

**CITY 2**  
20, INCLUDING 10 DEVOTEES,  
KILLED IN SEPARATE MISHAPS**OPINION 6**  
FREEDOM OF SPEECH &  
EXPRESSION IS ALIVE**WORLD 10**  
1/6 PANEL TO HEAR OF TRUMP'S  
PRESSURE ON JUSTICE DEPT

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INDIA WOMEN  
BEAT SRI LANKA  
IN FIRST T20I  
12 SPORT

# Shinde camp swells but Pawar hopes MVA will pull through

Shinde releases a group photo of 42 MLAs backing him

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The political crisis arising out of a massive rebellion within the ruling Shiv Sena that has brought the MVA Government to the brink of collapse deepened on Thursday as the rebel Eknath Shinde camp claimed that it enjoyed the support of 42 MLAs. But NCP chief Sharad Pawar has said the MVA Government will survive and the situation will change dramatically when the rebel MLAs return to Mumbai.

A day after Uddhav Thackeray offered to quit both as the Chief Minister and party chief if the rebel party MLAs were to meet him personally and ask him to put in his papers and moved out of CM's official residence, the Sena rebel faction leader and minister Eknath Shinde — in a show of strength — released a group photograph of 42 MLAs supporting him taken at Radisson Blu Hotel at Guwahati, where they are camping currently.

The video that the Eknath Shinde camp circulated in the media showed the rebel MLAs sitting together and raising slogans like "Shinde Saab Tum Aage Badho, Hum Tumhare

Saath Hain."

The rebel Shiv Sena MLAs write to Maharashtra Assembly's Deputy Speaker, declare that Eknath Shinde remains their leader in House.

On a day when Uddhav Thackeray appeared reconciled to the prospect of the fall of his Government, NCP chief Sharad Pawar — who is the architect of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government — expressed optimism that the MVA dispensation would survive the current crisis facing the Shiv Sena. "Let the MLAs come back from Guwahati. The situation will change drastically. The MVA Government will survive the floor test in the State Assembly," Pawar said.

Reiterating his party's support to Uddhav Thackeray, Pawar said it was the responsibility of all the three constituents — Shiv Sena, NCP, and Congress — to "save" the Uddhav Thackeray Government.

Without taking the name of the BJP, Pawar slammed the BJP for the manner it fuelled rebellion within the Shiv Sena. "Everyone knows how the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs were taken to Gujarat and then to Assam. We don't have to take the names of all those assisting them. The Assam Government is helping them. I don't need to take any names further," he said.

The rebel MLAs will have to come back to Mumbai and



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar addresses the media after a party meeting, at Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Mumbai on Thursday

PTI

face the Assembly, he said, adding that BJP leaders "from Gujarat and Assam will not be coming here to guide them."

Pawar also refuted allegations by rebel Shiv Sena MLAs that they faced difficulties in getting funds for their constituencies as the Finance Ministry, which is controlled by NCP's Ajit Pawar, discriminated against them, and the Sena has given up its Hindutva ideology.

"All these are excuses, some of these MLAs are facing a probe by Central agencies," he said. The NCP chief also said that the rebels will have to face consequences, recalling that when Chhagan Bhujbal defected from the Shiv Sena to join the Congress in the 1990s, all his supporters except one lost the Assam election.

"These rebels will face the same fate," Pawar said.

Informed sources in the

Shinde camp said that of the 42 MLAs camping at the Radisson Blu Hotel, 35 are Sena MLAs, while the remaining seven are Independents supporting the rebel Sena leader.

The number mustered by Shinde is nearly two-thirds of the Sena's strength of the 55 MLAs in the Assembly, a thing that will help Shinde to escape the wrath of the anti-defection law.

Continued on Page 9

# Let's meet halfway, China urges India

China says interests outweigh differences, proposes four-point process to boost ties

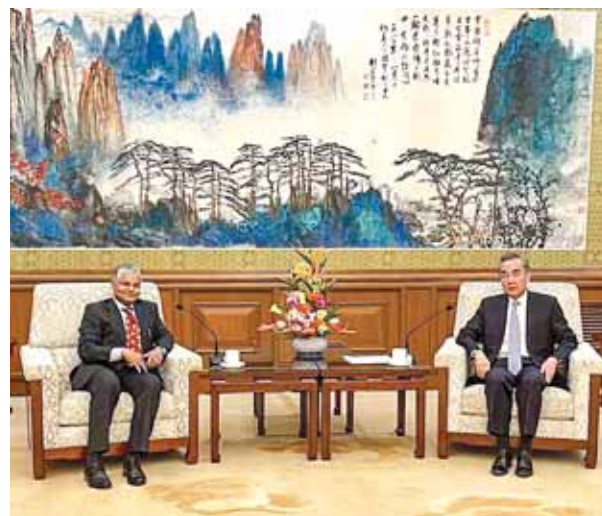
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

Even as face-offs persist at the border in Ladakh for the last two years, China has urged India to meet "halfway", saying common interests outweigh differences between the two countries. China also called for enhancing mutual trust rather than remain "suspicious of each other."

This message was conveyed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to India's ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat on Wednesday in Beijing. The Chinese minister also proposed a four-point process to improve ties between the two countries.

The Indian envoy emphasised the "criticality of maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas" to realise the full potential of the consensus between the top leaders of the two sides on the importance of Sino-India ties for Asia and the world.

"Bilateral and multilateral issues of interest to both sides were touched upon during the conversation" between Rawat and Wang, the Indian embassy in Beijing said in a statement



Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat meets Chinese Foreign Minister State Councilor and Wang Yi, at Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing on Wednesday

PTI

on Thursday.

"Wang Yi conveyed that at the highest level of leadership of the two countries, there is consensus on the importance of bilateral relations for Asia and the world," the release said.

"Wang Yi said the border issue is important and we should stay committed to peacefully addressing it through consultation and coordination," it said.

The meeting between Wang Yi and Rawat came ahead of the virtual meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President Xi Jinping and other heads of states of the BRICS combine on Thursday.

Incidentally, Wang Yi was the first Chinese minister to visit India this March since the stand-offs erupted at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020 leading to major flare up. He held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to find ways for early disengagement of troops from the friction points.

In the first meeting between Wang Yi and Rawat, the Chinese foreign minister said the two countries should support rather than undermine each other and enhance trust rather than be suspicious.

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# Will consider exit from MVA... Raut's call to rebels raises allies' eyebrows

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid an unprecedented rebellion that his party is reeling under, Shiv Sena chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Thursday set the cat among the pigeons when he — in his apparent over-enthusiasm to placate the rebel Sena MLAs — said that if the aggrieved party legislators wanted the Sena to quit the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) they should come and place their demand before Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Raut's statement — though it came in the form of an appeal to the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs camping at a Guwahati hotel — came on a day when the Sena allies pledged their support to the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA Government. Understandably so, Raut's remarks upset the MVA leaders, including NCP



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut and MLAs Kalpesh Patil and Nitin Deshmukh interact with the media after the MLAs returned from rebel party leader Eknath Shinde's camp in Guwahati, in Mumbai, on Thursday

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chief Sharad Pawar, as it meant the Sena was ready to forsake its ruling allies to save the party.

In an appeal made to the rebel Sena MLAs camping in Guwahati to return to Mumbai within 24 hours and meet Uddhav Thackeray, he said,

"You (rebel Sena MLAs) say you are real Shiv Sainiks and will not quit the party. We are ready to consider your demand provided you come back to Mumbai in 24 hours and discuss the issue with CM Uddhav Thackeray."

Continued on Page 9

# Low turnout in Azamgarh, Rampur bypolls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A low turnout, with just 44 per cent average polling, was reported from the two parliamentary constituencies — Rampur and Azamgarh — in the bypolls on Thursday, amidst allegations that the ruling party used government machinery to prevent minorities from casting their votes.

The Election Commission of India, however, claimed the entire polling passed off peacefully with no untoward incident taking place anywhere.

The election commission confirmed that 37.01 per cent voting took place in Rampur till 5 pm and 45.97 per cent in Azamgarh. The final figures released by the election commission showed 39.02 per cent polling in Rampur and 48.58 per cent in Azamgarh.

Continued on Page 9

# China biggest security threat: Australia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Australia on Thursday said China is the "biggest security anxiety" as it is seeking to shape the world in a way that was not seen before. It also slammed China for its "appalling behaviour" towards Indian soldiers two years ago in the Galwan valley in Ladakh.

Twenty Indian Army personnel, including the commanding officer, were killed in a bloody brawl with the Chinese troops on June 15, 2020. These remarks by visiting Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles here came against the backdrop of China flexing its muscles in the Indo-Pacific, the South China Sea and the ongoing tension at the border in Ladakh.

Sounding this note of caution, Marles said India too has similar security concerns and that Australia stands in soli-

arity with New Delhi over its border row with China.

He also expressed concern over growing defence and security cooperation between China and Russia, suggesting that it could have implications for the region. The visiting dignitary made these observations during an interaction with journalists.

Marles said New Delhi and Canberra are strongly committed to expand defence and security ties as his country sees India as "completely central" to its world view.

"For Australia, China is our largest trading partner and so is for India. For Australia, China is our largest security concern, that is also the same for India," he said.

India and Australia are working closely together to build our relationship economically but also in the context of defence so that together we are engaging more deeply to enhance the defence and

security of both our nations, Marles said.

In an apparent reference to the Galwan Valley clashes in eastern Ladakh over two years back, Marles said his country stands in solidarity with India in respect of that incident. Twenty Indian Army personnel, including the commanding officer, were killed in a bloody brawl with the Chinese troops on June 15, 2020. More than 40 Chinese soldiers were also killed in the clash.

China is seeking to "shape the world around it in a way that we have not seen before", and that has resulted in "more assertive Chinese behaviour", especially in the last couple of years, Marles said.

"We've seen it in respect of the Line of Actual Control (LAC)... the incident that occurred a couple of years ago, where there was an appalling behaviour towards Indian soldiers, and we stand in solidarity with India in respect of that

incident," he said

China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea is aimed at deterring Australia's activities to protect the rules-based order in that region, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, Marles said. Greater cooperation between Australia and India in the face of such Chinese assertiveness is "absolutely imperative," he said.

"It is really important that we live in a world where there is a rules-based order, where disputes between countries are resolved as per a set of rules and in a peaceful way," Marles said. On the Ukraine crisis, Marles said, "What we are seeing in Ukraine is having an impact on global food supply and that is a real concern."

He said a large country was seeking to overpower a smaller neighbor and this principle was there too in the Indo-Pacific.

Continued on Page 9

# Delhi Covid number doubles, cases spike to 15K in country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Delhi and Maharashtra recording sharp surge in Covid cases, the total caseload is likely to cross 15,000 mark on Thursday against 13,000 reported a day ago.

As per the Government data, Delhi on Thursday reported 1,934 new Covid cases, almost double from the day before. The national Capital's active cases tally was recorded at 5,755, while the test positivity rate (TPR) was recorded at 8.10 per cent. Maharashtra reported 5,218 new cases of Covid-19, a jump of almost 60 per cent from the day before when the State had reported 3,260 infections.

Mumbai had also recorded a jump of 50 per cent in fresh infections, as the metropolitan on Thursday recorded 2,479 new cases. On Wednesday, the financial Capital had recorded 1,648 cases.



Meanwhile, causing concern a June 21 report of Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG) says that 44 samples from Bengaluru sent for genome sequencing between June 2 and June 9 were found to be infected with BA.3, BA.4 and BA.5 sub-lineages of Covid variant Omicron.

India's total tally of Covid-19 cases has touched more than 4,33,44,958, while the active cases crossed 83,990, according to the Union Health

Ministry data updated on Thursday. The death toll has climbed to 5,24,941 with 38 new fatalities.

Concerned at the rising cases, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya directed officials to continue to focus on surveillance and whole genome sequencing to scan any possible mutations while stressing on adequate testing and effective monitoring to assess the spread of infection in a timely manner.

Continued on Page 9

# ED allows Sonia to appear in July end

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has accepted Congress president Sonia Gandhi's plea to defer her questioning in connection with a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper. The ED has now asked her to record her statement with the agency sometime in late July.

She was issued a second summons for June 23 by the agency but the 75-year-old Congress leader could not keep the date as she is recuperating from post-Covid implications. She has been strictly advised to rest at home following her hospitalisation on account of Covid and lung infection.

The ED has advanced her questioning in the case for about four weeks and asked her to depose sometime in the last week of July, sources said.

The move comes following a plea from Sonia, communicated on Wednesday to the ED, to postpone the questioning by

a few weeks in the wake of medical advice to take rest.

Sonia was first issued the notice for an appearance on June 8 but after she reported positive for Covid-19, the summons for June 23 was issued. The Congress president was on Monday discharged from a private Delhi hospital where she was admitted for treatment of Covid-19.

She was admitted to the hospital on June 12, days after she tested positive for Covid-19 on June 2.

Her son and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has been questioned by the agency in the same case for about 54 hours over five days.

The probe relates to alleged financial irregularities in the Congress-promoted Young Indian Private Limited, which owns the National Herald newspaper. The move to question the Gandhis was initiated after the ED recently registered a fresh case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act

Continued on Page 9

# Co-op can help post-Covid eco recovery, says Modi at BRICS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the members of the BRICS combine have a similar approach to the governance of global economy and mutual cooperation can make useful contributions to the post-Covid economic recovery.

Underlining this key factor at the 14th BRICS annual summit of heads of states, he also said in his opening remarks: "Our cooperation in several sectors has benefited our citizens."

Brazil, China, Russia, India and South Africa form the BRICS grouping. China is hosting the current summit as the Chair for this year in the virtual format. India hosted the 13th summit last year.

The two-day event starting Thursday saw the participation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the 14th BRICS Summit through a video conference, in New Delhi, on Thursday

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Modi, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

In his remarks, Modi also said the structural changes undertaken in the BRICS in the last few years increased the

influence of the grouping. "It is a matter of happiness that membership of the New Development Bank (NDB) has increased," the Prime Minister said.

Continued on Page 9



# UP all set to launch campaign against communicable diseases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Putting all the efforts to tackle health challenges thrown by water-borne diseases and other seasonal vagaries, the Yogi Adityanath government will launch a statewide special campaign against communicable diseases from July 1.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing a high-level meeting on Thursday, asked the officials to ensure regular sanitation and fogging drives to protect the state from vector-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria, chikungunya and others.

"The cooperation of organisations like WHO, UNICEF and PATH should be taken. We have two successful models of encephalitis control and COVID-19 management in front of us, which will be useful for us in the campaign against communicable diseases," the chief minister said

here on Thursday.

Stating that every year from June to November, Purvanchal used to face mayhem with a large number of children losing their lives to Japanese encephalitis, the chief minister said that there had been a significant reduction in the number of patients affected by encephalitis and deaths due to this disease since 2017. "Not only has the prevalence of the disease been controlled, but the deaths due to it have also come down by more than 95 per cent," he said.

"Where the previous governments seemed helpless against the deadly disease, our government took this challenge and put an end to the disease through its coordinated inter-departmental efforts," he said.

Being extra vigilant and careful, the government has set up encephalitis care centres at block levels, equipped with



PICU beds, and trained medical personnel.

Trained doctors, paramedical staff, nurses and ANMs have also been appointed in the districts. The number of technicians in laboratories is

adequate and all are well trained.

The chief minister said the state government had established inter-departmental coordination to ensure all necessary arrangements with depart-

ments of Medical and Health, rural Development, Urban Development, Women and Child Development, Agriculture and Basic and Secondary Education.

"Ministers and nodal offi-

cers will be present in the districts during the campaign. They will also participate in various programmes and make people aware of the importance of cleanliness, sanitation, and the importance of nutritional

food," he said and added that officials had been asked to ensure supply of pure drinking water and distribute chlorine tablets.

"If required, a chlorination demo should be given to the people," he added.

Congratulating the officials, the chief minister said, "Very soon Uttar Pradesh will become free of kala-azar and malaria will also be effectively controlled."

As per the latest data, malaria and kala-azar diseases are on the way out in the state. Malaria was observed in less than one per 1,000 population, while kala-azar disease was observed in less than one per 10,000 population in 22 identified blocks.

As per the directives, pig enclosures are to be made away from the public areas. The government also directed spraying of insecticides on a regular basis. To prevent scrub

typhus, clearing or cutting of bushes should be done in cities and villages as it becomes a breeding ground for rats that could spread disease, the chief minister directed.

The chief minister said there should be adequate availability of ambulances for patients and the ambulance response time should be kept to a minimum. He said rapid response teams should be formed in all districts and disease surveillance data systems should be strengthened for speedy response to any outbreak. Yogi said efforts should be made to control mosquitoes through fogging and sanitisation in areas with high mosquito/larvae density, identified on the basis of experience of the past years and areas with high mosquito/larval density on the basis of house-to-house surveys conducted by the teams during the Dastak campaign.



## NOTICE

I have changed my name from Nehal Akhtar Quraishi to Nehal Akhtar S/o Hafiz Mohammad Sami R/o C-1/49 Fatak Shekh Salem Chetganj Varanasi UP



## NOTICE

I have changed my name from Jannat Akhtar Quraishi to Jannat Akhtar S/o Nehal Akhtar R/o C-1/49 Fatak Shekh Salem Chetganj Varanasi UP



## NOTICE

Before marriage my name was Shiva Misra After marriage my name has changed to Shivangi Dwivedi Now I should be known as Shivangi Dwivedi W/oAbhishek Dwivedi R/o Flat No.906 Jyoti Heights Kidwai Nagar Kanpur



## NOTICE

This is to notify that Mohd Shuaib S/o Shabbir Ahmad R/o House No. 614P/30-31 Preeti Nagar, Sitapur Road, Lucknow and Mohd Shuaib Khan are the name of one and same person.

## सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मैं जमीर अहमद खान (Zameer Ahmad Khan) पुत्र नूर मोहम्मद खान निवासी 155/63 सैयदबाड़ा, रसूलपुर, प्रयागराज में अपने नाम की रसलिंग (Zameer Ahmad Khan) की जगह (Zamir Ahmad Khan) कर लिया है। मुझको इसी नाम से जाना एवं पहचाना जाय।



## NOTICE

Be it known to all that I Ghanshyam Prajapati S/o Fayanth plot no 1/1131 Ratanakhand, Sharda Nagar Lucknow which registry & Allotment letter termies eaten. I have some part of it.



## NOTICE

LIC Policy No. 230785958 is in the name of Om Paliwal having DOB 11.11.2001 while real name is Kartikey Paliwal having DOB 11.11.2001. Thus in the said policy name be read as Kartikey Paliwal having DOB 11.11.2001 Kartikey Paliwal S/o Smt Mridula Paliwal, Resident of H.No. 117/H-1/02, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Nagar-208005



## सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मैं सलमान तारिक पुत्र अहमद सलमान निवासी सी-48 जी0टी0वी0 नगर, करैली, प्रयागराज एवं मेरी पत्नी जिनका नाम हिना मंसूब है ने आज से अपना नाम सलमान तारिक की जगह तारिक सलमान एवं मेरी बीवी ने अपना नाम हिना मंसूब की जगह हिना तारिक कर लिया है। हम दोनों लोगों को अब इसी नाम से जाना एवं पहचाना जाय।



## NOTICE

I, Santosh kumar shah S/O Renu devi w/o late NK Bikram sah army no. 4559060N to be informed that in my father army service record's my name and my D.O.B wrongly mentioned santosh kumar, D.O.B- 20/04/1991 while my correct name is Santosh kumar shah and DOB is 20/04/1992. Know known me as same In all future purpose.Santosh kumar shah S/o late NK Bikram Sah durgapuri colony neelmatha bazar Lucknow



## NOTICE

To be Informed that in My Passport in My Name is Wrongly Mentioned Kaneez Humairah Noori W/o Mohamed awwal Mohamed Rafi noori While my correct name is Kaneez Humaira Ansari w/o Mohamed awwal ansari. in future we should be known kaneez humaira Ansari.w/o Mohamed awwal ansari.



## NOTICE

I, Arti kumari shah D/O Renu devi w/o late NK Bikram sah army no. 4559060N to be informed that in my father army service record's my name and my D.O.B wrongly mentioned laिता, D.O.B- 11/08/1993 while my correct name is bharti kumari shah and DOB is 01/02/1994. Know known me as same In all future purpose. Arti kumari shah D/o late NK Bikram Sah durgapuri colony neelmatha bazar Lucknow.



## NOTICE

To be Informed that in My Passport in My Name is Wrongly Mentioned Mohamed Awwal Mohamed Rafi Noori w/o Kaneez Humaira Noori s/o Mohamed Rafi Bashir Ahmed Noori. While my Correct Name is Mohamed Awwal Ansari w/o Kaneez Humaira Ansari s/o Mohamed Rafi Noori. in future we should be known Mohamed Awwal Ansari. s/o Mohamed Rafi Noori H.N-351 Shekhpara Nayanagar Bhodhipur Balrampur Uttar Pradesh



## NOTICE

I, Bharti kumari shah D/O Renu devi w/o late NK Bikram sah army no. 4559060N to be informed that in my father army service record's my name and my D.O.B wrongly mentioned bharti, D.O.B- 28/09/1994, while my correct name is bharti kumari shah and DOB is 01/04/1995. Know known me as same In all future purpose. Bharti kumari shah D/o late NK Bikram Sah durgapuri colony neelmatha bazar Lucknow.



## NOTICE

To be Informed that in My Passport in My Name is Wrongly Mentioned Sarah Fatima noori D/o Mohamed awwal Mohamed rafi Noori M/o Kaneez Humairah Noori While my Correct Name is Sara Fatima Ansari D/o Mohamed awwal Ansari m/o Kaneez Humaira Ansari . in future we should be known Sara Fatima Ansari. Sara Fatima Ansari D/o Mohamed awwal ansari H.N-351 Shekhpara Nayanagar Bhodhipur Balrampur Uttar Pradesh

## 20, including 10 devotees, killed in separate mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Road mishaps claimed 20 lives, including 10 in Pilibhit and eight in Hamirpur districts respectively since Wednesday night.

In the first tragic road accident reported from Pilibhit district, 10 devotees were killed while six others were injured when their vehicle rammmed into a tree in the early hours of Thursday.

Two of the injured were in critical condition and were shifted to Bareilly.

Police reached the spot and started an investigation.

According to reports, a speeding pickup overturned on the highway after ramming into a tree in the Gajraula police station area of Pilibhit. The pickup was full of devotees returning to Gola after taking a bath in the Ganga in Haridwar. The injured said that the accident happened as the driver dozed off. While eight died on the spot, two more were pronounced dead at the hospital.

District Magistrate Pulkit Khare and Superintendent of Police Dinesh Kumar P reached the district hospital as soon as they got information about the incident. The district magistrate said that while returning to Gola from Haridwar, the pickup met with an accident

near Gajraula.

There were 17 people in the vehicle.

The deceased were identified as Laxmi (28), Rachna (28), Sarla Devi (60), Harsh (16), Khushi (2), Sushant (14), Anand (3), Lalman (65), Shyamsundar (55) and driver Dilshad (35), all hailing from Gola.

Those injured in the mishap were identified as Sheelam Shukla (35), Sanjeev Shukla (35), Praveen (19), Prashant (17), Krishnapal Shukla (33), Poonam Devi (42) and Rishu alias Yash Trivedi (16).

In another mishap in Hamirpur district, eight people were killed and seven injured after a loader truck collided with an auto-rickshaw on Wednesday evening.

Police said the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment.

According to the police, the accident took place on the National Highway in the Maudaha Kotwali area of Hamirpur district. "Eight people were killed and seven injured in the collision between a loader truck and an auto-rickshaw on the National Highway in Maudaha Kotwali area of Hamirpur. The injured have been shifted to a hospital," Circle Officer of Maudaha, Vivek Yadav, said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the Hamirpur accident.

"The accident in Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh is very painful. I express my deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, as well as to the injured for a speedy recovery. The state government and the local administration are doing all they can to help the injured," Prime Minister Modi tweeted.

In the another mishap on Fatehpur-Lucknow highway, two cousins riding bicycles were crushed by a dumper coming from behind when they were returning from a wedding ceremony.

Reports said that Shyamu Paswan (14) and Rinku (20) were cousins hailing from Manpur Majre Bhadar village. They had gone to attend the marriage of their cousin Jitendra in Mishramau village. When they were returning home by bicycle early in the morning on Thursday, a speeding dumper crushed their bicycle and killed both of them. The driver fled from the spot with the dumper soon after the mishap.

The local police sent the bodies for autopsy and launched a hunt for the absconding driver.

## Drones to identify clogged drains

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a bid to prevent clogging of drains during monsoon, the Uttar Pradesh government is using drones to identify the sites where cleanliness or maintenance of drains is required.

Undertaking the statewide campaign on a mission mode, Principal Secretary (Urban Development) Amrit Abhijat has issued directives to the municipal corporations of Lucknow, Aligarh, Agra, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ghaziabad, Kanpur Nagar and Meerut to ensure cleaning of all major drains, medium drains and small drains, and to utilise drone cameras for monitoring their condition on priority basis.

This step of the government is aimed at preventing water-logging, flooding of drains and canals as well as easing vehicular congestion that occurs frequently during the monsoon. After the aerial surveys of the drains, the latitudinal and longitudinal positions of the drains concerned, their length, width and depth, along with their photographs and videos in a prescribed format, will be sent to the director, Urban Local Bodies Directorate, Lucknow.

The videos and photos of canals/drains before work, during work and after completion of work (silt clearance) by drones will be provided. The information will then be compiled and made available to the government within a week.

## Noida, Greater Noida favourite destinations for fintech cos

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Noida and Greater Noida have emerged as favourite destinations for setting up financial technology (fintech) companies as Fintech City would be developed over 100 acres spread across Noida and Greater Noida.

According to the latest information, there are 239 fintech start-ups in Noida. These are working largely in one or more of the four main fintech areas - digital lending, payments, block chain and digital wealth management.

"Most companies are witnessing a fast pace of growth in view of the rapid adoption of digital payments across all sectors in India," a government spokesman said here on Thursday.

He said availability of world-class infrastructure, uninterrupted electricity supply, internet connectivity and trained human capital have made Noida and Greater Noida favourite destinations for fintech companies.

Companies like Pine Labs, Spice Money, Paytm Payments Bank, Advisorymandi, DIGISPICE, OneCode, Wishfin, GramCover, FanTiger, Marquee Equity, Easypolicy, Buddy4Study, Oye Loans, PayMe India, PortiDesk, Nivesh.com, and many more have been doing business in

Noida for many years.

The areas in which they are working include diversified payment solutions for businesses and merchants, agent-based payment solutions to consumers and businesses, digital bank for individuals and businesses, equity research platform focused on stocks, suite solutions for government agencies, referral-based marketing solutions, comparison platform for consumer loans, online life and non-life insurance comparison platform focused on rural areas, NFT-based trading platform for music, deal management and investor discovery platform, customizable co-branded prepaid card solutions for businesses and retail loans.

Incidentally, some of the large data centre projects slated to be set up in this region of UP during the recently-concluded third groundbreaking ceremony (GBC-3) are powered by top fintech companies like Paytm.

"Growth of fintech in India is driven by various macroeconomic factors, such as enabling government and regulatory initiatives, India's demographic dividend, increasing national disposable incomes, large unbanked population, improving internet access and smartphone penetration, and a rapidly evolving e-commerce," the official said.

## Man who threatened to blow up RSS offices connected with PFI

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The sleuths of the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) grilling Raj Mohammad who threatened to blow up the offices of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), claimed he has connection with the Popular Front of India (PFI).

Sources said that Raj Mohammed, arrested from Tamil Nadu on June 7 last, has revealed during the interrogation by UP ATS that he had worked for the PFI and SDPI for three years.

At present, the ATS is interrogating Mohammad on remand.

Raj Mohammad, who threatened to bomb six RSS offices in the country, disclosed that he was an active member of the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Socialist Democratic Party of India (SDPI) between 2018 and 2021.

However, what he did after 2021, he has not yet disclosed.

It may be mentioned that Dr Neelkanth Mani Pujari, associated with the Sangh, was threatened on his WhatsApp number that the RSS offices would be blown up with bombs. The threat was to blow up RSS offices in Lucknow, Nawabganj in Unnao and four places in Karnataka. This threat was sent in three languages. After getting the threat, Neelkanth lodged an FIR at Madaon police station.

Taking the threat serious-

ly, UP ATS started investigating and later alerted the Tamil Nadu police and after tracking the address of the alleged accused, he was taken into custody by Thirukokarnam police station, Pudhukottai.

The ATS brought Mohammad the Lucknow and took his police custody remand to grill him further.

Meanwhile, sleuths of the National Investigation Agency raided a house in Deoband and arrested an accused, identified as Majidullah, hailing from Myanmar. The arrest was made in connection with the involvement of the accused in human trafficking racket. Majidullah is accused of settling illegal Rohingya Bangladeshis Muslims in India. Mobiles, laptops, SIM cards were recovered from him.

Sources confirmed that the NIA team raided Deoband in Saharanpur district on Wednesday night and arrested a Myanmar national for alleged illegal smuggling of Rohingyas into India and Muslims from Bangladesh.

An NIA spokesperson said that the case related to illegal smuggling of Rohingyas and Muslims from Bangladesh into India and settling them in different parts of the country on the basis of fake documents.

The NIA said that taking cognisance in this matter, a case was registered in December last year. The agency had filed a charge-sheet against six accused in this case on June 4.

## Retired army officer kills father, brother over property dispute

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A retired Army officer allegedly shot his father and brother dead after an argument with them over property issues.

The incident took place at Dhandhari village in Kaptanganj area of Azamgarh district on Wednesday night. The accused was identified as Manoj Kumar Singh (45) and the deceased as Shivnarayan (70), and Manish Singh (30).

According to reports, Manoj asked his father, Shivnarayan, about their property and the money they received from farming. However, the discussion soon turned into a heated argument. While Shivnarayan and Manoj were having a heated argument, Manish also reached the spot. On seeing him, Manoj suddenly took out his licensed pistol and shot his father dead. When Shivnarayan fell to the ground, Manish tried to nab Manoj but he fired at his brother also.

Hearing the gunshots, his aunt Avadhraji (65) tried to catch Manoj but he hit her with a stick and fled the spot.

A few hours later, Manoj reached the Kaptanganj police station with his licensed pistol and surrendered himself, a senior police officer said.

Circle Officer, Azamgarh, Lalita Prasad, said Manoj had been arrested and further investigation was underway.

A senior police officer of Kaptanganj police station said that during preliminary inquiry, it came to light that Avadhraji had adopted Manish when he was six years old.

"After returning home on retirement, Manoj had been trying to convince his father not to give their property shares to Manish as he would inherit Avadhraji's property. However, Shivnarayan was adamant about giving Manish a share of the family property and this led to the dispute and the killing," the police officer added.

In Unnao, a young man killed his grandfather by slitting his neck with a shovel. According to police, the accused killed his grandfather over a property dispute. The

deceased was identified as Anantu, a 70-year-old man, who was lying outside his house on Wednesday evening when the accused, identified as Umesh Yadav (24), attacked him.

On hearing the old man's scream, Umesh Yadav's mother came outside and saw her son killing his grandfather. Umesh fled from the spot after the crime.

Anantu did not have any children. Many years ago his wife passed away. Since then, he used to live at his brother's house. Umesh was angry with his grandfather over some property issues.

The police registered a complaint against the accused. A police team has been formed to nab Yadav. Further investigations are on.

In Etawah, a 55-year-old seer was murdered near Barauli Kala village, police said on Thursday.

Ramji, a resident of Sakrava village in Kannaua district, was living in a hut at a temple, about one kilometre away from Barauli Kala village.

The sadhu was murdered by unknown people on Wednesday night, Saifai police station in-charge Muhammad Tariq said. The killers used sharp-edged weapons to slit his throat, he said, adding that further investigations were on.

In Pratappgarh, a constable was allegedly lynched by three of his associates in Kunda locality.

Additional Superintendent of Police (West) Rahul Mishra said on Thursday that Sanjay Yadav (29), a police constable posted in Chhattisgarh, had come to his house in Maheshganj on leave these days and late on Wednesday night he along with his associates Kuldeep Yadav, Premchand and Pintu. Kunda had gone to town. He said that the three ate food and drank alcohol at a dhaba near a petrol pump. During this, there was a dispute between them about something and the three companions beat Sanjay Yadav with sticks and left him in a drain in an injured condition.

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# Students should be made aware of Abhyudaya: CM

## Yogi interacts with class X toppers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Underlining the importance of the Abhyudaya scheme of the Uttar Pradesh government for High School students in terms of preparations for competitive examinations, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday that information about it should be available in schools and students be made aware.

Interacting with ten UP Board High School toppers from Lucknow, Yogi asked them to work hard and also take part in extra-curricular activities. The CM gave the students tips on how to be work diligently.

“The students should visit the library regularly and keep themselves updated in all ways that will bring them success and help fulfil the dreams of their parents. The students did well even during the pandemic and did Lucknow proud,” the chief minister said.

“One should develop the habit of visiting libraries and make sure to read at least one English newspaper and one Hindi newspaper regularly so as to be updated about important



Chief Minister with UP Board High School toppers after an interaction with them in Lucknow on Thursday

local and global events. The event which is a news today may become a base of general knowledge for you tomorrow and you will not require a separate book for that. If you do not read the newspapers regularly, you will need to purchase books on current affairs,” the chief minister told the students.

He said news should be read carefully because often a headline says something while the content says something else. “There are also editorial pages in the newspapers with interesting opinion pieces by experts, indus-

trialists, editors and other known personalities. These can form a solid basis for competitive exam preparations. The write-ups on education, employment, government policies etc should be read regularly,” the CM told the students.

“At the time of progressing to a new class, you can donate the previous year’s books to the school library or to the needy. Efforts should be made to ensure there are as many books in the libraries as possible,” he said. He added that students they should be aware of who is the prime



Pioneer

minister of India, who is the president, the chief justice, the governor, etc.

He also asked the students to listen to the PM’s ‘Mann Ki Baat’ to get creative ideas.

“The prime minister also discusses the achievements of others in ‘Mann Ki Baat’ or what any youth has done and other people from the society have done which is worth mentioning. From time to time, he interacts with children through ‘Mann Ki Baat’ and ‘Pariksha Pe Charcha’,” Yogi said.

The chief minister pointed

out that PM Narendra Modi has written a book called ‘Exam Warriors’ which says that students should not fear the exams but approach it as a simple routine to not make it a challenge.

“The book will be made available to the students and they will be able to carry it forward. There are several subjects such as commerce and science in which formulas need to be memorised. These should be practised and the students should also focus on other important things. First read the lesson completely and then note

the important things and make notes. Most of the students only cram the notes made by their teachers which may help in the immediate results but when the concepts are not clear, it will create problems for you in the long run. We should go into the depth of subjects and the students should be encouraged to ask questions in the class and even outside,” the chief minister said.

The students also put up questions to the chief minister. A student, while praising the schemes of the government, said emphasis should be laid on Hindi instead of English.

The CM told the students about the various schemes and scholarships. “As far as subjects are concerned, a scientific analysis has been made in forming the courses and we have also made arrangements that they should know about their past, heritage or history and patriotic people and leaders who fought for independence. We have started with the Basic Shiksha Parishad. Schools should also know about the various government schemes,” Yogi said.

The CM said that principals should also have a dialogue with various government departments. “Just coming to school and finishing the course is not enough, one has to go for complete personality development,” he added.

# BSF employee’s kin battered to death

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A BSF employee’s uncle was battered to death in Kailash Vihar Colony in Sarojininagar police station area on the intervening night of June 22 and 23. Police said the victim was killed by his friend and a case of murder was registered against him. The accused was detained and he was being interrogated.

The deceased was identified as Maan Singh (52) of Pratapgarh district. He, along with his family, had gone to the house warming function hosted by his nephew Sandeep Kumar Singh, presently posted in West Bengal. Maan Singh, who was a truck driver, was staying with his family in Kanpur. As per reports, Maan Singh’s friend Ram Chandra, who also is a truck driver, was also present at the house warming function and had parked the truck near the house of one Shiv Sagar Dixit. Both Ram Chandra and Maan Singh had drinks and later went inside the truck to take rest. Maan Singh’s family alleged that Ram Chandra attacked him with a wooden plank, killing him on the spot, and later dumped the body in a vacant plot before fleeing the scene. “We were told about the recovery of a body and we reached the scene where we found Maan Singh lying dead,” they said.

Sources said Ram Chandra was nabbed by a police team near Eveready crossing in Talkatora area. A spokesman said a case was registered in this connection and the police were yet to find the motive for murder. “It surfaced that they fought over some issue and Ram Chandra hit Maan Singh latter with a wooden plank in a fit of rage,” he said.

Meanwhile, the body of a missing 60-year-old man was recovered from Agra Expressway in Para police station area on Thursday. The deceased was identified as Prahlad Lodhi of Mauda village in Kakori. Prahlad left his house around 1 pm on Wednesday and did not return home till late night. The family started searching for him, but in vain. On Thursday, they came to know of the recovery of a body and reached the scene where they identified the deceased as Prahlad.

## NRI prof’s fake email ID created, bank asked for change in details

**Lucknow (PNS):** Fraudsters created a fake e-mail ID of an NRI professor serving in the US and sent a request to the bank, in whose account his salary is credited, for changes in some details. After he was informed about it by the bank, he lodged a case with the Hussainganj police.

Abhijeet Mazumdar is a professor at Park University in the US and is a resident of Murli Nagar, Cantt road, in Hussainganj. He was informed by the bank about the e-mail through which he had requested a change in the bank account details. However, he was surprised as he had not made any such request.

He later reached Lucknow and lodged a case with the police. “Someone has created a fake e-mail ID using my details. He sent a request to the bank where I have a salary account. I complained to the cyber cell and was asked to lodge an FIR,” he said.

In another incident, Vivek Kumar Srivastava of Him City in Matiyari (Chinhhat) was duped of over Rs 15,000 in an online fraud on June 19.

As per reports, Vivek had placed an order for an item online and he got a call from a man who introduced himself as an agent of the courier company. “He told me that the item would be delivered at his doorstep and sent a link asking me to furnish the details,” Vivek said. He added that he filled an online form for registration and got a message regarding deduction of Rs 15,159.30 from his bank account after he submitted it.

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**CIRCLE HEAD**

## Uptick but not a wave, says Dr Wardhan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The uptick continued as Lucknow recorded 166 fresh cases of coronavirus infection on Thursday. District surveillance officer Dr Milind Wardhan said though there is a slight surge in Covid cases, it is not a wave. The state capital had recorded 191 cases on Wednesday.

“The pattern is the same across the country as you can see a slight increase in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune etc. The maximum cases are in urban areas, including those which have usually reported a surge, such as Aliganj, Chinhath and Alambagh,” he pointed out. He said most of the patients are asymptomatic while the others have mild symptoms. “People are getting cured in 3-4 days. Almost all of them are in home isolation,” Wardhan said.

“If the cases rise further, we will have L1, L2 and L3 hospitals ready as in the second wave. Though we do not think it will rise to that level, we are prepared for the worst,” he added. Dr Piyali Bhattacharya from SGP GIMS said the rise in Covid cases has been due to the decreasing immunity levels in people after a gap of six months. “Besides, people are also not adhering to Covid-appropriate behaviour and there are other factors too. Across the globe, there has been detection of a constellation of mutants, which means several mutations in one variant. It will lead to a milder fourth wave. The surge may also be due to variants other than those detected. BA5 is still around in the world and we may feel the heat here,” she said. She added that the numbers are increasing in Mumbai and since people are not taking precautions, the infection will also spread in Lucknow through travellers and the cases will rise.

## Tributes paid to Mukherjee



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paid tributes to Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on his death anniversary by garlanding his statue at the Civil hospital on Thursday. Yogi said Mukherjee was an educationist, social worker and political thinker and known for laying stress on the unity of the country.

“On his ‘Balidan Diwas’, we remember his sacrifice as he had given his life for the unity of the country. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was very clear that in one nation, there cannot be two ‘pradhans’, ‘nishans’ and ‘vidhans’.” He said that it was on this day itself that Mukherjee had sacrificed his life for Kashmir.

“His sacrifice had shaken the country. It was because of his sacrifice that Jammu & Kashmir could get rid of Article 370 and was also being rid of terrorism,” the CM said.

# Police open helpdesk for transgender community

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow police opened a helpdesk for the transgender community at Kaiserbagh police station on Thursday.

“It is a first-of-its-kind gender-inclusive community policing initiative in the state by the government,” said DCP, West, Somen Barma, who inaugurated the helpdesk. It will be managed by two female cops.

“The setting up of the helpdesk is an innovation to make the third gender community feel inclusive. It will be manned by an SI-level

woman officer and four constables.

It will be operational round the clock,” Commissioner of Police DK Thakur said. The helpdesk will address all the grievances of the transgender community in Lucknow and help them in getting legal assistance. Transgender community leader Sikander was also present on the occasion. Barma said the police were looking for NGOs working for welfare of transgenders.

ADCP, West, Chiranjeev Nath Sinha said the transgender community has been suffering discrimination since time immemorial and the helpdesk will help them.



## CITYBRIEFS

### LDA ENGINEER SHIFTED

Lucknow Development Authority chief engineer IS Singh was transferred on Thursday. He was attached to Awas Bandhu. It was disclosed in an official communique by Principal Secretary, Urban and Housing Development, Nitin Gokarn. It was alleged he was removed from the post following corruption charges and inquiries pending against him.

### GOLD MEDAL

Atharva Chandra, a class V student of City Montessori School, Chowk campus, won the gold medal in the 11th National Vovinam Championship-2022 held at CT Group of Institutions, Jalandhar, Punjab. He represented Uttar Pradesh in the sub-junior category in Thap Tha Quyen. The championship was organised under the aegis of Vovinam Association of India. The participants showcased their skills in the championship in which Atharva walked away with the gold medal.

### LECTURE

A lecture on army recruitment and women empowerment was organised for NCC cadets during a 10-day training camp organised by 19 UP Girls Battalion NCC at AMC Centre and College in Lucknow Cantonment. Colonel Vinod Joshi, Commanding Officer of



20 UP Girls Battalion NCC, delivered a lecture on army recruitment and women empowerment. He exhorted the NCC cadets to make a career in the army and highlighted every important aspect of the topics. He also shared all the information related to SSB with the NCC cadets. The cadets asked questions related to various subjects.

### SCHOLARSHIP

Divyam Bhaskar, a student of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus II, has been offered a US\$ 58,000 scholarship by the University of Arizona, USA, for pursuing higher education. The scholarship will be provided to him during the four-year undergraduate course. Besides, two more US universities have offered admission to him. Divyam credited his teachers and the educational environment in school for his achievement. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated Divyam and wished him suc-



# BBAU establishes centre to promote start-up ecosystem

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Shaping a vision of success for the students and faculty and moulding professionals with creative minds, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University has established a centre to promote the start-up ecosystem, Prof Naveen Arora from the department of Environmental Science said.

“Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises. BBAU has imbibed the idea and worked for the nurturing of start-ups, early-stage companies and young innovative thinkers. The ongoing Science Technology and Innovation Hub project in North India (Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh) funded by the Department of Science and Technology, has further extended the idea of the university and provided a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship through establishment of the Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) on the campus,” he said.

He said CIIE provides a unique platform for the faculty, staff, students and thinkers to achieve their goals.

“Innovative thoughts and technologies are often opted

out of the over-conservative established market by traditional practices and this can only be overcome by providing innovation and entrepreneurship platform as the core force and important carrier of the innovation system. CIIE encourages research-based knowledge which will influence education, practice and policy for the emerging markets. Achieving the socio-economic challenges in a sustainable manner is the greatest challenge of the present time. When every small step should be sustainable, development of centers like CIIE will not only bridge the component gaps in the innovation system but will also work for the achievement of sustainable development goals,” he said.

Meanwhile, a special lecture on ‘Global Climate Change’ was organised by the Department of Environmental Sciences, BBAU. The invited speaker was Prof Fuat Toprek from Decle University, Turkey.

He said many problems have cropped up due to change in the environment, the most important being global warming and depletion of the ozone layer. “Due to this, human life and even the existence of microorganisms, including animals and birds, is under threat,” he said.

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Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

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, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/ private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

**Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice**

**Borrower : Shri Sunil Kumar S/o Shri Shitla Prasad, R/o : A-68, Gujaini, Udyog Nagar, Kanpur Nagar. N.P.A. Date : 29-03-2022 & Demand Notice Date : 25-04-2022**  
**Property :** Residential Property Situated at House No. L/87, Block No. L.I.G., Scheme No.40, Barra-7, Kanpur Nagar. **Owner of Property :** Shri Sunil Kumar S/o Shri Shitla Prasad. **Area :** 66 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded-North :** House No.-88, **South :** House No.-86, **East :** House No.-90, **West :** 9 Mtr. Wide Road . **O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 41,21,152.84+Intt. + Others Charges**

**Date : 24-06-2022 Place : Kanpur Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India**

Notice under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act)				
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s) (A)	Particulars of Mortgaged property/properties (B)	Date Of NPA (C)	Outstanding amount (Rs.) (D)
1.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HDHLGRG00487682 (Earlier LAN Code 00002714 of DHFL) 1. AMIT KUMAR SHUKLA 2. MANJU DEVI	H.NO 171/769, KILLA No 27/29/2, 30, GALI No 18, KHANDSA ROAD, SHIVAJI PARK, GURGAON, HARYANA	20.05.2022	Rs. 58,02,006.45/- (Rupees Fifty Eight Lakh Two Thousand Six and Paise Forty Five Only) as on 20.05.2022
That the above named borrower(s) have failed to maintain the financial discipline towards their loan account (s) and as per books of accounts maintained in the ordinary course of business by the Company, Column D indicates the outstanding amount. Due to persistent default in repayment of the Loan amount on the part of the Borrower(s) the above said loan account has been classified by the Company as Non Performing Asset(s) (as on date in Column C) within the guidelines relating to assets classification issued by Regulating Authority. Consequently, notices under Sec. 13(2) of the Act were also issued to each of the borrower. In view of the above, the Company hereby calls upon the above named Borrower(s) to discharge in full his/their liabilities towards the Company by making the payment of the entire outstanding dues indicated in Column D above including up to date interest, costs, and charges within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the Company shall be entitled to take possession of the Mortgaged Property mentioned in Column B above and shall take such other actions as are available to the Company in law.				
Please note that in terms of provisions of sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, "A borrower can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Secured Creditor only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Further it may also be noted that in case Borrower fails to redeem the secured asset within aforesaid legally prescribed time frame, Borrower may not be entitled to redeem the property."				
In terms of provision of sub-Section (13) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of his business) any of the secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of secured creditor.				
Place: GURUGRAM (HARYANA) / BALLIA (UTTAR PRADESH)				For Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. Authorized Officer



# DM conducts surprise inspection of school

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Visakh G Dyer, carried out a sudden inspection of a Higher Secondary School, Bheetargaon on Thursday and reviewed the progress of works carried out under Kayakalp Scheme. He said that there should be no compromise on quality of work and should be as per the 21 parameters and warned that strict action will be taken in case of any laxity in development works. He said if any dereliction of duty was found then legal action be taken against the persons concerned. He then inspected the construction work being carried out for classes I, II, V and VIII and advised the teachers to ensure that they should teach



as per the curriculum and special emphasis should be made on teaching through smart class. He expressed concern over unhygienic conditions in toilets and said cleanliness should be the top priority. The DM then inspected the

Midday Meal room where the menu of the day was pulse and chappatti. The DM then tasted the food prepared and later inspected all spices and other ingredient used for cooking food. He directed SDM Narwal to carry out a campaign to

ensure there is no waterlogging and factors which led to it should be taken care of on priority. He expressed concern over encroachments on chak road, 'charagah' (grazing ground) and other government lands and directed them to remove all encroachments at the earliest. He then interacted with the Anganwadis and distributed nutritional diet to two of the pregnant women present on the occasion. He said the UP government was concerned to ensure that proper diet was provided to pregnant women. He interacted with the women and advised them to ensure that they should consume nutritional diet. He said special schemes were being run by the government for their welfare. A large number of officials and school staff and students were present.

## UP emerge champion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Uttar Pradesh emerged champions both in men's and women's categories of 23rd Sub-Junior National Powerlifting and National Benchpress Championships which concluded here at the Gaurav Memorial International School on Thursday. The team bagged the first place in sub-junior men's and women's categories, while Maharashtra and Manipur won the second and third places respectively in men's category. In the women's category, Manipur won the second prize and Uttarakhand the third place. In the National Benchpress Championship, Uttar Pradesh was adjudged the first winner in men's category followed by Maharashtra and Haryana, which had to remain content with second and third prizes. Likewise, in women's category also, UP got the first place followed by West Bengal



and Gujarat, which were adjudged the second and third winners respectively. On this basis Uttar Pradesh team clinched the overall champions trophy while the West Bengal and Gujarat were awarded for the second and third prize respectively. Chief guest MP Satyadev Pachauri gave away the trophy to winner and runners up. Director of Gaurav Memorial International School Arti Katiyar, international table tennis player Sanjiv Pathak, president of Indian Powerlifting Federation Satya Prakash Masi,

secretary Kausto Dutta, senior trade union leader Rajesh Shukla, acting president of UP Powerlifting Association Umesh Kumar Shukla, senior journalist AK Nigam, secretary of Kanpur Powerlifting Association Saurabh Gaur, Manish Mishra, Rajesh Dixit, Ankit Agarwal, Shobhit Verma, Rohit Sonkar, Abhishek Kashyap, Aniket Tewari, Manoj Singh, Anil Kushwaha and Prakash Bajpai were also present at the prize distribution ceremony. Secretary of UP Powerlifting Association Rahul Shukla proposed the vote of thanks.

## Branch Adalat campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

With the success of the earlier edition of Branch Adalat campaign between May 21 and May 26 Bank of India (BoI) decided to relaunch the campaign between June 21 to June 28 at pan India level. The concept behind Branch Adalat was to provide relief of borrowers affected by Covid-19 or any other reason, especially those having outstanding loans up to ₹ 5 crore under agriculture, MSME, retail and personal loan segment. In view of encouraging response of borrower, the BoI has decided to provide another opportunity to the bank's borrowers through the Branch Adalat campaign.

## PurpleSynapz & CSJMU AB Vajpayee School of Legal Studies sign MoU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

PurpleSynapz and CSJMU Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Legal Studies, signed an MoU. The MoU was signed by Pro-Vice Chancellor of the varsity, Prof Sudhir Kumar Awasthi and CEO PurpleSynapz Kapil Awasthi. Addressing the gathering Pro-Vice said this was a golden opportunity for CSJMU students in the field of cyber security and they will be able to pursue careers in the area of cyber security as well. He said it was a matter of pride that the leading name in cyber security was providing training to the students. He said this MoU aimed to promote collaboration between the two institutions at the social level and helps implement new legal education and cyber security dimensions as

per the current environment. He said this pact would improve ties between business and academia and would be very beneficial for the Department of Legal Studies' teachers, students and the company's cyber professionals. He said cybercrime was a serious issue and because people were unaware of the cybercrime regulations, the graph of cybercrime was continuously rising. He said there was an imperative need to educate more people about cyber legislation and include it in our curricula. Director of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Legal Studies, Dr Shashi Kant Tripathi, said our students and company would work together more effectively in cyber security.

**YOGA SESSION:** Vice-Chancellor of the CSJM

University, Prof Vinay Pathak on Thursday said that the varsity had decided to organise a Yoga session on the premises on Friday and added that the School of Health Sciences and the Department of Physical Education jointly will work to organise this programme and the topic was 'Yoga for Humanity'. He said the chief guest of the programme will be Padamshri Awardee Swami Bharat Bhushan, who is the founder and Chairman of Mokshayatan International Yogashram, Saharanpur. Swami Bharat Bhushan, developed a triangle-based approach to physical growth based on the Sattvik diet, Yoga and isometric exercises. He gained an international reputation because of personality development system. He said the humanitarian side of Yoga had

been widely disseminated by Yog Guru Swami Bharat Bhushan, who has also significantly contributed to the promotion of spiritual tourism.

He said that Yoga was an age-old practice that had its roots in Indian philosophy although it started as a spiritual practice, it has gained popularity as a means of spreading physical and mental well-being. He said there will be three special guests Ayurveda Acharya Dr Vandana Pathak and Pro V. C. Sudhir Kumar Awasthi, Registrar Dr Anil Kumar Yadav in this programme. Dr Ashish Kumar Dubey (HoD of the Physical Education department), Dr Ram Kishore (programme coordinator) and Dr Digvijay Sharma (Director of School of Health Science) will also be present in this programme.

## CSAUA&T observing Environment-friendly Week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) is observing a week long Environment-friendly Week. The celebrations took off in a big way on Thursday and will continue till June 30. Vice-Chancellor of the varsity, Dr DR Singh, said pollution, be it sound, water or air was a major cause of concern and it was highly essential for the academia to ensure they set an example for others to follow. He said for one complete week there shall be no plying of fuel driven vehicles on the campus and e-rickshaws will be plying on the campus to carry people free of cost. The V-C left his official vehicle at home and went to his office on foot on Thursday along with other staff members. He said it was highly essential to practice then preach and said this will pass on a big message to the masses. He said fossil fuel driven vehicles on the one hand were essential in the current times but on the other they



Vice-Chancellor of CSAUA&T Dr DR Singh walks to office as part of Environment-friendly Week celebrations on Thursday.

were a potent health threat to the people as well. He appealed to the faculty, staff and students to ensure they did not bring fuel driven vehicles on the campus till June 30. He said carbon emissions caused climate change by trapping heat and they also contributed to respiratory disease from smog and air pollution. He said extreme weather, food supply

disruptions and increased wildfires were other effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gases. He said emissions such as chlorofluoro carbons which were introduced into the atmosphere due to different human activities led to depletion of ozone layer which directly or indirectly effected the climate. He said due to these increased emissions the

global environment was facing immeasurable changes which can impact climate as well as human health. He said air quality was one of the leading troubles in our society and there were numerous factors that effected quality of air and one of them was vehicular emission. He said varsity has made a beginning and hoped at least academia of the city will follow suit.

## Air Cmde Gangopadhyay takes over command of AF station Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Air Commodore Partho Sankar Gangopadhyay took over the command of Air Force Station Kanpur on June 21. He took over charge from Air Commodore N Karthikeyan. The new Air Commodore was commissioned into the Indian Air Force as an Aeronautical Engineering (Electronics) officer on September 4, 1988. He is B Tech in Electronics & Communication Engineering and a postgraduate in Nuclear Science from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. He did MPHIL from Indian Institute of Public Administration and was an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College. During his service career, he had held important appointments, which include Senior Engineering Officer of two frontline fighter squadrons, Commanding Officer of a fighter Technical Type Training (TETTRA), Chief Engineering Officer of a premier Air Force Station and



Air Commodore Partho Sankar Gangopadhyay took over the command of Air Force Station Kanpur.

critical appointments in Air Headquarters. In recognition of his contribution to the IAF he was commended by the Air Officer Commanding in Chief

(AOC-in-C) and also by the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS). He was decorated with Vishist Seva Medal (VSM) in 2014. Prior to taking over the command of Air

Force Station Kanpur he was the project director of indigenous fighter and trainer design and development at Aeronautical Development Agency Bengaluru.

## Man, nephew killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A motorcyclist and his eight-year-old nephew were killed while the child's mother was grievously injured when a speeding truck knocked them down in Rupnagar village under Ghatampur Kotwali police area on Thursday morning. Due to her serious condition, doctors at Ghatampur Community Health Centre (CHC) referred the woman for Kanpur. After the incident, the truck driver along with vehicle was caught by Moosanagar police. Both the bodies were sent for autopsy. Dr Om Prakash of Bhadras (Ghatampur) had died of illness two years ago. He was a veterinary doctor and survived by wife Neeta and son Shiva (8). His elder brother Raj Prakash informed that on Wednesday, the husband of Neeta's sister Bablu had taken

her and Shiva to his Kripalpur village, Moosanagar, (Kanpur Dehat) on bike to attend the birthday ceremony of his son Monu (5). On Thursday morning when Bablu was going to drop Neeta and her son Shiva in Bhadras village on the bike a speeding truck coming from Ghatampur knocked them down in Rupnagar village on Mughal Road and injuring them seriously. The passersby informed the police which immediately rushed to the spot and sent the injured to Ghatampur CHC in an ambulance. On information of police control room, Moosanagar police caught the truck driver with the vehicle. At the Ghatampur CHC doctors declared Bablu and Shiva dead and referred Neeta to the LLR (Hallet) hospital, Kanpur, due to her serious condition. Bablu is survived by wife Vineeta and daughter Radhika (2). He was

engaged in milk supply trade. **SUICIDE:** A man committed suicide by hanging himself in Kandhiya village under Akbarpur Kotwali police station of Kanpur dehat late on Wednesday night. He was identified as Raj Kumar (26). Kin said that the brother-in-law of Raj Kumar had taken latter's bike two days ago and fled after a mishap. During quizzing by Akbarpur police, Raj Kumar informed about the involvement of his brother-in-law in the mishap. Thereafter, police also quizzed his brother-in-law. This irked his inlaws who had scolded him after an argument. His wife had also distanced herself from him to mark her protest. All this had upset Raj Kumar and forced him to end his life by hanging himself from a tree on the outskirts of the village late on Wednesday night. On Thursday morning when Raj

Kumar was found missing from his room, his family members and villagers looked for him and found him hanging by a tree. Meanwhile, his inlaws also reached there and pressed for return of their daughter's jewellery. There was a heated argument between both the families over it. Police rushed to spot and pacified the issue. Raj Kumar's brother Vinod said the bike given to the deceased in dowry was registered in the name of his father-in-law Jeetu. Raj Kumar had several times insisted to transfer the registration of the bike in his name, but the latter turned a blind eye to the issue. Akbarpur Station House Officer (SHO) Vinod Pandey said kin of the deceased alleged the involvement of inlaws in his death. On the basis of complaint further action will be taken in the matter, he said.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
**e-TENDER CALL NOTICE**  
TD/TM/GEN-225(Vol-IV)/22/1094  
std. 07.06.2022  
Name of the work :- " Allotment of 07 (Seven) nos. of Manual Iron Ore/iron Ore Pellet Plots".  
License Fees : Rs. 2,36,09,322/-  
Wharfage Fees : Rs.6,83,484/-  
Last date & time of submission of bid : 28.06.2022 up to 16:00 hrs.  
Date and time of opening (technical bid): 28.06.2022 up to 16:00 hrs.  
Refer our website for details : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.  
Traffic Manager  
Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/166/22-23, Dtd. 23.06.2022

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
**e-TENDER CALL NOTICE**  
No. EM/MCHP- 22/2022  
Date: 27.05.2022  
Name of the work:- "Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of fixed high velocity water spray system for fire protection of two nos 20 MVA Power Transformers at MCHP".  
Estimated cost: Rs.1,30,33,611/-  
Last date & time of submission of bid: 28.06.2022 up to 17:00 hrs. Refer our website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.  
Executive Engineer (M), MCHP  
PPA/PR/166/22-23 Dt. 23.06.2022

**SBFC**  
**SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.**  
Address: Unit No. 103, First Floor C&S Square, Sangam Complex, 127, Andheri-Kurla Road, Village Chakala, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400059 | Telephone: +91 22 67875300 | Fax: +91 22 67875334 | [www.sbfc.com](http://www.sbfc.com)  
Corporate Identity Number: U57190MH2008PTC18270  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. On 28th June 22 at Lucknow district Gomti Nagar, Alambagh and HARJINDER Nagar Kanpur. Branch, Gomti Nagar address: 1st Floor, 1/8, Bhatia Complex, Vram Khand, Patrakarapuram Chowraha, Gontinagar, district Lucknow - 226010, Alambagh address : Kundan Clinic 551/176 Jha first floor Alambagh Lucknow-226005, and Harjinder Nagar Kanpur district address: 1, 15B, N-2 Road, Lal Bangla Harjinder Nagar, Kanpur-208007, Uttar Pradesh- 243001. The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been issued to these borrowers. The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to all linked accounts of Customer ID for various customers mentioned below with branch details. Kanpur:AP00277746, AP00311609, AP00350467, AP00369928, AP00378609, AP00379391, AP00398472, AP00413078, AP00414346 Lucknow: AP00202954, AP0039222, AP00110438, AP00116178, AP00168680, AP00194195, AP00194212, AP00199988, AP00202211, AP00201596, AP00204099, AP00247543, AP00272223, AP00314960, AP00319703, AP00322559, AP00339825, AP00345188, AP00345189, AP00371312, AP00383968, AP00384435, AP00392152 Ayodhya: AP02472794, AP00280214, AP00301969, AP00350868, AP00398347 For more details, please contact:  
**SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.**  
Contact Number(s): 1800-102-8012, Alambagh: 0522-4113874/4113841, Gomti Nagar: 0522-4114337/4114338, Swaroop Nagar: 0512-2530892/2530897 (SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned & postpone / cancel the auction without any prior notice.)

**Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in) (Contact Number 96461-08405)  
Tender Inquiry No.: 36/CE/Thermal (D) 2022-23 Dated: 22-06-2022  
Dy. CE/ Projects under THERMAL DESIGNS ORGANISATION PSPCL Patiala Shed No. T-2, Thermal (D), Shakti Vihar, Patiala invites tender notice for Utilization of 35,00,000 MT of Pond Ash at GNDTP, Bathinda. For detailed NIT & tender specification, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 24-06-2022 (11:00 AM) onwards.  
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
76155/12/948/2021/15164 C-243

**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 subjected 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)	Description of secured asset (immovable property)	Total Outstanding Dues (Rs.)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession
Lucknow BRANCH Mr. Deepak Jaswal, Mrs. Sandhya Devi (Proprietor No. IL10043026)	All that piece and parcel of: House Built On Plot Over Kh. No.476 Minjuma, Area Admeasuring 750 Sq. Ft., Daud Nagar, Ward- Fazlulagani, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. 226021	Rs. 29,05,357/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakh Five Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Seven Only)	31-Dec-2021	21-June-22

  
For further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office: 1017, Tenth Floor, Cyber Heights, TC 2/2 and TC 5/5, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226 010 / or Corporate Office: Plot No. 98, Phase-IV, Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana.  
Place: Lucknow Date: 24/06/2022 Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Limited

Notice under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act)				
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s) (A)	Particulars of Mortgaged property/properties (B)	Date Of NPA (C)	Outstanding amount (Rs.) (D)
1.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLNOD00352839 1. RISHABH GUPTA 2. ASHOK KUMAR GUPTA 3. HIMANSHU PANDEY (GUARANTOR)	FLAT NO. 1605, 16th FLOOR, TOWER-SPARK, "SIKKA KANMAA GREENS", PLOT NO. GH-05B, SECTOR-143B, NOIDA-201301, UTTAR PRADESH	18.05.2022	Rs. 36,95,321.87/- (Rupees Thirty Six Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Three Hundred Twenty One and Paise Eighty Seven Only) as on 18.05.2022
2.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLNOI0036997 1. AKASH (PROPRIETOR OF SHALIMAR TENT AND CATERERS) 2. SHIKHA AGGARWAL	FLAT NO. GF-1, GROUND FLOOR, FRONT SIDE, PLOT NO. A-109, BLOCK-A, SLF VED VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD-201102, UTTAR PRADESH	13.05.2022	Rs. 18,67,422.47/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Two and Paise Forty Seven Only) as on 13.05.2022
3.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLMER00459667 1. NITIN GOYAL (PROPRIETOR OF SHRI HARI TRADERS) 2. AYUSHI GOEL	SECOND FLOOR FLAT ON PLOT NO. 5, PART OF KHASRA NO. 123, MAANSAROVAR GARDEN COLONY, VILLAGE-MOKHAMPUR, DELHI ROAD, PARGANA AND TEHSIL MEERUT, MEERUT-250002, UTTAR PRADESH	13.05.2022	Rs. 16,00,994.49/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Nine Hundred Ninety Four and Paise Forty Nine Only) as on 13.05.2022
4.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLNOD00435203 1. BIJENDRA SINGH BANSAL 2. RENU 3. SURENDRA SINGH BANSAL (GUARANTOR)	APARTMENT NO. TWINZ-SUN 5-0702, SEVENTH FLOOR, MIGSUN WYNN, PLOT NO. GH-01 (B1), SECTOR-ETA-2, GREATER NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR-201303, UTTAR PRADESH	18.05.2022	Rs. 20,40,149.30/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Forty Thousand One Hundred Forty Nine and Paise Thirty Only) as on 18.05.2022
5.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLNOD00410180 1. AMALA PRASANNA GHOSHAL 2. SADHNA GHOSHAL	APARTMENT NO. TWINZ - SUN 5 - 1104, FLOOR - 11TH, "MIGSUN WYNN", PLOT NO. GH - 01 (B1), SECTOR - ETA-2, GREATER NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR-201308, UTTAR PRADESH	17.05.2022	Rs. 11,27,633.88/- (Rupees Eleven Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Three and Paise Eighty Eight Only) as on 17.05.2022
6.	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLDIP00184636 1. SUNIL KUMAR 2. ARCHANA SINGH	FLAT NO. C-2503, 2ND FLOOR, BLOCK C, SPRINGVIEW FLOORS, CRESCENT PARC, VILLAGE SHAHPUR BAMHETA, GHAZIABAD-201002, UTTAR PRADESH	23.05.2022	Rs. 14,63,038.57/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Sixty Three Thousand Thirty Eight and Paise Fifty Seven Only) as on 23.05.2022
That the above named borrower(s) have failed to maintain the financial discipline towards their loan account (s) and as per books of accounts maintained in the ordinary course of business by the Company, Column D indicates the outstanding amount. Due to persistent default in repayment of the Loan amount on the part of the Borrower(s) the above said loan account has been classified by the Company as Non Performing Asset (as on date in Column C) within the guidelines relating to assets classification issued by Regulating Authority. Consequently, notices under Sec. 13(2) of the Act were also issued to each of the borrower. In view of the above, the Company hereby calls upon the above named Borrower(s) to discharge in full his/her liabilities towards the Company by making the payment of the entire outstanding dues indicated in Column D above including up to date interest, costs, and charges within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the Company shall be entitled to take possession of the Mortgaged Property mentioned in Column B above and shall also take such other actions as is available to the Company in law. Please note that in terms of provisions of sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, "A borrower can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Secured Creditor only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Further it may also be noted that in case Borrower fails to redeem the secured asset within aforesaid legally prescribed time frame, Borrower may not be entitled to redeem the property." In terms of provision of sub-Section (13) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of this business) any of the secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of secured creditor.  Place: NOIDA/ FATEHPUR / GHAZIABAD / MEERUT/ GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR / HAPUR / GREATER NOIDA / HATHRAS (UTTAR PRADESH)  For Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. Authorized Officer				





Children enjoying arrival of Monsoon in Varanasi on Thursday afternoon.

Pioneer

## Monsoon arrives in Purvanchal, brings cheers among farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As expected for the last couple of days, Monsoon finally arrived not only in the city on Thursday afternoon but also brought cheers among the farmers, especially the paddy growers, of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) which is popularly known as 'Rice Bowl'. Since this region received the pre-Monsoon showers a few days ago, there was an expectation that the Monsoon would come soon, though it was delayed by a day as the region was scheduled to receive Monsoon between June 18 and 22. As many parts of Sonbhadra and adjoining areas had received rains a day ago, it

was also expected that the Monsoon would arrive in areas anytime during the day.

As the rains hit the city in the afternoon hours, it gave a lot of relief from humidity. Due to frequent power cuts in this parliamentary constituency of the Prime Minister in recent days and high humidity, the local residents were facing a lot of uneasiness. As soon as the rains arrived in many localities, the children came on the roads and started enjoying it. The rains also brought happiness among the paddy growers and they are hopeful that in the coming days, the region would receive a good rain helping them start sowing of paddy nursery.

Though as usual, the rains brought cheers among the rural areas it increased some miseries in the city as the rains paralysed the normal life for hours, leaving many areas water-logged. Due to rains, the markets wore a deserted look in the peak evening hours. Due to water-logging in many main markets including Godowlia, Dashashwamedh, Nai Sarak, Luxa and others, the movement of the people was restricted and the same disappointed the traders who were expecting a good evening rush of customers.

Besides, the rains also affected the flight movement in the afternoon hours as several flights were delayed as per the

reports of Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur.

The flights 68-349, W2-9001, 6E-5349 (all from Mumbai), SG-3261 from Jaipur and IX-184 from Sharjah were delayed. Rain also disrupted power supply for hours in many areas. At Andhrapul, several two-wheelers and three-wheelers were stranded and movement of vehicles was slowed down. In several other places including Teliabagh, Ravindrapuri Colony, Khojwa, Nawabganj and Mahmooorganj in the city areas and Panchkoshi Marg, Jakhani Road, Raja Talab and others in rural areas saw water-logging.

## Speed up UDID card issuing process: CDO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the chairmanship of Chief Development Officer (CDO) Abhishek Goyal, the joint meeting of the District Management Committee (District Disabled Rehabilitation Centre), Local Level Committee, District Disability Committee and Special Disability Identity Card Committee was held at Vikas Bhawan here on Wednesday. Addressing the meeting, the CDO has directed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and District Disabled

Empowerment Officer to speed up the pace of making UDID cards.

Goyal also directed the CMO to make proper arrangements for sitting and drinking water for the Divyangians (physically disabled persons) while issuing the disability certificates at Pt Deendayal Upadhyay (DDU) Government Hospital, Pandeypur and Shri Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital, Kabirchaura. Besides, he instructed the Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) of DDU Hospital to make an alternative

arrangement for establishing the District Disabled Rehabilitation Centre at the hospital on the ground floor. Due to the completion of the tenure of the Local Level Committee, it was decided to constitute a new committee. The CDO directed that after making publicity, the concerned Medical Board should issue disability certificates in all types of disabilities as 21 types of disability are mentioned under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

In view of the problems being faced by the handicapped

persons in making the Aadhar cards, the officers of the banks and post offices were directed to come up with alternative solutions,' the CDO said. District Development Officer, District Panchayat Raj Officer, CMO, CMS of DDU Hospital, District Backward Classes Welfare Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, District Divyangjan Empowerment Officer, District Probation Officer, Uttam Ojha, Rajeev Tandon, psychiatrist Ajay Kumar Singh, Shyam and representatives of voluntary organisations were also present.

## AYUSH doctors asked to give details of TB patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Every effort is being made continuously to make the country free from tuberculosis (TB) by 2025. The government has taken another important step in this direction. Under this, now AYUSH doctors (Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Unani) should also give details of TB patients and they will be able to refer TB patients to PHCs and CHCs. An incentive amount of Rs 500 will be given to such doctors on the registration of the patient on the Nikshay portal. District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO) Dr Rahul Singh said that the Directorate of Medical and

Health has issued a special guideline for this. According to the new instructions, if any private doctor of Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Unani treats a patient with symptoms of TB, then first of all he/she will have to compulsorily inform the nearest PHC/ CHC or District Hospital. 'At the clinic of such doctors, any such patient who is having persistent cough, fever, persistent sweating, blood in mucus, continuous weight loss for two weeks, then such potential TB patient should be examined immediately. For this, it will have to be sent to the nearest health centre or hospital,' he said, adding that on confirmation of TB in the test, an

incentive amount of Rs 500 will be given to the private Ayush doctor in his account.

Dr Singh informed that a list of all private homeopathic, Ayurvedic and Unani doctors in the district is being prepared for implementation of the new instructions. He has appealed to all the doctors of the district to send all the patients with symptoms of TB to the TB department or the nearest health centre so that it can help in eradicating TB from the root. 'If TB is confirmed in the symptomatic patient, other family members of the patients and the people who are in contact with him/her will also be examined. On confirmation

of TB, all will be treated free of cost,' he added.

Regional Ayurveda and Unani Officer Dr Bhawna Dwivedi said that the work has been started as per the instructions received from the Directorate of Health. In this direction, all the Ayurveda and Unani doctors of the respective districts of the region have been asked to follow this instruction. District Homeopath Officer Dr Rachna Srivastava said that all the homeopathic doctors of the district have been asked to follow the instructions received regarding TB patients so that success can be achieved in eradicating tuberculosis.

## Truck cleaner's murder worked out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The police on Thursday claimed to have worked out the murder case of the cleaner of a commercial vehicle and arrested three in this connection. The driver of the vehicle was shot at and admitted in the hospital where his condition was stated to be improving.

It is learnt that one Lalji Pal (45), resident of Navapura in Sarnath, is a driver in a factory of gutkha. He along with the cleaner Manish Yadav, resident of Rustampur in Chaubeypur, reached a petrol

pump late night on June 14 after making delivery of goods in Azamgarh. After parking the commercial vehicle at the petrol pump, both driver and cleaner were returning to their homes by bike.

When they were on the way in Lalpur, two motorcycle-borne criminals overtook their two-wheeler and opened fire targeting them and fled away from the scene.

On getting information, the Lalpur-Pandeypur police reached the site and rushed both to the trauma centre in BFHU where the cleaner succumbed to bullet injuries, while

the condition of the driver was stated to be improving. The incident was captured in the CCTV camera installed near the spot.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP-Varuna Zone) Aditya Langhe informed the newsmen that the mastermind behind the murder were the notorious criminal Sriprakash Mishra aka Jhunnua Pandit and his aide Ravi Patel who are currently in jail under the Gangster Act.

The jailed gangsters had hatched a conspiracy to kill both the driver and cleaner to loot the collection money from

them.

The police arrested Anuj Jha, shooter of jailed criminal and his two aides Yash Singh and Pramod Gupta in this connection and also recovered a pistol and bike used in the crime.

The conspiracy to loot the driver and cleaner was made in a restaurant located in Pandeypur.

The police teams were conducting raids to nab the restaurant owner Dipankar Patel, Rohit Yadav and Abhishek Patel who were also involved in the crime, the police officer informed.

## Law students press for promotion, stage protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Allahabad University campus has turned into an arena for the second consecutive day on Thursday after Allahabad University had turned down the demand to promote LLB students instead of examination. These LLB students, who sat on a sit-in overnight protested on Thursday morning warning that they would be forced to commit self-immolation collectively if they were not promoted by postponing the examination to be held on July 7.

ADM (City) and SP (City) tried to persuade them but they refused to budge. After this the police, taking action, picked up the agitating students and filled them in the police bus and made them sit in Police Lines. On this the officers said that such unnecessary nuisance cannot be allowed to happen.

Allahabad University's LLB - BALLB examinations are proposed from July 7. Citing incomplete syllabus and bad session, students are demanding promotion instead of examination and starting fifth semester classes from July 1. On June 20 law students had created a ruckus outside the examination controller's office on this issue. Chief Proctor Prof Harsh Kumar had asked the students to apprise them about the decision of the AU on June 22. On Wednesday the Chief Proctor had reached among the students on the scheduled date and told that the university administration has decided to conduct the examination only. On this the students got furious and started dharna in the sun outside the office of the controller of examination. At around 3.30 pm when the Chief Proctor Prof Harsh Kumar started leaving



Protesting students of Allahabad University being taken to Police Lines by police bus.

the students sitting on the dharna, shouting slogans followed him. Enraged by it the Chief Proctor returned and warned the students to file a case. Then things got worse and an argument ensued.

The chief proctor broke into the crowd of students and the security personnel pulled him out from there. It was only after this clash that the students had announced that they would not end the dharna till the AU administration would take a decision on promoting them. These LLB students, who were sitting on a dharna all night long, continued to protest on Thursday to fulfil their demand. They are raising the demand to promote them by raising slogans against the AU administration. Police force is also present there but students are now warning of self-immolation. Around 11 o'clock SP (City) Dinesh Singh and ADM (City) Madan Kumar also reached with Chief Proctor Prof Harsh Kumar. The students were explained

that the examination would definitely take place, but even then they did not calm down so the police caught them and made them sit in the bus. All of them have been taken to the Police Lines.

Chief Proctor Prof Harsh Kumar said the examination of LLB students will be held on time only.

The demand of promoting the students has not been accepted.

They were informed in this regard by going among them, even then they sat on a dharna. In such a situation, the police have taken necessary action so that peace and order is maintained here in varsity.

**ITMS ALL SET TO TAME MOTORISTS:** Think twice, if you are violating the traffic norms like jumping of stop line, tripling, violation of speed limit, driving without helmet and seat belt and faulty number plates on city crossings and intersections. The district traffic police authorities are all set to tighten the noose around

traffic violators and issuing e-challans with the help of cameras being installed at crossings of the city under the ITMS (Information Management Technology System).

SP, Traffic, Arun Dixit told the reporters that the ITMS is all set to tame motorists and each and every traffic violators will be punished.

He added, "Riding two-wheelers without a helmet, jumping traffic lights, triple-riding on two-wheelers, over-speeding and driving four-wheelers without wearing a belt will be strictly dealt and the hi-tech cameras installed under ITMS at strategic points in the city which are helpful to send real-time pictures of traffic violations, will also help issue e-challan.

Besides, traffic police authorities have also geared up to streamline traffic at identified black spots. Both traffic police department and RTO have been asked to install traffic signs at black spots and speed limit violators.

## Hi-tech ATVMs to be re-installed at rly stns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Hi-tech Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs) will be re-installed at railway stations. With it passengers will be freed from standing in the queue at the ticket counter and will be able to take unreserved tickets easily. The operation of these machines will be very easy. Assistants will also be available for their operation.

During Corona period, the operation of trains stopped. Later the journey started only on reserved tickets, due to which these machines were not in use for almost two years. Now the operation of trains has become regular again and the journey on general ticket has also started. North Eastern Railway (NER) has placed an order for the purchase of 108 ATVMs for installing them at its major stations, including Prayagraj Rambagh railway station. Three ATVMs will be installed in Rambagh.

PRO of Varanasi Division Ashok Kumar said that new machines will be installed at railway stations where the automatic ticket vending machine had become damaged. Passengers will be able to buy general tickets by paying digitally.

Meanwhile, due to doubling work between Khetasari - Mehrawan Meghawan station of Barabanki - Ayodhya Cantt, 11055/11056 Gorakhpur LTT will run on the changed route. This train will run from Lokmanya Tilak on June 24, 26, 27, 29 June and July 1 via Lokmanya Tilak to Prayagraj Junction, Rambagh, Banaras Junction - Prayagraj Rambagh Banaras - Varanasi Junction -

Varanasi City - Mau. In return it will run from Gorakhpur on the same route on June 24, 26, 28, 29, July 1 and 3. Apart from this, 11059/11060 Lokmanya - Chhapra Express will leave Lokmanya Tilak Terminus on June 23, 25, 28, 30 and July 2, while in return journey from Chhapra on June 25, 27, 30 and July 2 will also run on the same route.

**COMPETITIONS:** In order to increase creative participation of officers and employees in the use of Official Language Hindi, Hindi noting and draft writing and Hindi essay and speech competitions were organised at the regional railway level by the Department of Official Language, North Central Railway headquarters under the guidance of Chief Official Language Officer Shashikant Singh.

The employees working in all the divisions and factories including the office of the General Manager, participated in these competitions with great enthusiasm. Participants from headquarters etc were present in the Hindi speech competition organised on the topic 'Measures to make Indian Railways financially self-reliant.'

The participating employees elaborated on the measures to make Indian Railways financially self-reliant and various aspects of income growth and expenditure reduction in line with the changing times. Chief Official Language Officer and PCCM Shashikant Singh said in the speech competition, the speakers should have proper understanding of the subject and have clear expression along with accurate facts. Singh said that various factors

of income and expenditure should be analysed in depth to make Indian Railways financially self-reliant.

Deputy Chief Official Language Officer Shailendra Kumar Singh, who was present as the judge, said that to make Indian Railways financially self-reliant, it has to reduce its debts and also increase the level of research and development.

Singh said that for this, along with increasing domestic and foreign tourists, it is also necessary to pay attention to the commercial use of railway land and to do advertisement and publicity work. In this competition MS Najmi, Sr Section Engineer/Tele, Construction Organisation, HQ, got first position, Ajay Prakash, Technician, Diesel Shed, Jhansi second position and Kumari Kishori, Office Superintendent, Mechanical Department, HQ got the third position.

**REFUND OF TICKETS:** The recently held violent demonstrations against the Agnipath recruitment scheme of the Central government has disrupted operation of large number of trains and at the same time the unrest has cost the Indian Railways in refund of tickets owing to mass cancellation of trains. The monetary loss to the railways was in addition to the loss of crores which railway has incurred by the damages and arson of train. In Prayagraj division alone, railways have been forced to refund for cancelled tickets in lakhs from its reservation counters alone. If tickets cancellations through online medium, data of which is not yet available locally, is taken in to account, this

amount could well in crores.

Officials share that more than 2,500 trains of North Central Railway (NCR) were affected owing to the agitation and around 100 trains on Prayagraj route had to be cancelled. "Cancellation of tickets took place in large numbers and we refunded the due amounts as per norms. However, now the situation is fast returning to normal in terms of operation of trains and ticker cancellations too have come down," said Amit Singh, Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Prayagraj division of NCR. In Prayagraj division Railways has refunded in lakhs from its reservation counters in just five days of the agitation.

**CHILD FALLS INTO TUB, DIES:** The mistake of not keeping an eye on children has caused deep sorrow to another family. A one-and-a-half-year old child fell in a tub filled with water while playing in Bakhtawar Ka Pura village in Manikpur area of Pratapgarh.

The child fell in such a way that his face was submerged in water and he breathing stopped due to suffocation. By the time mother's eye fell her on the child it was too late and he had died. A pall of gloom descended on the family while the mother who was inconsolable had fainted.

The son of Anand Maurya, who lived in the Bakhtawar Ka Pura was just one-and-a-half years old. There was happiness in the family due to the child. But Thursday's incident has shocked everyone. When the news spread, along with the people around, relatives also came and consoled the mother.

## DIG honours cops of Bhadohi

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DIG police (Vindhyachal Range) honoured cops of Bhadohi by conferring commendation letters for outstanding performance on Wednesday. The district police secured the first place in the state by disposing the cases related to IGRS, PG portal, helpline etc on merit. Another case was related to a loot of a truck at Dafi toll plaza on January 1, 2022, in which the truck driver had been murdered. Though the case was registered at Lanka police station in Varanasi but the joint

team of SOG, Surveillance, SWAT of Bhadohi police recovered the truck and arrested the main accused. The DIG honoured the team, including SHO Ajit Kumar Singh.

**DIRECTIVE:** DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar while presiding over the meeting of District Nutrition Committee at Collectorate on Wednesday directed PO ICDS to ensure availability of weighing machines at all Aanganbadi centres in operational condition.

In the meeting the DM was apprised about shortage of IFA syrup for which ACOMO Dr

Neelesh assured that within two days it will be available at all centres along with other prescribed medicines for children.

About construction of Anganwadi buildings the DM was apprised that out of 18 construction of 13 had been completed and others were in progress. About the toilets out of 44 only 30 had been completed.

The DM directed to the ADPRO to get all toilets as completed without inordinate delay. The DM directed the officials concerned to make all preparations for 'Sambhav'

drive which was scheduled to be held from June 25 to 30. The meeting was attended by DFO PS Tripathi, PO ICDS Vani Verma, ACOMO Dr Neelesh and other officials concerned.

Meanwhile the meeting of district level committee under Rani Laxmibai Mahila Evam Bal Samman Kosh was presided over by DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar on Wednesday. In it 58 applications had been brought for consideration in which 24 were approved on merit. It was attended by SP Ajau Singh, CTO RK Gupta, ACOMO Dr Neelesh, Probation Officer Shakti Tripathi and LDM.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Down, but not out

Uddhav's precarious position in Maharashtra may be a setback but doesn't mean the end of the road

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's departure from his official residence 'Varsha' on Wednesday night to his family home 'Matoshree' may seem to be a decline, if not the end, of his family's hold over the party that his father, Bal Thackeray, built. It was quite emotional, with a large number of Shiv Sainiks showing solidarity with him. As emotional as his (farewell?) speech: "Will quit as Chief Minister and leave official residence if even one of the disgruntled MLAs says he doesn't want me as Chief Minister." His speech was on Facebook, as he has been infected with the Coronavirus. He made three main points that need to be highlighted. One, he presented himself as an atypical politician; he is not among those for whom power is to be grabbed at any cost: "I have kept letter of my resignation as Chief Minister ready, willing to resign this very moment." Two, his party is still with him: "Getting calls from MLAs who have gone with Eknath Shinde; they are claiming that they were forcibly taken away." And, finally, he has reiterated his adherence to Hindu nationalism: "Shiv Sena can't be separated from Hindutva." His followers and sympathisers will agree with him, but others may like to raise a few questions. The Shiv Sena fought and won the 2019 Assembly election in alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party,



with the BJP's Devendra Fadnis as the chief ministerial candidate. Then why did Shiv Sena ditch the BJP, the only other Hindutva force in the country, for the parties that are inherently anti-Hindutva?

Further, are Shiv Sena legislators calves and cubs that could be forcibly taken away to a State hundreds of miles away? And if that is the case, Thackeray cannot be absolved of the blame of having given tickets to so many weaklings, for he also happens to be the supreme leader of the party. One can still sympathise with a leader who has been abandoned by his followers, but his competence in running the party and Government leaves a lot to be desired. He obviously failed to gauge the intensity of resentment in his own party, as is evident from the fact that two out of three of his MLAs were with Shinde. The exodus continues. On Thursday morning, three more Sena MLAs — Deepak Keskar, Mangesh Kudalkar and Sada Sarvankar — flew to Assam where the rebels are camping. So, is the party over for Uddhav, indeed for the Thackeray family? If that is the case, it may imply that a political party has been able to shrug off the shackles of the family that birthed it. It would, however, be premature to reach the conclusion that the Thackeray family's political career has ended; it is down but it may not be out. Like Chirag Paswan, who lost control over the LJP but claims to be the inheritor of Ram Vilas Paswan's legacy. Let's wait and watch.

## PICTALK



A man rides a bicycle as monsoon clouds hover in the sky in Nadia district, West Bengal

PTI

## Vendetta?

The UP Govt's action of bulldozing illegal houses in the State has raised a lot of heat and dust

The Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh Government has been brazening out the allegations of 'bulldozer politics', which is basically a euphemism for targeting those people who have been speaking out against the ruling BJP Government. The issue snowballed into a major controversy after the properties of certain people accused of participating in violent protests against remarks by two former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders on Prophet Muhammad were demolished to allegedly punish them for raising their voice against the establishment. In fact, the issue has reached even the Supreme Court, where the State Government submitted that "no property in the State was demolished to punish" people. Though the State has clarified that bulldozers were pressed into service to raze illegal constructions in accordance with municipal laws and after providing due opportunity to the violators, it is too much of a coincidence that the action came about soon after protests broke out in Kanpur and Prayagraj in the first fortnight of June against now-suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled party leader Naveen Jindal for their remarks against Prophet Muhammad. Subsequently, the UP Government demolished three properties in these cities.



The Government took the stand that these demolitions "had no relation to the riots", and that the actions were taken as part of the ongoing demolition drive against encroachment and illegal construction. Though it sounds like the first plausible excuse that the State Government took the stringent steps in accordance with statutes, the two applications filed by Muslim body Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind asked for restrictions on the State Government on further action. However, the Government's contention was that the organisation "deliberately obfuscated the true facts to paint a nefarious picture of alleged mala fide on the part of the administration". Referring to the two properties partly demolished in Kanpur, the Government claimed that proceedings were initiated under municipal law long before the riots in June — in one case, in August 2020 and, in another, in February 2020. The violators are said to have even admitted to the illegality of the buildings and moved applications for compounding the acts by payment of appropriate charges. But we, the people, don't really know which side the truth stands on. Suffice to say, it's the public's duty to respect the maintenance of law and order and the Government's to not take revengeful action against its own citizens.

# Freedom of speech & expression is alive

Contrary to claims that the situation in present-day India is worse than in the days of Emergency, press at the time was throttled and dissenters jailed



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

In Latin, 'Ut est rerum omnium magister usus' means "Experience is the best teacher". The term was popularised by management gurus with sufficient evidence and proof. This is a phrase attributed to the great Roman General Julius Caesar and finds mention in *De Bello Civili*, his war memoirs.

A major reason for opposition to war, which is common among the Europeans, could be their shocking experiences from the two World Wars in which millions perished and many more were maimed. There are accounts by authors like Winston Churchill (the former British Prime Minister who had covered the First World War for *The Pioneer*) about the post-WWII Europe totally devastated. The sights were unbearable and the generation that grew up experiencing the economic hardship and poverty became strong critics of any kind of war. Late MKK Nair, a former bureaucrat, had given first-hand information about England in the aftermath of WWII. Nair, who was undergoing professional training in Plymouth, has written in his autobiography 'With No Ill-Feeling Against Anybody' that only kids were eligible for sugar and chocolates: "Since there was severe shortage of power, only limited quantity of water could be heated for bathing as the winter was at its peak."

When maverick musician TM Krishna (born in 1976) declared in a public function sometime back that there was no freedom of expression or right to speak one's mind, the media highlighted his speech as if he was disclosing something new. What the musician forgot was that his statement reminded one of the term 'oxymoron' as his disclosure was poles apart from the reality. If there is no freedom of speech or right to dissent, would the media highlight the claim as a major report?

The comedy lies in the truth that Krishna and his generation, born in the post-internal Emergency phase, do not know the seriousness of freedom of expression. There was a time



when the Indian subcontinent was under the spell of dictatorship as well as despotism. The generation that grew up in that period stood silently when human rights, civil rights and freedom of speech and expression were crushed to powder by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, her younger son Sanjay and a cartel of persons who were members of their court. That was the era when the Prime Minister had the audacity to defend corruption in high places by describing it as "a global phenomenon".

What led to the declaration of Emergency and suspension of Constitution was a verdict by the Allahabad Bench of the Lucknow High Court on a petition filed by Raj Narain, the socialist leader who had challenged Indira's election from Rae Bareilly in the 1971 general election. Raj Narain, an unusual politician, had alleged that Indira had utilised the services of Yashpal Kapoor, her personal secretary, for campaign-related works. Being a Government servant, Kapoor was not supposed to do Indira's political bidding. It was gross violation of the Representation of People's

“THE GENERATION THAT GREW UP IN THAT PERIOD STOOD SILENTLY WHEN HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION WERE CRUSHED TO POWDER BY THEN PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI, HER YOUNGER SON SANJAY GANDHI AND THEIR COTERIE

Act, argued lawyer Shanti Bhushan who appeared for Raj Narain.

On June 12, 1975, Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha set aside Indira's election and disqualified her from contesting any election for six years. Justice Sinha was kind enough to stay his own judgment to enable Indira to appeal in the Supreme Court. By the time of the verdict, there had been widespread resentment against Indira. Members of her 'kitchen cabinet' advised her to proclaim Emergency, arrest the Opposition leaders and throw them behind bars. Thankfully, there were no satellite TV channels while All India Radio and Doordarshan had the monopoly over public broadcast. Gandhi declared press censorship which made the newspapers to seek permission from censor officers for publishing news. All India Radio was labelled 'All India Radio' globally as the world's largest radio network started airing only the speeches and songs eulogising 'Madam Indira'. People who now allege that there is no freedom of expression and speech in India should take out some time and read the archived newspaper copies!

There are some political

greenhorns who allege that the situation in present-day India is worse than in the days of Emergency. They should not forget that thousands across the country were jailed, assaulted and tortured by the police for criticising Indira. Musicians should focus on *raagas* and *thaalas* instead of commenting about freedom of expression. And the fact that such allegations hogged the limelight makes it oxymoronic! It is good to see in newspapers and news channels criticism levelled against the Narendra Modi Government for its omissions and commissions. If there is no freedom of expression, how come these reports and news get published? The sad thing is that while Indira and her men and women bulldozed the media, the Modi regime is ignoring it. The bosses may be under the impression that the best way to insult the critics is to ignore them (it is also true that many of them deserve to be ignored!) But freedom of expression is sacred and it is a sin to spread falsehoods about it.

(The writer is a senior journalist with *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRAGEDY IN AFGHANISTAN

Sir — It's heartbreaking! A powerful earthquake (5.9 magnitude) struck a remote border region of Afghanistan killing at least 1,000 people and injured more than 1,500, reminiscent of 1998 when a 6.1 magnitude quake in the north-east of Afghanistan killed at least 4,500 people and injured more than 10,000. The scenario is so tragic that every street one goes to, he/she hears people mourning the deaths of their beloved ones. It's a pity that the isolated Afghanistan regime may face struggle for aid after the earthquake, because humanitarian appeals for Taliban-ruled countries have had poor responses and there are sanctions.

The Taliban's supreme leader, Haibatullah Akhundzadah, pleaded with the international community to help the Afghan people affected by this tragedy and to spare no effort. Reacting to the request made by the Taliban leaders, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India stands by the people of Afghanistan in their difficult times and is ready to provide all possible disaster relief material at the earliest. But with such a huge disaster, the said relief material is peanuts. Due to the Taliban Government's rigidity in the name of Islam, many peoples are not ready to help the poor Afghans.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterje | Faridabad

### COVID SCARE BACK TO HAUNT INDIA

Sir — Under pressure, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya chaired the high-level review meeting with the core team of experts over alarming increasing cases of COVID-19 in the country. India has been witnessing an increase in Coronavirus infections over the last couple of weeks. As per reports, Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat have over 1,000 active cases. India saw a single-day rise of 13,313 new Coronavirus infections, tak-

## Murmu set to create history



By fielding Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from Odisha as the NDA's presidential candidate, the BJP has revealed its trump card. If she wins the July 18 poll, Murmu will become the first person from the tribal (Adivasi) community, the first native of Odisha and the second woman ever after Pratibha Patil to occupy the top post. She is set to follow in the footsteps of KR Narayanan and Ram Nath Kovind, who

both rose from the poor and downtrodden stratum to become the President. At the same time, the Opposition pick, Yashwant Sinha, would do well not to act wiser than Sharad Pawar or Farooq Abdullah or Gopalkrishna Gandhi, who refused to contest in the losing game.

As far the post of President is concerned, political parties should not have missed the opportunity to strike a cordial note and work out a national consensus when the outcome of the presidential election is a foregone conclusion. As the NDA headed by the BJP has the required numbers to go it alone, the Opposition should have fallen in line to support a non-controversial lesser known tribal woman who has risen from the ranks to a creditable political career. In a bid to put up a show of notional fight, the Opposition has only ended up showing fissures. The NDA, too, can't escape the blame for its disdain for consensus.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

ing the infection tally to 4,33,44,958, while the active cases have increased to 83,990, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday June 23.

The death toll has climbed to 5,24,941. In a review meeting of INSACOG, States/UTs were asked to submit "larger number" of samples for whole genome sequencing from districts and areas which have seen a surge in COVID-19 cases over a period of seven days. According to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) experts, Omicron and its sub-lineages, primarily BA.2 and BA.2.38, as of now, seem to be behind the current rise in COVID cases. With this, the matter related to COVID in India is very serious and dangerous.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### GUIDELINES FOR LOWER JUDICIARY

Sir — The Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has set a good precedent by issuing a circular according to which no judicial officer shall receive, see off and

visit the visiting Chief Justice or judges during court hours. The significance of this circular is better understood by the clients. If the judicial officers visit the visiting Chief Justice or other judges of High Court, the cases listed for that day stand adjourned for one or two months. If at least the Chief Justice and other judges visit once in a year, and in all it will be at least three or four times a year.

In each case, if the case listed for that day is not heard for one or two months, the case stands prolonged for about a year. This is one of the reasons for delayed delivery of justice. This may not be the case in any other department. If a judge leaves his seat, no one else can discharge his duties. Hence the importance of this circular is high. Another point is that if the visiting Chief Justice or other judges want to hold a meeting, it will be done before or after court hours.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

This year, we are expecting 7.5 per cent growth, which makes us the fastest growing major economy.



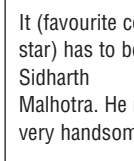
Prime Minister

—Narendra Modi



Sri Lanka PM

—Ranil Wickremesinghe



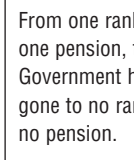
Actor

—Kiara Advani



India batter

—Cheteshwar Pujara



Congress leader

—Rahul Gandhi



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA AT BRICS AND G7:  
TOUGH BALANCING ACT

Navigating through China's assertiveness, Putin's Ukraine war



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India's diplomatic and foreign policy calendar has been swinging between a diverse bunch of power blocks. India had a tough challenge to attend the 14th BRICS summit held virtually under the chairmanship of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

It was a tough call, given India's frosty relationship with China over the border tensions and sharing a platform (virtually) with Russian President Vladimir Putin, now considered a global outlaw. The BRICS summit was themed on Global Development; it's actually a message China wants to send across, placing itself at the centre of economic prosperity for the globe. This position has traditionally been claimed by the US and its Western allies.

It is interesting to note how the Chinese communist party's foreign policy propaganda newspaper, the Global Times, reported on the significance of the BRICS summit. In one of its recent reports, it mentioned the most novel proposition of this summit, BRICS expansion. The presence of Putin and several new invitees is also open to various interpretations. The Ukraine crisis has seen fissures emerge in the G20; and adding new members to BRICS could make it an alternative minus US and its allies.



This could also mean an expanded BRICS overtaking G7 earlier than imagined. In some of the other paragraphs the report lays emphasis on the "Global South cooperation," the presence of India in both the US-led Quad framework and BRICS, India's exit from the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), while accepting to be a founding member of US-led Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

While China's foreign policy department officially stuck to "high-quality partnership amongst BRICS, usher in new era for global development," as the core agenda, its allied arms such as the newspaper report mentioned above was setting the real agenda for the summit.

India moves away from the BRICs summit to another important multilateral, the Commonwealth Summit which is taking place in Rwanda's capital Kigali over the weekend. Leaders of 54 countries from Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe participate in the commonwealth summit which most often has been described as a club of erstwhile UK colonies, discussing their internal affairs, rather than coming out with a significant outcome-driven agenda for world affairs.

However, this diverse group of nations also represents the confluence of developing and the developed world, the former rulers meeting the former colonies, to indulge in some creative solutions for existing and emerging problems. It is a different matter that much of the commonwealth nations except the larger and more prosperous ones have been denied access to vaccines and therapeutic remedies to counter the Covid pandemic by the powerful nations. India will be represented at the summit by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

However, one of the most eyeball-grabbing meetings will be the G7 in Schloss Elmau, against the backdrop of the Bavarian Alps in Germany next week. India has been invited for this meeting as a guest and will be represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in person. This is the fourth consecutive time India has been invited for this prestigious global policy leaders meeting.

The G7, which is a group of most prosperous nations of the world which are some of the largest donors to international bodies, together make the most influential voice for global policy directions. This year, the G7 presidency has been taken over by Germany, which will push for some coordinated policy actions on the ongoing war in Ukraine, its impact on food inflation, particularly in the developing nations, the climate crisis, the Covid pandemic, and its impact.

India has some tough balancing acts to do on multilateral platforms. (The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

COVID crisis led to distress employment

There is an urgent need to generate more decent and productive employment for the increasing labour force in the country



BALWANT SINGH MEHTA

The National Statistical Office (NSO) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2020-21 report on June 14. At a first glance, the annual survey report shows an improvement in the employment situation with rise in employment and decline in the unemployment rate during the pandemic years compared to the previous years (PLFS survey years correspond to the agriculture year July to June).

This is quite unexpected, keeping in mind the severe economic disruption after the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey results differ from several other reports, which suggest that the employment situation in the country has worsened after the pandemic. This survey report has evoked heightened interest in the findings. It calls for further investigation as to whether these results are survey anomalies or indicate the changing employment situation in the country.

This article attempts to interpret the findings from the last three annual PLFS (2018-19, 2020-21 and 2020-21) reports, and try to understand the impact of Covid-19 pandemic by analysing some key labour market indicators.

The labour force participation rate as per usual status (reference period of last 365 days preceding the survey), which is the sum of those working and those available for work or unemployed, reported highest in the four years at 41.6 per cent in 2020-21. The worker population ratio (WPR) has increased from 35.3 per cent in 2018-19 to 39.8 per cent in 2020-21, which is the percentage of employed persons in the population.

On the other hand, the unemployment rate which is the percentage of unemployed in the labour force has eased from 5.8 per cent in 2018-19 to 4.2 per cent in 2020-21. The rural-urban division shows that the rise in WPR is in rural areas, which is almost 2.5 times higher than urban areas. It is well documented that the impact of Covid-19 in the rural economy was far less than urban, which is also reflected from the survey results.

A lot of people, particularly migrants engaged in the informal sector, lost their employment during the pandemic at the urban destinations. With no means of employment in urban areas, a large number of them have returned to their native places in rural areas, where they, along with their family members especially women, are engaged in locally available activities such as agriculture and related work for survival.

The survey results further reveal that the rise in WPR is largely credited to female than male, where WPR of the former has increased by 2.54 times more than the latter. This phenomenon is more pronounced in rural areas, where the female WPR has increased almost 3.2 times more (19.0 per cent to 27.1 per cent) than their urban counterparts (15 per cent to 17 per cent) during the pandemic years.

So, the rise in employment during the



WITH NO MEANS OF EMPLOYMENT IN URBAN AREAS, A LARGE NUMBER OF MIGRANTS RETURNED TO THEIR NATIVE PLACES IN RURAL AREAS WHERE THEY, ALONG WITH THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, ARE ENGAGED IN LOCALLY AVAILABLE ACTIVITIES

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pandemic years is overwhelmingly of females in rural areas.

The industrial structure provides broad employment trends, where the employment in agriculture in developing countries like India is considered as subsistence and less productive, while employment in non-farm industrial and services is regarded as more productive. It is well documented that as the country progresses, the people move away from the less productive agriculture sector in rural areas to more productive non-farm industrial and services sectors in urban areas.

However, the industrial distribution of employment in India shows a reversal of the decades-long decline in agriculture share in recent years with more and more people moving into the farm sector in rural areas. The share of employment in agriculture has increased by 3 percentage points from 57.8 per cent in 2018-19 to 60.8 per cent in 2020-21.

This trend indicates that people are finding it difficult to get employment in non-farm sectors, and they are compelled to engage in subsistence farm activities due to the lack of other employment avenues. In rural areas, almost three-fourth (75.4 per cent) of the females are engaged in farm activities compared to around half of the male (53.8 per cent).

Thus, the rise in employment in rural areas has a huge implication on women's work, which is also reflected from increasing female's WPR. This reveals that the rise in share of employment in agriculture reflected the impact of economic slowdown and the pandemic.

The reverse migration from cities to rural areas would have only

increased the pressure on the farm sector to absorb the workers, especially females, leading to the distress employment.

The status of employment broadly indicates the quality of employment, where a regular salary is considered better quality of work than self-employed and casual labour. Regularity of work and social security benefits are associated with regular salaries, while social security provisions are generally not available for self-employed and casual labourer.

The PLFS survey reports show that the share self-employed has increased from 52.1 per cent in 2018-19 to 55.6 per cent in 2019-20, while the share of regular salaried (23.8 per cent to 21.1 per cent) and casual labour (24.1 per cent to 23.3 per cent) has declined during the last three years. This phenomenon is more pronounced in rural areas, where the share of the self-employed has increased relatively more (3.3 percentage points) than urban areas (1.7 percentage points).

However, the increase in share of the self-employed in rural areas is largely attributed to the rise in unpaid helpers in household enterprises (4.6 percentage points), while the share of own account workers and employer category has declined (-1.4 percentage points).

This indicates that the jump in female WPR in rural areas is contributed most by the increase in employment of helpers or unpaid family workers in household enterprises. A recent Niti Aayog report highlighted that the rise in 'disguised employment' or unpaid family workers is a more serious issue than unemployment in India. The decline in the share of regular salaried workers is another serious

concern, reflecting the worsening employment conditions with rise in low quality employment in recent pandemic years.

The above analysis reveals that the increase in employment in pandemic years is distress-driven and not necessarily any improvement in the overall employment in the country. This is shown in the report as an increase in terms of labour force participation rate, the worker-population ratio, and decline in the unemployment rate. It is also important to note that the share of employment in agriculture and allied activities, and especially employment of rural women, has gone up in recent years, which is mostly of distress type not productive or decent employment.

Further, the report also reveals that employment in the informal sector has increased during the pandemic years from 68.4 per cent to 71.4 per cent in 2020-21. Workers in the informal sector are for the most part not covered by any social security benefits and also not covered by the national labour laws and regulations. Such workers are most affected by any economic shocks such as the economic downturn after Covid-19.

In sum, the PLFS survey report (2020-21) indicates generation of new employment in the country during the pandemic years, but most of the new jobs are of distress or informal type, especially for females in rural areas.

In this context, there is an urgent need to generate or provide more decent and productive employment for the increasing labour force in the country, which is must to meet the SDG goal 8 targets of 'decent or productive employment for all' by 2030.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

IF ANY OF THE REBEL MLAS SAYS THEY DON'T WANT ME AS CM, I'M READY TO RESIGN. I'M PREPARING MY RESIGNATION LETTER.  
—MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER  
UDDHAV THACKERAY



FORTY SENA MLAS ARE PRESENT WITH ME IN GUWAHATI. WE WILL TAKE BALASAHEB'S HINDUTVA AND LEGACY FORWARD.  
—SHIV SENA REBEL FACTION LEADER  
EKNATH SHINDE

India emerges as leader at WTO ministerial meet

India defended its right to extend subsidies to Indian fishermen, with contentious clauses removed



PK VASUDEVA

For the first time in a decade, members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a 164-nation body, have finalised a historic deal at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). The four-day MC12 was extended by two days as trade ministers negotiated through the night at WTO headquarters, next to Lake Geneva, and negotiations continued till June 18 morning. India was at the centre of WTO negotiations at the MC12.

India has agreed to the proposal of no export restrictions on the World Food Programme. But internal food security concerns will take precedence. There is no work programme on agriculture, which could be considered as a good outcome for India as our agri-subsidy will not face any further scrutiny.

(The writer is former Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

On the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) waiver, an agreement could be reached only on vaccines. The official said negotiations for diagnostics and therapeutics would start in six months as demanded by developed countries.

This means India's demand to include diagnostics and therapeutics in the agreement did not find favour with developed countries. In October 2020, India, South Africa, and 63 co-sponsors had made the TRIPS waiver proposal to help middle- and low-income nations get access to Covid-19 vaccines and drugs. However, the discussions reached a deadlock in the TRIPS Council, the body responsible for monitoring the operation of the agreement. The draft agreement fell short of the original

proposal and includes only vaccines.

India had called for a TRIPS waiver for vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics to fight Covid-19 and future pandemics. India had held it was too late in the day if only vaccines were included because the pandemic had run its initial course. On a moratorium on customs duty on e-commerce transactions, countries agreed to extend it by another two years.

India put forth aggressive draft texts in all pillars of WTO negotiations rather than being reactive, as in the past. India brought the members together to a unanimous agreement on fisheries, health, and the future of WTO reforms, digital technology, food, and environment. India's principled stand at the WTO strengthened the voice of

the poor and the vulnerable globally.

An agreement at Geneva makes it the first trade deal since the 2013 Bali Ministerial, where members signed the WTO's first trade deal on a peace clause on public stockholding for food security purposes and a trade facilitation agreement. The consensus-driven, rule-making process at the multilateral trade organisation means even one member could thwart a deal at the last moment. After negotiations spilled over to the sixth day, 164 countries of the World Trade Organisation finally sealed a package deal in the wee hours on 18 June in Geneva with India leading the course.

In a first major agreement in nine years, the deal includes six major issues of importance for developing countries including

food security, balanced outcome fisheries subsidies, response to pandemic, and patents waiver on Covid-19 vaccines.

The deal that tested Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's negotiation skills saw several trade-offs between developed and developing countries during the two nights of marathon talks, going well past the June 16 afternoon deadline. "There is a good outcome on the issues that were long pending," Goyal said, adding that India completely protected the interests of fishermen and farmers. "All in all, it is a good package. Today there is no issue on which we have to be concerned, whether it is related to agriculture such as MSP [minimum support price], reinforcing the relevance of the public stock-

holding programme towards fulfilling the national food safety programme or PM Garib Kalyan Scheme, TRIPS waiver, e-commerce moratorium, response to Covid and fisheries," Goyal said after the deal.

India defended its right to extend subsidies to Indian fishermen, with contentious clauses removed from the text at the last minute. In turn, India agreed to an 18-month extension of the moratorium on customs duty on electronic imports that it argues favours rich nations. However, subsidies on overfishing, deep-sea fishing, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has been addressed through the proposed pact.

"On India's insistence, sovereign rights on EEZ [exclusive economic zones] have been firmly established. It is really a

big achievement," said Goyal, adding that principal stakeholders who have benefited from these "historic decisions" taken by the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO are fishermen, farmers, food security, multilateralism, and trade and business, particularly digital economy and MSMEs.

Through the joint efforts of all WTO members, the MC12 has made breakthroughs on a number of key issues, demonstrating that the multilateral trading system can play a key role in addressing global challenges, she said.

Goyal said India today battled on the front foot rather than being fearful on various issues, be it environment, startups, MSMEs or gender equality. This was a result of the confidence of 'New India.'



# CONGRESS DARES ED TO PROBE ADANI GROUP

Why is ED sitting over allegations that Modi was pushing its case for a project in Lanka: Gourav Vallabh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's five-day grilling by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Congress on Thursday asked when the probe agency would question the Adani Group over allegations that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was pushing its case for a project in Sri Lanka. The party accused the ED of taking "enforced directives" from the Modi Government.

The Sri Lanka issue was reported in a section of the media, but has been denied by the Lankan Government as well as the Adani Group. At an AICC press conference, Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh cited reports of the chairperson of the State-owned Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) in Sri Lanka making claims before a parliamentary panel that the Indian Prime Minister had allegedly "pressurised" Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to award a wind power project to the Adani Group.

"What was his compulsion? Why are ED and other agencies sleeping on this information?" the Congress leader asked.

"Is this not a case of corruption worth investigating? Which bureaucrats or Ministers is the ED



planning to call for an investigation? Has the ED ever called anyone from the Adani Group, or is it planning to call to investigate these serious allegations? What credibility does an agency like the ED have... (it) is on a political witch-hunt but failing on its duty of investigating severe allegations

and crimes," he said.

CEB Chairperson MMC Ferdinando, who claimed before a parliamentary panel that Modi allegedly influenced Gotabaya Rajapaksa to award a wind power project to the Adani Group in the island nation, resigned a day after retracting his statement.

During a hearing of the Committee On Public Enterprises (COPE), Ferdinando had said Rajapaksa summoned him after a meeting in November last year and told him that the wind power project must be awarded to Adani Group's Gautam Adani as Modi had urged that it be so. Rajapaksa

had categorically denied Ferdinando's statement before the parliamentary panel.

The Adani Group earlier issued a statement on the controversy: "Our intent in investing in Sri Lanka is to address the needs of a valued neighbour. As a responsible corporate, we see this as a necessary part of the partnership that our two nations have always shared," it said

During the press conference, Vallabh also spoke on Rahul Gandhi's questioning by the ED over the last few days and said it was a clear case of maligning his reputation and a "mere political stunt".

He alleged that all central agencies have been reduced to pawns in the hands of the Government. "All these agencies have been queuing up to collect their blindfolds only to make a mockery of themselves," Vallabh said, adding that the BJP Government's claims have been exposed in the last eight years and it has all been about 'antics and substance'.

"A once-reputed agency such as the ED can no longer be called the Enforcement Directorate... (it) is busy taking 'Enforced Directives' from the Modi Government," he alleged.



Sangrur by-election polling time extension

## EC seeks explanation from Punjab's Chief Secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday sought an explanation from Punjab's Chief Secretary and the Deputy Commissioner of Sangrur to explain why they sought extension of polling time towards closing hours at 4 P.M. without any new facts appearing on the day of polling, thereby attempting to influence a section of voters.

It said the letter of the Returning Officer and a subsequent request by the Chief Secretary at 4:05 P.M. amounted to "attempt to unduly interfere in the election process and influence a certain class of voters by conveying them to expedite voting or wait for time extension." The commission condemns such behaviour by the officers during the election process, it said.

In a strongly-worded letter to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Punjab, the EC expressed "displeasure" on the "unwarranted communication making

request for extension of poll timing on polling day for reasons which pre-existed even during notification of the by-election."

Officials said the plea taken to extend time was that people were still working in the paddy fields. It was a fact which was already known when the notification was issued.

"I have been directed to state that a detailed explanation from the Chief Secretary and Returning Officer shall be called regarding reasons and circumstances and new facts that arose on the afternoon of polling day, necessitating writing of such a letter so as to reach the Commission by Friday 1.00 P.M. to take a further decision on initiating disciplinary proceedings," the letter by an EC Secretary said.

The Sangrur Lok Sabha bypoll was necessitated after Bhagwant Mann won a seat in the Punjab Assembly elections recently and became the State's Chief Minister.

## NDA's Prez candidate Murmu meets PM, Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu who is expected to file her nomination papers on Friday called on Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Thursday. Naidu's wife Usha received Murmu at the portico of the Upa-Rashtapati Nivas. Accompanied by Union Minister Virendra Singh, Murmu was with the Naidus for nearly 30 minutes.

After arriving from Odisha on Thursday morning, she met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. Modi said her nomination has been appreciated across all sections of society.

"Met Smt. Droupadi Murmu ji. Her presidential nomination has been appreciated by all sections of society. Her understanding of grassroots problems and vision for India's



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

development is outstanding," the Prime Minister said in a tweet.

Murmu (64) is expected to file her nomination papers on Friday for the July 18 poll. The Opposition has fielded former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha as its joint candidate for the post. Murmu is expected to visit different States to canvass for votes after her nomination.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan asked people to celebrate on

Friday when she filed her nomination papers in Delhi for the post. "A new revolution is taking place. Those who were last in society in the development race are being honoured and lifted up to shape the country's future," Chouhan said.

Chouhan and State BJP president VD Sharma, both of whom were wearing tribal outfits, danced with a large group of tribal people at the party office here on the occasion. "The move honours the entire tribal community, not just Droupadi Murmuji," Chouhan said, noting that the State's population includes around two crore tribal people. "A tribal sister will be occupying the country's highest constitutional post. It is a matter of pride," he said.

## Kids as young as 3 also suffer from long Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Children as young as three-years-old also suffer from long Covid that can last at least two months, according to a study published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. The most commonly reported symptoms among these children were mood swings, rashes and stomach aches. In one of the largest studies, researchers from Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark analysed data from a survey of 11,000 children aged 0-14 with a positive Covid-19 test result between January 2020 and July 2021.

The data were then matched by age and sex to over 33,000 children who had never tested positive for Covid.

Among 4 to 11-year-olds the most commonly reported symptoms were mood swings, trouble remembering or concentrating, rashes, and among 12 to 14-year-olds it was fatigue, mood swings and trouble remembering or concentrating. The results of the study

found children diagnosed with Covid-19 in all age groups to be more likely to experience at least one symptom for two months or longer than the control group.

In the 0 to 3-year age group 40 per cent of children diagnosed with Covid-19 (478 of 1,194 children) experienced symptoms for longer than two months, compared to 27 per cent of controls (1,049 of 3,855 children).

For the 4 to 11-year age group, the ratio was 38 per cent of cases (1,912 of 5,023 children) compared to 34 per cent of controls (6,189 of 18,372 children), and for the 12 to 14-year age group, 46 per cent of cases (1,313 of 2,857 children) compared to 41 per cent of controls (4,454 of 10,789 children) experienced long-lasting symptoms.

"Our findings align with previous studies of long Covid in adolescents showing that, although the chances of children experiencing long Covid is low, especially compared to control groups, it must be recognised and treated seriously," said Professor Selina Kikkenborg Berg from the hospital.

## India re-establishes diplomatic presence in Kabul

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday resumed its diplomatic presence in Kabul by deploying a team in its embassy in the Afghan capital, over 10 months after it pulled out its officials from the mission following the Taliban's capture of power.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in a statement, said an Indian technical team has reached Kabul on Thursday and has been deployed in the embassy there. The reopening of the

embassy came three weeks after an Indian team led by JP Singh, the MEA's point person for Afghanistan, visited Kabul and met acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and some other members of the Taliban dispensation.

It is learnt that the Taliban side had assured the Indian team that adequate security will be provided if India sends its officials to the embassy in Kabul.

"In order to closely monitor and coordinate the efforts of various stakeholders for the

effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and in continuation of our engagement with the Afghan people, an Indian technical team has reached Kabul today and has been deployed in our embassy there," the MEA said.

The MEA has been maintaining that the embassy was not shut as only India-based officials were brought back home and that the local staff continued to function at the mission.

"Recently, another Indian team visited Kabul to oversee the delivery operations of our

humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and met with senior members of the Taliban," it said, referring to the visit to Kabul by the Singh-led team.

In the statement, the MEA said an assessment of the security situation was also carried out during the visit of that team.

"Our longstanding links with Afghan society and our development partnership including humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan, will continue to guide our approach going forward," the MEA said.

## BJP using agencies to topple Maha Govt: CPI(M)

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau on Thursday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of utilising central agencies and Gujarat and Assam State Governments for destabilising the Maharashtra Government.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said central agencies were being misused by the BJP to topple the State Governments run by other parties.

"The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the manner in which MLAs belonging to the Shiv Sena have been spirited away to Surat and then to Guwahati, both of which are BJP-ruled States. This has been done by

the BJP utilising the State machinery in both the States. The Central agencies have also been utilised to target the Ministers and Legislators of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government with the aim of destabilising the Maharashtra Government. This shameful use of State power is in line with the BJP's earlier efforts to target Opposition-ruled State Governments with a view to topple them," said the CPI(M) Polit Bureau in a statement.

"Condemn gross misuse of Central agencies and BJP State Government machinery to destabilise Maharashtra MVA Government. Strongly protest this misuse of State power to undermine democracy," said Yechury.

### NIA arrests 3 in CPI (Maoist) recruitment case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday conducted searches at three locations in Ranga Reddy, Medak and Secunderabad districts of Telangana and arrested three accused persons in a CPI (Maoist) recruitment case. The case relates to the conspiracy and recruitment of one college student, into the fold of the proscribed terrorist organisation CPI (Maoist) by the leaders/members of the Chaitanya Mahila Sangham (CMS), a frontal organisation of the outfit.

The arrested include Chukka Shilpa, one Dongari Devendra and Dubasi Swapna.

### NIA gets new D-G

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday appointed senior IPS officer Dinkar Gupta (1987 batch officer of the Punjab Cadre) as the Director General of the anti-terror probe agency National Investigation Agency (NIA). Meanwhile, Swagat Das (1987-batch officer, Chattisgarh cadre) was appointed Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Union Home Ministry.

He is currently Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

## Conman can only be moved to Mandoli jail, Centre tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday proposed to the Supreme Court that if at all the conman Suresh Chandrasekhar and his wife Leena are to be shifted outside the Tihar Jail, then they should be lodged only in Mandoli prison, which is guarded by paramilitary forces.

The conman is presently in jail for impersonating as Law Secretary and PMO officials by calling jailed Ranbaxy promoter's wife and offering bail and extorting more than ₹.200 crore.

Detailing the notorious activities of Chandrasekhar, the Centre's counsel said consorting with some Tihar jail officials, he even called Supreme Court Judges, impersonating as the Law Minister and sought favourable orders.

He was first caught for promising to get a favorable decision from the Election Commission in the AIADMK factions' case for election symbol. Chandrasekhar was accused of lobbying for AIADMK rebel leader Dinakaran to get the party's symbol. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) opposed the transfer of Chandrasekhar and his wife to any other jail outside Delhi on the alleged ground of a threat to their life and added that they will be protected by police personnel from Tamil Nadu Special Police Force and would be observed through CCTV cameras.A vacation bench of Justices CT Ravi Kumar and Sudhanshu Dhulia asked senior advocate R Basant, appearing for Chandrasekhar, to file his objections to the Centre's proposal to shift the accused to Mandoli Jail and posted the matter for further hearing on



June 30. The bench observed that a person who is lodged in prison cannot choose which jail he is to be lodged in. The top court recorded the submission of Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Centre of shifting Chandrasekhar to Mandoli jail, and said since the court had on June 17 asked the Government to suggest a name of the jail, where he could be transferred, the matter could proceed only after the compliance of the order.

"The ED call it a bribe and I call it extortion by the jail staff. I along with my wife are facing a threat to life. Kindly transfer me to some other prison outside Delhi", said Advocate Basanth appearing for the conman, adding that impalement of ED has still not been allowed and the agency has nothing to do with the transfer of the prisoner

ASG Raju on other hand submitted that Chandrasekhar is a 'conman' and is accused in nearly three dozen cases and in one of the incidents he has impersonated a Supreme Court judge and called up a trial court judge to pass orders in his favour.

## Unitech assets worth ₹257 crore attached provisionally, says ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said it has provisionally attached movable and immovable assets worth ₹257 crore in Gurugram, Goa, Chennai and other places in a money laundering case against Unitech Limited.

The total proceeds of crime detected by the ED in the case is ₹6,452 crore.

"The provisionally attached properties include residential/commercial units, land parcels, demand drafts, equity shares and bank account balances. The properties are owned by CIG (Chandra Investment Group) Realty Fund and Authentic Group.Two Separate Provisional attachment orders were issued for attaching these assets, , the ED said in a statement.

The ED had registered a money laundering case against Unitech Group on June 6, 2018 following a directive of the Supreme Court.

The money laundering case was registered on the basis of FIRs registered by Economic

Offences Wing (EOW), Delhi Police and Saket police station here under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

For purchasing these properties, homebuyers' funds of Rs 244 crore were illegally diverted by the Unitech promoters to CIG Realty Fund, it said.

The diverted funds were used to purchase land-owning companies of Unitech Group, the agency said.

Aurum Asset Management Private Limited was one of the companies controlled by the Chandra family, the promoters of the Unitech Group, which was used to manage the affairs of CIG Realty Fund. This company was also used by Chandras' to siphon-off the investors' funds from the accounts of CIG Realty Fund, it said.

"The misappropriated funds were used to finance the illegal activities of Chandras such as bribing certain Tihar jail officials and other personal expenses of Ajay Chandra and Sanjay Chandra," it said.

In 2007, instead of building

houses, homebuyers' funds to the tune of Rs 60.25 crore were illegally diverted by Chandras to Authentic Group with an intention to build a seven-star resort in South Goa. On the basis of money trail in this matter, the ED has attached the southern Goa land for the benefit of homebuyers, it further said.

During the money laundering investigation, the ED has arrested five individuals namely Sanjay Chandra, Ajay Chandra, Ramesh Chandra, Preeti Chandra and Rajesh Malik.

Presently, all of them are in judicial custody. As many as 45 search operations have been conducted in this matter and 14 provisional attachment orders including the current attachments of various domestic and overseas assets worth a total value of Rs 1,059.52 crore have been attached.

The attachment orders include the attachment of assets of Carnoustie Group, Shivalik Group, Trikar Group, CIG Realty Fund, Authentic Group and the assets of shell and personal companies of Chandras.



# EPS emerges as AIADMK's next leader as OPS shunned

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The battle in the AIADMK for control of the party reached a new phase as coordinator and former Chief Minister O Panneerselvam and his associates walked out of the General Council meeting held on Thursday at Chennai.

Though Panneerselvam wanted to move 23 resolutions as part of his bid to take over the party, Edappadi Palaniswamy, the co-coordinator supported by more than 69 party district secretaries out of 75, succeeded in ensuring the move. "Let us appoint Edappadi Palaniswami as the general secretary and then we will see whether to move the 23 resolutions," said C V Shanmugham, MP and former Law Minister in the Edappadi Palaniswami Cabinet.

The general body meeting saw many former supporters of Panneerselvam jumping fences and joining hands with Palaniswamy. The Panneerselvam faction tried its best to get the general body meeting stayed but the Madras High Court which heard the plea by faction for staying the Thursday meeting refused to grant any stay to the meeting



but restrained the leadership from going ahead with the move to elevate Palaniswamy as the general secretary of the party.

Since the demise of Jayalalithaa on December 5, 2016, the AIADMK was disintegrating slowly. Earlier, Sasikala, the live-in aid to the former tried to take control of the party but without any luck. The Madras High Court in a late evening hearing on Wednesday refused to stay the general council meeting convened for Thursday but asked the Palaniswamy faction not to tamper with the existing dual-leadership of the party.

Thursday's meeting saw

the entire general council meeting condemning and shouting down the resolutions introduced by Panneerselvam. In a sudden turn of events, K P Munusamy, a hitherto trusted aide of Panneerselvam made a turn around and declared that the party should follow the single leadership pattern which was in vogue since the AIADMK was launched by party founder M G Ramachandran.

The General Council of the party would be held on July 11 and that meeting would decide the fate of Panneerselvam. If the kind of reception accorded to Palaniswami on Thursday is any indication, stage is set for

his coronation as the general Secretary. "Panneerselvam has nowhere to go now. His son P Raveendranath's meetings with Chief Minister M K Stalin have not been accepted by the AIADMK members. Moreover he is seen as a Sasikala acolyte," said Kolahala Srenivasan, a political observer based in Chennai.

Besides Munusamy, Dr V Mythreyan, another camp follower of Panneerselvam too switched over to Palaniswami faction leaving Panneerselvam gasping. "It is certain that Palaniswamy would be the unitary leader the party is waiting for," said Doraisamy Raveendran.

# Administration, security agencies gear up for Amarnath Yatra

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the beginning of the 42-day long Amarnath yatra from June 30, the Union Territory administration has geared up its entire machinery along with different security agencies to ensure peaceful conduct of the yatra.

A mock drill was organized under the supervision of Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd) and Major Gen Sudhir Bahl (Retd) to test the disaster preparedness and improvise the response strategy where required.

The mock Drill was conducted by the Department of Disaster Management in collaboration with National Disaster Management Authority and District Disaster Management Authorities from June 22 to 23rd.

The exercise was conducted to assess the overall preparedness and response measures taken at critical sites to deal with any untoward incident by all the concerned government and private agencies on both the routes of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra from Sonamarg to Holy Cave and Pahalgam to Chandanwari route.

During the mock drill, several scenarios including fire incidents, terrorist attacks,



vehicular accidents and stampede were simulated. The simulations were held at Nunwan Base camp and in adjacent areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh who was present on the occasion said that response strategies for these mock scenarios have been discussed threadbare and any gap areas identified have been addressed.

He said that the mock exercise has been very fruitful in ensuring that all stakeholders are well versed with their responsibilities. He said that the exercise has been instrumental in ensuring interdepartmental

coordination.

Officials from National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Rashtriya Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Army, Police, Health Dept, Civil Defence, Transport, Fire & Emergency Services and other emergency services attended the mock exercises.

MS Bhatia, IG Kashmir OPS, Sector CRPF also took stock of the security deployment to ensure peaceful pilgrimage. Briefing the media, IG CRPF said, "Amarnath Yatra is going to resume after a gap of 2 years. CRPF has an important role to play in the security of

the devotees.

All security measures have been taken in order to conduct the Amarnath Yatra peacefully. The Union Home Ministry had earlier rushed around 350 companies of the central paramilitary forces for yatra duty. In Jammu, Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar Thursday visited the Jammu-Shrinagar National Highway near Samrolti to take stock of the ongoing restoration work to clear the massive landslides/mudslides. Due to disruption of traffic on the highway, a large number of supply trucks and passenger vehicles have been stranded.

Meanwhile, Additional Director General of BSF (Western Command) PV Ramasastry also reviewed preparations of Shri Amarnathji yatra. He was briefed by IG Jammu frontier DK Boora about the prevailing security scenario in the region. ADG BSF also visited Samba and Kathua borders to review the operational preparedness of field formations.

During his interactions with the officers of the Jammu frontier the BSF officer laid emphasis on the threat posed by the cross border tunnel and Pakistani drones abetting smuggling of weapons/ narcotics.

# Govt working on strategy to manufacture rare-disease drugs indigenously

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

With no domestic manufacturers developing drugs for people ailing with rare genetic diseases in India which is home to 8 crore such patients, the Government is working on a strategy to indigenously manufacture the drugs or bring generic drugs which are off-

patent here as well as develop process chemistry for drugs under patent to make it affordable once patent expires. Presently drugs are very costly and many times out of the reach of the patients too.

A senior official from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under the Union Science and Technology has sought

proposals from interested research groups for treatment of the rare genetic diseases.

"One-fifth of the global population is in India. High-genetic disease prevalence has been noted in affected communities with high genetic relatedness between parents and the majority of rare diseases in India occur at birth due to recessive

genetic defects. While many of the commonly occurring rare diseases have viable therapies, most of these therapeutic agents are patent protected and very expensive for the Indian user.

"Thus, there is a large unmet need for indigenously manufactured therapeutic agents for rare diseases. Currently, a few pharmaceu-

tical companies are manufacturing drugs for rare diseases globally and there are no domestic manufacturers in India except for Food for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) for small molecule inborn errors of metabolism. The DST has sought proposals from the interested pharmaceutical manufacturers as to "to bring generic drugs which are off- patent

or to develop process chemistry for drugs under patent to make it affordable once patent expires," said the official. The last date for submitting applications is July 15, the official informed.

According to the official, the rare diseases which may be targeted for the proposals include Lysosomal storage disorders, Gaucher disease,

Mucopolysaccharidoses (all types), Pompe disease, Fabry disease, Niemann Pick disease, Metachromatic Leukodystrophy, Krabbe disease, Small molecule diseases (Phenylketonuria, Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)), Neuromuscular Disorders such as Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) and Dystrophinopathies.

## FROM PAGE 1

## SHINDE CAMP SWELLS BUT PAWAR HOPES MVA WILL PULL THROUGH

If the number of MLAs who leave a political party constitutes two-thirds of the parent party's strength in the Assembly, they can merge with another party or become a separate group in the House without attracting provisions of the anti-defection law. Bharat Gogawale, whom the rebel Sena camp appointed as its whip on Tuesday, claimed that 42 rebel MLAs were supporting Eknath Shinde. "We are expecting more Sena MLAs to join us in the coming days," he said.

The strength Uddhav Thackeray-led has eroded markedly over the past few days. As many as 13 Sena MLAs, including Uddhav's son Aaditya Thackeray, attended a legislature party called by the chief minister at his Bandra residence "Matoshri" where the loyal MLAs are camping currently.

The Shiv Sena camp has written to State Assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Sitaram Zirwal, who has been acting as the Assembly Speaker since February 2021 in the absence of a full-fledged speaker in the Assembly, seeking recognition of their faction on the basis of its strength.

As the number of MLAs in the rebel camp swelled, the Opposition BJP – which has been working in tandem with Shinde and has contributed in a big way in fuelling the political crisis in Maharashtra – began to firm up its plans to defeat the Uddhav Thackeray government in the likely trust vote on the floor of the House and later stake claim to form the next government in the state. Maharashtra's former chief minister and current leader of the Opposition Devendra Fadnis – who has reportedly been in constant touch with Shinde – is coordinating with the BJP's central leadership at the Centre in the party's efforts to team up with the Sena rebel minister to form the next government in the state. Like in the past, the BJP is understood to have offered the deputy chief minister's post to Shinde and some ministerial berths to his supporting MLAs in lieu of his joining the party or supporting the government from outside as an independent faction.

Meanwhile, in what came as a relief to the beleaguered Uddhav Thackeray-led parent Sena camp, the ruling allies – NCP and Congress – announced their support to the MVA government. Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and State NCP President and minister Jayant Patil announced their party's continued support to the Uddhav Thackeray government, while senior Congress minister Ashok Chavan and Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole pledged his party's continued support to the MVA government. Reiterating his party's support to Uddhav Thackeray, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said it was the responsibility of all the three constituents – Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress – to "save" the Uddhav Thackeray government.

Talking to media persons, senior NCP minister Jayant Patil said: "We had a meeting at the residence of Sharad Pawar. An assessment of events that took place during the last three-four days was done. Pawar sahib told us that we should do everything that needs to be done to ensure that the government remains. We will stand with Uddhav Thackeray, with this government".

## WILL CONSIDER EXIT FROM MVA... RAUT'S CALL TO REBELS RAISES ALLIES' EYEBROWS

Your demand will be considered positively. Don't write letters on Twitter and WhatsApp" He was talking to the media after a meeting of Sena MLAs at the CM's official residence.

Raut told the rebel Sena MLAs: "The solution can be found through discussions. Our doors are open for you. Why are you wandering like this? Instead of being slaves, let us take decisions with self-respect... If you think that the Sena should quit the MVA and look at alternatives. We can consider that. But, show the courage to come back to Mumbai and meet party chief Uddhav Thackeray. You can have a direct talk with Uddhav Sahib and resolve matters". When his attention was drawn to Raut's statement that the Sena was prepared to walk out of the MVA government if the rebel MLAs so desired, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said: "It is the responsibility of all the three parties (NCP, Congress, and Shiv Sena) to save the government. Only Sanjay Raut can say why he made such a statement"

Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar declined to comment on

Raut's statement. "We don't want to react to what he said. The MVA needs to work collectively. Sanjay Raut has the right to say whatever he wants to. I have no clue why he made such a statement. We will ask Uddhav about Raut's statement."

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole also refused to comment on Raut's remarks by saying that he would not react to the Shiv Sena spokesperson's statement as it was an internal matter of the Sena

## LET'S MEET HALFWAY, CHINA URGES INDIA

Wang also said China and India's common interests far outweigh their differences, adding that the two sides should support rather than undermine each other, strengthen cooperation rather than guard against each other, and enhance mutual trust rather than be suspicious of each other, according to a statement by the Chinese foreign ministry.

Wang Yi said the two sides should meet each other halfway to push bilateral relations back onto the track of stable and healthy development at an early date, jointly address various global challenges, and safeguard the common interests of China and India as well as the vast number of developing countries.

He called on both sides to adhere to the important strategic consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, insist on placing the border issue in a proper position within bilateral ties, and seek solutions through dialogue and consultation.

China and India should also give full play to their traditional advantages in people-to-people and cultural exchanges, continuously expand mutually beneficial cooperation, and work together to create a better future for mankind, the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Wang as saying.

The Chinese Foreign Minister proposed a four-point agenda to define and take forward ties with India which are frosty at present due to tension at the LAC.

The four principles Wang mentioned included the requirement to follow the "important strategic consensus" reached by the top leadership of the two countries that "China and India are not competitors, but partners; and China and India will not pose threats to each other and are mutual development opportunities", the statement said.

"We should place the border issue at an appropriate position in bilateral relations and seek solutions through dialogue and consultation," according to Wang is the second principle to be followed. The remaining two principles were the need to expand "mutually beneficial cooperation" and to "expand multilateral cooperation" and "jointly cope with the "complex world situation". He said India's tradition of independent foreign policy was reflected in a recent speech by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, where he had expressed his disapproval of "Eurocentrism" and his hope that no external forces should interfere in China-India relations.

The Chinese Foreign Minister was referring to Jaishankar's June 3 speech at the GLOBESEC 2022 Bratislava Forum where he said the world could no longer be "Eurocentric", and that Europe needed to shun that mindset in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Chinese foreign minister also said Beijing attached importance to the Indian side's concerns regarding the return of Indian students and that he hoped to see early progress on this," the Indian embassy release said.

He also referred to the discussions on resumption of direct flight connectivity between the two sides, it said. "Rawat conveyed that the relevant agencies in India are seized of the matter and we may see progress in the matter soon," it said.

Over 12,000 Indian students have reportedly expressed their wish to return and their details have been forwarded to the Chinese government for processing. About 23,000 Indian students are studying in Chinese universities, mostly in medical courses.

## CHINA BIGGEST SECURITY THREAT: AUSTRALIA

Asked about the Quad comprising India, Australia, the US and Japan, Marles said it is not a security alliance as there is no defence pillar to it. With China forging a security pact with the

Solomon Islands in the Pacific, Marles favoured Australia and India working together in the region.

The security agreement between China and the Solomon Islands was a cause of concern for Australia, as any move to establish a Chinese military base in the region "would greatly change Australia's national security landscape".

Marles said there is a lot of scope for cooperation with India in the Pacific, while noting the significant Indian diaspora in Fiji, the work already done by the two sides to supply Covid-19 vaccines to Kiribati, and to support Tonga after an earthquake and tsunami in January. "There's probably never been a moment in our two countries' respective histories when we have been more strategically aligned," Marles said, highlighting the role played by the Indian diaspora in Australia in fields such as politics.

Besides building economic ties, deeper engagement in defence enhances the security of both India and Australia, which have shared values and geographies. "In that respect, all roads lead to India," he added.

In their wide-ranging talks, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Marles on Wednesday resolved to further expand bilateral defence and military ties in sync with the India-Australia comprehensive strategic partnership.

## LOW TURNOUT IN AZAMGARH, RAMPUR BYPOLLS

Over 35 lakh people were eligible to vote in the bypolls to decide the fate of 19 candidates.

An average 27.99 per cent votes were polled till 1 pm in both the seats. Of these, 26.39 per cent votes were cast in Rampur, and 29.48 per cent in Azamgarh, the election office here said. Both these parliamentary seats are considered bastions of Samajwadi Party. The bypoll to the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat was necessitated following resignation of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav after he was elected to the Uttar Pradesh assembly earlier this year. The Rampur seat was vacated by senior SP leader Azam Khan after his election to the state assembly.

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party, in a series of tweets, complained about the alleged wrongdoings in different areas of both the Lok Sabha seats and drew the attention of the election commission in this regard. "The police are harassing SP workers at the behest of the ruling party in Tanda and Darjaul areas of Suar assembly seat in Rampur. The election commission should take note. Action should be taken against the guilty policemen. Ensure fair voting," the party said and attached a letter written to the poll panel in this regard. In another tweet, the SP alleged that voters were prevented from casting votes at a booth in Tanda and polling was stopped. The SP also alleged that its booth agents were driven out in Azamgarh.

"All agents have been made to leave all polling booths in Gopalpur, Sagdi, Mubarakpur, Azamgarh and Mehnagar assembly areas as part of a conspiracy at the behest of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The election commission should take note. Ensure fair elections," the SP said in another tweet.

There was also a report of a police inspector misbehaving with an aged voter in Bilaspur in Rampur leading to ruckus. State minister Baldev Singh Aulakh, however, reached the spot and pacified the people, the report said.

The polling, which started at 7 am, continued till 6 pm, the office of the chief electoral officer said here.

According to a statement issued by the Election Commission of India, two general and as many as 291 sector magistrates, 40 zonal magistrates and 433 micro-observers were deputed.

For ensuring security and peaceful conduct of the polls, an adequate number of Central and state forces were deployed. The responsibility of security of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and strong rooms has been given to the Central forces.

There are 13 candidates in Azamgarh and six in Rampur. From Rampur, the BJP has fielded Ghanashyam Singh Lodhi, who recently joined the party, while the SP has fielded Asim Raja, handpicked by Azam Khan. The Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party did not contest from Rampur.

The Azamgarh seat witnessed a triangular contest between BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua', a famous Bhojpuri actor-singer; SP's Dharmendra Yadav and BSP's Shah Alam, also known as Guddu Jamali. While central BJP leaders remained absent from

campaigning this time, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath sought votes for the BJP candidates on the two seats. Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple did not campaign in the bypolls.

## CO-OP CAN HELP POST-COVID ECO RECOVERY, SAYS MODI AT BRICS

Highlighting co-operation between the BRICS nations, he also said "by increasing connectivity between BRICS Youth Summits, BRICS Sports, civil society organizations and think-tanks, we have strengthened our people-to-people connect."

"Confident that the deliberations today will produce suggestions to further strengthen our ties," the Prime Minister said. Ukraine is likely to feature in the deliberations. China has refused to condemn Russia's invasion while criticising sanctions brought against Moscow. India and South Africa have abstained from voting against Russia in the United Nations. New Delhi has all along favoured dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict.

In an address to the BRICS Economic Summit on Wednesday, Xi said the conflict in Ukraine has "sounded an alarm for humanity," continuing its formal position of neutrality while backing its ally Russia. Xi said imposing sanctions could act as a "boomerang" and a "double-edged sword," and that the global community would suffer from "politicising, mechanising and weaponising" global economic trends and financial flows.

"Economic globalisation is an objective requirement for the development of productive forces and an irresistible historical trend," Xi said.

## ED ALLOWS SONIA TO APPEAR IN JULY END

(PMLA) after a trial court here took cognisance of an Income Tax department probe against Young Indian based on a private criminal complaint filed by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy in 2013.

Sonia and Rahul are among the promoters and majority shareholders of Young Indian. Like her son, the Congress president too has 38 per cent shareholding. The Congress has accused the Centre of targeting Opposition leaders by misusing investigative agencies and has dubbed such action a "political vendetta".

## DELHI COVID NUMBER DOUBLES, CASES SPIKE TO 15K IN COUNTRY

Mandaviya, who chaired a meeting with key experts and officials amid an upsurge of Covid-19 cases in some States, stressed the need to focus on districts reporting high case positivity and undertake adequate testing (with higher proportion of RT-PCR) and effective surveillance to assess and control the spread of the infection in a timely manner, the Ministry said in a statement.

Mandaviya directed officials to continue to focus on surveillance and on whole genome sequencing (WGS) to scan for any possible mutation, it said.

He also directed officials to monitor hospitalizations due to Covid-19, and SARI/ILI cases, the statement stated. He exhorted them to increase the pace of vaccination, including booster doses, in districts reporting high cases. "As there are adequate vaccine doses available, let there be no vaccine wastage while focusing on accelerating vaccination among the eligible and vulnerable groups," he said.

The active cases comprise 0.19 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.60 per cent, the ministry said.

An increase of 2,303 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.03 per cent and the weekly positivity rate at 2.81 per cent, according to the ministry. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,27,36,027, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.21 per cent. According to the Ministry, 196.62 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive.

The 38 new fatalities include 20 from Kerala, four from Uttar Pradesh, three each from Delhi and Maharashtra, two each from Punjab and West Bengal and one each from Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Mizoram.



# Ready to help Lanka's quick eco recovery through promoting investments: India

PTI ■ COLOMBO

India on Thursday assured Sri Lanka that it stands ready to help the island nation's quick economic recovery through promoting investments, connectivity and strengthening economic linkage as a four-member delegation led by Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra met the country's top leadership, including President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, here.

Sri Lanka is facing the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948 which has led to an acute shortage of essential items like food, medicine, cooking gas and fuel across the country.

The delegation, which also included Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, V Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor, and Kartik Pande, Joint Secretary, Indian Ocean Region, first met President Rajapaksa.

During the call on President Rajapaksa, the Indian side thanked him for his commitment to the development of



India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations.

"Both sides had a productive exchange of views on the current economic situation in Sri Lanka as well as India's ongoing support," the High Commission of India said in a press release here.

During the meeting, Kwatra told Rajapaksa that India, as a close friend, will extend its fullest support to Sri Lanka in overcoming the difficult situation, the newsfirst.Lk website reported.

The delegation reviewed the already provided assistance in terms of fuel, medicine, fertiliser and other essentials and said the Indian government is committed to support Sri Lanka, the report said.

The delegation later met with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the two sides had an in-depth discussion on the Sri Lankan economy and efforts undertaken by the Government of Sri Lanka towards achieving economic

recovery.

"In this context, both sides highlighted the importance of promoting India-Sri Lanka investment partnership including in the fields of infrastructure, connectivity, renewable energy and deepening economic linkages between the two countries," the release said.

During the meetings, the Indian delegation underscored that the unprecedented recent economic, financial and humanitarian assistance of over USD 3.5 billion to the people of Sri Lanka was guided by 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The talks between the two sides were held in a frank, cordial and constructive manner," the release said.

In a tweet, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe said he had 'a productive discussion' with the Indian delegation led by Foreign Secretary Kwatra.

"I look forward to stronger bilateral ties with India," he tweeted. The Foreign Secretary

also had a separate meeting with his Sri Lankan counterpart,

Ambassador Wijewardena.

Aruni

## Truck driver dies after waiting for 5 days in queue at fuel station

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A 63-year-old truck driver has died in Sri Lanka after standing for five days in a queue at a filling station in the country's Western Province, the 10th death reported due to prolonged waiting for fuel procurement in the debt-ridden island nation grappling with the worst economic crisis since its independence, according to a media report on Thursday.

The man was found dead inside his vehicle after waiting in the queue at the filling station in Anguruwatota, police said.

The death toll in queues now stands at 10 and all the victims have been men aged between 43 and 84 years. Majority of the deaths reported in queues have been due to

cardiac arrests, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported.

A week ago, a 53-year-old man died while waiting in a queue for several hours at a fuel station in Panadura in Colombo.

The man was reported to have died of a heart attack while waiting in the queue in his three-wheeler.

Sri Lanka, home to around 22 million, is currently facing its worst economic crisis in more than 70 years.

Sri Lanka's economy is experiencing extreme fuel shortages, soaring food prices and a lack of medicines.

The current shortages were made worse by the government's inability to get the state-owned Bank of Ceylon to open Letters of Credit for fuel imports.

## Trains cancelled in UK as unions stage 2nd 24-hour walkout

AP ■ LONDON

Millions of people in Britain faced disruption Thursday as railway staff staged their second national walkout this week. The 24-hour strike by 40,000 cleaners, signallers, maintenance workers and station staff canceled about four-fifths of passenger services across the country. A third walkout is planned for Saturday as part of Britain's biggest and most disruptive railway strike in 30 years. Train stations were largely deserted Thursday. Highways also were less busy than expected, and many people appeared to heed advice to avoid travel. Internet provider Virgin Media O2 said its data suggested "millions more people" than usual were working from home. The strike is a headache for those who can't work from home, as well as for patients with medical appointments, students heading for end-of-year exams and music lovers making their way to the Glastonbury Festival, which runs through Sunday on a farm in southwest England. The dispute centers on pay, working conditions and job security as Britain's train companies aim to cut costs and staffing after two years in which emergency government funding kept them afloat. The strike pits the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union against 13 privately owned train-operating companies and the government-owned National Rail. Talks between union representatives and employers ended in deadlock Wednesday. The union accused Britain's Conservative government of scuttling the negotiations. The union says the government is preventing employers from improving on the 3% pay raise on the table so far. Britain's inflation rate hit 9.1% in May, as Russia's war in Ukraine squeezes supplies of energy and food staples while post-pandemic consumer demand soars.

## Australian leader to visit France to fix damaged relations

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Thursday he will meet President Emmanuel Macron in France next week to reset a bilateral relationship that was damaged when the previous Australian government canceled a submarine contract.

Albanese said Macron had invited him to visit France while he is in Europe to attend a NATO summit in Spain.

"We do need to reset. We've already had very constructive discussions. We've brought to a close the arrangements that were in place over submarines," Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

France responded with fury when former PM Scott Morrison announced in September that Australia was cancelling a 90 billion Australian dollar (\$62 billion) contract for a French state-owned company to build a fleet of 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines.

Instead, Australia had struck a deal with the US and Britain to provide submarines powered by U.S. Nuclear technology. France temporarily withdrew its ambassadors from the U.S. And Australia. Macron accused Morrison of lying to him over the French contract that was awarded in 2016.



## India, China discuss return of stranded students

PTI ■ BEIJING

India and China have discussed the return of thousands of Indian students stranded at home for two years due to Beijing's COVID-19 bans and resumption of direct flights disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, the Indian embassy here said on Thursday.

The vexed issue of the return of the Indian students figured in the talks between Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Wednesday.

Wang recalled his meeting with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar during his visit to New Delhi in March this year and mentioned that the "Chinese side attached importance to the Indian side's concerns regarding the return of Indian students and that he hoped to see early progress on this", a press release from the Indian Embassy quoted Wang as saying.

Foreign Minister Wang also referred to discussions on the resumption of direct flight connectivity between the two sides, it said.

"Ambassador Rawat conveyed that the

relevant agencies in India are seized of the matter and we may see progress in the matter soon", it said.

China, in recent months, began permitting "some" foreign students to return to the country. On June 20, the first batch of 90 Pakistani students, stuck back home for about two years due to China's strict visa restrictions, arrived in the Chinese city of Xian.

They are part of 250 Pakistani students China has agreed to permit to return based on their requirements while thousands more are awaiting Beijing's nod, according to the media reports from Pakistan.

## 1/6 panel to hear of Trump's pressure on Justice Department

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Jan. 6 committee will hear from former Justice Department officials who faced down a relentless pressure campaign from Donald Trump over the 2020 presidential election results while suppressing a bizarre challenge from within their own ranks.

The hearing Thursday will bring attention to a memorably turbulent stretch at the department as Trump in his final days in office sought to bend to his will a law enforcement agency that has long cherished its independence from the White House.

The testimony is aimed at showing how Trump not only relied on outside advisers to press his false claims of election fraud but also tried to leverage the



powers of federal executive branch agencies.

The witnesses will include Jeffrey Rosen, who was acting attorney general during the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol. Three days earlier, Rosen was part of a tense Oval Office showdown in which Trump contemplated replacing him with a

lower-level official, Jeffrey Clark, who wanted to champion Trump's bogus election fraud claims.

In a written statement prepared for the committee and obtained by The Associated Press, Rosen says the Justice Department had been presented with no evidence of fraud that could have affected the outcome of the election and therefore did not participate in any Trump campaign efforts to overturn the results, instead insisting on an orderly transfer of power.

"Some argued to the former president and public that the election was corrupt and stolen," Rosen's statement says. "That view was wrong then and it is wrong today, and I hope our presence here today helps reaffirm that fact."

Two other former department officials, Rosen's top deputy, Richard Donoghue, and Steven Engel, are also scheduled to testify. Both warned Trump at the White House meeting that they'd resign and that many of the department's lawyers would follow if he replaced Rosen with Clark.

"You could have a situation here, within 24 hours, you have hundreds of people resigning from the Justice Department," Donoghue has said he told Trump.

"Is that good for anyone? Is it good for the department? Is it good for the country? Is it good for you. It's not."

Only then did Trump relent. The night, and later his Republican administration, ended with Rosen still in power.

## Tension in Iraq as cleric accuses Iran's allies of meddling

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Iraq's Parliament is set to hold a session Thursday to vote in replacements for 73 lawmakers who resigned earlier this month. The collective walkout by followers of Iraq's most influential Shiite politician threw Iraq into further uncertainty, deepening a months-long political crisis over government formation.

It was not clear whether the

extraordinary session requested by 50 members of parliament during a recess would go through. A simple majority of the legislature's 329 members is required for an electoral session, and al-Sadr urged parliamentary blocs not to succumb to "pressures" from Iranian-backed factions.

Al-Sadr, a maverick politician with a large following, emerged as the biggest winner in general elections held in October, but has been

unable to cobble together a coalition that can form a majority government. He has been locked in a power struggle with internal Shiite rivals backed by Iran, preventing the formation of a new government.

Two weeks ago, he ordered lawmakers from his parliamentary bloc to resign in a bid to break the eight-month impasse. The unprecedented move threw Iraq's political landscape into disarray.

## Afghans bury dead, dig for survivors after quake kills 1,000

AP ■ GAYAN (AFGHANISTAN)

Villagers rushed to bury the dead Thursday and dug by hand through the rubble of their homes in search of survivors of a powerful earthquake in eastern Afghanistan that killed at least 1,000 people. The Taliban and the international community that fled their takeover struggled to bring help to the disaster's victims.

Under a leaden sky in Paktika province, which was the epicentre of Wednesday's magnitude 6 earthquake, men dug a line of graves in one village, as they tried to lay the dead to rest quickly in line with Muslim tradition. In one courtyard, bodies lay wrapped in plastic to protect them from the rains that are hampering relief efforts for the living. The quake was Afghanistan's deadliest in two decades, and, with the full extent of the destruction among the villages tucked in the mountains only slowly coming to light, officials said the toll could

rise. An estimated 1,500 others were reported injured, the state-run Bakhtar News Agency said.

"They don't have anything to eat, they are wondering what they can have to eat, and it is also raining," a Bakhtar reporter said in footage from the quake zone. "Their houses are destroyed. Please help them, don't leave them alone."

The disaster heaps more misery on a country where millions already faced increasing hunger and poverty and the health system has crumbled since the Taliban retook power nearly 10 months ago amid the US and NATO withdrawal.

How the international humanitarian community, which has pulled back significant resources from the country, will be able to offer aid and to what extent the Taliban government will allow it to remain in question. The Taliban's takeover led to a cutoff of vital international financing, and most governments remain wary of dealing directly with them.

## Iran orders US to pay compensation for slain nuke scientists

AP ■ TEHRAN

A court in Iran on Thursday ordered the United States government to pay over \$4 billion to the families of Iranian nuclear scientists who have been killed in targeted attacks in recent years, state-run media reported. The largely symbolic ruling underscores the escalating tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme, with negotiations to restore the tattered atomic accord at a standstill.

Although Tehran has blamed Israel in the past for slayings targeting Iranian nuclear scientists since a decade ago, Iran did not directly accuse its arch-foe Israel in its announcement.

Iran has not recognised Israel since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted the pro-West monarchy and brought Islamists to power. The court mentioned Israel only in saying the US supported the "Zionist regime" in its "organised crime" against the victims.

It's unclear how the court decision, like a raft of previous Iranian cases against the US as the two sides have engaged in a spiralling escalation of threats, would gain traction; there are no American assets to confiscate in the Islamic Republic.

## Russians focus firepower to seize 2 villages in east Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

The Russian military expanded its grab of territory in eastern Ukraine on Thursday, capturing two villages and vying for control of a key highway in an offensive that could cut supply lines and encircle some frontline Ukrainian forces, British and Ukrainian military chiefs said.

Britain's defense ministry said that Ukrainian forces had withdrawn from some areas near the city of Lysychansk, the latest major battlefield in Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine, to avoid the possibility of being encircled as Russians sent in reinforcements and concentrated their firepower in the area.

Ukraine's General Staff said Russian forces took control of the villages of Loskutivka and Rai-Oleksandrivka, and were trying to capture Syrotyne outside Sievierodonetsk.

For weeks, Russian forces have pummeled Sievierodonetsk, the administrative center of the Luhansk region, with artillery and air raids, and fought the Ukrainian army house-to-house. Ukrainian forces remain holed up at the Azot chemical plant on the city's edge, where about 500 civilians were also sheltering.

The Russians were also pressing their offensive on Lysychansk, which is located on a steep river bank facing Sievierodonetsk.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense noted in its intelligence assessment Thursday that Russian forces have



likely advanced more than five kilometers (three miles) towards the southern approaches of Lysychansk since Sunday.

"Some Ukrainian units have withdrawn, probably to avoid being encircled," the statement said.

"Russia's improved performance in this sector is likely a result of recent unit reinforcement and heavy concentration of fire."

Ukraine's military said the Russians were also moving to overtake the hills overlooking a highway linking Lysychansk with Bakhmut, to the southwest, in an attempt to cut the supply lines of Ukrainian forces.

Following a botched attempt to capture the Ukrainian capital in the early stage of the invasion on Feb. 24,

Russian forces have shifted focus to Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of Donbas, where the Ukrainian forces have fought Moscow-backed separatists since 2014.

The Russian military currently controls about 95% of the Luhansk region, and about half of the neighbouring Donetsk region of Donbas.



# Serena comeback cut short by Jabeur injury

AP ■ EASTBOURNE

Serena Williams' return to tennis action has been cut short after doubles partner Ons Jabeur withdrew from the Eastbourne tournament because of a knee injury.

The WTA event had seen tennis great Williams, 40, play her first two competitive matches since she limped out of last year's Wimbledon in tears with a hamstring problem.

The American and Tunisian partner Jabeur made it through to the semi-finals with a narrow last 16 win over Maria Bouzkova and Sara Sorribes Tormo, before a more convincing quarter-final victory in straight sets against Shuko Aoyama and Chan Hao-ching.

Williams will now focus on Wimbledon where she has accepted a wild card into the women's singles in a bid to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title.

She will find out who she faces in the first round when the draw is made on Friday.

Earlier on Wednesday, serena stepped up her comeback as the American star powered to a second successive victory.

Williams and Tunisia's Jabeur defeated Shuko Aoyama and Chan Hao-ching 6-2, 6-4 in the quarter-finals of the Wimbledon warm-up event at Devonshire Park.

Williams, 40, had initially looked rusty on her first appearance for 12 months in Tuesday's victory over Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova.

But she grew into that match and was more like her old self in the second step on her comeback trail.



**Williams will now focus on Wimbledon where she has accepted a wild card into the women's singles in a bid to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title**

It took only two minutes for the American to send down an ace before several clinical volleys provided the first break.

The opening set was wrapped up in 25 minutes and another break inspired by Serena in the ninth game of the second set put them on the brink of victory.

One more ace for Williams' tally helped get her and Jabeur over the line and they are now just two victories away from securing the title.

"I think we played together much better today, although I felt we played really well together yesterday. Ons really helped me out playing so good," Williams said.

Quizzed on how she celebrated yesterday, Serena she went for a dip in the nearby sea on the south-coast.

"I went to the beach and for a swim like everyone here in the cold water, no, no way! I didn't do much. I just played with my baby (Olympia). She is so fun," she said.

Williams is one Grand Slam crown away from equalling Australian

Margaret Court's record of 24 singles titles at the majors.

The last of her 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.

Earlier Wednesday, Petra Kvitova battled into the Eastbourne women's singles quarter-finals as the former Wimbledon champion fought back to beat Britain's Katie Boulter 5-7, 6-0, 7-5.

Kvitova, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014, was in danger of a shock defeat against Boulter after the world number 127 took the first set of their last-16 clash.

Boulter had knocked out last year's Wimbledon runner-up Karolina Pliskova in the previous round.

But former world number two Kvitova showed her class as she took the second set at a canter.

The Czech, who last reached a Grand Slam final in Australia in 2019, held her nerve in a tense decision to win in two hours and 23 minutes.

In the men's singles, Cameron Norrie defeated Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 6-2 for his first win on grass this season.

# Indian women's U17 team suffer 0-7 defeat against Italy



PTI ■ UDINE

India's Under-17 women's football team suffered a humiliating 0-7 defeat against Italy in the opening match of a four-nation tournament at Grandisico D'Isenzo stadium here.

The Thomas Dennerby-coached side started off the match by trying to press the opposition high up the pitch and entice mistakes from them.

Italy almost took the lead in the 10th minute as Dragoni had just Indian goalkeeper Monalisa to beat but the latter stretched and produced a wonderful save to deny the Italian.

However, India's resistance soon lay in tatters as just one minute later, Maria Rossi put the ball into the back of the net.

India came the closest to scoring on the half-hour mark when Anita tried a long-range effort to catch the Italian defence off-guard but her shot missed the target by a whisker.

The floodgates opened after that as Anna Longobardi and Giulia Dragoni scored in the

## India jump two places to 104 in FIFA ranking

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian football team reaped a good harvest of its impressive Asian Cup qualification campaign as it gained two places to jump to 104th in the latest FIFA world rankings released on Thursday.

The Blue Tigers are placed just below New Zealand (103rd), who missed out on a 2022 FIFA World Cup spot after losing to Costa Rica 0-1 in the intercontinental play-off earlier this month.

India's ranking among Asian Football Confederation members, however, still remained static at 19th place. Iran retained the top spot among AFC countries at 23rd place. In the overall rankings, Brazil remained on top, three months after taking the top spot from Belgium (2nd).

Argentina jumped one place to third at the expense of France (4th) who paid the price for four winless games in the UEFA Nations League.

England, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark complete the top-10. The next FIFA world ranking will be out on August 25. **PTI**

31st and 33rd minutes, respectively, to give the Italians some much-needed cushion.

Italy picked up right from where they left off in the first half as Manuela Sciacca scored in the 48th minute.

Couple of quick-fire goals followed after that and within 15 minutes of the second half, Italy had extended their lead to six goals.

Dennerby made some changes in the 60th minute as Neha, Rejiya, Babina and Pinku came on for Nitru, Lynda, Kajol and Shelia, respectively.

Marta Zamboni scored the final goal of the game in the 67th minute as she stretched Italy's lead to 7 goals.

On an exposure tour, the Indian team will compete in two tournaments to gear up for the U-17 women's World Cup in India during October-November.

## Back with a bang: Indian women's team storms into final

PTI ■ PARIS

India's recurve archers, who had a nightmarish qualification round in the women's event, bounced back strongly to storm into the final, confirming their first medal at the ongoing World Cup Stage 3 here on Thursday.

A day after all of them slipped out of top-30 in the qualifying round to get a lowly 13th seed, the trio of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur beat Ukraine, Britain and Turkey en route the summit clash.

They will be against Chinese Taipei on Sunday.

The Indian women's recurve trio started off by eliminating fourth-seed Ukraine 5-1 (57-53, 57-54, 55-55).

Against Great Britain in the quarterfinals, they dropped just four points to down their

opponents 6-0 (59-51, 59-51, 58-50).

In the semifinals, they had a slow start, aggregating 56 in the first set but their eighth-seeded Turkish rivals Gulnaz Coskun, Ezgi Basaran and Yasemin Anagoz shot a poor 51 to concede the first set by five points. The Indians stepped up in the second set to edge out their rivals by one-point before they went on to lose their first set of the day when the Turkish team won the third 55-54 to make it 2-4. Needing a tie in the fourth set to confirm their passage to the final, the Indians held their nerve and stood to their task for a 5-3 (56-51, 57-56, 54-55, 55-55) win.

Luck also was on their side as they did not have to face their nemesis Koreans as the top-seeds were upset by eighth-seeded Turkish team in the quarters.



Participants posing for the photograph before the Olympic Day Run at Shaheed Smarak in Lucknow on Thursday.

## Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia pulls out of CWG

**NEW DELHI:**Former All England champion Lee Zii Jia has pulled out of the upcoming Commonwealth Games to manage his workload, keeping in mind the World Championships in August. The world number five Malaysian's withdrawal will make it a bit easier for the Indian duo of Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen to go for the coveted Gold at the Birmingham event with Singapore's first ever badminton world champion Loh Kean Yew emerging as one of the favourites. "This is a difficult decision to make because I have played so many back-to-back tournaments and I think my body condition lacks rest and (so) I have to choose between Commonwealth and the World Championships," Zii Jia said in a video posted on Twitter.

## Cristiano could return to Juventus

AP ■ LONDON

Manchester United star Ronaldo is planning to return back to Juventus after an underwhelming season with Premier League club.

According to reports, Ronaldo's manager Jorge Mendes has already made a move and offered the 37-year-old striker's service to Juventus.

An AS.com report suggests that Ronaldo's manager has offered the footballer to the Italian giants. It has been learned that Juventus have not totally ruled out having star footballer in their side, although there is some doubt over whether they would be able to complete a deal.

United have not won the Premier League title since 2013 and last won a trophy in 2017. They finished last season in sixth place, having sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and replaced him with interim boss Ralf Rangnick.

The new manager of the club, Erik ten Hag has been tasked with a tricky rebuilding job in his first summer at Old Trafford and will need to get to work on replacing some of the star names who will leave when their contracts expire on June 30.

Ronaldo is reportedly 'worried' about United's current approach in the transfer win-



dow, according to a report from AS.com.

Along with Ronaldo, Pogba, who was bought by the club for a record \$112 million, could return to his former club Juventus.

The 37-year old found the back of the net 24 times in what was a forgetful season for Manchester United, as they failed to qualify for the Champions League, a result that leaves Ronaldo's future at the Old Trafford under doubts.

Ronaldo made 134 appearances for Juventus, scoring 101 goals and winning two league titles as well as two Coppa Italia.

## No Rani in India's CWG team

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday named an 18-member women's hockey team for the upcoming Commonwealth Games, with star striker Rani Rampal left out yet again for failing to regain full fitness after an injury.

The CWG team is very similar to the one taking part in the World Cup next month.

The side will be captained by goalkeeper Savita Punia while experienced defender Deep Grace Ekka will be her deputy in the Birmingham CWG, to be held from July 28 to August 8. The duo will also take the same roles in the World Cup, to be co-hosted by the Netherlands and Spain from July 1 to 17.

There are only three changes in the CWG squad from the World Cup team. Rajani Etimarpu was named in place of Bichu Devi Kharibam as number two goalkeeper while World Cup team member Sonika (midfielder) was left out from the CWG squad. Forward Sangita Kumari, who was named as one of the replacement players for the World Cup, figured in the CWG team as a full member.

India have been placed in pool A along with England, Canada, Wales and Ghana. They will begin their campaign on July 29 against Ghana.

Rani, who led the Indian



women to a historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics, was picked for the recent FIH Pro League matches in Belgium and Netherlands after recovering from a hamstring injury.

She didn't feature in the first four games of the side's European leg of Pro League, raising doubts about her fitness. Eventually, it cost her a place in the World Cup-bound squad.

In the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, India had finished fourth after losing to England in the bronze medal match. However, after an impressive campaign in their

maiden FIH Pro League where they finished overall third behind Argentina and the Netherlands, the Indian team is looking for a podium finish in Birmingham.

### INDIAN TEAM

**Goalkeepers:** Savita (c), Rajani Etimarpu

**Defenders:** Deep Grace Ekka (vc), Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Udita

**Midfielders:** Nisha, Sushila Chanu, Pukhrambam, Monika, Neha, Jyoti, Navjot Kaur, Salima Tete

**Forwards:** Vandana Katariya, Lalremsiami, Navneet Kaur, Sharmila Devi, Sangita Kumari.

# Top-scorer Nkunku extends stay with Leipzig until 2026

AP ■ LEIPZIG



RB Leipzig have extended the contract of their top-scoring France forward Christopher Nkunku until 2026, it was announced Thursday.

The 24-year-old was in stellar form last season, banging in 35 goals, including 20 in the Bundesliga, plus 19 assists in 50 matches in all competitions.

His performances earned him a debut in the France team last March and attracted interest from his former club PSG and Manchester United.

Nkunku still had two years on his original contract, but RB Leipzig managing director Oliver Mintzlaff has secured his services for another four years.

The new deal reportedly includes a significant salary raise with magazine Kicker and German daily Bild claiming a release clause of around 60 million euros becomes active next summer.

"I was really impressed with

## Löw tips Götze for Germany recall after Frankfurt move

AP ■ BERLIN

World Cup winner Mario Götze has been tipped for a Germany recall by former national team coach Joachim Löw after returning to the Bundesliga by signing for Champions League side Eintracht Frankfurt.

Götze completed his transfer from Dutch Eredivisie runners-up PSV Eindhoven by signing a three-year contract.

"I'm really looking forward to playing for Eintracht Frankfurt," said Götze, who scored an extra-time winner in Germany's victory over Argentina in the 2014 World

Cup final.

"The club has developed incredibly and embarked on an exciting, ambitious path which I am glad to be a part of."

Frankfurt have qualified for the Champions League for the first time since losing the 1960 European Cup final to Real Madrid after winning the Europa League last season.

Sporting director Markus Kroesche said Götze turned down "numerous offers" in order to join Frankfurt.

"We have lacked a type of player like him so far," said Kroesche.

Löw, who brought Götze



club has big goals.

"RB Leipzig have made a name for themselves on the international stage in recent years and have shown we can compete for titles," he said. "We want to build on that

on as a substitute in the World Cup final, is backing the midfielder to stake a claim for an international recall despite last playing for Germany in 2017.

"He has all the qualities for it," Löw, who stepped down as coach after Euro 2020, told Sky.

"He will play in the Champions League again, will be the focus here in the Bundesliga and will want to put himself forward for a World Cup place."

Götze rebuilt his confidence during his two-year spell at PSV after struggling for form at Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund.

going forward and go one step further."

### HALLER TO REPLACE HAALAND

Ajax forward Sebastian Haller flew to Germany on

Thursday to complete a medical check before signing with Borussia Dortmund as a replacement for Erling Haaland.

Haller was picked up by Dortmund officials after landing at the city's airport from where he was taken for his medical.

The 28-year-old Ivory Coast international is reportedly poised to ink a four-year deal with Dortmund to replace Haaland, who has joined Premier League champions Manchester City.

German daily Bild say Haller's transfer from Ajax is set to cost Borussia Dortmund around 31 million euros (\$32.5 million) including bonuses.

Haller was in superb form in the Champions League last season, scoring 11 goals in eight games including four in a 5-1 win over Sporting Lisbon in Ajax's opening group match.

The Dutch champions bowed out in the last 16, but Haller went on to score 21 goals in 31 games in the Eredivisie.



# INDIA CHOKE SL, TAKE 1-0 LEAD

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Indian bowlers choked the Sri Lankan women's team after Jemimah Rodrigues's vital knock on return to secure a convincing 34-run victory in the first T20 International here on Thursday.

Defending a modest 139, left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (2/22) made her presence felt right after the powerplay by dismissing the dangerous-looking Sri Lankan captain Chamari Athapaththu (16) and Harshitha Madavi (10) in three balls.

Reduced to 27 for three inside seven overs, Sri Lanka never managed to get going in the run chase, which was further derailed by some tight bowling by seamer Deepti Pooja Vastrakar in the middle overs en route to a tidy spell of 4-1-13-1.

Deepti Sharma gave India a flying start, dismissing opener Vishmi Gunaratne (0) in the second over. The senior off-spinner was at her miserly best in the powerplay and returned with figures of 3-1-9-1 to stymie the Sri Lanka's progress early on.

Deepti also took a stunning catch running in from deep square leg to give Radha her second wicket of the day.

Kavisha Dilhari waged a lone battle for the hosts with a fighting 49-ball 47 (6x4), but the Indians' top-class bowling and fielding ensured their team emerged easy winners for a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The hosts needed 78 runs in the last five overs and Kavisha got going with a flurry of boundaries against Harmanpreet Kaur and Radha.

But it proved insufficient as the Indians choked the home team's run rate while denying the Islanders any six in their innings.

Shafali Varma compounded Sri Lanka's misery by dismissing Ama Kanchana (11) in the death overs to leave them tottering at 104 for five.



The second match of the series is slated for Saturday.

Opting to bat, India lost opener Smriti Mandhana (1) in the third over of the game, the 25-year-old becoming the victim of veteran spinner Oshadi Ranasinghe while looking to free her arms. She hit a tossed-up delivery straight to Chamari Aththapatu at mid-on.

Sabbhineni Meghana was out for a golden duck, sent back to the dressing room by old warhorse Ranasinghe.

Losing two wickets early and under pressure in the hot and humid Dambulla, it was left to the duo of Harmanpreet and Shefali Verma to take control of the situation.

A well-settled Verma was the next to go, dismissed by Aththapatu on 31 while trying to go for a maximum.

Smart bowling by the Lankans ensured that they soon got their biggest breakthrough when Harmanpreet (22) was trapped in front of the wicket by spinner Inoka Ranaweera in the 11th over.

Ranaweera picked two more wickets to send back wicketkeeper batter Richa Ghosh (11) and Pooja Vastrakar (14) to reduce the visitors to 106 for six in 17 overs and leave Jemimah with the task of giving the Indian total a semblance of respectability.

Coming in at five, Rodrigues, who made her comeback to the side after a while, did not succumb to the pressure and scored some crucial runs, hitting three fours and a six, with Deepti Sharma playing the second fiddle with a 17 off 8 balls.

## Blessed to have spoken to Rohit & Pant after being dropped: Jemimah

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

Words of encouragement from Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant lifted Jemimah Rodrigues' spirit while she tackled a difficult phase and worked on her comeback, which began right after being dropped from the Indian women's team.

The chirpy cricketer feels she is blessed to have spoken to the likes of Rohit and Pant.

Jemimah, who was not part of India's World Cup squad in New Zealand, marked her return to international cricket with a vital 27-ball 36 not out to give India enough runs to defend in the first T20 International here on Thursday.

"My journey since the last Sri Lanka tour has not been smooth, it had its ups and downs. I have spoken to Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant, they told me these moments will define your career, they told me not to take it (being dropped from the squad before the World Cup) in a negative way," Jemimah said at the post-match press conference.

"They told me I should take up the challenge and move ahead. I am blessed to have spoken to them."

Coming in at number five, Rodrigues did not succumb to the pressure created by the Sri Lankan bowlers and scored some crucial runs, hitting three fours and a six. India posted 138 for 6 and the visiting bowlers choked the Sri Lankans to secure a convincing 34-run victory.



"I have understood my game better in the four-five months, I have become calmer, I have changed though my height remains the same," said Jemimah. "I started preparing right after I was dropped."

Coming into the middle at a crucial juncture of the innings, Jemimah said she was nervous to start with.

"This innings means a lot, I was nervous initially but the late cut boundary helped me a lot in easing things up. I am back in the side after 4-5 months or maybe more than that. I was pumped up."

Asked about the pitch, she said, "I don't know, it is more like the pitch where I stay in Mumbai. The pitches are similar, so I am used to playing in these conditions. I love this country, it is a very beautiful country. It is a privilege to come here and the love we are getting from the board is great."

# Bharat impresses, top-order fails in warm-up match against Leicestershire

PTI ■ LEICESTER

Wicketkeeper Srikar Bharat impressed with an unbeaten 70, even as India's top-order failed to get batting practice on the first day of their warm-up match against Leicestershire here on Thursday.

Opting to bat after winning the toss, India's top guns failed to fire as the visitors slipped to 81 for five, before reaching 246 for eight at the close of play.

Bharat shone during his 158-minute stay in the middle before rain brought an early end to the day's proceedings at Grace Road.

In all, the 28-year-old batter from Andhra hit eight fours and a six while facing 111 balls. At stumps, Mohammed Shami was giving Bharat a company on 18.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (25) and Shubman Gill (21) got out after getting starts. The opening duo, which is set to begin India's innings in the one-off 'fifth Test', added 35 runs for the first wicket before the latter was dismissed by fast-medium bowler Will Davis.



India's first-choice wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, who was representing the English county side alongside Cheteshwar Pujara, Jasprit Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna, held on to the catch of Gill, who found the fence four times while lasting 38 minutes.

For the addition of another 15 runs, India lost the wicket of Rohit, who hit three fours during his 64-minute stay in the middle.

Rohit's departure paved the way for Virat Kohli's arrival, and the former India captain looked to take the onus upon himself to prop up India.

In between, Hanuma Vihari (3) came on to bat at number three but departed cheaply off the bowling of Roman Walker.

Shreyas Iyer failed to open his account and walked back to the dressing room after facing 11 balls, having nicked Prasidh to the waiting hands of Pant.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja too failed to make an impact as he was adjudged lbw off the bowling of Roman Walker, who finished the day with impressive figures of 5/24.

## Ashwin joins team in Leicester

PTI ■ LEICESTER

Senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who did not travel to the United Kingdom along with his India team-mates for the one-off 'fifth Test' after testing positive for COVID-19, has joined the side in Leicester, according to sources.

Ashwin, who is in quarantine, joined his team-mates at Leicester where India



is playing a warm-up match.

The Indian team had left for the UK on June 16.

"Yes, Ashwin has joined the team but he is still recovering. He is not fit to play the warm-up game," a source said.

The team management is hopeful that he will recover in time for the Test against England, which starts on July 1.

After the IPL, Ashwin had played a Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) league red-ball match where he had bowled 20 overs to get some long-form game time.

# Sarfaraz's 134 propels Mumbai to 374, MP finish day 2 at 123/1

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sarfaraz Khan completed his transformation from Mumbai cricket's resident 'enfant terrible' to 'Man Friday' with a superb hundred that kept his side ahead against Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy final, here on Thursday.

Courtesy Sarfaraz's fourth hundred of the season - 134 off 243 balls - the 41-time champions managed a fighting 374 in their first innings after beginning the day at 248 for five.

But Madhya Pradesh won't be too unhappy as they finished the second day at 123 for one with Yash Dubey (44 batting) and Shubham Sharma (41 batting) adding 76 runs for the unbroken second wicket.

The day belonged to none other than Sarfaraz, who has now scored an astounding 937 runs in Ranji Trophy in just six games and could make it 1000 for the season if Mumbai bat again in this match.

His innings had 13 boundaries and two huge sixes - one over square leg off left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya and one down the ground off off-spinner Saransh Jain.



But what stood out was how he managed the innings after Shams Mulani was trapped leg before by Gourav Yadav (4/106) in the opening over of the second day.

His batting with the tail showed his new-found maturity, which is proving to be a boon for Mumbai cricket. He chose loose deliveries for boundary, forcing MP captain Aditya Shrivastava to open the field.

The manner in which Sarfaraz has turned a corner since the 2019-20 season (928 runs back then) is phenomenal as he had disciplinary issues early in his career, which also forced him to leave Mumbai for a season.

With father Naushad Khan, who also doubles up as his coach, making him play 400 balls (nearly 67 overs including nets and knocking) a day at practice, Sarfaraz 2.0 is a battle-hardened man, the 'khadoos street fighter' that any captain would want to go to a war with.

Once he reached his fifty, he touched the lion's crest on his jersey, gesturing 'Don't worry, I am going nowhere'.

His batting isn't as pleasing to the eye as Prithvi Shaw's but highly effective. His batting is assuring. He knows how to

score those runs on a track that is largely two-paced and in overcast conditions with the ball doing a fair bit.

When MP skipper spread the field to stop boundaries, he still found his way to play the controlled square cut off seamer Anubhav Agarwal, which bisected the two fielders stationed at deep extra cover and deep point to the fence.

The Indian Test team's middle-order is still jam-packed but the manner in which Sarfaraz is batting, to put it in head coach Rahul Dravid's words, he is not just knocking but banging the selection door down.

Sarfaraz was involved in four small, but very effective, partnerships which could prove to be decisive if the match turns out to be an affair of one innings.

He added 40 for seventh wicket with Tanush Kotian (15), 26 for the eighth wicket with Dhawal Kulkarni (1), 39 for the ninth with Tushar Deshpande (6) and another 21 priceless runs for the final wicket with Mohit Avasthi (7).

By the time, he became Mumbai's last batter to be dismissed, he had ensured that the total is good enough for his bowlers to defend.

AP ■ LEEDS

England's Stuart Broad closed in on 550 Test wickets after striking in the first over of the match and then removing New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on the opening day of the series finale at Headingley on Thursday.

New Zealand, already 2-0 down in a three-match series, were 65 for three at lunch after winning the toss under blue skies and on a seemingly good pitch for batting in Leeds.

England were looking to make it three wins out of three under their new leadership duo of captain Ben Stokes and red-ball coach Brendon McCullum, a former New Zealand skipper.

They were without James Anderson, their all-time leading Test wicket-taker, because of an ankle injury.

But any disappointment at Anderson's absence was soon eased when his longtime new-ball partner Broad removed Tom Latham for a sixth-ball duck after he edged a delivery straight to Joe Root at first slip.

New Zealand were none for one at that stage, but Will Young and Williamson, back in action after missing the second Test in Nottingham with a bout of coronavirus, repaired some of the early damage.

Williamson, on a ground where he had played for Yorkshire, smashed Broad for four and Young cut a boundary off Test debutant Jamie



Overton, with the Surrey quick preferred to twin brother Craig as the replacement for Anderson.

Spin, however, ended a promising partnership, when left-armers Jack Leach struck with his first ball, turning and straightened a delivery past Young's bat to have the opener lbw for 20.

Young reviewed, more in hope than expectation, with replays indicating the ball would have hit the middle of middle stump and New Zealand were 35 for two inside 13 overs.

Broad then captured the key wicket of Williamson, whose fluent 31 had included five fours, when the star batsman edged a fine leg-cutter to wicketkeeper Ben Foakes as the seamer took his 548th Test wicket.

Williamson, in a rare show of emotion, ripped off his glove in disgust.

New Zealand almost lost a fourth wicket before lunch when left-hander Devon Conway, on 11, inside-edged Broad, only for Foakes to drop a difficult one-handed chance as he dived to his right.

## Maxwell earns Test recall



AP ■ COLOMBO

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has been added to the Test squad in Sri Lanka following a spate of injuries in the camp. The development comes after Travis Head was ruled out of the fifth ODI with a hamstring injury, with white-ball captain Aaron Finch "not sure" about how the batter will hold up for the upcoming Test series.

Head sustained a low-grade hamstring injury while fielding in the fourth ODI of the series. "It's a bit more of a precaution, especially with where he fields," Aaron Finch said in the presser ahead of the final ODI. "He fields in the outfield and the ground is quite heavy and he does a lot of Ks... I'm not sure what he'll be like for the Tests but he's definitely not available for tomorrow."

Maxwell last played a Test five years ago, against Bangladesh in Chattogram, and could make a return to the XI at Galle, especially given the side injury to Ashton Agar. Maxwell, though, will have to fight off challenges from Mitch Marsh and Josh Inglis to replace Head at No. 5, should the latter not get fit in time.

## Ton for dad & celebration for late Sidhu Moosewala: Sarfaraz

PTI ■ BENGALURU

"This hundred is because of my abbu (father), his sacrifices and holding my hand when I could have been down and out," a teary-eyed Sarfaraz Khan choked in front of scribes while dedicating his best century to father and coach Naushad Khan.

Those who follow Mumbai cricket closely know how tough Naushad is on his sons Sarfaraz and Mushir (also in Mumbai squad), who don't have a life beyond cricket.

So is the dream India call-up on the cards now? His eyes welled up while answering the question after his century lifted Mumbai to 374 against Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy final here.

"In our lives, it's about all those little dreams that we harbour. The dreams that we (he and his dad) have dreamt together. The nearly 2000 runs that I have scored in two seasons since my Mumbai comeback is because of my 'abbu'," he said.

When there aren't any matches, the brothers train for good six to seven hours per day under their father's supervision.

He has had disciplinary issues, has not been the establishment's favourite child, and had to migrate to UP for a

season before coming back and serving a cooling-off period before being picked for Mumbai again.

"Aap sab toh jaante ho mere saath kya kya huwa. Abbu na rahte toh main khatm ho jataa (You all know what I have gone through and had my father not been there, I would have been finished by now)."

"There has been so much of struggle and when I think how my dad dealt with all of it, I get emotional. He didn't leave my hand even once. My brother put up a status on his cell phone and I could see Abbu so happy. It made my day," he could finally manage a smile.

### A FAN OF MOOSEWALA

Asked if his thigh thump celebration was imitation of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, who was recently gunned down by a gang, he said that was the idea.

"This was for Sidhu Moosewala. I love his songs and mostly me and Hardik Tamore (keeper) listen to his songs. I did a similar kind of celebration during an earlier match also (in his memory), but then, Hotstar didn't show it. I had decided once I score another hundred, I would repeat the celebration," the burly Mumbaikar said.