

WORLD 5
CRISIS-HIT LANKA LIFTS
STATE OF EMERGENCY**MONEY 6**
INDIA SUPPLIES 40K METRIC
TONNES OF DIESEL TO LANKA**SPORT 8**
ON SELECTION RADAR FOR SA
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Centre slashes fuel, LPG prices

After excise duty cut, petrol price drops by ₹9.5/litre, diesel ₹7/l; ₹200 LPG subsidy for Ujjwala beneficiaries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to give relief to consumers suffering from high fuel prices, the Centre on Saturday announced to cut excise duty on petrol by a record ₹8 per litre and on diesel by ₹6 per litre. This will, effectively, reduce the price of petrol by ₹9.5 and that of diesel by ₹7. The Government also announced a subsidy of ₹200 per cylinder for the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries, for 12 cylinders in a year. But the Opposition isn't impressed.

From Sunday, petrol will thus cost ₹95.91 a litre in Delhi as against ₹105.41 a litre currently while diesel will cost ₹89.67 a litre as against ₹96.67 a litre. A 14.2-kg LPG cylinder presently costing ₹1,003 in Delhi will now cost ₹803 for the Ujjwala beneficiaries.

"It is always people first for us. Today's decisions, especially the one relating to a significant drop in petrol and diesel



prices will positively impact various sectors, provide relief to our citizens and further 'Ease of Living'." Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the decisions.

"Ujjwala Yojana has helped crores of Indians, especially women. Today's decision on Ujjwala subsidy will greatly ease family budgets," Modi said. Announcing the duty cut "despite the challenging international situation" through a series of tweets, Sitharaman said, "It will have a revenue implication of around ₹1 lakh crore/year for the Government." She exhorted all State Governments to also cut local sales tax or VAT. "I wish to exhort all State Governments, especially the States where reduction wasn't done during the last round (November 2021), to also implement a similar cut and give relief to the common man," she said.

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said, "I want to highlight the fact despite this 2nd reduction in Central excise, price of petrol & diesel in States like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand & Kerala remain around ₹10-15 higher than in BJP-ruled States"

BJP president JP Nadda also said in a statement that the Opposition too should reduce petrol and diesel rates in the States governed by them so that common people can get some more relief amid inflation.

Kerala's Left Government responded with its Finance Minister KN Balagopal announcing a cut in tax on petrol and diesel by ₹2.41 and ₹1.36 respectively.

But Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala termed the decisions "jumlas". He demanded the restoration of Central excise duty to May 2014 levels of ₹9.48 per litre on petrol and ₹3.56 per litre on diesel. "U increased Excise on Petrol by ₹18.42/litre and now reduced it by ₹8/litre. It is still ₹19.90 V/S ₹9.48 during Congress," he said in one of his tweets addressing Sitharaman.

Continued on Page 2

At Cambridge, Rahul attacks Govt, calls Indian diplomats 'arrogant'

Cong leader says BJP has sprinkled kerosene on the country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has attacked the Government and the BJP claiming "India is not in a good place" as the ruling party has sprinkled kerosene all over the country. He even went on to target the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers saying he has been told by the European bureaucrats that they have "changed" and are "arrogant".

Speaking at an event titled 'Ideas for India' at Cambridge University to mark the occasion of 75th year of India's Independence, Rahul said: "I was talking to some bureaucrats from Europe and they were saying that the Indian Foreign Service has completely changed. They don't listen to anything; they are arrogant. Now, they are just telling us what orders they are getting. There is no conversation. You can't, you can't do that."

He alleged there is a systematic attack on institutions



that allow conversation, and in an apparent reference to the Adamis and the Ambanis — his regular targets — he said the prevalent private sector monopoly is very dangerous but it never existed in this form, with such a massive concentration of power and capital.

"India is not in a good place as the BJP has spread kerosene all over the country," he alleged, adding India is witnessing an attack on the institutions that built the country which is now occupied by the Deep State.

Leaders of the Opposition, including Sitaram Yechury, Salman Khurshid, Tejashwi Yadav, Mahua Moitra and Manoj Jha, were among the invitees. "We believe India is its people. But the BJP and the RSS believe it is geography. We are not just fighting the BJP; it's no longer a pure political fight. The BJP has 100 per cent control of the media," Rahul said in conversation with author Ashish Ray.

Continued on Page 2

It's not arrogance, but confidence: Jaishankar

Rahul maligns India's image abroad: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government and the BJP on Saturday took exception to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks in London and came out with a strong counterattack.

"Yes, the Indian Foreign Service has changed. Yes, they follow the orders of the Government. Yes, they counter the arguments of others. No, it is not called arrogance. It is called confidence. And it is called defending national interest," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar tweeted with a 19-second video clip of Rahul Gandhi's statement.

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia launched a sharp attack on the Congress leader for his remarks at a conference in London where Gandhi accused



the ruling party of spreading "kerosene all over the country; you need one spark and we will be in big trouble".

It is the Congress that has been carrying kerosene oil to incite riots since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the BJP spokesman alleged, dubbing Rahul Gandhi a "part-time, immature, unsuccessful leader of a hopeless Congress" who has often spoken negatively about the country in foreign places like the US, the UK and Singapore.

With the Government coming out with a strong attack on his IFS remarks, Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said "Yes, it is also called being subservient to the

political masters in face of foreign policy bloopers. Yes, it is called not being able to stand up to China in face of illegal occupation of our territory. Yes, it is called furthering the agenda of a party rather than the nation".

Bhatia said the Congress leader is a "part-time politician" and a "habitual offender" and he and his family is "working overtime to destroy India".

The BJP leader said it seems that Rahul was speaking at a seminar titled "Ideas for destroying India" rather than "Ideas for India".

"Whenever Rahul Gandhi goes abroad, he portrays a negative picture of India," the spokesperson said.

Bhatia referred to the controversy over Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's purported tweet where he quoted former PM Rajiv Gandhi's remark "when a big tree falls, the ground shakes" in the aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent anti-Sikh riots.

Continued on Page 2

Out on bail, Chautala convicted in DA case



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Just about a year since his release from jail in the teachers' recruitment case, a city court on Saturday convicted 87-year-old former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala in a case related to disproportionate assets.

Special judge Vikas Dhull of the Rouse Avenue court passed the order and posted the matter for May 26, when the court will hear the arguments on the quantum of sentence.

The Chautala family had slammed the case as "political vendetta". Chautala served as the State's Chief Minister four times — from July 24, 1999 to March 5, 2005; from March 22, 1991 to April 6, 1991; from July 12, 1990 to July 17, 1990; and from December 2, 1989 to May 22, 1990.

Continued on Page 2

DU Professor held for shivling post gets bail

Refrain from posts on Gyanvapi, asks court

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A history professor with Delhi University's Hindu College, Ratan Lal, who was arrested on Friday night over a social media post that appeared to question claims of a shivling found inside Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque complex, was granted bail on Saturday.

The court has asked to furnish a bond of ₹50,000 and surety on the like amount. It ordered Lal to "strictly refrain from posting any social media posts or interviews" regarding the controversy.

Meanwhile, left-affiliated All India Students Association (AISA) activists staged a protest outside Delhi University's Arts Faculty against the arrest of Lal. The student activists held placards that read: "Stop attack on our teachers," "Stop curbing democratic voices" and "Release professor Lal".



Delhi University Professor Ratan Lal, who was arrested for his social media post related to Gyanvapi case, being produced at Tis Hazari Court in New Delhi on Saturday

Granting bail to Lal, Tis Hazari court Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sdihartha Malik said, "It is true that the accused did an act which was avoidable considering the sensibilities of persons around the accused and the public at large."

Continued on Page 2

Man beaten to death over suspicion of being Muslim

PNS ■ NEEMUCH

In a shocking incident, 65-year-old man Bhanwarlal Jain was found dead in Neemuch district. He was thrashed by a ruling BJP functionary over suspicion of being a Muslim.

The family members of a mentally-challenged person, whose body was found in Neemuch district days after he went missing, complained to the police saying that a video has come to light in which the victim can be seen being slapped repeatedly by a man who is asking him to reveal his identity.

The MP unit of the Congress claimed that the man seen slapping the victim in the video is a local BJP leader, and demanded action against him. The video purportedly shows the accused asking the victim whether his name is Mohammed, besides demanding his Aadhaar card before repeatedly slapping him.

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CAPSULE

9 BODIES RECOVERED FROM CAVED-IN TUNNEL

Jammu: The fears of the rescue workers, looking for survivors under the debris of an under-construction tunnel in Ramban, turned out to be true as nine dead bodies were recovered from the accident site along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Saturday. According to official sources a total number of 9 labourers were trapped under the debris after a front portion of an 'adit tunnel' caved-in late Thursday night.

SP CHIEF MEETS KCR; DISCUSSES ISSUES

New Delhi: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday met Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in the national capital and discussed various issues concerning the country. Rao is in Delhi as part of his week-long tour to attend national-level political and social programmes. Yadav met the chief minister at the latter's official residence.

Australian PM Scott concedes election defeat

Canberra: Australia's Prime Minister conceded defeat after an election on Saturday that could deliver a minority government. Scott Morrison acted quickly despite millions of votes yet to be counted because an Australian Prime Minister must attend a Tokyo summit on Tuesday with US, Japanese and Indian leaders.

"I believe it's very important that this country has certainty. I think it's very important this country can move forward," Morrison said.

"And particularly over the course of this week with the important meetings that are being held, I think it's vitally important there's a very clear understanding about the government of this country," he added.

Opposition leader Anthony Albanese will be sworn in as Prime Minister after his Labour party clinched its first electoral win since 2007.

Labour has promised more financial assistance and a robust social safety net as Australia grapples with the highest inflation since 2001 and soaring housing prices.

The party also plans to increase minimal wages, and on the foreign policy front, it proposed to establish a Pacific defence school to train neighbouring armies in response to China's potential military presence on the Solomon Islands on Australia's doorstep.

Detailed report on Page 5

Indian chess prodigy claims another win over world champion Magnus Carlsen

New Delhi: Indian Grandmaster Pragganandhaa Rameshbabu notched up his second win of the season over Magnus Carlsen in the fifth round of the Chessable Masters online rapid chess tournament, exactly three months after stunning the world champion for the first time. The 16-year-old from Chennai capitalised on a late blunder from Carlsen on Friday to pocket three crucial points to keep himself in the hunt for a knockout berth.

"I did not want to win that way," said Pragganandhaa when asked about his second triumph against the world champion.

The match was headed for a draw before the Norwegian committed a blunder in the 40th move when he misplaced a black knight during the final seconds and resigned immediately in the next move as Pragganandhaa emerged winner. The Indian drew with Harikrishna in the next round, defeated Gawain Jones before losing to David Anton Guijarro to finish the day. The victory took Pragganandhaa to 12 points, while Carlsen was at the second spot behind China's Wei Yi on the second day of the USD 150,000 tournament.

Detailed report on Page 7

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FM lists out Govt’s initiatives to give relief to common people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Announcing the fuel-related decisions, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday also listed out in detail the Government initiatives in different sectors against the backdrop of the “challenging international situation”.

“Today, the world is passing through difficult times. Even as the world is recovering from Covid-19 pandemic, the Ukraine conflict has brought in supply chain problems and shortages of various goods. This is resulting in inflation & economic distress in a lot of countries,” Sitharaman said.

WPI or wholesale price inflation touched a record high of 15.08 per cent in April on price rise across all items. Retail inflation too rose to a



near eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in that month, remaining above the RBI's inflation target for the fourth straight month.

“Even during the pandemic, our Government set a paradigm of welfare, especially with PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. This is now acknowledged and appreciated the world over,” she said, referring to a scheme to provide free foodgrains to poor to help them tide over

difficulties caused by a nationwide pandemic related lockdown.

“Despite the challenging international situation, we’ve ensured that there are no shortages/scarcity of essential goods. Even a few developed countries couldn’t escape some shortages/disruptions. We are committed to ensure that prices of essential items are kept under control,” she said.

The Finance Minister said despite rising fertilizer prices globally, the Government has protected farmers from such price hikes. “In addition to the fertilizer subsidy of Rs 1.05 lakh crore in the budget (for current fiscal), an additional amount of Rs 1.10 lakh crore is being provided to further cushion our farmers.”

She said the Prime Minister “has specifically asked

all arms of the government to work with sensitivity and give relief to the common man,” she said, adding the steps announced on Saturday were in line with that.

“We are also reducing the customs duty on raw materials & intermediaries for plastic products where our import dependence is high. This will result in reduction of cost of final products,” she said.

“Similarly we are calibrating customs duty on raw materials & intermediaries for iron & steel to reduce their prices. Import duty on some raw materials of steel will be reduced. Export duty on some steel products will be levied.” “Measures are being taken up to improve the availability of #Cement and through better logistics to reduce the cost of cement,” she added.

J&K tunnel accident: 9 more bodies recovered from caved-in tunnel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The worst fears of the rescue workers, looking for survivors under the debris of an under-construction tunnel in Ramban, turned out to be true as nine more dead bodies were recovered from the accident site along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Saturday.

According to official sources a total number of 9 labourers were trapped under the debris after a front portion of an ‘adit tunnel’ caved-in late Thursday night. Three labourers were safely rescued as they miraculously escaped the boulders falling over their heads.

During the day-long rescue operations jointly conducted by the NDRF, SDRF, civil, police, ITBP and army personnel only

one dead body was recovered on Friday. The rescue operations were hampered due to inclement weather conditions and were suspended on Friday evening. On Saturday the rescue operations were launched with the first light to look for survivors. As the day progressed the rescue teams cleared the debris and recovered eight more dead bodies.

“So far nine bodies have been recovered from the spot. Out of these nine deceased, five were from West Bengal, one from Assam, two from Nepal, and two were local. FIR has been registered for negligence,” Ramban district police superintendent Mohita Sharma told reporters at the accident site. Late Saturday evening another dead body was recovered by the rescue workers.

More than 8 lakh devotees have so far visited Char Dham

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

About eight lakh pilgrims from across the country and abroad have so far undertaken the Char Dham yatra, visiting the shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttarakhand, while lakhs more have registered for the pilgrimage, officials said on Saturday.

They said there are no slots for registration left for the month of May. People who intend to undertake the pilgrimage are required to register themselves prior to the yatra.

The doors of the Hemkund Sahib Gurdwara are opening from May 22, the officials said. To ensure seamless and proper

arrangements for pilgrims, the authorities have put a limit on the number of people who can undertake the yatra at a time, they added.

The number of pilgrims who can visit Badrinath has been fixed at 16,000 per day, Kedarnath 13,000, Gangotri 8,000, and Yamunotri and Hemkund Sahib 5,000 each.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said his government’s top priority was to ensure safety of the pilgrims. Harish Gaur, media in-charge of the Shri Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee, said the total number of pilgrims who have reached the Char Dham till Friday night stood at 7,75,842, and that the figure would cross eight lakh by Saturday.

Mob torches Assam police station after ‘custodial death’

PTI ■ NAGAO

A police station in Assam’s Nagaon district was set afire by a mob on Saturday following an alleged case of custodial death of a local resident, a top police official said.

Three of those involved in the arson were arrested and operations are on to nab the others, the official said.

The mob had set ablaze the Batadrava Police Station and several two-wheelers in the afternoon following the death of a fish trader who was allegedly detained by the police late on Friday evening when he was going to take a bus for Sivsagar. It was not clear why he was detained.

Nagaon Superintendent of Police Leena Doley said, “Some miscreants had attacked the Batadrava Police Station in the afternoon and set it ablaze.”

The family members of the fish trader of Salanabori village claimed that the police had demanded Rs 10,000 and a duck as a bribe for his



release, and his wife visited the police station with a duck in the morning.

When she returned with the money later, she learnt that her husband had been taken to Nagaon Civil Hospital. After reaching there, she found him dead, they claimed.

Alleging that the man died because of torture, villagers gheraoed the police station, allegedly assaulted on-duty police personnel and then torched the police station. Videos of the incident showed a woman sprinkling some inflammable liquid on

two-wheelers parked in front of the police station and setting them on fire.

The blaze engulfed the police station soon after and fire tenders later brought the flames under control.

The SP, who visited the spot after the incident, said the police are analysing all video footage available.

On the allegations that the police demanded a bribe to release the man, Doley said all the charges will be investigated and if anyone is found guilty, steps will be taken.

Govt not done justice to Bhat’s widow, says unhappy family

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Unhappy family members of Kashmiri pandit employee Rahul Bhat, killed by terrorists inside his office in Chadoora, Budgam, Saturday claimed the Union Territory administration has not done justice with his wife by offering Class-IV job in the school education department.

The family members accompanied by close relatives performed special prayers in Jammu on Saturday in the memory of Rahul Bhat. Sharing his angst, Bittu jee Bhat, father of Rahul Bhat Saturday said, “my son has sacrificed his life and the government has offered a class IV job to his wife”. He said she is qualified enough to take up other jobs. I am not going to allow her to go to the school education department and serve tea and clean utensils there as a class IV employee. I would rather not accept it and tell her to stay at home”.

On Wednesday, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, alongwith

Additional Director General of Police Jammu, Mukesh Singh had handed over appointment letter and ex gratia amount to the family of Rahul Bhat.

The Government had sanctioned the compassionate appointment of Meenakshi Raina W/o Late Rahul Bhat R/o Sangrampora Beerwah Budgam, under SRO-43 of 1994. She was appointed as Class-IV in the Pay level of SL 1(14800-47100) in the Government Higher Secondary School Nowabad, Jammu (School education department) on compassionate grounds under SRO-43 of 1994, read with SRO-199 of 2008 dated 04.07.2008.

A financial assistance of Rs 5 Lakh as ex-gratia relief was also handed over to the family.

On the other hand, a large number of Kashmiri pandit migrant employees also shaved off their heads during special prayers organised in the Kashmir valley to mark the 10 th day of his supreme sacrifice.

Protest marches were taken out by the employees across Kashmir valley. A sit in

dharna was also organised in the Lal Chowk area where Kashmiri migrant employees raised the one point demand of safe evacuation from Kashmir valley.

Agitated employees who shaved off their heads claimed they decided to do so in solidarity with the aggrieved family of Rahul Bhat. “We wanted to convey to the family and especially to the young daughter of Rahul, She is not alone. We are all standing by her side at this hour. We will continue to fight for justice for Rahul Bhat”.

The employees claimed, the targeted killings of Kashmiri pandits have not stopped in Kashmir valley. “We are being made cannon fodder. We will not become scapegoats. People are playing dirty politics and the blood of Kashmiri pandits is being bartered for vested interests”. The employees thundered, “we want to convey to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to deliver justice to them”.

Centre slashes fuel...

From Page 1
The TMC also said it’s not good enough as the Central Government increased price of petrol and diesel by ₹10 recently. TMC MP Saugata Roy said, “The Central Government still has the flexibility to reduce excise duty more instead of pressuring the States (to reduce VAT) as State’s finances are mostly in difficulty.”

NCP chief Sharad Pawar,

however, said, “It’s better than nothing.”

The subsidy to Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries is aimed at easing some of the burden arising from cooking gas rates rising to record levels. “This will help our mothers and sisters,” tweeted Sitharaman.

This excise duty cuts along with ₹5 cut on petrol and ₹10 reduction on diesel effected from November 4, 2021, rolls back the ₹13 per litre and ₹16

per litre increase in taxes on petrol and diesel effected between March 2020 and May 2020 to avoid passing on to consumers the sharp fall in international oil prices at that time. The excise duty hikes of 2020 had taken central taxes on petrol to their highest level of ₹32.9 per litre and that on diesel to ₹31.8 a litre.

After the latest excise cut, the incidence of central tax on petrol will come down to ₹19.9

a litre and that on diesel to ₹15.8 per litre.

Post November 2021 reduction in excise duty on petrol by ₹5 per litre and that on diesel by ₹10 a litre, 25 States and UTs had cut VAT to give further reprieve to consumers battered by record-high retail prices. However, States ruled by non-NDA parties like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had not reduced VAT.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, Fakir Chand Mutreja S/o Sh. Chand Parkash Mutreja R/o House No.63, Blk-E, Pkt-16, Sector-8, Rohini, Delhi-110085, Allottee/Purchaser/Owner of Plot No.63,Block-E, Pocket-16, Sector-8, Rohini, Delhi-110085 Vide DDA File No. F. 10(2092)83/LSB(Rohini).The original documents i.e. Demand-cum-allotment Letter, Possession Letter, Site Possession Slip, Perpetual Lease Deed & Bank Challans of the above said plot has been lost. An FIR/NCR/LR No. 422939/2022 dated 21/05/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S.Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person (s)claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9990709829 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LSB) Rohini or Director (LSB) Rohini, DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi

After Meghalaya, Arunachal’s border dispute with Assam to be resolved: Shah

PTI ■ DEOMALI/WAKRO

After solving 60 per cent of Assam’s border problems with Meghalaya amicably, similar disputes between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam are likely to be settled by this year, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

The governments of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam are working for an amicable and permanent resolution of the border issue, Shah said while addressing the golden jubilee celebration of the Ramakrishna Mission School at Narottam Nagar in Tirap district. Arunachal, which was carved out of Assam, was initially a Union territory. It became a full-fledged state in 1987. The two states share an 804.1 km long border. The boundary issue which originated during the re-organisation of the North-eastern states is now pending in

the Supreme Court.

“Almost 60 per cent border dispute between Assam and Meghalaya was resolved amicably and I am confident that the dispute between Arunachal and Assam will be settled before 2023,” said Shah who is on a two-day visit to Arunachal Pradesh from Saturday.

Assam and Meghalaya in March decided to end their five-decade-old border dispute in six of the 12 contested locations that often raised tensions between the two states.

Asserting that efforts are underway to make Northeast insurgency-free, he claimed that 9,000 militants of the region have surrendered during the last eight years of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

“The Centre is committed to bringing peace and development to the region. Youths of the Northeast no

longer carry guns and petrol bombs. They are now carrying laptops and are launching start-ups. This is the path of development that the Centre has envisaged for the region,” he said.

“Manipur, which was earlier known for bandhs and blockades for more than 200 days a year, is now witnessing a sea of change without any bandh during the last five years of BJP rule in the state,” he said.

Shah said that the insurgency in the Bodoland region of Assam was resolved through the signing of the Bodo Peace Accord.

“Surrender of militant groups in Tripura and resolving of the Bru refugee issue was undertaken by the Modi government. The Union Home Ministry has taken initiatives to bring peace to Assam’s Karbi Anglong (district),” he said.

At Cambridge...

From Page 1
“The Congress is fighting to regain India. It’s an ideological battle now -- a national ideological battle. The Deep State is chewing the Indian State, much like what happened in Pakistan,” he said.

He said the BJP, despite a sharp drop in employment, continues to be in power in India because of “polarisation and the total domination of the media”.

He also spoke about private sector monopoly saying it’s very dangerous for one company to control all airports, all ports, all the infrastructure. “Private sector monopoly never existed in this form. It has never existed with such a massive concentration of power and capital,” he said.

It’s not arrogance, but...

From Page 1
“This is the state of the party and a failed, part-time politician of the party talks about BJP sprinkling kerosene all over the country,” he asserted.

The BJP leader said it is the Congress which is “carrying kerosene since 1984 riots”.

On Rahul drawing a parallel between the Russia-Ukraine crisis and India-China face-off in Ladakh, the BJP spokesperson said, “Rahul Gandhi’s situation in politics is like someone who wants to appear in the PhD exam but does not like books and has not even passed nursery.”

“Rahul Gandhi does not even know the A, B, C, D of foreign affairs. But he comments non-stop. His

comment comparing Ukraine’s situation with Ladakh proves that he is not aware of either India’s strength or foreign affairs,” the spokesperson said remembering the sacrifice of Galwan hero Colonel Santosh Babu.

Bhatia said it is Indian army that pushed back Chinese army that considers itself “most powerful”. “Rahul also said India’s situation is like Pakistan. We know that you are not fond of reading. But I warn you Rahul, do not compare India with terror-country Pakistan,” Bhatia said.

The BJP also countered the Congress leader by recalling the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi and gagging of media, the fourth pillar of democracy.

Out on bail, Chautala convicted...

From Page 1
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had lodged the case in 2005, and a charge sheet was filed in March 26, 2010, accusing Chautala of amassing assets worth Rs 6.09 crore, much disproportionate to his legitimate income, between 1993 and 2006. In January 2021, a Delhi court framed money laundering charges against Chautala in connection with the disproportionate assets case. Chautala and his son Ajay were also sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment after they were found guilty of corruption in a teacher recruitment scam in 2013. Chautala, now 87 years old, was released from jail in July 2021.

DU Professor...

From Page 1
However, the post, though reprehensible, does not indicate an attempt to promote hatred between communities.”

The court observed that the police’s anxiety to maintain peace and order leading to Lal’s arrest could be understood, but “the court has to employ higher standards while considering the need to send a person to custody.” It rejected the Delhi Police request for 14 days for judicial custody to further investigate the matter as it has received six complaints against him so far. Calling the post a failed attempt at satire, the court said, “The feeling of hurt felt by an individual cannot represent the entire group or community and any such complaint regarding hurt feelings has to be seen in its context considering the entire spectrum of facts/circumstances.”

Lal was arrested under Indian Penal Code sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) and 295A (deliberate act to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion) by the Delhi Police.

Man beaten...

From Page 1
Bhawarlal Jain, a resident of Sarsi village of Ratlam district, had gone missing on May 15 after visiting a religious programme in Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, and was found dead on Friday morning on Rampura Road under the jurisdiction of Manasa police station, some 38 km from the district headquarters, police said.

“But after performing the last rites of the deceased, his family members came to know about the purported video and informed the police about it,” KL Dangi, in-charge of Manasa police station, said.

After the video surfaced, the police registered a case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 302 (murder) and 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and launched a probe.

As per the preliminary investigation, the man seen in the video assaulting the mentally-challenged was identified as Dinesh Kushwaha, a resident of Manasa, he said. The man who assaulted the victim and the one who shot the video are absconding, he said. “The video was probably shot on May 19, but further investigation is underway,” Dangi added.

Eye on national role, TRS chief KCR meets Akhilesh, Kejriwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Renewing his aspirations for a prominent role in national politics and in view of the impending Presidential elections, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday met Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal here as part of his hectic itinerary that also includes visits to Chandigarh, Bengaluru and Kolkata for meeting former Prime Minister HD Devegowda besides Galwan martyrs and famers.

The term of incumbent President Ram Nath Kovind ends on July and election is expected to be held next month. Sources said the fresh galvanisation seems to focus towards that.

Rao and Yadav had lunch and a long discussion for about two hours and later in the evening he met his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal. Both the CMs visited a mohalla clinic and a government school in Delhi's South Moti Bagh.

Rao, who reached Delhi on Friday, will over the next two weeks meet Opposition leaders and travel across the country. The TRS, which so far had been supporting the government, has belatedly joined the Opposition space after the BJP made deep political inroads in Telangana.

Rao is apparently clear about the formation of an anti-BJP front but without the Congress with the first litmus test being the presidential election. Almost six months ago, the TRS chief made his first move by talking to his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu CM



MK Stalin followed by a meeting with Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray at a time when Banerjee had asserted that there was no existence of a Congress-led UPA.

Political experts, however, remarked that the non-BJP or non-Congress front may have difficulties to become a reality as besides KCR, TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and Kejriwal after their big wins in assembly elections have been making attempts to position themselves on the national stage as well.

On Sunday, KCR will reach

Chandigarh to distribute Rs 3 lakh to the family of each of the 600 farmers who lost their lives during the farmers' agitation against the now-repealed Central agri laws.

Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will be present at the ceremony. On May 26, Rao will meet former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Bengaluru, and then will also visit Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra to meet activist Anna Hazare.

During the month end, KCR will visit West Bengal and Bihar to meet the families of the soldiers who died in the Galwan Valley clashes. He will extend assistance to those families, a release by the state government said. Sources, however, added that the Telangana CM could also line up meetings with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD leaders separately.

China's Indo-Pacific posturing, LCA face-off to come up in Quad summit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

China's aggressive posturing in the Indo-Pacific and the ongoing stand-offs at the border in Ladakh will come up in the Quad summit in Tokyo on May 24. Besides attending this high-profile event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also hold bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden and Japanese and Australian Prime Ministers. The summit takes place in the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

Giving details of the Prime Minister's programme in Tokyo, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said here on Saturday "Indo-Pacific has challenges and opportunities. When Quad leaders speak, both challenges and opportunities will be talked about." This was in response to queries about China's stance and it building the second bridge across the

Pangong Tso(lake)in Eastern Ladakh.

It will be the second Quad summit in person with Biden hosting the first meet in Washington last year. Modi is travelling to Tokyo to attend the Quad conclave at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida.

As regards bilateral meeting between India and Japanese prime ministers, Kwatra said the strategic and global relations between the two countries have seen great momentum. In Tokyo, two Prime Ministers will continue their discussion on deepening bilateral economic cooperation including trade and investment, clean energy, and cooperation in northeast.

On meeting with the Australian Prime Minister, he said elections are being held there on Saturday. The next Australian Prime Minister is likely to attend the Quad



Summit. It is expected that Modi will meet the new Australian leader in Tokyo, the Foreign Secretary said.

In their interaction, the two leaders will review India-Australia comprehensive strategic partnership and exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest. The last bilat-

eral meeting was held virtual-

ly in March this year, he said. Modi will have a bilateral meeting with Biden on May 24. The India-US relationship is multi-faceted, has acquired momentum, depth and is diversified, Kwatra said. Modi will also address Indian community there and will meet Japanese business leaders.

Dominican Govt drops illegal entry charges against Choksi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a setback to Indian agencies seeking repatriation of Mehul Choksi, the Dominican Government on Saturday dropped charges of illegal entry against the fugitive diamond-taire. Reports said the prosecution of Dominica decided to withdraw/discontinue the legal proceedings in the illegal entry case against Choksi.

"Choksi is pleased that the Dominican Government has today dropped all charges against him for unlawful entry in May 2021. By doing so they now recognise that there was never any case against him. Choksi was forcibly removed from Antigua against his will by agents of the Indian State, viciously assaulted, and taken to Dominica by boat, where he was again unlawfully handed over to authorities for an offence he never committed. Choksi's legal team continue to pursue all avenues for justice to redress the human rights vio-



lations committed against him. Choksi hopes that those responsible for his kidnapping from Antigua on 23 May, 2021 will be brought to justice," according to a statement by Choksi's spokesperson.

On May 17, Director of Public Prosecutions (AG) in a reply filed before the Magistrate Court informed that 'Mehul Chinubhai Choksi' was charged, for that he, on the 24th day of May 2021 at Toucarie Bay, Toucarie in the Parish of St John, in the Commonwealth of Dominica, did enter illegally into the Commonwealth of Dominica at a place not approved as a point of entry."

The Director of Prosecutions further stated

before the court that "in accordance with the provisions of Section 72(2) (c) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I do hereby discontinue the above-mentioned proceedings against the said, Mehul Chinubhai Choksi." The move comes as a setback for Indian agencies that were seeking his repatriation to face trial in the PNB loan fraud case.

Fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi who had gone missing from Antigua on 23 May, 2021, was soon caught in Dominica. He was charged with illegal entry by the police in Dominica.

The 62-year-old fugitive diamond businessman is wanted in India in connection with the Rs 13,500-crore loan fraud in the Punjab National Bank (PNB). Choksi had taken citizenship in Antigua and Barbuda in 2017 and fled India in the first week of January 2018 after the PNB scam came to light.

Pradhan confers degrees at XXVIIth convocation at NEHU



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday attended the XXVII Convocation of the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Meghalaya as the chief guest and conferred degrees to the passing out students for 2020 and 2021 at the ceremony held in the Shillong campus.

Pradhan congratulated all the passing out students and extended his best wishes for their bright future ahead. He urged them to bring in the change in the society by participating in the knowledge-based revolution to become job providers.

Our universities are melting pot of ideas, innovation and aspirations and universities should be a breeding ground for research—research for welfare of society & mankind and for furthering ease-of-living, he added. Pradhan complimented Chief Minister Conrad Sangma for giving special focus on early childhood care and education in the state of Meghalaya in line with the NEP 2020. This will ensure that our children live up to their full potential.

Centre announces fresh composition of standing committee of Inter-State Council

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/AGENCIES

The Central Government has announced the fresh composition of the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council that includes 13 members, including its Chairman Amit Shah.

Ministry of Home mentions the move in its gazette notification issued on Friday pointing out that the step was taken in supersession of the Inter-State Council Secretariat's notification dated August 9, 2019, and with the approval of the Prime Minister.

Besides Shah, the committee comprises four other Ministers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet and eight Chief Ministers.

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra



Singh Shekhawat are among the Union Cabinet Ministers as members of the committee.

Chief Minister Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Chief Minister Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister Bihar Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister Gujarat Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister Odisha Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister Punjab Bhagwant Mann, Chief Minister Uttar

Pradesh Yogi Adityanath are other members of the committee.

The Standing Committee will have continuous consultation on the matters for consideration of the Council. It processes all matters pertaining to Centre-State Relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council.

The committee also monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council and considers any other matter referred to it by the Chairman or Council.

The Standing Committee may, if necessary, invite experts and persons eminent in specific fields to have the benefit of their views while deliberating upon the related subjects.

CBI raids over 10 locations in multiple cities in NSE co-location scam case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Saturday conducted a coordinated search operation at over 10 locations in multiple cities in connection with the NSE co-location scam case.

The searches were conducted at more than 12 premises in Mumbai, Gandhinagar, Delhi, Noida, Gurugram and Kolkata, among other cities, officials said.

The agency has filed a chargesheet against former National Stock Exchange (NSE) CEO and MD Chitra Ramkrishna and Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian in the case.

The probe has so far established that from 2010 to 2015, when Ramkrishna was managing the affairs of the NSE, OPG

Securities, one of the accused in the FIR, had connected to the secondary POP server on 670 trading days in the "Futures and Options" segment, officials said.

The CBI is probing allegations of preferential access granted to certain brokers by NSE officials and undue gains made out of it during the tenure of Ramkrishna and Subramanian.

Ramkrishna, who succeeded former CEO Ravi Narain in 2013, had appointed Subramanian as her advisor, who was later elevated as the Group Operating Officer (GOO) with a hefty salary of Rs 4.21 crore annually.

Subramanian's controversial appointment and subsequent elevation, besides crucial decisions, were guided by an unidentified personnel, who



Ramkrishna claimed was a formless mysterious "yogi" (mystic) dwelling in the Himalayas, a probe into her e-mail exchanges during a SEBI-ordered audit had revealed.

The CBI had booked stock broker Sanjay Gupta, the owner and promoter of Delhi-based OPG Securities Private Limited, in 2018 for allegedly making gains by getting early access to the stock market trading sys-

tem, they said.

The agency is also probing unidentified officials of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), NSE, Mumbai and other unidentified persons in connection with the case. "It was alleged that the owner and promoter of the said private company abused the server architecture of the NSE in a conspiracy with unidentified officials of the NSE," the CBI has alleged in the FIR.

The FIR also alleged that unidentified officials of NSE, Mumbai had provided unfair access to the said accused company using the co-location facility during the period 2010-2012 that enabled it to log in first to the exchange server of the stock exchange that helped to get the data before any other broker in the market.

Cong's leader Adhir says his twitter account hacked, files complaint

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Saturday claimed that his Twitter account was hacked and filed a police complaint with South Avenue Police Station, New Delhi.

On the occasion of the death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, Chowdhury quoted the former PM's remark "when a big tree falls, the ground shakes" in the aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent anti-Sikh riots. The Congress leader later deleted his tweet.

Chowdhury said, "The tweet against my name has nothing to do with my own observation. A malicious campaign is propagated by those forces inimical to me," he

claimed.

"With all my conviction, with humility at my command, I'm firmly stating that the tweet being quoted against my name is nothing but a malicious campaign being propagated by some unscrupulous elements, by some heinous forces who are inimical to me and my party," Chowdhury, who is also Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha stated in another tweet.

He posted another tweet with a quote from Rajiv Gandhi, "Development is not about factories, dams and roads. Development is about the people. The goal is material culture and fulfilment for the people. The human factor is of supreme value in development".

The party did not react to the controversy till late evening.

12 nations report 150 monkeypox cases, India on wait and watch

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With at least 12 countries reporting 150 Monkeypox cases so far, the Government has decided to adopt a wait and watch policy besides sounding alert on the airports and seaports.

Sources said that the decision will also be firmed up once the WHO issues a guideline in the matter which will give a clear picture about the severity of the situation.

The Centre has already issued an alert to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and asked them to keep a close watch on the situation evolving in relation to the monkeypox cases abroad.

Doctors said that one should not let their guard down as there is no need to

panic. We need to keep a surveillance on how it is evolving, and how many people are getting affected. Fortunately, it is not as severe as smallpox," said Dr Jugal Kishore, head of the Community Department, Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi.

He said that the WHO may issue guidelines in this regard soon on how fast the monkeypox is spreading. There is a need to keep a watch on borders and international travelers and ensure that those having rash-like symptoms or reporting fever are kept in quarantine as per protocol.

Dr Kishore said that the virus can spread through touching or using clothes or towels of someone who is infected; touching monkeypox skin blisters; coughs or sneezing. Hence, health hygiene is a must. Also, those venturing in wildlife should stop doing so for some time, he added.

Telangana, TN confirm cases of BA.4 Omicron variant, Centre asks to share details regularly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With two States—Telangana and now Tamil Nadu—indicating reports of confirmed cases of the BA.4 Omicron variant, the Centre is keeping a constant watch on their status and asked the States to share the details of the patients regularly to it.

Sources in the Union Health Ministry said that a team will soon be sent to the two States if required to investigate into their history as well as to consult the authorities for further steps to be taken.

On Saturday, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian had said that initial reports from a whole genome sequencing lab have indicated the possibility of a similar variant among one of the patients in the state.

The patient, a 19-year-old resident of a gated community in Navalur in Chennai who tested positive on May 9, has recovered from the viral infection. But her mother who was also positive for

the viral infection during the same time he was carrying the BA. 2 variant. Neither of them had a travel history.

Earlier this month, scientists said two Omicron sub-lineages -- BA.4 and BA.5 -- were threatening to trigger a new wave of Covid-19 infections in South Africa, but there is no evidence to show that these variants can trigger more complications and death.

The BA.4 variant was first detected in a specimen collected in Limpopo, South Africa, on January 10 and has since been detected in all South African provinces.

On May 4, the teenager and her 45-year-old mother who had a flu-like illness gave their samples for testing at a private lab. They tested positive for the viral infection. "The patients self-isolated themselves at home and recovered in three days. They resumed work in a week," said health secretary J Radhakrishnan.

Two other family members -- the

teen's father and grandmother -- did not have symptoms. While the grandmother has taken one dose of the vaccine, others have taken two doses of the vaccine.

"We are awaiting confirmation at the national level by NCDC. Two members of a family usually carry the same variant if they are affected at the same time. In this case we think the source of infection for mother and daughter could be different," Radhakrishnan said.

According to reports, Telangana has reported India's first case of Omicron subvariant BA.4, detected through a genomic surveillance program. "The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) has confirmed the first case of the BA.4 Omicron variant in India has been reported from Hyderabad," according to a news agency.

The BA.4 and BA.5 variants of Omicron have been detected during the fifth Covid-19 wave in South Africa and have also been reported in the US and Europe

8th Int Day of Yoga led by Modi to be held at Mysuru on June 21

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the eighth International Day of Yoga (IDY) will be held on June 21 this year at Mysuru in Karnataka. This year, as the nation celebrates Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to mark 75th year of Independence, the Union Ministry of Ayush has plans to observe IDY at 75 iconic sites also across the country.

This year, the IDY will be focused on Branding India on the global stage, said sources adding that Union Ayush Ministry has already started propagating the benefits of using WHO mYoga

App, Namastey App, Y-break App, besides hosting photo contests, quiz contests, discussions on the MyGov platform.

The sources said that the Ministry has written to Chief Secretary of Karnataka P Ravikumar regarding the decision to hold the D-Day at Mysuru and directed him to ensure arrangements for successful organisation of the main event of IDY-2022. So far, the IDY has been held at Dehradun, Lucknow among others.

Various stakeholders, including prominent sports celebrities, foreign diplomats, and Yoga gurus will participate at the D-Day, the sources said.

The Centre has already

launched the Yoga Mahotsav 2022-- a 100-day countdown for the 8th International Day of Yoga. The 100-day campaign is presently being organised in 100 cities and 100 organizations till June 21 across the globe.

For instance, a large yoga programme was held in Singapore on May 18, organized by Pragma Yoga and Wellness with Morarij Desai National Institute of Yoga, under Ayush Ministry. As a countdown programme, 75th countdown day and 50th countdown day were observed at the Red Fort, Delhi, and Sivadol, Assam.

Other programmes in the 100-day celebrations include yoga programmes, yoga

demonstrations, workshops, seminars not only in India but across the globe.

Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ayush had recently pointed out that "the worldwide acceptance of Yoga is a matter of pride for our country, as yoga is an integral part of our cultural and spiritual heritage".

IDY, at the initiative of PM Modi, the United Nations General Assembly took a historical decision in 2014 to declare June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The ministry of Ayush is the nodal ministry for observation and is focused on a Mass Yoga demonstration based on Common Yoga Protocol (CYP).

Crisis-hit Lanka lifts state of emergency



PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government lifted the state of emergency from Saturday, nearly two weeks after it was imposed across the island nation as it faced unprecedented economic and anti-government protests. Embattled Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had declared a state of emer-

gency with effect from May 6 midnight, the second time in just over a month amidst growing countrywide anti-government protests over the economic crisis. The Presidential Secretariat stated that state of emergency has been lifted with effect from Friday midnight, Hiru News reported. The move was taken with improvement of the law and order situation in

island nation. The state of emergency gave police and security forces sweeping power to arbitrarily arrest and detain people. The president's decision to declare emergency had come amidst weeks of protests demanding his resignation and the government, blaming powerful Rajapaksa clan for mishandling the island nation's economy, already hit by pan-

demic. Nine people were killed and over 200 injured in clashes between pro- and anti-government protesters. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from Britain in 1948.

The crisis is caused in part by a lack of foreign currency, which has meant that the country cannot afford to pay for imports of staple foods and fuel, leading to acute shortages and very high prices.

An inflation rate spiralling towards 40 per cent, shortages of food, fuel and medicines and rolling power blackouts have led to nationwide protests and a plunging currency, with government short of foreign currency reserves it needed to pay for imports.

New York-based ratings agency Fitch has downgraded debt-ridden Sri Lanka's sovereign rating to "restricted default" after country defaulted on making international sovereign bond payments. On April 12, Fitch had downgraded Sri Lanka to 'C'.

Lanka's CID interrogates top police officer in connection with violence on May 9

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A top Sri Lankan police officer was interrogated by the Criminal Investigation Department on Saturday over his alleged actions that triggered violent clashes between anti- and pro-government protesters in the country earlier this month that killed at least 10 people and injured over 200 others.

On May 9, violence erupted in Sri Lanka after supporters of former prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa attacked peaceful anti-government protesters demanding his ouster over the country's worst economic crisis that led to acute shortages of staple food, fuel and power.

Earlier this week, Galle district MP Ramesh Pathirana

informed the Parliament that Senior Police DIG in-charge of the Western Province Deshabandu Tennakoon had informed President Gotabaya Rajapaksa that Inspector General of Police Chandana D.

Wickramaratne had instructed him not to block the mob heading to Galle Face to disrupt the anti-government protesters, online portal Colombo Gazette reported.

Pathirana added that the President demanded action be taken to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control.

Following the President's orders, police rushed to the spot and fired tear gas and water cannons on the mob, by which time scores were injured and at least 10 people were dead, according to Colombo

Gazette. Members of CID interrogated Wickremaratna on Saturday, officials said. Last week, Sri Lanka's CID quizzed three members of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group over their alleged involvement in the clashes.

Two of their colleagues who were arrested previously have been remanded in custody till May 25. On Friday, Namal Rajapaksa, a former minister and the son of former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was also summoned and his statement has been recorded.

Members of the ruling coalition government blamed Opposition party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna for instigating the violence on May 9, which was vehemently denied by the Marxist party. The mob

destroyed several tents and other structures erected at Galle Face and also attacked some of the demonstrators. The violence saw arson attacks on homes of several politicians, including ancestral home of Rajapaksas in Hambantota.

Video footage showed the entire house of Mahinda Rajapaksa and his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Medamulana in Hambantota city was burning. The properties of some 78 government parliamentarians faced arson in the ensuing attacks.

Sri Lanka has been witnessing large-scale protests against the government's handling of the debt-ridden economy - the worst-ever economic crisis in the country's history.

Russia attacks Ukraine's eastern cities



AP ■ LIVIV

Russian forces on Friday continued attacking the cities of Lysychansk and Severodonetsk in Ukraine's eastern region of Luhansk to try to cut the area off from the rest of Ukraine, the region's governor said.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai told The Associated Press Russian forces were focused on the Lysychansk-Bakhmut highway, which he said is the only road for evacuating people and delivering humanitarian supplies. "The road is extremely important because it's the only connection

to other regions of the country," he said via email. "The Russians are trying to cut us off from it, to encircle the Luhansk region." Russian forces are constantly shelling the road from multiple directions, but Ukrainian armoured transports are still able to get through, Haidai added.

One of Friday's attacks was on a school in Severodonetsk sheltering more than 200 people, many of them children. Three adults were killed, Haidai said on Telegram. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Friday, "the liberation of the Luhansk People's Republic is nearing completion." (AP)

Russia claims to capture Mariupol

AP ■ POKROVSK (UKRAINE)

In what would be its biggest victory yet in the war with Ukraine, Russia claimed to have captured Mariupol after a nearly three-month siege that reduced much of the strategic port city to a smoking ruin, with over 20,000 civilians feared dead.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to President Vladimir Putin the "complete liberation" of the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol — the last stronghold of Ukrainian resistance — and the city as a whole, spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Friday.

There was no immediate confirmation from Ukraine. Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti quoted the ministry as saying a total of 2,439 Ukrainian fighters who had been holed up at the steelworks had surrendered since Monday, including over 500 on Friday.

As they surrendered, the troops were taken prisoner by the Russians, and at least some were taken to a former penal colony.

Oz PM Scott Morrison concedes election defeat

AP ■ CANBERRA (AUSTRALIA)

Australia's prime minister conceded defeat after an election on Saturday that could deliver a minority government.

Scott Morrison acted quickly despite millions of votes yet to be counted because an Australian prime minister must attend a Tokyo summit on Tuesday with US, Japanese and Indian leaders.

"I believe it's very important that this country has certainty, I think it's very important this country can move forward," Morrison said.

"And particularly over the course of this week with the important meetings that are being held, I think it's vitally important there's a very clear understanding about the government of this country," he added.

Opposition leader Anthony Albanese will be sworn in as prime minister after his Labour party clinched its first electoral win since 2007.

Labour has promised more financial assistance and a robust social safety net as Australia grapples with the highest inflation since 2001 and

soaring housing prices. The party also plans to increase minimal wages, and on the foreign policy front, it proposed to establish a Pacific defence school to train neighbouring armies in response to China's potential military presence on the Solomon Islands on Australia's doorstep.

It also wants to tackle climate change with a more ambitious 43 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Morrison's Liberal party-led coalition was seeking a fourth three-year term.

It holds the narrowest of majorities — 76 seats in the 151-member House of Representatives, where parties need a majority to form a government.

In early counting on Saturday, the coalition was on track to win 38 seats, Labour 71, seven were unaligned lawmakers and 23 were too close to call.

Minor parties and independents appeared to be taking votes from the major parties, which increases the likelihood of a hung parliament and a minority government. Australia's most recent hung parliaments



were from 2010-13, and during World War II. A record proportion of postal votes because of the pandemic, which won't be added to the count until Sunday, adds to the uncertainty in early counting.

As well as campaigning against Labour, Morrison's conservative Liberals fought off a new challenge from so-called teal independent candidates to key government lawmakers' reelection in party strongholds.

At least four Liberal lawmakers appeared to have lost their seats to teal independents including Liberal Party deputy leader Josh Frydenberg, who was considered Morrison's most likely successor.

US Prez, South Korean leader to consult on how to check NKorea

AP ■ SEOUL

President Joe Biden is devoting his Saturday to cementing ties with South Korea and its new leader Yoon Suk Yeol as the two sides consult on how best to check the nuclear threat from North Korea at a time when there's little hope of real diplomacy on the matter.

The division of the Korean peninsula after World War II has led to two radically different nations. In South Korea, Biden is touring factories for computer chips and next-generation autos in a democracy and engaging in talks for greater cooperation. But in the North, there is a deadly coronavirus outbreak in a largely unvaccinated autocracy that can best command the world's attention by flexing its nuclear capabilities.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One as Biden made his way to South Korea, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. Has coordinated with Seoul and Tokyo on how they'll respond should the North conduct a nuclear test or missile strike while Biden is in region or soon after. Sullivan also spoke with his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi earlier in the week and urged Beijing to use its influence to persuade the North to cease the tests.

Ex-Pakistan Minister Shireen beaten in police custody

Islamabad/Lahore: Pakistan's ex-human rights minister Shireen Mazari, who has been criticising the powerful Army after Imran Khan was ousted as prime minister last month, was "beaten" and taken away by the police, her daughter said on Saturday.

Mazari's arrest by anti-corruption officials triggered a political storm but it was quickly doused with intervention of Pakistan's Punjab province CM Hamza Shehbaz who ordered her release from police custody. Hamza also ordered an inquiry against those police officials involved in 59-year-old Mazari's arrest. PTI

Biden signs \$40B for Ukraine assistance during Asia trip

AP ■ SEOUL

President Biden on Saturday signed legislation to support Ukraine with another USD 40 billion in U.S. Assistance as the Russian invasion approaches its fourth month.

The legislation, which was passed by Congress with bipartisan support, deepens the U.S. Commitment to Ukraine at a time of uncertainty about the war's future. Ukraine has successfully defended Kyiv, and Russia has refocused its offensive on the country's east, but American officials warn of the potential for a prolonged conflict. The funding is intended to



support Ukraine through September, and it dwarfs an earlier emergency measure that provided USD13.6 billion. The new legislation will provide USD20 billion in military assistance, ensuring a steady stream of advanced weapons that have been used to blunt Russia's

advances. There's also USD8 billion in general economic support, USD5 billion to address global food shortages that could result from the collapse of Ukrainian agriculture and more than USD1 billion to help refugees.

Biden signed measure under unusual circumstances. Because he's in middle of a trip to Asia, a U.S. Official brought a copy of bill on a commercial flight so president could sign it, according to a White House official. The logistics reflect a sense of urgency around continuing U.S. Support for Ukraine, but also overlapping international challenges

Palestinian teen shot in Israeli raid in occupied West Bank

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli troops shot and killed a 17-year-old Palestinian militant as fighting erupted when soldiers entered a volatile town in the occupied West Bank early Saturday, the Palestinian health ministry and local media said.

The shooting, which Israel said came during a gunbattle with local militants, came at a time of intensified Israeli military activity in the northern West Bank town of Jenin in recent months.

The ministry identified the dead teen as Amjad al-Fayyed. It said another Palestinian — an 18-year-old — was in critical condition after being wounded by Israeli gunfire.

Later Saturday, the militant group Islamic Jihad said al-Fayyed was a member of its armed wing. Local media reported that clashes erupted

Singaporians lose SGD 70.8mn to scammers this year, says police

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

People in Singapore have lost at least SGD 70.8 million this year to scammers impersonating business partners or employees via spoofed emails, the Singapore Police Force said on Saturday.

At least 149 victims have fallen prey since January to such scams where scammers used hacked or spoofed email accounts to pose as colleagues, business partners or suppliers.

In a press release, it said that Singaporians have lost at least SGD 70.8 million (USD 51.3 million) this year to scammers impersonating business partners or employees via spoofed emails. The spoofed email addresses often included slight misspellings or replacement of letters, which may

not be obvious at first glance, said the police.

The email would inform the victims that there was a change in their companies' bank account number and ask them to transfer payments to another bank account, Channel News Asia cited the police as saying.

The victims would believe that they had received a genuine email and transfer money to the new bank account. In some cases, the victims were asked to assist their supervisor to purchase gift cards and provide the activation keys.

The victims would only find out that they had fallen prey to the scam when they clarified with their supplier or supervisor and realised that they did not make any request or receive any payment, said the police.

US sees risk of Covid supply rationing without more funds

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The White House is planning for "dire" contingencies that could include rationing supplies of vaccines and treatments this fall if Congress doesn't approve more money for fighting COVID-19.

In public comments and private meetings on Capitol Hill, Dr Ashish Jha, the White House coronavirus coordinator, has painted a dark picture in which the US could be forced to cede many of the advances made against the coronavirus over the last two years and even the most vulnerable could face supply shortages.

Biden administration officials have been warning for weeks that the country has spent nearly all the money in the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan that was dedicated directly to COVID-19 response.

A small pool of money remains, and the administration faces critical decisions about how to spend it. That means tough decisions, like weighing whether to use it to secure the next generation of vaccines to protect the highest risk populations or giving priority to a supply of highly effective therapies that dramatically reduce the risks of severe illness and death.

That decision may be made in the coming week, according to the administration, as the White House faces



imminent deadlines to begin placing orders for vaccines and treatments before other nations jump ahead of the US in accessing supply.

Jha has warned that without more money, vaccines will be harder to come by, tests will once again be scarce, and the therapeutics that are helping the country weather the current omicron-driven surge in cases without a commensurate increase in deaths could be sold overseas before Americans can access them.

"I think we would see a lot of unnecessary loss of life if that were to happen," Jha said this past week. "But we're looking at all the scenarios and planning for all of them."

He said the administration was "getting much more into the scenario-planning business to make sure that we know what may be ahead of us so we can plan for it and obviously also lay those out in front of Congress".

Jha, who declined to put a specific projection on potential loss of life, has become the face of the Biden administration's efforts to persuade Congress to approve an additional \$22.5 billion for COVID-19 response.

Pennsylvania's Senate GOP primary too close to call, recount likely

AP ■ HARRISBURG (US)

Pennsylvania's Republican primary for an open US Senate seat is too close to call and is likely headed for a statewide recount to decide the winner of the contest between heart surgeon-turned-TV celebrity Dr. Mehmet Oz and former hedge fund CEO David McCormick.

A recount would mean that the outcome of the race might not be known until June 8, the deadline for counties to report their results to the state.

Oz, who was endorsed by former President Donald Trump, led McCormick by 1,079 votes, or 0.08 percentage points, out of 1,340,248 ballots counted as of 5 pm Friday.

The race is close enough to trigger Pennsylvania's automatic recount law, with the separation between the candidates inside the law's 0.5 per cent margin. The Associated Press will not declare a winner in the race until the likely recount is complete.

Both campaigns have hired Washington-based lawyers to lead their recount efforts, and both have hired Philadelphia-based campaign strategists who helped lead the operation to observe vote-counting on Election Day for Donald Trump's presidential

campaign in 2020. The two campaigns combined already had hundreds of lawyers and volunteers fanned out around the presidential battleground state as election workers and election boards toiled through the remaining ballots.

McCormick's lead recount lawyer is Chuck Cooper, a veteran Washington lawyer and a go-to attorney for prominent conservative figures.

He represented then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe and former national security adviser John Bolton in a dispute over the publication of his book. He recently successfully argued a campaign finance case on behalf of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Oz's lead recount lawyer is Megan Newton, who was general counsel for Jeb Bush's unsuccessful 2016 presidential campaign and National Republican Senatorial Committee, and has represented Trump's campaign and Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign.

The winner will face Democratic Lt. Gov. John Fetterman in November's midterm elections in what Democrats see as their best opportunity to pick up a seat in the closely divided Senate.

India, Japan to provide relief as extreme food shortage looms

Colombo: India and Japan will provide food relief supplies worth millions of dollars to Sri Lanka which is grappling with its worst economic crisis, leading to nationwide protests over the government's mismanagement.

The Indian High Commission said here on Friday that an Indian ship laden with urgent relief supplies like rice, medicines and milk powder for the people of crisis-hit Sri Lanka is scheduled to reach Colombo on Sunday.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin flagged off the ship laden with relief supplies, the first to be dispatched to Sri Lanka, from Chennai on Wednesday.

The first consignment comprises 9,000 metric tonne (MT) of rice, 200 MT milk powder and 24 MT life-saving medicines with a combined value of Rs 45 crore.

"People of #India, standing by their brethren in #SriLanka. Rice, milk powder and medicines worth more than SLR 2 billion (USD 5.6 million) is scheduled to reach #Colombo on Sunday," the Indian mission tweeted.

Chief Minister Stalin flagged off the cargo carrying the relief, from the Chennai



Port, in the presence of his cabinet colleagues and senior officials.

Japan has also announced to provide USD 1.5 million through a World Food Programme (WFP) programme for essential food rations and school meal programme.

"We are pleased to announce that the Government of Japan will grant 1.5 million dollars emergency assistance through WFP to provide three months' essential food supplies, including fortified rice, dhal and oil, for approximately 15,000 urban and rural people

and 380,000 school children across the island," Charge d' Affaires ad interim of Japan to Sri Lanka Katsuki Kotaro said.

"We hope that this humanitarian assistance will help improve food access and nutrition for the people of Sri Lanka amidst the economic crisis," Kotaro added.

Using the contribution, the WFP will procure rice for the daily free school meals and also distribute ration packs comprising essential commodities to vulnerable households.

"Getting the right nutrition to those who need it the most

will help mitigate the long-term effects of today's economic downturn," said Abdur Rahim Siddiqui, WFP Representative and Country Director in Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe announced this week that Sri Lanka would be facing a severe food shortage.

He advocated the use of unused state land for cultivation as a mitigation measure.

Sri Lanka is going through the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948. A crippling shortage of foreign reserves has led to long queues for fuel, cooking gas and other essentials while power cuts and soaring food prices heaped misery on the people.

The economic crisis has also triggered a political crisis in Sri Lanka and a demand for the resignation of the powerful Rajapaksas.

India has said that as an eternal and reliable friend of Sri Lanka, New Delhi is fully supportive of the island nation's democracy, stability and economic recovery.

CRISIS HIT SRI LANKA

India supplies another 40K metric tonnes of diesel

Colombo: India on Saturday provided another 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Sri Lanka under the credit line facility to the island nation which is grappling with its worst economic crisis.

Last month, India extended an additional USD 500 million credit line to help Sri Lanka import fuel as the country has been struggling to pay for imports after its foreign exchange reserves plummeted sharply in recent times, causing a devaluation of its currency and spiralling

inflation. "Pumping diesel into #SriLanka!! Another 40,000 MT consignment of diesel under the credit line from #India reached #Colombo today," India's High Commission said on Twitter.

On Friday, the mission here said that an Indian ship laden with urgent relief supplies like rice, medicines and milk powder for the people of crisis-hit Sri Lanka is scheduled to reach Colombo on Sunday.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin flagged off the ship laden with relief sup-



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"People of #India, standing by their brethren in #SriLanka. Rice, milk powder and medicines worth more than SLR 2 billion (USD 5.6 million) is scheduled to reach #Colombo on Sunday," the Indian mission tweeted.

Chief Minister Stalin flagged off the cargo carrying the relief, from the Chennai Port, in the presence of his cabinet colleagues and senior officials.

The assistance from peo-

ple of India complements multi-pronged efforts undertaken by the Government of India by standing with their brethren in Sri Lanka, the High Commission said in a press release on Friday.

Several private and social organisations from India have sent assistance to Sri Lanka to meet various urgent requirements. This outpouring of support for Sri Lanka among common Indians is apart from the economic assistance by Government of India which has been to the tune of around USD 3.5 billion since January this year. In addition, medicines, dry rations etc have also been sent by Government of India on grant basis, the statement said.

PTI

Paytm forms joint venture general insurance firm



New Delhi: Digital financial services firm One97 Communications, which operates under Paytm brand, on Saturday said it has formed a joint venture general insurance company in which it has committed to invest Rs 950 crore over a period of 10 years.

The proposal to set up joint venture firm Paytm General Insurance Limited (PGIL) was approved by the board on May 20, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Initially, One97 Communications (OCL) will hold a 49 per cent stake in PGIL while the rest of the 51 per cent stake is to be owned by OCL's managing director Vijay Shekhar Sharma owned and controlled company VSS Holding Private Limited (VHPL).

PTI

Min for making India a leading global supplier of quality tea

Kolkata: Union Minister Anupriya Patel on Saturday exhorted the planters about the need to make India a global supplier of quality tea with assistance from the Tea Board.

Speaking at an event jointly organised by the Tea Board and Indian Tea Association (ITA) to mark the occasion of the third International Tea Day, Patel said the Tea Board has taken an initiative to embark upon a special tea plucking and plantation exercise by dint of which it will help the gardens' workers to improve the quality of green leaves plucked from the bushes.

The Union Minister of

State for Commerce and Industry said these fine quality teas will be sold through a special auction this month and expected to fetch remunerative prices.

"There is a need to make India a leading supplier of quality tea in the global market", she said, adding that there is also a need to promote the beverage among the younger generation who are more inclined towards aerated drinks and coffee.

The minister said India had recommended to mark May 21 as International Tea Day which was accepted by the UN General Assembly.

She also called for promotion and more collective action for sustainable production of tea.

Chairman of Tea Board Saurav Pahari said the tea industry is going through challenging times. The industry had not foreseen these challenges in the past and also

going through massive structural changes at the moment.

"We are trying to target the younger generation who have not grown up on tea. We also need to think of tea as a total value chain from the producer to the consumer", he added.

Pahari said the industry and the other stakeholders need to reinvent tea and it should be made trendy which is the need of the day.

During the pandemic, the industry supported the workers, adding that they should be the focal point. The industry had also shown resilience which is hard to see in these trying times.

Chairman of ITA Nayantra Pal Chowdhury said India is among the top tea-consuming countries where 80 per cent of the production is consumed domestically.

The sustainability of the tea industry is not just about profits, but well being of all the stakeholders. But the declining tea prices is a nagging problem for which equilibrium of demand and supply is required.

PTI

FPIs dump Indian equities worth over ₹35K crore in May so far

New Delhi: Exodus of foreign money from the Indian equity markets continues unabated with FPIs pulling out over ₹35,000 crore so far this month on concerns over the prospects of more aggressive rate hike by US Fed and appreciation of the dollar.

With this, net outflow by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) from equities reached ₹1.63 lakh crore so far in 2022.

Going ahead, FPIs flow in India is to remain volatile in the near term, given the headwinds in terms of elevated crude prices, inflation, tight monetary policy, among others, said Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities.

"Since the mother market, US, is weak and dollar is strengthening, FPIs are likely to continue selling in the near term," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Foreign investors remained

net sellers for seven months to April 2022, withdrawing a massive net amount of over ₹1.65 lakh crore from equities.

After six months of selling spree, FPIs turned net investors in the first week of April due to correction in the markets and invested ₹7,707 crore in equities.

However, after a short breather, once again they turned net sellers during the holiday-shortened April 11-13 week, and the sell-off continued in the succeeding weeks as well.

FPI flows continue to remain negative in the month of May till date and have dumped equities worth ₹35,137 crore during May 2-20, data with depositories showed.

"The major factor behind the relentless FPI selling is the appreciation of the dollar which has taken the dollar index above 103. Also, India is the major emerging market where FPIs are sitting on big profits

and the market is very liquid to absorb FPI selling," Vijayakumar said.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said that foreign investors continue to have concerns over the prospects of more aggressive rate hike by US Fed going ahead.

US Fed has hiked rates twice this year to battle surging inflation caused by the disruption in supply chain due to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

"Because of the war, the geopolitical tension has also enhanced, which has prompted investors to turn risk-averse and stay away from emerging markets like India which are perceived to be relatively riskier."

And in the current risk-averse environment, foreign investors would have found profit booking a better option," Srivastava said.

PTI

Power Grid announces ₹4,156 PAT for Q4FY22

Gurugram: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a 'Maharatna' Company under Ministry of Power, Government of India, has announced a PAT of ₹4,156 crore for Q4FY22 on a consolidated basis which is 18% increase over Q4FY21. The total income for Q4FY22 was ₹11,068 crore compared to ₹10,816 crore in the Q4 of the previous year.

On consolidated basis, company posted PAT of ₹16,824 crore and total income of ₹42,698 crore for FY22 registering a YoY growth of 40% and 5% respectively.

The Company has proposed a final dividend of 22.5% (₹2.25 per share on a face value of ₹10/- each) in addition to first & second interim and special dividends aggregating to 125% (₹12.5/- per share on a face value of ₹10/- each) already paid for the FY22. The total dividend for the year thus amounts to ₹14.75 per share compared to ₹9.75 per share (adjusted for Bonus Share) for the previous year. During the year, the Company completed the first asset monetization by a CPSE through the Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) route. PGInvIT, sponsored by the Company, got listed on BSE & NSE on May 14, 2021. Total monetization done by the Company during FY22 is ₹8,370 crore.

The Company incurred a Capital Expenditure of ₹9,060 crore and capitalized assets worth ₹20,695 crore (excluding FERRV) on consolidated basis during the financial year. The Company's Gross Fixed Assets on a consolidated basis stood at ₹2,62,726 crore as on March 31, 2022 as against ₹2,41,498 crore as on March 31, 2021. In FY22, the Company along with its subsidiaries added 43,500 MVA transformation capacity, 7 sub-stations and 5,450 km transmission lines. Indian portion of additional cross border links with neighbouring countries (Bhutan and Bangladesh) have been completed.

PNS

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all that the owner/allottee of Residential Property No.C-9, Sector-20, NOIDA, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Sh. G.S. MAKHNI, son of LATE SH. HUKUM SINGH MAHNI, R/o B-5/29, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi, has sold the above residential house on GPa basis as under: 1. A G.P.A. was executed in favour of Smt. Sheetal W/o Sh. Udayvir Singh Bhatti, R/o C-1/41, Mangal Apartment, Vasundhara Enclave, New Delhi, which is regd. in the office of S.R. NOIDA, on dt.08.04.2022, and the Agreement to Sell was not registered.

Because the Agreement to Sell written in para 1 above is not regd., so with the help of this notice, it is informed that the transfer of the above said property on the basis of G.P.A goes in favour of SH. UDAYVIR SINGH BHATTI S/O SH. GAURAJ SINGH BHATTI, R/o H.No.35, Village-Yakhoobpur, Phase-II, Sector-85, NOIDA. If anyone has any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection with documentary evidence in the Residential (Plot) Section of Noida Authority within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

[SHEETALI]

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER FOR REPAIR & OVERHAULING WORK

Tender Notice No.: Sr.DEE(RS&G) BSP/OTP/2022-23-03, Dated: 18.05.2022. Name of Work: "Repair and Annual overhauling contract for Tower AC, Cassette AC, Water Cooler and Fridge of different make at various service building over Bilaspur Railway Settlement and out station of Bilaspur Division for a period of Two Years". **Tender Value (Approx):** ₹ 73,94,877.76. **Earnest Money Deposit:** ₹ 1,47,900/-

Tender Closing Date & Time: 10.06.2022, 15.00 hours.

For further details, eligibility criteria and the complete details for the above work, please refer/download tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engg. CPRI/10142 (RS&G)/Bilaspur.

f South East Central Railway @seccrail

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, **RESHAM LAL** S/o Late NAZAR RAM and **JAGPAL KAUR** W/o **RESHAM LAL** R/O B-6, G-2, CHANDER NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, U.P. PIN Code-201011, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under: (1) That the deponents have their only son namely Dr RAJNEESH KLER age 40 years has gone astray and is not in our say. (2) We hereby disown/ disinherit our son namely Dr RAJNEESH KLER from our all self acquired movable and immovable properties respectively. We sever our relations from him. (3.) Everybody is informed, that if, anybody will deal with our son, he will do so on his own responsibility and we will not be responsible for any misdemeanor/act done by our above said son in future.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public that by **Mohd. Hanif S/o Mr. Imamuuddin**, is owner of A Residential Property Area Measuring 100 Sq. Yds. Out of Khassa No. 3531, Situated At Village Loni, in the Abadi of Azad Nagar, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Chhazibad, U.P. vide Notarized G.P.A dated 11.01.2005. All persons are hereby informed that **Mr. Mehboob Ali s/o Mr. Maksud Ali**, is purchasing the above-mentioned property from **Mohd. Hanif S/o Mr. Imamuuddin** by way of registered Sale Deed. General public hereby informed that anybody has any charge/interest/title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Mrs. Prasoon Lata, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm) Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301. E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com. Ph: 7011172764, 8130200837

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sarvesh Prasad/ Vijeta Rani/ LBMRT00002440050	House No. 116, Minjumla Khasra No. 514, Global City, Revenue Village Abdullahpur, Pargana Tehsil and District Meerut, Uttar Pradesh/ May 20, 2022	December 31, 2021 Rs.22,11,915/-	Meerut/ Delhi

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : May 21, 2022 Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

New Delhi: Uttam Galva Steels Ltd on Saturday said its consolidated net loss has narrowed to ₹25.83 crore during the quarter ended March 31, 2022.

Net profit for the year ending March 31, 2022 grew to ₹79.8 crore from ₹6.7 crore registered last year. Revenues for the year ending March 31, 2022 went up to ₹3,686.7 crore, as compared to ₹2,211.7 crore registered year ago. The Board which met here on Friday recommended a dividend of ₹8.30 per share. The company, in a statement, said it surpassed milestone of ₹1,000 crore in exports during the year ending March 31, 2022.

PTI

Uttam Galva Steels Q4 net loss narrows to ₹26 crore

New Delhi: Uttam Galva Steels Ltd on Saturday said its consolidated net loss has narrowed to ₹25.83 crore during the quarter ended March 31, 2022.

The company had posted ₹68.04-crore net loss in the year-ago period, it said in a regulatory filing.

During the January-March period, the company's total consolidated income increased to ₹252.30 crore, from ₹196.75 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2020-21 fiscal.

Its expenses during the quarter were at ₹278.13 crore, as against ₹264.23 crore a year



ago. Uttam Galva Steels Ltd is one of the largest manufacturers of cold-rolled steel and galvanised steel in the country's western region.

The company is presently undergoing NCLT proceedings.

PTI

Power Mech Projects posts ₹47 cr net profit in Jan-Mar

New Delhi: Power Mech Projects Ltd on Saturday posted a 31 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹47.2 crore during the quarter ended March 31, 2022, helped by higher income.

The company had clocked ₹36 crore net profit in the January-March quarter of the 2020-21 financial year. Power Mech Projects said in a regulatory filing.

Its total income during the said period rose to ₹905.4 crore, from ₹759.9 crore a year ago.

The expenses were at ₹841 crore, as against ₹711 crore in



the year-ago period. Power Mech Projects Limited, is one among the leading infrastructure-construction companies based in Hyderabad with a global presence.

PTI



INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

7

We have done well in patches but what is important is to keep doing well as a team

— MS DHONI

MI win by 5 wickets, DC out of IPL

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Royal Challengers Bangalore sneaked into the play-offs after Mumbai Indians broke Delhi Capitals' heart with a five-wicket win in their last IPL match here on Saturday. Already out of contention, MI played partypoopers as they first restricted DC to 159 for 7 with Jasprit Bumrah snapping three wickets and then returned to overhaul the target in 19.1 overs to knock the 2020 finalists out of the tournament.

While Ishan Kishan (48) and Dewald Brevis (37) kept MI in the hunt, it was Tim David's 11-ball 34-run cameo that brought the five-time champions back into the chase.

Tilak Varma also chipped in with a crucial 17-ball 21. With MI at 95 for 3 in 14.3 overs, DC skipper Rishabh Pant made a strategic blunder as he refused to go for DRS after David nicked the first ball of his innings but the onfield umpire didn't give him out. It came back to haunt DC as David slammed fours and sixes at will to bring down the equation to 15 off 14 balls. Ramandeep then provided the finishing touch with a six-ball 13. DC finished with 14 points to remain in the fifth spot, while RCB joined Gujarat Titans, Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants into the play-offs with 16 points. Defending the total, left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed looked in good rhythm as he bowled a sensational first two overs, conceding just 2. He bowled full outside off-stump to trouble the openers, mainly Rohit Sharma (2). Anrich Nortje finally put an end to Rohit's struggle with the MI skipper chipping one to mid-on. Ishan and Brevis then added 51 runs off 37 balls but Kuldeep Yadav (1/33) broke the partnership with David Warner taking a fine catch to get rid of the former.

Brevis took on the attack to the opposition and smashed two sixes and a four off Kuldeep, who could have had him but skipper Pant dropped a sitter in the 12th over to add to the agony of the bowler. However, Brevis dragged one on to his stumps as MI



► points table

PO. TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1. GT	14	10	4	0	20	0.316
2. RR	14	9	5	0	18	0.298
3. LSG	14	9	5	0	18	0.251
4. RCB	14	8	6	0	16	-0.253
5. DC	13	7	7	0	14	0.204
6. KKR	14	6	8	0	12	0.146
7. PBKS	13	6	7	0	12	-0.043
8. SRH	13	6	7	0	12	-0.230
9. CSK	14	4	10	0	8	-0.203
10. MI	13	4	10	0	8	-0.506

► boundary meter

4s	1882
6s	986

slipped to 95 for 3 in the 15th over. After that it was a David show as he hit a six over deep mid-wicket off Shardul Thakur. David and Varma hit a four a six to accumulate 13 runs off the 16th over. Khaleel then conceded 17 with David smashing a four and a six. Needing 29 from 18 balls, David clobbered Shardul for two maximums and also completed the fifty run stand to reduce the equation to 15 off 13 balls.

Thakur finally removed David, who hit a full toss to Prithvi Shaw at extra cover but by then it was too late. Earlier, opting to field, MI bowlers, led by Bumrah (3/25) left DC tottering at 50 for 4 in 8.4 overs but Rovman Powell and skipper Pant (39 off 33 balls) shared 75 off 44 balls to resurrect the innings and take them to a decent total.

On selection radar for South Africa series: Malik, Mohsin, DK

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Emerging stars like Umran Malik and Mohsin Khan could be rewarded for their IPL performances while old-horses Shikhar Dhawan and Dinesh Karthik are likely to return to the T20 set up when the India squad is picked for the home series against South Africa on Sunday. All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who has not played for India since the T20 World Cup last year, has shown form and fitness in the

IPL and is set to be included in the squad for the five-game series beginning June 9.

He is finally back to bowling regularly, which was critical in his national comeback bid. After a two-month long IPL and with the Test team due to depart for England on June 15, some of the all-format players including Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah could be rested for the home series. A similar squad is also expected to be picked for the two

T20s in Ireland later in June. If that is the case, the captaincy responsibility could go to either Dhawan, who led in Sri Lanka last year, or Hardik who has impressed as a leader in his debut season for Gujarat Titans.

The IPL continues to unearth future stars and this season has been no different. While Umran impressed with his raw pace for the Sunrisers, left-arm pacer Mohsin, has stood out both for his speed and accuracy.

As his Lucknow Super Giants

skipper K L Rahul said left-arm pacers are always in demand at the highest level, Mohsin could get his big break on Sunday.

Another left-arm pacer in the reckoning is Arshdeep Singh, who once again had a good season for Punjab. He had one of the best economy rates in the death overs and displayed the ability of landing yorkers at will, which is always welcome in an unforgiving format like the T20.

In the batting department, Tilak

Verma showed a lot of promise in his maiden IPL season and might get a look in for the South Africa series, considering his Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma, who is also the India captain, had reserved high praise for the left-hander. The likes of Deepak Hooda and Venkatesh Iyer were tried in the middle-order over the West Indies and Sri Lanka series and it remains to be seen, if either of them retains his place or selectors give preference to IPL form.

Modi hosts Deaflympics contingent



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi interacted with the Indian contingent for the recently held 'Deaflympics' as he hosted them at his residence on Saturday. In the best-ever performance, the Indian team won 16 medals including 8 Gold medals in the Deaflympics, held in Brazil, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

Union Ministers Anurag Singh Thakur and Nisith Pramanik were also present on the

occasion. Interacting with Rohit Bhaker, senior member of the contingent, the Prime Minister discussed his way of dealing with the challenges and his way of assessing his opponents.

Rohit also told the Prime Minister about his background and inspiration for getting into sports and staying for so long at the highest level. The Prime Minister told the ace badminton player that his life as an individual and sportsperson is an inspiration. He also complimented

him for his perseverance and not yielding to the obstacles of life. Wrestler Virender Singh told about the legacy of his family in wrestling and also narrated his satisfaction in finding opportunities and competition in the deaf community. The Prime Minister noted his medal winning consistent performance in Deaflympics since 2005 and complimented him for his desire to excel. The Prime Minister appreciated his position as a veteran and also as a keen learner of the sport.



Chopra says he is not losing sleep over his international rivals' 90m-plus throws

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is not losing sleep over some of his top international rivals producing big early season performances but made it clear that he would want to join the 90m club this year. Reigning world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and Tokyo Olympics silver winner Jakub Vadlech of Czech Republic had come up with 93.07m and 90.88m throws respectively in the Doha Diamond League on May 13.

But Chopra is not the one to take pressure, thinking about somebody's performance. "I don't take pressure of distance. Peters and Vadlech must be working hard and so doing well."

BAHRAIN PARA BADMINTON Bhagat, Dhillon bag golds as India set for rich medal haul

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat secured two golds to lead the Indian badminton team's medal rush at the Bahrain Para Badminton International in Manama on Saturday.

Bhagat received a walkover from arch-rival Daniel Bethell of England in the men's singles SL3 final, while he paired up with Manisha Ramdass to outwit Thailand's Siripong Teamarrom and Saensupa Nipada 21-14 21-11 in the summit clash of mixed doubles SL3-SU5 class.

World number one Bhagat, who had settled for two bronze medals in the Brazil Para Badminton International recently, registered a convincing 21-16 21-14 win over compatriot and Paralympic bronze medallist Manoj Sarkar in the SL3 semi-



finals. "I am excited on winning the double gold. This will boost my preparation for Dubai International. I hope Bethell feels fine soon and comes back to court quickly. My partnership with Manisha Ramdass also began very well, we gelled well together and she played really well," Bhagat said.

Tarun Dhillon also secured

a gold after beating Korea's Shin Kyung Hwan 21-9 21-9 in the men's singles SL4 final. The Indian had notched up a 21-14 21-15 win over Thailand's Siripong Teamarrom in the semifinals.

In women's singles, Mandeep Kaur (SL3) lost 5-21 17-21 to Halime Yildiz to sign off with a silver medal. She had

pulled off a shocking 21-18 21-14 win over top seed and compatriot Manasi Joshi in the semifinals.

Among others, Dhillon and Nitesh Kumar also registered a win in the men's doubles SL3-SH4 semifinals, defeating Korean Hwan and Joo Dongjae in straight games 21-18 21-18 and will take on Thailand's Mongion Bunsun and Siripong Teamarrom in final.

In women's events, Ramdass (SU5) and Mandeep Kaur (SL3) reached the final of women's doubles SL3-SU5 class.

The second seeded pair of Kaur and Ramdass, who has a gold together from the Brazil Para Badminton International, will face the Paralympic duo of Palak Kohli and Parul Parmar in the final. Parmar, however, lost to Turkey's Halime Yildiz 21-5 21-18 in her women's singles SL3 semifinals.

India names team for FIH Women's Pro League, Savita remains captain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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The team will play six matches from June 11 to 22 ahead of the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup to be held in Spain and the Netherlands from July 1-17.

India play hosts Belgium on June 11 and 12 in Antwerp before shifting base to Rotterdam, the Netherlands, to face Argentina (June 18 and 19) and USA (June 21 and 22).

Savita will continue to lead the team though star striker Rani Rampal is likely to return to action after she made her last appearance at last year's Tokyo

Olympics.

Rani was under rehabilitation after recovering from a prolonged hamstring injury. She was named in the Indian squad for the last two matches of the FIH Pro League in Bhubaneswar against the Netherlands last month but did not play.

Experienced defender Deep Grace Ekka will be the vice captain of the team which also has junior World Cup stars like Bichu Devi Kharibam, Ishika Chaudhary, Akshata Abaso Dhekale, Baljeet Kaur, Sangita Kumari and Deepika.

Rajini Etimarpu and Mahima Chaudhary — who will be the captain and vice captain respectively of the Indian team for the June 4-5 FIH Women's Hockey 5s in Switzerland — as well as Rajwinder Kaur have been named as standbys.

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**PURITY & EMPATHY:
TWO THINGS THE WORLD
REALLY NEEDS MORE OF**



Apart from her professional side, she's also fun to be around. I remember that on the set, we were constantly joking and pulling her leg and yet she was always such a sport.

She strongly believes in upgrading skills in different areas, as you never know which one would work well. During the pandemic, with a lot of free time in her hands, she started learning about spirituality, even practising it for hours. Her identity as a popular fashion and beauty influencer is well established today as her YouTube channel www.youtube.com/c/NidhiChaudhary is going great guns for its informative and engaging content related to beauty, fashion, relationships and spirituality.



GYANVAPI TO SET THE NEW COURSE OF INDIAN POLITICS

It may be the beginning of a prolonged judicial process that could unravel the murky medieval Indian history marked by demolitions of temples, atrocities, and killings, writes SHIVJI SARKAR

The surprise discovery of Shivalinga, supposedly the symbol of the Lord of creation and destruction, at the old temple of Lord Vishwanath or Gyanvapi mosque can have major political ramifications and help the saffron outfit in keeping the Hindutava pot boiling in the next round of assembly polls and 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Would it make the Congress effort at Udaipur's Chintan Shivir futile and boost up the votary of Hindutva for a new stretch of political success? Much will depend on how Congress responded to the row and how it convinced the nation that BJP was raking up religious issues to divert attention from the burning issues of price rise and unemployment. In any case, Gyanvapi controversy would firm up the religious thrust of Indian politics

For millions of devout believers, Varanasi is the city of Lord Shiva. Mythology is full of tales about Shiva visiting this city from his Himalayan home every year. Still, no one possibly expected that Lord Shiva would emerge from a grimy ‘vaju’ tank to energize his devotees.

It may be the beginning of a prolonged judicial process that could unravel the murky medieval Indian history marked by demolitions of temples, atrocities, and killings. The Gyanvapi can have an impact on at least ten different places, where the medieval rulers had taken recourse to the extreme brutality of converting religious structures killing thousands. These are – Kashi Vishvanath-Gyan Vapi in the oldest living city of Varanasi; Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah -5000-year-old; Rudra Mahalay in Patan, Gujarat; Bhojshala Saraswati Mandir -

Kamal Maula mosque at Bhoshala in MP; Adinath Temple – Adina mosque at Pandua, West Bengal; Bhadra Kali Temple – Jama Masjid in Ahmedabad, Gujarat; Vijay Temple – Bijamandal mosque, Vidisha, MP; 27 Hindu and Jain Temples – Quawwatal- ul- Islam Qutb Minar complex; Somnath and Ramjanmabhoomi Temple – now restored.

The Gyanvapi controversy re-ignites the issue that was supposed to have been settled with the judgment of the Ramjanmabhoomi temple by the Supreme Court. The five Supreme Court judges took note of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991 that laid down that all shrines will be preserved as inherited by independent India on 15 August 1947. The law made an exception for Ayodhya as it was already an ongoing dispute. Nothing else was deserving of an exception, nor was it legally or constitutionally possible, the judges wrote.

The quick scenario change in the Gyan Vapi incident may raise the question of the validity of the enactment of the Places of Worship law by the Narasimha Rao government. Sentiments are high not only in Varanasi but all over. Seeming non-partisan people like PK Roy, former executive director, Airports Authority of India in Kolkata; Lalima Aneja Dang, a senior radio producer; Priyadarshi Dutt, author, commentator; former editor of Doordarshan Prabhat Dabral are all charged and advising that it is prudent to settle and not react on this emotive issue. Former Vice-Chancellor of Nagpur University SN Pathan and another Vice Chancellor Firoz Bakht Ahmed have appealed to the minorities to correct the steps and maintain harmony. Left-leaning Dabral says minori-

“THE GYANVAPI CONTROVERSY RE-IGNITES THE ISSUE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SETTLED WITH THE JUDGMENT OF THE RAMJANMABHOOMI TEMPLE BY THE SUPREME COURT. THE FIVE SUPREME COURT JUDGES TOOK NOTE OF THE PLACES OF WORSHIP (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) ACT OF 1991 THAT LAID DOWN THAT ALL SHRINES WILL BE PRESERVED AS INHERITED BY INDEPENDENT INDIA ON 15 AUGUST 1947. THE LAW MADE AN EXCEPTION FOR AYODHYA AS IT WAS ALREADY AN ONGOING DISPUTE. NOTHING ELSE WAS DESERVING OF AN EXCEPTION, NOR WAS IT LEGALLY OR CONSTITUTIONALLY POSSIBLE, THE JUDGES WROTE

ties must dispassionately judge the acts of despots like Aurangzeb and peacefully sort it out the issue in the best interest of the nation.

The one common question the non-political elite ask is how could someone treat the revered Shivlinga with such contempt that they established the wash-tank above that. It is difficult to say whether it would have the same manifestation and feelings till elections or not. The sentiments expressed speak in volumes of the hurt feelings.

The nation may recall that since 1949, the Babri structure in all purposes was the Ram temple. Emotive issues are not forgotten. That led to the demolition of the structure in 1992. The way now the GyanVapi is flaring up indicates that the issue of demolition by Aurangzeb on Sept 2, 1669, can widely impact the course of Indian politics. The Hindutva-oriented parties would find it easy to exploit the sentiments to woo the voters. The rest could go on screaming about price rise and divisive politics, or take up other equally emotive issues to remain relevant and vibrant.

It may start with Hyderabad’s Bhagyalakshmi temple. The TRS of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao may have to take a stand on the crucial Bhagyalakshmi temple in the Charminar complex. Rao facing a pincer attack by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Home Minister Amit Shah, KCR may have to stir with deftness. The others and even MIM may pitch in to make the Telangana assembly elections interesting.

It has to be interesting to see whether Gujarat rakes up the Bhadrakali and Rudra Mahalaya issues and Madhya Pradesh ignites Vidisha and Bojshala. If the BJP raised these

issues in MP and Gujarat, the opposition may have to wait and watch silently fearing backlash from Hindus.

Alok Kumar, president of VHP, an eminent lawyer, is categorical, “There has been no change in the status of the religious structure since 1947, and Hindus have always performed puja at the site.”

Calling it GyanVapi Mandir. VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal said the faces of those who were trying to “hide the truth” have been “painted black” with the “finding”.

In the BJP only Sangeet Som has threatened a replay of the 1992 ‘Babri demolition. But the BJP is happy with the Varanasi court developments giving it time, to extend the restrictions at the Gyan Vapi. They being the rulers in UP are acting with caution so that the gains are long-term.. Chief Minister Yogi Aditynath is personally observing each of the developments.

The Gyan Vapi will decide the religious fervor of Indian politics. The parties not aligned with BJP’s view have the challenge to tailor new strategies. The minorities are in dilemma. They are not keen on sailing with it or giving up but the voices within are advising not to get into another confrontation and solve it prudently.

Howsoever, it develops it would keep the Indian politics warm and parties would have to stir cautiously to chart their way to 2024 Lok Sabha and many assembly elections before that. The churning continues and the nation hopes that solution would emerge for a prosperous, peaceful nation.

The writer is a senior journalist and views expressed are personal.



“When I was 19-21, the Babri Masjid was snatched away from me. But we will never lose a Masjid again in front of the 19-20-year-olds. Do you take an oath that we will not lose any more mosques?”
—MIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi



“Now, they will create a new drama in Varanasi. It has started yesterday on news channels, and on social media too. There will be some 100 such places where they keep creating controversy, so how long will you keep Hindu-Muslim fighting in the country? They have lived together for centuries and they have to live together for centuries.”
—Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot



The faces of those who were trying to ‘hide the truth’ have been ‘painted black’ with the ‘finding’ of the ‘Shivling’ on the mosque premises.
—VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal



BJP is raising religious issues to divert public attention from issues of price rise and unemployment.
—Samajwadi party president Akhilesh Yadav

A nursery of military leadership

Valour & Wisdom is a well researched chronicle of contribution made by the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun in producing some of the bravest war heroes of India.

BOOK REVIEW

AMITABH SHUKLA

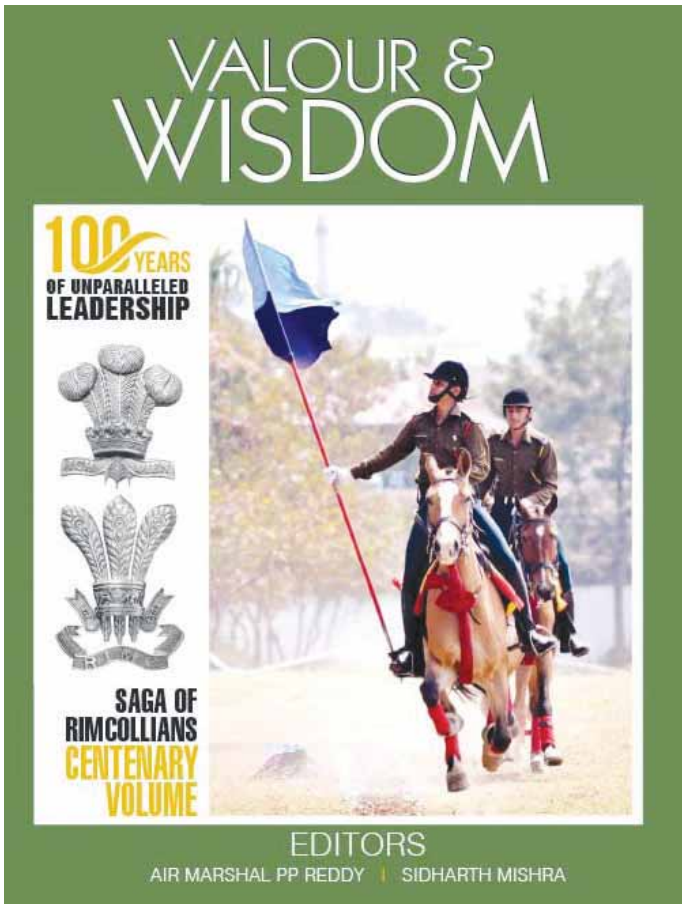
It was there to defend Srinagar when tribal marauders came in 1947, it was again there to defend borders in Punjab in 1965, in 1971 it was there fighting on both the eastern and the western front. In 1974, when the first nuclear device was tested in Pokhran it was there, so was it in Maldives, in Sri Lanka and it stood face-to-face with China in 1987. It drove the Pakistani army out from Kargil in 1999, in 2008 it defended Bombay and lastly it destroyed the enemy base in Balakot.

Seldom has the alumni of a school contributed so much in the defence of a nation as that of the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun. Founded in 1922, the school is celebrating its centenary this year. Air Marshal PP Reddy (Retired), one of the two editors of the Book along with Sidharth Mishra describes it as the "nursery of military leadership" and says that it was the Rimcollians, as an alumnus of RIMC is known, who were in the higher echelons of the military at the time of

Independence, who built and guided the Indian armed forces into a formidable foe to reckon with.

Sidharth Mishra, an alumnus of the Institute and well-known journalist, who has co-authored the nearly 500-page book, says that whenever an educational institution reaches a milestone of its existence, the practice has been to bring out self-congratulatory volumes in the genre of coffee-table books. He says that unlike that practice, objectivity has been the main plank of the book.

The book comprises essays by the alumni from various fields, tracing the origin of its establishment through its training methodology and grooming, puts on record the contributions of the alumni, school and nation building and sifts hearsay from documented facts. There are 26 contributors, most of them senior officers of the armed forces, who have sort of drawn a complete picture of the Indian armed forces from the First World War period onwards and how Indianisation of the Officer Corps began in the Great War. Lt Gen NS Brar writes the first chapter tracing how Indians were gradually inducted for training and then commissioned as officers. When the need



THE BOOK HAS A CHAPTER ON THE HEROES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE RIMCOLLIANS WHO WERE AWARDED VICTORIA CROSS, BAR TO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER, DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND MILITARY CROSS AND LISTS THE BATTLES FOR WHICH THEY ARE AWARDED

was felt for Indianisation of the Officer Corps, the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (as it was known then) was opened on March 13, 1922.

The book has a chapter on the heroes of the Second World War and the Rimcollians who were awarded Victoria Cross, Bar to Distinguished Service Order, Distinguished Flying Cross and Military Cross and lists the battles for which they are awarded. In the Battle of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia)

Africa, PS Bhagat was given the Victoria Cross, highest gallantry award of the pre-Independence era. Despite close enemy fire, without food or rest for four days, he cleared 15 minefields over a distance of 55 miles and was evacuated after punctured eardrums.

Then, there is a chapter on integrating J&K and the role of Rimcollians. In the Battle of Badgam, Major Somnath Sharma, at the age of 25 was martyred and due to his bravery became the first recipient of the highest gallantry award of Independent India--Param Vir Chakra. His efforts had significantly slowed down the advance of the enemy raiders and bought valuable time for the Indian troops to fly into Srinagar.

In the 1961 Liberation of Goa, called Operation Vijay, Lt Gen KP Candeth played a pivotal role in retaking the colony from the Portuguese.

In the 1965 Indo-Pak War, three Rimcollians, Major GC Verma, Major MS Bal and Major JC Pandey made the supreme sacrifice. Similarly in the 1971 war, the entire western border with Pakistan was under the command of Rimcollians and the book lists the contributions of the

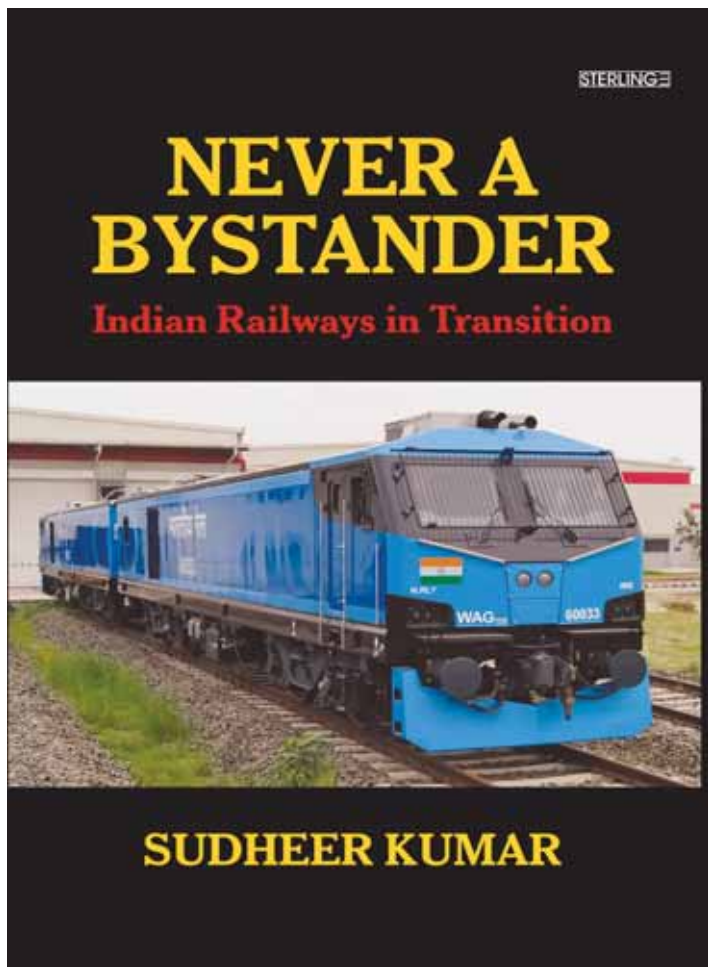
alumni in the liberation of Bangladesh. IPKF operation in Sri Lanka in 1987, Operation Cactus in Maldives in 1988, Kargil Conflict in 1999--all had the presence of Rimcollians, the book lists. There are thrilling chapters on the Rimcollian Infanteers, the Tankmen from Rajwada, the Gunners, flying wings and other branches.

Interestingly, it is not only about the armed forces that the book talks about. But also, about those Rimcollians who have cracked JEE, CAT, NEET, GRE, GMAT and other exams and their success in different walks of life. Be it chronicling military history of Independent India and successes through individual and team efforts, Valour and Wisdom makes an effort to project the need to preserve institutions, which have kept alive the values and traditions, which the founders of our national struggle nursed. The writer says that the book is an attempt to set right the historical perspective, analyse qualities which made the school alumni leaders extraordinaire and visionaries in their own right. "This effort would probably aid those who seek to learn from the lessons of the past for a better future," says Mishra

Never a bystander: Indian Railways in Transition

BOOK REVIEW

DEEPAK JHA



This book is a collection of actual stories of change and transformation that give the reader an insider's view of the incredible world of the Indian Railways. Driving successful change in government organisations is a Herculean task; many efforts fail, in any case. Grit, resilience and hardiness, along with a humane approach and the benign influence of critical stakeholders can often move mountains. The failures along the way are just the lead indicators of success.

The story author Sudheer Kumar read in his childhood, 'Haar ki Jeet' by Sudarshan, and the prayer, 'Woh shakti hamein do dayanidhe kartavya marg par dat jaayen' by Murarilal Sharma left a deep impression on his mind..

The biggest-ever Make-in-India PPP project, an initiative of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government, to set up a locomotive factory at Madhepura, Bihar, forms a part of the book. ISB Hyderabad has written a case study on this project, and Harvard Business Publishing has published it in June 2020.

The book has lessons in leadership which go beyond the rule-

book to create a guiding coalition and collaborate actively; embrace empathy, and always put people first; challenge the status-quo and dysfunctional legacy systems but in an inclusive, humane way; cultivate inner emotional stability and focus; operate always from a tranquil mind for the greater good; optimism and idealism with superior people-skills achieve miracles; cultivate an environment of empowered and empowering leadership, and finally; bring differentiated technical and functional mastery to everything you do.

About the author

(Sudheer Kumar is a graduate in Electrical Engineering with a gold medal in 1981 from GB Pant University, Pantnagar. He studied at IIT Delhi; Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Tepper School of Business, Pittsburgh; and HEC Business School, Paris). He joined Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers in 1983. He superannuated in 2020 as Additional Member Transformation, Planning and Railway Electrification after a career spanning 37 years.

Short stories with big messages

The Anthology of New Writing is a collection of well-crafted short stories by some of the finest women story tellers from across the world . The stories resonate with the cultural moorings of the places they are set in.

BOOK REVIEW

NAVIN UPADHYAY

A new anthology of short stories brings together women writers from India, the US, the UK, and Canada. The Punch Magazine's Anthology of New Writing, edited and introduced by its founder and publisher Shireen Quadri, features 18 stories by both emerging and established writers. It has been published by Niyogi Books. Founded in January 2017, The Punch Magazine has been publishing short stories — along with poetry, creative non-fiction, interviews, and reviews — by writers around the world every month. The anthology was conceived to celebrate the short fiction genre. While the form's origin is as old as human civilization, the genre flourished during the nineteenth century, with several modernist writers showcasing its subtle power through their landmark stories.

The stories in this anthology resonate with the cultural moorings of the places they are set in and are often laced with the writer's lived experiences. They throb with the rhythm of the daily life of their protagonists - their inner struggles, existential angst, and anxieties.

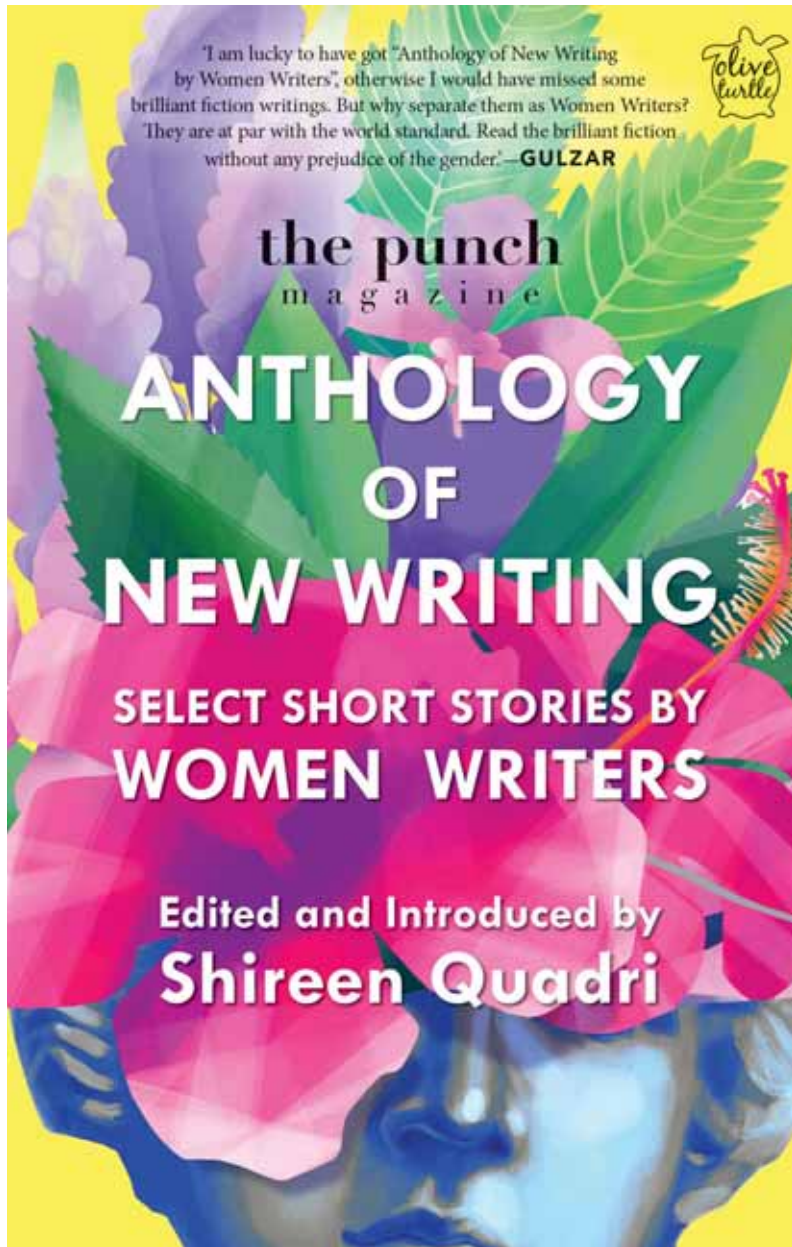
There are stories that centre around the memories of early crushes, adolescent romance, and others that dwell on the passage of time with all its attendant ravages. Stories rooted in family traditions are also a part of this anthology.

The writers of these stories are Ameta Bal, Anila SK, Anjali Doney, Camilla Chester, Geetha Nair G., Helen Harris, Humra Quraishi, Jayshree Misra Tripathi, Latha Anantharaman, Meena Menon, Meher Pestonji, Rinita Banerjee, Rochelle Potkar, Sarah Robertson, Shilpa Raina, Tammy Armstrong, Vineetha Mokkil and Vrinda Baliga.

Short fiction condenses the human experience and yet is able to capture its depth. These short stories show us how they compress the composites of life as well as expand its complexities and contradictions.

Ameta Bal's 'Static A.D.', has a first-person narrator that tells the tale of isolation and loneliness. The story was written much before the pandemic, but it has an uncanny resemblance to the lockdown situation. Anila S.K.'s 'A Tale of Disconnect' is about a dysfunctional marriage and the gods who never answer. Anjali Doney's 'Pandemonium', is about an unfulfilled college romance, full of emotions and mush. In Camilla Chester's 'Terms and Conditions', the protagonist Laura Pimpleback, discovers her childhood dreams and her wishes coming true.

Vineetha Mokkil's 'Sunday, Bloody Sunday', the narrator, Tara Bakshi finds all hell breaking loose as she disclosed to her family her intentions of marrying a fellow



civil servant outside her community. Vrinda Baliga in her story 'Crossing', delves into the issue of illegal immigrants who risk their lives for a prosperous future.

Geetha Nair's 'Falls' is a tale of love and betrayal. The story goes back from the present into the past, revealing the sequence of events.

London-based prolific author Helen Harris writes a story about food and family bonding. Her story, 'Olya's Kitchen', is set in the nineties. The narrator, Nicholas, recalls his Russian grandmother and her penchant for cooking and feeding her grandchildren. He chooses a career in the food business cooking authentic Russian dishes to pay homage to his beloved grandmother after she passes away.

Three stories are set in Kashmir. Humra Qureshi's 'Kashmir Valley's Soofiya

THE PUNCH MAGAZINE HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL SHORT STORIES IN THE DIGITAL FORMAT SINCE ITS INCEPTION TO BRING A TANGIBLE COLLECTION WHERE MANY HIGH-CALIBER WRITERS' WORKS HAVE BEEN SHOWCASED. THE STORIES TAKE US ALONG THE WEARS AND TEARS OF LIFE, DWELLING ON THE CHARACTERS' EXPERIENCES AND MEMORIES OF THEIR MANY PLEASURES AND PAINS SUSPENDED IN THE CONTINUUM OF TIME

Bano' draws on the flood fury of 2014, in which the water brings the son back to his mother from police custody. Independent journalist Meena Menon's story 'The Closed Cinema' is about Firdaus Cinema, located on Srinagar's busy Lal Chowk road, which has been closed for several years. 'The Vacation' by Shilpa Raina, is about a Kashmiri Pandit couple, and their struggles after they were forced to leave their house in Srinagar during the militancy. The wife steers her family through depravity and loss as they live in a state of permanent exile. Rochelle Potkar's story 'Honour' is about a young washerwoman Purna who works at Mumbai's dhobi ghat. Her family responsibilities are what she lives for.

Latha Anantharaman's 'delicately structured 'The Very Narrow House', set in Palakkad(Kerala), is about the reclusive family of a sub-priest at the temple. The story is woven beautifully and has a dash of suspense and drama.

Jayshree Misra Tripathi's 'Indigo Blue' employs the device of 'story within a story to explore both parallels between past and present.

In Meher Pestonji's dark yet funny tale 'Ghost', young Kaizad who loves to play ghost and scare his little sister, unwittingly invites trouble for the family. Tammy Armstrong's 'Artichoke', set in Rome, foregrounds the flawed approach to a researcher's quest to understand the painter as opposed to his co-traveller.

In Rinita Banerjee's 'The Dance of the Happy Muse', a young man seeks temporary solace in art when family responsibility feels heavy to bear.

Sarah Robertson's lyrical 'Marietta's Song', is about the magic notes of a magical song - 'enough to lift the dead along into a world of passionate flight, with pre-dinner martinis every night' - played on piano by a miracle man.

The Punch Magazine has published several short stories in the digital format since its inception to bring a tangible collection where many high-caliber writers' works have been showcased. The stories take us along the wears and tears of life, dwelling on the characters' experiences and memories of their many pleasures and pains suspended in the continuum of time. The anthology's editor Shireen Quadri is the founder and director of Punch Art and Cultural Foundation, which endeavours to chronicle the proliferation of arts, literature, and culture in India and globally. She writes, "The short stories by contemporary women writers show us how they compress the composites of life as well as expand its complexities and contradictions."

The Punch Magazine promotes the best of literary and cultural traditions around the world. For this anthology, they were looking at good storytelling, the quality of its narration, language, and stories that reflected the human condition in general and had a deep resonance with the times we are living in.

Concerns over Finland, Sweden joining NATO

The crisis in Ukraine is rebalancing the power calculus in Europe and in the rest of the world. It's the first major devastating war that Europe is experiencing after the Second World War. Currently, what seems to be more disturbing is the determination of two Nordic nations — Finland and Sweden — to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). After years of neutrality in Scandinavian countries, the sudden decision of the two neighbours of the Russian Federation to join the NATO is heightening tension between Moscow and the rest of the West. Despite threats from Moscow, Helsinki and Stockholm have moved their applications to be a part of the world's largest security alliance. The time chosen by the two nations to be part of the NATO security orbit is creating ripples across Europe.

After the Second World War, the world was turned into two rival ideological camps of power: the capitalist bloc led by the US and the socialist bloc by the USSR. For more than four decades, there were years of high and low, with tipping points like the Cuban Missile Crisis. The period saw the emergence of the Cold War between the West and the USSR and its allies. But then the fall of the USSR leading to the dissolution of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe formally hinted at an end of the Cold War. During the Cold War period, Finland and Sweden maintained their neutral stance. They neither went to the NATO nor signed the Warsaw Pact (Warsaw Treaty Organization or officially, the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance founded on 14 May, 1955 in Warsaw). But once the Warsaw Pact terminated on 1 July, 1991, the security alliance of European nations, particularly in Eastern Europe, underwent massive changes. For the first time in the post-Warsaw Pact scenario, on March 12, 1999, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined the NATO; the second wave countries such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia joined in March 2004.

Interestingly, out of the five Nordic nations — Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland — the first three joined the NATO as its founding members in 1949. Therefore, Sweden and Finland maintained their distance from the NATO for a long time so as not to attract the ire of the then USSR and now the Russian Federation. However, what then has drastically changed the security scenario in Europe, except the Ukraine war, which caused Finland and Sweden to join the NATO so abruptly? The Ukraine war which began on February 24 has dragged on close to three months without producing any clear winner. Putin's military aggression has alerted the world, especially



Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson walks outside the US Capitol to speak with journalists following her joint meetings with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and leaders in Congress in Washington on May 19

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Russia's neighbours. This has finally caused Finland and Sweden to join the NATO alliance.

The Social Democrats of Sweden has jettisoned their previous opposition to NATO membership with Putin's onslaught in Ukraine in the current scenario. Magdalena Andersson, the Swedish Prime Minister, said, "The best thing for the security of Sweden and the Swedish people is to join NATO. We believe Sweden needs the formal security guarantees that come with membership in NATO."

Why is Putin scared of NATO expansion? In the past, the USSR had bitter experience of the expansion of the West,

particularly after the dissolution of the USSR. The way the US-led NATO has encircled Russia, it has become a cause of concern for Moscow. In fact, the NATO has violated its basic understanding with Russia. And the NATO has not addressed the security concerns raised by the Putin regime till now. Therefore, Moscow cannot trust the NATO.

While, powerful nations such as France and the US are welcoming the decision of Finland and Sweden to join the NATO, why is Turkey — NATO's oldest member — objecting to it? Turkey possesses the second largest armed forces after the US in the

NATO. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is determined to stop Finland and Sweden's bid for the NATO membership. He has said he won't allow terror havens becoming part of the NATO. Turkey's objection stems from its security concerns and grievances with Sweden and to a lesser degree Finland's perceived support to the banned Kurdistan Worker's Party or PKK. Turkey's long war with the PKK has taken tens of thousands of lives since 1984. Therefore, Erdogan has branded the two prospective NATO members, especially Sweden as a "focus of terror, home to terror". He accused the two Nordic countries of giving

financial and armed support to the PKK. However, the NATO officials are ready to address all the concerns of Turkey and making the road smoother for Finland and Sweden to join the NATO.

Initially, Putin was airing warning signals to both Finland and Sweden. But gradually, he is changing his mind and strategy towards NATO's two probable members. Now Moscow says that it has no problem in Finland and Sweden joining the US-led military alliance. But Putin has made it clear that Moscow would take action if the NATO moves more troops or hardware into the territory of Finland and Sweden. To him,

NATO expansion itself is not a threat for Russia. Putin, however, has clarified, "The expansion of military infrastructure into this territory (i.e. in Finland and Sweden) would certainly provoke our response. What that response will be, we will see what threats are created for us." This all makes it clear from Putin that in case the West tries to provoke Russia, he will not sit back. And for all of us, the latest war in Ukraine should be a lesson.

Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, the three leaders had overseen the transformation of the Russian Federation from the last days of the USSR to the emergence of the Russian Federation. Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin initiated changes that clearly broke with the communist ideology and Soviet political system of the past. But Putin came to Russian politics when the massive and tumultuous transition from communism had already made its way all over the fallen super-power. Since 1999 when he took over as the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation under the leadership of Yeltsin, many brand him as an agent of the restoration of the old order. Also, Putin, a former spy guy, has made it known to people that he shares with many Russians a great nostalgia for the greatness created, established and heralded by the Soviet Union.

Unlike Yeltsin, Putin did not have extreme distaste for the Communist Party of those days. Equally, Putin aims to enhance the power of the Russian State and wants to expand as far as possible beyond its borders. But the problem is that Putin has combined his ambition with realism and wants to achieve the same with force. Therefore, the raising concern in Finland and Sweden is well-understood.

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Finland and Sweden's bid to enter NATO has met with roadblocks. Initially, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned them against their efforts, but now he has changed his strategy towards NATO's two probable entrants. Now, Moscow has no problem in Finland and Sweden joining the US-led military alliance as long as the NATO doesn't move more troops or hardware into the territory of Finland and Sweden. But the real challenge is from Turkey which is hell-bent on preventing the two Nordic nations from joining the NATO as it considers them "focus of terror, home to terror"



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Regional parties, Hindi & Hindutva

Regional parties have not yet done enough to counter northern India's control over Indian politics. Many regional parties in the south have associated or supported the NDA or the UPA Governments in the past. If they complain about Hindi imposition each time it crops up, it begs the question: What were they doing all along to break the north's hold over national politics?



RAHUL JAYARAM

At a time when Hindutva appears further into the social fabric of Indian society, Union Home Minister Amit Shah pitched his support yet again for the use of Hindi as India's common language. In the wake of recent events, a series of queries emerge: How did India come to such a pass where the issue of Hindi keeps surfacing at regular intervals? Is our Constitution not clear over the uses of English, Hindi and other languages? Why is India wasting time running around in circles? Doesn't India owe her growth, in large part, to English? Does English not merit further promotion?

However, the place of Hindi in the national consciousness, how it asserts the supremacy of north India, and the overwhelming current hold of Hindutva merit a deeper and longer contemporary scrutiny. In my view, Hindutva and Hindi have come together to set the tone of north India's political and cultural domination.

Collectively, the South has driven a lot of India's growth, and despite Constitutionally-mandated federalism, has suffered at the hands of the Centre and complained about it often. Can we assume a binary where the Centre is the "victimiser" and the States the "victim"? How have States used their agency? We must examine

regional parties' behaviour. Some context first.

A major but under explored takeaway from the recent Assembly polls is the future of regional parties. They are caught between a take-no-prisoners BJP-ruled Centre and the fast-fading Congress. For parties that haven't broken bread with the single largest party, these have been hard times. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party's loss despite high vote share and the Bahujan Samaj Party's decimation for a consecutive second time prove how the BJP has knifed into their core constituencies. Yet, the Aam Aadmi Party's win in Punjab where it beat entrenched rivals demonstrates there is room for a credible alternative. But it's only at the State level.

Even for the strongest regional parties in other States, the BJP's wins are a jolt. Inured to a more accommodating Centre in the UPA and the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA eras, how do they square with an ideologically overdriven current BJP?

Yes, Hindutva imbued previous BJP-led Governments, but there is stark difference between then and now. Now, the BJP wants to swamp India. Hindi is one of the arrows in its quiver.

The TMC and the AAP first read the signs. TMC chief

Mamata Banerjee sized up the situation after the BJP's strong showing in the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal in 2014 and 2019. She put everything into the bruising election she won last year. During the frenzied 2020 Delhi Assembly election, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal kept away from the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act-National Register for Citizens protests to ensure the AAP didn't appear anti-Hindu. In West Bengal, Mamata postured her Hindu identity in rallies. Mamata and Kejriwal nuanced their stance towards Hindutva. The BJP controls current public discourse and it has pushed opponents to mould their messaging, and display their Hindu cred to avoid appearing "secular". As a counter to that, the TMC and the AAP have tried expanding their footprint. In a way, both are unlike older regional players. They understand how power at the Centre was handed away on a platter to the Congress once, and now to the BJP.

So, what's the nature and intent of most regional parties? They win their States, but still need support from the Centre. Why haven't they gone pan-India? Over decades they buttressed Congress-led and BJP-led Governments. But by doing so, they paved the way for the supremacy of the Hindi belt and UP as the most powerful

State in the Lok Sabha. The Shiv Sena, the Biju Janata Dal, the SP, the BSP, the Nationalist Congress Party, the DMK, the AIADMK, the Janata Dal (Secular), and the Left parties, all collectively failed our federal aspirations by sticking to their regions. This approach is harming them now, and will even more in the coming years. In 2012-2013, JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar was positioned as a rival to Narendra Modi. Now he struggles to retain Bihar. The regional matrix scotched him. Even a small party like Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has fought elections outside its home base. These three parties — AAP, TMC, AIMIM — realise the importance of breaking the two party hold at the Centre.

In such a milieu with no threat at the Centre, and no State-level players able to take it on, proven wedge-like issues like the role of Hindi are invoked by the north-dominated Centre, and precious political time wasted on distracting the republic from pressing matters.

The Centre acts like the puppeteer, and the non-Hindi States react like puppets. The States are in a funk. The BJP-led NDA knows this, and is seizing the momentum to push through its nativist and hard-line agendas to the extent it can. Such conducive conditions

may not be there in the future. We have to see the issue of Hindi in this light. And, what are the States doing?

Notwithstanding its past alliance with a BJP-led Central Government, among the older regional parties, the DMK represents the staunchest opposition to Hindutva and Hindi in ideological terms. In most ways, even its arch rival in Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK, is not an ideological opponent, but an extension. The United Democratic Front and the Left Democratic Front in Kerala are not dissimilar to the DMK and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu — they are regional rivals and not ideological nemesis to one another. All four rage against Hindi and Hindutva. Almost all the major States away from north India have bipolar rivalries, and are without a strong BJP or Congress presence at the moment, excepting Karnataka. These include Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as well. Why have they not challenged the BJP or the Congress at the Centre? Why have they not made concerted efforts to dismantle the hold of the Hindi heartland, the Hindi language and the might of UP over the last several decades? Why are the States not taking concerted proactive action to smash, break, mould, the north's overbearingness?

With its genuine distinctiveness vis-à-vis Hindutva, the Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu only prove their individuation and mettle effortlessly. But one of the inbuilt problems for Dravidianism is that it has always been perceived and imagined as centred on Tamil identity.

Its critiques over caste, and other contributions are known, but haven't spread from the south to the north, while Hindutva has reached many corners of India. Dravidianism is too closely tied with Tamilness, which is a natural strength inside the state, and a weakness outside it. Has its association and synonymy with Tamil identity and politics and language, made Dravidian parties parochial? Make no mistake, it is the case with every other regional party, outside of north India.

However the Tamil parties have a special quality in being the antithesis of Hindutva that needs to reach and percolate to the rest of India. Here, newer parties like the AAP and slightly older parties (but much younger than other regional parties) like the TMC are not burdened with the past. And yet they aren't ideological like the Dravidian parties. They may have shown their dynamism and can-do in countering and defeating entrenched rivals like the BJP

or the Congress or the once-strong CPM. But due to their proximity to the Hindi heartland, where Hindutva discourse is the only currency these days, they cannot take it on full throttle. If the BJP has appropriated and parlayed Ambedkar, then the BJP's opponents have had to modify their stance towards Hindutva. As have parts of the north-east of India, where the BJP has stamped its presence over the last seven years. So, the full counter to Hindutva can only come from the deep south and not via strategic accommodation, but ideological contestation.

The truth has to be faced. Many regional parties in the south and elsewhere have associated or supported the NDA or the UPA Governments in the past. If they complain about Hindi imposition each time it crops up, it begs the question: What were they doing all along to break the north's hold over national politics? It's a loop: the Centre acts, the States react. Why should that be so? In a democracy, why should Hindi majoritarianism assert its power over the rest of India? Why can't the States of the south or the east, take the lead? Is it too late?

(The writer teaches at Vidyashilp University, Bangalore. Views are personal.)

