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LUCKNOW, MONDAY JUNE 27, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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MP BEAT MUMBAI IN RANJI FINAL
11 SPORT

Sena rebels challenge suspension notice in SC

Rejection of no-trust motion against Deputy Speaker, too, questioned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena supporters stage a protest in support of Chief Minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

Amid the heightened political turmoil in Maharashtra, the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs, led by senior leader Eknath Shinde approached the Supreme Court on Sunday against the disqualification notice issued against them.

The rebel Legislators, who have been camping at a luxury hotel in Assam's Guwahati, also challenged the rejection of the no-confidence motion against Deputy Speaker Narahari Zirwal.

Shiv Sena had filed a petition before the Deputy Speaker for disqualifying 16 rebel MLAs after they revolted against the party and pushed the Government on the brink of collapse. The Deputy Speaker's office has issued 'summons' to these MLAs, seeking written replies by the evening of June 27. In their petition filed in the top court, the rebel leaders have also challenged the appointment of Ajay Choudhari as the Shiv Sena Legislature Party leader. Sena named Choudhari to the post after removing Shinde a day after the latter left Mumbai with a sizable number of loyal MLAs, leaving the Maha Vikas Aghadi Government teetering.

Amid the intense power tussle between Shinde and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, one more Minister left the Sena camp on Sunday and joined the rebel leaders. Uday Samant is the ninth Minister to desert the Uddhav Thackeray's team.

Meanwhile, the Sena leadership has hardened its stance against the rebels and is planning to take away the portfolios of some of the Ministers in the rebel camp. According to reports, Shinde, who heads the Urban Development Ministry, Water Supply and Sanitation Minister Gulabrao Patil and Agriculture Minister Dada Bhuse as well as Ministers of States Sambhuraje Desai and Abdul Sattar are likely to lose their portfolios.

The State witnessed large-scale protests by Shiv Sena workers against the rebel leaders. In Mumbai, a large number of party workers, including women, assembled outside the office of 'Saamana', at Prabhadevi and took out a two-wheeler rally raising slogans against Shinde and rebel MLAs.

LS bypolls: Double blow for SP as BJP wrests Azamgarh, Rampur seats

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, UP BJP President Swatantra Dev Singh, Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak and others flash the victory sign as they celebrate the party's victory in the by-polls, in Lucknow on Sunday PTI

Sunday was a day of a double whammy for the Samajwadi Party (SP) as its candidates lost in their bastions — Rampur and Azamgarh --- to the BJP in the Lok Sabha by-elections.

In Azamgarh, the BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' defeated SP's Dharmendra Yadav by 8,679 votes, while Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi beat Asim Raza by 42,192 votes in Rampur. Both seats have been the SP strongholds for decades.

The Azamgarh seat fell vacant following the election of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav to the State Assembly, while the Rampur seat was vacated by Azam Khan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the BJP's victory in Azamgarh and Rampur on Twitter terming it "historic".

"The bypoll wins in Azamgarh and Rampur are historic. It indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the double-engine Governments at the Centre and in UP. Grateful to the people for their support. I appreciate the efforts of our party karyakartas," the PM tweeted.

The Azamgarh seat saw a triangular contest between the BJP's Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua', SP's Dharmendra Yadav and the BSP's Shah Alam, also known as Guddu Jamali.

In Azamgarh, Shah Alam polled over 2 lakh votes, denting the prospects of Dharmendra Yadav. Another factor for this tight contest could be the absence of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav from the campaign.

The two constituencies went to the polls on June 23 and Azamgarh and Rampur recorded a 49.43 per cent and 41.39 per cent turnout, respectively. The BSP did not contest the Rampur bypoll and that helped the BJP as the Dalit votes shifted to the saffron party. NOTA got 4,447 votes.

Azam had won from Rampur in the Lok Sabha election in 2019 when the SP had an alliance with the BSP and RLD. In 2014, the BJP's Nepal Singh had won the Rampur seat albeit with a thin margin of 23,435 votes.

Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi belongs to the OBC community and is a former SP MLC who had started his political career with the BJP but later switched sides. He had contested the Lok Sabha elections from Rampur as a BSP candidate in 2009 and finished third. He was elected as a member of the UP Legislative Council from the Rampur-Bareilly local bodies' constituency in 2016 as an SP candidate. His term ended in March earlier this year.

Continued on Page 9

My dad offered CM's chair to Shinde: Aaditya

Was tempted with ₹50 cr to join rebel faction, says Sena MLA

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray during his interaction with party workers from Kalina and Kurla Assembly constituencies, at Santacruz, in Mumbai on Sunday PTI

In two sensational claims, Sena Minister Aaditya Thackeray said here on Sunday that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had offered the Chief Minister's post to rebel faction leader Eknath Shinde on May 20, while Sena MLA Udaysingh Rajput claimed that the rebel Sena group had offered him Rs 50 crore to join the faction led by Shinde.

On a day when the Shinde camp prepared itself to battle it out both within and outside the State Assembly and the parent Sena camp went about the task of keeping its flock together, Aaditya, addressing the party workers at a series of rallies including the ones at Dahisar and Thane, said: "On May 20, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had called Eknath Shinde to 'Varsha' (CM's official residence), asked him if he had any grievance against him (CM). He also had asked if he wanted to become the Chief Minister."

"However, at that time, Shinde did not say "yes" to my father's offer.

Continued on Page 9

Centre gives Y+ CRPF security to rebel MLAs

Guv too asks Maha cops to protect Legislators

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government on Sunday provided Y+ category Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) security cover to 15 rebel Shiv Sena MLAs. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has also asked the State Director-General of Police to provide security to the rebel MLAs. The development comes a day after the State Government withdrew the security cover to the rebel Sena MLAs and the homes of many of them were attacked by the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

As per the Union Home Ministry's order, the rebel MLAs, who have been accorded the CRPF security cover, include: Ramesh Bornare, Mangesh Kudalkar, Sanjay Shirsat, Latabai Sonawane, Prakas Surve, Sadanand Saranavnkar, Yogesh Dada Kadam, Pratap Sarnaik, Yamini Jadhav, Pradeep Jaiswal, Sanjay Rathod, Dadaji Bhuse, Dilip Lande, Balaji Kalyanar and Sandipan Bhumare.

On Saturday, Sena workers loyal to Uddhav Thackeray staged protests against the rebels and vandalised office of an MLA in Pune.

Rebel leader Eknath Shinde wrote to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, State Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil and the DGP Rajneesh Seth alleging that security cover provided to the rebel MLAs at their residence and to their family members has been withdrawn "as an act of revenge".

Continued on Page 9

BJP wins big in Tripura

PNS ■ AGARTALA

BJP registered an impressive performance in Tripura, winning three out of the four Assembly seats which went to poll on June 23. The Congress bagged one seat.

While Chief Minister and BJP candidate Manik Saha won in Town Bordowali, his party's candidates Swapna Das won *Continued on Page 9*

Cong pips BJP to bag Mandar seat

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Congress candidate Shilpi Neha Tirkey won the Mandar Assembly by a margin of 23,517 votes. Shilpi got 95,062 votes, while the BJP candidate, Gangotri Kujur came second with 71,545. Over 61.25 per cent of about 3.5 lakh *Continued on Page 9*

Jolt for AAP in Punjab, party retains Delhi's seat

MONIKA MALIK/PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

AAP candidate Durgesh Pathak flashes the victory sign alongwith party's senior leaders Sanjay Singh, Gopal Rai and Atishi Marlena at party headquarters after winning Rajinder Nagar bypoll, in New Delhi on Sunday Ranjan Dimri I Pioneer

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday faced a resounding defeat in the Sangrur Lok Sabha by-election just 100 days after the massive mandate it got in State Assembly polls. A former IPS and Khalistan-ideologue Simranjit Singh Mann, won the Sangrur seat --- represented by AAP since 2014 — by a slim margin of 5,822 votes.

On the other hand, AAP candidate Durgesh Pathak defeated the BJP's Rajesh Bhatia by a margin of 11,468 votes in the Rajinder Nagar Assembly by-poll. Pathak got 40,319 votes (55.76 per cent) while Bhatia got 28,851 (39.91 per cent) votes. The Congress candidate Prem Lata secured only 2019 votes (2.79 per cent).

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called it the defeat of BJP's "dirty politics" and thanked the people for appreciating the work done by his Government in the national Capital. Senior AAP leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also

Continued on Page 9

CAPSULE

CRIME BRANCH ARRESTS TEESTA IN FORGERY CASE

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad crime branch on Sunday arrested activist Teesta Setalvad, a day after she was detained in Mumbai and shifted to Gujarat, in connection with a fresh case of forgery, criminal conspiracy and insulting criminal proceedings to cause injury registered against her, officials said.

'PROGRESS MADE FOR THEATERISATION PLAN'

New Delhi: Definite progress has been made in ongoing deliberations for the theaterisation plan and the Indian Air Force (IAF) remains fully committed to the tri-services integration for enhancing comprehensive national combat power, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari said on Sunday.

ASSAM FLOOD: OVER 25 LAKH STILL AFFECTED

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam continued to remain criticalon Sunday with more than 25 lakh people still reeling under the deluge,although water level has started receding from some areas.

Indians proud of democracy, PM tells desi diaspora

Looking forward to fruitful discussions with G-7 leaders, Modi says on reaching Munich

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/MUNICH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by officials, upon his arrival in Munich, Germany on Sunday PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said Indians are "proud" of democracy, which has been made vibrant by the diversity of culture, food, clothes, music and tradition.

Making this assertion while addressing the Indian diaspora in Munich, he also said the country has shown democracy can deliver and has delivered.

However, he cautioned that June 26 marks the Emergency as well. "Today is June 26, which is also known for the day when India's democracy that is in the DNA of every Indian, was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago. Emergency was a black spot on the vibrant history of India's democracy," the Prime Minister said.

The PM arrived in Munich earlier to attend the G-7 summit hosted by Germany. Besides, he will also hold bilateral meetings with world leaders on the sidelines of the summit in the next two days.

In his address to the Indian community, the Prime Minister also said now every village in the country is open defecation free, has electricity and 99 per cent of the villages also have clean cooking fuel.

Continued on Page 9

Varun likely to move private Bill to end MPs', MLAs' pensions

DEEPAK KUMAR UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

BJP Member of Parliament Varun Gandhi may move a bill in Lok Sabha in the coming monsoon session seeking an end to post-retirement benefits to the MPs and MLAs.

The party MP, who has become a vocal critic of the Centre's Agnipath scheme for recruitment in the Army and declared that he himself would not take pension, will be writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to take steps to end pension benefits to the public representatives, sources

Continued on Page 9

Viswanathan Anand making a ceremonial move on the chess board against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the 44th Chess Olympiad Torch Relay event in front of Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow on Sunday Pioneer

CBI probe against 3 IT staffers for aiding fake TDS returns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has started a probe against three Income Tax department officials and nine private persons for allegedly facilitating fictitious refunds of TDS deducted for several assessees by misusing system access of senior officers.

The CBI filed an FIR based on a complaint from Joint Commissioner of Income Tax, Muzaffarnagar, against three group C officials of the Income Tax who allegedly managed to dupe the department by misusing RSA tokens of assessing officers to work out and generate fictitious refunds of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS).

RSA tokens are unique and time-synchronous solutions that automatically change a user's password every 60 seconds.

Following the registration of the FIR, the agency has carried out searches at multiple locations, officials said.

Continued on Page 9

Yogi: Win in Rampur, Azamgarh a clear message by people

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hailing the Bharatiya Janata Party's bypoll victory in Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituencies, considered to be the stronghold of the Samajwadi Party, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday that the public has given a clear message to 'parivarvadis', casteist and communal elements.

Congratulating the BJP candidates and workers, Yogi said, "The victory in the bypolls has determined the optimistic fate of the 2024 general elections. People have shown their trust in the double-engine government under the leadership of PM Modi. Good governance and public welfare policies have overthrown corruption, hooliganism and terrorism."

"The victory of BJP candidate Ghanshayam Singh Lodhi in Rampur and that of Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' in Azamgarh has affirmed BJP's positive and development-oriented approach which ensures the uplift of every section of the society without any discrimination," Yogi said.

"The win testifies the good governance of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the tireless efforts as well as hard work of dedicated party workers have produced incredible results in such challenging places. I express my deepest gratitude to the people of Rampur and Azamgarh for believing in the BJP," he added.

Highlighting the success of the BJP in winning public support, Yogi said, "After the thumping victory in assembly elections, the BJP won massive seats in the UP Legislative Council elections, and now the party has fared exceptionally well in Azamgarh and Rampur. Double engine has fetched double win."

"The BJP will continue to work under PM Modi's able leadership on the path of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas aur Sabka Vishwas'. This is the reason people have rejected negative forces with destructive and dynastic approach," he added.

Bharatiya Janata Party state president and Cabinet Minister Swatantra Dev Singh offering sweets to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to celebrate the party's victory in Lok Sabha bypolls at BJP office in Lucknow on Sunday
Pioneer

Yogi's chopper makes emergency landing following bird hit

PNS ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's helicopter had to make an emergency landing at the police lines in Varanasi just a few minutes after take-off on Sunday.

After his two-day visit to Varanasi, Yogi was leaving for Sultanpur to pay tributes to former MLA Surya Bhan Singh but the helicopter had to make an emergency landing following a bird hit.

According to Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal, the chopper was hit by a bird and the pilot, in a bid to avoid any problem, decided to make the emergency landing in Varanasi.

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma said the CM and other staff were safe and they left for Lucknow from a state plane. After the incident, the CM's proposed visit to Sultanpur was postponed and he returned to the circuit house before leaving for the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Babatpur. There he waited for some time for the state plane to arrive. Around 11 am, the CM left for Lucknow. Earlier, the local ministers, public representatives and other officers made emergency arrangements at the police lines and the CM was provided a security cover first on his way to the circuit house and then to the airport.

Akhilesh, Azam allege rigging, use of unfair means in elections

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and senior party leader Azam Khan alleged large-scale rigging and use of unfair means in the Azamgarh and Rampur bypolls. Khan demanded that the elections be conducted under the watchful eye of a global body such as the International Court of Justice for a free and fair democratic process.

Former CM Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the BJP won with deceit. "The Samajwadi Party contested the elections in Rampur and Azamgarh with full strength and the electorate in both the constituencies were favourably inclined towards the party. However, nothing worked as the voters were intimidated and prevented from casting their votes. A large number of SP workers and polling agents were illegally detained at police stations," Yadav alleged.

Yadav said that at a polling booth in Rampur with 900 Muslim votes, only six votes were cast while at another booth with 500 Muslim votes, only one vote was cast.

"This is a mockery of elections and democracy. By no stretch of imagination this can be termed as an election where the democracy has been mutilated and voters shown contempt," the SP chief alleged.

Questioning the celebration of victory in Rampur and Azamgarh by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the SP chief said: "The electorate of Rampur and Azamgarh are at their wits' end over the celebration of victory by the BJP and its rank and file. People of UP will give a befitting lesson to the arrogance of the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections."

The SP chief alleged that the BJP's double-engine government has ruined millions of poor people who are staring at a bleak future.

He also alleged that the development process in the state has come to a grinding halt since the BJP came to power in 2017.

Meanwhile, Azam Khan claimed that the SP had not lost but won by a margin of over 2.5 lakh votes. Addressing a meeting of party workers at the district office after the results were announced on Sunday, Khan alleged rigging in the election and said the state machinery was misused and voters were prevented from exercising their franchise.

"Let there be free and fair elections; if we lose, I will quit electoral politics forever. We are happy in our defeat and I know that the BJP is not happy with its victory as it has not been achieved by fair means. The SP was also in power and conducted the elections but never indulged in such vendetta against our political rivals," the SP leader said.

"Let the record of the previous Lok Sabha and assembly elections be examined. As per the voting patterns and the support base of the Samajwadi Party and votes used to be polled by it will show that we have won the elections by at least 2.5 lakh votes. We lost as the supporters of the SP were prevented from casting their votes. The voters were assaulted, intimidated and unlawfully detained in police stations on the day of polling," Khan said.

Targeting the media, he said the fourth estate failed to discharge its duty. He also trained his guns at the police and said the cops responsible for maintaining law and order have been targeting the people of Rampur with specific religious identity for the last many years.

"I am very disappointed by the conduct of the police as we are made to feel like foreigners in our own home land. After partition of India in 1947, a miniscule population went to Pakistan while a huge number of people stayed back," Khan said.

"The way polls were conducted in Rampur and Azamgarh was not an election but a mockery of democracy. Only one community was targeted and detained in police stations. Local people in Rampur and Azamgarh were targeted by the police on the basis of their religious identity and were framed in false cases," Khan alleged.

UP first state to fully vaccinate over 16 cr people

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh crossed a major milestone by becoming the first state in the country to have fully vaccinated over 16 crore individuals. In nearly 20 days after crossing the landmark of fully vaccinating 15 crore people, the state achieved another significant feat by administering both the doses to 16,02,66,806 people.

An official spokesman claimed on Sunday evening that the most populous state has so far given over 33.92 crore 'shots of life' to people. In addition, the state has also achieved the landmark of administering the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to 100 per cent of the eligible adult population while nearly 99 per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated.

Committed to providing additional protection cover to people, Uttar Pradesh rolled out booster shots (precaution dose) from January 10. Nearly 35.22 lakh booster shots have been administered in the state so far, the spokesman said.

Strengthening its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Uttar Pradesh government is providing vaccination cover to all the children in the age group of 12-17 years in a time-bound manner. So far, over 2,60,80,643 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of 15-17 years while over 1,37,51,108 vaccine doses to kids in the age group of 12-14 years in the state.

Uttar Pradesh stands on top, followed by Maharashtra with 16.90 crore doses. According to the latest figures on CoWIN, UP has administered 17.54 crore first doses of the vaccine so far. Just a few days after crossing the milestone of 32 crore doses, UP has also inched closer to crossing the 34 crore Covid vaccine shots. It will be another major landmark as the state continues to conduct one of the most successful vaccination campaigns in the country.

Aggressive vaccination is an integral part of the comprehensive strategy of the Yogi Adityanath-led UP government to contain the pandemic, along with adherence to coronavirus-appropriate behaviour, the spokesperson said.

2 former chief secretaries may face the heat in Gomti Riverfront case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two retired bureaucrats who served as chief secretaries in the erstwhile Samajwadi Party government may find themselves in trouble in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Samajwadi Party's ambitious Gomti Riverfront project.

The Anti-Corruption Branch of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has sought permission from the UP government for a probe against former chief secretaries Alok Ranjan and Deepak Singhal.

Both the former officers were accused of overlooking the alleged irregularities. Alok Ranjan was the chief secretary while Deepak Singhal the principal secretary (Irrigation) at the time of Gomti Riverfront construction. Later, Singhal became the chief secretary of the state.

Financial irregularities to the tune of over Rs 1,400 have been alleged in the Gomti Riverfront project and FIRs have been registered against 189 people.

Both Ranjan and Singhal were considered to be close to the then Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. During the construction of the Gomti Riverfront, Ranjan and Singhal had travelled to many countries for research on channelisation and rubber dams. Ranjan was the chairman of the task force set up for the riverfront and it had 23 meetings. At the same time, Singhal had made more than 20 visits to the construction site. The CBI believes that even after so many meetings and visits, these two officers overlooked the irregularities.

After taking charge as the UP Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath visited the Gomti Riverfront on March 27, 2017. On April 1, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Justice (retd) Alok Singh to conduct a probe. The committee submitted its report after 45 days on May 16.

The committee headed by Urban Development Minister Suresh Khanna and comprising two other ministers, was tasked with taking action against those found guilty. Later, an FIR was lodged by the Irrigation department at the Gomti Nagar police station on June 19.

Retired chief engineer Gulesh Chandra, then chief engineer SN Sharma, Kazim Ali, then superintending engineer Shiv Mangal Yadav, Kamleshwar Singh, Roop Singh Yadav and executive engineer Surendra Yadav were named in the FIR. On July 20, 2017, a recommendation was made to the Center for a CBI probe.

On November 30, 2017, the CBI (Lucknow) started the probe. The ED is also conducting a probe into this case and has registered a case against the accused under the Money Laundering Act. On January 24, 2019, the ED had raided nine locations in Lucknow, Noida and Ghaziabad in connection with this case.

Sources said that the probe hinted at several irregularities such as environmental NOC not taken, tenders made against the rules and standards, emphasis on beautification more than cleaning Gomti, damage to environment on Gomti bank by diaphragm wall, arbitrary foreign trips in the name of project, etc.

At the time of the riverfront, Deepak Singhal was posted as principal secretary (Irrigation). Singhal, a 1982-batch IAS officer, then became the chief secretary by superseding 18 officers.

Similarly, Alok Ranjan, a 1978-batch IAS officer, held the post of principal secretary, Urban Development, in the erstwhile BSP government and later served as chief secretary in the Akhilesh Yadav's government for two consecutive years till 2016. After his retirement, Ranjan was also associated as an advisor to the SP government and even during Lok Sabha elections in 2017.

Sources said Ranjan played an important role in drafting the SP manifesto. Ranjan's name was also in discussion during the recent Rajya Sabha elections as a Samajwadi Party candidate in UP. However, he was later denied the ticket.

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Refused money to buy liquor, youth kills grandparents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a 20-year-old boy allegedly killed his grandparents over being refused money to buy liquor in a village in Budaun and hid the bodies in two separate rooms, police said on Sunday.

Himesh, the accused, who lived with his grandparents in Delhi was said to be a liquor addict. According to police, the accused killed the elderly couple on June 22 in Damri village in Budaun where they had arrived for a wedding.

The police recovered the partially decomposed bodies and sent them for autopsy.

The bodies of Premshankar (65) and Bhawan Devi (60) were recovered from the locked houses of their sons in Damri village under Faizganj police station limits, SP (Rural) Siddhartha Verma said.

According to a complaint lodged by one of the sons, his parents had come to the village with Himesh to attend a wedding. "Himesh is said to be a liquor addict and would fight with his family members for money to buy his daily dose. It has been alleged in the complaint that Himesh killed his grandparents following an argument over money to buy alcohol on June 22," the SP said.

Meanwhile, in Rae Bareli, two youths slit the throat of his friend. Reports said that Lal Bahadur, a resident of Hatwa village, was sleeping at his house at around 11 pm on Saturday when some of his friends woke him up and took him with them to a secluded place about 300 metres away. They later offered him alcohol and when he got drunk, they slit his throat with a knife and fled the scene. However, Lal Bahadur regained consciousness and somehow returned home. His brothers took him to the CHC from where he was referred to KGMU Trauma Centre. A case was registered in this regard and a manhunt was launched for the accused.

Elsewhere in Kannauj, a man allegedly killed his wife and later committed suicide. The incident came to light on Sunday morning when the 3-year-old son went out and started crying after which villagers reached the scene and informed police.

Reports said that Ramswaroop, who is a resident of Srinagar village of Thana area, had married off his daughter Aarti six years ago with Shakti Singh of Sugandh Nagar village of Jaswant Nagar in Etawah. The couple would fight off and on over domestic issues. About a fortnight back, Aarti went with her brother Guddu to her house and also took her son Shiva. On June 23, Shakti also reachere there. The in-laws asked him to stay in a separate house and take Aarti along with him after a few days. On Sunday morning, when Shiva started crying, Aarti's parents and neighbours reached the scene and found her lying dead in a pool of blood. Later, Shakti's body was also found hanging from a tree in the courtyard of the house. Police suspected that Shakti first killed Aarti and then committed suicide. A case was registered in this connection and the police are waiting for the autopsy report.

Student wing of AAP to galvanise youth

Lucknow (PNS): The student wing of the Aam Aadmi Party is all set to galvanise the youth who constitute a big chunk of voters in Uttar Pradesh. To give shape to the strategy, Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti (CYSS) state president Vansh Raj Dubey addressed a meeting of workers and leaders at the party office in Gomti Nagar on Sunday. Senior AAP leaders, including Mahendra Singh, attended the meeting. AAP's former state president Sabhajeet Singh was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Dubey said the AAP's student wing would raise the voice of youth in UP and fight for their rights. He called upon the workers to be prepared to take to streets.

Shun caste-based politics to defeat BJP: CPI to opp

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reacting to the Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha bypoll results, the Communist Party of India (CPI) said the BJP could be defeated only riding a movement on ideology and issues.

The CPI said that the opposition could not defeat the BJP by fighting without an ideology but on caste basis.

"Without shunning the alliance based on castes, sub-castes and narrow-minded interest-based parties and people without an ideology, we can't defeat the BJP," the CPI said in a statement.

"There were issues like skyrocketing inflation, unemployment, scams, poor economy, sale of public sector assets, Agnipath scheme, spurt in crime, rape, and atrocities on Dalits on which the BJP could have been given a tough challenge," the CPI said.

The CPI said that the regional parties contesting against the BJP in the bypolls failed to raise these issues. "The regional parties focused on castes and failed," the party said.

The CPI said the opposition ignored the left wing parties which have had a strong and traditional base among voters

"After their crushing defeat in the recent assembly and MLC elections, the opposition did not try to stitch an alliance with the anti-BJP forces in the Azamgarh and Rampur bypolls, and the result is before them. These results will make the BJP rule with more audacity in UP," the CPI said.

Farmer shot dead in Muzaffarnagar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, a farmer was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Muzaffarnagar late on Saturday night. On being informed, the kin of the deceased and local villagers reached the spot and blocked the Meerut-Shamli road by placing the body there. They demanded the arrest of the killers. The police also reached the place and assured the protesters that the accused would be arrested soon. The protesters lifted the blockade after which the body was sent for autopsy.

Reports said that 43-year-old farmer Satendra alias Pappu, who was a resident of village Fugana under Fugana police station area of Muzaffarnagar, had gone to the field late on Saturday night. When Satendra did not return home, his family members went out to search for him. In the meantime, they were informed that Satendra had been shot dead. SP (Rural) Atul Kumar Srivastava pacified the protesters by assuring them that the accused would be arrested soon. The police registered a case on the complaint of Satendra's family and took two people into custody.

Satendra's elder brother said he got information about the incident and by the time he reached the scene, Satendra had already succumbed. According to the SP, the family members suspected that Satendra might have been killed over enmity with some local villagers.

Meanwhile, a boy was fatally knocked down by a truck near Bairauna village of Khukhundu police station area in Deoria on Saturday evening.

Irate over the incident, the villagers set fire to the truck. The villagers then created a ruckus, placing the body on the road. There was also a scuffle between the police and villagers. Anuj Kumar (3), who was the son of Radheshyam Rajbhar, a resident of Bairauna village of the area, was playing near his house on Saturday evening when he was crushed under the wheels of the truck which was backing off.

The errant driver fled the scene, abandoning the truck. The kin of the deceased and villagers reached the spot and set the truck on fire. They also held a road blockade in protest.

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Railway contractor's killers wore Bihar police uniform

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The killers of railway contractor Virendra Thakur in Cantonment police station area were donning Bihar police uniform to gain access to his house where security guards were also deployed.

The wife of the slain contractor lodged a case of murder and also alleged that she and children were detained in their own house. She named three accused, including her husband's first wife Priyanka.

Meanwhile, police were yet to lay their hands on the accused who were suspected to have fled the city. The police were also said to be groping in the dark for murder motive.

Virendra's wife Khushbu of Nilmatha locality in Cantonment police station area also named Firdaus and Bittu Jaiswal, both of Narkatiaganj locality of Bettiah district in Bihar. She stated in her complaint that three miscreants in Bihar police uniform knocked the door around 12.30 pm. "The security guards refused to open the gate but the miscreants told them that they were policemen. The guards then sought Virendra's permission and opened the door. All of them were carrying weapons. They entered the house and overpowered me and Virendra's sons from his first wife Priyanka and locked us in a room. The killers then entered Virendra's room. As Virendra was bed-ridden and could not move, they pumped two bullets in his chest and head and left the scene. Our tenant's wife heard my screams and opened the door in which we were locked. I saw blood oozing out from the mouth and head of Virendra. He was almost dead. We rushed him to Civil hospital where he was declared dead," she said.

POLICE WERE YET TO LAY THEIR HANDS ON THE ACCUSED WHO WERE SUSPECTED TO HAVE FLED THE CITY. THE POLICE WERE ALSO SAID TO BE GROPING IN THE DARK FOR THE MOTIVE FOR MURDER

She alleged that the murder was planned by Priyanka, who married someone 15 months back after eloping with him. However, she did not mention Priyanka's address.

Khushbu further alleged that Priyanka gave the contract to Firdaus and Bittu Jaiswal. "Firdaus had earlier attacked my husband inside the circulating area of Charbagh railway stations but he survived," she said.

The Lucknow police have formed five teams that have been dispatched for Bihar and some western districts of UP, including Shahjahanpur.

The teams found a CCTV footage in which the accused were seen moving in a car and reaching the house of the deceased. The police also got CCTV footage in which the accused were seen going back.

"Only three accused entered the house while others stood guard outside the house as a back-up plan," the police said.

ADCP (East) Qasim Abdi said two of the accused were donning Bihar police uniform, as seen in the footage and as per details given by the deceased's wife.

"Prima facie, Priyanka is the prime conspirator in the murder case and she gave the contract to Firdaus, who is a dreaded criminal and wanted by the Bihar police. He had also attacked Virendra in 2019 but the latter survived. However, Virendra had become immobile since then as the bullet had damaged his spine," the ADCP said.

The slain contractor had a shady past and several cases were registered against his name. He went from rags to riches by getting contracts of bike/car parking lots. He had over 56 such contracts, including in the railways.

"The Bihar police have given us detailed information about Virendra's criminal past. He had several cases of crime, including murder, loot and extortion, registered against him," the police said.

Sources said Virendra shifted base to Lucknow after enmity with some of the dreaded criminals, including Vishal Sharma, in Bihar.

ACS pic used for purchase of gift cards

Lucknow (PNS): The picture of Additional Chief Secretary (Sugar Industry & Development and Excise), Sanjay R Bhoosreddy as a WhatsApp profile photo by unidentified accused and messages were sent for purchase of Amazon gift cards. The Hazratganj police registered a case on the complaint of the ACS. "The case is against unnamed miscreants and we only have a mobile number," he said.

In his complaint, Bhoosreddy said he was told by his well-wishers that some fraudsters were using his photo as their WhatsApp profile picture and sending messages to Amazon to purchase gift cards.

Meanwhile, a realtor lodged a case of extortion against some people, including journalists, in Gudamba. Police arrested one of the accused. In his complaint, Anil Jaiswal said he and others were being bullied by some people claiming to be office-bearers of Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan, dreaded criminals and YouTube journalists.

He named the accused as Subhash Nishad, Ram Prakash Singh and Srikant Prasad aka SP Siddharth among others.

He said the accused realised extortion from him and others. "Ram Singh is the gang leader while Srikant claims to be an office-bearer of Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan. I have a receipt of donation which they took from me in the name of construction of Sriram Temple," he said. The accused arrested was identified as Ranjeet Kumar of Gudamba.

Southwest monsoon likely to arrive in UP on June 28

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The southwest monsoon is likely to arrive in Uttar Pradesh on June 28.

Giving this information, MET Director JP Gupta said that currently the easterly winds were favourable for the progress of the monsoon.

Gupta said the south-west monsoon was not delayed and had arrived in eastern Uttar Pradesh in the expected time with a plus/minus four day difference.

He said the pre-monsoon showers were expected in eastern Uttar Pradesh but not in Lucknow in the coming days.

"The rains will be normal this year and there will be no rainfall deficit in UP," he said.

Meanwhile, professor of geology at Lucknow University, Vibhuti Rai, while explaining the connection between climate change and the arrival of monsoon, said that climate change could now be seen as a real phenomena and not just a hypothetical thing because a lot of climatic chaos was being seen.

"Sultry weather conditions are prevailing and these issues are to be addressed because the modeling on the monsoon still regards the relationship between modeling by previous data and statistics available needs to be interpreted. This is being done to understand climate change in terms of shifting of the weather conditions in different regions," he said.

Prof Rai said that in a year or two they would be able to predict what was happening because in the last decade or so conditions were building up and the data was being generated for the same.

"Researchers are trying to see and study this phenomenon in their own fields. As a geologist, I am studying in my area and in the Himalayas there is certainly an impact. I went there recently and I realised that there has been an impact. The low pressure that pulls up the clouds and the other winds -- that domain is not being developed and hence there is sluggishness in the movement of monsoon from south-east to north-west which causes delay in the arrival of the monsoon," he said.

The professor said that the point of importance was what was making the monsoon sluggish was something which was not understood because it was not following the usual path, especially in the Himalayas and it was to be observed in different regions such as Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

He pointed out that Nainital was warm this year as compared to other years. "But if you look at the North-East and Assam region, there is too much of rain and floods and hence we are witnessing unusual weather conditions," he said

Venkatesh Dutta, professor from the environmental sciences department of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) while speaking on climate change impacting monsoon in the state, said, "The arrival of monsoon is something which can be called a cyclic system which has been happening for the last fifteen million years. It is not a new phenomenon. The south-west monsoon is delayed in Uttar Pradesh. Earlier it used to come in the middle of June but now it arrives in the later part of June or early July. Due to the heating of the sea surface, there have been a lot of western disturbances in the past decade and also the number of cyclonic events. The number of cyclonic events and rains have become of high intensity and short duration that is a sort of flash floods in the monsoons. These are some of the concepts of climate change."

He said that this year there were literally no pre-monsoon showers. "Monsoon has been forecast for June 28 but we are still not sure that this will happen," he added.

"Generally, the models give you the estimate of some errors. This year, particularly in comparison to the previous years starting from the beginning of the century and the last 22 years, has been the hottest year. There has been a dramatic rise in the temperature and in Uttar Pradesh there has been a rise of 1.3 degree Celsius in temperature and so a lot of disparity in rainfall is happening. Bundelkhand and western Uttar Pradesh are getting less rain and the eastern Uttar Pradesh is getting more rain," he said, and added, "From 2001 we have been getting flash floods and this is because of the increase of the sea surface temperature. Climate change was always an impact. In the four months of June, July, August and September, there are only 18 days of actual rain. Earlier it used to be equally spread with some peak in September but now the spread is more confined to one of the months which is also a consequence of climate change," he said.

Jacob to join today as Lko's first female commissioner

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow division's first female commissioner, Roshan Jacob, will assume office on Monday evening. She is currently holding the post of Director Mining also.

A 2004-batch IAS officer, Roshan Jacob was appointed incharge district magistrate of Lucknow on April 17 last year when the then DM Abhishek Prakash had tested positive for COVID-19. After Prakash returned to duty, she had also functioned as the district incharge for COVID-19.

Jacob was actively involved in the battle against COVID-19 in Lucknow district during the second wave of coronavirus. As the district magistrate in-charge, Roshan Jacob had carried out regular inspections and had requested the state government to set up oxygen generation plants in Lucknow district.

As district magistrate in-charge, she and her team had also worked on the CMO referral system for allotment of beds in Covid facilities and for putting the private Covid facilities in public domain to resolve the issue of bed availability for patients. She had also pointed out that the increase in the beds for COVID-19 patients would help only when oxygen supply was increased in the Lucknow district and worked on both long-term and short-term plans for increasing the medical oxygen supply.

With a large number of people testing positive in the second novel coronavirus wave, she had put the focus on testing and distribution of medicine kits. She had also worked on the Integrated Control and Command Centre to make it better managed when earlier it was handling too many activities. She had also worked for the containment of the coronavirus by increasing the number of rapid response teams and looked into the grievances of the people regarding the inflated bills given by private hospitals and nursing homes for treatment of COVID-19.

66-year-old man found dead, murder suspected

Lucknow (PNS): A 66-year-old man was found dead at a plot close to SBN Inter College in Para police station area on Sunday, fuelling speculations that he was killed and the body dumped there. The deceased was identified as Makhan Lal of Narpat Khera in Para police station area. He was unmarried and jobless. His nephew Rajendra Verma identified the body. He said he was searching for his uncle who was missing since Saturday and reached the scene on information and identified the body. The police sent the body for autopsy.

Meanwhile, in a tragic incident, a 4-year-old boy died after he fell off the terrace of his house in Chinhat on Saturday evening. The deceased was identified as Akash Singh of Kamta locality in the area. Reports said Akash was playing on the terrace and fell down accidentally. "There was no railing or protection wall around the terrace as a result of which Akash fell down. He sustained grave injuries and was rushed to Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences where he succumbed during treatment," the police said, adding that the incident was reported around 5 pm on Saturday. The police came to know about the incident after the hospital sent a memo to them. Later a team was sent to the hospital to collect details about the incident.

Elsewhere in Mahanagar, a class IV employee of Jal Kal department was found hanging at his house on Sunday. He was identified as Ram Prakash Gautam (56) of Kalakankar Colony in Old Hyderabad. His daughter Kajal found him hanging from the ceiling. Police said Ram Prakash had been suffering from some disease for the last 7-8 years.

THEFT

Thieves made off with the car of a senior advocate of high court in Gomti Nagar. RK Dwivedi of Vinay Khand said he had parked the car near a park close to his house on June 23 night. "The car was found missing the next day," he stated in his complaint.

Woman discharged after successful cadaver liver transplant at KGMU

Lucknow (PNS): The deceased donor (cadaver) liver transplant performed on a 49-year-old woman at KGMU on June 11 turned out to be success and the patient was discharged from KGMU. "The patient was suffering from advanced stage liver cirrhosis with complaints of fatigue and loss of appetite. She later developed jaundice and complained of bleeding. She needed an urgent liver transplant to survive. After a wait of more than six months, a matching cadaver donor liver could be available in KGMU," the spokesperson said.

The liver was obtained from a 49-year-old man who met a road accident and was declared brain dead at KGMU on June 11. "The woman was airlifted from Noida for an emergency liver transplant. She recovered well after the surgery at KGMU and has now been discharged from the hospital," the spokesman said.

The transplant team was led by KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri. The surgery team included Prof Abhijit Chandra, Dr Vivek Gupta, Dr Sandeep Kumar Verma. Many doctors played significant roles including Sandeep Kumar Verma, GP Singh, Tanmay Tiwari, BB Kushwaha, SN Sankhwar, BK Ojha, Atin Singhai, Sumit Rungta, Tulika Chandra, Amita Jain etc. "Liver transplant surgery at present is a complex surgical procedure. It involves multidisciplinary management by a team of more than 100 doctors and staff. More than 2 lakh patients suffer from liver cirrhosis in India per year. Most of these cases are caused by alcohol abuse, diabetes, viral infections or immune disorders. Only about 2,000 liver transplants are done in India every year," doctors said. They said most of the transplants are done in private hospitals with a cost ranging from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 40 lakh. "KGMU, being a government institute, has brought down the cost to about Rs 8 lakh. For patients with low income, KGMU is utilising government schemes to further reduce the cost to Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh," they said. This is the 16th successful liver transplant of KGMU. With a success rate of more than 90%, KGMU is at par with the most advanced centres in the world.

KGMU has also been the only institute in UP to perform multi-organ donation. More than 50 organs have been transplanted with the collaboration of other institutes, including SGPGI, AIIMS (New Delhi) etc.

EC nod to insurance of KMC Language University students

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 25th executive council meeting of KMC Language University was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor Prof NB Singh. Several important decisions were taken in the meeting.

Approval was given to the proposal of the finance committee related to insurance of students. On payment of a premium of Rs 138, the students will be covered for a life insurance of Rs 2 lakh and accident insurance of Rs 50,000.

KMCLU is preparing for NAAC evaluation and in this regard, various policy documents of the university were presented before the executive council for approval. Approval was given to the formation of a sports council.

The proposed course structure and course design under NEP-2020 approved by the academic council was also presented in the meeting. Approval was also given to the rules and regulations prepared for management of the Poor Boys Fund and Teacher Welfare Fund.

The institutional development plan proposed to be sent by the university to the government was also discussed in detail. The executive council gave statutory approval to BPharma programme from the upcoming session.

Orchard visit celebrates 10 yrs of Mango Festival

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The month of June is celebrated as the Mango Month. The king of fruits definitely deserves the special attention it receives.

On Sunday, mango lovers visited a mango orchard to celebrate 10 years of the Mango Festival. The orchard visit was a one-of-its-kind experience. Organised by Lucknow Farmers' Market team led by Jyotsana Kaur Habibullah, founder of Awadh Mango Growers Association, and supported by the Central Institute of Subtropical Horticulture (CISH), the Mango Festival was a sustainable eco-friendly event and provided additional revenue sources to farmers and supported the rural economy.

Jyotsana Habibullah said that the mango eating competition asserted the fact that hunger plays no role in the consumption of mangoes.

"Truth is that the mangoes on trees enchanted those sitting under them with their sweetish aroma. The event brought more than 500 people, groups of friends and families, out of their homes into the orchard to eat freshly plucked mangoes under the canopy of mango trees, enjoy fun activities related to mangoes, relish a delicious brunch and revel in nature at its best. The Mango Fest is an attraction for tourists coming from all over the world," she said.

Jyotsana said the Mango Fest brought together people from different spheres of life to appreciate the unique flavours and textures of different varieties of mangoes, the sweetness of the Raja variety of mango, the tenderness of Dussehri, and the pulpy texture of the Safeda variety.

"It was enticing to watch children and young adults take time out to appreciate nature. Children, in particular, had an exciting field day in the beautiful outdoors where they enjoyed different sports, experienced the magic of climbing and swinging on mango trees, used their tiny hands to make pottery, and watched artisans at work. The kids and also the adults took pleasure in horse cart and horseback rides," she said.

The mango eating contest formed the highlight of the day. Most of the participants played the game for the first time but it did not seem like it. Their speed at consuming mangoes matched the professionals. The prizes were bagged by Prakhar, Bipasha, Tejas and Biole Mahendra.

Lucknow resident Sunita Mehta said, "I came here with my kids. I feel happy that I can introduce my children to the simple joys of childhood, savour quality mangoes we never get in the city and a clean fresh environment. My kids had a marvelous time with the competitions and rides, especially the horse rides. "

Some of the other comments about the festival acknowledged the event as an interesting way to sustain agriculture. To some it was a beautiful day out with their families and for others it was a get-together with friends. The most commonly praised activity was eating freshly plucked, juicy mangoes under the canopy with the cool breeze inflating the lungs.

"Over 50 college students from Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune and other places join the team each year to help organise the festival by providing community participation.

"From being a single day event, it became the Awadh Mango Growers Association and has now evolved into the Lucknow Farmers Market which provides an online platform to growers, artisans, farmers and startups working on sustainable solutions, allowing them to connect directly with the consumers." she said.

Jyotsana Kaur Habibullah, organiser of the Mango Festival, said, "I am thrilled to bring back the festival; it has become an annual event and this time we have had people contact us from different parts of the world and India as well. We look forward to keeping this integral part of our culture alive and bring more tourism and investment to Lucknow as well as benefit the farmers and local rural economy."

CITYBRIEFS

SUMMER CAMP

The 40-day summer camp of City International School, Manas Vihar (Indiranagar), came to a close on Sunday with almost 300 children as participants. Students from schools other than CIS and those living close by also joined the camp in large numbers. The activities ranged from singing, dancing, instrumental music and public speaking to sports like taekwando, football, basketball, skating and swimming. They also delved in art forms like pottery, clay modelling and art & craft.

Youth accused of eve-teasing

Lucknow (PNS): A youth acted fresh with a girl, who is an event performer, in Vibhuti Khand police station area on June 24 night. The girl was accompanying the accused, identified as Shivam Verma of Barabanki, when he acted fresh with her at Kathauta Jheel crossing.

"We were sitting in an SUV parked near the crossing around 8 pm. Shivam started groping me and made obscene gestures. I shouted at him and asked him to behave. As I was frightened, I left the scene. Shivam may resort to more coercive measures in future and kill me for reporting the matter to police," she stated in her complaint. The police booked the accused under Section 354 (a) of IPC.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
पावरग्रिड POWERGRID

NOTICE

1. Approval under regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations'1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations'2019 for i) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2014-19 tariff block and ii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block for Green Energy Corridors-Inter State Transmission Scheme (ISTS) Part-B in Western Region.
2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: 1)Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Limited.(2)Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd.(3)Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd.(4)Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd.(5)Punjab State Electricity Board. (6)Haryana Power Purchase Centre(7)Power Development Deptt, Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir. (8)Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd.(9)Delhi Transco Ltd.(10) BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (11) BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd.(12) North Delhi Power Ltd. (13)Chandigarh Administration.(14)Uttaranchal Power Corporation Ltd.(15) North Central Railway(16) New Delhi Municipal council (17)Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board (18) Madhya Pradesh Power Management Corporation Ltd, (19) Electricity Department, Administration of Daman & Diu, Daman, (20) Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd., Vadodara, (21) Electricity Department, Government of Goa, Panaji, (22) Electricity Department, Administration of Dadra Nagar Haveli, Silvassa, (23) Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd., Mumbai, (24) Chhattisgarh State Power Transmission Co. Ltd, Raipur, (25) Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd., Indore, (26) Chhattisgarh State Power Distribution Co. Ltd. (27) Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd. 28) Delhi Tranco ltd
3. Tariff details: (₹ in Lakhs)

True up Transmission Tariff for 2014-19		
Asset	2017-18	2018 - 19
Asset-A: Chittorgarh– Ajmer 765 KV D/C line along with associated bays and 240 MVAR Switchable Line reactors at both end	3771.73	14997.30
Asset B1: i) 765 kV Banaskantha -Chittorgarh D/C line alongwith 2 nos. 330 MVAR, 765 kV Switchable Line Reactors at Banaskantha SS & 2 nos. 240 MVAR, 765 kV Switchable Line Reactors at Chittorgarh SS with associated line bays at both ends, ii) 400 kV Banaskantha - Sankhari D/C line with associated bays at 765/400 kV Banaskantha SS & 400 kV Sankhari (GETCO) SS,	-	2283.05
Asset B2: 1 no. 400 kV, 125 MVAR Bus Reactor along with associated bay at Banaskantha SS	-	2.29

a) 2019-24 Block

Asset details	Cost Admitted by CERC	Tariff for 2019-24 block				
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Combined Asset (effective DOCO 04.10.2018)	283949.52	42487.45	43370.97	43791.95	43626.20	43308.32

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergrid.in
5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th floor, Chandralok Building, Janpath, New Delhi-110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place : Gurgaon
Date : 23-06-2022
Sd-
Ch. General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Reg. Office : B-9. Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110 016.
Corp. Office : "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana) Tel. : 0124-2571700-719
www.powergrid.in, CIN : L40101DL1989GOI038121
A Maharatna PSU

PG/CC/Notice-13/Advt-20/2022-23/Prabhatam

Speaker inaugurates 1st trial of Knp Boat Club

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Speaker Satish Mahana while inaugurating the much- awaited first trial of Kanpur Boat Club at Ganga Barrage Boat Club said Ganga and Ganga Barrage are synonymous with Kanpur Boat Club and this was a long-pending dream fulfilled. He said two most prominent works to be done on priority were erection of statues of Luv, Kush and the highest tricolour at this spot. He hoped that before the commencement of water sports the tricolour will be set up on priority. He said it was a matter of pride that this boat club was a huge one and on par with the boat clubs in the country. He said now Kanpur will be known by its Boat Club. He congratulated the entire team for giving it a practical shape.

Addressing the gathering Kanpur Boat Club Chairman and also the Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, said every effort had been made to ensure this Boat Club is the most beautiful and stood huge at the national level. He said the objective was to promote water sports. He said unless three successful trials were carried out till then its benefit will not reach the people at the grassroots level. He said till date around 40 plus different boats had been included and this was its first trial which had been successfully carried out. He said special teams from Haridwar, Lucknow and Delhi had been summoned to make this event a memorabale one. He said this Boat Club had been set up at a cost of ₹13 crore from the discretionary fund of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) and added that today Kanpur apart from being popular globally because of Green Park Stadium will also be known as Water Sports City in future. He said Kanpur was also a mythological city and thus this Boat Club was also set up to tap tourism potential incorporating water bodies and this recreational offering in the mighty Ganga river will help in establishing Uttar Pradesh as a most sought-after tourism hub. He said infrastructure will be further augmented in phases. Dr Shekhar said activities that will be operationalised in Kanpur Boat Club will include jet skis, speed boats, day cruise, inflatable boat, kayaking, canoeing and much more. Earlier the programme began with 'Ganga Pujan' followed by march past on the drum beats of PAC Band. This was followed by a musical vocal and instrumental programme and the most attractive event was march past of water sports team. There was a display of boats which will be the pride of Kanpur Boat Club. A special photo session of the team and participants was carried out with political dignitaries and finally the grand event came to an end with 'Ganga Aarti'. Those who contributed to the success of this programme were DP Singh, underwater sports specialist, Sumit Ghosh, water sports specialist SM Bhatt, UP Police Sports Control Board, Water Sports Wing coach Ram Niranjan and all were given cash prizes between ₹2,000 and ₹10,000 each. Prominent BJP leaders present were MP SD Pachauri, MP DS Bholey, Panchayat Adhyaksh, Swapnil Varun, Mayor, Pramila Pandey, MLC Arun Pathak, MLA Surendra Maithani, MP Abhijeet Singh Sanga, Police Commissioner, VS Meena, DM, Visakh G Aiyer, KDA V-C Arvind Singh, KMC, Shiv Sharanappa, Secretary Boat Club, Neeraj Srivastava and many other officials.

Speaker Satish Mahana and other BJP leaders taking part in Ganga Aarti.

Chairman of the Boat Club and Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, addressing the gathering

NER GM inspects progress of work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

General Manager (GM) of North Eastern Railway (NER) Anupam Sharma made a window trailing inspection of the Gorakhpur-Aunrihar-Chhapra railway section on Saturday. He was accompanied by Chief Administrative Officer (Construction) Rajiv Kumar, Divisional Railway Manager (Varanasi Division) Ramashray Pandey and other senior officers. During the inspection, the GM reviewed the progress of various development works on Varanasi Division. With the aim of ensuring safety in rail operation, the GM, after leaving Gorakhpur railway station boarding in the special inspection train, conducted a window trailing inspection at several stations including Deoria Sadar, Bhatni, Indara, Mau and reached Chhapra Junction via Aunrihar, Ghazipur City, Ballia and Suremanpur stations.

During the inspection, Sharma, while reviewing the work related to doubling projects at various stations of Gorakhpur-Aunrihar-Chhapra railway section, provided adequate resources such as foot over bridges, high level platforms corresponding to 24 coaches, electric lighting at the stations, provisions of high mast lights etc. He directed the officers to make water booths for drinking water, toilets, ramps for differently-abled passengers, development work of passenger facilities at stations as per standard and instructed the officers to complete all these works on time maintaining quality as per the standard. In the course of inspection, Sharma also saw the progress of development works including the doubling project on Aunrihar-Chhapra railway section. He inspected the progress between Bakulahan and Manjhi stations, intensification of extension of major bridge number 16 under construction there.

While reviewing the work progress, the GM directed to complete the piling work at the earliest. Besides, the GM did deep screening of railway tracks during rear window trailing from his inspection vehicle and completed the journey till Chhapra Jn taking cognizance of permanent and temporary vigilance orders of this section. He reviewed the tracks, overhead tractions, colour light signals, information/warning boards, passenger amenities and doubling work going on between Chhapra-Ballia from a safety point of view. Sharma gave instructions regarding the management of proper passenger amenities at various stations falling on the Aunrihar-Chhapra railway section, including public toilets and uninterrupted supply of drinking water at the stations and to ensure cleanliness at the stations. The other senior officers who were also accompanying him were ADRM (Admn) Rahul Srivastava, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer Trimbak Tiwari, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) Pankaj Kesharwani and many senior supervisors.

IIT Kanpur to help Odisha's Angul dist in developing land & water restoration plan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur will work to help Angul district of Odisha in developing a land and water restoration plan. An MoU in this regard was signed recently between IIT Kanpur and the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) Angul to initiate a large project to develop land and water restoration plan for Angul, Odisha. The MoU signing was a part of a larger event on circular economy that was attended by a number of industry representatives and state officials. Under this MoU IIT Kanpur will leverage the institute's infrastructure and technology expertise to assist the Angul district in restoring the land and water resources affected by mining. The Angul district is enriched with several valuable minerals, including coal, Kyanite, graphite, fireclay, China clay and precious and semi-precious stones and is known as 'Black Diamond of Odisha State'. However, a rapid expansion of the mining operations in the region has led to loss of rich biodiversity and soil fertility, degradation of water bodies - quantity as well as quality and piling up of hazardous waste and drainage issues. This project, led by Professor Rajiv Sinha from the Department of Earth Sciences, will use all modern technologies to develop solutions for land and water resource restoration for sustainable development of the district, primarily in the context of circular economy. Prof Abhay Karandikar, Director IIT Kanpur said, "The Angul district in Odisha is a very resource-rich region which needs some assistance in restoration of its land and water resources. We are delighted to be leading the efforts in developing a land and water restoration plan for the region. The team led by Prof Rajiv Sinha will leverage our institute's resources and expertise to achieve the stated goals of the project. This project is expected to contribute significantly towards the development of a policy document for land use, water budget and utilisation plan for Angul district based on demand and supply management and also to contribute towards the circular economy of the region." The goal of this project is to support the DMF for eco-restoration of the areas impacted by mining activities, particularly in terms of assessment of land and water system degradation due to human activities and their restoration. The project will use a 'landscape approach' to (a) determine the baseline conditions before the mining activities started (b) assess the overall degradation of the area in terms of land-use changes, impact on water bodies, and landform dynamics to map the hotspots (c) assessment of restoration potential of each of the hotspots and then (d) to develop the management plan for eco-restoration. Major government departments that will be supporting the implementation of the programme are – Water Resource Department, Pollution Control Board and Irrigation Department of Angul district. A major highlight of this project would be the use of modern technologies such as high resolution satellite remote sensing data and drone-based investigations to determine the baseline conditions and then perform the change detection analysis to assess the degradation and to identify the hotspots. For developing the restoration plan, the project will use the 'landscape approach' which seeks to provide tools and concepts for allocating and managing land to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives in areas where agriculture, mining and other productive land uses compete with environmental and biodiversity goals. "Landscape approaches" have gained prominence globally in search for solutions to reconcile conservation and development trade-offs and they focus on management of landscape resources for multi-functional uses, consider landscape diversity, and are inclusive of socio-economic perspectives.

In addition the project will deliver a comprehensive water governance platform which will aim to integrate near real-time observation using IoT sensors and field-based observation. The platform will be cloud-based allowing input data from various sources, process it using a well-trained algorithm, predict possible near-future scenario, and visualise through the analytical dashboard. The platform would be accessible through web (WebGIS) wherein mobile devices (with desired functionalities) will be one of the sub-components to collect data from the field and visualise certain information. The project will be hosted at the newly created Centre for Sustainable Technology, IIT Kanpur and will also have a strong training component that is aimed towards building capacities and technical knowledge of key stakeholders on landscape and water body restoration. This will also focus on building capacities on allied aspects, including livelihood, natural resource management, project design and knowledge dissemination. The project will be completed in a period of about two years with a total cost of about ₹10 crore to be provided by DMFT Angul under circular economy initiatives of Angul district and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

27-year-old youth murdered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A youth was killed one day ahead of his tilak ceremony, and the body dumped in the outskirts of Padri-Lalpur village under Sadh police station area of Ghatampur Kotwali late on Saturday night. Villagers recovered the body on Sunday morning and informed the kin of the deceased. His mouth was shut with a piece of cloth. A blood-stained rope and broken pistol were recovered from the spot. His bike was lying about 10 metres away from the body. The deceased was stated to be employed as 'gau sewak' in a village 'gaushala'. Circle Officer (CO) Sushil Kumar Dubey and Sadh Station Officer (SO) Mansoor Ahmad rushed to the spot and called forensic team and sniffer dog squad for carrying out investigation. According to a report, Man Singh alias Lalu Yadav (27), son of Nankha of Padri-Lalpur village, was employed as 'gau sewak' in a 'gaushala' situated on the outskirts of the village. Elder brother Rajan said that around 9.30 pm on Saturday night after dinner Man Singh had proceeded for the 'gaushala'. On Sunday morning when villagers recovered his body in the field they informed the police and family members of the deceased. Police rushed to the spot and found the mouth of the deceased stuffed with a piece of cloth. His clothes were torn and there were marks of injury on his head. Parts of the pistol, including butt, spring and trigger were also lying beside the body. At some distance, police recovered a blood-stained plastic rope and apprehended as if the body was dragged towards the field with the help of the rope. Kin informed that the marriage of Man Singh was fixed with the sister-in-law of his elder brother. The 'barat' was to proceed to Kishanpur Mandauli village under Bakewar police station area of Fatehpur district on July 8. The 'tilak' ceremony was scheduled to be held on June 27. Preparations for his marriage were on in the house and suddenly the event of joy turned into mourning, they said. Man Singh had five sisters and two brothers. His mother had died several years ago while four sisters were already married. Kin did not suspect the role of anybody in the village in the killing of Man Singh. CO Sushil Kumar Dubey said investigation in the matter was on with the help of forensic experts and sniffer dog squad.

In another incident, an elderly grocery shopowner raped a seven-year-old girl in his shop in Vidhnu police area on Thursday afternoon. The former called the girl at his shop on pretext of giving her a toffee. On her raising alarm, the shopowner freed the girl who apprised her family members about the incident. During the past three days, kin of the victim girl and the shopowner kept on trying to reach a compromise on the issue. But on Sunday her mother reached the police station and informed about the incident. Police immediately lodged a first information report FIR against the shopowner and arrested him. The mother of the victim girl is employed as nurse in a nursing home while father, a driver. Mother said her seven years old daughter was student of class III. On Thursday afternoon, when she was playing at the doors of her house, grocery shopowner Prajanand (60) called her at his shop on pretext of giving a toffee and sexually assaulted her. When she protested the shopowner's move, the latter denied his involvement in the incident and abused the former. In the evening on return of her husband, when she was going to lodge a complaint with the police, family members of the accused insisted on a compromise on the issue. During meetings with respected persons of the village during past three days, when the accused family members failed to arrive at any compromise, she lodged a complaint with the police on Sunday. Police lodged an FIR against the Prajanand under POSCO Act and other relevant sections of the IPC and sent the girl for a medical examination. SHO Amit Kumar Mishra said the accused had been arrested.

Cong team denied permission to meet youths lodged in jail in protest against Agnipath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A delegation of the UP Congress Committee (UPCC) on Sunday reached the district jail to meet the youths arrested while protesting against the Agnipath recruitment scheme but the jail administration did not allow the Congress leaders giving reason of COVID-19 guidelines. As per its earlier announcement, a delegation of UPCC reached the district jail to meet the youths who were arrested by local police when they were indulged in violent protest against the Agnipath recruitment scheme of the Central Government in the armed forces. But, the jail administration did not allow them giving reasons of the COVID-19 protocol.

The delegation blamed that when the ex-CM and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had recently reached the jail to meet the party workers, the jail administration had given permission but the Congress leaders were not allowed and the reason of COVID-19 protocol was given a reason behind this. Does the COVID-19 protocol not apply on the ex-CM, the delegation questioned? By introducing new recruitment scheme, the government has made injustice to the youths who have dream of job in armed forces of the country as they would get job on four years contract under the new recruitment scheme, the delegation blamed, adding that the intention of the government is not good in introducing the new scheme and it would prove fatal for the future of youths. The Congress Party would fight for the interest of youths in a democratic way and not allow the government to play with the future of youths, the delegation said. The delegation mainly comprised the former UP Minister Ajay Rai, former MP Dr Rajesh Mishra, state party vice-presidents Vishwavijay Singh & Maqsood Khan, state general secretaries Devendra Singh & Sarita Patel, state secretary Imran Khan, district president Rajeshwar Patel and city chief Raghvendra Mishra. Party senior leaders Manish Chaubey, Fasahat Hussein, Dr Rahesh Gupta and Chanchal Sharma were also present.

Shivansh wins 2 gold medals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Shivansh won two gold medals in the district level Karate Championship organised by the Indiato Active Karate Association being run under the patronage of Jagdish Narain here at Tulsi Upvan, Motijheel on Sunday. Vaibhav, Sonu, Shubham and Anand coordinated for the grand success of the event. All the children took part in the championship with enthusiasm and the organiser wished them bright future in the game.

Dumper cleaner killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A dumper cleaner was killed while its driver seriously injured when their vehicle rammed into a stationary truck on the Lucknow-Kanpur highway in Koela Nagar under Chakeri police area on Sunday early morning. After the incident, the movement of traffic on both the sides of the highway was disrupted till 8 am. According to reports, Anand Tewari (24) of Ghatampur was a cleaner. Late on Saturday night he along with dumper driver Asif of Chhateni (Punkhrayan) was carrying the building material to Unnao. On Sunday the dumper rammed into a stationary truck on the highway in Koela Nagar causing serious. On the information of passerby local police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to Kashiram Trauma Centre where the cleaner Anand Tewari was declared dead. Due to his serious condition, driver Asif was referred for the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur. Police got both the damaged vehicles removed from the spot with the help of the crane and restored the movement of traffic. Station House Officer (SHO) Shailendra Singh said the massive jam was there on the highway due to road accident which was restored around 8 am. Kin of the deceased had been apprised of the incident and necessary penal action was being initiated in the matter, he said.

CM Yogi Adityanath inspecting Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi on Saturday night. Pioneer

Complete construction projects on time: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed the officials that the ongoing projects should be completed on time and asked the Divisional Commissioner (DC) and District Magistrate (DM) to conduct on-site inspection to check the quality of work of these projects. During his two-day visit to the city, he was reviewing the progress of development works especially the projects to be inaugurated during the upcoming proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and law and order with officials at Circuit House here on Saturday evening.

The CM also inspected a centralised kitchen prepared at a cost of Rs 24 crore in LT College premises near Orderly Bazar. The kitchen is for preparing mid-day meals for about 25,000 children of 1,143 government schools in the district. It is proposed that the target of the kitchen would be increased to one lakh within six months and two lakh after one year. Yogi also made a surprise inspection at the Child Care Centre at Sikraul and during his stay there, he also talked to some children and their family members.

He distributed gifts to the children and took information about the 18 children admitted there from the director Dr Satyajit Pradhan.

Later, around 9 pm, Yogi offered prayers at Shri Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairav temples.

After prayers, he inspected the entire Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) and saw the arrangements at Annakshetra. When the CM reached the premises, the devotees present there gave a grand welcome to him, raising the traditional slogan of 'Har Har Mahadev.'

Then the CM went to the ghats while inspecting the various buildings. The DC Deepak Agrawal informed the CM that more than 40 per cent of the devotees are reaching the Dham through Ganga Marg, for which arrangements for water, matting and tents have been made at various places. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sunil Kumar Verma said that almost every devotee visiting the corridor from any route, definitely, wants to go to the Ganga Ghat once and for this, the temple administration has set up help desks at different places.

Earlier, in the review meeting, Yogi directed the officers to complete the Har Ghar Nal Yojana project on priority. 'Expedite the work by increasing the manpower and completing the survey work keeping in mind the revenue villages,' he instructed the officers. He also directed to get the vendors systematically rehabilitated under the Pradhan Mantri Swanidhi Yojana. 'There should not be any encroachments on the road side by any vendor or illegal collection by the personnel of Municipal Corporation or Police,' he instructed. During the review of cow shelters, the CM emphasised that instead of building new cow shelters, the capacity of old existing ones should be increased.

Reviewing the road construction work, he directed the engineers of the Public Works Department (PWD) to complete work on time, maintaining quality. 'No laxity will be tolerated,' he warned the PWD officials. In the meeting, UP Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, MLCs Ashok Dhawan and Shatrudra Prakash, MLAs Dr Neelkanth Tiwari, Saurabh Srivastava, Dr Awadhesh Singh, T Ram and Sunil Patel, DC Deepak Agrawal, Commissioner of Police (CP) A Satish Ganesh, DM Kaushal Raj Sharma and many other senior officers were also present.

Minister honours Emergency 'fighters'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Minister Dr MN Padey honouring Emergency fighters in Varanasi on Saturday evening. Pioneer

Observing June 25 as a black day, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) organised a seminar in protest against the Emergency imposed on the country and honoured the 'fighters', terming them as 'Senani', who were in jail during the period. Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey was the chief guest at the programme held at the city's party office at Gulab Bagh here on Saturday evening.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Pandey, who was himself jailed during that period, said that the two periods, Emergency and Ayodhya movement, are very important in Indian politics. 'The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi forcibly imposed Emergency on the country on June 25, 1975 in the greed of power by hurting the democracy,' Dr Pandey said, adding that all the rights of the common people were taken away, political parties banned and the big leaders put in jail apart from suppressing the voices of the media.

Praising the role of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its frontal wings and narrating the memoirs of Emergency, he said that at that time he was a student of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and being a member of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) he also opposed the Emergency and as a result of which he was sent to the jail. He also criticised the Congress government for adopting cruelty against the opposition leaders and workers.

'After a long time, a government has come under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, the world's largest democracy, which fulfilled the aspirations of the people and made the nation proud in the world,' he said, adding that the Central and State governments are working continuously for the uplift of the exploited, deprived and oppressed people of the society.

On the occasion, he honoured the democracy fighters and important among them were Subhash Chandra Gupta, Dr Baijnath, Dr Shivnath Yadav, Jai Prakash Gupta, Kamlesh Jaiswal, Santosh Srivastava, Lalta Prajapati, Jagdish Prasad Jaiswal, Satish Chandra Srivastava, Om Pratap Singh, Arun Kumar, Rama Shankar Chaurasia, Nand Lal, Bharat Jaiswal, Vijay Kumar, Arun Kumar Srivastava, Radheshyam,, Buddhadev and Ramkishan. The seminar was presided over by city vice-president Atmavisheshwar.

In another programme held at the regional BJP office at Rohaniya, regional BJP chief Mahesh Chand Srivastava termed Emergency as a dark chapter of Indian democracy. 'There was an atmosphere of fear in the country due to the brutal behaviour of the then PM Indira Gandhi. Those who protested were put in jails. Jayaprakash Narayan united the whole country against the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi and called for a protest against the government, this movement led to the defeat of Indira Gandhi in the 1977 elections,' he said, adding that more than four decades have passed since the Emergency but people's souls tremble as soon as they are reminded of the date of June 25. On the occasion, as many as 75 democracy fighters were honoured.

Two killed in road mishap

VARANASI (PNS): In a road mishap that occurred in Chateri village, under the Mirzamurad police station in early morning on Sunday, two cyclists, said to be weavers, were killed when they came under the wheels of a speeding heavy vehicle. It led to a demonstration by villagers but the police pacified them and sent the bodies for the post-mortem examination. According to the information, two youths who were identified as Irfan (18) and Mohammad Kaif (20) of Chateri village and said to be weavers were going to a weaving centre on bicycle where they were working. It was said that when they were on the way near a dhaba in the same village, a speeding truck hit the bicycle and they fell on the ground and came under the wheels of a heavy vehicle. It was said that Irfan died on the spot, while Kaif sustained serious injuries. Seeing this, the villagers rushed to the spot but the truck driver managed to flee away from the scene with the vehicle. The agitated villagers blocked the road by putting the body on the road while the family members rushed injured Kaif to Pt Deendayal Government Hospital where he succumbed to injuries during treatment.

PDA bulldozers may pull down house of AIMIM activist

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) bulldozers may pull down the house of AIMIM activist Shah Alam in days to come. Shah Alam was allegedly involved in June 10 after Friday Namaz violence in Atala area of the city.

The PDA officers found his house construction to be unauthorised and have pasted a notice in this regard at the main door of the house situated in Ghausnagar Kareli.

The notice reads that if no satisfactory reply is received till June, PDA will proceed forward.

Whether the property of Shah Alam will be demolished or attached is not clear as yet, but it is quite clear that if Shah Alam comes forward to save his house, he will be arrested by the police and if he dose not turn up by June 29, PDA will proceed forward with the bulldozer action.

Decision has been taken to attach the properties of those involved in stone pelting or hatching the conspiracy, if they do not surrender before the police. Properties of such persons are under PDA scanner, and if the construction is found to be unauthorised, bulldozers will be pressed without any hesitation.

According to the police local leaders of AIMIM, Samajwadi Party and some Left-oriented organisations were actively involved in June 10 violence and are still absconding. Their properties are to be attached.

SP corporator Fazal Khan, Zeeshan Rahmani Umar Khalid and CPIML(ND) leader Dr Ashish Mital were allegedly involved in the provocation for attacking the police and hatching a conspiracy to disturb peace after 'Juma Namaz'. Warrants have been issued for their arrest but they are absconding.

Reports have been sent to the SSP for announcing a reward of ₹25,000 each on the heads of Shah Alam, Fazal Khan, Dr Ashish Mital, Zeeshan Rahmani and Umar Khalid. If they could not be arrested, their properties will be attached.

Losses during the violence by the mob after Juma Namaz on June 10 in Atala is estimated to be around Rs 80 lakh. The mob had damaged CCTV cameras, vehicles and had set a good number of vehicles, including a PAC truck, on fire. A report in this regard has been sent to Divisional Commissioner and it is expected that the trouble makers will be compelled to compensate the above losses.

Meanwhile the alleged master mind of the Atala violence here, Javed Mohammad alias Javed Pump is being grilled by the police under 48 hour custody remand.

The police took him on custody remand from Deoria jail to find out answer of several mysteries.

The court had granted custody remand on a condition that no third-degree treatment would be given to Javed during interrogation. He was medically examined before being handed over to the police and the same process will be repeated when he comes back to jail to negate the possibility of any physical torture during interrogation.

A good number of questions had been waiting for Javed — from where he possessed pistols and cartridges recovered from his house, why he kept three firearms of different bores, why did he post instigating material on social media, why did he made an insulting comment on the judiciary and several more.

Because the court had granted only 48 hour custody, the police started showering questions on Javed in the van itself on way to Prayagraj from Deoria. He is being grilled at Khuldabad police station by the officers who wanted to know whether some big politicians were involved in this criminal conspiracy or not.

Meanwhile the June 10 Atala violence came as an opportunity for the thugs who are minting money in the name of getting names from the list of culprits wiped off. The police have prepared a list of persons involved directly or indirectly in Atala pelting. Some have been arrested, while a good number of them are at large. Footage of CCTV cameras and videos prepared by the police and mediapersons, extended help in identifying the stone pelters to a great extent and on the basis of the same list has been prepared by the police. Taking advantage of the situation, some 'dalals' (touts) are approaching local residents with a fake list in their hand, which include the names of the family members. They pose themselves as sympathisers and assured that the name can be deleted from the list if some amount of money is spent. The fear-stricken residents pay the amount under the impression that the same will be paid to the police as a bribe to see the work done. But the reality is absolutely different.

The list possessed by the cheats is not the genuine one, but forged to trap people and extract money from them.

On suspicion one such person approached the police and was surprised to know that the genuine list did not include the name of any member of his family.

Now this fraud has come to the knowledge of the police and the officers are planning action against such thugs.

Case of 'love jihad' comes to light

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A case of 'love jihad' has come to light in Khuldabad area of the city. A Hindu girl has lodged an FIR against a Muslim boy who posed to be a Hindu.

The boy, Junaid, presented himself as Suresh to impress the girl. They got married in a temple and lived together. When the girl conceived Junaid put pressure on her to terminate the pregnancy. He turned violent when the girl came to know the real identity of Junaid. Later the girl was beaten up and ousted from the house. The girl could not know the reality for quite some time because Junaid did not take her to his home, rather kept her in a rented room. They lived together for quite some time, but the pregnancy came as a turning point and she could not stand the reality. She reached the police station and lodged an FIR against Junaid who is absconding.

The police have registered a case against Junaid of Kaladanda under different sections of the IPC and launched a manhunt for him.

The girl from the trans-Yamuna area of the city was working at a private office here in Civil Lines. Junaid presented himself as Suresh to trap the girl. She fell in love with him and they got married at a temple and lived together as husband and wife. When the girl got pregnant, Junaid pressurised her to terminate the pregnancy and for this, he turned violent. After the termination of pregnancy, she was thrown out of the house. On Saturday night the girl reached Khuldabad police station and narrated the whole story there. The Khuldabad police registered an FIR against Junaid, who is absconding. She alleged that her relation with Junaid should be treated as rape, because she had been befooled by the Muslim boy who hid his real identity and introduced himself as Suresh Pal, a Hindu by religion.

Video wall equipped truck flagged off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Amrit Mahotsav of Independence was celebrated by Railway Protection Force (RPF) North Central Railway (NCR) in the premises of Zonal Training Centre, Subedarganj here on Saturday. The truck equipped with video wall was flagged off by General Manager North Central Railway Pramod Kumar, president NCRWWO Poonam Kumar, Additional General Manager (AGM) Ranjan Yadav and Principal Chief Security Commissioner (PCSC) Ravindra Verma.

This truck will go to 30 identified places of Prayagraj division as per the schedule. Through this video walled truck, achievements of Railway Protection Force, Railway Protection Force Amrit Geet, safety/safety awareness, cleanliness awareness etc. will be told through various programmes. Similar video wall equipped trucks will go to 25 locations of Jhansi division and 20 locations of Agra division. Overall 75 locations will be covered as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (i.e. commemorating 75 years of independence)

Run for Unity was also organised on the occasion. This race was also flagged off by NCR General Manager Pramod Kumar, AGM Ranjan Yadav and PCSC Ravindra Verma. As many as 140 force members enthusiastically participated in this run for unity.

During the programme retired employees of RPF and Indian Police Medal recipients were felicitated.

General Manager, President NCRWWO, AGM, PCSC, all heads of departments, other officers and employees also planted saplings on the occasion in the Zonal Training Centre premises. Throughout this programme the RPF band played patriotic tunes.

Santation staff told to ensure cleanliness

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

EO Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Mirzapur Angad Gupta while inspected the main places of the city on Saturday warned the sanitation workers to mend their ways otherwise remain prepared to face the music. During the inspection of Shyama Prasad Mukherji Park the EO expressed displeasure on seeing filth on the spot. He directed the sanitation staff to ensure cleanliness in the park in future otherwise action will be taken. The EO inspected Baraundha Kachar area and found the drain choked and got the drain cleaned by engaged machines. After inspecting several localities of the city the EO held the meeting of the sanitation staff and made it clear that any laxity will be tolerated on the issue of sanitation. He directed the staff to clean all the drains of the city before the rain to avoid the waterlogging during the rainy season. He warned the sanitary supervisors that it was their responsibility to involve the staff in their duty and if anyone is found absent, responsibly will be fixed on them.

DIRECTIVE: District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar directed the officials concerned to dispose of cases related to Thana Samadhan Diwas and Sampoorna Samadhan Diwas on priority otherwise face the music. He issued such direction while addressing the meeting held for Thana Samadhan Diwas at Lalganj police station on Saturday.

Listening the problems of the aggrieved at the police station along with SP Ajay Kumar Singh the DM inspected the register on a random basis and found that the cases of Newarhiya and Tolangi villages registered on June 11 undisposed without proper reason so he directed Lalganj SDM to take action against lekhpals of the villages concerned. On a complaint related to Turkaha village about encroachment on land a joint team was formed to take proper action and directed to inform him about action without inordinate delay. On the day six cases were brought to the DM out of which two were disposed of on the spot and were formed to dispose of the rest.

On the day out of 214 applications in the district only 19 could be disposed of on the spot. At Dehat Kotwali police station the meeting was held by ADM Shiv Pratap Shukla and ASP City, at Katra Kotwali it was held by City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh and Circle Officer (City), at Padari police station by SDM (Sadar) Chandrbhanu Singh and CO (Sadar) Shailendra Tripathi, at Halia police station by ASP (Operation) and naib tahsildar while at Vindhyachal police station SLAO Bharat Lal Saroj held the meeting.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Daggers drawn

The Maharashtra crisis deepens while the Thackeray heir and his dissenters fight for Balasaheb's legacy

The political drama in Maharashtra is getting interesting every passing hour. The fear, however, is that it can become dirty in no time. In fact, Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's loyalists have already begun protesting against rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and his followers. The banners of rebels have been defaced, stones hurled at some places and an MLA's office has been vandalised in Pune. It seems that Chief Minister Thackeray, having overcome the initial shock of such a massive revolt, has decided to dig his heels in. It is not the first time that the party has suffered dissidence to a noticeable extent. In December 1991, Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's confidant Chhagan Bhujbal sought to split the party. Bhujbal, who belongs to other backward classes or OBC, might have thought of riding the Mandal wave, but the party remained intact. The revolt by Narayan Rane in 2005 also didn't break the party; ditto Raj Thackeray's rebellion a little while later. That was then; Bal Thackeray, who liked to be compared with the tiger, was alive and kicking. But political commentators are watching with great anticipation if his son, Uddhav, would be able to weather the raging storm? He is not believed to be aggressive as his father or even his own cousin Raj. He has often been portrayed as a gentler version of a typical Shiv Sena leader with an interest in wildlife photography. Would he be able to take on street fighters like Eknath Shinde who have risen through the ranks?

Anticipation is accompanied with fear, for Shiv Sena leaders are not known for patience and tolerance of their adversaries' views. Thankfully, the semblance of normal party functioning is being maintained. So, on Saturday, Uddhav Thackeray chaired a meeting of the party national executive, attended by his partisans. Unsurprisingly, they authorised him to take all party decisions. The meeting also asserted that only the Shiv Sena (that is, the group under Uddhav Thackeray) can use the name of Balasaheb Thackeray. It was also decided to serve disqualification notices to 16 rebel MLAs on the ground that they did not attend a party meeting Uddhav had called earlier in the week. Meanwhile, Shinde's supporters are crying foul, arguing that Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, an NCP leader, is not qualified to act against the 16 MLAs as there is a petition seeking his removal. The rebels are reportedly seeking legal opinion. Shinde, meanwhile, has presented himself as a Hindutva warrior. In a tweet, he urged the Shiv Sainiks to "understand MVA's plan". He claims to be "fighting a battle with a dragon to free the Shiv Sena and Shiv Sainiks from its clutches". Colourful imagery indeed, but the point is that Uddhav Thackeray is still the Chief Minister and therefore has control over the administration and police. One only hopes that the internecine battle within the Sena doesn't get nastier.

PICTALK

Castle Elmau and surroundings during the G7 summit in Kruen, near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany AP

First among equals

There's nothing exciting about the Prez poll, at least not till the eve of the 2024 LS election

The process of electing the 16th President of India has begun. The election is scheduled for July 18 and the counting of votes will take place on July 21. Exactly a month earlier, Yashwant Sinha, the Opposition's unanimous choice, filed his papers. The choice of the ruling BJP and its allies is Droupadi Murmu. Unlike other elections, the presidential election is routine and there's nothing exciting about it. Generally, the ruling party with a majority in the Lower House and sufficient seats in the Upper gets its candidate elected. The Opposition candidate is more of positioning to tell all that the next President was not a consensus choice. Though the BJP is a little short on the numbers, its candidate is likely to sail through as BJD and others have pledged support to Murmu. The President is indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of MPs and MLAs. The electoral college comprises 776 MPs and 4,123 MLAs who would be voting to elect the President. Total votes for UPA candidate (including the support of non-UPA parties) are 4,02,682 which is 37.31 per cent of total votes while the votes for NDA candidates with outside support are 6,13,849 or 56.82 per cent.

Thus the outcome of the election is obvious. Though often the office of President is seen as politically insignificant, it is not. The President's role gets pronounced at the time of the formation of a new Government, especially when no party has a clear mandate. For this reason, the party in power never takes it lightly and settles for the most trusted person. Murmu is a former Jharkhand Governor, a two-term MLA from Odisha and served as Minister in the BJP-BJD coalition Government. Sinha has had an illustrious political career and a clear political ideology; he served as Finance Minister in the Vajpayee Government. But it is the numbers and not merit that would decide the President and Murmu's credentials as a tribal lady are unbeatable. What is more, Murmu is getting a lot of support from non-NDA parties and so is likely to win hands down. But her moment of truth would come in 2024 when she would be instrumental in the formation of a new Government at the Centre.

India at G7 Summit & its Ukraine stand

SIMRAN **SODHI**

It is quite clear that the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia, which is a delicate diplomatic challenge

The upcoming G7 Summit in Germany will see global leaders get together to discuss several issues. The one that will dominate the deliberations is likely the Ukraine invasion, sanctions on Russia and how the world, the western world, should deal with defiant Russian President Vladimir Putin. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be there, as India, Indonesia, South Africa and Senegal have been invited as special guests. According to a report in *Bloomberg*, Germany was in two minds as to whether to extend the invitation to India; the reservation being that India has not condemned Russia for its invasion and also abstained from the United Nations Resolutions censuring Russia. But pragmatism won the day and India was extended the invitation. But it remains quite clear that in the luxury resort of Schloss Elmau in the Bavarian Alps, where the Summit will take place, the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia.

For India and Modi, it will present a delicate diplomatic challenge. Of course, India today wants to be a part of the global leadership but it has no intentions of breaking ties with old and tested allies, Russia being the best example. The problem also is that not only has India not condemned Russian actions in Ukraine, it continues to buy oil at discounted rates from it and is also working out an alternative payment system to keep this going. The United States and Europe, who have been leading the charge against Russia, have expressed their frustrations but, of late, the approach has been more nuanced in public with the western world trying to show an understanding of India's position.

Indications are clear that while India will stick to its stand, so will the western world. Earlier this year, while visiting Germany, Modi called on both Russia and Ukraine to end the fighting, saying: "We believe that no party can emerge victorious in this war." Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra also said that India has always maintained that "there should be cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and the path to resolution goes through diplomacy and dialogue". India is likely to toe this line during the G7 Summit. But, behind closed doors, the G7 intends to raise the pressure on India.

So far, one has to admit that India has maintained its 'neutrality' on the Ukraine war with success. The Quad, a grouping of the US, Japan, India and Australia which initially seemed to be tested by the Ukraine crisis with three members vocally critiquing Russia and India being the lone neutral voice, seems to have reconciled to the in-house differences. Challenges in the Indo-Pacific are a common cause for Quad and even as the Ukraine war presents a new challenge, reality stares hard in the shape of China. All four need one another to counter the dragon's ever-expanding global footprint. Also, for India, China is another worrisome factor that explains its stand on Russia. In the regional dynamics, Russia's embrace of China is worrisome and a closer relationship between Russia and Pakistan even more so. After the Ukraine war, the world has seen a change in the shape of its alliances and a closer Russia-China axis is there for all to see. It doesn't make the world comfortable but it worries India even more, with a boundary dispute, and the Chinese looking for yet another excuse to expand territorially.

> THE SUMMIT WILL TEST INDIA NOT ONLY IN HOW IT PUTS FORWARD ITS UNIQUE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE BUT ALSO CHECK WHETHER INDIA IS READY TO PUSH BACK DELICATELY AND DEMAND THAT THE WORLD SEE SITUATIONS AND CRISIS FROM A NON-WESTERN VIEWPOINT

The G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the US (the European Union is not a member of the G7 but attends the Summit). It is an informal grouping of the world's richest nations and hence the most powerful, too. Russia had joined the G7 in 1998 making it G8 then, but following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia was shown the door. Interestingly, China, despite the size of its economy and the global influence it asserts, has been kept out of the grouping. So looking at the G7 in an unbiased fashion, it's quite apparent that it is a grouping of rich and powerful western nations that has zero representation from Africa and the Middle East. It also helps explain and understand the contradictions not just in the global order but also the response to the Ukraine war.

India is not part of the G7 or the western world. But with an economy that is growing and a strategic place in the Indo-Pacific, it today cannot be kept out. India is also one of the few countries that have shown the occasional spine to the western nations that still seem to view the world from a very narrow post-World War II perspective. The upcoming G7 Summit will test India not only in how it puts forward its unique global perspective but also check whether India is ready to push back delicately and demand that the world see situations and crisis from a non-western viewpoint. That, at the end of the day, is the hallmark of a global leader.

(The author, a Delhi-based journalist and foreign affairs analyst, holds a Masters in International Relations from the American University in Washington DC. In 2009, her book 'Piercing the Heart: Untold Stories of 26/11', was published. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANTI-MURMU PROTEST ISN'T GOOD

Sir — This refers to the editorial, *'First among equals'* (June 23) wherein it was logically elaborated that the BJP has been playing its game beautifully, and reaping rich dividends. By nominating Droupadi Murmu for the post of the new President of India, the NDA has given a gift to all tribals, besides redeeming the tribal vote bank towards the alliance. Her nomination by the ruling NDA will tilt the political equations in its favour. Murmu has risen from the grassroots political level. She had attained a remarkable position as a teacher, Nagar Panchayat representative and ministerial position in the Odisha Cabinet.

She has completed the tenure as the Governor in Jharkhand without any controversy, which shows that she has a lot of experience of working in a high constitutional post. The NDA will get an opportunity to strengthen its penetration in tribal States like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Opposing Murmu's candidature will prove to be politically harmful for the Opposition parties. Another special thing is that in the presidential election, neither the NDA nor UPA will be in a position to issue a whip to their MLAs and MPs since the election is done by secret ballot.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | *Faridabad*

PURE AIR MAKES LIFE BEAUTIFUL

Sir — Through your columns, I wish to draw attention towards the topic of air pollution and its fatal effects. In today's world, almost everything around us is contaminated and so is the air that we breathe. Air pollution is becoming a matter of great concern each passing day. Every living being needs fresh air to remain healthy. Breathing in polluted air can lead to fatal diseases like asthma and cancer, which in turn can lead to death. With the increasing number of cars and factories, the world is becoming a tougher place to live in. Our environment thrives upon balance.

To curb the air pollution, more trees should have been planted. Instead, we can see deforestation all around us. People seem to carelessly do things that are making the environment more polluted. They need to take steps that will reduce the effects of air pollution, like using solar panels, replacing fossil fuels and by using electricity and petroleum efficiently. I hope that my small but sincere effort will help spread awareness among people about the fatal effects of air pollution and how dangerous it can be for the lives of those inhabiting this planet.

Divyansha Sharma | *Ujjain*

WHAT A COMEBACK, DK!

Sir — As India's head coach Rahul Dravid has rightly said, Dinesh Karthik hasn't just knocked on the door of Indian cricket, but banged it hard and made a spectacular comeback into the national side after a gap of three years, riding on his stellar performance in the IPL this year. The Tamil Nadu wicket-keeping batter last played in Indian colours in the forgettable 2019 World Cup semifinals against New Zealand. Picked up by Royal Challengers Bangalore and donning a new persona, 'Dinesh Karthik 2.0', the seasoned middle-order batter, took up the role of a finisher to perfection, which became one of the biggest talking points in the cash-rich tournament.

Since making his Test debut way back in 2004 against Australia, Dinesh Karthik has made several comebacks to the Indian team but the latest one is undoubtedly the most inspiring of all and is nothing less than a fairytale. His 27-ball 55 against South Africa in the Rajkot match, which was his first half-century in T20s, further underscores his value as a 'finisher.' Ahead of the 2022 T-20 World Cup to be held in Australia in October-November, Dinesh Karthik will be the cynosure of all eyes.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | *Chennai*

US must review gun rights order

It is most unfortunate that the US Supreme Court has not taken seriously many firing incidents on the locals and foreigners, including schoolchildren in major cities, expanded gun rights and ruled that Americans have a right to carry handguns in public (June 24). Though the Supreme Court ruled that handguns can be carried in public for self-defence outside homes, most of the guns are used for various offences and crimes. Many Indian students, software workers and salespersons are among the worst victims of guns without any provocation. The guns used by some anti-social elements, criminals and unemployed are playing havoc with citizens and creating terror in the society.

The worst part is that a few psychos are gunning down even schoolchildren. It is shocking that the Supreme Court judges (6-3) in a majority judgment, who gave ruling for letting guns be in the hands of Americans, have lost compassion and love, at least for schoolgoing children. These days, a handgun meant for defence has become a ready weapon for offences and crimes, which was not considered by the court. The US may be progressing in all fields with international command but cannot control guns and its misuse in killing innocents. The killing of innocent schoolgoing children is a dangerous signal for society. Hope a review petition is filed citing many incidents of casual firings.

JP Reddy | *Telangana*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

The laws of J&K, adapted in Ladakh, provide protection to both jobs and land.

Ladakh Lt Governor
—RK Mathur

China's and India's common interests far outweigh their differences.

Chinese Foreign Minister
—Wang Yi

Women today are capable enough of doing their own thing in their own way.

Actor
—Ankita Lokhande

It's so easy to get up for these relays… and just not think and go. I'm proud of our team.

World championship swimmer
—Katie Ledecky

There is a need to tighten the (Indian cyberspace) accountability matrix.

Union Minister
—Rajeev Chandrasekhar

FIRST COLUMN

HELP KIDS COPE WITH DEATH OF DEAR ONES

Handle them sensitively yet with honesty

SONALI **KHAN**

With the novel coronavirus hitting the globe, many families were left staggered to their feet with medical emergencies, untimely death of their loved ones. What began with a learning loss resulted in weakened financial conditions and also, in many cases, the loss of parents, grandparents or loved ones for children. Usually, when it comes to talking about death with children, adults don't know how to start the conversation or how and what exactly to say.

Here's how you can explain what happened. While explaining about death to children, it is critical that they are handled most sensitively yet with honesty. It's important for an adult (whom the child feels safe and comfortable to interact with) to talk to him or her in a quiet place. Conversations help to create an open and comforting environment that allows them to question and freely express their thoughts and feelings.

You can begin with explaining what death is. For example, you might say, "When a person dies, his or her body stops working. The heart stops beating and the body stops moving, eating, and breathing."

Many times, younger children may not realise that death is permanent and ask questions like "when will Naani come back?" and "I want to show Papa what I made". Phrases such as "he is gone into long sleep," "your loss," and "passed away" may seem gentler but can also confuse the young children, who often think literally. They may think if the relatives look for the "lost" loved one, he or she could be found. Hence, it's important to reaffirm the facts gently, and reassert death with most honesty.

Children go through waves of emotions when something like this happens in their life. They experience anger, frustration, anxiety and build a story that it might have happened because of a certain reason. Remind them that nothing they did caused the death or there's nothing that can reverse it.

Also, sometimes it is natural for children to feel angry or disappointed with the family member for leaving them alone or when a close relative passed away. In such a situation, one must allow kids to express themselves freely and assure that feeling this way is alright by saying something like "I know you're upset that Mom died. Sometimes I feel like that, too."

However, children can develop strong fears about their own personal safety or about the death of the surviving parent. And that's when their fears need to be addressed and they need to know that you are there to take care of them. Grief is a very complex emotion; it is not easy for children to cope with. Sometimes children's responses can be harsh when coping with the death of their parent or any loved one. Children may have nightmares or scary thoughts. They may not want to talk about the deceased person in any way, inclusive of happy memories. They may experience trouble sleeping, concentrating, and others. If such feelings or behavioural patterns occur to a degree that concerns you, then it's best to seek professional help.

It may not be possible to prepare fully for the emotions that may follow however, with time they may become easier to process. Remind your children that while change is hard for everyone, you are there for them to get through this time. It's important that you give them all the information that they need to avoid assumptions leading to confusions.

Maintaining some routines can help children. It's important to keep the memories of the deceased alive for your children; after all, they still love the deceased person.

Remember grieving is a slow process that requires time. While feelings attached with the loss may never completely go away, with each passing day they can become easier to endure. Give yourself and your children permission to feel happy again. Be assured that the memory of your loved one can live on in the hearts of your family.

(The author is a journalist-turned-activist who works towards women empowerment and development of children.)

We should celebrate Independence Month

BALAKRISHNAN **SATYAM**

Individuals celebrate birthdays, but a nation ought to celebrate its Independence for a month, not in a single day

To understand a certain concept better, we expect that a paragraph about it will help us better than a single sentence. Likewise, we say that to achieve greater skill development, our practice sessions need to be longer. Thus, when we accord something more time, we hope to have given it that much more attention.

Generally, in our minds the expression 'a day or two' suggests a quite short duration. 'Day' is such a familiar word, and so casually used that we rarely reflect on it. It is an important unit of time. If an individual celebrates his or her birthday, shouldn't a nation celebrate Independence Month rather than only a day?

Many kinds of organisations played a role in our gaining Independence; they were quite different from each other, and unique in what they did. You have heard it said that we should also render proper respect to many movements and sacrifices across the country. An Independence Month, organised as themed weeks, or even as distinct days to recognise and highlight various aspects of self-governance would also spread greater political awareness among the people.

There are of course programmes on the day of official and ceremonial significance, but in practical terms, Independence has meant our own currency without colonial insignia, that our houses of legislature are sovereign, our own Chiefs of the Armed Forces, our own Election Commission, and various Indian Councils for research, our Central Universities, and national corporations in the Energy and other sectors. Showcasing each of them and celebrating their progress is something that can be done in greater detail than through only a few tableaux over three hours in a single day. It can be a richer, longer, more informative experience through an Independence Month.

The opportunity to organise a number of exhibitions on progress will not only inform our citizens about the energy sector, the telecom and ITES sector, the space sector and so on; it will also help the youth.

Now, for argument's sake, someone could say that a much larger country in terms of area and with about twice our number of states is, after all, observed on one day with a lot of fireworks and parades. Their struggle for Independence, while admirable for many things, was quite different. It was concentrated in a few battle arenas, and basically under one command. Their nation itself grew in territory over the mainland over several decades, and largely drew upon the progressive political ethos of Western Europe as its main source.

While we thus appreciate the US's particular history, it is plain to see that our own liberation from the colonial yoke has been a different kind of process. Given our geography and ancient heritage, our Constitutional spirit includes elements from Western and indigenous frameworks as we had an equally illustrious and forward-looking team of authors as were the Founding Fathers of the US.

> THE OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANISE A NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS ON PROGRESS WILL NOT ONLY INFORM OUR CITIZENS ABOUT THE ENERGY SECTOR, THE TELECOM AND ITES SECTOR, THE SPACE SECTOR AND SO ON; IT WILL ALSO HELP THE YOUTH

(The author is a creative director, advertising faculty, and an amateur epistemologist. The views expressed are personal)

In fact, the project to draft the Constitution is itself an undertaking about which more information can be shared. From inception, there has been a strong inclusivist orientation in the Republic of India. Cabinets at national and state levels have sought to have members from under-represented or marginalised communities, or from places far away from economic and political hubs.

On the contrary, it is much rarer to find Native Americans among Secretaries or in the House of Representatives. Representation for them was initiated only in 1924, and it took till 1965 for them to even properly participate as voters across most States. Given our own greater diversity and many regional and district cultures, India is more representational in its political culture from the beginning.

Much more remains to be done, yet the Constitution adopted within three years of Independence got us off to a flying start. There is in it a pluralism and coexistence of doctrines—there are some curbs on exploiting fellow humans for profit even while incentivising industrial growth. The mixed economy approach of having some utilities undertaken and operated by the State, a broadly welfarist outlook, a planning model suited to the developmental needs of a Third World country (typical for most recently decolonialised)—all parts of a unique 'middle path' policy, in itself a marvel. There was advocacy of a scientific temper and promotion of modern education for all. In an ethos where both consumerism and spirituality have been pursued parallelly!

The generation of leaders and experts who determined and agreed upon such a choice was a generation that could boast of knowledge and practical experience. While no set of principles may be such that a further adaptation cannot be considered at all, what we've had already so far is not narrow, and any fault is actually about weak implementation.

A month, therefore, would not only be a celebration, it would be a thanksgiving, a reaffirmation and a renewal of our commitment to our fair polity. With the passing years, we won't have people any more who had known how things were, prior to 1947. The domination by the European, the severely limited participation in governance in those times, the inadequate infrastructure across sectors, will all be long forgotten. Our present rights and freedoms had been dreamt of for decades before they were ushered in 75 years ago.

The very theme of Independence can lead us to reflect, as families and citizens, on how it can be practically maintained. There's an important aspect of economic freedom, which Gandhiji had underlined.

In the US, a lot of ordinary people are groaning under the yoke of steep debt—for housing, healthcare and education. A small part of it is due to heedless use of credit cards, but much of it has to do with the lack of a sense of society, and with the adoption of a view of people as customers first, and only then as humans. Student debt, and steep cost of university education are formidable barriers to opportunity and social mobility. It helps to remember something here that is often forgotten.

Rather than being accorded our freedom, we have to realise that we are born free, and as Rousseau famously said, the chains get forged only subsequently.

For India, decolonisation halted the robbery of our natural resources by an imperial power. It brought us into the modern era of representative government, and put us on the path of inclusive development. It shook off past shackles and at the same time, launched visions of a prosperous and progressive future for all strata in our society. The Directive Principles, as enshrined in the Constitution, undertake to uplift large numbers living in various kinds of deprivation, whose circumstances in recent generations had offered little or no scope.

This is a socioeconomic gap that a positive governmental agenda can bridge. Yet, independence is really all about people being kept out of debt, than being placed in debt. We reciprocate by serving national interest in many small ways for the broad support we receive. This is what President J.F. Kennedy, in his 1961 White House inaugural, said, "Ask what you can do for your country."

An Independence Month of thirty-one days would offer enough time to ask these questions, and to discover enough answers.

POINT COUNTER POINT

SHARAD PAWAR IS THREATENING THE (REBEL) MLAS TO COME TO THE ASSEMBLY. THEY'LL VOTE AS PER THEIR WILL.
—UNION MINISTER
NARAYAN RANE

WE WILL STAND BY CM UDDHAV THACKERAY. WE ARE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION.
—MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM
AJIT PAWAR

Israel: All turbulence in politics is about Netanyahu

Netanyahu or Bibi is the standard-holder for the Jews who favour a bigger country but without citizenship to Palestinian Arabs

GWYNNE **DYER**

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

There was a rare moment of grace in Israeli politics last Monday, as Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid announced they would dissolve their extraordinary coalition and pitched Israel into its fifth election in three and a half years.

The coalition was extraordinary because it included such a broad spectrum of political conviction in Israel, from Rightwing pro-settler parties like Bennett's Yamina to Centre-Left Yesh Atid (Lapid's Party) and even, for the first time ever, an Islamic party, the United Arab List.

The moment of grace was the loyalty and even friendship shown by Bennett and Lapid, political and ideological opponents who rose above the bitter divisions of a fragmented Israeli political scene characterised by defections and betrayals.

They did not blame each other for the coalition's collapse. They treated each other with respect. Bennett even kept his word to share the top job in rotation with Lapid, who will become prime minister of the transitional government for the months between now and the next election, probably in late October.

"They are political rivals who were wise enough to create a rare partnership, almost utopian by Israeli political standards. They began nicely and ended even better. We were as dreamers—is this Israel, or Denmark?" wrote Haaretz journalist Yossi Verter. But these two men apart, it's Israel. Definitely Israel.

The eight-party coalition had one unifying principle: to stop 'Bibi' (Binyamin Netanyahu, prime minister for most of the past 25 years) from coming back to power yet again. It could only work by concentrating on social issues (where there was some agreement) while preserving the status quo on 'security', settler violence and Palestinian rights.

Even so, the attempt to hold such a spectacularly diverse coalition together was ultimately sunk by the defections of members who felt morally compromised by working with people of such radically different views. It only had 62 Members of the Knesset out of 120 to start with, and just three MKs quitting, one at a time, destroyed its parliamentary majority.

So will Netanyahu be back

in power again after October? He's still on trial for breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud, but the coalition didn't get around to banning people on trial for felonies from becoming prime minister, so it's certainly possible.

That was why Netanyahu strove so hard to bring the coalition down, getting the opposition to vote against every single coalition measure. The Knesset and the country are so evenly balanced that any reshuffle of the deck is another chance to win.

Netanyahu even got his allies in the Knesset to vote against another five-year extension of the regulation that places Jewish settlers in the West Bank under Israeli civil law, not the military law that controls life for Arabs in the occupied territories.

That normally goes through automatically, without debate, but Netanyahu's Likud Party and its allies voted against it despite the fact they are pro-settler parties. Bibi knew that the four Arab members of the coalition government couldn't bring themselves to vote for the settlers having special rights, so the measure failed and the coalition fell.

Actually, everything political in Israel is ultimately about the settlers and the occupation now, and the country is split down the middle with almost surgical precision. That's why it was so hard to make an anti-Bibi coalition, but it's just as hard to form a pro-Bibi one.

Few people realised that this was the future they were creating when Israel won the 1967 war and conquered substantial Arab-populated territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

Between the 1948 war, when most Arabs fled or were driven from what then became Israel, and the Six-Day War of 1967, about 85 per cent of Israel's population was Jewish. After Israel's victory in that war, about half the population on the land now controlled by Israel was Arab and either Muslim or Christian.

That is still the case today, although the Gaza Strip has been turned into an open-air prison that is technically not in Israel. So unless you are planning to give the occupied territories back, you can have a democratic Israel where half the population is Arab, or a Jewish Israel where half the population has no political rights.

That's the choice that divides and paralyses the country, and there's no decision on the horizon. Bibi is the standard-holder for all those Israeli Jews who favour a bigger country but one where most Palestinian Arabs are not citizens, and he may be back in power by the end of the year.

Emergency took away all rights of citizens: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the imposition of the Emergency "took away right to life and personal liberty" and recalled what he described as the massive popular movement against it to defeat the "dictatorial mindset" and "re-establish democracy".

Addressing his monthly radio talk 'Man ki Baat, Modi also touched on rapid growth in space start-ups and increasing achievements in the field of sports."It was the month of June when an emergency was imposed. In that, all the rights were taken away from the citizens of the country," he said "One amongst those rights was the 'Right to Life and Personal Liberty' provided to all Indians under Article 21 of the Constitution.

At that time an attempt was made to crush the democracy of India", said the Prime Minister. He said as people fought back, the country's courts, every Constitutional institution and the press were put under control.

"The condition of censorship was such that nothing could be printed without approval. I remember when famous singer Kishore Kumar refused to applaud the Government, he was banned. His entry on the radio was done away with.

"But even after many attempts, thousands of arrests, and atrocities on lakhs of people, the faith of the people of India in democracy did not shake… not at all! For us, the people of India, the sanskars of democracy which we have been carrying on for centuries; the democratic spirit which is in our veins, finally won", he said.

The people of India got rid of the emergency and "re-established democracy in a democratic way", Modi said. "It is difficult to find such an example of defeating a dictatorial mindset, a dictatorial tendency in a democratic way, in the whole world", said the Prime Minister.

Turning to progress in the space sector, Modi said many big feats related to the space sector have been accomplished in our country.

One of these achievements of the country, he said, has been the "creation of an agency named In-Space… an agency that is promoting new opportunities in the space sector for the private sector of India."

This beginning has especially attracted the youth of our country, he said."Till a few years ago, in our country, in the space sector, no one even thought about start-ups. Today their number is more than a hundred", he said giving an example of Chennai and Hyderabad which have two start-ups – Agnikul and Skyroot.

"These start-ups are developing launch vehicles that will take small payloads into space. Through this, the cost of Space Launching is estimated to come down significantly.

Similarly, Dhruva Space, another Start-Up of Hyderabad, is working on High Technology Solar Panels for Satellite Deployer and Satellites", said Prime Minister.

He also mentioned Tanveer Ahmed of Digantara, another space start-up that is trying to map waste in space.

"I have also given him a challenge that they should evolve work technology, which can solve the problem of waste in space. Both Digantara and Dhruva Space are going to make their first launch from ISRO's launch vehicle on the 30th of June", he said.

Similarly, Neha, the founder of Astrome, a space start-up based in Bangalore, is also working such flat antennas which will not only be small, but their cost will also be very low. Demand for this technology can be, Modi said would be all over the world.

Modi said he also met Tanvi Patel, a school student of Mehsana, "working on a very small satellite, which is going to be launched in space in the next few months."

The Prime Minister said like Tanvi, about 750 school students in the country are working on 75 such satellites in the Amrit Mahotsav, and "it is also a matter of joy that, most of these students are from small towns of the country."

Modi turned on to progress in sports in the country and mentioned that Country was holding Chess Olympiad in Chennai from July 28 with the participation of 180 countries.

He praised Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra for "setting new records of success", winning the silver at Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland and the country the gold in Kuortane Games.

"In the recently held Khelo India Youth Games too, our players set many records. You would love to know that a total of 12 records have been broken in these games - not only that, 11 records have been registered in the names of female players. M. Martina Devi of Manipur has made eight records in weightlifting", he said.

Similarly, Sanjana, Sonakshi and Bhavna have also made different records."With their hard work, these players have proven how much India's prestige is going to rise in the international sports arena in the coming times, he said.

Prime Minister specifically praised sportspersons who made big though coming from low economic backgrounds and small towns.

Modi praised woman cricketer Mithali Raj who retired from the game recently. The successful efforts related to 'waste to wealth' was what Modi spoke about next in his radio talk.

"One such example is that of Aizwal, the capital of Mizoram. There is a beautiful river 'Chitte Lui' in Aizwal, its banks were full of plastic and polythene waste.

"The organization working to save the river, decided to build a road using this polythene, that is, the waste that came out of the river. "From that, in a village in Mizoram, the state's first plastic road was built… that is cleanliness and development as well", he said.

Govt playing with future of youth, should withdraw Agnipath: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up its attack on Government over the 'Agnipath' scheme, the Congress on Sunday said Modi Government is playing with the future of the youth by bringing in the new military recruitment plan.The party asked Government to withdraw this "Tughlaqi" decision.

Twenty senior Congress leaders, including former Union Ministers and spokespersons, addressed press conferences titled 'Agnipath ki Baat: Yuwaon se Vishwasghaat' in as many cities and demanded the withdrawal of the scheme, citing risk to national security and discontent among the youth.

The party said it will also hold a nationwide protest in every assembly constituency against this "anti-youth and anti-national" scheme "bulldozed through without discussion". Addressing a press conference in the national Capital, Congress spokesperson Shakti sinh Gohil said the Congress is standing with the youth and this "Tughlaqi decision" should be withdrawn immediately. "At a time when China has entered our borders... this ('Agnipath' scheme) is like playing with national security," Gohil said.

"I demand from the prime minister that 'Agnipath' be withdrawn and all those ministers or BJP spokespersons who say that the 'Agnipath' scheme is good, they should get their sons and daughters recruited under the 'Agnipath' scheme," he said.

Gohil also demanded an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya's remarks apparently suggesting that he will give priority to 'Agniveers' for security jobs at his party office. "The leader who said that Agniveers will be employed in BJP offices as guards should be sacked by the prime minister and the PM must apologise," Gohil said.

Addressing a press conference at the PCC headquarters in Jaipur, Congress Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana Deepender Singh Hooda also attacked the Centre over the 'Agnipath' scheme and called the government a "copycat" for importing ideas from foreign nations to draft policies.

"The Government has adopted the attitude of a 'Nakalchi Bandar (copycat)' but this is Hindustan. Sometimes it gives the example of America in the context of agriculture laws and at other times talks about Israel in reference to military service," he said.

Several parts of the country witnessed protests after the announcement of the 'Agnipath' scheme on June 14. Others who address the Press conferences were at Shimla by Alok Sharma; Dehradun - Manvendra Singh; Chandigarh - Ranjeet Ranjan, MP; Jaipur - Deepender Singh Hooda, MP;

Ahmedabad: Alka Lamba; Mumbai - Supriya Shrinate; Bengaluru, former HRD Minister MM. Pallam Raju; Chennai - Gaurav Gogoi, MP; Hyderabad - Naseer Hussain, MP.

The Congress has demanded a rollback of the scheme. Earlier a seven-member Congress delegation led by Leader of Opposition (LoP) and including two Chief Ministers met President Ram Nath Kovind and submitted a memorandum with two demands in connection with the army recruitment scheme 'Agnipath' and police action during Congress' protest.

Progress made in deliberations on tri-services' theaterisation plan: IAF

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Definite progress has been made in ongoing deliberations for the theaterisation plan and the Indian Air Force (IAF) remains fully committed to the tri-services integration for enhancing comprehensive national combat power, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari said on Sunday.

In an interview to PTI, the Chief of Air Staff said the IAF is hopeful that the final structures, as and when they come out, would be potent, robust and capable of tackling the existent and future threats.

"The process of theaterisation of the Indian Armed forces is at a deliberation stage. There are a few issues which are being discussed and definite progress has been made in this aspect," he said.

As per the plan, each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander.

At present, the Army, Navy and the Air Force have separate commands. Initially, a plan was firmed up for the creation of an Air Defence Command and Maritime Theatre Command.

"While the deliberations are ongoing, we are hopeful that the final structures, as and when formed, would be potent, robust and capable of tackling the existent and future threats," the Chief of Air Staff said. "Therefore, the joint structures that we may form shall be specific

to our environment, adequately deliberated and wargamed to clearly annunciate tasks and roles of each service," he said.Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said the three services are on the "same page" when it comes to these broad aspects of formulation of joint structures. "The IAF remains fully committed to integration that brings about transformation and enhancement of the comprehensive national combat power," he said.

"We are sanguine that the armed forces will meet the aspirations of the nation and arrive at a model that is most effective and is future ready," the IAF Chief added.

He said the IAF is committed to joint operational planning based on principles of achieving enhanced combat power and efficiency in operations of armed forces.

The Chief of Air Staff was asked about the perception that the IAF is not very keen on the theaterisation initiative. The theatre commands are being planned to integrate the capabilities of the three services and to ensure optimal utilisation of their resources.

The Department of Military Affairs headed by India's first Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat last year had asked all the three services to carry out independent studies on the theaterisation plan for its rollout.The deliberations on the theaterisation plan slowed down a bit following the death of Gen Rawat in a helicopter crash in December last.

"My vision for the IAF is to build on the strong foundations of our service and make it further effective and ever ready to protect the the sovereignty of our nation," the IAF chief said, in replying to a separate question.

"We aim to achieve this through enhancement of entire spectrum of our operational capabilities, induction of modern technology and by ensuring better serviceability and availability of our assets," he said. Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said the coming years would demand more

Senior Opp leaders likely to accompany Yashwant when he files nomination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Senior Opposition leaders, including Sharad Pawar, Sharad Yadav and others, are likely to accompany their Presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha when he files his nomination on Monday. The NDA's nominee Draupadi Murmu filed her nominations last week.

Besides Pawar, representatives from other political parties such as also TMC, SP, RJD, Congress and others are likely to join Sinha.

On Sunday, Sinha said the July 18 Presidential election is much more than a personal contest and is a step towards resisting the authoritarian streak of the Government. Sinha said he was not in any 'dharma sankat' over not getting the support of his son, Jayant Sinha, a BJP MP. " He follows his 'Raj Dharma', I will follow my 'Rashtra Dharma'," he said.

Sinha has promised to raise his voice for farmers, workers, unemployed youth, women and all marginalised sections of society if he wins the election.

In a letter to Opposition parties Sinha thanked them for choosing him unanimously as their common presidential candidate and assured them that he will conscientiously uphold, without fear or favour, the basic values and guiding ideals of the Constitution.

Cong refutes BJP's charges that Sonia was behind Teesta's campaigns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Congress on Sunday termed "baseless" the BJP's allegations that AICC president Sonia Gandhi was behind activist Teesta Setalvad's campaign against then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi over the 2002 riots in the state, and said the charges were "in direct contempt of" the Supreme Court's ruling.

The opposition party's reaction came a day after BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra alleged at a press conference that Congress-led UPA government, especially its education ministry, had given Rs 1.4 crore to an NGO run by Setalvad, and this money was used to run a campaign against Modi and also to "defame" India. "She (Setalvad) was not alone. Who was the driving force? Sonia Gandhi and the Congress party," he had said. Reacting to remarks, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said on Twitter, "The charge by BJP spokespersons that Teesta Setalvad acted at the behest of Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi is wholly bogus and baseless."

"The Congress party condemns these allegations most forcefully. These allegations are in direct contempt of Supreme Court's judgment," Singhvi said. In its order on Friday, the Supreme Court dismissed a petition challenging clean chit given by Special Investigation Team (SIT) to Modi and others in 2002 post-Godhra riots.

EC makes fresh push for power to de-register parties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid an ongoing clean-up exercise to identify unrecognized parties involved in corrupt practices, the Election Commission has made a renewed push to get powers to de-register political parties.

The election law provides the poll panel power to register an association of people as a political party but does not give it the authority to de-register.

At a recent interaction with the Union Legislative Secretary, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar is learned to have pushed for this power to withdraw the registration of political parties.

The poll panel had been writing to the government to grant it power under the Representation of the People Act to de-register a political party on certain grounds. The poll panel believes that many political parties get registered but never contest elections. Such parties exist only on paper. The possibility of forming political parties with an eye on availing the benefit of income tax exemption also cannot be ruled out, the Election Commission (EC) feels.

A senior official said the Commission which has the power to register political parties is also empowered to de-register in appropriate cases. He said adequate safeguards can be put in place while giving EC this authority.

Under the constitution, the Election Commission is required to function independently and ensure free and fair elections. An inquiry into non-compliance with the conditions for the grant of registration might involve the Commission in matters of a political nature and could mean

monitoring by the Commission of the political activities, programmes and ideologies of political parties. This, EC feels, is perhaps the reason why it has not been given the power to cancel the registration of a political party.

The poll body had recently deleted from its register a total of 198 registered unrecognised political parties from its register as they were found to be "non-existent" during a verification exercise aimed at cleaning up the system. In a recent statement, the poll panel had said that a reference has also been sent to the Department of Revenue for necessary legal and criminal actions against three such parties involved in serious financial impropriety.

There are nearly 2,800 registered unrecognised political parties in India. Besides, eight parties are recognised as national parties and over 50 as recognised state parties.

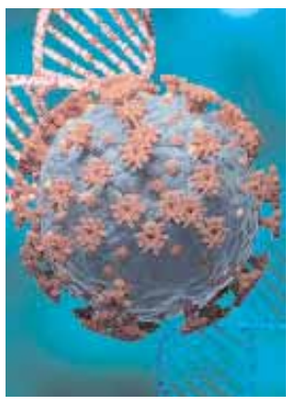
'Comorbid women had higher death risks in Covid'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Young women with co-morbidities like chronic kidney disease (CKD), diabetes, and hypertension had a higher risk of death due to Covid-19 than males during the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in India, according to a study by a team of researchers from Delhi-based Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

The study highlights how co-morbidities like diabetes and hypertension weaken the immune system, making it incapable to fight the virus. It was conducted on 2,586 Covid-19 patients who were admitted to the hospital from April 8 to October 4, 2020.

The patients were divided into two categories: those aged between 18-59 years; and those above 60 years of age. The team observed the association of diabetes, hypertension or high blood pressure, and CKD on the prognosis and mortality of Covid infected hospitalised



patients. The conditions have been, from the beginning of the pandemic, associated with the progression of Covid disease to the severity and higher mortality risk. These have also been linked with prolonging the recovery period.

The findings, published in the journal Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry, showed that patients with CKD were the most prone to severity as well as mortality, followed by high blood pressure and diabetes. Compared to the elderly patients with these comorbidities, the severity of Covid infection, as well as mortality, was found to be much higher in younger patients. Many studies have reported males to be at higher risk of infection than females.

In this study, although the number of Covid admitted male patients (69.6 percent) was more than twice the number of females (30.4 percent), the risk of severity of infection and mortality was found to be higher amongst the females.

This is even after having the same comorbid conditions, except for the hypertensive patients, the researchers said.

According to Dr Rashmi Rana, author and consultant, Department of Research at the hospital, "our study also found that females were relatively at higher risk of mortality as compared to males having same comorbid conditions except for hypertension patients."

Our study showed the risk of the severity of Covid-19 infection in younger patients with underlying comorbidities were found to be relatively at higher risk of severity of disease as well as mortality compared to elderly patients with similar underlying conditions, added Dr Vivek Ranjan, co-author, and Chairperson at the hospital's Department of Blood Transfusion.

Out of the 2,586 patients, 779 (30.1 percent) needed ICU admission, whereas 1,807 (69.9 percent) did not require it. About 2,269 (87.7 percent) recovered, while 317 (12.3 percent) patients died.

"On comparing the impact of multiple comorbidities with the severity of Covid-19 infection, it was found that the presence of comorbidity poses a greater risk of ICU admission.

As the number of comorbidities increases, the risk of severity of Covid19 infection also increases significantly," said Dr D.S. Rana, co-author and Chairperson, Department of Renal Sciences.

After 3 decades, BHU identifies Amphiregulin that helps in identifying asymptomatic Kala Azar patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

After three decades of intensive research aiming to help better management of Kala Azar, scientists at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) have identified Amphiregulin — a biomarker — that helps in identifying asymptomatic patients suffering from the disease, also called Visceral leishmaniasis (VL).

VL is fatal and can cause death. It can also cause severe bleeding, infection, and facial disfigurement. People living in India, Ethiopia, Brazil, Sudan, and Bangladesh are vulnerable to it. India has missed deadlines thrice to eliminate this neglected Tropical Disease.

According to BHU scientist, Dr. Rajeev Kumar, the research team carried out a transcriptomic study on blood samples collected from three groups of persons (asymptomatic Kala Azar patients, Kala-Azar patients, and healthy individuals) living in the area of influence of Kala Azar, and identified Amphiregulin — a biomarker — that helps in identifying asymptomatic individuals.

Amphiregulin not only inhibits inflammation and tissue damage but can also help in differentiating individuals with active disease. According to Dr Siddhartha Shankar, Senior Research Fellow, who led the study under the guidance of Prof. Shyam Sundar, Distinguished Professor, Department of Medicine, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS)-BHU, and Dr. Rajeev Kumar, CEMS, IMS-BHU, symptoms includes irregular fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anemia. The disease spreads easily as it remains asymptomatic in the early stage, and detecting it has so far been costly and very complex.

However, the new research will make it much easier.This internationally acclaimed research by Indian scientists has been published in the latest issue of 'Clinical and Translational Immunology' research journal.

In India, Kala Azar is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected 'Phlebotomus argentipes' sandfly. The size of these sandflies are a quarter of that of an average mosquito. Their body length is from 1.5 mm to 3.5 mm. Most cases occur in Brazil, East Africa and India. An estimated 50,000 to 90,000 new cases are reported annually worldwide, of which only 25 to 45 per cent are reported to the WHO.

"Asymptomatic individuals do not show any symptoms of the disease but carry the parasite in their body which can help in the spread of Kala Azar. Therefore this research is a very interesting discovery in the field of Kala Azar research, especially in light of the eradication programme of the government.

BHU scientists feel that the study could be globally acceptable and is reliable and cost-effective. Prof. Shyam Sundar, the country's leading scientist who has been working in the field of Kala Azar research for the last three decades, said, "We are taking forward our research work keeping in mind the Kala Azar eradication programme of the government, and this discovery is a big step in that direction."

Adult sandflies are hairy, with straight wings that are small and large in proportion. It takes birth from an egg and the larva grows into an adult through the stage of the pupa. This entire cycle takes about a month.

Flood situation grim in Assam, over 25 L still hit; toll at 121

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam continued to remain critical on Sunday as the toll touched 121 with more than 25 lakh people still reeling under the deluge, although water level has started receding from some areas.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, during the day, visited Silchar in Cachar district, which is among the worst-affected areas, and assessed the damage caused by flood waters in the Barak valley city.

According to latest updates by Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), over 25 lakh people are still facing difficulties in 27 flood-hit districts of the state, comprising 79 revenue circles and 2,894 villages.As many as 2.33 lakh have taken shelter in 637 relief camps of the northeastern state, which had been battling floods and landslides for the past two weeks.

Relief materials were being distributed to affected populations that haven't put up at the shelter camps through 259 distribution centres or points that have been opened temporarily, the ASDMA bulletin said.

NDRF had been helping the district administration in safe evacuation of people from affected areas apart from the state forces like SDRF, Fire & Emergency Services, the police and ASDMA volunteers. So far, 67,237 people have been moved to safety by the various agencies, the bulletin said. Four more persons died on Saturday in the floods in different parts of Assam, raising this year's toll in the state due to flood and landslides to 121. Fresh landslides were reported from Kamrup Metropolitan district, the ASDMA said. During the last 24 hours, the state experienced an average rainfall of 7 mm.Since March 1, the state recorded 1,891.90 mm rainfall.

As per Central Water Commission bulletin, Kopili river at Dharamtul in Nagaon, the Barak at BP Ghat in Karimganj and AP Ghat in Cachar, and its tributary Kushiyara at Karimganj town are above danger levels.

TMC played the Goa game in Tripura says Left Front

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Hours after the Tripura by-election results the Left Front and Congress on Sunday attacked the Trinamool Congress for working as the real "vote katua" party that was working with the purpose of helping the BJP.

Showing how the people of Tripura had rejected the TMC by relegating it to the fourth position in all the four Assembly constituencies where Assembly by election results were declared on Sunday, senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakrabarty said "the election results only show the real acceptability of the TMC in Tripura and the real intention of their leaders in going to that State with all the camera focus behind them … they are the real vote cutters."

While in all the four seats both the CPI(M) and the TMC ended winning no seats, the Left managed to retain the second place in two seats whereas the TMC was pushed to the fourth slot in all the four seats.

Another State committee leader said "it is quite clear why the BJP was continuously targeting the TMC … this is because they wanted to shift the focus on that party as the real challenger so as to cut the opposition votes … TMC will make no presence in Tripura in the next year's Assembly elections… they are the appointed agents of the BJP to spoil the opposition unity … as they did in Goa so they are doing in Tripura … till a few weeks ago their biggest leaders like Abhishek Banerjee was coming to Tripura … he has fulfilled his goal … now the BJP Government will not send ED, CBI to their houses for a few weeks." Saying that in by-elections people generally vote in fear in States like Tripura, CPI(M)'s Rabin Deb said "a change is inevitable in that State and the BJP Government is bound to go in 2023."

The TMC leadership promptly hit back to the Left attack saying LF was a spent force and that they existed only on sign boards. "We accept that we are on the fourth spot … but which child grows into a strongman soon after birth … We have started our journey and will win Tripura … But Tripura has rejected the Left and will never bring them back," said senior party leader JP Mullick.

Meanwhile, stray violence marked the Sunday's Bengal civic by-elections and Siliguri sub-divisional board polls with about 78 percent voters exercising their franchise.

While about 78 percent voters cast their votes in Siliguri, 69% and 72% of voters voted in South and North Dum Dum. At Bhatpara the constituency of BJP-turned-TMC MP Arjun Singh 74 percent voters cast their votes amid complaints of massive rigging. At Jhalada in Purulia district and Panihati in North 24 Parganas 80 percent and 56 percent voters exercised their franchise respectively.

In Siliguri Sub-divisional board elections about 78 percent voters cast their votes amid reports of violence near Phansidawa, Motabari and Naxalbari Assembly areas.

While State Election Commissioner Sourav Das said that the polls were nearly peaceful with about reports of some disturbance coming from 5-6 places only the Left and the BJP complained there was rampant rigging in these areas.

"It is undeclared Emergency going on in Bengal … let alone the voters, here no candidate is safe … the Sunday's violence has clearly shown that," State BJP president Sukanto Majumdar said. TMC MP Sukhendu Shekhar Roy however said that there was no violence adding "the losers will have to show some excuse for their defeat … this is the same excuse they are putting forward for the people."

Suspended 'flamboyant' cop to take plunge in Kashmir electoral politics

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After serving the Police department for over 22 long years, Basant Rath, a 50 year old 'flamboyant' suspended IPS officer of 2000 batch, Sunday announced his decision to 'permanently' hang his uniform before taking a plunge in the electoral politics of Kashmir.

He is often seen in 'black dress' and seldom wore uniform after locking horns with his superior officers.

Rath, who remained very active on his twitter timeline and posted 'cryptic' messages which triggered debates and invited wrath of netizens, once again chose the platform where he shared his wish list to resign from the Indian Police service.

He wrote, 'Politics is a noble profession' while uploading a signed copy of his resignation letter. "I wish to resign from the Indian Police Service in order to be able to participate in electoral politics. "Please consider this letter as my request for resignation/ voluntary retirement and process it accordingly … ,"

The letter, dated June 25, 2022, was addressed to the Chief Secretary, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and was also marked to The Director General of Police, J&K and he Commandant General Home Guard and SDRF.

Hours before uploading his resignation letter, Rath had dropped clear hints claiming he wanted to join electoral politics. "If I ever join a political party, it will be BJP. If I ever contest an election, it will be from Kashmir. If I ever join politics, it will be before March 6, 2024.

Rath attracted attention of the local media and netizens,especially from Kashmir valley during his stint as IG, Traffic in Jammu and Kashmir. He was also running a book club and distributed books,free of cost to the needy students and aspirants studying for the Union Public Service examination. In July 2020,the Ministry of Home Affairs had placed him under suspension in connection with repeated instances of gross misconduct and misbehaviour.

Earlier, in the last week of June 2020, Rath had filed a written complaint, in his personal capacity and not as a policeman, against Jammu and Kashmir police Chief, Dilbagh Singh, stating that Singh poses a threat to his safety and reputation.

While serving the department he adopted 'unorthodox' means and also invited public wrath while he went around kicking motorbikes parked on the roadside. In March 2020, the government had taken serious note of another act of indiscipline when he forcibly shifted kashmiri students, stranded at a quarantine centre in Jammu, to a nearby hotel in his official vehicle.

In November 2018, he was shunted out of the traffic department shortly after a spat with the then Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Junaid Azim Mattu on a social media platform.

Fishermen spread fishing nets while sailing in the Hooghly river, in Nadia on Sunday PTI

FROM PAGE 1

DOUBLE BLOW FOR SP AS BJP WRESTS AZAMGARH, RAMPUR SEATS

Hailing the BJP victories, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the public has given a clear message to 'parivarvadis', casteist and communal elements.

Congratulating the BJP candidates and workers, Yogi said, "The victory in the bypolls has determined the optimistic fate of the 2024 general elections. People have shown their trust in the double-engine Government under the leadership of PM Modi. Good governance and public welfare policies have overthrown corruption, hooliganism, and terrorism."

"The victory of BJP candidate Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi in Rampur and that of Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' in Azamgarh has affirmed BJP's positive and development-oriented approach which ensures the uplift of every section of the society without any discrimination," Yogi said.

JOLT FOR AAP IN PUNJAB, PARTY RETAINS DELHI'S SEAT

congratulated Pathak and said the poll results show that Kejriwal lives in the hearts of the people.

In Punjab, Mann bagged 2,53,154 votes, defeating the AAP's first-timer and district unit head Gurmail Singh Sarpanch, who secured 2,47,332 votes. The candidates of three main traditional parties — Congress' Dalvir Singh Goldy (79,668 votes), followed by the BJP's Kewal Singh Dhillon (66,298) and the SAD's Kamaldeep Kaur Rajoana (44,428 votes) — failed to save their deposit.

Sangrur — which has emerged as the stronghold of the AAP, especially that of incumbent Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann who had won the seat twice in 2014 and 2019 — gave a huge jolt to the ruling party despite the slew of pro-people decisions and initiatives it has taken in less than four months in Government, including an anti-corruption helpline, free power from July 1, doorstep ration delivery, advertising jobs, among others.

However, it seems, that the ruling party failed to reduce the effect of the killing of popular Punjabi singer-rapper Sidhu Moose Wala, with the AAP facing the blame of first pruning his security and then publicising it — which led to his brutal daylight murder. Even during the February 2022 State Assembly polls, Moose Wala — who was then contesting as Congress candidate from Mansa — had expressed his desire to go and campaign for Mann, who was contesting from the Amargarh segment. Also, the support actor-Sikh activist Deep Sidhu had extended to Mann during the Assembly polls, also seemed to have worked for him in this election too. On the other hand, it is believed that inaccessibility of local leaders after the formation of the AAP Government, delay in fulfilling major pre-poll promises like Rs 1,000 to all 18-plus women, free power, a comparatively weak candidate and strong multi-cornered contest, among others have cost the ruling party its pocket-borough.

The AAP had won all the nine Assembly constituencies under the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat including that of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, Education Minister Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer just about four months ago.

CONG PIPS BJP TO BAG MANDAR SEAT

voters exercised their franchise in the election, held on June 23. The by-election was necessitated after the disqualification of Bandhu Tirkey as an MLA in the wake of his conviction in a corruption case. Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh, the YSR Congress Party registered a big win in the Atmakuru Assembly by-poll. SR Congress Party candidate Vikram Reddy defeated his nearest rival, the BJP's G Bharat Kumar, by a margin of 82,742 votes.

BJP WINS BIG IN TRIPURA

from Surma and Malina Debnath won from the Jubarajnagar constituency. In the Agartala constituency, Sudip Roy Barman of the Congress won. Barman had recently resigned from the BJP and joined the Congress.

INDIANS PROUD OF DEMOCRACY: PM TELLS DESI DIASPORA

Also, India is providing free rations to 80 crore poor people for the last two years, he said in an apparent reference to the Covid pandemic.

In the country's fight against the pandemic, the Prime Minister said there was a time when people said the country will take 10-15 years to vaccinate its population against Covid-19. "Today, 90 per cent of adults have taken both doses and 95 per cent of adults have taken at least one dose," he said.

"In the last century, Germany and other countries took benefit from the industrial revolution. India was a slave back then that is why it could not leverage benefits. But now, India will not be left behind in the fourth industrial revolution, it's now leading the world," Modi said.

Listing achievements in promoting entrepreneurship, he said: "There was a time when India was nowhere in the race of startups. Today, we are the third-largest startup ecosystem. Similarly, we used to import even the simplest phones, today, we are the second-largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world. In India now we have a unicorn every 10 days."

Touching upon the issue of the environment, the Prime Minister said climate change is just not a matter of policies in India. Sustainable climate practices have become a part of the lives of India's people. "We have made over 10 crore toilets in the country. Now people understand their duty to keep the country clean," he said.

The Prime Minister said his Government had set an ambitious target of 10 per cent ethanol blending in petrol and achieved this five months before the target. On reaching Munich, the Prime Minister said he was looking forward to "fruitful discussions" with leaders of the G-7 on issues like climate, energy, food security, counter-terrorism, environment, gender equality and democracy. The summit hosted by Germany is also likely to discuss the ongoing Russian military action in Ukraine that has triggered geopolitical turmoil besides fuelling a global food and energy crisis.

US President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Justine Trudeau, French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga are taking part in the summit. India is participating in the summit as an observer. Modi is attending the G-7 summit following an invitation by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The summit is being hosted by Germany in its capacity as the chair of G-7, a grouping of the world's seven richest nations including the US, Germany, Japan, Italy, France, Canada, and the European Union (EU). "Landed in Munich to participate in the G-7 Summit. I look forward to fruitful discussions with world leaders during the Summit," Modi tweeted. On his arrival, the Prime Minister was warmly greeted by the Indian diaspora.

"Warm welcome to PM Shri @narendramodi in #Muenchen to attend the @G7 Summit #G7Germany #AmbHarishParvathaneni and Mrs. Nandita Parvathaneni received PM at @MUC_Airport," India's Embassy in Berlin tweeted. "The Indian community gave PM @narendramodi a warm and special welcome to #München!" the Indian Mission said in a tweet.

"At the invitation of @Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, PM @narendramodi arrives in Germany for the G7 Summit. Besides participating in @G7 discussions on climate, energy, food security, health, gender equality and more, PM will also hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in a tweet.

The invitation to the G-7 Summit is in keeping with the tradition of close partnership between India and Germany. After attending the summit, the Prime Minister will be travelling to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on June 28. The G-7 summit is an annual meeting and the discussion typically focuses on global security, economic and climate concerns.

India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra in a media briefing said, "India's regular participation at the G-7 summits clearly points to increasing acceptance and recognition that India needs to be a part of any and every sustained effort to find solutions to solve global challenges."

MY DAD OFFERED CM'S CHAIR TO SHINDE: AADITYA

He was evasive and did not give a proper response to the offer... Even at that time I had heard some murky political things that were going on. Exactly a month later on June 20, Shinde and his group staged a rebellion in the party," Aaditya said.

Aaditya said that Shinde's departure from the Sena was in a way "good riddance".

"With Shinde leaving the party, all ghaan (muck) has gone out of the party on its own. Now the party is clean," Aaditya said and added that the rebel Sena MLAs would not be taken back into the party. "All those rebel Sena MLAs camping at a five-star hotel at Guwahati are traitors and they will not be taken back into the party," he said.

Meanwhile, in a startling revelation on the efforts made by the Shinde camp to woo the loyal Sena MLAs through money, from Kannad constituency in Aurangabad district Udaysinh Rajput said: "The members of the Shinde camp offered me Rs 50 crore to join the rebel Sena camp. Even if they had offered me Rs 100 crore, I would not betray Uddhav Thackeray sahib and join the Shinde camp. Because, I attach more importance to loyality and principles." Rajput's claim is the first revelation about the horse-trading allegedly indulged in by the Shinde camp to woo Sena MLAs. Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut said that just because "the rebels have got Rs 50 crore" did not mean that the Shiv Sena would be finished. "We will fight it out and emerge victors in the current battle with the rebel MLAs." Raut dared the MLAs from the breakaway rebel faction to "quit your seats and face the electorate again. Come face us and fight elections against us. We will defeat all of you."

Raut said that Shinde lost the CM's post because of the Opposition BJP's political hara-kiri after the State Assembly polls in 2019."Shinde would have been made the CM if the BJP had not backtracked on its formula of sharing the top post for two-and-half years with the Sena after the 2019 elections. If BJP had honoured the understanding, Shinde could have become the CM then," Raut said. Raut said that Uddhav became the Chief Minister at the instance of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar and AICC president Sonia Gandhi after the formation of the Maha Vikas Aghadi comprising Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress.

"Shinde forfeited the post of CM because of the same BJP he is now terming as a 'Maha-Shakti' and trying to destroy the Shiv Sena," Raut said. In a related development, NCP chief Sharad Pawar reiterated that his party was supporting fully the MVA Government, led by Uddhav Thackeray.

"Till now our MVA is intact. I am pretty sure that after the Sena rebel MLAs land in Mumbai from Guwahati, they will change their stand and return to the parent Sena camp. We will take measures to ensure that the rebel MLAs return to Mumbai at the earlier," Pawar said.

The NCP chief said that the Opposition BJP was desperately trying to topple the Uddhav Thackeray government. "The BJP's involvement in the ongoing rebellion within the Sena camp became crystal clear when Shinde himself said that he enjoyed the support of a national party. The rebel MLAs first went to Surat and then they flew to Guwahati. Both Surat and Guwahati are in BJP-led states. That is enough to suggest the BJP's hand in the current rebellion within the Shiv Sena," Pawar said.

CENTRE GIVES Y+ SECURITY TO REBEL MLAS

In his letter, Shinde, who is presently camping with the rebel MLAs at a Guwahati hotel, said that the "sinister move" is an attempt to break their resolve and arm-twist them to give in to the demands of the MVA Government comprising of "the NCP and Congress goons."

Meanwhile, in his letter to DGP Seth, Governor Koshyari has pointed out that these MLAs have expressed serious concerns about the safety of their homes and families after "threatening statements were made by certain political leaders."

Koshyari said that 47 MLAs - 38 from Shiv Sena, two from Prahar Jan Shakti Party, and seven Independents - have written to him that police security of their families has been "illegally and unlawfully withdrawn."

VARUN LIKELY TO MOVE PRIVATE BIL TO END MPS, MLAS' PENSIONS

close to him said. The MP would be moving a private member bill to withdraw pension benefits to MPs and MLAs. He would also move a bill to make recruitment in the Government jobs "time-bound", sources said.

According to an estimate, the Center is spending over Rs 70.50 crore on monthly pension being paid to the former MPs, which also include rich film stars, businessmen and industrialists having declared their wealth in their election affidavits running into crores. Varun has argued that if those recruited in the armed forces under the Agnipath initiative are not eligible for a pension, then why public representatives "after five years term" should get post-retirement benefits. On Sunday Varun tweeted that two youth Sachin in Rohtak and Vikas in Fatehpur, who were preparing for years to join army, have committed suicide after the Government announced the Agnipath scheme.

Tagging a video along with the tweet, the MP has said "the Government is repeating the same mistake it committed during farmers' agitation by refusing to have a dialogue on the issue". BJP MP from Pilibhit and son of former Union Minister Maneka Gandhi, Varun has been questioning the Agnipath scheme since it was unveiled on June 14 by the Centre.

Varun who has not taken his MP salary for the last 10 years has repeatedly questioned the pension entitlement of the public representatives which is now being "denied" to soldiers in the Agnipath recruitment policy, he said.

"If Agniveers who serve for a short period of time are not entitled to a pension, then why this 'facility' should be for public representatives? If those who protect the country do not have the right to a pension then I am also ready to forego mine," he earlier tweeted. "Can we, the MLAs/MPs, give up our pension to ensure that Agniveers get a pension," he said.

CBI PROBE AGAINST 3 IT STAFFERS FOR AIDING FAKE TDS RETURNS

The CBI has named three Income Tax Department officials — Abhay Kant, Saurabh Singh and Rohit Kumar — in connection with the case along with nine beneficiaries of the refunds.

The case has been registered by the anti-corruption branch of the CBI under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, forgery, cheating and criminal breach of trust besides criminal misconduct under the Prevention of Corruption Act besides provisions of the Information Technology Act. The tax department has alleged that the officials misused the RSA tokens of assessing officers to work out and authenticate generation of fictitious refunds payable to 11 assessees, on the system, and got the refunds worth over Rs 1.39 crore between August 1, 2020 and August 25, 2021 till the fraud was detected.

The scam surfaced when one of the assessing officers detected computation of refunds under section 154 of the I-T Act for assessees who did not belong to his range, according to the IT Department complaint.

These refunds were reported to be on AST (Assessment Information System), an old system, and not on ITBA (Income Tax Business Application) on which the process has now been shifted since 2016. "Out of the total amount siphoned off, nearly Rs 35 lakh was deposited back to Government accounts by the accused officials as taxes against demand Rs 22 lakh was recovered by assessing officers by way of coercive actions against the beneficiaries," the FIR alleged.

"A total recovery either by the staff involved in the scam or by the assessing officers by way of attachment of accounts of the assessees comes to Rs 57.31 lakh so far. The total amount still outstanding, including interest chargeable, is computed at Rs 94.39 lakh," the complaint further alleged.

Russia strikes Kyiv as troops consolidate gains in the east

AP ■ KYIV

Russia attacked the Ukrainian capital in the early hours of Sunday morning, striking at least two residential buildings, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said, as elsewhere Russian troops consolidated their gains in the east.

Associated Press journalists in Kyiv saw rescue services battling flames and rescuing civilians. Klitschko said four people were hospitalised with injuries and a 7-year-old girl was pulled alive from the rubble.

Ukraine Member of Parliament Oleksiy Goncharenko wrote on the Telegram messaging app that "according to prelim data 14 missiles were launched against Kyiv region and Kyiv."

Before Sunday's early morning attack, Kyiv had not faced any such Russian airstrikes since June 5.

Klitschko told journalists that he believed "it is maybe a symbolic attack" ahead of this week's NATO summit in Madrid.

Two more explosions were later heard in Kyiv, but their cause and possible casualties were not immediately clear.

Meanwhile, Russian forces have been seeking to swallow up the last remaining Ukrainian stronghold in the eastern Luhansk region, pressing their momentum after taking full control Saturday of the charred ruins of Sievierodonetsk and the chemical plant where hundreds of Ukrainian troops and civilians had been holed up.

Serhiy Haidai, governor of the Luhansk region that includes Sievierodonetsk, said Sunday that Russia was conducting intense airstrikes on the adjacent city of Lysychansk, destroying its television tower and seriously damaging a road bridge.

"There's very much destruction — Lysychansk is almost unrecognizable," he wrote on Facebook.

Also Sunday, U.S. President Joe Biden said the United States and other Group of Seven leading economies intend to announce a ban on

imports of gold from Russia. They hope that measure will further isolate Russia economically over its invasion of Ukraine.

Senior Biden administration officials said gold is Moscow's second largest export after energy, and that banning imports would make it more difficult for Russia to participate in global markets.

Biden's Twitter feed said Russia "rakes in tens of billions of dollars" from the sale of its gold, its second largest export

after energy.

On Saturday, Russia also launched dozens of missiles on several areas across the country far from the heart of the eastern battles. Some of the missiles were fired from Russian long-range Tu-22 bombers deployed from Belarus for the first time, Ukraine's air command said.

The bombardment preceded a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, during which Putin announced that Russia planned to supply Belarus with the Iskander-M missile system.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said late Saturday that Russian and Moscow-backed separatist forces now control Sievierodonetsk and the villages surrounding it. He said the attempt by Ukrainian forces to turn the Azot plant into a "stubborn center of resistance" had been thwarted.

Haidai confirmed Saturday that Sievierodonetsk had fallen to Russian and separatist fighters, who he said were now trying to blockade Lysychansk from the south.

Russia's Interfax news agency quoted a spokesman for the separatist forces, Andrei Marochko, as saying Russian troops and separatist fighters had entered Lysychansk and that fighting was taking place in the heart of the city. There was no immediate comment on the claim from the Ukrainian side. Lysychansk and Sievierodonetsk have been the focal point of a Russian offensive aimed at capturing all of the Donbas and destroying the Ukrainian military defending it — the most capable and battle-hardened segment of the country's armed forces.

Capturing Lysychansk would give Russian forces control of every major settlement in the province, a significant step toward Russia's aim of capturing the entire Donbas. The Russians and separatists control about half of Donetsk, the second province in the Donbas.

Biden praises allies for unity on Ukraine war

AP ■ ELMAU (GERMANY)

US President Joe Biden says Russian President Vladimir Putin hoped the West would "splinter" as Russia's invasion of Ukraine drags on.

But Biden praised the allies who have stuck together and stood up to the Kremlin during the four months of war, applying sanctions on Russia while sending weaponry to Ukraine.

Greeting German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Sunday, Biden praised his counterpart for helping to sustain the pressure on Russia and exhorted him to keep at it — a central message of Biden's five-day trip to meet allies at summits in Germany and Spain.

"We have to stay together, because Putin has been counting on from the beginning that somehow NATO and the G7 would splinter," Biden said. "But we haven't and we're not going to."

Biden added: "We can't let this aggression take the form it has and get away with it."

Scholz, who is hosting the annual Group of Seven summit in the Bavarian alps, greeted Biden on a balcony overlooking what the US leader called a "magnificent" view of lush greenery and towering peaks.

Biden credited Scholz for helping to lead the European in

standing up to Russia, saying his tough response "had a great impact on the rest of Europe to move."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson urges fellow G-7 leaders not to give in to 'fatigue' over the war in Ukraine

PTI ■ GERMANY

Johnson has expressed concern that divisions may emerge in the pro-Ukraine alliance as the four-month-old war grinds on. He says allies should not pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to concede territory in exchange for a ceasefire.

The British leader said at a G-7 summit in Germany on Sunday that it was a principle that "a free, independent sovereign country like Ukraine should not be violently invaded and should not have its boundaries changed by force."

Asked whether he thought France and Germany were doing enough, Johnson praised the "huge strides" made by

Germany to arm Ukraine and cut imports of Russian gas. He did not mention France.

UK joins US, Canada, Japan at G7 Summit to ban Russian gold imports

PTI ■ LONDON

New exports of Russian gold will no longer be allowed to enter the UK, US, Canada and Japan after tough new measures agreed at the G7 Summit in Germany on Sunday, designed to exert pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin over the conflict with Ukraine.

Gold is a major Russian export, worth 12.6 billion pounds to the Russian economy in 2021. Its value to the Russian elite has also increased in recent months with oligarchs rushing to buy gold bullion in an attempt to avoid the financial impact of western sanctions.

"The measures we have announced today will directly hit Russian oligarchs and strike at the heart of Putin's war machine," said UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is attending the summit in Bavaria.

"Putin is squandering his dwindling resources on this pointless and barbaric war. He is bankrolling his ego at the expense of both the Ukrainian and Russian people. We need to starve the Putin regime of its funding. The UK and our allies are doing just that," he said.

London is a major global gold trading hub and UK sanctions, which will be the first of their kind to be implemented against Russia anywhere in the world, will have a huge impact on Putin's ability to raise funds.

"With this import ban on new Russian-origin gold, over 13.5 billion pounds of our imports from Russia will be covered by restrictions. Given London's role at the heart of the global gold trade, this shows the UK will take tough steps to stop the Russian war machine," said UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

"I am pleased that following discussions with others in the G7 Finance Track, the US, Canada and Japan will be joining us in imposing this measure, shutting down avenues for Russian gold sales and maximising the impact that we can have on Putin and his cronies," he said.

At the G7, the UK's message has been to further isolate Russia from the international financial system. The UK claims to have already sanctioned more than 1,000 individuals and more than 100 entities since the Russia-Ukraine conflict began in February.

The measures announced this week build on the action taken by the London Bullion Market in March to suspend six Russian refineries.

The gold import ban, which will come into force shortly, will apply to newly mined or refined gold. It does not impact Russian-origin gold previously exported from Russia. The UK government has said that there are no plans to extend restrictions to Russian gold purchased legitimately before the import ban was put in place.

Legislation will be tabled in the UK Parliament to implement this latest ban as the UK pledges further GBP 429 million in guarantees for World Bank lending to Ukraine.

Carpe diem: In Ukraine, war turning love into marriages

AP ■ KYIV

When the couple awoke to the rumble of war on Feb. 24, they'd been dating for just over a year. Russia was invading and Ihor Zakvatskyi knew there was no more time to lose.

He fished out the engagement ring he'd bought but, until then, not yet been ready to give to Kateryna Lytvynenko and proposed. If death do us part, he figured, then let it be as husband and wife.

"I did not want to waste a single minute without Katya knowing that I wanted to spend my life with her," Zakvatskyi, 24, said as he and his 25-year-old bride exchanged vows and wedding rings this month in the capital, Kyiv. The newlyweds joined a growing army of Ukrainian couples who are speedily turning love into matrimony because of the war.

Some are soldiers, marrying just before they head off to fight. Others are simply united in determination that living and loving to the full are more important than ever in the face of so much death and destruction.

Ukraine's wartime martial laws include a provision allowing Ukrainians, both soldiers and civilians, to apply and marry on the same day. In Kyiv alone, more than 4,000 couples have jumped at the expedited opportunity. Before the war, a one-month wait was the norm.

After a three-month interruption in normal service, Kyiv's Central Civil Registry Office is fully open again and working almost at a prewar pace. Since Russia withdrew its badly bloodied invasion forces from around Kyiv in April, redirecting them to front lines east and south, many people who'd fled the fighting have returned. Weddings have increased accordingly.

The returnees include Daria Ponomarenko, 22, who fled to Poland. Her boyfriend, Yevhen Nalyvaiko, 23, had to stay, because of rules preventing men aged 18 to 60 from leaving the country.

Reunited, they quickly wed — because "we don't know what will happen tomorrow," she said.

Jealously guarding their intimacy after their painful months apart, it was just the

two of them, without friends and family. Rather than a puffy bridal gown, she wore a Ukrainian embroidered shirt, the traditional Vyshyvanka chosen now by many brides to stress their Ukrainian identity.

In peacetime, they would have opted for a traditional wedding with many guests. But that seemed frivolous in war.

"Everything is perceived more sharply, people become real during such events," he said.

Anna Karpenko, 30, refused to let the invasion crimp her wedding — she arrived in a white limousine.

"Life must go on," she said. She and her new husband dated for seven years, often talking about marriage, before the war turned the plan into action.

Pavlo and Oksana Savryha already had 18 years of civil marriage under their belts before the invasion prompted them to renew their vows — this time in a small 12th-century church in the war-damaged northern city of Chernihiv.

"Our souls told us to do so. Before the invasion, we were constantly running somewhere, in a hurry, and the war forced us to stop and not postpone the important decisions until tomorrow," Pavlo said.

Prince Charles got suitcase of cash from Qatar for charity: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

Prince Charles, the heir to Britain's throne, allegedly accepted a suitcase full of cash as a charitable donation from the former Prime Minister of Qatar, according to a UK media report on Sunday.

'The Sunday Times' says the suitcase was one of three bundles of cash given as charitable donations which the 73-year-old received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani.

The three lots, which reportedly totalled Euro 3 million, were handed to the prince personally between 2011 and 2015. Each payment was reportedly deposited into the accounts of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund (PWCF), a low-profile grant-making entity which funds projects close to the royal's heart and his country estate in Scotland. There is no suggestion the payments were illegal, the newspaper said.

"Charitable donations received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were passed immediately to one of the Prince's charities who carried out the appropriate governance and have assured us that all the correct processes were followed," Prince Charles' Clarence House office said in a statement.

The newspaper claims that on one occasion the money was handed over in a holdall at a meeting at Clarence House. On another, the paper reports the cash was contained in carrier bags from the famous London department store Fortnum and Mason.

> "Charitable donations received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were passed immediately to one of the Prince's charities and have assured us that all the correct processes were followed, "

"At a few hours' notice from 'The Sunday Times', we have checked into this event in the past, and confirm that the previous trustees of PWCF discussed the governance and donor relationship, (confirming that the donor was a legitimate and verified counterparty) and our auditors signed off on the donation after a specific enquiry during the audit. There was no failure of governance," PWCF chairman Sir Ian Cheshire was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"The donation was made in cash and that was the donor's choice," he said.

The PWCF has the stated aim of transforming lives and building sustainable communities, by awarding grants to good causes in fields such as conservation, education, health and social inclusion.

As summit host, Spain paper urges NATO to watch southern flank

AP ■ BARCELONA

While Russia's invasion of Ukraine is certain to dominate an upcoming NATO summit in Madrid, Spain and other member nations are quietly pushing the Western alliance to consider how mercenaries aligned with Russian President Vladimir Putin are spreading Moscow's influence to Africa.

As the host of the summit taking place from Tuesday to Thursday, Spain wants to emphasise its proximity to Africa as it lobbies for a greater focus on Europe's southern flank in a new document outlining NATO's vision of its security challenges and tasks.

The Strategic Concept is NATO's most important working document after the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, which contained the key provision holding that an attack on one member is viewed as an attack upon all.

The security assessment is updated roughly every decade to reset the West's security agenda.

The current version, approved in Lisbon in 2010, stated the risk of a conventional war on NATO territory was "low."

It did not explicitly mention concerns about instability in Africa. At the time, the alliance viewed apathy as its biggest military threat; U.S. Complaints that some European members were not paying their due featured heavily in summit talks.

Fast forward a dozen years, and the view looks very different from NATO headquarters in Brussels.

After Russia brought war close to NATO's eastern borders, the alliance has worked to provide Ukraine with an assortment of more powerful weapons and to avoid the very real risk of getting drawn into the fighting.

But there appears to be a consensus among NATO members heading into the Madrid summit that while Russia remains concern No. 1, the alliance must continue to widen its view globally. Spain's position for an increased focus on "the South" is shared by Britain, France and Italy.

In their view, the security challenges in Africa arise from a Putin apparently dead-set on restoring the imperial glories of Russia as well as from an expansive China.

Russia has gained traction thanks to the presence of its mercenaries in the Sahel region, a semiarid expanse stretching from Senegal to Sudan that suffers from political strife, terrorism and drought.

"Each time I meet with NATO ministers, the support of the allies is total due to the instability that we see on the alliance's southern frontier and especially the situation in the Sahel region right now," Spanish Foreign Minister José Albares said.

The Kremlin denies links to the Wagner Group, a mercenary force with an increasing presence in central and North Africa and the Middle East.

The private military company, which has also participated in the war in Ukraine, has developed footholds in Libya, Mali, Sudan and Central African Republic.

In Mali, Wagner soldiers are filling a void created by the exit of former colonial power France.

In Sudan, Russia's offer of an economic alliance earned it the promise of a naval base on the Red Sea. In Central African Republic, Wagner fighters protect the country's gold and diamond mines. In return, Putin gets diplomatic allies and resources. French President Emmanuel Macron has long called for a "greater involvement" from NATO in the Sahel region.

Now that Wagner has moved into Mali, French authorities underlined that Wagner mercenaries were accused of human right abuses in the Central African Republic, Libya and Syria.

Former NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said that Russia's brutal military campaign in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during his country's long civil war left it emboldened.

"Syria gave (the Russians) the sentiment that they could be more active in that part of the world," Solana told The Associated Press. "They have very good relations with Algeria and they have (...) the Wagner type of people in the Sahel, which is delicate."

With the Sahel, Morocco and Algeria at risk of worsening instability, "the southern part of NATO, for Portugal, Spain, Greece, etc., they would like to have an eye open to that part of the world," he said.

Italy is another NATO member attuned to the political climate across the Mediterranean Sea.

The country NATO's Joint Force Command base in Naples, which in 2017 opened a south hub Hub focusing specifically on terrorism, radicalization, migration and other security issues emanating from North Africa and the Middle East.

The Italian ambassador to NATO, Francesco Maria Talo, said in a May interview with Italian news agency ANSA that humanitarian crises in Africa must concern all NATO allies.

INDIA WOMEN EYE SERIES SWEEP AGAINST SRI LANKA

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The series already in their pocket, a confident India will look to complete a whitewash when they take on hosts Sri Lanka in the third and final women's T20 International here on Monday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led outfit had thrashed the home team by 34 runs in the opening T20 and then followed it up with a dominating five-wicket win in the second game to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

More importantly, the wins will be a morale booster for India ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham starting next month, where women's T20 cricket is set to make its debut.

India seem to have found the winning momentum, but they won't be entirely pleased with their performance in the series so far.

While the bowlers have done a stellar job in the two games, India's batting has left a lot to be desired.

Additionally, the Indians have been sloppy on the field.

The bowling unit has been on the mark for India. The spinners have been sensational, making full use of the slow nature of the pitch. They had comfortably defended 138 in the opening game.

Sri Lanka skipper Chamari Athapaththu (43) and opener Vishmi Gunaratne (45) presented the Indian bowling unit with a challenge as the duo put up a 87-run stand in the second game.

But the Indian bowlers made a strong comeback as they gave just 14 runs in the last 3.1 overs while claiming six wickets to restrict Sri Lanka to a below-par 125.

But the visitors were made to work hard for what should have been a comfortable chase.

Shafali Verma (17), Sabbhineni Meghana (17) and Yastika Bhatia (13) were unable to convert their starts.

The team's top scorer in the previous game Jemimah Rodrigues (3) also perished cheaply and will aim for consistency.

After stuttering in the first game, prolific opener Smriti Mandhana roared back to form, her 39 off 34 balls helped the tourists win the match and the series.

Mandhana was complemented by Harmanpreet (31 not out), who is now India's leading T20I run scorer. The all-rounder played a captain's knock guiding her side over the line while also pitching in with the ball.

Sri Lanka will be desperately hoping to avoid a second consecutive whitewash, having gone down to Pakistan 0-3 in a T20 series recently.

The hosts will seek to perform as a cohesive unit and grab a consolation win, which will lift their spirits heading into the three-match ODI series, starting Friday.

For that they need more contributions with the bat while their bowlers will also need to support the spin duo of Inoka Ranaweera and Oshadi Ranasinghe, who have done most of the the task with the ball for the side till now.

ASHWIN RETURNS TO SNAP TWO WICKETS

PTI ■ LEICESTER

Opener Shubman Gill struck a sublime fifty while Ravichandran Ashwin snapped two wickets after making his first appearance in the game following his recovery from a COVID-19 infection as India's warm-up match against Leicestershire ended in a draw here on Sunday.

As many as five Indians turned up for both the teams during the four-day practice match as the visitors looked to put final touch to their preparation for the rescheduled fifth Test against England starting in Birmingham on July 1.

It was a much-needed outing for Ashwin, who had travelled to England late after testing positive for the virus. He looked in good touch as he bowled 11 overs and took two wickets, conceding 31 runs.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah led India on the fourth and final day after the country woke up to the news of their skipper Rohit Sharma testing positive for COVID-19, which put his participation in the one-off Test in serious doubt.

If he misses out, Gill will have to take the onus of giving India a good start and the Punjab batter, who was earlier dismissed for 21 and 38, finally managed to convert the starts with a 77-ball 62 studded with eight hits to the fence and two maximums.

He emerged as the top-scorer after he turned up for Leicestershire, who were set a target of 367 to win following India's second innings declaration at 364 for 7.

Hanuma Vihari, who also batted for both the teams, spent some quality time in the middle with his 86-ball vigil producing a 26-run innings. He had scores of 3 and 20 in the earlier innings.

Chasing 367, Leicestershire lost Hasan Azad (12) early on day 4 but Gill stitched a 67 run partnership with skipper Samuel Evans (26) to steady the innings.

However, spinner Ashwin dismissed both the set batters.

The 35-year-old from Chennai had first Gill caught by Mohammed Shami in the 28th over and then removed Evans with wicketkeeper Srikar Bharat coming up with a clean take behind the stumps to effect the stumping.

Vihari and Louis Kimber (58 not out) then came together and forged a 72-run stand to take Leicestershire close to the 200-mark.

Vihari's stay ended when Ravindra Jadeja (1/35 in 8 overs) had him caught behind in the 56th over.

Kimber and Joey Evison (15 not out) batted for another 10 overs, adding 37 before both the teams decided to shake hands.

Prasidh Krishna and Bumrah bowled for both Indians and Leicestershire but both remained wicketless on the final day.

While Krishna bowled five overs for 19 runs, Bumrah rolled his arms for 8 overs, conceding 12.

Tector takes Ireland to 108/4 in rain-hit game

MALAHIDE: Harry Tector's counter-attacking 64 not out off 33 balls took Ireland to 108 for four in the rain-hit first T20I against India here on Sunday.

India opted to bowl in overcast conditions but soon after the rain arrived, delaying the start of play by more two hours and 20 minutes. The break reduced the game to 12 overs a side.

The conditions were ripe for Bhuvneshwar Kumar to make the ball talk and he did just that in the opening over of the match.

The wily operator got the ball to swing both ways before an inswinger breached the defence of Ireland skipper Andrew Balbirnie.

Skipper Hardik Pandya got himself into the attack in the second over and took two balls to dismiss the dangerous Paul Stirling.

After hitting the first ball over cover, Stirling went for the same shot but mistimed to be caught at mid off.

Avesh Khan then had Gareth Delany caught behind in his first over to leave Ireland at 22 for three.

India were expected to run through the opposition but Ireland staged a spirited recovery through Tector, who went for the offensive against the Indian pacers, including debutant Umran Malik.

All eyes were on the Indian pace sensation but he had a rather nervous start to his international career.

He dragged his third ball down the leg side and it raced to the boundary off Lorcan Tucker's (18 off 16) pads. Two balls, later Tector played a beautiful straight drive off a full delivery. Malik dragged the next one short but Hector was ready to pull it for a six.

Tucker smashed two successive sixes off Hardik to give further impetus to the innings. The last over of the innings yielded 17 runs and pushed the total past 100 with Tector collecting a boundary from a reverse hit off Avesh before smashing a full toss for six over deep cover.

Rohit Sharma tests positive for COVID-19: BCCI

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India skipper Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 in a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and placed in isolation ahead of 'fifth' Test against England, the BCCI said on Sunday.

The Test match is scheduled to begin from July 1 in Birmingham and if Rohit remains in six-day isolation, either pacer Jasprit Bumrah or wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant could be asked to lead the team.

"Team India captain Mr Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted on Saturday," BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a media release.

"He is currently in isolation at the team hotel and is under the care of the BCCI Medical Team. An RT-PCR test will be conducted on Sunday to ascertain his CT value," the release added. Rohit had batted on first day of the ongoing warm-up game against Leicestershire but didn't take field on the second day. He did not bat in the second Indian innings.

The 35-year-old Indian skipper is expected to open the innings alongside Shubman Gill in the Test match and his participation would now depend on result of his RT-PCR test and recovery.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had also joined the squad in England late since he had also tested positive for COVID-19 before the team left for the UK tour.

Mitchell, Blundell frustrate England again

AP ■ LEEDS

New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell frustrated England again on Sunday as they denied the hosts a fresh breakthrough in their quest for a series whitewash.

The pair batted through the entire morning session to take the Black Caps to 254-5 in their second innings, a lead of 223 runs, at lunch on the fourth day of the third Test at Headingley.

Mitchell, who had already scored three hundreds this series, including 109 in New Zealand's first innings 329, was 44 not out.

Blundell, fresh from his first-innings 55, was unbeaten on 45,

The pair had so far put on 93 to follow their first-innings partnership of 120 and this latest stand also saw them get through the first two overs the new ball, available to England for two overs before the interval.

World Test champions New Zealand resumed on 168-5, a lead of 137 runs, having lost a flurry of wickets late on Saturday.

And with England having chased down 299 inside a day to win at Nottingham and go 2-0 up in the three-match series, the Black Caps still had plenty to do if they were to avoid a whitewash.

Mitchell and Blundell, four and five not out respectively overnight, were rarely troubled as England captain Ben Stokes -- yet to bowl himself Sunday -- rotated his pace attack.

But England left-arm spinner Jack Leach, who took 5-100 in the tourists' first-innings, did pose problems by gaining plenty of turn, dip and bounce.

Leach thought he had Mitchell, pushing forward, lbw for 17 with the total on 206.

South African umpire Marais Erasmus raised his finger, but Mitchell's review indicated the ball would have bounced over the stumps and the decision was overturned.

England had been forced into a late change, with Sam Billings called up as an emergency wicketkeeper after Ben Foakes was ruled out of the rest of the match following a positive test for Covid-19.

Foakes did not take the field on Saturday afternoon because of a stiff back, with Jonny Bairstow deputising behind the stumps, but Billings, who made his Test debut in the final match of England's Ashes series loss in Australia earlier this year, was drafted in for the remainder of this fixture.

Mithali is an inspiration to many: PM Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid glowing tributes to Mithali Raj and conveyed his best wishes to the legendary former Indian skipper who announced her retirement earlier this month.

Having made her debut at the age of 16, Mithali brought an end to an illustrious 23-year career, finishing as the most capped player, the highest run-scorer and the most successful women's captain.

In Sunday's episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi described Mithali as "one of the most talented cricketers in India".

"Her retirement from cricket has emotionally moved many sports lovers. Mithali has not only been an extraordinary player but has also been an inspiration to many players. I wish Mithali all the very best for her future," the prime minister said.

Since making her debut on June 26, 1999 against Ireland, Mithali represented the country in 12 Tests, 232 ODIs and 89 T20Is.

In 333 international matches, the 39-year-old aggregated 10,868 runs across three formats. She has led India to a record 89 wins from 155 ODIs, ahead of Belinda Clarke who is second in the list with 83 victories.

LOCAL EVENTS

AKASH BAGS SILVER

Akash Chauhan of Kushinagar bagged 50m freestyle silver medal in the 38th Sub-Junior National Aquatic Championships at Rajkot on Sunday. Akash cloacked 00:30.46 secs to clinch the silver in the 50m freestyle of boy's Group III. UP Swimming Association president Raja Jai Pratap Singh congratulate Akash for the feat.

SPORTS EVENT

A sports event was is organised for the LGBTQIA+ community at LDA park on Sunday. Many games like tug-of-war, frisbee, kho-kho, kabaddi were played in the event, organised by Suramya Life Foundation.

MP create history with maiden Ranji triumph

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Madhya Pradesh, not considered among cricketing elites during the past decade, on Sunday humbled domestic powerhouse Mumbai by six wickets in a one-sided Ranji Trophy final under coach Chandrakant Pandit, who exorcised the ghosts of losing one at this very ground 23 summers ago.

On the final day, Mumbai could only manage 269 in their second innings, leaving MP with a paltry target of 108, and they did it in style as Pandit won a record sixth national title as a coach.

Sarfaraz Khan (45), who finished the season with 18 short of 1000 runs and young Suved Parkar (51) tried their bit, but with the need to attack at every opportunity, MP's Kumar Kartikeya (4/98) and the other bowlers knew that wickets would come their way.

While chasing, there were some hiccups, but with just over 100 to get, it was a stroll in the park for the MP team.

As they completed the victory, Pandit was flooded with memories (not happy ones), which he hasn't been able to erase for over two decades and despite winning five trophies as a coach.

It was here at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in the summer of 1999 when MP, despite a first-innings lead of 75, failed to win the game as Pandit, a proud captain, finished his playing career in tears.

Before the final, he spoke to PTI about divine intervention and circle of life and during the five days, sat in one corner with a white towel on his lap.

He has again proved to be an 'Alchemist', after guiding Vidarbha to four trophies (successive Ranji and Irani Cup), with a team that didn't have superstars.

The Yash Dubeys, Himanshu Mantris, Subham Sharmas, Gourav Yadavs or Saransh Jains aren't players who would give you the feeling that they are India prospects, the classy Rajat Patidar being an exception.

But they gave enough indication that they aren't ready to concede even a micro millimetre without a good scrap.

They gave the Mumbai men a lesson in perfect execution of tactic with dollops of 'Khadoos' cricket, which many thought was a patent of the 41-time champions.

MP's win once again proved that the Ranji Trophy is often won by sides which don't have too many superstars or India prospects with ambition or wherewithal to play top-flight cricket.

It happened with Rajasthan when they had Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Akash Chopra during their triumph while Vidarbha had Wasim Jaffer and Ganesh Sathish guiding a bunch of youngsters.

In MP, there was no Avesh Khan or Venkatesh Iyer and had only an emerging potential star in Patidar, yet they followed Pandit's 'Gurukul' style of 'My Way or HighWay' coaching philosophy to emerge triumphant.

Since 2010, the Ranji Trophy, barring Karnataka's dominance for a few seasons and Mumbai winning it once, it has been won by teams like Rajasthan (twice), Vidarbha (twice), Saurashtra (once) and Madhya Pradesh, who would never be in contention in the past.

This shows that cricket has moved from the Shivaji Park, Azad Maidan or Cross Maidan in Mumbai, from the National Stadium in Delhi or the state-of-the-art camps in Bengaluru or Kolkata, to the hinterlands.

Bhopal's Yash Dubey, who had problems with his eye-sight during teenage years or Sultanpur's Kumar Kartikeya, who hadn't gone back home for nine years or Hoshangabad's Gourav Yadav, who would beat Prithvi Shaw's bat many times just for fun are men, who haven't had it easy.

When the Ranji Trophy started, the Madhya Pradesh cricket team wasn't even formed and it was back then known as Holkar, a princely state from the British era, which produced the country's finest cricketers - the charismatic Mushtaq Ali -- or the first ever captain of the Indian cricket team -- the great CK Nayudu.

Holkar was a formidable team till the 1950s before it was rechristened as Madhya Bharat and subsequently Madhya Pradesh.

MP, over the years, have produced some fine cricketers - spinners Narendra Hirwani and Rajesh Chauhan -- who had brief but eventful international careers.

Amay Khurasiya, who had finished his cricket some years before the IPL, where he would have been a rocking success.

And then there was the peerless Devendra Bundela, who was one of those unlucky middle-order batters, who played in the 1990s and 2000s when Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman were in their pomp.

But as a Ranji team, it never looked menacing save the occasional final they played 23 summers back under Pandit's captaincy.

However, this was a team that had enough self-belief and was ready to punch above its weight. They did it with aplomb through five days.

Lucknow accords grand welcome to Chess Olympiad Torch Relay

CM Yogi hands over Torch to Anand in a gala event

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a first-of-its-kind mega event, Lucknow accorded a grand welcome to the '44th Chess Olympiad Torch Relay' on its arrival on Sunday.

Ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the torch relay, it has created a buzz. This year, for the very first time, FIDE has instituted the Chess Olympiad Torch which is part of Olympic tradition but was never done in the Chess Olympiad. India will be the first-ever country to have the Chess Olympiad Torch Relay.

After Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the torch relay entered Uttar Pradesh on Saturday via Meerut.

On its journey, the torch relay will pass through nine districts of the state and after holding events in Noida, Agra and Kanpur, it reached Lucknow. To spearhead the relay, five-time World Champion Grand Master Viswanathan Anand reached Lucknow in the evening and he was received by his fans.

The main event was held in front of Vidhan Bhawan, where All-India Chess Federation president Sanjay Kapoor handed over the torch to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who passed it on to Khel Ratna awardee Viswanathan Anand.

Anand then ran for around 100 metres before boarding an open jeep as the torch realy moved to its new destination, Ayodhya. Anand was accompanied by GM Tejas Bakre, WGM Vantika Agarwal, IM Dinesh Sharma and Shubhi Gupta.

The 44th edition of the world's biggest chess event will be held in Mahabalipuram near Chennai from July 28 to August 10.

Earlier, AICF president Sanjay Kapoor urged the CM to induct chess into study curriculum as the brain game has the ability to help students sharpen their skills.

During his address, Yogi expressed happiness over India hosting the Chess Olympiad for the first time in the history of the game and also the first-ever chess torch relay from the country of its origin.

Others present during the event were Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Sports Minister Girish Chandra Pandey, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal, Secretary (Sports) Kalpana Awasthi and Director (Sports) RP Singh.

Kyrgios happy to make 'top 10 players look ordinary'

AP ■ LONDON

Nick Kyrgios resumes his bittersweet relationship with Wimbledon vowing to continue making "top 10 players look ordinary."

The volatile Australian shot to fame at the All England Club in 2014 when ranked 114 in the world, he stunned two-time champion Rafael Nadal.

Kyrgios has been defeating the stars and upsetting officialdom while delighting his army of fans ever since.

"I've played top-10 players in the world this year and made them look pretty ordinary," the 27-year-old said Sunday.

"I know where my game's at. I know if I'm feeling confident, I'm playing well, I'm able to just light it up kind of whenever I want."

The facts back him up.

Having sat out the entire claycourt season, Kyrgios has excelled on grass this summer, reaching the semi-finals back-to-back in Stuttgart and Halle. World number six Stefanos Tsitsipas fell to the Australian in Halle. That was the Greek's third loss in four meetings with Kyrgios. Fellow members of the top such as Andrey Rublev and Casper Ruud have also fallen victim to a sometimes inspired Kyrgios in 2022. Kyrgios made the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in 2014 on the back of his famous win over Nadal.

However, recent visits have not been so fruitful and he has yet to get past the fourth round in his last six visits.

Along the way, he has been accused of tanking, complained about the state of the grass last year while admitting he deliberately speared a ball at Nadal in the pair's bad-tempered 2019 rematch.

Kyrgios knows he has the tools to make the second week at Wimbledon again.

"I know if I'm serving well and I'm playing well, I can beat anyone. I have pretty much beaten everyone in the draw before," he said.

"It's hard. It's like not many people have gotten over the hump of winning a slam. I'm one of the people that has to deal with that every week.

"Like, Oh, he's probably one of the biggest wastes of talent. He should be winning a Slam."

Kyrgios will still play to the crowd.

In recent seasons, he has sought the advice of fans on serve placement, perfected the underarm serve and once even demanded a beer while playing at the French Open.

The darker, flip side has seen thousands of dollars in fines and a suspended 16-week ban in 2019.

Nadal feels 'immortal', says Tsitsipas

AP ■ LONDON

Stefanos Tsitsipas believes Rafael Nadal must feel "immortal" after winning the French Open and moving halfway to the first men's calendar Grand Slam in more than half a century.

The great Spaniard captured a 14th title at Roland Garros earlier this month to add to the Australian Open he secured in January.

His win in Paris, which also extended his Grand Slam record to 22 titles, came despite him needing his injured left foot to be anaesthetised.

"I have a lot of respect for what he did at the French Open, playing with that foot. It was a broken foot in a way. It kind of makes him feel like he's immortal with the things he's able to pull off," said Tsitsipas.

"The matches, the level of intensity he's able to reach in times where it's very uncomfortable, it would be uncomfortable for most players to compete under these conditions physically."

Nadal goes into Wimbledon, which starts on Monday, claiming he is pain-free for the first time in a year and a half after undergoing treatment to cure nerve pain in his troublesome foot.

Tsitsipas believes that Nadal, the champion at the All England in 2008 and 2010, has a psychological edge if rivals believe the Spanish star is often just one injury away from retirement.

"We're used to seeing Rafa not being able to play and win multiple Grand Slams or tournaments," added the 23-year-old.

"That's where I think the opponents need to be more careful. When he says he can't play and has foot problems, that's where I feel he's the most threatening in terms of his performance.

"It's actually reverse psychology in a way."

World number six Tsitsipas arrives at Wimbledon with a first grass-court title under his belt having triumphed in Mallorca on Saturday.

Now he needs to translate that form to the All England Club where he has fallen at the first round three times in four visits.

That included 2021 when he was knocked out in straight sets by Frances Tiafoe.

"Last year was difficult for me. I didn't play a single match before Wimbledon on grass."

India end with three medals in Archery WC Stage 3

PTI ■ PARIS

The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal after the trio's fairytale run was halted by Chinese Taipei in a one-sided final at the World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday.

India concluded their campaign with one gold and two silver medals -- two of them coming in the compound section.

The women's recurve team, who bagged a lowly 13th seed after the trio slipped out of top-30 in their individual qualification rounds, failed to make much of an impact and lost to Chinese Taipei 5-1 (53-56 56-56 53-56) in straight sets.

With Rio Olympics team bronze medallist Lei Chien-Ying in the line up, third seed Chinese Taipei mounted early pressure with two 10s and four 9s as India shot a 7 in the first set that proved to be the turning point. The Indian trio bounced back to level the second set but that was not enough as it again slipped in the third set, while Chinese maintained their consistency to seal the gold.

Nevertheless it was a memorable return for world no. 3 Deepika, who returned with a team silver after being sidelined following her Tokyo Olympics debacle.

But the tournament was all about compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam's dream comeback, who led India's medal tally with one gold (mixed team event with Abhishek Verma) and one silver (individual) on Saturday.

The world no. 3 Jyothi too was snubbed in the Asian Games trial earlier this year.