 2005 at Delhi. She played her last Test against the same opponent in 2006 at Taunton.

She also played 78 WODIs, scoring 961 runs and taking 63 wickets, with six half-centuries since her debut against England in 2003 at Lincoln. She played her last ODI in 2012.

Dhar, who played for Bengal among other domestic sides, also featured in 18 T20s, in which she scored 131 runs and took 13 wickets after making her debut against England Women in 2006.

At 34, she made an unexpected comeback to the India T20 team in 2018 against South Africa, and played her last game in the format against Australia Women at the Brabourne Stadium the same year.

Sundar signs up with county side Lancashire

IANS ■ MANCHESTER

County side Lancashire on Wednesday announced that they have signed up India all-rounder Washington Sundar as their overseas player. Washington, who has been missing in action due to hand injury sustained while playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL 2022, is set to join the team after his rehab at National Cricket Academy (NCA) gets over.

This will be his first stint in England's domestic cricket and would be the second Indian after Cheteshwar Pujara to play county cricket.

"Washington, who is currently following a period of rehabilitation with the BCCI after a recent injury, will be available for the whole Royal London One-Day Cup competition, and fitness depending, a number of LV=County Championship games in July," said an official statement by Lancashire.

"I am extremely excited to play county cricket for the first time with Lancashire Cricket. To play in English conditions will be a great experience for me and I can't wait to play at Emirates Old Trafford. I would like to thank both Lancashire Cricket and the BCCI for allowing this opportunity happen and I'm looking forward to joining up with the squad next month," said Washington after his Lancashire signing.

Mark Chilton, Lancashire's Director of Cricket Performance, expressed excitement over Washington joining the county side in the current English domestic season.

Ishan breaks into top 10 in T20 rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

On the back of his recent exploits, veteran Dinesh Karthik jumped a massive 108 spots to 87th on the latest ICC T20 rankings for batters, even as young opener Ishan Kishan broke into the top 10.

Kishan finished the series with two half centuries against South Africa and was the leading run scorer with 206 runs at an average of 41. That form catapulted the left-hander up one spot to sixth on the latest T20 rankings for batters.

Karthik has been in excellent form since the IPL-15 and had a few blazing knocks in the T20 series against South Africa.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam still holds the top spot on the T20 batting rankings and Kishan is the only Indian player rated inside the top 10.

Yuzvendra Chahal was the biggest mover on the T20 rankings for bowlers with the India spinner jumping three places to 23rd following his six wickets during the South Africa series.

Disciplined MP keep Mumbai at 248/5 on Day 1

PTI ■ BENGALURU

An unheralded bunch of Madhya Pradesh bowlers stuck to its plans as a star-studded Mumbai side toiled its way to 248 for five on the first day of the Ranji Trophy final here.

Despite an opening stand of 87 between Prithvi Shaw (47, 79 balls) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (78, 163 balls), Mumbai failed to drive home the advantage on a pitch that wasn't conducive for strokeplay.

A 400-plus first-innings total will now depend on the season's highest run-getter Sarfaraz Khan (40 batting, 125 balls), who is looking good for another big knock with the dependable Shams Mulani (12 batting, 43 balls) giving him company.

While left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya was the tireless operator from one end, having sent down 31 overs for figures of 1 for 91, seamer Gaurav Yadav (23-5-68-0) was distinctly unlucky and the wickets column don't reflect the relentless pressure that he put on Mumbai batters, especially skipper Shaw.

In fact, it was the pressure applied by Yadav which helped nippy seamer Anubhav Agarwal (19-3-56-2) and tall off-spinner Saransh Jain (17-2-31-2) to share the bulk of the spoils, with some intelligent execution of plans.

Mumbai did enjoy the advantage during the first hour after Shaw opted to bat and, along with Jaiswal, took on the MP attack.

The strategy to start with Kartikeya's slow left-arm orthodox seemed to have backfired when Jaiswal took him on and lofted him over long-on for a six.

Shaw followed suit and hit Kartikeya over long-off for a six as they added 87 for the first wicket.

But while Jaiswal, with his drives and upper cuts, looked to continue from where he left in the semi-final, Shaw, despite his seven fours (at least three of them behind square) looked edgy.

The first breakthrough came minutes before lunch break when Anubhav, who was bowling closer to the stumps, decided to move slightly wide and fired in a couple of deliveries with the angle.

While Shaw managed to defend one, the second delivery saw him play across the line and the stumps rattled.

Arman Jaffer (26 off 56 balls) looked solid till he tried a forward-defensive jab off Kartikeya, without factoring in the extra bounce, and the ball took an inside edge off his bat and Yash Dubey, at short mid-wicket, completed a diving catch.

The pitch in the second session slowed down considerably and Suved Parkar (18) paid the price when a delivery from Saransh stopped on him and the leading edge off closed bat face just lobbed up for the easiest of catches for rival captain Aditya Shrivastava. The dismissal that was most well-planned was that of Jaiswal, who was closing in on a fourth hundred of the season.

Anubhav, who had started operating wide of the crease, started cramping the left-hander for room. As he was finding it difficult to get the boundaries, Jaiswal, without much room, tried the square cut but failed to keep it down and Dubey at gully took a sharp low catch.

Hardik Tamore (24) was living dangerously till Saransh got some drift and the delivery straightened after pitching, taking the outside edge into Rajat Patidar's hands in the first slip.