

**OPINION 6**  
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ARE SIMPLE PEOPLE

**WORLD 8**  
ASTRONOMERS FIND SUPERMASSIVE  
BLACK HOLES INSIDE DYING GALAXIES

**MONEY 10**  
ONGC BECOMES INDIA'S 2ND MOST  
PROFITABLE FIRM AFTER RELIANCE

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## JD(U) dumps Steel Min RCP Singh

BJP names Nirmala for K'taka RS seat; Goyal, Naqvi, Bajpayee among 16 BJP candidates; Azad not in Cong list

PNS ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

The Janata Dal (U) has denied Rajya Sabha (RS) nomination to Union Steel Minister RCP Singh, replacing him with a lesser-known leader from Jharkhand Kheeru Mahto for the upcoming RS polls in Bihar.

In a similar development, contrary to speculation Congress did not nominate its senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, or any other member of the G-23 group of dissidents, in its list of ten candidates announced on Sunday. Former Union Minister P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, and Ajay Maken besides senior leader Rajeev Shukla and Randeep Singh Surjewala figure in the list.

Meanwhile, the BJP on Sunday released its list of 16 candidates for elections to the Upper House which includes Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who will



contest from Karnataka, and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal who will go to the Upper House from Maharashtra.

The decision to deny a berth to RCP Singh comes amid reports that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and several senior JD(U) leaders reportedly opposed Singh's nomination over his growing proximity with the BJP leadership. With this, the JD(U) will have no presence in the Modi Government unless the BJP accommodates him within the next six months. RCP Singh's current term in the Rajya Sabha ends on July 7.

The name of Mahto, the party's former Jharkhand unit chief, was announced here by JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh. A former MLA, Mahto belongs to the Kurmi caste, that

of Nitish Kumar and RCP Singh. RCP Singh was inducted into the Union Cabinet only last year and is currently enjoying his second-consecutive term in the Upper House.

Any possibility of Singh securing a nomination from the BJP also did not fructify as the saffron party renominated Satish Chandra Dubey and its state secretary Shambhu Sharan Patel as its two candidates from Bihar. Patel comes from the extremely backward caste (Dhanuk), which constitutes nearly 4 per cent of votes. Dhanuks have traditionally supported JD(U).

To make way for Patel, the BJP denied renomination to another sitting MP Gopal Narain Singh.

Announcing Kheeru Mahto's nomination, JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh said, "He is a commoner, poor party worker and this is another step in honouring party workers who have been associated with us since the days of Samata Party."

"We want to expand beyond Bihar as well," he added, in response to questions about why the JD(U) did not select someone from Bihar, the State where it is in power.

Of the 16 BJP candidates, six are from Uttar Pradesh. These include two women — Darshana

Contd on Page 2

Judge's wife found hanging at Delhi flat; leaves 3 suicide notes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 42-year-old woman — the wife of a Saket court judge — was found hanging from a ceiling fan at her brother's house in South Delhi's Rajpur Khurd area, Maidan Garhi, on Saturday. Police said they have recovered three suicide notes near the body. Police said the judge's wife has clearly stated in the suicide notes that she does not hold anyone responsible for her death. According to Benita Mary Jaiker, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, additional session judge at Saket court Ashok Beniwal, a resident of Saket Court residential complex, on Saturday informed the police at 10.30 P.M. that his wife had been to the Malviya Nagar market at 11.30 A.M.

Continued on Page 2

## Plane with 4 Indians on board missing in Nepal

Bad weather hampers bid to locate aircraft, 22 people aboard

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The fate of 22 people, including four members of an Indian family, on board a Nepalese airlines plane remained unclear as bad weather and blankets of clouds made it difficult to locate the aircraft that went missing on Sunday in the mountainous region of the Himalayan nation minutes after taking off from the tourist city of Pokhara, officials said. The condition of the plane belonging to Tara Air that took off at 10:15 am from



Pokhara, 200 kilometers east of Kathmandu, is unknown till now, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) said in a statement.

The turboprop Twin Otter 9N-AET plane had four Indian nationals, two Germans and 13 Nepali passengers besides a three-member Nepali crew, said Sudarshan Bartaula, a spokesperson at the airlines.

The plane was flying from the city of Pokhara to Jomsom, a popular tourist town in central Nepal. The airline issued the list

of passengers which identified four Indians as Ashok Kumar Tripathy, his wife Vaibhavi Bandekar (Tripathy) and their children Dhanush and Ritika. The family is currently residing in Thane city near Mumbai.

"As the search operations carried out in possible sites have been hindered due to hilly terrain and bad weather, the status of the aircraft is still unknown," the CAAN statement said. "However, the Rescue Coordination Centre

Continued on Page 2

Monsoon arrives 3 days early in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon has reached Kerala three days before the usual onset date of June 1. After it failed to arrive on Friday (May 27) as predicted earlier, the IMD on Saturday had said that the onset of monsoon might take another 2-3 days. This is only the fourth occasion since 2010 when the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala happened before time (June 1).

As per the records of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the monsoon had arrived earlier than usual in 2010 (May 31), 2017 (May 30), and 2018 (May 29).

The earliest onset over Kerala since 2005 was recorded in 2006, when the monsoon arrived on May 26. The rains are expected to reach Delhi between June 25-30. The IMD made the declaration regarding the arrival of monsoon after it

Continued on Page 2

## Moosewala shot dead in Punjab

Attack came day after security cover nixed; Cong, BJP slam Mann Govt

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH



Popular Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Punjab's Mansa district, a day after the State Government withdrew his security

cover. His death sparked off a political slugfest with the BJP and the Congress slamming the Punjab Government. Punjab police said that the attack seemed to be due to a gang-war. Police also said that a Canada-based gangster has claimed responsibility for the attack. "Lawrence Bishnoi gang is involved in this murder. Lucky, member of the

gang has taken responsibility from Canada," Punjab DGP VK Bhawra told the media. Punjab Police has also formed a special investigation team to probe the incident.

Mansa civil surgeon Dr Ranjeet Rai told reporters that Moosewala was brought dead at the civil hospital. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Mansa)

Continued on Page 2

Govt drops advisory against sharing photocopy of Aadhaar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has withdrawn an Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) advisory that cautioned the general public against sharing photocopy of their Aadhaar with any organisation. The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) said it is withdrawing the press release as it can lead to misinterpretation. "The release advised the people to not to share photocopy

Continued on Page 2



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# Hry CM allocates of ₹2,711 cr for development work in Gurugram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Haryana chief minister (CM) Manohar Lal Khattar announced an allocation of about Rs 2,711 crore for different development work in all four constituencies of Gurugram district during a 'Pragati Rally' at Gurugram on Sunday.

He claimed that this is one of the biggest ever allocations for the development of Gurugram passed by the government during BJP ruling in the state.

He also inaugurated a government Women's college built on 10 acres at Rs 14.5 crore in Sector-52.

He said that the present state Government strongly believes in making the youth self-reliant by providing employment opportunities to them.

During the rally, Khattar also took a dig at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Kurukshetra rally

on Sunday and without taking AAP national governor Arvind Kejriwal's name he said a leader is misleading innocent people of the state in the name of free education and electricity.

"This is the reason we are working on stand-up policy, but some leaders are trying to mislead the public with their 'sitdown policy' and promising freebies for them. This policy is very hazardous and people now understand the disadvantages of this policy as nothing has been given to the people of Delhi and now Punjab," Khattar said.

"The Haryana government have started several skill development program so that one can do a job and even start their own business. If someone is capable physically and mentally one should work to achieve his goal rather than sit and look for free things," he said

Khattar said the AAP luckily win the Punjab election but the people of Punjab will soon



face the truth.

Khattar announced that the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) would execute various projects costing Rs. 1,275 crore. These include work of 200 MLD Waste Water Treatment Plant to be constructed at a cost of Rs 235 crore and sewerage system for Sectors - 77 to 80 and Sectors - 103 to 115 at a cost of Rs 965 crore. Apart from this, an amount of Rs 75 crore has also

been announced to complete the work of the drainage network of Sectors 68 to 115 of Badshahpur.

Besides this, an amount of Rs 200 crore has also been announced to Municipal Corporation, Gurugram for executing various works.

The state government has planned to regularize unauthorized colonies with prescribed norms. A list of 60 colonies has been prepared in the Gurugram district except

# Thrikkakkara likely to remain with Cong

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A sedately begun campaign almost a month ago in the Thrikkakkara assembly constituency for the bye-election to be held on May 31 came to a conclusion on Sunday evening amidst cacophony and confusion as charges, counter charges and allegations flying all over to wrest as well as retain the seat.

The Indian National Congress which was the first to announce the name of the candidate without the customary inter group rivalry for which the party is famous, completed the formalities of the campaign as it was begun. Uma Thomas, the Congress candidate, completed the campaign formalities and looked confident to retain the seat which was earlier held by her husband P T Thomas whose demise caused the bye-election.

"There is no doubt about our chances. The constituency is a Congress stronghold and we are sure to win the seat

despite the blatant violations of the game by the CPI(M)," said V D Satheshan, Leader of the Opposition who was in charge of the campaign. All the big guns of the Congress party in the State including the MLAs and MPs undertook house to house campaign to make use of the discontentment among the electorate over the failure of the CPI(M)-led Government in all spheres, said Mohammed Shiyaz, the District Congress Committee chief.

Sunday started in a tense note as P C George, the seven-term law maker of the assembly who had been arrested, remanded and released on bail, declaring at his home town that he would not be presenting himself before the police station in the State capital on Sunday despite the summons by the superintendent of police. "I have a lot of personal issues to attend to it and they cannot insist that I should be present at Thiruvananthapuram as per their whimsies," George told The Pioneer. He cam-

paigned actively for he BJP's A N Radhakrishnan, who has succeeded in retaining his image as a challenger till the curtains came down for campaigning.

P Sujathan, veteran scribe based in Ernakulam, said that Uma Thomas would score an easy victory. "Her campaign had decency and dignity. She did not attack anybody during her campaign. The unanimity in the Congress in electing the candidate and the systematic campaign has made inroads into all regions of the constituency," said Sujathan.

He was quick to point out that the goof-up by the CPI(M) in the selection of party candidate for the election is in all likelihood would boomerang on the Marxists," said Sujathan.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and LDF Convener P Jayarajan chose to stay put in the constituency for the last three weeks and this is an indication of the tension undergoing by the comrades, according to Sujathan.

# Govt to provide financial aid to small hardware traders, exporters

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The State Government has decided to provide financial help to the small and medium hardware traders and exporters of Aligarh. Regarding this, the grant amount in the Accelerated Export Promotion Scheme has been increased to two times. Along with this the rules have also become simpler so that they can export their products directly. The amount of grant has also been increased for wire.

In order to compete with hardware exports from China, Taiwan and other countries, the state government is preparing to connect the small and medium enterprises of Aligarh hardware with direct export. More than 500 small and medium businessmen are likely to benefit from this.

Apart from America, Britain, France and Germany, arrangements will be made to organize exhibition of hardware and building fitting materials in Arab countries. This will also include the entrepreneurs who produce the hardware and the wires.

Till last year, under the export promotion scheme, financial assistance was available only up to Rs 30 lakh in all items. Only entrepreneurs with large and high turnover were involved in this. Now the grant amount will be available up to Rs 75 lakh. There is a provision of providing two lakh rupees for quality related certification.

Application has to be made for 20 days in advance to put up a stall in the exhibition.

Modifications can be made up to seven days from the date of application. The in-charge of the District Industries Center will send the application along with the recommendation to the Export Promotion Bureau within 21 days. Which will be finalized by a committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Export Commissioner.

The business of the district is about six thousand crores, which is planned to be made 8 thousand crores. In this, the business of hardware and building fitting materials is Rs 2000 crore, while Rs 4,000 crore is of frozen meat. Preparations are being made to export hardware up to Rs 4 thousand crore by holding exhibitions abroad.

# Yogi asks UP BJP workers to start preparations for LS polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, asked Bharatiya Janata Party workers to start preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and move forward with the target of winning 75 out of the state's 80 seats.

In 2019, the BJP had won 62 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh while its ally Apna Dal (Sonelal) had emerged victorious in two constituencies.

"We have to prepare the ground for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from now. We should move ahead with the target of winning 75 seats," Yogi Adityanath said at the BJP's one-day state executive meeting in Lucknow on Sunday.

This was the first state executive meeting of the BJP

after the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh concluded in March 2022.

"With the help of people and by dint of our hard work during COVID-19 pandemic, we got better results in the assembly polls," he said.

"In the 2024 general elections, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have to march ahead with the target of winning 75 seats in Uttar Pradesh," Yogi said.

Congratulating Modi for completing eight years as prime minister, Yogi Adityanath said with the 2024 roadmap, the BJP would succeed in achieving its target.

Earlier, addressing the meeting, BJP state president Swatantra Dev Singh congratulated Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda and senior party leaders and people of the state for the party's victory in the assembly polls.

The BJP is organising a massive public outreach campaign to mark the eighth anniversary of the Modi government, from May 30 to June 14. The series of events will begin with Modi releasing the benefits under the PM Cares for Children scheme on May 30. During the event, which coincides with the oath-taking of the second term of the BJP government at the Centre, the prime minister will hand over cheques for the children orphaned during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to BJP national general secretary Arun Singh.

# JD(U) dumps Steel Min....

**From Page 1**

Singh and Sangeeta Yadav — from the state.

The party also announced the names of two candidates each from Karnataka, Maharashtra. Piyush Goyal and Anil Sukhdevrao Bonde have been nominated from Maharashtra, while Nirmala Sitharaman and actor-turned-politician Jaggesh from Karnataka. The name of BJP general secretary Dushyant Gautam, who was a Rajya Sabha member from Haryana, was missing from the first list of candidates. Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi is also retiring and would need renomination to the Rajya Sabha. He is an RS member from Jharkhand. The party has given a ticket to former MLA Krishan Lal Panwar from Haryana.

Dr. Laxmikant Bajpayee and Dr. Radha Mohan Aggarwal have been nominated from Uttar Pradesh. Party has announced six nominations from UP. Kavita Patidar will be the party's nominee from Madhya Pradesh, Ghanshyam Tiwari from Rajasthan, and Kalpana Saini from Uttarakhand.

On the Congress front, Gulam Nabi Azad, a leading member of the G23 rebels, has been denied a ticket.

Sources in the party, however, said that if Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren agreed, then Azad may be accommodated from the State where Soren's JMM and Congress is in a coalition government. But what has come as a surprise is the several leaders not being nominated from their home state. AICC chief spokesperson and a former Minister from Haryana Surjewala has been nominated from Rajasthan, while Mukul Wasnik and Pramod Tiwari from Rajasthan. Vivek Tankha has been retained from Madhya Pradesh. Maken who was expecting a nomination from Rajasthan is now a candidate for RS from Haryana.

According to the late-night announcements made by AICC after approval from Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former Union minister P Chidambaram was named the party's candidate from Tamil Nadu.

"Congress president Sonia Gandhi has approved the names as party candidates to contest the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha," an AICC statement said.

While Rajeev Shukla and Ranjeet Rajan have been fielded from Chhattisgarh, Jairam Ramesh comes from Karnataka.

Imran Pratapgarhi has been made the party candidate from Maharashtra where Congress is In a coalition government with Shiv Sena and NCP.

Earlier, hectic parleys continued for two days to decide on the candidates with Sonia conducting a series of meetings with several leaders including Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren during which Baghel insisted on nominating Priyanka Gandhi as an Upper House Candidate from his state

# Moosewala shot dead...

**From Page 1**

Gobinder Singh said Moosewala, 27, was shot several times. He was in his car, a Mahindra Thar, in village Jawahar Ke when he was attacked. He had fought on the Congress ticket from Mansa Assembly seat in the recent Assembly election and was defeated by AAP's Dr Vijay Singla.

Calling Punjabi singer and politician Sidhu Moosewala's murder on Sunday shocking, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: "Sidhu Moosewala's murder is saddening and shocking. I just spoke to Punjab CM Mann sahib. Culprits will be given the harshest punishment. I request everyone to remain strong and maintain peace. May God give peace to his soul," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's tweet on the incident.

"I am shocked and deeply saddened by the gruesome murder of Sidhu Moosewala. Nobody involved will be spared. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and his fans across the world. I appeal everyone to stay calm," Mann said in his tweet.

However, the BJP and the Congress slammed the AAP

Government in Punjab. The BJP held Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab-in-charge Raghav Chaddha responsible for the murder of Moosewala.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said the "remote controlling" of the Punjab Government by Kejriwal and Chaddha has rendered Bhagwant Mann a "puppet Chief Minister".

Patra wondered how the Punjab Government released the "confidential list of 400 people" whose security was withdrawn a day before.

"What input did you take before withdrawing security and why released it," he asked adding "obviously to gain public applause".

He said both the leaders "who know little about Punjab" should seek an apology from the people of the State.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in a tweet expressed shock at the incident. He said, "Deeply shocked and saddened by the murder of promising Congress leader and talented artist, Sidhu Moosewala. My heartfelt condolences to his loved ones and fans from across the world."

Other leaders of the Congress and political leaders expressed shock and anger over the killing of Moosewala and attacked the AAP Government too.

**DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA**  
E-mail: [sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in](mailto:sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in) Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010

**LOOK OUT NOTICE**

On 24.05.2022, one Ramesh S/O Khushi Ram R/O Kishanpur W. No. 05 Tehsil Billawar and District Kathua lodged a written report at P/S Billawar stating therein that his grandson-in-law namely Gourav Sharma S/O Raghbir Sharma got married with his grand daughter-in-law on 18.02.2022 and was resided at Kishanpur at his in-laws house. The said Gourav Sharma is serving in Army and presently posted at Army Camp Sunjwan Jammu. On 21.05.2022 at about 1130 hours, he went missing from his in-laws house. On this, missing report vide DDR No. 03dated 24.05.2022 has been entered at P/S Billawar. During the course of investigation, best efforts were made to locate missing individual, but he is still un-traced.

As such Description Roll/Photograph of said missing individuals is being shared with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about her whereabouts may inform us accordingly. The informer will be rewarded suitably.

**Description Roll :-**

- Name :- Gourav Sharma
- Father :- Ragubir Chand
- Permanent Address :- Maroonie (Kishanpur)
- Present Address :- Maroonie (Kishanpur)
- Tehsil :- Billawar
- Police Station :- Billawar
- Age :- 24 years
- Height :- 05 Feet 6 Inch
- Complexion :- Wheatish
- Built :- Average
- Eyes :- Black
- Languages Known :- Dogri/Hindi

Any information related to the whereabouts of the subject may be communicated on following Contacts:-

1. DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)
2. dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in (Mail ID)
3. PCR Kathua-01922-234311 (Phone/Fax)
4. Police Station Billawar 01922-222022

No: DIP/JA-2217/22  
Dated: 28.05.2022

Sd/- Sr. Superintendent of Police, Kathua.



# UP Govt to fulfil promises made in Sankalp Patra 2022

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is making rapid strides towards fulfilling the promises made to the people in the Bharatiya Janata Party's Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra 2022 during the assembly elections in the state.

Making this claim here on Sunday evening, an official spokesman claimed that the government has made enough provisions in its 2022-23 Budget to fulfil 97 of the promises made in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra 2022, covering a wide gamut of areas, including widening the scope of welfare schemes for farmers, youth and women, infrastructural development, law and

order and women's safety, industrial growth etc.

He said the budget includes proposals worth Rs 54,883 crore for 44 new demands/schemes.

The official said that prominent among these budgetary provisions was the proposal of Rs 3301.74 crore for providing free LPG cylinders to the poor beneficiaries on the occasions of Holi and Diwali, which was one of the key points in the Sankalp Patra.

He said the government had also proposed Rs 1,500 crore for distribution of free smartphones and tablets to students under the Vivekananda Youth Empowerment Scheme, which was another highlight of the Sankalp Patra.

# Monsoon arrives...

From Page 1

was satisfied with all meteorological parameters, including the cloud cover over the Arabian Sea and Kerala, rainfall over 14 stations in Kerala, and the strengthening and depth of westerly winds, among others. Despite the early arrival of the southwest monsoon over the Andaman Sea on May 16 this year, the monsoon's progress thereafter had slowed down.

"There has been widespread rainfall activity over Kerala during the past 24 hours and out of the 14 rainfall monitoring stations for declaring the onset of monsoon over Kerala, 10 have received rainfall of 2.5 mm or more.

Thus, all the conditions for the onset of monsoon over Kerala have been satisfied on Sunday (May 29, 2022)," said a statement from the IMD confirming the arrival.

# Judge's wife found...

From Page 1

to buy groceries but did not return. He filed a missing complaint at the Saket Police Station and investigation was carried out, a senior police officer said.

The police analysed the CCTV footage near Malviya Nagar market and the judge's home.

"We identified an autorickshaw driver who was seen with the woman and questioned him. He told us that he dropped the woman at the Rajpur Khurd area in the morning. We informed the husband about this. He told us that his brother-in-law lives there. We went to the house. The door was closed from inside. We broke the iron grill and opened it. The woman was found dead on the first floor," said the DCP.

# Plane with Indians on board...

From Page 1

remains open for 24 hours and the search operations will be intensified through air as well as land routes," it added. An Army helicopter as well as private choppers were taking part in the search, it said.

A Nepal Army spokesman said that troops and the helicopter with rescue teams are trying to locate the possible incident site that is believed to be in and around Lete, Mustang.

"Poor visibility due to bad weather is hindering the efforts. The plane has not yet been located. We are trying to reach the place where locals have allegedly seen something burning. Once our troops reach the location then only we can verify the findings officially and independently," the spokesperson said.

He said that the Army has "halted all efforts of search and rescue for today due to loss of daylight and adverse weather. The search will resume early in the morning on Monday both from air and ground."

The search and rescue team is on

standby at Jomsom, he added.

In a tweet, the Indian embassy in Nepal issued an emergency hotline number :-+977-9851107021.

"Tara Air flight 9NAET that took off from Pokhara at 9.55 AM today with 22 people onboard, including 4 Indians, has gone missing. Search and rescue operation is on. The embassy is in touch with their family," it said.

The crew of the aircraft was led by captain Prabhakar Prasad Ghimire. Utsav Pokhrel is the co-pilot while Kisni Thapa is the air hostess, Pokhara Airport Information Officer Dev Raj Adhikari.

The aircraft was scheduled to land at Jomsom Airport in the Western mountainous region at 10:15 AM. The aircraft lost contact with the tower from the sky above Ghorepani on the Pokhara-Jomsom air route, aviation sources said.

According to an air traffic controller at Jomsom Airport, they have an unconfirmed report about a loud noise in Ghasa of Jomsom. It was suspected that the aircraft crashed in the Dhaulagiri area.

# Govt drops...

From Page 1

of their Aadhaar with any organisation because it can be misused. Alternatively, a masked Aadhaar which displays only the last four digits of Aadhaar number, can be used. However, in view of the possibility of the misinterpretation of the Press Release, the same stands withdrawn with immediate effect," the statement said. MeitY, in the withdrawal statement, said the UIDAI issued Aadhaar card holders are only advised to exercise normal prudence in using and sharing their Aadhaar numbers. "Aadhaar Identity Authentication ecosystem has provided adequate features for protecting and safeguarding the identity and privacy of the Aadhaar holder," the statement added.



# Rape accused dies in police custody

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man allegedly died in police custody at Dabri Police Station of Delhi's Dwarka district. Police said that as per the medico-legal case (MLC), the man died due to injuries sustained after he was beaten by the public for allegedly sexually assaulting his stepdaughter.

The man has been identified as Subodh, a resident of Madhu Vihar in Uttam Nagar area and he was arrested on May 27 in a rape case by the police team of Dabri police station.

According to Shankar Choudhary, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka district, on Friday a police control room (PCR) call was received regarding rape of a child following which a police team was dispatched for the enquiry.

"During enquiry, the mother of the victim told that Subodh, who is step father of her daughter had committed



sexual assault on her child," said the DCP. "Before the police team arrived, the locals had already beaten Subodh. The police team took the accused to Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital in Hari Nagar for the treatment and medical examination," said the DCP.

"He was medically examined and MLC was prepared in which the doctor stated that the patient was brought to emergency for medical examination and capability test A/H/O beaten by the public as told by self," said the DCP.

The MLC stated that Subodh had abrasion over face, pattern bruises over upper back and the kind of weapon used might be blunt.

"After the treatment, Subodh was lodged in lock up

at Dabri police station after an First Information Report (FIR) under 4 Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was registered against him on the basis of complaint received by the police," said the DCP.

"At around 6 am next day, Subodh started feeling unwell following which the Station House Officer (SHO) of the police station along with a police staff rushed him to DDU Hospital where doctor opined that he was brought dead," said the DCP.

Police said that a case under section 304(culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered on May 28 at Dabri police station and proceedings under section 176 IPC is being carried along with the rest legal proceedings.

"Autopsy report is awaited to be conducted by a medic board for neutrality and fair enquiry and further investigations are on in both the cases," police added.

# Activist accused of sexually harassing woman on JNU campus; case lodged

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An activist of the All India Students' Association (AISA) has been accused of sexually harassing a woman inside the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus. The Delhi Police has registered a case against a JNU student for allegedly molesting a fellow student.

The case was lodged on the complaint by a third year student of JNU on Saturday, the Delhi Police said in a tweet. "A case has been registered U/S 354A/509 IPC at PS Vasant Kunj North following a complaint of molestation from a JNU 3rd yr student.

"The accused, who is her known college mate has joined the investigation. Further probe is on," it tweeted. According to a statement issued by the Concerned Women of JNU, the woman was inappropriately touched by the accused without her consent.

AISA said the complaint has been forwarded to its Gender Sensitisation Committee for enquiry and the activist in question had been

told not to participate in organisational activities. The statement further mentioned that the victim has complained to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to take "prompt action to save her from any more mental trauma and intimidation".

"The survivor faced sexual harassment by the accused touching her inappropriately without consent and grabbing her forcefully from behind and continued this disgusting act."

The survivor is also being conveyed through classmates about conspiracies to defame and slut shame her and her credibility from the grapevine," the 'Concerned Women of JNU' said in the statement. The date of the incident was not mentioned in the statement.

In a tweet, ABVP JNU demanded to take immediate and stringent action against sexual assaulters along with their protectors.

"The campus has recently witnessed two cases of sexual assault. The assaulters are from AISA and NSUI. Prominent left activist have misled and threatened the survivors," it

said. In its tweet, ABVP JNU said the accused has been identified as Prasanna Raj, who is pursuing a Master's degree from the Centre for Political Studies (CPS). The alleged incident took place on the rooftop of JNU's Chandrabagh hotel.

"Not only did he attempt to forcefully sexually assault her, but also threatened her if she spoke out in public. The senior 'comrades' have been desperately trying to shield this atrocious act.

Not one female activist of the organization has spoken up against this despicable, vile assault," ABVP said in a statement. It added that the accused Prasanna Raj was seen roaming freely within JNU campus, with no fear of law while other AISA members have been involved in victim blaming. In a statement, AISA acknowledged that an "unsigned" public statement has been issued regarding a complaint of sexual harassment against an AISA member. The student organisation also expressed solidarity with complainant in her pursuit of justice.



AAP supremo and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal during a State-level rally in Kurukshetra, on Sunday PTI Photo

# CM Kejriwal challenges BJP in Haryana to contest 2024 Assembly poll under Khattar

STAFF REPORTER ■ KURUSHETRA/NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday challenged the ruling BJP in Haryana to contest the 2024 Assembly election under the leadership of incumbent Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and said those who want to make their children doctors and engineers should support the AAP and those who want them to become goons, rioters and rapists should side with its rival parties.

He was addressing AAP's 'Ab Badlega Haryana' rally in Kurukshetra ahead of the June 19 urban civic body polls in Haryana. Claiming to have ended corruption in Delhi and Punjab and improved the conditions of schools and hospitals in the national capital, Kejriwal also said his party wants to replicate the same in Haryana.

"I want to ask those who want their children to be engineers and doctors and lawyers to come with us and those who want their children to be goons, rioters and rapists, to go with them," Kejriwal said in an apparent attack on the BJP-led Manohar Lal Khattar Government in the state. This was Kejriwal's first rally in Haryana after the party's stunning performance in the Assembly polls in neighbouring Punjab.

Like his rallies in other parts of the country, here, too, he began his speech with the slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Vande Mataram'. Kejriwal said that some journalists were telling me that 'the BJP is going to remove (Manohar Lal) Khattar sahab, they are replacing him with someone else as chief minister'. Have you heard about it?

Referring to the visit of the then US First Lady Melania Trump to a Delhi government school during her brief visit to the capital in 2020, Kejriwal said: "It was a big thing that the American President's wife came to see Kejriwal's school. We must have done something.

I would like to ask who came to see the Haryana schools of Khattar sahab? Has someone even come from Sri Lanka? Has someone come from our country? People come to see your schools only if you do something."

Kejriwal dwelt upon his claims of improved conditions of government schools in Delhi and said children of the poor alone used to study in government schools earlier in Delhi.

He said the condition of schools in the national capital earlier was as bad as what is now in Haryana and only the children of the poor used to study there.

"But now the rich people too are sending their wards to government schools (in Delhi)," he said. In his native state Haryana, Kejriwal said: "I like it the most when people call me Haryana's lal.

Haryana is my birthplace. And the land of birth is like a mother. A person can't repay the debt of a mother and the motherland even in seven lives."

Giving a call to support AAP candidates in civic body polls, Kejriwal said: "In the civic polls, show your strength like people of Punjab and Delhi have already shown.

Throw out all these political parties. Give us one chance, we will clean corruption from municipal corporations with jhadu and in 2024, we will remove corruption from Haryana.

Only AAP can give an honest government. We will end corruption in Haryana, too, after Punjab and Delhi."

# Heavy rainfall lashes parts of Delhi-NCR leading to waterlogging, traffic snarls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rainfall lashed parts of Delhi and NCR causing waterlogging and traffic congestion on Sunday. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the weather is likely to remain pleasant on Monday.

The maximum temperature settled at 40.7 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the season while the minimum temperature was recorded at 28.7 degrees Celsius, two notches above season's average, it said. The sky will be partly cloudy and there is a possibility of thunderstorms and light-

ning in the city on Monday, the IMD official said. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle around 41 and 28 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, the humidity levels oscillated between 61 per cent and 49 per cent.

The 24-hour air quality of the city was recorded in the 'poor' category on Sunday with the AQI clocking 273 at 4 pm, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.



# Submit plan for razing of 3 garbage mountains: LG to officers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Sunday issued instructions to officers to submit a plan of action within the next three days for complete razing of all three garbage mountains situated at Ghazipur, Bhalswa, and Okhla after he visited the sanitary landfill site at Ghazipur.

He also instructed that a dedicated team of officers is constituted to draw out plan of action mentioning a fixed date

of completion. The L-G also suggested adopting the reverse engineering model so as to ensure that the deadlines are met and goals achieved.

"The action plan to be submitted by MCD will be monitored on a regular basis by LG himself and if required, he would visit the site to see actual progress at regular intervals.

A special cell will also be put in place in LG Secretariat to monitor the work on a weekly basis," the LG office said in a statement. Saxena was accompanied by the Chief

Secretary, Special Officer, MCD, Commissioner, MCD, Pr. Chief Conservator of Forest and other senior officials during his visit that went more than two hours in scorching.

Besides, a special cell will also be put in place in the LG Secretariat to monitor the work on a weekly basis.

During his visit to site, LG observed that recycling activities were being undertaken on mounds generating substantial dust that was adding to haze and pollution in adjoining areas. He has therefore asked

officers to address this by using recycled water from nearby STP for sprinkling and settling dust. Spread over 70 acres, the Ghazipur landfill site has legacy waste amounting to 140 lakh metric tonnes.

Apart from this, he emphasized a campaign to involve the people of Delhi, NGOs, Raggickers, and other civil society groups in efforts to shape skyline and landscape of Delhi so as to make city free of mountains of garbage at various locations in National Capital.

# MCD plans massive plantation drive to help reduce air pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to minimise the air pollution in the national Capital, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Saturday said that in a massive plantation drive, the civic body will plant nearly 85,000 trees and about 5.20 lakh shrubs and ornamental plants this year.

However, the MCD also said that they will develop 20 more 'mini forests' this year.

According to a senior MCD official, at this juncture, when the world is battling with the effects of global warming and is looking for a solution, the most effective step to tackle the menace is to ensure more and more plantations. "Various agencies working to

reduce global warming have also found in their research that trees reduce the temperature by three to five degrees. Considering all these facts, the MCD has set out a target of planting about 85,000 trees and 5,20,000 shrubs and ornamental plants this year," he said.

While informing about their plan to achieve the goal, he said, the civic agency has identified parks, regional offices, corporation schools, dispensaries, roadsides, community centers, etc where trees, saplings, and shrubs will be planted.

Apart from this, the corporation has developed 'mini forests' by planting about 8,000 additional trees at 17 places last year. "These 'mini-forests' have been developed at places like C-

2 block Keshav Puram, park in front of fire station along Shankar Road, park of Azadpur vegetable market etc.

This year, 'mini forests' will be developed at a total of 20 locations like P U block Pitampura, KL Sharma Park Paschim Vihar, PHC Narela, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Park Outram Lane, Welcome, Yamuna Vihar, Sunder Nagri, Nand Nagri, etc," he stated. "MCD is committed to providing excellent services to the citizens of Delhi.

At present, when citizens are reeling due to problems like pollution and excessive heat, tree plantation campaigns/drives carried out by the Civic Agency will be effective up to an extent in solving this problem in near future," he added.

# DCW to form panel to examine health impact of landfills on women, children

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) will form an expert committee to ascertain the impact of landfill sites in the city on the health of women and children living in their vicinity as well as MCD sanitation workers. The committee shall submit a report to the Government on this issue, according to a statement issued on Sunday.

"Prima facie, we have observed that North MCD has adopted a callous attitude while dealing with the sensitive issue of growing landfills in the capital," DCW chief Swati Maliwal said in a statement on Sunday.

Noting that people are living around landfill sites for many years, she said they have been forced to live in a hell-like

situation and their health has been severely impacted. Accusing the unified and North MCD of not making any efforts whatsoever for cleaning the landfill site until an NGT order in 2019, she alleged that despite expenditure of Rs 70 crore, landfills continue to be in a bad situation.

"Also, MCD never bothered to conduct any study on solid waste management or the health impact of landfills.

In fact, its answer to the problem seems to be to simply evict the people from their homes who have been living around the dumpsite for several years. The Commission shall conduct an in-depth study on this issue and give a report to the Government," she said.

A massive fire had broken out at the landfill site at

Bhalswa Dairy on April 25. The DCW learnt that residents of the area had to face several health issues due to the blaze, it said.

"The residents informed the Commission that poisonous fumes generated due to the fire, which raged on for several days, severely affected the health of all residents including women and children.

On a daily basis, the people living in vicinity of landfills in Delhi are subjected to poisonous fumes, unbearable stench and water pollution due to the landfill sites," the statement said.

Maliwal had issued summons to Commissioner, North MCD on April 29 seeking a detailed report on the fire incident. The panel was informed that the Bhalswa landfill site

was commissioned in 1994 by the unified MCD.

From 1994 till 2012, the site was maintained by the unified MCD, and thereafter the site was maintained by the North MCD.

"Officials informed that no steps were taken by MCD for clearing the dumpsite for 25 years, that is from 1994 till 2019. In October 2019, the bio-mining/remediation work for clearing the site was started only after the orders of National Green Tribunal," the panel said.

North MCD stated that an MoU was signed with IOCL for setting up 2500 tonne/day municipal solid waste processing plant but due to high rate received from lone bidder, fresh tender will be invited in July 2022.



The budget allocation for clearing Bhalswa dumpsite in the years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 was Rs five crore, Rs 25 crore, Rs 25 crore and Rs 14.99 crore respectively.

The panel said till date only one study was conducted by MCD for capping Bhalswa dumpsite by engaging a consultant in association with IIT Delhi and an expenditure of Rs 1.95 crore was done on this account. The Commission will also issue notices to MCD seeking similar details regarding other landfill sites as well.

# Traffic management system planned to reduce congestion

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To reduce congestion and facilitate faster vehicular movement, the Delhi Traffic Police has planned an Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS).

The new system that works on machine learning and artificial intelligence will also play a vital role in facilitating a quick passage to emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire tenders.

According to traffic police, also, a command centre to handle operations and monitor the programming will be

set up at the Delhi Police Headquarters. The project aims to synchronise all the traffic signals and automatically regulate the signal light. The ITMS will also caution motorists on diversions to be taken in case of any congestion ahead.

This system will also be integrated with all the civic-body run parking lots in order to alert motorists on the free spaces that are available before they could reach the venue.

"They can look for updates on the Municipality Corporation of Delhi's mobile application, which will generate a pop up message. It will

also be linked with Google maps," SK Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic Headquarters-II), said. The Delhi Traffic Police signed a Memorandum of Understanding for an integrated traffic management system with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), which has further assigned the task to a consultant firm. Currently, the project is in its initial stage, Singh said.

"We have been given eight months' time for the project and the first Detailed Project Report has to be prepared after surveying the traffic at 42

junctions to cover 1,200 signals and 600 blinkers. It has to be submitted by November this year," the officer added.

A few days ago, a massive fire had broken out at a building in Outer Delhi's Mundka and it claimed 27 lives. It was alleged that traffic congestion delayed the arrival of some of the fire tenders and that their early arrival would have minimised casualties.

On this, Singh said the new ITMS will also incorporate a green corridor to facilitate hassle-free movement of emergency vehicles. "At many of the junctions, it has also been noticed that even if there

is no traffic, the red light continues to be on. So, by having an adaptive system, it will identify the traffic volume and accordingly change the timing. This will reduce the stoppage time at the junction," the DCP said.

Meanwhile, as part of the project, traffic authorities have identified accident hotspots and they are currently looking for congestion points in Delhi, he said. The Public Works Department and civic agencies concerned have been roped in to ensure appropriate road engineering. This will then be integrated with the Safe City project, Singh said.

# Meghna Gulzar visits Jamia to recce for film Sam Bahadur

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Filmmaker Meghna Gulzar recently visited the Jamia Millia Islamia to conduct a recce for her film Sam Bahadur, based on the life of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

According to a communication, in case the university is finalised as a location for the shoot, the filming will happen around October 10-15 for about a couple of days. The biopic features Vicky Kaushal in the titular role along with actors Sanya Malhotra and Fatima Sana Shaikh. According

to officials, the team surveyed a building when there were no students there.

Around January-February, the varsity had also played host to the unit of Karan Johar's 'Rocky aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani' which has Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in lead roles. Johar and Bhatt were present in the varsity and the shooting had happened near its library.

"The ad shoots keep happening off and on while film shoots mostly happen in winter months or when the temperature is pleasant. During the

pandemic, many web series and ad films were shot here. The Married Woman, a web series, was also shot here earlier. Another web series Feels Like Home, directed by Sahir Raza, who also made Married Woman, was shot here in October last year," said sources privy to the development.

Last October, students had condemned varsity's decision to rent out campus space for film and ad shoots but keeping it closed for students. The university has still not opened fully with classes happening only for final year students.



# Indian startups continued to create wealth during Covid: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that Covid-19 could not interrupt the growth of Unicorn in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday informed that their numbers have reached 100 this month with 44 of them making their mark last year when coronavirus had resurfaced in a big way.

In his monthly 'maan ki baat' radio programme, Prime Minister asked listeners to plant trees on June 5, the environment day and find "unique ways" to do Yoga on June 21 when International Yoga Day would be celebrated.

Modi is himself to lead the main event of the eighth International Day of Yoga celebrations on June 21 in Mysuru, Karnataka.

In his talk Prime Minister named several "selfless individuals" working for the public good and maintaining cleanliness in different parts of

the country.

Pointing to the number of unicorns in India which has reached the 100-mark, Modi on said that even in the phase of the Covid pandemic, Indian startups have been creating wealth and value with entrepreneurs emerging from smaller cities and towns as well. On the fifth of this month the number of unicorns in India reached the 100-mark.

A unicorn is worth about 7.50 thousand crore rupees, he said.

"The total valuation of these unicorns is more than USD 330 billion, that is, more than 25 lakh crore rupees. Certainly, this is a matter of pride for every Indian," he said. "You will also be surprised to know that out of our total unicorns, 44 came up last year. Not only that, 14 more unicorns were formed anew in 3-4 months this year. This means that even in this phase of the global pandemic, our startups

have been creating wealth and value," he said.

Modi also pointed out that the average annual growth rate of Indian unicorns is more than those of the USA, UK and many other countries. Analysts also say that in the coming years there will be a sharp spike in these numbers, he added.

Noting that the unicorns are diversifying, Modi said they are operating in many fields like E-commerce, Fin-Tech, Ed-Tech and Bio-Tech.

"Another thing which I consider more important is that the world of startups is reflecting the spirit of New India. Today, India's startup ecosystem is not limited to just big cities; entrepreneurs are emerging from smaller cities and towns as well. This shows that in India, the one who has an innovative idea, can create wealth," he said. Modi also stressed the importance of right mentoring when it comes to the world of startups.



He named Sridhar Vembu, a Padma Awardee, who he said is a successful entrepreneur, but now he has also taken up upon himself the task of grooming other entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Meera Shenoy, he said is also one such example doing remarkable work in the field of Market Linked Skills Training for rural, tribal and disabled youth.

Prime Minister paid tribute to the diversity of the country and regional languages and

cited an example of a young girl from Joshimath, Uttarakhand, who learned Kannada language despite being infected by TB and losing her vision.

"Friends, our country is a rich treasure house of many languages, scripts and dialects. Varied attire, cuisine and culture in different regions is our hallmark. As a nation this diversity strengthens us and keeps us united. Modi said shared a "very inspiring example related to this.

"Her name is Kalpana, but her endeavor is full of the true spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshthha Bharat'. Actually, Kalpana has recently passed her class 10th examination in Karnataka, but, the very special thing about her success is that, Kalpana did not know Kannada language till some time ago.

"She not only learned Kannada language in three months, but also proved it by scoring 92 marks. You might be surprised to know this, but it is true. Kalpana is originally from Joshimath in Uttarakhand. She had been suffering from TB earlier and when she was in the class three she lost her eyesight too, but, as they say, 'where there is a will, there is a way'. Kalpana later came in contact with Professor Taramurthy, a resident of Mysuru, who not only encouraged her but also helped her in every way.

Stressing on maintaining cleanliness, Modi asked pil-

grims on to the 'Char-Dham' yatra in Uttarakhand to not to leave garbage behind. He complimented many who have been devotedly clearing the left-over in and around the pilgrim routes.

Stressing on keeping good health, Prime Minister said the corona pandemic has made all realize the overarching importance of health and Yoga being a great medium in ensuring the same.

"From the world's top business persons to film and sports personalities, from students to common people, everyone is making yoga an integral part of one's life," he said.

Modi urged people to celebrate Yoga Day this time in a special way.

"Choose any place in your city, town or village which is most special. This place can be an ancient temple and tourist center, or it could be the banks of a famous river, lake or pond.

With this, along with yoga, the identity of your area will also be reinforced and tourism there will also get a boost", he said.

Prime Minister also mentioned

Hiroshi Koike, a well-known Japanese Director, whom he met during his recent trip to that country.

"You will be very happy to know that he has directed the Mahabharat Project. This project was started in Cambodia and it is continuing for the last 9 years", he said

"Hiroshi Koike ji performs every task in a very different way. Every year, he travels to one country in Asia and produces parts of the Mahabharata with local artists and musicians there. Through this project, he has done productions and given stage performances in nine countries including India, Cambodia, and Indonesia", Prime Minister said referring to Hiroshi's deep attachment with India, he said.

## 50% of rural households have access to tap water connections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICES ■ NEW DELHI

India has covered on an average 50 per cent of the rural households with access to tap water connections, in keeping with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to provide every rural home with safe drinking water.

However, major populated States like Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand continue to report below 25 per cent coverage of functional tap water connection, under the central flagship Jal Jeevan Mission.

In contrast, Goa, Telangana, A&N Islands, D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry and Haryana have already achieved 100 per cent household connections. Punjab, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar have coverage of more than 90 percent and are progressing fast towards attaining the status of



'Har Ghar Jal'

The Jal Jeevan Mission aims to empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions and communities by engaging them in water supply schemes from the very beginning.

Over 9.59 crore rural households spread across States/UTs are getting water within their premises. Women and girls in these households are now free from the century-old drudgery of walking long distances in scorching heat, rain and snow in search of water, said a senior official from the Union Jal Shakti

Ministry..

'Har Ghar Jal' is a flagship programme of the Union Government, implemented by Jal Jeevan Mission under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in partnership with States/UTs to ensure tap water connection in every rural household by 2024.

At the time of the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, only 3.23 Crore households i.e. 17 per cent of the rural population had access to drinking water through taps. The burden of arrangement of water for daily household needs mostly fell on women and young girls.

On poor coverage in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand, a senior official said it was a matter of concern and the Centre was working with states to resolve the issues.

The official said even though coverage was low in these states, groundwork for establishing functional tap water connections was at an

advanced stage and results would soon be visible.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, tap water connections are also being provided to government schools, gram panchayat offices, community health centres (CHCs) and anganwadi centres.

According to official data, tap water supply has been given to 8.6 lakh schools, 8.89 lakh anganwadi centres, and 3.51 lakh gram panchayat offices and CHCs.

Among states and union territories, Jharkhand has the lowest coverage of tap water connections in schools and anganwadi centres at 17.99 per cent and 4.57 per cent, respectively.

As of 27 May, 108 districts, 1,222 blocks, 71,667 Gram Panchayats and 1,51,171 villages have become 'Har Ghar Jal', wherein all rural households have been provided with drinking water through water taps.

## Prepare for action against adverse outcome of suits on Kashi, Gyanvapi: JeM to Muslims

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar has given a call to the Muslims to 'prepare for action' against any adverse outcome of the ongoing suits in various courts in India concerning temple-mosque complexes like Kashi Vishwanath Temple and Gyanvapi Mosque.

In a recent Friday sermon, the Maulana has asked Muslims to rally behind the mosques facing litigations in India, said sources tracking the terror group.

Taking a cue from the JeM exhortations, outfits here like the radical Popular Front of India (PFI) have also given a similar call, exhorting the Muslims to protest such claims of prior existence of temples on mosques like Gyanvapi in Varanasi and Shahi Eidgah in Mathura.



"The JeM plot to galvanise the Muslims in the region is orchestrated by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to exploit the communal faultlines to foment trouble, enhance fan following in the gullible sections of the community as also to portray India as an intolerant country," a senior intelligence official said.

Earlier in 1991, post Babri mosque demolition, the minority Hindus and their temples were targeted in the countries neighbouring India, including in Pakistan, Bangladesh and

Afghanistan.

Following a meeting on May 23 and 24 of PFI's national executive council at Putthanani, the outfit exhorted the Muslims to unite on the ongoing disputes concerning the prior existence of temples on mosques.

The outfit has further asked the Islamic community members to oppose the ongoing action against mosques and places of worship.

In a resolution passed at the national executive meet regarding the temple-mosque dispute, the PFI said that Gyanvapi mosque and Mathura's Shahi Eidgah are outcomes of ill-intentioned petitions by Sangh Parivar organizations and are completely against the Places of Worship Act, 1991 and the courts should not have allowed them.

True to its radical spirit, the PFI has also commented on certain court decisions. In its

resolution, the outfit has said that the Supreme Court upholding the ban on the use of the Vuzukhana of the Gyanvapi Masjid is disappointing.

The PFI further claimed that the courts also did not feel the need to test such claims on the basis of facts and evidence, to the effect that anyone anywhere in the country can make such claims about any place of worship. As a result of this communal elements are now targeting mosques in many parts of the country, the latest example being that of Jama Masjid in Mangaluru, Karnataka. This will lead to never-ending communal enmity and mistrust, it said.

The PFI also appealed to the courts to do justice to the Places of Worship Act 1991 and stay the process of petitions based on communalism seeking change in the status of any place of worship of any community in the country.

## 'Invasive alien species have cost Indian economy ₹11.9 trillion in four decades'

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

At least ten invasive alien species (IAS) out of 330 in India have cost the Indian economy between at least Rs 8.3 trillion to Rs 11.9 trillion in four decades since 1960 which has increased with time, researchers have said. But what is more concerning is there are 'glaring' knowledge gaps incurred by these species to the country's economy, they said.

According to the analysis "Massive economic costs of biological invasions despite widespread knowledge gaps: a dual setback for India," published in the Biological Invasion, India is the second topmost invasion-cost bearing country after the United States.

These costs are likely to be a "gross underrepresentation" of the actual costs based on the global analysis of 112 countries, said the authors of the study.

"The negative economic impacts are documented and available only for 3 percent of the known invasive species and unavailable/masked/underrepresented for the rest 97% of invasive species in India. That's a huge knowledge

gap," said the Lead author of the study, Alok Bang from the Society for Ecology Evolution and Development, Wardha, Maharashtra.

He pointed out that "When costs were specifically assigned, maximum costs were incurred in West, South and North India, by invasive alien insects in semi-aquatic ecosystems; they were incurred mainly by the public and social welfare sector and were associated with damages and losses rather than management expenses.

"Our findings indicate that the reported economic costs grossly underestimate the actual costs, especially considering the expected costs given India's population size, gross domestic product, and high numbers of IAS without reported costs."

The researchers expressed concerns that despite the long-lasting ecological problems caused by IAS in India, the country lacks awareness of the enormity of associated economic costs, in turn preventing the development of biosecurity protocols, pre-and post-invasion monitoring guidelines, effective eradication programmes and trained human resources to tackle this issue.

To bring home their point, they cited a few examples in this direction. For instance, they said, the most common examples of IAS in India include the Santa-Maria feverfew or carrot grass Parthenium hysterophorus, gaining entry with imported wheat from the USA in the 1950s; the flagship mass social afforestation programmes undertaken by the government of India using the invasive river tamarind Leucaena leucocephala; or the invasion of the Mozambique tilapia Oreochromis mossambicus, a fast-growing fish introduced as a source of income for disadvantaged fishing communities, but which is now replacing the native fish communities in Indian water bodies.

The researchers have called for immediate measures to address socio-ecological issues in India and suggested the Government to launch a national biological invasion research programme, "especially since economic growth will be accompanied by greater impacts of global change".

## 94% registered informal workers' income ₹10K/month or below: Data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 94 per cent of 27.69 crore informal sector workers registered on the e-Shram portal have a monthly income of Rs 10,000 or below and over 74 per cent of the enrolled workforce belongs to scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) and other backward classes (OBC), according to the latest data.

The proportion of informal workers getting a monthly income of Rs 10,000 or below was 92.37 per cent in the middle of November 2021 when total enrolments on e-Shram portal were a little over 8 crore.

Those belonging to SC, ST and OBC who enrolled on the portal were 72.58 per cent in the middle of November 2021.

The experts are of the view that as the enrolments progress on e-Shram portal towards the ultimate goal of enrolling all informal sector workers estimated at 38 crore in the country, the data would show sharp disparities in the society.

E-Shram portal is aimed at building a comprehensive National Database of

Unorganized Workers (NDUW) in the country.

The aim of the portal is to boost the last-mile delivery of the welfare schemes for over 38 crore unorganised workers in the country. It was launched on August 26, 2021.

The experts are of the view that almost all targeted informal sector workers should be registered on e-Shram portal during this calendar year only, which would give a big opportunity to the political leadership to draft an evidence-based policy for the large section of deprived classes in the country.

According to the latest data, as many as 27.69 crore informal sector workers are registered on the portal and show that this unorganised workforce is living under extreme poverty and a majority of those belong to socially backward communities.

The data showed that 94.11 per cent of the registered informal workers have a monthly income of Rs 10,000 or below, while 4.36 per cent have a monthly income between Rs 10,001 and Rs 15,000. The social category analysis of the

data shows that 74.44 per cent of registered workers are below the socially backward classes, including 45.32 per cent OBC, 20.95 per cent SC and 8.17 per cent ST. The proportion of the General Category workers is 25.56 per cent.

Age-wise analysis of the data show that 61.72 per cent of the registered workers on the portal are of the age from 18 years to 40 years, while 22.12 per cent are of the age from 40 years to 50 years.

The proportion of the registered workers aged above 50 years is 13.23 per cent, while 2.93 per cent of workers are aged between 16 and 18 years.

Gender analysis shows that 52.81 per cent of registered workers are female and 47.19 per cent are male.

Top-5 states in terms of registrations are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

Occupation wise, agriculture is at the top with 52.11 per cent of enrolments done by those related to the farm sector followed by domestic and household workers at 9.93 per cent and constructions workers at 9.13 per cent.

## IIT-Delhi study reveals mechanisms driving SARS-CoV-2 evolution in humans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi have revealed the mechanisms driving the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 in humans which can help in better understanding of COVID-19's pathogenesis, immune evasion and emergence of variants of concern.

According to the seven-member research team, CpG (a cytosine followed by a guanine) numbers in virus genomes have been linked to host-switching, the efficiency of virus replication, immune evasion and the ability of a virus to cause disease.

The researchers found that the rate of CpG depletion from

SARS-CoV-2 genomes rapidly decreases after the first few months of evolution in humans. The research has been published in a journal, Molecular Biology and Evolution, and is titled "The Slowing Rate of CpG Depletion in SARS-CoV-2 Genomes is Consistent with Adaptations to the Human Host".

"Zinc-finger antiviral protein (ZAP) is a host protein that can bind to CpG-rich regions in SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of the COVID-19 pandemic, and recruits other host proteins to degrade the viral RNA. Several viruses including HIV-1, Influenza A virus and SARS-CoV-2 prefer to reduce their CpG content (by losing CpGs) to minimise the host



immune response, thus allowing better virus replication and survival," Vivekanandan Perumal from the Kusuma School of Biological Sciences, IIT Delhi told PTI.

"The team analysed over 1.4 million full-length SARS-CoV-2 sequences from across the world. They found that the rate of CpG depletion from SARS-CoV-2 genomes rapidly decreases after the first few months of evolution in humans.

"Furthermore, most SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern had lower CpG content. This work highlights the existence of selection pressures apart from ZAP that may lead to CpG depletion in SARS-CoV-2 genomes," he added.

SARS-CoV-2 has a uracil-rich (uracil is one of the four building blocks of RNA) genome. The researchers have identified how uracils adjacent to CpGs contribute to the accelerated loss of CpGs from SARS-CoV-2 genomes.

"Our results lay the necessary groundwork for future studies on understanding the intricacies of virus-host interactions leading to CpG depletion," IIT Delhi professor Manoj Menon said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

To improve the ease of living for the common man, the Government is planning to launch 'Jan Samarth' — a common portal for delivery of various schemes run by different Ministries and Departments.

As part of the Narendra Modi Government's vision of minimum Government maximum governance, the new portal plans to initially onboard 15 credit-linked government schemes, sources said.

The offerings will be gradually expanded, depending on compatibility, as some of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes have involvement of multiple

agencies, they added.

For example, schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) are being administered by different ministries.

The proposed portal intends to bring these schemes on a single platform so that they can be accessed by the beneficiaries without much hassle. Pilot testing is being done and loose ends are being tied up before the actual launch takes place, they said, adding State Bank of India (SBI) and other lenders are doing the testing.

They said the portal will have open architecture enabling state governments and other institutions to also

onboard their schemes on this platform in the future.

To provide comfort to borrowers, the government in 2018 had launched a portal <http://psbloansin59minutes.Com> for various kinds of credit products, including MSME, home, auto and personal loans. The portal facilitates in-principle approval of loans for MSMEs and other borrowers in 59 minutes by various state-owned banks compared to the earlier turnaround time of 20-25 days.

After receiving an in-principle approval letter, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days. The portal processes loan applications without human intervention till the sanction stage. Any

MSME borrower does not need to submit any physical document for in-principle approval for a loan.

Instead, the portal depends on advanced algorithms to analyse data points from several sources such as Income Tax returns, GST data, bank statements etc.

The platform is integrated with the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to check borrowers' eligibility.

In the first two months of the launch of the portal, state-owned banks had given in-principle approval to 1.12 lakh loan applications of micro, small and medium enterprises, totalling Rs 37,412 crore.



# After Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura appear to be waking up: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

After the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the temple town of Kashi appears to be waking up, as are Mathura, Vrindavan, Vindhyavasini Dham and Naimish Dham, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday.

There has been no communal riot in the state, he told the BJP's one-day state executive meeting in Lucknow and mentioned recent festivals to say that for the first time in the state the namaz on the last Friday before Eid was not held on roads.

Adityanath referred to the inauguration of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor, to say one lakh devotees visit Kashi every day and the place is proving the significance of its name in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision.

"Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti were held

peacefully. This was the first time that the last Friday namaz before Eid was not held on the streets. For namaz there is a place of worship, the mosques where their religious programmes can be held," he said.

Mentioning the removal of loudspeakers from religious places, he said, "You must have seen how the unnecessary noise was got rid of."

At the first state executive meeting of the BJP after the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, he asked the party workers to start preparing for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and move forward with the target of winning 75 out of the state's 80 seats.

In 2019, the BJP had won 62 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh while its ally Apna Dal(S) registered victory in two seats.

Referring to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor, he said, "After the beginning of the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, the



waking up ('angadai') of Kashi is before us."

"All pilgrimages centres like Mathura Vrindavan, Vindhyavasini Dham, Naimish Dham are once again waking up ('angdai li'). In this situation we all have to move forward once again," the chief minister said.

His remarks came amid legal proceedings over the temple-mosque disputes in Mathura and Varanasi, also known as Kashi.

At the meeting, Adityanath said, "We have to prepare the ground for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from now only. We should move ahead with the

target of winning 75 seats."

"With people's help and by dint of our hard work during Covid, we got better results in the assembly polls. In the 2024 general elections, under the leadership of PM Modi, we have to march ahead with the target of winning 75 seats in Uttar Pradesh."

Congratulating Modi for completing eight years as prime minister, Adityanath said with the 2024 roadmap, the BJP will succeed in its achieving its target.

Adityanath said the perception about the state changed after 2017 while asserting that Uttar Pradesh is leading the country in over four dozen schemes.

Earlier, addressing the meeting, BJP state chief Swatantra Dev Singh congratulated PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda and senior party leaders and people of the state for the party's victory in the assembly polls.

# North Korean drone carrying seven magnetic bombs shot down in Kathua

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

An alert search party of the Jammu and Kashmir police on Sunday morning shot down a North Korean hexacopter attached with a payload carrying magnetic bombs and UBGL (Under barrel grenade launcher) grenades near Hariya Chak area of Rajbagh in Kathua district.

A total number of seven magnetic bombs and seven UBGL grenades were packed in a packet attached with the hexacopter.

Police media centre, Jammu Sunday tweeted, "Today early morning, the search party observed a North Korean drone coming from the border side and fired at it. The drone was shot down. It has a payload attachment with it which is being screened by the bomb disposal experts". 7 Magnetic bombs and 7 UBGL grenades were later recovered from the drone.

Significantly, there was no

word from the Border Security Force how a hexacopter, attached with a payload, managed to enter deep inside the Indian territory from across the International border with Pakistan and the same was shot down by the police party in Hariya Chak area.

In Jammu, Additional Director General of Police, Jammu range Mukesh Singh in a statement said, "early Sunday morning, the search party from Ranbagh police station observed a drone coming from the border side and fired at it. The drone was shot down.

A team of experts from Jammu were rushed to Kathua to examine the hexacopter and dig out more information to determine its exact trajectory and the destination fed into its GPS system.

Meanwhile, the recovery of magnetic bombs and UBGL grenades has already alerted the security grid tasked with the herculean task of conducting peaceful Amarnath pilgrim-



age starting June 30.

According to police, several incidents of drone spotting have been reported in the border belt of Kathua and Samba in

recent days. It appears the handlers of terrorist outfits have been stocking up arms and ammunition ahead of the yatra.

SSP Kathua Ramesh Chander Kotwal, the first senior officer who reached the spot told reporters, "the hexacopter was shot down by the police party from Rajbagh police station as they were regularly carrying out searches in the Hariya Chak area following inputs about the suspected drone movement from across the International border with Pakistan". He said the suspicious drone movement and detection of cross border tunnels in the border belt of Samba and Kathua pose a big challenge to the security forces ahead of the beginning of Amarnath yatra. "We are on the job and carrying out anti tunneling drills and launching early morning searches to detect any suspicious movement of over ground workers and payload dropping via drones".

# Bengal Guv seeks action against TMC MP for criticising judiciary

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Hours after Trinamool Congress MP and party national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee made an apparently contemptuous remark against the judiciary saying that "a small percentage of it" was acting as the stooge of the BJP Government, Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar demanded strong action against him for having "crossed the red line" of constitutional decorum.

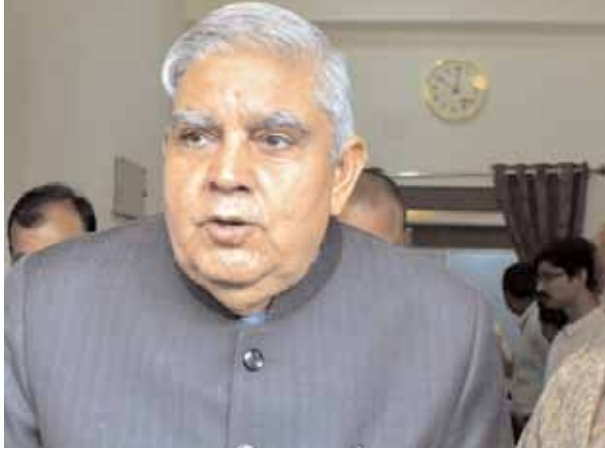
The remarks, made by an "honourable member of Parliament" prove that the "Constitutional institutions in the State are under attack ... the attack on the Judiciary is reprehensible," the Governor on Sunday said.

Dhankhar who was going to Darjeeling told journalists in Siliguri, that to attack a judge

in public was a reprehensible act and attracted necessary proceedings. "Attacking a judge — who ordered CBI inquiry into SSC scam — is most condemnable," he said adding, "the honourable Member of Parliament crossed the red line."

Banerjee who is also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday told a rally in East Midnapore how some judges were acting hands in gloves with the BJP Government to malign the Trinamool Congress leaders.

"I feel ashamed to say that there are a small percentage ... perhaps one or two persons in the judiciary who are acting as Talpi Bahak (luggage bearers in Bengali)" of those sitting in Delhi. "They have a tacit understanding with them and are ordering CBI investigation in every case... even they are



giving stay in murder cases," Banerjee however would make any specific reference about any particular judge.

In the recent past the Calcutta High Court has ordered CBI investigations in a plethora of cases that include

CBI investigation into coal and cattle smuggling, large-scale school level recruitment scam involving thousands of people — by the School Service Commission as well as post-poll violence and Rampurhat carnage case.

Without giving any clarification for the statements he made on Saturday, Banerjee hit back at the Governor on Sunday saying he was not afraid of telling the truth and would do so thousands of times.

Banerjee tweeted "Yesterday, I said how 1% in Kolkata HC is working in cohorts with Centre in protecting some individuals. People are Watching, they know who is actually 'Crossing the Red line' I rest my case!"

Top leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress has been facing judicial inquiry for the past several years now. Following the Court order senior Bengal ministers like Partho Chatterjee and Paresh Adhikari were presently being questioned by the central agencies for their alleged roles in the fake recruitments of hundreds

(maybe thousands) of people in schools by-passing the claim of eligible candidates who had cleared the recruitment exams.

Meanwhile, Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury made a strong demand for contempt proceedings against Banerjee for making "such filthy statements against the High Court Judges ... Though I am not a legal expert to demand such steps I feel contempt proceedings should be started ... Abhishek Banerjee is making such statements because he knows that his party leaders are in trouble ... in any case this is the same judiciary — to which he approaches every time — that has given him respite from appearance before the CBI and ED in their Delhi offices ... he is so much afraid of being jailed that he is making such comments."

# Didi raps Centre for not clearing NREGA dues

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Hard pressed for funds Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday slammed the Centre for not clearing the State Government's dues "making it impossible to clear the "wages under the NREGA scheme."

Banerjee who was on a district tour said, that her party Trinamool Congress would organise continuous agitation against the Centre in the first week of June if its demands were not met. She told the media at Durgapur how that the "Centre has not cleared the State's dues towards the 100-

days work scheme for the past five months ... this is creating great hardship for the poorest of the poor people who have been hit hard by the nonpayment of wages."

Asking her party wings to "hold protest marches at village, block and district level on June 5 and 6 against the Centre's deprivation," Banerjee said that "they (New Delhi) already owes Rs 98,000 to the State ... and here they have stopped funds worth Rs 6,000 towards the payment of wages for 100-days work ... this is despite the fact that Bengal is number one in Awaz Yojna (housing) and 100-days work projects."

# Akhilesh backed Sibal, Jayant with an eye on 2024 LS polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Samajwadi Party has decided to support Supreme Court lawyer Kapil Sibal and Rashtriya Lok Dal leader Jayant Chaudhary in the Rajya Sabha polls from Uttar Pradesh even though both the leaders are not contesting the election on the symbol of the SP.

Kapil Sibal is an independent candidate while Jayant Chaudhary will contest the poll on RLD election symbol 'hand pump'. Jayant is likely to file his nomination papers on Monday.

"For the sake of alliance and placating senior party leader Mohammad Azam Khan, Akhilesh Yadav had to compromise and none of the three candidates is his choice. Akhilesh Yadav wanted Jayant Chaudhary to contest as Samajwadi Party candidate but he declined. Akhilesh Yadav had no option but to concede

Jayant Chaudhary's demand to contest the poll on his own party symbol," a SP leader said.

The third candidate is a protégé of Ram Gopal Yadav, the uncle of Akhilesh Yadav.

Sources said Kapil Sibal had first contacted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for a Rajya Sabha seat. She had agreed but put the condition of joining her party Trinamool Congress first. Sibal declined to join her party and his wish for contesting the election as an independent candidate was fulfilled by the Samajwadi Party.

Sources in the SP said Akhilesh Yadav had decided to field his wife and former MP Dimple Yadav for the Rajya Sabha but he was forced to defer his choice for the next election. Dimple Yadav is likely to be the SP candidate from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat where bypoll is scheduled to be held in June.

The supporters of Akhilesh Yadav, however, maintain that

their party president has tried to score many goals with one shot.

"To placate Azam Khan who is angry with the SP these days, Kapil Sibal, who was his lawyer, was backed by the SP. On the other hand, Jayant Chaudhary has been given a message to follow the alliance 'dharma'. The party has reposed faith in Sambhal's Javed Ali Khan. Along with this, the party has also tried to woo Muslim voters amid the increasing distance from Azam Khan," said a senior SP leader.

The sources claim that the reason for Akhilesh Yadav supporting Kapil Sibal is that it will give the party a loud voice in the Rajya Sabha and will also help in sorting out the internal differences in the party. Along with this, due to his father Mulayam Singh Yadav's health issues and the compulsion of his own active presence in Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav needs an effective advocate for himself in the national politics.

# Jamiat opposes proposed UCC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, an organisation of Deobandi Sunni Muslim clerics, has opposed the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

In the conclaves of the clerics at Deoband in Saharanpur district, Jamiat adopted a resolution against the UCC, arguing that it would prevent observance of personal law by the Muslims and thus violate the guarantees for Muslim Personal Law given in the Indian Constitution.

"This ignores the true spirit of the Constitution. No Muslim accepts interference in Islamic law. If any government makes the mistake of implementing UCC, Muslims will not accept this injustice and will be forced to take all measures against it while staying within constitutional limits," the resolution said.

The UCC will formulate personal laws which will apply to all citizens equally regardless of their religion and gender. The Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre and

in states has promised to implement the UCC.

Apart from the resolution against the UCC, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind also passed a resolution on the ongoing mandir-masjid dispute. The organisation expressed its displeasure at igniting controversies over places of worship like Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi.

At the conference, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind chief Mahmood Asad Madani said, "Muslims had a chance to go to Pakistan but we did not go. Those who harp on Pakistan should go there themselves."

On Saturday, the Jamiat had raised the banner of 'Islamophobia'. During an emotional address to the gathering, Madani said that Muslims had been made strangers in their own country.

The two-day meeting was attended by nearly 2,000 members and representatives of organisations from across the country and was presided over by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind president Maulana Mahmud Asad Madani.

# LS bypolls: BSP not to contest from Rampur, to fight on Azamgarh seat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party will not contest the bypoll for the Rampur parliamentary seat and also not support any party on this seat. The party, however, will fight for the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat in the bypoll.

BSP chief Mayawati declared Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali as the party candidate for the by-election to Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat.

By-elections for the Rampur and Azamgarh parliamentary seats will be held on June 23. The bypolls have been necessitated after the resignations of Mohammad Azam Khan and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav from Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats respectively after they won the UP assembly polls.

In a statement issued after a two-day party review meeting in Lucknow, the BSP said, "The party will not contest the Lok Sabha by-elections sched-

uled on June 23 from the Rampur seat as we have to work on this seat to make the organisation strong there. The party will also not support anyone on this seat. The party has already decided to contest the Azamgarh parliamentary seat."

The party asserted that it is "capable" of shaking the roots of the 'anti-poor' and 'pro-capitalists' Bharatiya Janata Party in the state. At the meeting, Mayawati said the BSP was a party with limited resources and it was fighting parties that were run with the support of capitalists so "we have to make the party strong by holding small cadre-based meetings".

"We did not get expected results in the assembly polls even after hard work," she said, and added, "New political development will give a new lease of life to the party and for this attempts are on."

"After uprooting the Congress from the state, the BSP is the only party that can do the same for the BJP," she

added.

An atmosphere of atrocities on the poor and anarchy is seen in the BJP rule but people cannot muster the courage to speak against them, she charged.

"Poor and unemployed are targeted in the name of anti-encroachment drives and they are made targets with the terror of bulldozer. The right use of bulldozers is for making roads and construction works but it has been put for destruction works," she said.

At the meeting, Mayawati advised party workers to hold cadre meetings on the issues of employment and basic problems of people.

She alleged that to divert the attention of people, religious issues and disputes were being raised in the state.

Mayawati also said that due to lack of upkeep, memorials and parks constructed during her regime in Lucknow were in a bad shape and an adequate budget was not being allocated for them.

# 6 people, including Maharashtra family, killed as car falls into ravine in Sikkim

PTI ■ GANGTOK

A family of five people from Maharashtra and their driver were killed when their car plunged into the ravine in North Sikkim, police said on Sunday.

The incident happened in Kedung Bhir, 13 km away from the popular tourist destination of Lachung, on Saturday around 8 pm, they said.

The family, which came on a vacation to Sikkim, were heading to Lachung from capital Gangtok when the accident happened, police said.

The vehicle skidded off the road and fell into the ravine, hundreds of feet below, they said.

The deceased were identified as Suresh Punamia, Tural Punamia, Hiral Punamia, Devanshi Punamia and Jayan Parimar, and their driver Somi Biswakarma, police said.

# Japan's 5 trillion Yen investment plan depends on India's atmosphere: Diplomat

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Japanese Deputy Chief of Mission in India Kawazu Kunihiko on Sunday said the investment target of five trillion yen over the next five years from his country will depend on the "investment atmosphere" in India.

The diplomat, however, asserted that the relationship between Japan and India is on the rise in every field.

"We have already announced a target to invest five trillion yen in the next five years in India. This will be by both public and private sectors, including debts to India for various projects," Kunihiko told PTI on the sidelines of a conclave here.

The major areas likely to attract the chunk of the investment will be manufacturing, climate change and infrastructure, he added.

"That's the target and we

hope to achieve that figure. However, it's up to improvement of investment atmosphere in India. Without the effort and cooperation from the Indian side, it'll be very difficult to achieve that investment target," Kunihiko said.

When asked what he meant by "investment atmosphere", he said stable energy supply, thrust on infrastructure development and stability in policy are prime to attract capital to India.

"The relation between India and Japan has always been on the rise in the 21st century," the Japanese Embassy official in New Delhi said, adding that his country's exposure to India currently stands at around USD 30 billion.

In March, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced an investment target of five trillion yen (Rs 3,20,000 crore) in India over the next five years after hold-

ing talks with his Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a wide range of issues, including the Ukraine crisis.

Speaking at the 'Natural Allies in Development and Interdependence' conclave here, Kunihiko said that India and Bangladesh are the top two nations in the world receiving Japanese assistance for various development projects.

"Japan would like to be the natural ally of India and the neighbouring countries. I'm looking forward to working with the Indian government," he added.

Kunihiko stressed that Japan does not prefer the supremacy of one country, surrounded by other less empowered nations.

"We believe in economic self-reliance and political autonomy. We are in association with India in the Indo-Pacific by becoming a leader in the region," he added.

# India-Bangladesh train services resume after two years

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed on Sunday after an over two-year gap owing to the pandemic with the flagging off of Bandhan Express from Kolkata station on way to Khulna in the neighbouring country, an Eastern Railway (ER) official said here.

Maitree Express is also scheduled to resume services between Kolkata and Dhaka on Sunday and will travel to the Bangladesh capital on Monday morning on the first journey from here since March 2020, he said.

"Passenger train services between India and Bangladesh, which were stopped for over two years owing to the pandemic, resumed with the flagging off of Bandhan Express from Kolkata station at 7.10 am," ER spokesperson Ekalavya Chakraborty said.

While the Bandhan Express between Kolkata and Khulna runs two days a week, Maitree Express connecting Kolkata with the Bangladeshi capital is a five-day service.

Chakraborty told PTI that people on both sides of the border are excited about the resumption of the train services, which are fully booked for the next few days.

"With the comfort of train travel and a convenient time schedule along with affordability, people prefer this mode of transport over others such as bus and air," he said.

The trains have a capacity of around 450 passengers and have air-conditioned chair car and executive class categories, he said.

India-Bangladesh train connectivity through West Bengal will receive another boost from June 1 with the inauguration of Mitali Express between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka, Chakraborty said.

# Nagaland Govt urges NSCN(IM) to continue negotiations

PTI ■ KOHIMA

The Nagaland government's Core Committee on Naga Political Issue (NPI) urged the NSCN(IM) to continue the negotiations with the Centre.

The Core Committee, headed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, made the appeal during a marathon meeting with the NSCN(IM) on Saturday, ruling United Democratic Alliance (UDA) chairman TR Zeliang said.

After Centre's interlocutor AK Mishra visited Nagaland in April, NSCN(IM) leaders went to New Delhi and returned last week. Following their return, they have been saying that they will not hold any further discussions with the Centre, Zeliang said.

The Core Committee requested the NSCN(IM) to

continue the talks as any settlement can take place only through it, he said. The Core Committee will convey to the Centre whatever has been discussed with NSCN(IM), he said.

Government spokesperson Neiba Kronu said that the meeting was held for a better understanding with the NSCN(IM) over an early solution to the Naga issue.

The meeting, which lasted for nearly four hours, deliberated on the competencies, he said. It was agreed that further discussions are needed on the demands of the NSCN(IM) for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas, Kronu said. He said that they also discussed the need for the support of Assam Chief Minister and North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) convener Himanta Biswa Sarma.



## Unfair to her

Sex detection tests, though illegal, are rampant across India and lead to skewed gender ratio

The fight for girls’ rights is secondary to fighting to first keep them alive. Many people in India still want sons, not daughters. They are willing to do anything to see that their women do not give birth to girls. The latest pattern shows they seem to prefer termination of pregnancy over female infanticide. The illegal use of sex determination tests to know the sex of the unborn child is rampant in India. It shows the utter failure of State Governments and the police force to strictly enforce the ban on such tests. The latest instance is from Odisha, where a racket was busted in Berhampur last week. The police raided a residence-cum-clinic where it said an inter-State sex selection racket was in operation for years. When the clinic was raided, 11 pregnant women were awaiting their turn. Over a dozen accused were arrested, including, shockingly, an ASHA worker. A sophisticated, portable ultrasound machine, banned since 2005, and paraphernalia were seized. It was a “referral” clinic recommended to pregnant women by medical practitioners. A day earlier, Dharmapuri police in Tamil Nadu rescued six pregnant women from an illegal clinic and seized an ultrasound machine. A week ago, the Kurukshetra police in Haryana exposed an illegal clinic. In April, too, a decoy team of Haryana and Delhi officials raided a Delhi nursing home involved in this racket. Another illegal clinic was closed down in Ludhiana this March. The Rajkot police in Gujarat arrested the kingpins of a similar racket in a nursing home.

Such sex determination operations are happening in every State of the country. The affluent have other alternatives like going abroad where the tests are legal. Some years ago, it came to light that sex detection kits were being smuggled into the country from abroad. Costing close to ₹20,000, the kits were easier to transport and deliver and were less messy. Non-invasive Prenatal Test (NIPT) is another technology that has come to India. It is highly accurate and can determine the sex of the foetus quite early in the pregnancy. The test is officially allowed to detect genetic disorders in the embryo. However, its misuse is also reported. Last August, a raid on a private laboratory in Gurugram revealed the use of this test. It is quite clear that the primary reason for the skewed gender ratio in many States is people resorting to female foeticide or abortion after knowing the baby’s gender. It is officially acknowledged that millions of girls are statistically missing in India, and millions more are abandoned as “unwanted”. The Government must take the initiative to stop the racket. The Medical Council of India can de-register medical practitioners involved in conducting the tests. Campaigns and counselling at the community level can save the girl child. Pregnant women need the support of the State to be able to say ‘no’ when forced to undergo the test.



Liverpool fans climb atop traffic lights as they wait ahead of the trophy parade in Liverpool, England

## New season

For the sake of Delhi’s development, let’s hope the new L-G and the CM work together

In a surprise move a few days back, the Centre decided to replace Anil Bajjal with Vinai Kumar Saxena, a seasoned bureaucrat working with Khadi Gramodyog, as the Lt Governor of Delhi. Bajjal had resigned recently citing personal reasons. The tenure of the outgoing L-G was marked by several controversies and a strained relationship with the Delhi Chief Minister. The AAP Government maintained that the L-G was stalling its work and creating obstacles. It even accused him of working against the interests of Delhi’s citizens. The Delhi L-G is a Central Government appointee and reports to it. Matters had come to such a pass that the Delhi CM sat on dharna outside L-G’s office. The issue reached the Supreme Court, which put its weight behind the L-G, saying the Delhi Government meant the L-G and not the elected Government. The constitutional amendment in 2019 dealt the final blow to the Chief Minister as it mandated the Delhi Government to work under the L-G. The new L-G has, however, struck all the positive notes after assuming office. He met the Delhi Chief Minister warmly and assured him of working together for the city’s development. Besides, he also said that he would be seen more on roads than in Raj Bhawan.

The Chief Minister has also shown a positive attitude towards the new L-G. Having said that, it will be interesting to note how they work together. After all, the L-G is a representative of the Central Government. Delhi, as well as general elections, are just two years ago and the BJP would not like to give any brownie points to AAP. Moreover, Delhi’s Government’s powers are limited and the files keep pending with the L-G for consent. For instance, the Government’s plan to deliver ration at the doorstep has been stalled as the L-G and CM were at loggerheads. There have been numerous instances in which the L-G has deferred the decision at the Centre’s instance. At the end of the day, however, it’s all about the people of Delhi. They can do little about the Centre and the State Government working at cross-purposes. Let’s hope the new L-G can walk the talk and resist any anti-people moves by the very people who appointed him for the sake of development in Delhi.

# Kashmiri Pandits are simple people

Since Greek times, when people extended extreme hospitality to guests and strangers, the tide has reversed and xenophobia is being stoked

Pandit Kailash Nath Kaul ‘Mekash Kashmiri’, was a great Urdu poet of Jammu. Aggrieved by the strained Indo-Pak relations, he once wrote in his anthology: “*Kyun jang ke saaman idher bhi hein udher bhi; sehme hue insaan idher bhi hein udher bhi.*” (Why is the battle preparedness this side and the other side; people on both sides are terrified). The poet was right while revealing the plight of gullible citizens on both sides of the border who are least bothered by political machinations.

In addition to lurking external aggression, the internal situation is marred with communal tensions. Mostly, we hide our misdeeds blaming British rulers for their “divide and rule” policy, but the magic vend of Angrez *jadugar* cannot retain its ugly impact forever. We need to honestly introspect for finding the causal factors behind hate-mongering, polarisation and communal divide strategically designed by political masters, misusing religions and promoting xenophobia.

Xenophobia is an extreme, intense fear and dislike of customs, cultures and people considered strange, unusual or unknown. The term xenophobia comes from Greek, where ‘phobos’ means fear and ‘xenos’ means stranger, foreigner or outsider. It also means guest or wanderer. As a matter of fact, there was a practice among ancient Greeks for extending extreme hospitality to strangers and guests. They used to consider unexpected guest a god or goddess, walking among people in disguise. This culture of hospitality towards strangers was an essential feature of that time and the violation carried serious repercussions, which can be found in the *Illiad*, *Odyssey* and other Greek literature.

However, with the turning of time, the tide got reversed and people globally started behaving adversely towards the strangers and guests to the extent of developing phobia towards them. Phobia, an anxiety disorder, triggers rage and anger when you

encounter a thing, individual or group, you are afraid of. There are mainly three main categories of xenophobia: stranger/ immigrant, cultural, and religious. A person suffering from xenophobia will reject interaction with anyone they hate. They will avoid business and social contacts with them, describe their living areas as dangerous, make derogatory remarks against them and, if they have been indoctrinated by communal politicians, they will easily get ready to assault or kill the hated individual on one pretext or the other. These days, religion is the most (il)logical pretext to spew venom and exhibit naked xenophobia.

These days, our country is in the grip of ideologically sponsored communal divide by attacking and lynching members of minority community on the pretext of *azan*, loudspeakers, *namaz*, etc. Wahabi clowns are shamelessly displaying their skills of killing Shia Muslims in Pakistani amphitheatre. The same lobby following Wahabi ideology has indulged in aimlessly killing Kashmiri Pandits (KPs), who are very simple and harmless people. If Kashmiri



“THESE DAYS, RELIGION IS THE MOST (IL)LOGICAL PRETEXT TO SPEW VENOM AND EXHIBIT NAKED XENOPHOBIA. OUR COUNTRY IS IN THE GRIP OF IDEOLOGICALLY SPONSORED COMMUNAL DIVIDE BY ATTACKING AND LYNCHING MEMBERS OF MINORITY COMMUNITY

Muslims feel that they are targeted, falsely arrested or killed by police and paramilitary forces, it’s the matter between them and the Government. How come KPs are at fault and why are they being targeted?

Those indulging in terror acts in the name of false jihad are as a matter-of-fact Wahabis, who have camouflaged themselves under the cover of Islam, which is the fact known by very few people, including Muslims. Wahabism is the distorted version of Islam. Its founder was Sheikh Najdi ibn Abdul Wahab who in association of Ibn Saud, a Bedouin tribal chief having Zionist ancestry, founded this new cult in 1744 AD. They are currently the rulers of Saudi Arabia.

The *Quran* says: “Prophet Mohammad was sent to the world as a mercy to mankind” (21:107). .... Allah abhors any disturbance of peace (2:205). The murder of one innocent person is akin to the murder of the whole humanity.” Whereas Sheikh Najdi ibn Abdul Wahab, the founder of Wahabi cult, in his book ‘*Kitab al Twahid*’, prescribes forceful conversion of Muslims and others to his Wahabi ideology

wherein he manifests: “Follow my ideology, else get ready to be killed.”

In 1766, Ibn Saud was killed and his son Abd al Aziz took over as Emir (temporal leader). He accelerated his attacks in a spectacular bid to extend his territory. Since then, it has been the schismatic, fraudulent practice of Wahabi terror operators to misguide and exploit the Muslim youth for recruitment with the promise of Paradise. Hence, attacks on KPs are un-Islamic.

Muslims of Kashmir and outside must raise their voice for the protection of KPs. Similarly, Hindus engaged in violence and lynching of Muslims must know that in *Ramayana Ratnas-80*, *Yuddhakanda* 116.44/45/46, it is conveyed, “The wise never injures even those that harm him. On the other hand, they go to their aid in case of trouble and help them out. Virtuous conduct is the ornament of a meritorious person. (Sita’s advice to Hanuman not to kill or cause harm to female demons that tormented her at the Ashok Vatika).”

(The writer is a legal journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### STOP VIITIATING THE ATMOSPHERE

Sir — Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay’s recent comments “If Ram Rajya comes, we will completely ban Urdu, *madrasas* ... and all Shivlingams found would be ours” reek of ignorance and false arrogance. Out of ignorance, he is saying that he will ban Urdu when Ram Rajya comes to Telangana. But he doesn’t know that Urdu is in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution and he wrongly thinks that Urdu is the mother tongue of all Muslims. There was a time when leaders would talk about employment, development or science but now I am ashamed that we are choosing leaders who hate a particular religion because they only contribute 15 per cent of the votes.

Such leaders talk about destruction of a particular religion instead of the nation’s development. The people of Telangana vote for development and the State is a good example of secular India where all citizens live in peace and harmony. Bandi Sanjay must not try to ruin this fabric of harmony. By winning one or two byelections, perhaps the BJP is dreaming about forming the Government in Telangana, but there is no swing in favour of the BJP in Telangana.

Zeeshaan | Kazipet

### STOP PAMPERING THE BUREAUCRATS

Sir — In a country engulfed by inequality, where the VIP enjoys a privileged position from a toll tax to the airport, it is easy to feel for the common man. The recent episode in which Delhi Government-run Thyagaraj Stadium was found closing its ground to athletes at 7 pm, apparently to allow Principal Secretary (Revenue) to walk his dog on the track, must come as a rude shock to all, especially to sport lovers. The athletes were forced to practice in the scorching heat during the day because the premises were closed early.

What is most distressing is that even after 70 years of Independence, our bureaucracy has retained its colonial character and public servants remain aloof

## Chief Minister as the Chancellor



The West Bengal Cabinet has taken a decision to make the Chief Minister the Chancellor of the universities as against the existing system of the Governor holding the post. This is an attempt to strip the Governor of his powers in running the universities. It is an unprecedented move and sets a bad example for other States. In the present system, the Governor can act independently in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who expects the Governors to be the puppets in the hands of Chief Ministers, has locked horns

with Governor Jagdeep Dhankar but she is finding the going tough.

This move paves way for direct political interference in the administration of universities and the intention of the Cabinet meeting decision is to achieve that only. The power of governance has been vested into the hands of Chief Ministers but the Governor is the constitutional head of a State. The Governor is a mid-pole between the State and Centre. Unsurprisingly, the BJP and the Left have closed ranks to oppose Mamata’s attempt to usurp power from the Governor. By divesting the Governor of his position as Chancellor, the age-old custom is being given a go-by. This smacks of Mamata’s addiction to an autocratic rule. All political parties must close their ranks and fight tooth and nail against her rapacious desire of usurping the power of university administration.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

from common people. The episode lays bare the sense of unbridled power and entitlement that many politicians and bureaucrats gain merely on the basis of winning elections or passing an exam once but not due to consistent outstanding performance. Politicians, bureaucrats and business tycoons must be kept out of sports governance, and much more needs to be done so that only competent and deserving persons acquire strategic and pivotal positions in sports administration. It’s time to get serious.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### CONGRESS TO TAKE GOVT TO TASK

Sir — As the Central Government completes eight years in office, an aggressive Opposition led by the Congress will release a ‘report card’ on its performance. The communications department of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) has prepared a report card highlighting the failures and performance of the Central Government on various fronts including

economy, foreign policy, communal harmony and inflation. The unemployment rate is very high and has broken a 45-year record while inflation is rising especially in essential commodities, petrol-diesel prices are at a historic high while the rupee against the dollar is at a historic low; the foreign reserve is also dipping.

On national security, China’s aggression at the Line of Actual Control is a major concern on which the Government’s performance is lacking and it hasn’t taken on China in the manner it should be dealt with. There are also concerns about communal harmony and polarisation in the country as several areas in various States have seen unrest on this front in the last few months. The Congress is also going to highlight the failures of the Central Government over the last few years in the coming days to the people of India.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

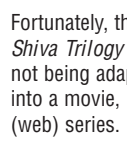
Despite the (PM’s) rhetoric, industries are closing down, the GDP is crashing.



Telangana CM — K Chandrashekar Rao



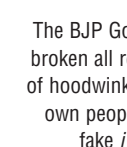
Catholic Church head — Pope Francis



Author — Amish Tripathi



Former Australia coach — Justin Langer




Congress chief spokesperson — Randeep Surjewala



FIRST COLUMN

## HYPERTENSION IS A SILENT KILLER

Early prevention can reduce cardiovascular mortality



VIKAS MAHATME

Time to prevent hypertension as silent killer from engulfing the nation. With at least 1.13 billion adults suffering from hypertension in the world, May 17 is observed as World Hypertension Day. We need to check the right boxes to generate awareness about the issue while initiating medical efforts to tackle it as well.

Today when we talk about having a healthy lifestyle especially after Covid, it still looks a distant reality especially when one is suffering from high blood pressure resulting in hypertension. It is not without any reason that hypertension is called the silent killer. It is related to heart disease, development of ischemic heart, and chronic kidney and other killer diseases.

In India, over the last decade, cardiovascular diseases have emerged as the top killer in India and an underlying cause for this exponential rise is hypertension. The latest NFHS 5 India data reveal that non-communicable diseases account for 65 per cent of all deaths in India and the major metabolic risk factors include raised blood pressure among others.

Although easily treated and controlled if detected and treated early, high blood pressure is now a full-fledged health crisis with twenty-one percent of women and 24 percent of men age 15 and suffering from hypertension according to the latest NFHS 5 data. Thirty-nine percent of women and 49 percent of men age 15 and over are pre-hypertensive.



Early diagnosis is the crucial step for proper management, and is associated with substantial reductions in cardiovascular mortality. Primary health care centres in India should be responsible in providing basic health measures including regular and continuous supply of medicines so that the poorest of the poor are not deprived of regular medication. Besides screening, the healthcare workers should also be trained to provide lifestyle advice, to initiate low doses of safe medications and to reinforce adherence. The NFHS 5 findings also revealed that when it comes to treatment, only seven per cent women and six per cent men who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure are on medication - an issue that is of critical concern.

In a recent update by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 'a population-based initiative for prevention, control and screening for common NCDs, i.e., diabetes, hypertension and common cancers has been rolled out in the country under National Health Mission (NHM) and also as a part of Comprehensive Primary Health Care. Under the initiative, persons more than 30 years of age are targeted for their screening for common NCDs. Screening of these common NCDs is an integral part of service delivery under Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres. The preventive aspect of cardiovascular diseases is strengthened under the Comprehensive Primary Health Care through Ayushman Bharat Health Wellness Centre scheme, by promotion of wellness activities and targeted communication at the community level will help in early detection and diagnosis of hypertension.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is another important aspect for controlling of high BP. Avoid smoking, limit or eliminate alcohol consumption and increase intake of fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet regularly. One should also reduce salt intake and try and follow WHO recommendation of less than 5g per day. This will significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases and coronary heart attack.

Other useful measures are promotion of physical activity by local environmental changes at home, workplace and schools. User-friendly food labels which are easy to interpret for consumers in determining unhealthy food products high in salt, sugar and fats will also help in reducing controlling of blood pressure in the long run.

*(The writer is a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Seeing in candlelight or LED lamp glow?

Cultivate respect for local culture and customs, do not dump in our baggage from elsewhere, minimise any disruption we may bring

Change is not easy to come to terms with. While it is taking place all the time, there's a juxtaposition of the old and the new. Our eyes can either see a continuity and harmony, or we see a struggle.

If T.A. Edison were to visit my home, he'd notice the electric bulbs immediately. Right now, nearly all of them are LED. A few years ago, they were a mix of CFL and LED bulbs. Before that, some were GLS and some CFL. When all were GLS (it simply stood for general light source) bulbs with a few fluorescent tubes, no one quite expected much innovation in domestic lighting.

Now if Edison were to look for something remotely resembling a gramophone in my home, he would find no similarity with how music is stored and replayed today. Sometimes we look upon heirloom objects with understanding and admiration in a Science Museum. Some exhibitions are termed as 'retrospectives'.

Today, in the IT industry, 'retrospection' is a formally scheduled exercise. People gather to look at past events and concluded projects together to go over subjective and objective data and to share experiences. They expect benefits from doing it such as improved team collaboration, better productivity, preventing repetition of mistakes, anticipating future problems, and improved work processes.

There is a proper way to regard the past - merely raking it up in a rough way brings little good. It's also only vain to crudely compare the past with the present, and to say that one or the other is superior by far. About forty years ago, the bicycle and the radio were regarded as outmoded, and virtually as relics. Neither has disappeared. They have a redefined role and command a useful place, and offer a different set of experiences than they did before.

When a person from a different culture, particularly from Europe, looks at communities on other continents they don't see them instinctively as backward or primitive like in the days of their great-grandparents. This healthy trend began Down Under with the Maori traditions and then the Abo ceremonies being respected, and with legislation passed to protect and cherish indigenous culture and languages.

In many countries, with the onset of the tech toy craze and the information explosion from so-called "popular magazines", there was a devaluation of traditional forms of recreation, fitness regimens, beauty treatments, and handicraft jewellery. Regional folklore and linguistics have often got swamped under by the deluge of the wide mainstream channels.

When we really look at it, today's LCD/LED television has its forerunner in the old picture tube that you could see



WHEREVER EXTENSIVE AND DELIBERATE FRACTURING HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE PAST, THE PROCESS OF MAKING AMENDS NEEDS HONEST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A COMMITMENT TOWARDS THE FUTURE. WHEN IT COMES TO AN ILLUMINED ATTITUDE, WHY SHOULD YOU BE IN THE GLS ERA RATHER THAN LED?

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



today as 'primitive' though it was a tremendous leap in knowledge and capability when TV was introduced. So when we come across what might seem simplistic or naive practices in our communities, we must realize that they are all stages. The new cannot dismiss the old. The old cannot cast an iron mold on the emergent new.

Very typically, we expect to see a 65+ person talking about the good old days, about ancient lore, historical bonds, and about movies of the 1930s their grandparents had mentioned! We are equally unsurprised when a millennial is wholly unaware that the Earth had been orbiting the Sun even prior to the release of the PlayStation console or The Need For Speed game. A 'generation gap' might seem apparent. Now it's commonly seen that just as there is a craze about the 'latest', there is a big business in 'antiques'. What is seen less is a practical perspective. To see a continuity and a succession of developments over months and years. To form an idea of how our earlier generations have lived and how our own lives have come to be.

It's true that there is such a thing as progress. We speak of 'golden ages' when largely peace prevailed. The arts flourished, new discoveries were made, and the general populace improved

their lifestyle. These are decades and successive centuries with which are associated a bonanza of great buildings, musical compositions, garden areas, reservoirs, stage presentations, and poetry events.

When ancient learning from Asia could flow into European societies, their dogmas could get shed and an era of revival of knowledge and arts came about. Their ships then accessed the material and cultural resources on faraway lands on other continents. Thus, many communities across the globe have experienced the coming into contact with other ethnicities - some through barter and hospitality, and many through shock of violence and subjugation. Unsurprising then, that conflicts always seem a greater likelihood than collaboration.

In a somewhat later era, scientific breakthroughs in medicine, transportation, and communication have travelled eastward this time, and electrified and awakened relatively dormant civilisations. And thus, the baton travels, the torch is propelled ahead. We see that everyone does indeed have their place under the sun, and there are no lasting monopolies. The value of enormous oil reserves can get assessed very differently in a mere 150 years. Distance education over the web is going to level out the



quality gap in syllabus and teaching between regions. Zoonotic viruses from afar can arrive at your doorstep, just as remote opportunities become encashable for you.

In the midst of all the globalisation, what is the role of 'local'? What could that term mean anymore? Through very long periods of association, a language and its dialects, a bunch of sub-ethnicities and a larger society come to be identified with a given geography. Somehow, it feels natural that a deeper affinity is readily available amongst its members than is immediately possible with persons outside the 'locality'. This is not in conflict with globality. Rather, we only expand the scope of how we relate to each other - as neighbours, as our tribe, as native speakers in our language group, as fellow pilgrims, as river sharers, and so on. Vasudaiva kutumbakam, as is loftily inscribed on our Parliament building's entrance - of the world as a family - is an extension of this natural tendency in us.

The lesson we can glean from examples worldwide - from New Zealand to the Caribbean, from Polynesia to Alaska - is to cultivate respect for local culture and customs, to not dump in our baggage from elsewhere, and to minimise any disruption we may bring. This new attitude is writing fresh chapters in community relations.

It goes without saying that wherever extensive and deliberate fracturing had taken place in the past, the process of making amends needs honest acknowledgement and a commitment towards the future. When it comes to an illumined attitude, why should you be in the GLS era rather than LED?

When it is clearly possible for many modern companies to practise retrospection sessions to achieve their goals, it's a matter of time before the larger society learns to incorporate similar methods towards promoting harmony between communities and class interests. Typically, the approach assesses what they would like to stop, what they want to continue with, and what they wish to start. Except for the most adamant, many people find it possible to agree that some things can be stopped or minimised. The key thing is to orient individuals to initiate reforms rather than resist them. Welcome the change!

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WOW! STADIUM IS EMPTIED, ATHLETES TOLD TO LEAVE SO THAT DELHI GOVT'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY (REVENUE) CAN WALK HIS DOG! —NOTED ACTIVIST-LAWYER PRASHANT BHUSHAN



SPORTSPERSONS ARE FACING PROBLEMS ...STADIUMS GETTING CLOSED BY 6 OR 7 PM. ALL SPORTS FACILITIES WILL REMAIN OPEN TILL 10 PM. —DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL



# Exemplars of a positive work ethic

People who possess a strong work ethic produce high-quality work consistently and that motivates them to stay on track

work ethic is a set of moral principles we use in our jobs. It has been measured as a multidimensional variable composed of seven factors, including self-reliance, ethical behaviour, valuing leisure time, hard work, giving centrality to work, productive use of time, and delay of gratification." — Miller, M.J., Woehr, D.J., & Hudspeth, N. (2002).

The meaning and measurement of work ethic: Let me illustrate these seven factors with examples I have come to see or hear.

The first example that comes to mind is Sir M Visvesvarayawho personified a wonderful work ethic in engineering and public administration. A stickler for time and perfection, he would



SUDHEESH VENKATESH

*(The writer is Chief Communications Officer, Azim Premji Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)*

rebuken his engineers for drawings, and notes that did not meet his standards. In the early 1900s, as the Dewan of Mysuru, he was on an official visit to Nanjangud where he was scheduled to attend a function at the local municipality. He arrived at 9 a.m. sharp, much to the chagrin of the organisers. By the time the officers gathered their wits around and got the function going, it was 9.30 am. After admonishing the officers, Sir MV promptly left at 10 am, midway through the function, so that he could keep his next engagement!

Another beacon of professionalism is Prof. Duncan Haldane, the Eugene Higgins professor of Physics at Princeton University, winner of the 2016 Nobel Prize. The



award announcement was made at around 5 am EST. Haldane, who was teaching first-year undergraduate students 'Electromagnetism: Principles and Problem Solving' those days, turned up for his class four hours later, sporting a light smile.

Applause and cheers erupted. "Thank you," he said, lowering his head in slight bows as the clapping continued. A student asked, "Do you need to teach on this big day? Would you rather not celebrate, Prof. Haldane?" After a pause, Haldane replied, "Well, what can I say," eliciting a round of laughter from the students. "I guess we'll have to double down and learn some electromagnetism and see where it goes."

The next example goes to show that even the greatest personal tragedies cannot deter the committed from putting work first. Sahitya Akademi Award winner Devudu Narasimha Sastri was an eminent Kannada and Sanskrit scholar who wrote and spoke extensively on the philosophy of the Bhagavad

Gita. In the 1950s, he was due to speak on Chapter 2 of the holy book at an event in Udipi. While he was speaking, someone handed him a telegram that contained the death news of his eldest son. Without a pause, he finished his speech. It was only after he got down from the stage that his wife and friends who were in the audience received the tragic news. Sastri is reported to have said Chapter 2 is about being stoic and detached and how could my practice differ from precept".

Anil Kumble, too, showed stoicism when he bowled 14 overs with a broken jaw in the Antigua Test of 2002. He even claimed Brian Lara's wicket. On his way home to Bengaluru the next day for his surgery, he said, "At least I can

go home with the thought I tried my best. I did not want to sit around."

Every example of a positive work ethic, however, doesn't make headlines. There are some that we grow up watching and admire deeply. MN Krishnaswamy, the headmaster of my school in Mysuru, personified all the seven factors that I started the piece with. Always on time, never to miss a class, the first to be in school and the last to leave, his exemplary work yielded phenomenal results for my alma mater.

A positive work ethic should not to be confused with being a workaholic. During my years with the British retailer Tesco, I found their executives valued their vacations and leisure, and this

made them better at work.

There are also people who feign a positive work ethic, often staying late in the office to impress bosses. There is, however, a story about a foreign head of state getting annoyed during a factory visit in Japan because none of the workers lifted their heads to acknowledge his presence. When he asked them about it, one of them replied, "I am paid to do my work."

People who possess a strong work ethic produce high-quality work consistently. This motivates them to stay on track creating a virtuous loop that leads to self-respect, satisfaction, and fulfilment. Like a wise, much-respected director at Asian Paints once told me, "Work is its own reward!"



# After Texas shooting, schools around US boost security



AP ■ AUSTIN

In the aftermath of the elementary school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, schools around the US have brought in additional security staff and restricted visitors as they deal with a new rash of copycat threats. For some families and educators it all has added to uneasiness in the wake of the deadliest school shooting since the 2012 attack

at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Jake Green, 34, of Los Alamos, New Mexico, was jolted when he saw a plainclothes police officer for the first time while walking into school Friday morning. He grew up in Colorado, not far from where two Columbine High School students shot and killed 12 classmates and a teacher in 1999. Green remembers

attending memorials and candlelight vigils as a fifth-grader, but he's torn about whether having police at his daughter's school is best. "In a way, I don't really feel any safer with police around," Green said. "Seeing the police there, it really made it seem like the worst possibility was even more possible today." In El Paso, Texas, where a gunman killed 23 people in a racist 2019 attack that targeted Hispanics at a Walmart, schools are on edge.

The El Paso Independent School District has already encountered some reported threats that turned out to be false. They were either "students joking or overly-sensitive parents," said Gustavo Reveles Acosta, a district spokesperson.

"Our community is still raw from that incident," Acosta said. "It hits us in a pretty emotional way." The district, which has its own police department, has also stepped up patrolling at all 85 campuses. Officers have been pulled from moni-

toring traffic or other duties. Schools already have updated camera surveillance systems. Visitors are required to ring a doorbell and show identification before they can enter.

The district is making a point to look out for teachers' and students' mental health. A counselling team has been visiting every school to speak about the shooting in Uvalde. They are also urging people to talk in private about any distress.

Mia Baucom, a 15-year-old student at a Forth Worth, Texas, high school said it was surreal to think the Uvalde killings happened in her home state. It also stirred memories of a lockdown at her school two months ago that was prompted by a shooting.

"I'm a little more stressed out about it because just the fear of what if that happened at my school?" said Baucom, whose last day of school was Thursday. "Let's say we get more police officers. Most like-

ly that's not going to stop people from going crazy and just shooting up schools.

"Schools have ramped up police presence in a host of states, including Connecticut, Michigan and New York, after the shooting Tuesday that left 19 students and two teachers dead.

In Buffalo, New York, where a white gunman fatally shot 10 people in a racist attack in a supermarket on May 14, the largest school district announced new security rules effective immediately.

Any visitors - parents, siblings, vendors - have to call ahead for approval. No exceptions will be made. They may be subjected to a search by a wand detector. Doors will be locked at all times.

In Jacksonville, Florida, the Duval County Public Schools' chief of school police banned backpacks or large handbags at any school through Friday, the last day of school.

## Biden called again to mourn with a city stricken by grief

AP ■ UVALDE (US)



President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden are hoping to console a city stricken by grief and anger when they meet with families affected by the mass shooting at a Texas elementary school that killed 19 students and two teachers.

The visit to Uvalde on Sunday is Biden's second trip in as many weeks to comfort a community in mourning after staggering loss.

On May 17, he was in Buffalo, New York, to meet with victims' families and condemn white supremacy after a shooter espousing the racist "replacement theory" killed 10 Black people at a supermarket.

The shootings in Texas and New York and their aftermath have put a spotlight on the nation's entrenched divisions and its inability to forge consensus on actions to reduce gun violence.

"Evil came to that elementary school classroom in Texas, to that grocery store in New York, to far too many places where innocents have died," Biden said Saturday in a commencement address at the University of Delaware. "We have to stand stronger. We must stand stronger. We cannot outlaw tragedy, I know, but we can make America safer."

Biden was to visit the makeshift memorial outside Robb Elementary School before attending Mass at a local Catholic church.

He was also scheduled to meet with family members at a community centre and then with first responders at the local airport before returning to Washington, the White House said.

He was not expected to deliver formal remarks. Mckinzie Hinojosa, whose cousin Elishana Torres was killed Tuesday, said she

respected Biden's decision to mourn with the people of Uvalde. "It's more than mourning," she said. "We want change. We want action. It continues to be something that happens over and over and over.

A mass shooting happens. It's on the news. People cry. Then it's gone. Nobody cares. And then it happens again. And again."

"If there's anything if I could tell Joe Biden, as it is, just to respect our community while he's here, and I'm sure he will," she added. "But we need change. We need to do something about it."

The Biden's visit to Uvalde comes amid mounting scrutiny of the police response to the shooting. Officials revealed Friday that students and teachers repeatedly begged 911 operators for help even as a police commander told more than a dozen officers to wait in a hallway.

Officials said the commander believed that the suspect was barricaded inside an adjoining classroom and that there was no longer an active threat. The revelation prompted fresh anguish and questions about whether more lives were lost because officers did not act faster to stop the gunman, who was ultimately killed by Border Patrol tactical officers.

On Wednesday, before details about delayed officer response were known, Biden had praised their efforts, saying, "brave local officers and

Border Patrol agents intervened to save as many children as they could."

Authorities have said the shooter legally purchased two guns not long before the school attack: an AR-style rifle on May 17 and a second rifle on May 20. He had turned 18 just days earlier, permitting him to buy the weapons under federal law.

Speaking on Saturday, Biden said something had to change in response to attack. "I call on all Americans at this hour to join hands and make your voices heard, to work together to make this nation what it can and should be," Biden said. "I know we can do this. We've done it before."

Hours after shooting, Biden delivered an impassioned plea for additional gun control legislation, asking: "When in God's name are we going to stand up to gun lobby? Why are we willing to live with this carnage? Why do we keep letting this happen?"

With Jill Biden standing by his side in the Roosevelt Room, the president, who has suffered the loss of two of his own children - though not to gun violence - spoke in visceral terms about grief of loved ones of victims and pain that will endure for students who survived.

"To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away," Biden said. "There's a hollowness in your chest. You feel like you're being sucked into it and never going to be able to get out."

Over the years, Biden has been intimately involved in gun control movement's most notable successes, such as 1994 assault weapons ban, and its most troubling disappointments, including failure to pass new legislation after 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

## 10 killed, 20 injured in Bangladesh bus accident: Police

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least 10 people, including a minor, were killed and 20 others injured after a passenger bus met with an accident in Southwestern Bangladesh on Sunday, police said.

The accident happened in Barishal district's Wazirpur after the bus driver lost control of the vehicle following which the bus hit a roadside tree.

"Ten people lost their lives almost immediately and 20 others wounded after the bus hit a roadside tree in Barishal on Sunday morning," a senior police official said.

Ali Arshad, the police station's in-charge of Wazirpur, said the injured ones have been sent to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. The district administration had launched an investigation on the accident.

## Visit by far-right Israeli lawmaker sparks Jerusalem unrest

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A far-right Israeli lawmaker, joined by scores of ultranationalist supporters, entered Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site early Sunday, prompting a crowd of Palestinians to begin throwing rocks and fireworks toward nearby Israeli police.

The unrest erupted ahead of a mass ultranationalist Israeli march planned later Sunday through the heart of the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. Some 3,000 Israeli police were deployed throughout the city ahead of the march.

Israel says the march is meant to celebrate Israel's capture of east Jerusalem, including the Old City, in the 1967 Mideast war.

Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its capital. But Palestinians, who seek east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state, see the march as a provocation. Last year, the

parade helped trigger an 11-day war between Israel and Gaza militants. Sunday's unrest took place in a contested hill-top compound revered by Jews and Muslims.

The compound is home to the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam. It also the holiest site for Jews, who call it the Temple Mount and revere it as the home of the biblical Temples.

The competing claims to the site lie at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and have triggered numerous rounds of violence.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, leader of a small ultranationalist opposition party and a follower of the late racist rabbi, Meir Kahane, entered the compound early Sunday along with dozens of supporters.

Palestinians shouted "God is great" as Ben-Gvir, accompanied by Israeli police, shouted "the Jewish people live." Later, a crowd of Palestinians



Members of Jewish youth movements dance and wave Israeli flags on the eve of Jerusalem Day an Israeli holiday celebrating the capture of the Old City during the 1967 Mideast war, next to the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, in the Old City of Jerusalem

AP Photo

barricaded inside the mosque threw fireworks and stones toward police, who did not immediately respond. Israel's national police chief, Kobi Shabtai, said his forces were prepared for "every scenario" and had taken "immediate and professional" action when needed. "We will not allow any inciter or rioter to sabotage

today's events and to disrupt law and order," he said. Sunday's march comes at a time of heightened tensions. Israeli police have repeatedly confronted stone-throwing Palestinian demonstrators in the disputed compound in recent months, often firing rubber bullets and stun grenades.

## TTP militant group persistent threat to Pak's security: UNSC

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A United Nations Security Council report has reminded about the persistent threat Pakistan's security faces from the Afghanistan-based Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and warned that prospects of success of the ongoing peace process with the dreaded terror group were bleak, according to a media report.

The annual report of the 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team noted TTP's linkages with the Afghan Taliban and explained how the group benefitted from the fall of the Ghani regime last year and touched upon its relations with other terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan.

The banned TTP, the report noted, had up to 4,000 fighters based in east and south-east areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and made up the largest group of foreign fighters based there, according to Pakistan's Dawn newspaper.

This was the team's first report for the committee since the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August last year. The report's original focus was on the Taliban's internal politics, its finances, relations with



Al-Qaeda, Daesh, and other terrorist groups, and the implementation of the UNSC sanctions. The report's launch coincided with the start of the third round of talks between the Pakistan government and TTP last Thursday.

The first round of talks, held in November last year, had yielded a month-long ceasefire that later broke down after TTP accused Islamabad of not fulfilling promises.

The TTP subsequently resumed attacks against Pakistani forces. Statistics tabulated by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies reveal that this year, the militant group carried out nearly 46 attacks, mostly against law enforcement personnel, in which 79 people lost their lives. On March 30, the TTP, emulating Afghan Taliban's strategy during US

war in Afghanistan, announced a "Spring Offensive" against security forces here.

The peace process, which is being facilitated by Taliban Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, meanwhile, resumed earlier this month after both sides took confidence-building measures.

The TTP militants have been fighting with the Pakistani security forces since 2008, when outfit was set up, to press for the implementation of Sharia laws in country.

However, the group is being pressed by Afghan Taliban for talks with Pakistan government to end conflict. The TTP first announced a ceasefire on occasion of Eid and later extended it after Pakistan released a couple of its (TTP) commanders, who were then on death row.

## Pakistan, IMF likely to reach agreement in June: Fin Min

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is expected to reach an agreement with the IMF next month to resurrect an enhanced bailout package to support the cash-strapped country's sagging economy, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has said.

Pakistan has repeatedly been seeking international aid to support its failing economy. The talks with the International Monetary Fund are being held in the Qatari capital Doha.

He said that the country is projected to need USD 36-37 billion in foreign financing in the next fiscal year.

Speaking at a webinar on the "National Dialogue on Economy: The Way Forward for Pakistan", organised by Nutshell Conferences and Corporate Pakistan Group on Saturday, Ismail revealed that at present the government was not considering raising fresh foreign debt from the global capital market and commercial banks after the country's international bonds lost almost one-third of their value, while their yields went up significantly, The Express Tribune reported.

He said that instead of economic growth, controlling inflation was the top priority of the government. "Inflation control will lead to economic growth," he said. Giving the breakdown of the external financing requirement, Ismail said "Pakistan is to repay USD 21 billion in foreign debt in the next fiscal year."

Besides, the country will require another USD 10-15 billion to finance the current account deficit.

The government is also aiming to boost the country's foreign exchange reserves by USD 5 billion to USD 15 billion next year. So, it is a must to enter the IMF loan programme (worth USD 6 billion) to arrange the required financing," Ismail said on the talks with the global crisis lender which began on May 18 in Doha.

The finance minister invited all political parties to frame the Charter of Economy, which could include the minimum economic agenda by setting aside the political differences.

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide Pakistan with a "sizable package" of around USD 8 billion to help the cash-starved country bolster dwindling forex reserves and revive its ailing economy. Pakistan secured the deal during the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia.

## UK considers return of pounds, ounces in post-Brexit measure

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is reportedly set to announce a return to imperial measurements of pounds and ounces as a post-Brexit move away from the European metric system to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next week.

As part of a series of announcements to celebrate the 96-year-old monarch's 70 years on the British throne, UK media reports indicate that Johnson is preparing a nostalgic move away from another European Union (EU) influence on the country.

It is also being seen as an attempt to placate his strong Brexit voter base in the wake of the partygate scandal of COVID lockdown breaching parties at Downing Street, which have angered many voters.

"As the British people have been happy to use both imperial and metric measurements in their daily life it is good for the government to reflect that now we are free to change our regulations accordingly," The Mirror newspaper quoted a Cabinet source as saying.



At present, shopkeepers are legally obliged to use metric measurements such as grams, kilograms, milli-litres and litres when selling packaged or loose goods in England, Scotland and Wales.

As opposed to the metric system of weight, in which 1,000 grams are equivalent to one kilogram, under the imperial system there are 14 pounds in a stone and 16 ounces in a pound.

While it is still legal to price goods in pounds and ounces, these have to be displayed alongside the price in grams and kilograms. Since 2000, when EU weights and measures directive came into force businesses have been legally required to use metric units for sale by weight or measure of fresh produce.

## Beijing, Shanghai relax Covid curbs as outbreaks fade

AP ■ BEIJING

Shoppers returned to the Smalls of Beijing on Sunday as the Chinese capital relaxed pandemic restrictions after declaring a small but persistent COVID-19 outbreak effectively under control.

A partial reopening of stores and offices in Beijing was welcomed by a weary populace and struggling shopkeepers eager for life to return to normal.

Coupled with a gradual easing of restrictions in Shanghai, it signalled that the worst is over in the twin outbreaks in China's most prominent cities.

The lockdowns and other restrictions under China's "zero-COVID" strategy have increasingly frustrated residents as they see other countries ease up and re-open their borders.

Some have resisted and staged protests at apartment complexes and university dormitories, in an authoritarian country where people think twice about speaking out publicly because of possible repercussions.

Restaurants remain closed in Beijing, except for takeout and delivery.

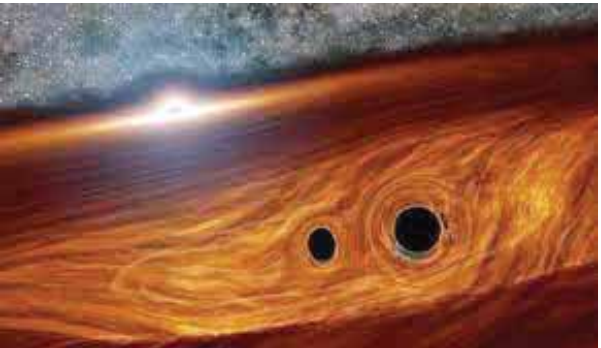
## Astronomers find massive black holes inside dying galaxies

IAN S ■ LONDON

An international team of astronomers have detected the signal from the active supermassive black holes of dying galaxies in the early Universe.

The appearance of these active supermassive black holes correlates with changes in the host galaxy, suggesting that a black hole could have far reaching effects on the evolution of its host galaxy, said researchers in the paper published in the Astrophysical Journal.

The Milky Way Galaxy where we live includes stars of various ages, including stars still forming. But in some other galaxies, known as elliptical



galaxies, all of the stars are old and about the same age. This indicates that early in their histories elliptical galaxies had a period of prolific star formation that suddenly ended. Why this star formation ceased in some galaxies but not

others is not well understood. One possibility is that a supermassive black hole disrupts the gas in some galaxies, creating an environment unsuitable for star formation. To test this theory, astronomers from Japan, Mexico, Denmark, France,

Italy and the US, looked at distant galaxies that are 9.5-12.5 billion lightyears away. They used a database combining observations from the best telescopes in the world, including Japan's 8.2-metre Subaru Telescope and the Atacama Large Millimetre/submillimetre Array (ALMA).

The team first used optical and infrared data to identify two groups of galaxies: those with ongoing star formation and those where star formation has stopped.

The x-ray and radio wave data signal-to-noise ratio was too weak to identify individual galaxies. So the team combined the data for different galaxies to produce higher signal to noise ratio images of "average"

galaxies. In averaged images, the team confirmed both x-ray and radio emissions for the galaxies without star formation. This is first time such emissions have been detected for distant galaxies more than 10 billion lightyears away.

Furthermore, the results show that the x-ray and radio emissions are too strong to be explained by the stars in the galaxy alone, indicating the presence of an active supermassive black hole.

This black hole activity signal is weaker for galaxies where star formation is ongoing. The results show that an abrupt end in star formation in the early Universe correlates with increased supermassive black hole activity.

## Pope names 21 new Cardinals from India, Mongolia, elsewhere

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis said Sunday he will elevate 21 churchmen to the rank of cardinal in a ceremony at the Vatican this summer. Among the churchmen tapped by the pontiff to receive the prestigious red hat will be two prelates from India and one each from Mongolia, Ghana, Nigeria, Singapore, East Timor, Paraguay, and Brazil, in keeping with Francis' determination to have church leaders reflect the global face of the Catholic church.

Francis read out his choices at the end of his traditional Sunday greetings to the public in St. Peter's Square.

## 25 missing after cargo boat sinks in Indonesia

**Makassar (Indonesia):** Rescuers in Indonesia were searching for 25 people who were missing after a cargo boat sank in the Makassar Strait in South Sulawesi province, officials said Sunday.

A total of 42 people were on the boat when it sank in bad weather on Thursday morning while traveling from a seaport in Makassar to Kalmas Island in Pangkep Regency, said Djunaidi, the head of the provincial search and rescue agency.

Like many Indonesians, Djunaidi goes by only one name. Seventeen people were later rescued, including some by two tugboats that were at

sea at the time of the incident.

Djunaidi said the search and rescue agency received new information about the location of the sunken boat on Saturday and dispatched crews to the area.

Two motor boats and a search and rescue boat, along with local fishing boats and Indonesia air force helicopters, are involved in the search for the missing passengers.

The sunken vessel was initially said to be a passenger ferry, but Djunaidi later clarified that it was a cargo boat carrying construction materials. Thirty-six passengers had asked for a ride on the boat and there were six crew members.



# Russia takes small cities, aims to widen east Ukraine battle

AP ■ KRAMATORSK (UKRAINE)

As Russia asserted progress in its goal of seizing the entirety of contested eastern Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin tried on Saturday to shake European resolve to punish his country with sanctions and to keep supplying weapons that have supported Ukraine's defence.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Lyman, the second small city to fall this week, had been "completely liberated" by a joint force of Russian soldiers and Kremlin-backed separatists, who have waged war for eight years in the industrial Donbas region bordering Russia.

Ukraine's train system has ferried arms and evacuated citizens through Lyman, a key railway hub in the east. Control of it also would give Russia's military another foothold in the region; it has bridges for troops and equipment to cross the Siverskiy Donets river, which has so far impeded the Russian advance into the Donbas.

Ukrainian officials have sent mixed signals on Lyman. On Friday, Donetsk Gov. Pavlo

Kyrylenko said Russian troops controlled most of it and were trying to press their offensive toward Bakhmut, another city in the region. On Saturday, Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar disputed Moscow's claim that Lyman had fallen, saying fighting there was still ongoing.

In his Saturday video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the situation in the east as "very complicated" and said that the "Russian army is trying to squeeze at least some result" by focusing its efforts there.

The Kremlin said Putin held an 80-minute phone call Saturday with the leaders of France and Germany in which he warned against the continued transfers of Western weapons to Ukraine and blamed the conflict's disruption to global food supplies on Western sanctions.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron urged an immediate cease-fire and a withdrawal of Russian troops, according to the chancellor's spokesperson, and called on Putin to engage in serious,



direct negotiations with Zelenskyy on ending the fighting.

A Kremlin readout of the call said Putin affirmed "the openness of the Russian side to the resumption of dialogue." The three leaders, who had gone weeks without speaking during the spring, agreed to stay in contact, it added.

But Russia's recent progress in Donetsk and Luhansk, the two provinces that make up the Donbas, could further embolden Putin.

Since failing to occupy Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, Russia has set out to seize the last parts of the region not controlled by the separatists.

"If Russia did succeed in taking over these areas, it would highly likely be seen by the Kremlin as a substantive political achievement and be portrayed to the Russian people as justifying the invasion," the British Ministry of Defense said in a Saturday assessment.

Russia has intensified efforts to capture the cities of

Sievierodonetsk and nearby Lysychansk, which are the last major areas under Ukrainian control in Luhansk.

Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai reported that

Ukrainian fighters repelled an assault on Sievierodonetsk but Russian troops still pushed to encircle them. He later said Russian forces had seized a hotel on the city's outskirts, damaged 14 high-rise buildings and were fighting in the streets with Ukrainian forces.

Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Striuk said the previous day that some 1,500 civilians in the city, which had a prewar population of around 100,000, have died, including from a lack of medicine or diseases that could not be treated.

Just south of Sievierodonetsk, AP reporters saw older and ill civilians bundled into soft stretchers and slowly carried down apartment building stairs Friday in Bakhmut.

Svetlana Lvova, the manager of two buildings in Bakhmut, tried to persuade reluctant residents to leave but said she and her husband would not evacuate until their son, who was in Sievierodonetsk, returned home.

"I have to know he is alive. That's why I'm staying here," said Lvova, 66. On Saturday, people who managed to flee Lysychansk described intensified shelling, especially over the past week, that left them unable to leave basement bomb shelters.

Yanna Skakova left the city Friday with her 18-month-old and 4-year-old sons and cried as she sat in a train

bound for western Ukraine. Her husband stayed behind to take care of their house and animals.

"It's too dangerous to stay there now," she said, wiping away tears.

Russia's advance raised fears that residents could experience the same horrors seen in the southeastern port city of Mariupol, which endured a three-month siege before it fell last week.

Residents who had not yet fled faced the choice of trying to do so now or staying. Mariupol became a symbol of massive destruction and human suffering, as well as of Ukrainian determination to defend the country.

Mariupol's port has reportedly resumed operations after Russian forces finished clearing mines in the Azov Sea. Russian state news agency Tass reported that a vessel bound for Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia entered the port early Saturday.

In the call with Macron and Scholz, the Kremlin said, Putin emphasized that Russia was working to "establish a peaceful life in Mariupol and

other liberated cities in the Donbas."

Germany and France brokered a 2015 peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia that would have given a large degree of autonomy to Moscow-backed rebel regions in eastern Ukraine.

However, the agreement stalled long before Russia's invasion in February. Any hope that Paris and Berlin would anchor a renewed peace agreement now appears unlikely with both Kyiv and Moscow taking uncompromising stands.

Ukrainian authorities have reported that Kremlin-installed officials in seized cities have started airing Russian news broadcasts, introduced Russian area codes, imported Russian school curriculum and taken other steps to annex the areas.

Russian-held areas of the southern Kherson region have shifted to Moscow time and "will no longer switch to daylight saving time, as is customary in Ukraine," Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti quoted Krill Stremousov, a Russian-installed local official, as saying Saturday.

# Russian troops storm city amid eastern Ukraine bombardments

AP ■ POKROVSK (UKRAINE)

Russian and Ukrainian troops engaged in close-quarter combat in an eastern Ukraine city on Sunday as Moscow's soldiers, supported by intense shelling, attempted to gain strategic footholds in the region while facing fierce Ukrainian resistance.

Ukrainian regional officials reported that Russian forces were "storming" the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk, where the fighting has knocked out power and cellphone services and terrorised civilians who haven't fled.

Sievierodonetsk, a manufacturing centre, has emerged as an epicentre of Russia's quest to conquer Ukraine's industrial Donbas region.

Russia also stepped up its efforts to take nearby Lysychansk, where Ukrainian officials reported constant shelling.

The two cities, with a combined prewar population of around 200,000, are the last major areas under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province, which makes up the Donbas together with neighbouring Donetsk.



Russia is focused on capturing parts of both not already controlled by pro-Moscow separatists.

Russian forces made small advances in recent days as bombardments chewed away at Ukrainian positions and kept civilians trapped in basements or desperately trying to get out safely.

Attacks to destroy military targets throughout the country also caused casualties in civilian areas.

In his Saturday night video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the situation in the east as "very complicated" and

"indescribably difficult".

The "Russian army is trying to squeeze at least some result" by concentrating its attacks there, he said.

Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Striuk said there was fighting at the city's bus station on Saturday.

A humanitarian centre couldn't operate due to the danger, Striuk said, and cellphone service and electricity were knocked out. Residents risked exposure to shelling to get water from a half-dozen wells, he said.

Some supply routes were functioning, and evacuations of the wounded were still possi-

ble, Striuk said. He estimated that 1,500 civilians in the city, which had a prewar population of around 100,000, have died from the fighting as well as from a lack of medicine and diseases that couldn't be treated.

Haidai, the regional governor, claimed that the Russians had retreated "with losses" around the village of Bobrove, around 20 kilometres southeast of Sievierodonetsk, but were carrying out airstrikes in a nearby village on the strategic Siverskiy Donets river.

"The situation in Lysychansk is severe due to constant shelling by the occupiers, there are fatalities and wounded people," he wrote on Telegram, without elaborating.

On Saturday, he said, one civilian died and four were injured after a Russian shell hit a high-rise apartment building. A local cinema and 22 more residential buildings were also damaged, he said.

The Ukrainian military said Sunday morning that Russian forces were trying to strengthen their positions around Lyman, a small city that serves as a key rail hub in the Donetsk region.

AP ■ KYIV

As Russian forces press their offensive to take the eastern Ukrainian cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, civilians who have managed to flee say intensified shelling over the past week left them unable to even venture out from basement bomb shelters.

Despite the attacks, some managed to make it to the town of Pokrovsk, 130 kilometers to the south, and boarded an evacuation train Saturday heading west, away from the fighting.

Fighting has raged around Lysychansk and neighboring Sievierodonetsk, the last major cities under Ukrainian control in the Luhansk region.

Luhansk and the Donetsk region to its south make up the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland which is the focus of Russia's current offensive.

Moscow-backed separatists have controlled parts of the Donbas for eight years and Russian forces are now trying to capture at least the whole Donbas.

Bouncing her 18-month-



old son on her lap, Yana Skakova choked back tears as she described living in a basement under relentless bomb-

ing, and having to leave her husband behind when she fled with her baby and 4-year-old son.

Initially after the war broke out, there were quiet times when they could come out of the basement to cook in the street and let the children play outdoors. But about a week ago, the bombing intensified.

For the past five days, they hadn't been able to venture out of the basement at all. "Now the situation is bad, it's scary to go out," she said.

It was the police who came to evacuate them Friday from the basement where 18 people, including nine children, had been living for the past two and a half months.

# UN envoy decries Sudan violence after two killed in protests

AP ■ CAIRO

The UN envoy for Sudan on Sunday decried the killing of two people in a violent crackdown against pro-democracy protesters who once again took to the streets of the capital to denounce an October military coup.

Hundreds of people marched Saturday in Khartoum, where security forces violently dispersed the crowds and chased them in the streets, according to activists.

"I am appalled by the violent death of two young protesters in Khartoum yesterday. Once again: it is time for the violence to stop," said Volker Perthes, the UN envoy,

on Twitter. The two were killed in during protests in Khartoum's Kalakia neighbourhood. One was shot dead by security forces and the other suffocated after inhaling tear gas, according to the Sudan Doctors Committee, which is part of the pro-democracy movement.

Perthes urged military authorities to lift the state of emergency imposed since the October 25 coup and find a "peaceful way out of the current crisis."

Sudan has been plunged into turmoil since the military takeover upended its short-lived transition to democracy after three decades of repressive rule by former strongman

Omar al-Bashir.

Al-Bashir and his Islamist-backed government were removed by the military in a popular uprising in April 2019. Saturday's protests were part of relentless demonstrations in the past seven months calling for the military to hand over power to civilians.

At least 98 people have been killed and over 4,300 wounded in the government crackdown on anti-coup protests since October, according to the medical group.

The protesters demand the removal of the military from power. The generals, however, have said they will only hand over power to an elected administration. They say elec-

tions will take place in July 2023 as planned in a constitutional document governing the transition period.

The UN, the African Union and the eight-nation east African regional group called the Intergovernmental Authority in Development have been leading concerted efforts to bridge the gap between the two sides and find a way out of the impasse.

Meanwhile, the trial of four activists accused of killing a senior police officer during a protest earlier this year began Sunday amid tight security

outside the Judicial and Legal Science Institute in Khartoum. Dozens of protesters gathered in the area in a show of support for the defendants.

The four were detained in raids after police Col. Ali Hamad was stabbed to death as security forces dispersed protesters on January 13. Their defence lawyers deny the allegations.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My Clients: NARENDER SONI S/o CHUNNI LAL SONI, AND CHANDRIKA SONI W/o SHRI NARENDER SONI, both R/o 1071, Chand Mohalla, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi-110031, have severed all relations from their SON SATISH SONI S/o NARENDER SONI and daughter-in-law RUPAL SONI W/o SATISH SONI, Second son HITESH SONI S/o NARENDER SONI, his wife ARCHANA SONI VERMA W/o HITESH SONI, debar them from all their moveable and immovable properties because of their misbehaviour. My client will not be responsible for any act/transactions/deal done by Them.

Raj Kumar and Associates (Advocate)  
Delhi High Court  
33A, Krishan Kunj, Extn.-II, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-92

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My client Mr. Namit Gupta and Mr. Nalin Kumar Gupta are the registered owner of leasehold Plot No. L-392, measuring 126 Sq.Mtrs. in Kensington Park Plot, Phase-I, situated Sector-133, Jaypee Greens Wish Town, Noida, Uttar Pradesh by virtue of Registered Sub Lease Deed dated 19.01.2013 and Original Provisional Allotment Letter dated 17.05.2010 in favour of M/s. Shikhar realtors & Developers Pvt. Ltd and Original Transfer Letter dated 19.10.2011 in favour of Mr. Namit Gupta and Mr. Nalin Kumar Gupta has been lost/misplaced and now my client is mortgaging the same to LIC HFL. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 7 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, then our client shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear.

Karnali Singh, Advocate,  
K-8, Basement, Jungpura Extension New Delhi  
Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363

**Utkarsh Small Finance Bank**  
Aapki Ummeed Ka Khaata

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**BEWARE OF IMITATORS / FRAUDSTERS**

It has come to our notice that certain fraudsters / criminal elements / imitators are misrepresenting themselves as representatives of **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank** and offering inducements through loans at cheaper rates. They advise members of the public to deposit processing fees, stamp duty charges and any other charges in a bank account opened with **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank** purportedly for this purpose. We hereby caution members of the public to be aware of any such fake communication / misrepresentation and desist from entertaining any such proposals / offers. It has also been observed that these individuals / entities are illegally using the **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank logo (as displayed in the above Header)**. While the Bank is initiating necessary legal action against such fraudsters, members of the public are advised not to fall prey to such misleading offers.

For any assistance / clarification, you may please contact **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank's Customer Care on 1800 123 9878 / 1800 208 1788**. Please note that **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank** will not be liable for any loss suffered by any of the customers / members of the public on account of the misrepresentation / acts of such fraudsters / criminal elements.

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Statement of Audited Financial Results for the year ended 31 March 2022  
INR in thousands

Particulars	Quarter ended 31 March 2022 (Audited) (refer note 5)	Quarter ended 31 December 2021 (Unaudited) (refer note 5)	Year ended 31 March 2022 Audited	Year ended 31 March 2021 Audited
Total Income from Operations	4,41,559	3,85,670	9,53,769	–
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	41,535	32,985	1,27,701	4,01,018
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	41,535	32,985	1,27,701	4,01,018
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	54,262	36,038	1,30,383	2,82,432
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	54,262	36,038	1,30,383	24,873
Paid up Equity Share Capital	29,594	29,594	29,594	29,594
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	25,06,790	24,52,529	25,06,790	23,76,408
Net worth**	25,36,384	24,82,122	25,36,384	24,06,001
Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt*	–	100,20,000	100,20,000	–
Debt Equity Ratio *	3.00	3.00	3.00	–
Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)				
1. Basic :	18.34	12.18	44.06	95.43
2. Diluted :	18.34	12.18	44.06	95.43
Debtenture Redemption Reserve *	82,431	85,179	1,67,611	–
Debt Service Coverage Ratio *	1.31	1.06	1.40	414.38
Interest Service Coverage Ratio	(3.71)	1.81	1.64	584.61

**Disclosures pursuant to Regulations 52(4) and 52(7) Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.**

- Credit Rating : "CRISIL A"
- Change in credit rating : No
- Asset Coverage Ratio : 150%
- Debt Equity ratio : mentioned above
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio : mentioned above
- Interest Service Coverage Ratio : mentioned above
- Previous due date for the payment of interest/ repayment of principal of non convertible debt securities and whether the same has been paid or not (as on 31 March, 2022). NA
- Next due date for the payment of interest/ repayment of principal of non convertible debt securities (as on 30 September, 2022)
- Next due date for the payment of interest : 30 September, 2022
- Next due date for the payment of principal : 30 September, 2022
- Outstanding redeemable preference shares (Quantity and Value): Not Applicable
- Net Worth \*\* (31 March, 2022) : INR 2,536,384 (31 March, 2021 : INR 2,482,122)
- Net profit after tax : mentioned above
- Earning per share : mentioned above
- Debtenture Redemption Reserve (31 March, 2022) : INR 167,611 (31 March, 2021 : Nil)
- There are no material deviation in the use of proceeds of issue of Non Convertible Debentures from the objects stated in the offer document (Regulations 52(7))

**Notes :**

- Ratios have been computed as follows :
  - Earning per share (Basic & Diluted) = Profit after Tax / Weighted average number of equity shares
  - Debt Equity Ratio\* = Debt (Amount due to Debenture Holders) / Equity (Equity share capital + share premium + quasi equity i.e. Short term borrowing but excluding unamortized fees)
  - Interest Service Coverage Ratio = Profit before interest, prior period items, tax, extraordinary items and depreciation / (Total Interest Expense)
  - Debt Service Coverage Ratio\* = (PAT based on Project Revenues realised (excluding non-cash adjustment, if any) + Depreciation + Interest (Interest, Guarantee Fees, other financing costs payable under Debenture and Project Documents) ) / (Interest + Principal Repayment+Guarantee fee).
  - Asset Coverage Ratio = (Total Assets) / Debt (Amount due to Debenture Holders)
- \*\* Networth represents issued subscribed and paid up capital plus reserves and surplus. Reserves and Surplus includes Debtenture redemption reserve, Securities premium account and Profit and loss account balance.
- The company is in the business of development and operation of solar power. There is only one segment (business and/or geographical) in accordance with the requirements of IND AS - 108 "Operating Segments".
- The above financial results of the Company for the quarter and for the period ended March 31, 2022 have been approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at the meeting held on 27-May-2022. The statutory auditors of the company have carried out the limited review of the above unaudited financial results of the Company for the quarter and audited financial results of the Company for the year ended March 31, 2022.
- The figures of the last quarter are balancing figures between audited figures in respect of the full financial year upto March 31, 2022 and the unaudited published year-to-date figures upto December 31, 2021, being the date of the end of the third quarter of the financial year which were subject to limited review.
- The financial information for the corresponding quarter ended 31st March, 2021 to be included in the Statement of Financial Results, have not been furnished by the Company in the accompanying statement pursuant to the relaxation provided in the SEBI Circular SEBI/HO/DHHS/CIR/2021/000000637 dated October 5, 2021.

**For and on behalf of the**  
**ReNew Sun Waves Private Limited**  
(Sd/-) **Rahula Kumar Kashyapa**  
Managing Director, DIN : 07637489

Place : Gurugram  
Date : 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2022



# ONGC becomes India's 2nd most profitable firm after Reliance

Displaces Tata Steel for No. 2 slot with highest net profit of ₹40,306 cr

NEW DELHI ■ PTI

On the back of the best-ever price it earned on crude oil it produces, State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) reported a record net profit of Rs 40,305 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, becoming India's second most profitable company behind Reliance Industries Ltd.

In a statement, ONGC said net profit for the fiscal FY22 (April 2021 to March 2022) soared 258 per cent to Rs 40,305.74 crore from Rs 11,246.44 crore in the previous financial year.

This as it got an average of \$76.62 for every barrel of crude oil produced and sold in the fiscal as against \$42.78 per barrel net realisation in the previous year.

This is the best-ever price that ONGC got as international oil prices surged from late 2021 and spiked to a near 14-year high of \$139 per barrel after Russia invaded Ukraine. International rates had spiked to a record \$147 per barrel in

2008 but ONGC's net realisation at that time was much lower as it had to provide subsidies to fuel retailers so that they could sell petrol, diesel, cooking gas LPG and kerosene at rates lower than cost.

ONGC now gets international rates as the downstream fuel retailers too price petrol, diesel and other petroleum products at global rates.

The firm got \$2.35 per million British thermal unit for the gas it sold as against \$2.09 in the previous FY21 fiscal. The gas price jumped to \$6.1 in April this year and this impact will be visible in the first-quarter earnings.

Consolidated net profit, after including those earned by its subsidiaries like HPCL, PL and ONGC Videsh Ltd, soared to Rs 49,294.06 crore in 2021-22 as compared to Rs 21,360.25 crore in 2020-21. Both standalone and consolidated net profit of ONGC is the second-highest profit in the country.

Reliance had on May 6 reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 67,845 crore on a revenue of Rs 792,756 crore.

ONGC displaced Tata Steel

for the No.2 spot. Tata Steel on May 3 reported a standalone net profit of Rs 33,011.18 crore and a consolidated net profit of Rs 41,749.32 crore for FY22.

At No.4 spot is Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) with a consolidated net profit of Rs 38,449 crore, followed by State Bank of India (SBI) which reported a net profit of Rs 31,676 crore on

May 13. Its private sector rival HDFC Bank reported a standalone net profit of Rs 36,961.33 crore and a consolidated net profit of Rs 31,150.90 crore for the fiscal. ONGC once was India's most profitable company but a decline in output and paying fuel subsidies led to its earnings declining over the years. ONGC said its standalone revenue from operations soared nearly 62 per cent to Rs 1.10 lakh crore and consolidated turnover came in at Rs 5.31 lakh crore.

The profit surge was despite a 3.7 per cent drop in crude

oil production to 21.7 million tonnes in 2021-22 as some of the firm's western offshore fields were hit by a severe cyclone in May last year. Gas

output fell 5 per cent to 21.68 billion cubic meters.

"The decrease in oil/gas production is mainly due to the impact of cyclone Tauktae in western offshore assets and western onshore assets and modification work at Hazira (Gujarat)," the statement said.

ONGC said its Reserve Replacement Ratio (2P) from domestic fields (excluding joint venture fields) was 1.01. This is the 16th consecutive year when ONGC achieved Reserve Replacement Ratio (2P)

of more than one. The company's overseas arm, ONGC Videsh Ltd reported a 16 per cent drop in net profit to Rs 1,589 crore in 2021-22 as crude oil and natural gas output fell. Its crude oil production declined to 8.099 million tonnes in FY22 from 8.51 million tonnes in the previous year. Gas output fell to 4.231 billion cubic meters from 4.529 bcm in FY21.

ONGC declared a final dividend of 65 per cent (Rs 3.25 per share of face value Rs 5 each), taking the total dividend paid in the fiscal to 210 per cent (Rs 10.50 a share).

# NCLT allows insolvency proceedings against NTC

NEW DELHI ■ PTI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ordered to initiate insolvency proceedings against State-run National Textile Corporation (NTC) after admitting a plea by one of its operational creditors claiming default of around Rs 14 lakh.

The New Delhi bench of the NCLT has also appointed Amit Talwar as an interim resolution professional (IRP), suspending the board of NTC and has also declared a moratorium against the PSU as per the provisions of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

A two-member NCLT bench also rejected the claims of NTC and said the dispute it raised over the due amount claimed by its operational creditor is merely a "moonshine dispute" and said default has occurred for the payment.

This is probably for the first time since the code has come into effect that insolvency proceedings against a central government-owned public sector unit (PSU) has been initiated. NTC is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Textile, Government of India. It is engaged in the production of yarn and fabric through its 23



mills in operation, located all over India.

The NCLT direction came over a petition filed by Hero Solar Energy Private Ltd (HSEPL) through its counsel Pallav Mongia, claiming a default of Rs 13.84 lakh for two contracts for installing solar rooftop power projects.

The matter relates to an almost six-year-old contract. NTC had awarded a work order in May 2016 in Tamil Nadu for a total 780 kWp grid-connected rooftop solar power PV system. As per the contract of both the projects, the amount of Rs 2.21 crore towards Project 1 and Rs 1.86 crore towards Project 2 become due upon the comple-

tion of work on December, 2016 and April, 2017, respectively.

However, NTC failed to release the complete payment due to HSEPL and retained an amount of Rs 13.84 lakh against the terms of the agreement. It was informed by the operational creditor that as per the clauses of the agreement, there was no provision for levying any penalty and sent a demand notice to NTC under section 8 of the IBC. However, NTC in its reply had said HSEPL has committed a delay of 117 days in the execution of the work order and it has suffered losses and hence it has deducted penalties from the amount due.

## Haryana pump owners urge Govt to reduce VAT on petrol, diesel

**Gurugram:** After the reduction of excise duty on petrol and diesel by the Centre, the All Haryana Petrol Pump Association has demanded that the state government follow suit. The organization has threatened that if the Haryana government ignores their demand, all dealers of the state will not buy oil from companies on May 31, which has been named 'No Purchase Day'.

The association said on Saturday that in the coming days, giving fuel to government vehicles will also be stopped.

This was announced by the All Haryana Petroleum Dealers Association during a press meet here. They said that the pump dealers are incurring losses of crores of rupees due to the arbitrariness of the government and oil companies.

"The state government should reduce VAT on petrol and diesel so that the constant loss to the petrol pump operators can be compensated," Anil Yadav, President of Petrol Pump Association told IANS.

"Excise on petrol and diesel has already been reduced by the central government but the state government has not yet decided to reduce VAT. In view of this, all petrol pump operators will register their protest for a day on May 31," he added.

"In the past five years, the price of petrol has increased by 160 per cent and that of diesel by 150 per cent, but the commission of pump dealers has not been revised even once. The Apoorva Chandra Committee constituted by the Government of India has also said in its report that 90 per cent of the commission that pump dealers get is spent on operating the pump itself. The expenses which have increased for them are not being met by the commission."

Association general secretary M.C. Gupta said that pump dealers should be kept out of the fluctuation of excise rates. "Full supply of petrol, diesel is given only after full payment of excise duty to the dealer. In such a situation, it is excessive to reduce the amount of excise duty back from their sale price," Gupta said.

"There are 4,000 oil pumps in Haryana and 200 pumps in Gurugram. The reduction in excise duty has resulted in a loss of at least Rs 5 lakh to each pump. Accordingly, the dealers have suffered a loss of more than Rs 200 crore," Manish Yadav, a Gurugram based dealer said.

IANS

# Starlink satellite Net gets approval in three more countries

Musk's firm has received the green light in the Philippines, Nigeria and Mozambique

**San Francisco:** Tech billionaire Elon Musk's Starlink, the satellite Internet division of his rocket company SpaceX, has received the green light in the Philippines, Nigeria and Mozambique.

In a statement on Sunday, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) said it has approved the registration of Starlink Internet Services Philippines Inc. as a value-added service (VAS) provider, reports CNN Philippines.

"Starlink's VAS registration now allows the company to directly access satellite systems, build and operate broadband facilities to offer internet services. The NTC's swift processing of Starlink's VAS provider registration was meant to expedite the service's immediate roll-out," the regulator was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, the CEO informed its Twitter users via a tweet that "Starlink approved by The Philippines".

In another tweet, he also announced that the satellite internet service has been approved in Nigeria and Mozambique.

"Starlink approved by Nigeria and Mozambique," he wrote on the microblogging site. This month, a report said that Starlink is available in 32 countries, up from 25 countries reported earlier this year.

Recently, Musk was asked about an update on Starlink's approval in India, to which he replied "we are waiting for government approval".

In June last year, Musk claimed that Starlink would

**Starlink registered its business in India via a local unit, Starlink Satellite Communications and targeted an April rollout. But the Department of Telecommunications under the Ministry of Communications in December warned Starlink to get the necessary permission required to offer satellite-based Internet services in India**

span the globe, including India, within months. But its plans to set up space in the country were denied. Starlink registered its business in India via a local unit, Starlink Satellite Communications and targeted an April rollout.

But the Department of Telecommunications under the Ministry of Communications in December warned Starlink to get the necessary permission required to offer satellite-based Internet services in India.

The Government told Starlink to stop "booking/rendering the satellite internet service" in India without a licence.

Starlink later announced that it will apply for a commercial licence in India by January 31, which it is yet to.

IANS

## Ather Energy report on electric scooter fires

# 'Rare structural breach in battery pack to blame'

**Chennai/New Delhi:** Electric scooter manufacturer Ather Energy has blamed an "extremely rare" phenomenon for a fire at its experience centre in Chennai, saying structural breach allowed water to find its way into the battery pack of the scooter, which triggered a thermal runaway event resulting in smoke and fire.

The EV maker said the scooter in question had been brought to the Nungambakkam facility for service after an accident.

The service crew apparently subjected the Ather 450 electric scooter to a high-pressure wash to remove dust and mud that had accumulated on the scooter over time.

The crew later "discovered a crack on the top casing of the battery pack", which, the company believes, was due to the

accident of the scooter.

"A structural breach allowed water to find its way into the battery pack of the scooter, which triggered a thermal runaway event," the company claimed. The EV maker said such an incident has never happened with neither its test vehicles nor any scooters it has sold to date.

"The crack in the casing allowed water into the battery pack - which is both IP67-rated as well as AIS 156-compliant - that made its way to the 224 cells in the pack," said the company, adding it was an 'impossible to solve' scenario in terms of saving the battery pack. The EV maker also said that the scooter in question had a number of 'non-standard parts' in place of the stock screws surrounding the battery pack, adding that it is increas-

ing the pre-checks for accident cases to avoid such incidents in the future.

The company had earlier said in a tweet that there has been a minor fire incident on its premises in Chennai.

"While some property and scooters got affected, thankfully all employees are safe and things are under control. The experience centre will be operational shortly," the EV company said.

This was the first time Ather Energy came in news for a fire incident as several top EV players are facing government inquiry over battery explosions and fire incidents across the country. A Hero Photon Electric scooter in Odisha caught fire this week while it was being charged. The incident left the scooter partially damaged.

IANS

# 10-minute delivery startups ready to defy downturn as demand surges

**New Delhi:** As a pall of gloom shrouds the Indian startup ecosystem amid funding drought after a strong bull run, the quick commerce (10-minute delivery) segment is brewing with new hope as people prefer groceries and other home essentials at their doorsteps within no time after making an online order.

Startups like Swiggy Instamart, Zepto, and Reliance-backed Dunzo, etc are trying to defy the current slowdown, as they add more goods and daily essentials to their kitty and deliver them to their customers.

Learning from the earlier players in the quick delivery space, the startups are minimising cash burn. India's quick commerce market is all set to witness 15 times growth by 2025, reaching a market size of nearly \$5.5 billion, according to Bengaluru-based market research firm RedSeer.

The total addressable market for

quick commerce in India stands at \$45 billion, and urban areas are driving this market on the back of mid-high-income households.

Swiggy Instamart pioneered quick commerce grocery delivery in India when it launched this in August 2020.

Since then, Instamart has made quick commerce more accessible and affordable to consumers across 28 cities to date.

"We are encouraged by the consumer adoption and the opportunity this category is providing for sellers, D2C brands, and FMCG brands alike as they benefit from Swiggy Instamart's reach and superior experience," Karthik Gurumurthy, SVP, Swiggy Instamart, told IANS.

In December 2021, Swiggy announced to pour \$700 million into Instamart.

"While grocery is commonly understood to be the largest category

**Quick commerce is fundamentally changing consumer purchase behaviour and the grocery retail market on the whole by providing faster delivery options (in as little as 10 minutes) as well as a more convenience-driven shopping experience.**

ry in retail, quick commerce remains a new and largely untapped segment even within grocery," Gurumurthy added. Over the last two years, quick commerce has seen a significant uptake in urban areas, with major cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, and New Delhi enjoying most of the offerings.

According to Abhishek Gupta, Engagement Manager, RedSeer, India

has laid the foundation for a well-positioned market for quick commerce adoption.

"The growing online population and an increasing preference for online shopping over brick-and-mortar shopping is enabling this market to grow rapidly," he said.

Earlier this month, 10-minute delivery platform Zepto raised \$200 million, taking its valuation to around \$900 million.

Just nine months after launching, Zepto posted a record 800 per cent revenue growth quarter-on-quarter.

"Our rigorous focus on Unit Economics is the main reason why we've had such an amazing trajectory as a company and also the reason for our investors' continued faith in our efficient business model," a Zepto spokesperson told IANS.

The cash burn has also "come down 5 times on a per-order basis, significantly lower than companies grow-

ing at the same pace", the spokesperson added.

The company has a 1,000-strong workforce and plans to hire across all functions.

The platform has so far raised \$360 million from investors in Silicon Valley and India. It recently clocked Series D fundraising of \$200 million, bringing its valuation to \$900 million.

Quick commerce is fundamentally changing consumer purchase behaviour and the grocery retail market on the whole by providing faster delivery options (in as little as 10 minutes) as well as a more convenience-driven shopping experience.

"Quick commerce is satisfying the latent needs of its customers in a way that traditional commerce never could," said Gupta.

According to Gurumurthy, they will continue to "make online grocery shopping more delightful and convenient to users".

IANS

# VCs reroute top dollar to Web 3.0, gaming startups amid dry spell

**New Delhi:** As venture capital (VC) funds and top investors squeeze the flow of money to traditional startups owing to multiple global macroeconomic conditions, they have now turned their attention on emerging tech like Web3.0 (Blockchain/Crypto/ NFTs) and gaming (Metaverse) where they see immense opportunities. Realising that 'funding winter' has finally set in after a strong rally of more than two years in the pandemic that allowed Internet-driven startups to grow exponentially across the spectrum — edtech, healthcare, e-grocery, food delivery and online home services, they have decided to park their money elsewhere.

Leading the pack is

California-based investment firm Andreessen Horowitz (A16Z) which just announced two new funds — a massive \$4.5 billion fund for crypto and Blockchain companies and Web3.0 startups and a \$600 million 'Games Fund One' that is exclusively focused on the gaming industry.

Web3, or Web 3.0, represents the next generation of the Internet.

A group of former executives from one of the largest cryptocurrency exchanges Binance has also reportedly created a \$100 million venture fund.

"Games will play a pivotal role in defining how we socialise, play and work over the next century," said Andreessen

Horowitz.

The fund's backers include co-founders at gaming companies like King, Discord, Roblox, Zynga, Twitch, Blizzard, and Riot Games.

Indian startups in the gaming industry have also realised immense opportunities as smartphone usage grows and data packs get cheaper, as high-intensity gaming devices and bigger screens arrive on the scene.

India is currently home to more than 430 million mobile gamers and the number is estimated to grow to 650 million by 2025. Currently, mobile gaming dominates the sector, contributing more than 90 per cent to the current \$1.6 billion gaming market in the country,

according to a latest report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

"The Indian gaming ecosystem consists of gamers of all ages, game developers and designers, investors, and marketers all working together to come up with the latest cutting-edge games, concepts and offers for players," Sean (Hyunil) Sohn, Head of India Division at Krafton, Inc, said.

Gaming startups in India attracted \$1.6 billion in the first nine months of 2021, according to a report by investment banking platform Maple Capital Advisors.

Nearly 90 per cent of the investments went to two large players in the fantasy sports and platform gaming sector - Dream

Sports and the Mobile Premier League (MPL).

Top venture firms also invested millions of dollars in other gaming startups like PlayShifu, Zupee, and Winzo. PUBG Mobile developer Krafton invested \$22.4 million in the home grown esports company Nodwin Gaming.

"In the last 12 years, we had to update our GPUs (graphics processing units) over 700 times, that's the demand coming in from the consumers," said Qualcomm Vice President and President, Rajen Vagadia.

A metaverse and NFT-focused startup known as Sandbox recently raised nearly \$93 million in a round led by SoftBank Vision Fund 2, the first investment into crypto

assets by the Japanese investment giant. Another NFT-focused startup, known as Sfermion, received \$100 million from billionaires Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss (Winklevoss twins) and two general partners from A16Z. Blockchain-based startups from India also aspire to be on the world map.

According to Nasscom, the cryptotech industry in India has expanded over 39 per cent in the last five years. The government has also stated that there will be no blanket ban on all technologies related to Blockchain or Web3.0. Apart from having a robust blockchain space, the technology and entrepreneurship sectors in India too have witnessed significant growth with more than 230 cryptotech

startups and 34 Indian companies gaining unicorn status in 2021 itself, according to Venture Intelligence Unicorn Tracker.

Apart from popular crypto exchanges like WazirX, CoinDCX and CoinSwitch Kuber, India is now brimming with Web3.0 startups like Polygon. Rajan Anandan, managing director at Sequoia Capital, recently said that India represents great potential on Web3.0.

"Look at the Indian startups in the Web3.0 space. Some of them are doing great work, and not just in the crypto space. Startups working on Blockchain-based Web3.0 projects in India have continued to grow," Anandan said during the Lenovo Tech World India con-

ference in March.

With capital becoming scarce, Sequoia Capital has also told its founder community to tighten the belt and focus on profitability.

"We are just beginning to see how the increasing cost of money flows through to impact the real economy. If you're stepping back and thinking twice, it's not just you. Belt tightening and priority reassessment will have second- and third-order effects, as one company's costs represent someone else's revenue or purchasing power," the leading VC fund told its founder community.

Sequoia Capital India has invested in almost 30 unicorns of the 100 Indian unicorns.

IANS





the pioneer

INDIAN

PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

11

I KNEW THIS GAME WAS GOING TO BE LIKE THAT ONLY AND I WAS PREPARED FOR THE GAME TO GO DOWN TO THE WIRE. GREAT EFFORT BY THE GIRLS

— HARMANPREET KAUR

# GUJARAT ARE THE TITANS

Captain Hardik leads the show to help his side win maiden IPL title

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Nobody gave them a chance but Gujarat Titans, bucking all pre-tournament predictions, surprised everyone by lifting the Indian Premier League title in a dream maiden season after a seven-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals in the final here on Sunday.

Gujarat's highly-rated bowling attack, led by skipper Hardik Pandya (3/17) himself, limited a formidable Rajasthan Royals batting unit to 130 for nine after losing the toss.

Shubman Gill and David Miller remained unbeaten on 45 and 32, respectively, to complete an emphatic win for their team.

It should have been a comfortable chase but Rajasthan bowled their hearts out to make it an interesting final. As they showed all season, Gujarat remained calm in tough situations to finish the chase in 18.1 overs.

Not many gave Gujarat a chance in their first season especially after a mixed auction where they waited till the end to secure the services of wicketkeepers Wriddhiman Saha and Matthew Wade.

It was not a team studded with star players but Hardik impressed with his leadership and got the best out of his colleagues.

His performance with bat and ball also contributed immensely to the team's triumph besides the ability to bounce back from any situation through the brilliance of Miller and Rahul Tewatia.

After posting an underwhelming total, Rajasthan had to produce a special effort with the ball to get back in the game.

The pace duo of Trent Boult and Prasidh Krishna were brilliant in the powerplay, reducing Gujarat to 31 for two with Wriddhiman Saha (5) and Matthew Wade (8) back in the



dugout.

Krishna got one to seam back in from good length to breach Saha's defence and crash into the stumps.

Boult, who also bowled a maiden over in his tidy spell, removed Wade. Gujarat would have been three down in the powerplay if Yuzvendra Chahal held on to a simple catch of Gill off Boult in the first over of the innings.

Hardik and Gill struggled to get the boundaries but never felt extreme pressure as the asking rate remained very much in control.

R Ashwin was introduced in the 12th over and Hardik (34 off 30) decided to go after him, collecting a four and six off successive balls to bring up the 50-run stand with Gill

## IPL creates Guinness World Record with largest cricket jersey



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Amid the high voltage final clash of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals, the tournament created the Guinness World Record for the world's largest cricket jersey.

IPL achieved this feat during the summit clash of the 15th edition, here at Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

The certificate was presented to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Sourav Ganguly, secretary Jay Shah, and IPL chairman Brijesh Patel.

and take Gujarat to 77 for two in 12 overs.

The skipper fell to a brilliant leg break from Chahal but Gill and Miller got the job done in the end. The entire stadium, housing more than a lakh people, erupted when Gill hit the winning six.

Earlier, Hardik (3/17) struck thrice in his four overs while Rashid Khan (1/18) delivered yet again on the big stage to put their team on course for a title in its debut season.

Rajasthan did not have the best of starts after skipper Sanju Samson decided to put runs on the board in a big final. Gujarat bowlers were able to maintain the pressure on the opposition though Jos Buttler (39 of 35) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (22 off 16)

## Record crowd of almost 105,000 watches IPL final



AP ■ AHMEDABAD

The Indian Premier League final between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad set a new record attendance for a cricket match, attracting a crowd of 104,859, organisers said Sunday.

The 132,000-seater Narendra Modi Stadium -- the biggest cricket ground in the world -- was nearly full for the season finale of the popular Twenty20 tournament.

The largest crowd in one-day matches was previously listed as 100,000 in Kolkata in the 1990s and early 2000 but the highest official figure for a limited-overs

match was the 87,812 people at the 1992 50-over World Cup final between Pakistan and England in Melbourne.

The Ahmedabad stadium has been working empty or at half capacity during the coronavirus pandemic after it opened in 2020 to a packed mega rally of former US president Donald Trump.

But the fans poured in for the title clash to back home team Gujarat, led by star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

India's cricket board allowed 100 percent seating for the four play-offs this season after stadiums worked at half capacity in the IPL league phase due to Covid restrictions.

## Gavaskar lauds Hardik for his captaincy in IPL 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 2022 season of the Indian Premier League has seen the rise of Hardik Pandya as a skipper. In his first year as a captain of any team, the 28-year-old from Baroda has done an outstanding job, leading his team, the Gujarat Titans, to the IPL finals.

His exemplary work with the Ahmedabad-based side has earned him a lot of praise already, and recently another big name was added to the list in the form of Sunil Gavaskar, who lauded the star all-rounder for his on-point captaincy in the ongoing season.

Analysing Hardik's captaincy, the member of the Indian team that won the 1983 World Cup said that Hardik seems to have learnt a lot from his close friend and former India captain MS Dhoni. The cricketer-turned-commentator highlighted that the Gujarat captain has focused on man-management and that approach has paid dividends for him.

"Looking at Hardik Pandya's captaincy, it seems as if he has learnt a lot from MS Dhoni. He considers MS Dhoni his elder brother and hero. His man-management style is MS Dhoni's approach. Not showing too much emotion on the field and letting anyone know



about their mistakes in the dressing room."

The legendary Indian opening batter is impressed with Hardik's bowling changes and field placements throughout the competition and said the 28-year-old's inspiring performance as the captain is also a good sign for the Indian cricket team going forward.

"Because of this, every player wants to do something special for the skipper. Hardik has been very impressive with his bowling changes and field placements as well. His success as captain is a positive sign for Team India."

## Umran Malik 'breath of fresh' air for pace bowling: Whatmore

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Former Australian cricketer and World Cup-winning coach Dav Whatmore on Sunday said Umran Malik was a breath of fresh air in the world of pace bowling and expressed hope that the 22-year-old goes from strength to strength.

Whatmore, who arrived in Srinagar as part of a camp at a private school here, said many youngsters from J-K would like to emulate the pace sensation.

"Umran Malik is a breath of fresh air for the speed and pace bowling. He has been wonderful to the point that he was retained by his (IPL) franchise which is a big thing. I am sure there are a lot of youngsters in this state that would like to emulate Malik," the cricketer, who has in past coached Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh among other teams, told reporters. He congratulated Malik for being selected in the India cricket team "Let's hope he does well. Congratulations to him for being selected in the Indian squad. We all



hope that he goes from strength to strength," Whatmore said.

Asked about his favourites for the IPL final match to be played between Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans, Whatmore said it is really good for the IPL for those two teams to be playing in the finals.

"I am not sure which way to go.

There are good reasons for both to win the IPL. Maybe later in the day, I will have some leaning, but both are very very good teams," he said.

Whatmore, who was part of the Australian squad which played a match here in 1979, expressed hope that his second visit to the valley would not be his last.



## India inch closer to finals

PTI ■ JAKARTA

India almost clinched the title round berth before Razie Rahim turned out to be Malaysia's saviour with a hat-trick in an enthralling 3-3 draw in a 'Super 4' encounter of Asia Cup hockey tournament here on Sunday.

Rahim (12th, 21st, 56th minutes) converted three penalty corners for Malaysia, while India made a valiant fightback after being two goals down, scoring through Vishnukant Singh (32nd), SV Sunil (53rd) and Nilam Sanjeep Xess (55th). India had earlier defeated Japan 2-1 in their first match on Saturday.

Meanwhile in the other Super 4 league match, South Korea defeated Japan 3-1 to move to four points. South Korea had earlier drawn 2-2 against Malaysia in their first match.

As the Super 4's table stands, South Korea with a goal difference of +2 (5-3) are on top of the table with India (GD) +1 (5-4) are placed second.

Japan with two defeats have no chance of making it to the final while Malaysia (GD) 0 (5-5) have an out-side chance if they can beat Japan by a comprehensive margin (minimum 2 goals) provided India and South Korea match ends in a draw.

On the day, Malaysia started brightly and put the Indian defence under sustain pressure.

Indian goalkeeper Suraj Karkera was brought to action in the sixth minute when he made a fine save to deny Muhammad Hassan's reverse hit.

Malaysia earned a penalty corner from the resultant move but Karkera positioned himself perfectly to keep out Faizal Saari's try.

It was all Malaysia in the first quarter as the Indian team failed to get a single shot on target.

Malaysia's consistent pressure secured them another penalty corner in the 12th minute and this time Rahim beat Karkera with a powerful low flick to the right bottom corner of the board.

The Indians upped their game in the second quarter and created a few chances but that didn't result in a goal.

Malaysia, on the other hand, secured another penalty corner in the 21st minute and once again Rahim was bang on target as India conceded second goal of the match. A minute later, India goalie Karkera came out of his line to narrow down the angle and deny Saari from close range. Trailing by two goals, the Indians stepped up the pressure after the change of ends and pulled a goal back when Vishnukant converted from a rebound after the team got its first penalty corner.

## 'Working on my S/R to earn place in CWG, WT20 squads'

PTI ■ PUNE

India wicketkeeper batter Taniya Bhatia said she has been working on her strike rate to cement her place in the national women's team ahead of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and next year's World T20.

The 24-year-old from Chandigarh, known for her glove work, is not a regular in the Indian team since retiring hurt during the T20 World Cup final two years back due to a concussion.

She played three ODIs last year in England, managing just 7 and 2 in two opportunities. She also played three ODIs this year -- one each against the West Indies, South Africa and New Zealand, scoring 8 in her only outing with the bat.

She was included in the World Cup squad in New Zealand this year but didn't get



a game with young Richa Ghosh, with better batting credentials, getting the preference.

"The main thing is to accept things, so I accepted my situations," she said after Supernovas beat Velocity by four runs to claim the Women's T20 Challenge title.

"I thought during the World Cup that when I go back I will work on my batting. I knew there are T20s lined up this season, so I started working on my strike rate during the domestic tournament.

"T20 cricket is all about maintaining strike rate and average, so here also I kept my focus on that,

to act according to the situation, and now also when I go back my preparation and focus will remain the same for the upcoming games."

Bhatia had played a pivotal role in India snatching a draw against England in the one-off Test last year when she shared an unbeaten 104-run partnership with Sneha Rana after coming on to bat at number 10.

"I am always positive and live in the moment. I didn't think about past even during the domestic season," said Bhatia, who scored 36 and 1 not out in two innings besides claiming three catches and one stumping in the three games of the Women's T20 challenge.

"Before coming here, I thought that I will just focus on my role, do what the situation demands and not think about what is happening outside and try to grab the opportunities that come my way."

## I AM WORKING ON MY LEG-SIDE GAME: WOLVAARDT

PTI ■ PUNE

South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt, who smashed a 40-ball 65 for Velocity, albeit in a losing cause, said she has been trying to improve her game on the leg side.

"I have been working on my leg-side game quite a lot, especially now in T20 games when teams put out the long off and deep extra cover, it takes away my extra cover powergame. So I have to think about different options," she said.

"I am glad I got one or two over long on today (Saturday) but last over Sophie (Ecclestone) bowled really well, those yorkers were hard to get away.

"I got the first one away but



she nailed the yorkers afterwards under a lot of pressure which shows there is a reason she is number one in world in both formats at the moment."

Wolvaardt hit five fours and three sixes during her innings, including a maximum of Alana King over long-on.





# KINGS OF EUROPE

Vinicius Jr's 2nd-half strike helps Real Madrid beat Liverpool 1-0 to win 14th Champions League title

AP ■ PARIS

Vinicius Junior scored the only goal of the game as Real Madrid beat Liverpool 1-0 in Saturday's Champions League final in Paris to become kings of Europe for a record-extending 14th time after a night marred by problems outside the ground that led to the kick-off being delayed by over half an hour.

Brazilian winger Vinicius turned in Fede Valverde's enticing low cross in the 59th minute at the Stade de France and Liverpool could not find an equaliser as Jurgen Klopp's side lost to the Spanish giants in a Champions League final for the second time in five seasons.

The Anfield side will wonder what might have been had the outstanding Thibaut Courtois not pushed Sadio Mane's shot onto the inside of a post when they were on top in the first half, as they fell short of a trophy treble.

Winners of the English League Cup and FA Cup this season, they just missed out to

## LIVERPOOL WILL 'COME AGAIN'

AP ■ PARIS

A season that will live in the memory for Liverpool fans ended on a night that will be remembered for all the wrong reasons as Jurgen Klopp's men were beaten 1-0 by Real Madrid in Paris.

Less than a week ago, the Reds were on the brink of an unprecedented quadruple.

Instead they have to settle for the double of League and FA Cup after missing out on the bigger prizes of the Premier League and Champions League.

Manchester City claimed the English title by one point after a dramatic final day when Pep Guardiola's men came from 2-0 down to beat Aston Villa 3-2.

"These boys played an



outstanding season," said Klopp. "The two competitions we couldn't win we didn't win for the smallest possible margin.

"City was one point better and tonight Madrid was one goal better."

Vinicius Junior scored

the only goal as he stole in at the back post to turn home Fede Valverde's cross-comshot.

But the fact it was Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois who was named man-of-the-match said more about the flow of the game.

"When the goalkeeper is man-of-the-match then something is going wrong for the other team," added Klopp.

"They scored a goal and we didn't. That's the easiest explanation in the world of football."

For the third time this season, Klopp's men failed to fire in a final.

Twice they beat Chelsea in penalty shootouts after 120 goalless minutes at Wembley.

But Madrid were not so forgiving as they capped a remarkable run through the competition to claim a 14th European Cup.

Klopp has now won just one of his four European Cup finals.

Four years ago, Real also won a clash between the sides 3-1 in Kiev.

Liverpool bounced back a year later to win their sixth European crown in Madrid.

And Klopp is confident his side will not stop at reaching the showpiece for a third time in five years.

"The difference between now and 2018 is I see us coming again," he said. "I wished it but I couldn't know it."

"They have an incredible attitude, it's a fantastic group and we will go again."

European club football's greatest prize for a fourth time.

Ancelotti was also in charge of Real when they won the 2014 final having triumphed with AC Milan in 2003 and in 2007, the latter victory coming against Liverpool.

"We managed the game very well," said Ancelotti, who called himself "a record man".

"I had luck to come here last year and have a fantastic season. A fantastic club, a really good squad with a lot of quality and mental character," he told *BT Sport*.

### DELAYED KICK-OFF

The delayed kick-off may have been responsible for the slow start to the game, as it took 16 minutes before there was an incident of note, Mohamed Salah turning a low Trent Alexander-Arnold cross towards goal only for Courtois to save.

Liverpool were seen as favourites to avenge their loss to the Spanish giants in the 2018 final in Kyiv and they began to take control of the game.

Mane came agonisingly

## 'I can't do much more' to win Ballon d'Or: Benzema

AP ■ PARIS

Karim Benzema admitted he had done all he could with Real Madrid this season to make himself favourite for the Ballon d'Or after helping the Spanish giants beat Liverpool 1-0 in Saturday's Champions League final in Paris.

Benzema did not score in the final at the Stade de France as Vinicius Junior netted the only goal of the game, but the Frenchman finished as the Champions League's top scorer with 15 including 10 in the knock-out rounds.

"Of course," the 34-year-old told *Canal Plus* when asked if the Ballon d'Or was on his mind after a season in which he also won La Liga with Real Madrid.

"Now I will join up with the national team but I don't think I can do much more with my club.

"We will see what happens, but in any case I am proud of what I have done."

Benzema will join up with the France squad for a series of UEFA Nations League games in June after finishing the season with 44 goals altogether for Real.

He scored hat-tricks against Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea in the Champions League knockout rounds and netted three times across the two legs of the semi-final against Manchester City.

"There is no luck," he said in reference to a series of remarkable comeback wins on their run to the final.



"You can be lucky once but not every time. We deserve our victory. We put in the effort, we came back every time, we never gave up."

"Every player is important in our squad, whether they are a starter or a substitute, or they don't play often but give everything in training."

Benzema, who has now won five Champions Leagues with Real, added that ending the season as the competition's top scorer was "exceptional".

"But the most important thing is to win this fifth Champions League."

The winner of the Ballon d'Or will be revealed in a ceremony in Paris in October, before this year's World Cup in Qatar.

close in the 21st minute as he skipped his way into a shooting position inside the box only for Courtois to tip his net-bound shot onto his right-hand post.

Klopp's side, with Fabinho and Thiago Alcantara starting in midfield after overcoming fitness worries, were on top but could not turn their superiority into a lead.

**OUTSTANDING COURTOIS**

Real, meanwhile, created almost nothing in the first half with Karim Benzema quiet, but their captain briefly thought he had got the breakthrough two minutes before the interval.

The Frenchman prodded home after the ball broke back to him inside the area but the offside flag was raised.

The decision to disallow the goal was upheld after a lengthy VAR check, despite Fabinho deflecting Valverde's

touch through to Benzema.

Yet Ancelotti's side kept their nerve and were rewarded with the goal as the hour mark approached.

Valverde drove forward down the right before firing a low ball across the face of goal for Vinicius to turn it in at the far post past his Brazilian national team colleague Alison.

Just like in 2018, Real had drawn first blood, but this time there was no need for them to send on Gareth Bale in order to ensure victory.

Courtois was superb, flying to his right to keep out a Salah curler before two saves in quick succession late on.

First the Belgian got down low when substitute Diogo Jota deflected Salah's effort towards goal, and then he produced a strong arm to turn a Salah strike behind.

It was Real Madrid's night.

## Djokovic cruises closer to Nadal clash

AP ■ PARIS

World number one and defending champion Novak Djokovic reached a 16th French Open quarter-final on Sunday where old rival and 13-time winner Rafael Nadal could be waiting.

Djokovic, bidding to equal Nadal's record of 21 Grand Slam titles, eased to a 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 last-16 victory against 15th seed Diego Schwartzman of Argentina.

"I have a lot of respect for him (Schwartzman). He's a good person off the court," said Djokovic who has now beaten Schwartzman seven times in seven meetings.

Djokovic is still to drop a set at Roland Garros after cruising through the first week.

He has also won 22 sets in a row, stretching back to his Italian Open title triumph in Rome earlier this month.

"I've made a good start but I have a lot of work to do," added Djokovic who will face Nadal for the 10th time at Roland Garros and 59th overall if the Spaniard defeats Felix Auger-Aliassime later Sunday.

In an interesting twist, Auger-Aliassime has Nadal's uncle and former long-time coach Toni working with him.

Toni coached his nephew for the best part of three decades during which time Nadal won 16 of his record 21 Slam titles.

When asked if he will divulge to Auger-Aliassime the secret of how to become just the third man to defeat Nadal at Roland Garros, the 61-year-old coach was unequivocal.

"Of course not. I told Felix that my ethics do not allow me to give him advice on beating my nephew. It's as if I were telling someone how to defeat my own son," said Toni ahead of his first meeting with Rafael since their split.

Toni said he would not sit in Auger-Aliassime's player box for the match, taking his

DJOKOVIC IS STILL TO DROP A SET AT ROLAND GARROS AFTER CRUISING THROUGH THE FIRST WEEK. HE HAS ALSO WON 22 SETS IN A ROW, STRETCHING BACK TO HIS ITALIAN OPEN TITLE TRIUMPH IN ROME EARLIER THIS MONTH

place instead in the presidential box on Court Philippe Chatrier.

In the wide open women's event, which saw nine of the top 10 seeds fall before the second week, Canadian teenager Leylah Fernandez reached the quarter-finals for the first time.

Fernandez, seeded 17th, and who was US Open runner-up last year, fired an impressive 40 winners past 2019 semi-finalist Amanda Anisimova to secure a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win.

The 19-year-old has made the quarter-finals on the back of an impressive 23 service breaks over four rounds at Roland Garros.

"It was a very complicated match. Amanda is a very good player but I was happy to win in front of you," said the 2019 junior champion.

She next faces Martina Trevisan for a place in the semi-finals.

The world number 59 from Italy booked her place in the quarter-finals for the second time in three years, edging out Aliaksandra Sasnovich from Belarus 7-6 (12/10), 7-5.

Trevisan enjoyed a surprise run to the quarters as a qualifier in 2020, losing to eventual champion and current world number one Iga Swiatek.

"Paris is a bit like my second home," said the 28-year-old, who won her maiden WTA title earlier this month in Rabat.

"The atmosphere here is magical and I feel great on the court."

American teenager Coco Gauff reached the last-eight for the second successive year with a 6-4, 6-0 win over Belgium's Elise Mertens.

Gauff, 18, will face either US compatriot, and 2018 runner-up, Sloane Stephens or 23rd-seeded Jil Teichmann of Switzerland for a spot in the semi-finals.

Later Sunday, 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz, the youngest man through to the second week of the French Open since Djokovic 16 years ago, takes on 21st seed Karen Khachanov.

Alcaraz has won 20 of 21 matches on clay this season but needed to save a match point to beat Spanish compatriot Albert Ramos-Vinolas in the second round.

## Perez wins chaotic Monaco GP

AP ■ MONACO

Sergio Perez rebounded from Red Bull team orders that denied him a chance to race for the win one week ago to pick up his first Formula One win of the season in the rain-marred Monaco Grand Prix.

Perez earned his third career F1 victory on the slick city streets of Monaco after a questionable strategy call by Ferrari cost pole-sitter Charles Leclerc a win on his home circuit.

Although Leclerc finished the race for the first time in four tries, he finished fourth and allowed reigning world champion Max Verstappen to extend his lead in the points standings. Carlos Sainz Jr. finished second for Ferrari and Verstappen was third for Red Bull.

Verstappen now leads Leclerc by nine points in the standings; Leclerc has two wins this season, Verstappen and Perez have combined for five victories as Red Bull and Ferrari have claimed all seven races.

But the win went to Verstappen's teammate just one week after Perez was ordered to cede the lead to Verstappen during the Spanish Grand Prix. Leclerc had dropped out of the race with an engine failure and Red Bull chose to capitalize by manipulating the finish to get Verstappen the win in Spain.

The team promised Perez he'd be allowed to race for wins and held its word Sunday.



"You dream of winning this, and after your home race, there is no place more special to win," Perez said after waving the Mexican flag.

Leclerc led from the pole and screamed in rage when told to pit for a second tire change on Lap 22 - at the same time as Sainz. His engineer realized the mistake and yelled "stay out!" but it was too late and Leclerc came back out on track in fourth place.

"What are you doing?" Leclerc shouted.

After the race, he lectured Ferrari again.

"No words, no words. We cannot do that," he radioed. Leclerc also won the pole a year ago but never got to start because he crashed at the end of qualifying, and the car's gearbox failed moments before the start. In 2018 and 2019, Leclerc had retired from the race with crash damage.

The race was delayed by

70 minutes for heavy rain and began from a rolling start behind a safety car. It was then red-flagged on Lap 30 after Mick Schumacher's heavy crash three laps earlier sliced his Haas car in two. He escaped unharmed. "I'm fine, very, very upset not to finish the race," Schumacher said. "I don't know why the car split in two."

George Russell finished fifth for Mercedes ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and the Alpine of Fernando Alonso. Seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton was eighth for Mercedes - extending his winless run with the Silver Arrows to eight races - while Valtteri Bottas was ninth for Alfa Romeo and Sebastian Vettel 10th for Aston Martin.

The restart after Schumacher's crash was again a rolling start behind the safety car. But the long delay and red flag shortened the race from 77 laps into a timed race so that it would end by local curfew.