

CITY 3

ECONOMY SEEING V-SHAPED
RECOVERY, SAYS RAJNATH

WORLD 6

RUSSIA WITHDRAWS FROM
CITY OF KHARKIV

SPORT 7

AMANDEEP FINISHES 13TH AND
VANI 23RD IN SWITZERLAND

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LUCKNOW, SUNDAY MAY 15, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

Now, Tripura surprise: New CM before polls

State BJP prez Manik replaces Biplab Deb as Chief Minister

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

About a year ahead of the Assembly polls in Tripura, the BJP on Saturday elected its State president Dr Manik Saha, a dentist, as the new Chief Minister in place of Biplab Kumar Deb, who, in a surprise move, was asked to put in his papers by the party's central leadership.

Increasing factional fighting in the State BJP and dissent against Deb were among the major reasons for his ouster. Deb had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda here on Thursday. Elections to the 60-member Tripura Assembly will be held early next year.

Saha was elected as the BJP legislature party leader in the presence of central observers Bhupender Yadav and Vinod Tawde. But it wasn't a smooth affair. As Deb proposed the 69-year-old Saha's name in the meeting, Minister Ram Prasad Paul protested, which led to a scuffle among the MLAs.



BJP leader Manik Saha meets Tripura Governor Satyadev Narayan Arya to stake claim to form the government, at Raj Bhavan in Agartala. Former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb is also seen

Sources said Paul, who wanted Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Dev Varma, a member of the erstwhile Tripura royal family, as Deb's successor also broke a few chairs before the situation was calmed.

Saha later met the Governor at Raj Bhavan and submitted the claim to form the Government with a letter of support from the party legisla-

tors. Saha promised to continue working for the State as well as the BJP.

"Our chemistry (of Saha and Deb) is strong. Earlier also, I worked for the party and will continue to do it," Saha said. The decision was taken hours after Deb, who was the CM for four years, tendered his resignation to Governor S N Arya, saying that the party

wants him to "work to strengthen the organisation" and that there is a "need to bring the party to power again".

"I did my best," said the outgoing Chief Minister and stressed that he would work for the party and that "Biplab Deb can fit in anywhere".

Deb could again be made State BJP chief.

Continued on Page 6

19 still missing, death toll in Mundka inferno set to rise

Charred remains recovered on Sat, Kejriwal orders magisterial probe

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Nineteen people are still said to be missing, a day after a massive blaze snuffed out 27 lives at a commercial building in West Delhi's Mundka area. Of the 27 bodies, the authorities have managed to identify only eight people. A top fire official said that the death toll may rise as charred remains were recovered from the second floor of the building on Saturday morning. It is suspected that the death count may climb beyond 27.

The administration is also clueless about the whereabouts of those missing since the incident. According to police, of the 21 women and six men missing, eight of them have been identified.

During the search by the fire department on Saturday morning, some charred remains were also found.

"We have found charred remains and it is difficult to ascertain whether they are of one person or more. Initial investigation suggests an explosion in an air-conditioner may



Security personnel and civil defence officials at the site, as NDRF personnel carry out rescue and relief work after a massive fire at an office building near the Mundka Metro Station, in West Delhi on Saturday

have triggered the fire," said Atul Garg, the Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Service (DFS).

The fire was so intense that out of 27 people killed in inferno only eight have been identified by police. The deceased have been identified as Tania Bhushan, Mohini Pal, Yashoda Devi, Ranju Devi, Vishal, Drishti, Kailash Jyani and Amit Jyani. The identity of the rest 19 bodies is yet to be discovered.

The father and son duo—Kailash Jyani and Amit Jyani—had come here at the compa-

ny for a motivational lecture on the second floor.

Police said that they have initiated the DNA process for those dead bodies which cannot be presently identified.

According to a list released by the district magistrate of West Delhi, the injured have been identified as Satish (38), Pradeep (36), Ashu (22), Harjeet (23), Nitin (24), Avinash (29), Sandhya (22), Dhanvanti (21), Bimla (43), Ayesha (24) and Mamta (52).

Following the incident, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal ordered a magisterial enquiry into the matter.

"It is a very unfortunate incident and a magisterial enquiry has been ordered. We will not spare anyone, whoever is responsible for the incident. Two brothers have been arrested so far, said Kejriwal.

The Chief Minister also announced to provide an ex-gratia relief of Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of the deceased while the injured will be given Rs 50,000 per person by the Delhi Government.

Continued on Page 6

CAPSULE

SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED IS UAE PRESIDENT

Dubai: Rulers in the United Arab Emirates announced Saturday that they unanimously appointed Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the president of this hereditarily ruled nation on the Arabian Peninsula.

MARATHI ACTRESS HELD FOR FACEBOOK POST

Mumbai: The Navi Mumbai Police on Saturday arrested Marathi actress Ketaki Chitale for sharing a "derogative" Facebook post against Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar.

PFI, SDPI ARE TERRORIST OUTFITS, SAYS KERALA HC

Kochi: A judge of the Kerala High Court said in his verdict that the SDPI and the PFI are terrorist organisations and it is a widely known fact. Justice K Haripal termed these bodies as terrorist outfits while dismissing a petition filed by Arshika, widow of RSS activist Sanjith who was murdered by SDPI/PFI extremists, to transfer of the probe from the State Police.

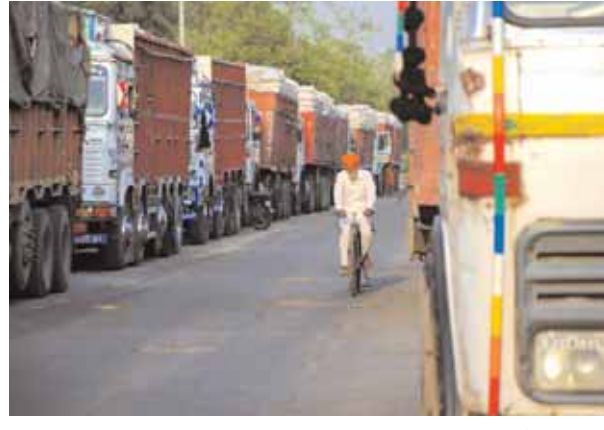
India bans wheat export to rein in inflation soaring to 7.79% in April

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India, the world's second largest producer of wheat after China, has banned wheat exports with immediate effect saying it is part of its steps to control the price surge at home, manage the overall food security of the country and support the needs of the neighbouring and other vulnerable countries. The decision is contrary to India's big export plans, especially against the backdrop of an affected global supply chain due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Further, the Government is under pressure to rein in inflation that surged to 7.79 per cent in April.

Incidentally, the decision also comes just a day after the Government even announced to send trade delegations to nine countries "for exploring possibilities of boosting wheat exports from India".

"The export policy of wheat is prohibited with imme-



Trucks loaded with sacks of wheat stand at a wholesale grain market in Amritsar on Saturday

diat effect," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification on Friday. However, the export shipments for which irrevocable letters of credit (LoC) have been issued on or before the date of this notification will be allowed, the DGFT stated.

It also clarified that wheat exports will be allowed on the basis of permission granted by the Government of India to other countries to meet their food security needs and based on the request of their Governments.

Continued on Page 6

G7 slams India's no export call; India says will fulfil promises

New Delhi: Agriculture Ministers from the Group of Seven industrialised nations on Saturday condemned India's decision to ban unapproved wheat exports after the country was hit by a punishing heatwave.

Hours after G7's reaction against export ban, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted, "Wheat stocks are comfortable. Decision to restrict wheat exports taken with focus on India's food security, ensuring affordable foodgrain and to combat market speculation. India, a reliable supplier will fulfil all commitments including needs of neighbours and vulnerable countries."

PNS ■ UDAIPUR/NEW DELHI

The issue of a regular full-time Congress president continued to mark its presence on Saturday at the ongoing Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir of the party with its different factions "unofficially" and separately pitching the names of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi for the top job before the media on the sidelines of the deliberations.

Officially, though, the party in its internal meetings chose to sidestep the issue. In a meeting of AICC general secretaries, PCC presidents and legislature party leaders over the party's mass contact programmes, sources said a discussion cropped up about the immediate concern of leadership crisis.

A section of leaders appeared to be pitching for a different candidate and another wanted to bring back Rahul Gandhi to lead the party,



Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi with party leader Rahul Gandhi and others during a meeting on day 2 of the party's 'Nav Sankalp Shivir', in Udaipur

Punjab Cong ex-prez Sunil Jhakar quits party

Chandigarh: Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jhakar on Saturday announced his decision to quit the party which had last month removed him from all positions.

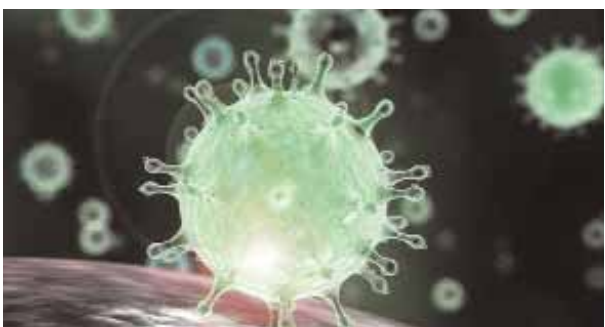
China not to host 2023 AFC Asian Cup amid Covid surge

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

China will not host the AFC Asian Cup final round next year in view of the surging COVID-19 cases in the country, the continent's football governing body said on Saturday.

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said it has been officially informed by the Chinese association that it would not be able to host the continental showpiece next year. "Following extensive discussions with the Chinese Football Association, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has been officially informed by the CFA that it would not be able to host the AFC Asian Cup 2023," the AFC said in a statement.

China were named as hosts of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup in June 2019, at the AFC Extraordinary Congress in Paris. The 24-team competition was to be hosted across 10 Chinese cities from June 16 to July 16 next year.



"The AFC acknowledges the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the relinquishment by China PR of its hosting rights," the AFC said.

The Indian team is vying for a place in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup and will feature in the final qualifying round to be held in Kolkata next month.

The AFC said it worked closely with the CFA and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) during the preparations and several milestones were achieved, including the launch of the tournament logo

and the unveiling of the newly completed Shanghai Pudong Football Stadium last year.

"The AFC appreciates that China PR, the CFA and the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 LOC have made this very difficult but necessary decision in the collective interests...Which has also provided the AFC the required time to assess the situation regarding the hosting of the AFC Asian Cup 2023."

The AFC said it will continue to work closely with its commercial partners and stakeholders to chart out the future course of action.

CBI books 3 persons for IPL betting

New Delhi: The CBI has booked a network of individuals engaged in Indian Premier League (IPL) betting since 2013 in collusion with a Pakistani operator.

The agency has named one accused from Delhi — Dileep Kumar of B-9/200, Sector 5, Rohini — besides two individuals from Hyderabad — Gurram Satish and Gurram Vasu.

"A reliable information has been received about a network of individuals involved in cricket betting influencing outcome of IPL matches based on inputs received from Pakistan," reads the FIR.

It further said, "In the garb of betting related to IPL matches, they are cheating the general public by inducing them for betting. For this purpose, they have opened bank accounts using fake identities and KYC documents in connivance with bank officials."

PNS

3 cops shot dead by black buck poachers in MP, 1 shooter killed

CM announces ₹1 crore each to kin of deceased

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Three police personnel were shot dead by black buck poachers in Saga Barkheda village of Aron region in Guna district in Madhya Pradesh late on Friday night. One accused Naushad was killed in the same encounter, while another criminal Shahjad Khan was gunned down in another encounter with cops on Saturday afternoon.

The incident occurred under the precincts of Aron police station, when the policemen had gone to nab the poachers after receiving a tip-off.

The deceased have been identified as Sub-inspector Rajkumar Jatav, 27 and constables, Neeraj Bhargava, 38, and Santram Meena, 27.

Soon after the information reached Bhopal, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan conducted a high-level meeting at around 10 am and gave directives to take stern action against the culprits. By the afternoon, the police and administration had identified all the accused that were from nearby villages and bulldozed the houses of two of them.

Inspector general of Gwalior Anil Sharma has been removed from the post, as he had not



reached the scene of crime even after 12 hours. He has been replaced by D Srinivas Varma. Ironically, Varma was posted as Gwalior IG few months ago, but due to strong opposition by a Union Minister, he was not allowed to join and under pressure, Amil Sharma was posted there.

Continued on Page 6

China, Pakistan to visit India to take part in SCO anti-terror meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan and China will take part in an anti-terrorism meeting here next week under the aegis of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO). Despite tension between the two countries, an Indian delegation had also participated in a similar meeting in Pakistan last year.

The upcoming meeting scheduled from May 16 to 19 will see a Pakistan delegation coming to India for the first time after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took over last month.

Pakistan also appointed a Minister (Trade) at its High Commission here recently after a gap of more than three years thereby signaling some positive movement in ties between the two countries. Leaders and officials of India and China have also participated in the SCO meets even as stand-offs persist at LAC for last two years.

UP Assembly session: Budget on May 26

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The first session of the 18th Uttar Pradesh Assembly will commence on May 23 with the joint address to both the houses of the UP Legislature by Governor Anandiben Patel. The budget for the current fiscal 2022-23 will be tabled in the assembly by Finance Minister Suresh Khanna on May 26.

According to the programme issued by the state assembly secretariat here on Saturday, the governor will address the joint session at 11 am on May 23. The budget will be tabled at 11 am on May 26. There will be a general debate on the budget on May 28 and May 30.

The brief 8-day session will end on May 31 with the approval of the budget. During the session, four ordinances will also be tabled.

The bills replacing ordinances include Bhatkhande State Cultural University Ordinance 2022, UP State University (Amendment) Ordinance 2022, UP Industrial Area Development Authority (Amendment) Ordinance 2022, and UP Private University (Amendment) Ordinance 2022. This time, UP Assembly will be paperless with the adoption of e-Vidhan system and the entire proceedings will be telecast live through YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms.

CM reviews preparations for PM's visit to Kushinagar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed preparations for the proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kushinagar, the place of 'Mahaparinirvana' of Lord Buddha, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on May 16.

The chief minister held a meeting with the administration and police officers at the Kushinagar International Airport complex and issued necessary directions regarding the preparations. He said that all the arrangements should be completed in time to ensure that the prime minister's programme is completed in an orderly manner.

The chief minister offered prayers at the Mahaparinirvana temple. Senior officials of the government and administration, including public representatives, were present on the occasion.

Modi will arrive at the Kushinagar International Airport around 9:30 am on May 16. He will also visit Lumbini in Nepal, where Lord Buddha was born.

Modi will offer a 'chevre' (chadar) and prayers to the laying statue of Lord Buddha at the Mahaparinirvana temple. A delegation of Buddhist monks,



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offering prayer at Mahaparinirvana temple at Kushinagar on Saturday

including president of Bhikshu Sangh AB Dnyaneshwar, will also be present at the temple on the occasion.

The prime minister will also be spending some time in meditation at the Mahaparinirvana temple. He

will also donate a 'chevre' and 'sangdaan' to Buddhist monks of various monasteries.

The PM will be visiting the Mahaparinirvana temple of Lord Buddha for the second time within seven months. Earlier, he had visited the tem-

ple on October 20 to inaugurate the Kushinagar International Airport.

The same day, he had offered prayers at the Mahaparinirvana temple and offered a 'chevre' to the statue of Tathagata.

Guv accepts resignation of Raghavendra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Saturday formally accepted the resignation of Advocate General Raghavendra Singh, who had resigned soon after the swearing-in of the second Yogi Adityanath government on March 25.

The government has appointed Ajay Kumar Mishra as the new Advocate General of Uttar Pradesh and a proposal to this effect was cleared by the UP cabinet earlier this week on May 10.

Mishra started practising at the Allahabad High Court in 1981 and has been practising at the Supreme Court for the past 10 years. In 1995, he became the youngest additional advocate general of the state. Mishra's appointment assumes importance as it comes barely a few days after the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court asked the state government to fill the post of AG in Uttar Pradesh, which was left vacant with the departure of previous incumbent Raghavendra Singh.

Holding that the office of Advocate General cannot be permitted to be left vacant, the bench had asked the state government to appoint a new advocate general by May 16.

Videography survey of Gyanvapi premises held peacefully

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amidst tight security arrangements, the videography survey of Gyanvapi premises, as per the court orders, began here on Saturday morning. The survey will continue on Sunday and the full report is scheduled to be presented in the court on May 17.

The entire Kashi Vishwanath Corridor and adjoining areas turned into a fortress even as the roads leading to the corridor and Gyanvapi from Maidagin and Godowlia sides were closed for the public. However, devotees were allowed to pay obeisance to the deity at the Kashi Vishwanath temple going there through Gate No. 1.

As per the court orders, the first day's survey ended by noon and during this period, the team comprised more than 50 members.

The media and the public were stopped about a kilometer away from the main gate. After coming out of Gyanvapi campus, the court commissioner and other advocates refused to disclose anything to the media.

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma said that on the orders of the court, the team led by Advocate Commissioner Ajay Mishra surveyed parts of Gyanvapi premises from 8 am

to 12 noon.

During the survey, representatives of the state government, commissioner of police, district administration and Kashi Vishwanath temple management were also present. The 4-hour-long survey was done peacefully but details of the same could not be disclosed. Commissioner of Police (CP) A Satish Ganesh said that the survey work would continue from 8 am on Sunday.

Sources said that amidst tight security arrangements, the team surveyed four rooms in the basement and appeared satisfied. During the four hours, more than 50 per cent of the area was surveyed.

Earlier, when the survey process started on May 6, it was halted due to strong protests from a section of people while next day (May 7), the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee submitted an application in the court demanding replacement of the advocate commissioner. However, the plea was rejected by the court on May 12. Heavy security forces, including CRPF and PAC personnel, were deployed inside and outside Gate No. 4 of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor. Police personnel were also deployed on the rooftops of houses in the adjoining areas to keep a close watch on the situation.



NOTICE

In school records of my daughter Alishba's D.O.B. written as 27.9.2007, whereas her correct D.O.B. 27.09.2005. Please correct accordingly. Ali Rizwan R/o 546/P6 Hardoi Road, Sarfarazganj Lucknow.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was Salim Samuel Paul which is now changed to Samuel Salim Paul. In future I shall be known as Samuel Salim Paul. Samuel Salim Paul. S/o Hijial David Paul 570, Mutthiganj, Allahabad.

NOTICE

In all documents my name written as S.M. Tabish, now I have changed my name as Syed Mohammad Tabish for all purposes. Syed Mohammad Tabish S/o Zahid Abbas 463/79, Napier Road Colony Part 2, Lucknow-3

आवश्यकता है

JBS PG कालेज दुल्हदेपुर, टिकैतनगर, बाराबंकी को प्राचार्य की आवश्यकता है। योग्यता व अनुभव UGC/University के मानकानुसार। मूल प्रमाणपत्रों के साथ 7 दिन के अन्दर सम्पर्क करें। मो-0-9415004449, 9140600858

सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि विवाह से पूर्व मेरा नाम सविता धीमान था, जिसे बदलकर मैंने देबिका मित्रा कर दिया है। भविष्य में मुझे इसी नाम से जाना जाए। देबिका मित्रा पत्नी वीरेश मित्रा, उत्सव इक्लेव, ई-ब्लाक, फ्लैट नं० जी-1, एचएल के सामने, फैजाबाद रोड, इंदिरानगर, लखनऊ।

NOTICE

My purchase land No. 2670 of Village Korari Kalan Per, Hadha, Teh & Distt- Unnao was from Sheela Devi, Kusma Devi, and Pratap Singh on 06-07-1976. Said saledeed has been registered as bahi No. 1, Jild No. 566 Page, 68/177 serial No. 1830 1831-1832 on 19-08-1976 at SRO Unnao. Said Saledeed has been lost. For Haridas Ahuja S/o Bhanumal Ahuja R/o 48 Krishna Nagar City Unnao

'Niryaat Sarathi' app to strengthen export facilitation mechanism

Lucknow (PNS): In order to strengthen the export facilitation mechanism, the Yogi Adityanath government will soon be developing 'Niryaat Sarathi' app which will provide every information related to export of goods at one click.

"Export is one of the strong pillars of the economy and is the chief contributor to development. The 'Niryaat Sarathi' app will be a high-tech one-click solution to get all information related to the export of goods. It will be an efficient platform for sellers to conduct business smoothly," a

government spokesman said here on Saturday. He said for small and medium sector enterprises, making their products reach across national boundaries is a dream. The state government has been taking a lot of initiatives to boost the exports of MSMEs and small businesses. The app will sensitise and create awareness among the exporters of the state.

The government is also planning to simplify all export-related schemes so as to benefit the exporters in the state.

It is worth mentioning here that Uttar

Pradesh exports have almost doubled in the last five years from Rs 88,967 crore in 2017-18 to more than Rs 1.50 lakh crore in 2021-22.

The ODOP schemes constitute about 72 per cent of the total exports from UP.

The initiatives include setting up of six MSME parks across the state, a mega leather cluster in Kanpur and increasing the disbursement of credit to MSME sector to Rs 5 lakh crore in cooperation with banks, which will pave the way for creation of 5 crore jobs.

UP first state to administer over 32 crore vax doses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a stride towards another vaccine milestone, Uttar Pradesh became the first state in India to have administered more than 32 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

This is another major landmark as the state continues to conduct one of the most successful vaccination campaigns in the country since the rollout of the mass immunisation drive.

As per data from the CoWin portal updated last at 12 pm on Saturday, at least 32.01 crore out of the total 189 crore doses administered in the country were from UP.

Strengthening its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Uttar Pradesh government is providing vaccination cover to all the children between 12-17 years of age in a time-bound manner.

So far, over 2,34,32,056 children in the age group of 15-17 years and over 74,16,435 children in the age group of 12-14 years have been adminis-

TOP 5 STATES WITH MAX VACCINATIONS

Uttar Pradesh: 32 crore
Maharashtra: 16.60 crore
West Bengal: 13.93 crore
Bihar: 13.02 crore
Madhya Pradesh: 11.82 crore



tered vaccine doses in the state.

Committed to providing additional protection cover to the priority group, UP started administering booster shots (precaution dose) to frontline

and healthcare workers as well as senior citizens from January 10. Over 29.35 lakh 'precaution doses' have been administered in the state so far.

UP is followed by Maharashtra with 16.60 crore doses administered so far. In terms of percentage, about 90 per cent of the adult population is fully vaccinated while 100 per cent of the population has received at least one dose.

In the age category of 15-17 years, over 96 per cent of the children have received at least one dose of the vaccine while over 70 per cent in this age category have been fully vaccinated. To speed up the vaccination drive for children in the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also asked the officials concerned to ensure adequate availability of vaccine doses in the state.

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

Chandauli case: CPI (ML) secy goes on hunger strike

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

State secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxists-Leninist) Sudhakar started a hunger strike in protest against the Chandauli incident in which a girl had died allegedly due to being thrashed by police who raided her house in search of her father in Manrajpur village under Saiyadraja police station.

Yadav alleged that the district administration and police were trying to cover up the incident to save the skin of the errant cops.

"Instead of ensuring justice to Nisha Yadav in the case, the police are engaged in a cover-up exercise. The party will continue the strike till the arrest and termination of the Saiyadraja SHO and other cops," he said.

Zonal spokesman of Bhartiya Kisan Union (A) Manidev Chaturvedi and leaders of other left wing parties/organisations also joined Yadav. The 50-hour strike will continue till Monday.

RS poll crucial test of SP-led alliance future

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The upcoming Rajya Sabha election is going to be a crucial test of the future of the Samajwadi Party-led alliance having 125 members in the UP Assembly.

The SP has the lion's share of 111 MLAs while the rest are of its two allies Rashtriya Lok Dal (8) and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (6).

The election to the 11 seats of Rajya Sabha from UP is due next month. On its strength, the ruling BJP can win eight seats.

If the SP alliance remains intact and united, it can win the rest of the three seats with 23 spare votes.

Though the SP has strong temptation to field a fourth candidate as it has 23 spare

votes, it is most likely to exercise this option to avoid a contest. If only 11 candidates file nomination papers, there will be no election and all 11 candidates will be declared elected unopposed.

If the SP contests the extra (fourth) seat, the move will not only necessitate voting, but will also bring in the risk of cross-voting which could hurt its prospects due to the purported unhappiness of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia (PSP-L) chief Shivpal Yadav and SP leader Azam Khan.

The Rajya Sabha members are elected by MLAs in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. For one seat, 34 votes will be required.

The BJP and allies have 273 votes while the SP and allies have 125.

After the claim on eight seats, the BJP will be left with only one spare vote while the SP will have 23 spare votes.

SP sources said that the matter is under consideration and the party has not decided on fielding an extra candidate.

"If the Samajwadi Party decides to field the fourth candidate, the BJP will also field the ninth candidate, and then the Shivpal and Azam camps may come into play," the sources said.

Samajwadi Party spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary said: "Shivpal Yadav, Azam Khan and all the members of the SP and its allies will vote for the SP candidates."

PSP-L spokesperson Deepak Mishra said Shivpal Yadav has not made up his mind as yet.

Besides, the Samajwadi Party also cannot be confident of five floating votes — two of Raghuraj Pratap Singh's Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik), two of the Congress, and one of the BSP.

SP alliance partner Om Prakash Rajbhar, the chief of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), is also lobbying for the RS nomination from SP for his son Arvind Rajbhar, who had contested the recently-held UP Assembly elections from Shivpur but lost.

The RLD had contested 38 seats in the SP alliance and won only eight while the SBSP contested only 16 and won six.

Top industry leaders to attend groundbreaking ceremony

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Top leaders of India Inc will be present in Lucknow for the groundbreaking ceremony on June 3. Kumar Mangalam Birla, Gautam Adani, Sanjiv Goenka, Sajjan Jindal, and Sudhir Mehta have confirmed their presence at the proposed event.

Gearing up to make Uttar Pradesh a hub of industrialisation, the state government is expecting investment proposals worth more than Rs 75,000 crore to be translated on the ground.

It will be the third groundbreaking ceremony under the Yogi Adityanath government in the last five years.

The biggest corporates who are going to attend the event include Kumar Mangalam Birla, chairman of the Indian multinational Aditya Birla

Group which operates in 36 countries across six continents. Gautam Adani, who will also be present, is the chairman and founder of the Adani Group along with Sanjiv Goenka, founder and chairman of RPSG Group; Sajjan Jindal, chairman and managing director of JSW Group of companies; and Sudhir Uttamlal Mehta, who operates Torrent Group comprising Torrent Pharma, Torrent Power, and Torrent Gas.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, chairman of the Board of Tata Sons and chairperson of the Vedanta group will also be participating in the ceremony. The third groundbreaking ceremony to be held at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Among the prominent projects to take off in the ceremo-

ny are Rs 4,900-crore and Rs 9,100-crore data centres of Adani and Hiranandani groups respectively, along with Rs 2,100-crore software development centres of Microsoft.

Besides, the work on a cement manufacturing plant of Rs 600 crore by Dalmia Group in Mirzapur and the detergent plant of Hindustan Unilever Limited will also begin.

According to officials of the Industrial Development department of UP, of the projects beginning in the ceremony, Rs 21,000 crore investment is in the information technology (IT) and electronic sector only.

Besides, many other projects of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), textile, tourism, energy, food processing and pharma will also begin.

Rajnath annoyed over delay in completion of Ring Road

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing annoyance over the delay in completion of the Ring Road, Defence Minister and local MP Rajnath Singh said the project should have been completed by now. He said the officers responsible for the delay should be sternly dealt with.

Addressing a programme called 'Namaste Lucknow' with Rajnath Singh, organised by Lucknow Intellectual Foundation in Nirala Nagar here on Saturday, Singh said that Ring Road is the government's dream project but it was delayed because of the laxity of some officials.

"Once the construction of the Ring Road is completed, it will ease traffic movement inside the city. People coming from other districts will directly go to the area within Lucknow, thus avoiding traffic jams," Singh said.

Elaborating on the development work being carried out in the city, Singh said that in the last three years, six flyovers have been built and five new flyovers approved.

"Work is also underway to improve infrastructure at Gomatnagar railway station," he said.

Earlier during discussions, people talked about the development schemes but also highlighted the increase in prices of essential commodities. "There is no doubt there is inflation and the government is trying to control that. The primary rea-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurating a programme at Nirala Nagar in Lucknow on Saturday

son for the inflation is the Covid pandemic and ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. It is not only India but also the developed countries like the US and China are also facing inflation. However, we are hopeful that India will turn the tide," the defence minister said.

He said that since 2014 when Narendra Modi came to power, credibility of India has increased on the world stage. "The whole world listens to what India has to say because they know Modi talks sense. India is currently the sixth largest economy in the world and our dream is to be named in the top 3 economies in the world in the coming 10 years," he said.

During an interaction with intellectuals, Justice (Retd) SC Verma urged the defence minister to reduce pressure which the state courts are under.

SP Mishra asked Singh to expedite the work of Kisan Path while a senior advocate requested him to get encroachments around the High Court removed. Padmeshri Vidya Bindu Singh requested the defence minister to rename Lucknow as Laxman Puri.

Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma, BJP city president Mukesh Sharma, MLA Dr Neeraj Bora, MLC Ramchandra Pradhan and Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor AK Rai were among many intellectuals who attended the function.

Economy seeing V-shaped recovery, says Rajnath

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Indian economy is witnessing a V-shaped recovery due to government's all-round efforts amidst COVID-19, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said while speaking at a workshop on financial market organised by the Lucknow branch of Central India Regional Council (CIRC), Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), at a city hotel on Saturday.

The workshop was organised to update the participants about the new developments related to economy and train and motivate them to deal with future challenges related to the sector.

Singh commended the contribution of chartered accountants in steering the commercial ecosystem of the country in the right direction and described them as the backbone of financial management and auditing of the economy.

"Just like our armed forces personnel who protect the country's borders with sheer bravery and dedication, our CAs are the conscience keepers of the financial system. The CAs must ensure honesty while imparting their duties as they are the keepers of people's trust in financial institutions," the defence minister said.

Singh was of the view that the world economy is going through a very difficult phase due to the supply chain disruptions and logistical bottlenecks caused first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"Russia and Ukraine are important commodity producers. Russia is a major producer of food grains and hydrocarbons while Ukraine is an important producer of wheat, etc. Therefore, the ongoing conflict has impacted the whole world. Since we import hydrocarbon and oilseeds in large quantities, their prices have affected our country. Food and fuel prices have gone up. Core inflation has also increased due to the global supply chain disruptions and other logistical bottlenecks," he said.

Noting that the disturbances and uncertainties caused due to COVID-19 reduced private consumption



Rajnath Singh inaugurating a workshop on financial market organised by the Lucknow branch of Central India Regional Council (CIRC), Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), at a city hotel on Saturday

expenditures, the defence minister said that the government has initiated a number of steps to deal with these challenges and the results are visible.

"According to surveys by many agencies, India continues to be one of the fastest growing major economies in the world. Our exports continue to set new records and are likely to increase further. A major free trade agreement has been signed with Australia and similar agreements with other partner countries as well," he added.

Singh also spoke about the gross GST revenue collection which was the highest ever at Rs 1.68 lakh crore for April 2022. Defining tax collection as a means of completing works of public interest, he said the same revenue is reaching more than 80 crore people in the form of free food grains through the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana' during COVID-19.

He added that new investments are being made at the global and domestic level which are expected to ease the pressure on the supply chain.

Throwing light on the PM

Gatishakti – National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singh termed it as the government's long-term response to logistical bottlenecks. He said that an expenditure of up to Rs 100 lakh crore has been envisioned to execute this master plan.

Singh said that infrastructure projects like roads, railways, airports, ports and shipping are one on the priority list of the government and that the Production Linked Incentive Scheme has led to an increase in private investment which will strengthen the demand in the economy.

He said that due to these efforts, the domestic demand, be it related to investment or consumption, is rapidly increasing. "Contact-based services are also gaining momentum due to the success of our COVID-19 vaccination drive. This is a good sign for our economy to come back on track," he added.

Singh further said that bold steps such as merger and privatisation of banks and capitalisation of public sector banks have ensured that banks,

which were facing losses due to non-performing assets or other reasons are now in a position to provide loans.

"We have developed venture capital funding for start-ups, which is important for their hand-holding at the early stage. The success of the start-up-based innovation ecosystem is evident from the fact that the number of Unicorns in the country has crossed 100. We have encouraged retail investors and put an end to insider trading. Use of technology and digital architecture in the trading process is being promoted to make it more transparent," he said.

In order to promote technology, the defence minister said that the government is undertaking reforms in R&D establishments such as Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He stated that a link has now been established between academia and industry so that the researches being conducted in colleges, universities reach the industry and both parties reap the fruits of progress.

Couple playing good samaritans thrashed by PAC constable

Lucknow (PNS): A woman and her husband were thrashed for playing good samaritans in Sarojininagar allegedly by a PAC constable and his kin.

In her complaint, the woman said an unclaimed motorcycle was found parked outside her house on May 9 night. Her husband, whose office is to the house, inquired about the same and came to know that the bike belongs to their neighbour named Nivedita. "I went to her house but Nivedita did not open the door. I dialled her mobile number but the call went unanswered. Fearing that the bike might be stolen, I shifted it to a safe place. Later, Nivedita called me back and I informed her about it. Nivedita, along with her relative Kuldeep, who is a PAC constable, reached my husband's office. I was there to serve a meal to my husband. Without any provocation, Kuldeep started abusing us and accused us of having stolen the bike," she stated in her complaint.

She said she told Nivedita not to abuse them and the latter intended to attack us. "Kuldeep intervened and caught me by my hair. He pushed me down. Kuldeep later kicked my husband and thrashed him. He also assaulted me during the brawl," she alleged, adding that her staff saved them from Kuldeep. Police registered a case for brawl and attempt to outrage the modesty of a woman under Section 354 of IPC.

City in heatwave grip

Power cuts add to miseries of people



Patients on ventilators in the Pulmonary and Respiratory department of KGMU had to be shifted to others hospitals power disruption on Saturday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow reeled under heatwave conditions on Saturday with the maximum temperature soaring to 43 degree Celsius, which was 3.6 degrees above normal. The minimum temperature settled at 28.8 degree Celsius, which was also 4.6 degrees above normal. In the state, Banda was the hottest at 48.8 degree Celsius, followed by Jhansi at 47.3 degree Celsius, Kanpur 46.6 degrees Celsius, Prayagraj & Agra 46.4 degree Celsius each, Fatehpur 45.2 degree Celsius and Aligarh 44.8 degree Celsius.

Frequent power outages also added to the miseries of people in Lucknow. Clear skies

made the weather hotter while the moisture in the air from the Bay of Bengal made it sultry. The weatherman said the heatwave conditions would continue to prevail in some parts of the state. The local forecast for Lucknow and neighbourhood is clear skies while the maximum and minimum temperature is expected to be around 43 degree Celsius and 27 degree Celsius, respectively. The weather is most likely to be dry over the state. There is a warning of heatwave to severe heatwave conditions at isolated places over the state.

Meanwhile, there was some problem in the transformer due to which the power supply to KGMU was dis-

rupted for an hour even as two patients from the Pulmonary and Respiratory department, who were on ventilators, had to be shifted to the trauma centre, a senior doctor said.

Medical superintendent of Lok Bandhu Hospital Dr Ajay Shankar Tripathi said people should remain indoors and step out only in the evening. He said senior citizens should take special care.

A nutritionist said one have fresh fruits, fruit juices and drink lots of water to remain hydrated. "Freshly-cooked lentils, curd, green vegetables and fresh salad are the best meals. Lemonade with salt and sugar is one of the best refreshing drinks," she said.

Saying no to marriage proposal costs dear to woman constable

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Saying no to a marriage proposal cost dear to a woman constable who was threatened with acid attack, murder and fake crime cases in Naka police station area. Police registered a case in this connection under sections 419/420/354/506/499 and 384 (forgery, attempt to outrage modesty, threatening, defamation and extortion). The accused was identified as Mahendra Kushwaha of Unnao. He is a munshi of an advocate in Unnao.

The victim was getting calls from policemen from Krishna Nagar, Banthra and Naka in Lucknow as also from some of the police stations in Hardoi regarding inquiry of a complaint against her and her brother. She met the policemen and was told that Ram Pyari of Hardoi had given a complaint against her and her brother. She said she was surprised as she or anyone in her family did not know Ram Pyari. She added that they also had no property dispute with any one by that name. The police worked in the case and the name of Mahendra surfaced.

It surfaced that a relative of the victim had brought a proposal for her marriage with Mahendra in 2020. The victim's family collected details about Mahendra

and were told that Mahendra was a man of criminal tendency and had served a jail term in the past.

On the revelation, the victim and her family declined the proposal. "Mahendra started bullying me into accepting his marriage proposal. He also talked to my mother and asked her to persuade me," she alleged. She said Mahendra also sent obscene messages to her. "He threatened to throw acid on my face and kill me," she alleged. She further alleged that Mahendra gave fake information to a man with whom her marriage was to be fixed. "My marriage is now settled with a man in Varanasi and Mahendra is again bullying me," she alleged. She said the contact number written in the complaint against her was checked by the man with whom she was to get engaged. According to the victim, the man who attended the call introduced himself as Mahendra Kushwaha and said he had married me. She further alleged that Mahendra demanded Rs 50 lakh and Rs 25,000 per month from her and threatened to lodge a complaint in a court.

Meanwhile, a 32-year-old woman, identified as Shweta of Mati village in Bijnor police station area, was found hanging at her house on Saturday. Her father Gajodhar Shukla said she was the wife of Ajeet Mishra of Rae Bareilly. "She was

being harassed by her husband and in-laws due to which she ended her life," he alleged. He lodged a case against her husband and in-laws.

DUPED

A woman post office agent was accused of forgery and breach of trust by a female customer in Aminabad. In her complaint, Alka Verma of Alamnagar said she had given Rs 1 lakh in cash to an agent, Vandana Awasthi, for fixed deposited on February 13, 2020. Vandana gave her a pay-in slip and promised to give FD certificate/card, but failed to do it. On February 15, the victim gave Rs 1 lakh in cash to Vandana again for FD and she was given the card on the same day. "I asked Vandna why the FD for the first investment was delayed. She is opting for dilly-dallying tactics and has not given my FD as yet," she alleged.

In another case, cash and ornaments were stolen from a house in Ashiyana on Friday night. House owner Pankaj Kumar of Devi Kheda in the area said that he, along with his family, had gone to attend a marriage function on Friday after locking the house. "The thieves made off with Rs 20,000 in cash and ornaments worth lakhs of rupees," he said.

Health dept shifting focus to regular immunisation

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

The Health department is now shifting focus to regular immunisation with Covid vaccinations already going on. State Immunisation Officer Dr Ajay Ghai said that regular immunisation would be taken up on priority now and that target is to vaccinate 95 per cent of the infants.

Due to the Covid pandemic, a lot of other programmes had taken a back seat but now they are trying to catch up. "Nearly 86 per cent of the children who had to be fully immunised were covered under the regular immunisation in 2021-2022 while the coverage was almost 93 per cent two years back. Had Covid not happened, we would have covered over 95 per cent of the children till now. However, we are making efforts to make it at least 92 per cent," he said.

He said there are 56 lakh infants in the age group of 0-1 year and 53 lakh in 1-2 years.



Dr Ghai said that on May 17 and 18, there would be a meeting of the district immunisation officers of the state on routine immunisation.

"Micro-plans have not revised properly because we did not get sufficient time. The first thing which they will do is prepare all the micro-plans by June 10 and revise them thoroughly. It is an exercise which needs to be done every year. For this reason, we had the Intensive Indradhanush Mission programme recently and third round of which concluded just yesterday (Friday)," he said. "It was done because many of the routine immunisations were not done and the children who had not been covered under regular immunisations were vaccinated

through this exercise. But we do not want these children to be left behind in future. In the revision of the plans, ASHA workers who covers 250 houses each carry out the survey again and update the booklet which they carry and collect details of the infants aged 1-3 years and their status of vaccination," he added.

The immunisation officer said vaccines are administered to infants to protect them from 10 diseases. "There is a BCG and then pentavalent which includes three vaccines of DPT. There is one vaccine for pneumonia and the other for Hepatitis B. There is an injectable polio vaccine & an oral polio vaccine and then there is a pneumococcal vaccine. Rotavirus is for diarrhoea which is given orally and when the child is 9-month-old. There are also vaccines for measles and rubella after which the kids can be called fully vaccinated," he explained. Currently, 86 per cent of children in the state are fully vaccinated.

CME on asthma, allergies held at RMLIMS

Lucknow (PNS): A continued medical education on 'Asthma and Allergies' was organised by the department of Paediatrics, Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. The programme was inaugurated by director Dr Soniya Nityanand while Dr Rajendra Prasad was the guest of honour.

Dean Dr Nuzhat Hussain and CMS Dr Rajan Bhatnagar were also present at the inauguration.

Head of the Paediatric Pulmonology department, PGIMER, Chandigarh, Dr Meenu Singh delivered a talk on challenges in asthma management in children. Dr Nilo Fosgaard from Translational Research Centre (Denmark) talked about the effect of fish oil-derived fatty acids in pregnancy on wheeze and asthma in offspring.

Former director of VP Chest Institute, Delhi, Dr Rajendra Prasad delivered a lecture on diagnosis and management of allergies while president of Indian Academy of Pediatrics, National Respiratory Chapter, Dr NK Subramanya on various issues of childhood asthma. The programme was conducted by CME organising secretary Dr Shetanshu Srivastava and head of the department of Paediatrics Dr Dipti Agarwal. The programme was attended by faculty members and residents of the institute. Pediatricians from all over the country attended the CME online.

Meanwhile, National Nurses' Day and lamp lighting & oath taking ceremony of the first foundation batch of College of Nursing at RMLIMS were also held. The oath ceremony, along with lamp lighting was conducted by the first foundation BSc (Nursing) batch of 2021-22 of the institute under chief nursing officer Suman Singh and deputy nursing superintendent Kamini Kapoor.

3 dead, 2 injured in car-jeep collision

Lucknow (PNS): Three persons died while two were injured in a car-jeep collision in Nanpara police station area of Bahraich on Saturday. Nanpara SHO Bhanu Pratap Singh said that the accident took place late on Friday night when the Lucknow-bound car with five occupants collided head-on with a jeep on Mihinpurwa-Nanpara road.

He added that car occupants Tirath Ram (38) and Hardev (22) died on the spot while three injured persons were taken to the medical college in Bahraich

where Vinod Kumar (28) succumbed to injuries.

In another incident in Hardoi, four persons, including a child, were killed while ten suffered injuries after a speeding bus hit a bike and later hurtled down a trench on Lucknow-Hardoi road in Sandila on Saturday. A man was going on a bike along with two women and a child. When they were near a factory, a private bus hit the bike, killing the quartet. The bus driver later lost control of the vehicle which fell into a

trench, leaving ten of the passengers injured. On being informed, a police team reached the scene and rushed the injured to the CHC.

2 BOOTLEGGERS HELD

A team of STF nabbed two bootleggers and recovered IMFL bottles and beer cans worth Rs 25 lakh from their possession in Fatehpur district on Saturday. Those arrested were identified as Vanshi Kumar aka Dolu (driver) and Dharmveer Panchala

aka Sonu (both of Haryana). A truck laden with IMFL bottles and beer cans, a counterfeit registration number plate of truck, two mobile phones and Rs 1,560 in cash were recovered. The accused owned up their crime and disclosed the names of their aides as Pradeep, Lalit Tewariya, Sunil Lamberdar (all of Haryana) and Rakesh of Delhi.

The accused were arrested near an under-construction overbridge under Malwa police station area in Fatehpur.

45-day Summer Carnival at airport kicks off today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Passengers can enjoy special discounts on select F&B and retail brands at the airport with 16 F&B and retail brands participating in the Summer Carnival at the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow from May 15 to June 30. There will be discounts ranging from 10-50 per cent on shopping at select outlets. Passengers can enjoy special discounts on shopping, food, and beverages (F&B) as the airport is kicking

off the 45-day Summer Carnival on Sunday.

The airport spokesperson said, "The easing of COVID-19 restrictions as well as resumption of international flights has renewed the passengers' interest in travel this summer. The return of passengers has resulted in increased passenger footfalls at the airport." The spokesperson further said that around 16 brands – 11 in retail and five in F&B — are offering special discounts to passengers travelling through the airport.

"Some of the retail outlets have innovated in coming up with offers where the users can avail discount ranging from 15-50 per cent. Some F&B outlets have come up with special combos that will benefit passengers travelling in groups," he said.

The airport has also set up special selfie counters at various locations to attract millennial passengers. The airport has been in the forefront of providing exciting retail and F&B experience for passengers.

U-20 Athletics Championships from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The 55th UP State Annual U-20 Athletics Championships 2022 will be organised at Ghaziabad from May 15 to 17. According to Secretary, UP Athletics Association PK Srivastava, the Championships will be organised in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of Athletics Federation of India and Athletics Uttar Pradesh. He said some of the events shall be organised at the Sports Complex, Hindon Airforce Station, Ghaziabad on May 15. Bib numbers to the bonafide athletes shall be distributed on May

15 at 6 am in the Reception of Air Force Station Hindon, Ghaziabad. The Team Managers and Athletes may contact Likhi Ram Chaudhary- Secretary - Ghaziabad Athletics. 9650192889. GK Mishra from Air Force Hindon - 7204284347. Events include 100m/110m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 3000m Steeplechase, High Jump and Pole Vault. He said all other Track and Field events including Throws shall be organised on May 16 and 17 at OEF Stadium, Cantonment, Kanpur. Bib numbers to the bonafide athletes of these events shall also be distributed on May 15 between 2 pm to 6 pm in OEF Stadium,

Kanpur. Athletes will report at 6 am in the morning of May 16 at the OEF Stadium Kanpur. Meet Manager Dr Devesh Dubey, Secretary, Athletics Kanpur (Mob 9336111929) said, the teams were required to make their own arrangements of Boarding and Lodging at Kanpur. Special and specific requests may be entertained if these were received by the Organising Committee well in advance, he added.

GROWTH REPORT: Calling Delhivery as the proxy for eCommerce growth in India, brokerage firm Ventura Securities said in its report that the logistics firm has

outlier growth prospects with profits being just round the corner.

The report adds that Delhivery is uniquely positioned to emerge as the sustainable business leader in an essential vertical having a total addressable market size of \$316 billion.

The company's IPO comes at a time when the Indian government is focusing its investments on infrastructure-led growth through a slew of measures including its flagship initiative- the PM Gatishakti Programme.

The move will likely benefit the company in long-term.

Development of biz ecosystem in Ladakh discussed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

IIT Kanpur along with IIT Delhi and IIT-Mumbai discussed the development of entrepreneurial ecosystem in Ladakh. The workshop titled "Enterprising Ladakh" was organised by the Industries and Commerce Department, Ladakh for its budding entrepreneurs in different domains. The workshop received partnership from three leading IITs of the country and over 40 active entrepreneurs from multidisciplinary domains.

The teams from IITs also interacted with the entrepreneurs based in Kargil and visited Leh's incubation centre, followed by brief interaction with ITI and Polytechnic students and faculty at the Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Ladakh. The purpose of the workshop was to educate the existing and budding entrepreneurs about the sustainable utilisation of resources in Ladakh to achieve successful entrepreneurial ventures and add to employment generation there.

The areas of focus were like food processing, handicrafts, handlooms, textiles, pashmina, emerging technologies, and business areas. Over 40 active entrepreneurs attended the workshop to understand the sustainable utilisation of resources in Ladakh to achieve successful entrepreneurial ventures and add to employment generation there. Dr. Anil Verma, Professor Chemical engineering, IIT Delhi, Dr. Anil Wali, MD FITT, IIT Delhi, Dr. Amitabha Bandopadhyay, Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT Kanpur, professor-in-charge

- Innovation and Incubation, Mr. Ankit Saxena, in-charge of social innovation, IIT Kanpur, and Mr. Shakti Tripathy, Senior Manager, Desai Sethi School of Entrepreneurship, IIT Bombay attended the workshop to share their ideas and insights for a holistic development of entrepreneurship and incubation ecosystem in Ladakh.

The entrepreneurs highlighted their critical need for assistance in developing harvesting techniques that was sensitive to Ladakh's fragile ecosystem during the workshop. One-on-one discussions with the experts on processing technologies, storage, packaging, and marketing were also organised. The team also identified various problem statements for development of effective solutions in the domain. A special visit was also organized at the Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Ladakh for the teams to interact with the ITI and polytechnic students and faculty.

The Commissioner Secretary of Industries and Commerce Department, Mr. Saugat Biswas said, "The purpose of the workshop is to assist the youth of Ladakh to become successful entrepreneurs who can generate employment by sustainable utilisation of resources in Ladakh. I believe this will allow our youth to understand the mechanism of entrepreneurship on a deeper level and find solutions to the identified gaps. Dr. Bandopadhyay said visiting Ladakh and interacting with the local entrepreneurs had been an exciting experience and the workshop was a wonderful initiative by Ladakh's Industries and Commerce Department.

Seminar on taxation inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Justice Piyush Aggarwal, Allahabad High Court, while inaugurating the seminar on Taxation at the Merchants Chamber Hall jointly organised by Kanpur Income Tax Bar Association and Kanpur Chartered Accountants Society on Saturday said cases under GST had increased drastically in the last couple of years. He said this engendered the need for immediate improvement in infrastructure of judiciary and for which concerted efforts were being made in the direction.

He said Lok Adalats helped in the main reasons for early resolution of disputes. He also underlined the need to have mediation and arbitration mechanism for an all round improvement. He said the professional bodies like IT Bar, KCAS and KITBA were doing yeoman service. He made a special mention for Merchants Chamber of UP for always volunteering to provide a platform for such intellectual bodies which can give momentum the entire law and order of the country.

Noted IT lawyer, Prayagraj, Shumbam Agarwal while addressing the seminar said Under GST Law, Section 70 of the CGST Act, 2017 empowers the GST officers to summon any person to appear before them, if the same was necessary in the course of an inquiry to record statements or produce any documents. He said such persons summoned by the GST officers were duty bound to appear before the officials. He said With passage of time the complexities of GST have only increased and so has the aggression of the tax authorities to recover taxes from the

taxpayers. He said of late many companies, their employees and key managerial persons had been receiving summons for some or the other matter. He said under GST law, Section 70 of the CGST Act, 2017 empowers the GST officers to summon any person to appear before them, if the same was necessary in the course of an inquiry to record statements or produce any documents.

He said by appreciating the duties and recognising the rights, a taxpayer can mitigate any adversities which may be caused to them by issuance of summons and not succumb to any pressure imposed by the authorities. He said thus it was imperative that a taxpayer was diligent and mindful of the foregoing rights and duties.

He said most of the time, it had been seen that the department caused undue harassment to the bona fide taxpayers. He said it was of utmost importance that the taxpayers must be aware of their rights that can be exercised by them to safeguard themselves from any unilateral action on part of the tax authorities. He said to begin with, the taxpayers must be aware that CBIC has issued detailed guidelines for regulating summon proceedings which inter-alia provides that summons should only be used as a last resort.

Discussing the Right of retraction he said tax officers often put undue pressure on taxpayers as a result of which they are forced to make inaccurate statements. He said in such a situation, taxpayers have the right to retract the earlier incorrect statement recorded during the summon proceedings and substitute the same with the correct statement.

UCO Bank makes ₹312.18 cr net profit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

UCO Bank on Saturday released its official statement and announced that the bank had made a Net Profit of Rs 312.18 crore during the quarter ended March 2022 as against Net Profit of Rs 80.02 crore in the quarter ended March 2021 registering a growth of 290.11 per cent. The Bank had made Net Profit of Rs 929.76 crore during the year ended March 2022 as against Net Profit of Rs 167.03 crore in the year ended March 2021 registering a growth of 456.63 per cent.

Operating Profit of the Bank for the year ended March 2022 had increased to Rs 4797.43 crore as against Rs 4149.07 crore for the year ended March 2021 registering a growth of 15.63 per cent. The Net Interest Income of the Bank for the quarter ended March 2022 had increased to Rs 1652.38 crore from Rs 1412.61 crore for the quarter ended March 2021 registering a growth of 16.97 per cent. Net Interest Income of the Bank for the year ended March 2022 has increased to Rs 6472.95 crore from Rs 5479.70 crore for the year ended March



UCO Bank, CMD and CEO, Soma Sankara Prasad, addressing presspersons virtually on Saturday.

2021 registering a growth of 18.13 per cent.

This is highest Net Interest Income earned by the Bank. Other Income of the Bank for the quarter ended March 2022 had stood at Rs 588.95 crore as against Rs 719.15 crore for the quarter ended December 2021. Other Income of the Bank for the year ended March 2022 had stood at Rs 3100.81 crore as against Rs 3424.18 crore for the year ended March 2021. Total Business of the Bank had increased to Rs 353850.24

crore as on 31.03.2022 from 324324.20 crore as on 31.03.2021 registering a growth of 9.10 per cent. Total Deposits of the Bank had increased to Rs 224072.90 crore as on 31.03.2022 from Rs 205919.39 crore as on 31.03.2021 registering a growth of 8.82 per cent. CASA of the Bank (Domestic) stood at 40.26 per cent as on 31.03.2022. and Savings Deposits of the Bank had increased to Rs 77161.76 crore as on 31.03.2022 from Rs

Teachers urged to learn from Swami Vivekananda's life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vivek Sanjivani, an initiative for healthcare and education of Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi which works in the some remote villages of Purvanchal (eastern UP) and Udham Singh Nagar district in Uttarakhnad, organised a teachers' workshop on 'Misconceptions and Missing Concepts in the Biology Book

Vivekananda's whole life is full of various ideas that can help teachers as well as students

of Class X' here on Saturday. The president of workshop Swami Brahmeshananda Maharaj elaborated the life and teachings of Swami

Vivekananda.

He added that Swami Vivekananda's whole life is full of various ideas that can help teachers as well as students. Purity, patience and perseverance are the pillars of character building.

He recommended everyone to read Swami Vivekananda's literature. The chief guest of the workshop was District Inspector of School (DIOS) Vinod Rai who spoke on the need of education

and its goal that should be imbibed by the students, and that will come by right efforts made by the teachers for the students. Later on, he suggested that what had been done one or two decades before must be corrected and updated for today's generation of students in different fields or subjects. Coordinator of Vivek Sanjivani department Swami Divyasukhananda Maharaj threw light on various sections of the Biology books of

NCERT and UP Board. He pointed out that many fundamental and basic principles, ideas, definitions and others are missing, along with that there are lots of misconceptions presented in the Biology books of Class X.

The teachers from various schools of English, Hindi medium, Government and aided schools/ colleges have actively participated, interacted with healthy discussions on different topics. All the teach-

ers got an opportunity and a platform to talk on the topics that must be changed in future so that the students of the upcoming generation can study science with the right concepts and ideas. More than 55 people including monks, teachers from Varanasi's schools/ colleges and healthcare providers attended the workshop. This workshop was organised under the guidance of Swami Divyasukhananda Maharaj.

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PNS ■ KANPUR

Members of Kanpur University Self-Finance Teachers Association (KUSFTA) have demanded to increase the remuneration for evaluating the answer books. During meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Sudhir Awasthi, Director of Mahavidyalaya Vikas Parishad Dr RK Dwivedi and Examination Controller Dr Anjana Mishra of CSJM University on Saturday, KUSFTA delegation submitted a 4-point charter of demands and held in-depth discussions on them. The delegation was led by KUSFTA president Dr Kamlesh

Yadav and general secretary Dr Akhand Pratap Singh.

Their other demands included the assigning responsibilities to SF teachers during conduct of annual examination like in the past; payment of atleast local conveyance allowance to teachers included in digital evaluation and ensuring participation of SF teachers in practical examinations.

Other members of delegation present on the occasion were Dr Brijendra Senger, Dr Pushplata, Dr Sadhana, Dr Rajan Dixit, Dr Raj Kumar, Dr KK Gupta, Dr Arti Singh, Dr Sneha Shukla, Dr Pragya Dixit and Dr KK Singh.



KUSFTA delegation meets Pro-Vice Chancellor, CSJM University, on Saturday.

Supervisor robbed of cash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A PVC company supervisor was robbed of Rs 15.74 lakh by SUV-borne miscreants near Rind river bridge in Shambhuwa village, under the Vidhnu police station late on Friday night. Miscreants threw chilli powder on the eyes of the car-borne supervisor and his driver to commit the crime. They looted the bag containing cash and their cellphones. From the Ghatampur police station, victim was diverted to Vidhnu police station for lodging FIR. Police immediately ordered to seal all the borders and carried out investigations but failed to nab the miscreants till late night. Rahul Kumar (35) of Jamalpur, PS Bansder, Balia, is supervisor in a PVC company of Lucknow. He said the company used to take contract for pebbles loading in truck through machines in Kabrai. He was presently supervising the work in Kabrai. On Friday night, after collecting Rs.15.74 lakh cash from Lucknow Headquarters, when he was going to Kabrai on car with driver Satnam of Kabrai (Mahoba), a white colour Scorpio overtook them ahead of Rind river bridge in Shambhuwa village. Immediately, five masked men alighted from the Scorpio and began to beat them up after throwing chilli powder on their eyes. They looted the bag containing Rs 15.74 lakh and cell-phones from him and escaped towards Ghatampur. SP (Outer) Ajit Kumar Sinha along with force rushed to spot and after taking stock of the situation, quizzed the victims. Supervisor said miscreants got his car stopped on pretext of driver's rash driving and looted the cash.

Bride refuses to marry tipsy groom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 22-year-old bride in Prapatgarh district's Poore Bhaiya village refused to tie the nuptial knot after she and her family members spotted the groom in a inebriated state during marriage rituals on Friday night. The bride's family made the groom and other close family members captive and asked to return articles which they had gifted while fixing the marriage.

The issue was resolved on Friday evening when the family members of the groom agreed to return cash and other valuables that were gifted by the bride's family at the time of fixing of marriage.

Ironically, both the groups approached the police seeking their help in getting the issue resolved. Prapatgarh police, meanwhile, said, "A man had fixed his daughter's marriage with one Puneet Kumar of

Ayodhya".

Police added the girl's father had made necessary arrangements for the ceremony, but when the bride and groom were called up for marriage rituals, the bride and her family members found the groom in a drunk-en state. Upon being alerted, a team from Antoo police station arrived on spot and tried to resolve the issue. The matter was, however, resolved only when the family members of the groom were assured to withdraw gift items and cash worth Rs 3 lakh.

Sub Inspector Umesh told the reporters that the groom was also shifted to the district hospital after his condition became serious while attending the marriage rituals. Police, meanwhile, said when the bride's decision was conveyed to the groom's family, they (groom and his family members) were still ready to solemnize the marriage but the bride refused.

National Family Day today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

National Family Day is celebrated every year on May 15 and observed as a symbol of bond, love, and strength. In India the joint family was eroding dangerously and the impact had reached the rural areas as well. In rural India the share of nuclear families had risen from 60.7 per cent to 64.1 per cent. Ironically joint families, fell substantially from 19.1 per cent (3.69 crore) to 13.1 per cent (4.39 crore) across India. In rural areas, the dip was even sharper and from 20.1 per cent to 12.8 per cent. A family held an important place in one's life, and to celebrate that May 15 was also observed as International Family Day also.

This was stated by the general secretary of the Sakhi Kendra, Neelam Chaturvedi while addressing a seminar on the eve of National Family Day. She said contrary to the perception that urban Indian families were going nuclear, data released by the government showed that the proportion-

al share of nuclear households had dipped in urban areas, with people choosing to live in extended families.

She said however it was in rural areas where there were greater signs of fragmentation of families with nuclear families rising and joint families declining at a faster pace than in urban areas. She said the rise of nuclear families consisting of a couple and their unmarried children is consistent with rapid urbanisation. She said at the same time, lack of adequate housing may be forcing more urban people to stay together. The new data could, therefore, be a pointer to this challenge from urbanisation. She said what was striking was the decline in the proportional share of nuclear households in urban areas.

She added that joint family can be of various compositions, including parents with married children and contrary to the perception that urban Indian families were going nuclear. She said in the joint family, all members were equally sharing their contribution for a healthy contribution and even shared their personal

experiences for strengthening the bond and children easily get help from their parents.

Chaturvedi said joint family was in fact a backbone in the modern world. She said it would not be any exaggerations to state that we were living in a broken world and family structure was also getting smaller day by day and the new generation kids were deprived of their grand parent's guidance and care. She said was also true that umpteen children spend time alone after school because their parents were on the job and there was none to guide them in academics at the opportune time.

She said today single child was self centred but in joint family children learnt the art of sharing and above all joint family taught one to improve self-control and how to respect others. She said when was talk about indigenisations and when we talk about our rich cultural heritage and traditions then there was also an imperative need to ensure that the joint family trend was revived.

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, सुनिट-5
कन्सल्टन्ट एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (उ.प्र. सरकार का उपक्रम)
क्यान्पस : 117/क-19, सोनब नगर, कानपुर-208005 (पिपर बाकी का साथी नहीं)
फ़ोन क्यान्पस : 0512-38-40, डिजिटल क्यान्पस, कानपुर, कानपुर
E-mail : pmu5cds@gmail.com Ph. No. : 9415453588
निविद सूचना संख्या : 290ई-निविदा/04 ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक : 11.05.2022
अथवा, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम, की ओर से अघोहलसारी द्वारा जनपद कानपुर नगर के अधिन्याय में 100 नग इलेक्ट्रिक बसों हेतु चालीस स्टेशन में रोड के नीचे फाल्स सिलिंग, चहारदीवारी में वारिडेंट फोर्निंग तथा अन्य कार्य अनुमानित लागत रु. 23.90 लाख (जी.एस.टी. रॉलिट एंव लेबर सेस सहित) हेतु सी.एच.डी. एल. में योजित श्रेणी में भवन कार्य हेतु पंजीकृत टेकदारों से दिनांक 27.05.2022 के अपरान्ह 04:00 बजे तक ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उक्त कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 12.05.2022 अपरान्ह 12:00 बजे से दिनांक 27.05.2022 अपरान्ह 04:00 बजे के मध्य उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की e-procurement वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं तथा ई-निविदा दिनांक 27.05.2022 को अपरान्ह 05:00 बजे कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, सुनिट-05, सी.एच.डी.एल., उ.प्र. जल निगम कानपुर में निविदा खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य रु. 2000.00+GST (18%) अतिरिक्त देय होगा। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत विवरण विभाग की वेबसाइट www.cdsupjn.org एवं प्रोक्वैमेन्ट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है। समस्त शुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum) <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर ही अपलोड किये जायेंगे, इनका प्रयुक्त से कोई प्रकाशन नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदादाताओं को सलाह दी जाती है कि वे उक्त वेबसाइट का समय-समय पर अवलोकन करते रहें। परियोजना प्रबन्धक

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Complete Phulwaria four lane project on time, says CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the progress made in Dashashwamedh Plaza and Phulwaria four lane road construction work here on Friday night. Seeing the work at Dashashwamedh Plaza, he directed the officers to complete the remaining work at the earliest while inspecting the ambitious under-construction Phulwaria project, he asked the officers present on the spot to expedite the work.

Prior to that Yogi, during his two-day visit to the city, offered prayers at Shri Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairav temples. He also inspected the Kashi Vishwanath Dham premises, seeing the progress of ramp building and other works being done on the side of the ghat. Besides, the CM has instructed the officers concerned to improve the arrangements for the devotees further so that they can feel a different experience visiting the corridor.

Earlier, while directing the district magistrates (DMs), he said that the projects and development works under construction in the division should be completed with quality within the stipulated time by launching a campaign on a war footing. He laid special emphasis on the adoption of safety standards in every situation during the works and directed the officers to regularly review 97 under construction projects totaling Rs 12,700 crore in the Varanasi division. Expressing displeasure over the slow progress of the medical college under construction



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

Pioneer

in Jaunpur district, he directed the DM concerned to expedite the work and also directed him to nominate a nodal officer for daily review. He also directed the Jaunpur DM to take action against the working organisation for slow work while talking to him through video conferencing, along with the DMs of Chandauli and Ghazipur districts also. The CM also directed to expedite the work of medical colleges under construction in Ghazipur and Chandauli districts by nominating nodal officers.

While directing the officers, Yogi said that there should be good coordination between the administrative and police

officers posted in the field with the public representatives.

'Complaints are received from some districts that the officials do not pick up the phones of public representatives, this situation is objectionable, rectify it, otherwise action will be taken,' he said, adding that the administrative and police officers must hold meetings with public representatives once in a month and ensure quality disposal of public problems on priority. 'Jal Jeevan Mission is the priority plan of the government so that the DM should personally review its work and ensure satisfactory progress. Under this scheme, pure drinking water

supply will be ensured to every household through taps,' he said, instructing that a water committee should be formed in each revenue village.

UP Ministers of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal and Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', former Minister and MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, MLAs Saurabh Srivastava, Dr Awadhesh Singh, Tribhuvan Ram and Sunil Patel, Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal, District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma and many other officers were present in the meeting.

India has always respected public sentiment: Yogi Adityanath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that respect of public sentiment has always been paramount in India. 'Chauri-Chaura incident is a reflection of the same public sentiment and it was fought by the ordinary people,' he said while speaking on the occasion of presentation of 'Chauri-Chaura: Aprajya Samar' organised on the occasion of Chauri-Chaura centenary year at DAV PG College here on Friday evening.

'It is a matter of great pride that the play on Chauri Chaura being staged at a place which is related to Madan Mohan Malviya, who fought the case and saved many from hanging on the noose,' he said, adding that the whole world is looking towards India with hopeful eyes in the year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. 'Today Kashi is leading the whole country as the people



CM Yogi Adityanath being welcomed at DAV PG College in Varanasi on Friday evening.

Pioneer

here have elected the Prime Minister and not only an MP,' said Yogi, adding that whoever came to Kashi has returned with something and no one leaves empty handed from here.

'India is now moving rapidly towards self-reliance. Kashi Vishwanath Dham has contributed a lot for the econ-

omy. The next 25 years will be an important period for the country in which the whole world will see the rise of a new India,' said the CM. While delivering the welcome address, Principal Dr Satyadev Singh said that the British government has given great tragedies to Indians, its only hallmark is the Chauri Chaura

incident, we are remembering it and saluting all the heroes of freedom. He also said that our college is working strongly on the Prime Minister's vision of digital learning.

Earlier, Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations were inaugurated by the CM and the function was also attended by UP Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Dr Dayashankar Mishra, Rector of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof VK Shukla, College Manager Ajit Kumar Singh Yadav, Prof Vijay Bahadur Singh, Prof GCR Jaiswal, Prof Binda Paranjpe, Padma Shri Pt Shivnath Mishra, Dr Usha Kiran Singh, Sabhajit Singh, Priyankdev Singh, Dr Vinod Kumar Choudhary and other dignitaries.

Dr Sameer Kumar Pathak conducted the function while the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Dayashankar Mishra.

Scholarships distributed among blind students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A scholarship distribution function was organised for the visually impaired students in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Friday. The programme was organised by the Finance Officer, BHU and the scholarships were given by Help the Blind Foundation (HTBF), founded by DK Patel in 2005 in Hong Kong. HTBF's mission is to provide access to university education thereby enabling visually-impaired students in India to get jobs in today's modern economy. Towards this mission, HTBF also provides skills training through coaching for examinations and personal development initiatives. It has provided 10,787 scholarships so far, and around 3,000 scholarships are distributed across India this year. The programme began around 4 pm on Friday in the Satabdi Krishi Presha Griha of Institute of Agricultural Science with lamp lighting. Visually impaired students of the Faculty of Performing Arts beautifully presented the Kulgeet. HTBF Managing Trustee N Sivaji Rao joined the programme online and welcomed the delegates. He also emphasised that the

goal of HTBF is to ensure good university education in an inclusive environment and help them become independent in life.

HTBF Trustee Deepa Krishnamoorthy, daughter of the founder late DK Patel, encouraged the students to excel in life and thanked all the members of the BHU administration, especially the Finance Officer Dr Abhay Thakur and his team for the speedy disbursement of the scholarship. Prof Arun Kumar Singh, Registrar, BHU presided over the function. In his presidential address Prof Singh praised the efforts of HTBF for providing scholarships to the visually impaired students. He said that this will pave the way for a better future of such students. Earlier, Dr Thakur inaugurated the scholarship distribution. Dean of Students Welfare, BHU Prof KK Singh along with HTBF volunteer Dr Raka Ray Mandal participated in the faculty wise scholarship distribution. Dr Sanjay Kumar, JR (A/C1) was also present in the scholarship distribution programme.

Dr Raka Ray Mandal, Varanasi volunteer, HTBF informed that this year about 124 students from Varanasi are receiving scholarships

among about 45 per cent are girls. Each student is getting Rs 10,000. Among these students, 116 students are from BHU Main Campus, MMV and VKM and eight students are from DAV and other colleges. The programme was conducted by Section Officer Dr Ramesh Kumar Nirmesh.

PCME INSPECTS WRESTLING CENTRE IN BLW: Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME) Amitabh, along with the Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) and president of BLW Sports Association Pradeep Kumar Singh, conducted a thorough inspection of the Wrestling Centre in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Saturday. On the occasion, the wrestling bouts were also organised between the wrestlers of various weight categories.

The bout between UP Kesari Kumari Kashish Yadav and a male wrestler of her weight category, which ended in a draw, was a centre of attraction. The PCME and PCPO were delighted to see the wrestling between some international wrestlers of BLW and they expressed happiness to see the equipment and arrangement of the centre. In his

address, Amitabh said that the BLW Wrestling Centre has an arena of clay and state-of-the-art mats at one place, which is helping to advance this sport, the wrestlers here have proved their mettle at the international level. A large number of wrestlers have been produced from this wrestling centre, which have brought laurels to BLW by performing well at national and state level events.

On the occasion, Joint Secretary of BLW Staff Council Dharmendra Kumar Singh welcomed the PCME and PCPO along with others guests including Chief Mechanical Engineer/SE Sunil Kumar, Sports Officer Bahadur Prasad and Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar by tying safa (scarfs). The guests distributed wrestling kits among the wrestlers who have excelled in the field of wrestling during the year. International wrestler Gopal Yadav, UP Kesari Kishan Yadav, Pawan Pehelwan, Rajan Yadav, Arjun Yadav, Surendra Yadav, Ajay Singh, Uday Pratap Singh (international wrestling coach), Surendra Patel (national wrestling coach) and Ravindra Mishra (international wrestling coach) were also present.

Heatwave sweeps Prayagraj, may get worse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

There is no respite from the heatwave that has been scorching the city for weeks. The situation could get even worse in the days to come, according to forecasts. The heat of the sun is increasing with each passing day affecting life. The maximum temperature for the entire month, hovering around 40 degrees Celsius, touched 46.6 degrees Celsius on Saturday, six notches above normal. Yesterday i.e. Friday was 46.8 degree Celsius.

The rays of the sun are blazing fire in the afternoon. The gusts of hot air are bothering. The hottest day ever recorded 23 years ago was 46.6 °C on April 30, 1999.

Breaking the record of this temperature, the maximum temperature reached 46.8 degree Celsius yesterday i.e. on May 13.

There is some relief today as compared to yesterday. Today the maximum was recorded at 46.6 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature was recorded at 27.4 degree Celsius today. Yesterday,



Passengers filling water bottles on a hot summer day at Prayagraj railway station on Saturday

Pioneer

May 13, the minimum temperature was recorded at 28.8 degrees Celsius, which is three notches above normal. The hot air is scorching the passers-by passing on the roads. The heat is so severe that even waiting

for a few seconds till the green light at the traffic signal is becoming a herculean task for commuters. Now again due to the scorching heat, all the forecasts of the Meteorological Department have been demol-

ished. It was only after 11 o'clock that the heat started showing its adverse impact. It is getting difficult to pass on the road at 12 o'clock. People could not bear the brunt of this scorching heat.

Three held for running fake website, duping money

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Cyber crime unit busted an inter-state racket of cyber frauds, who operated fake websites of iconic brands and government welfare schemes, offered people to become dealers, and distributors and attain franchise as well as offering loans and duped them worth crores of rupees.

While three members of the racket have been arrested, police said the gang is allegedly involved in at least over three dozen cases of cyber fraud across many states including UP, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, and Karnataka and have siphoned

off worth crore of rupees from victims' accounts.

The arrested persons were identified as Vinay Kumar alias Ashok Singh alias SSP Kolkatta of Nalanda (kingpin of racket), Abhishek Sharma of Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh (website developer) and Ratnesh Bharti of Nawada (Bihar). Police have also seized two wi-fi sets, three laptops, 10 mobile sets, one passport, six cheque books, four passbooks, 26 ATM cards of different banks, six Aadhar cards, three EPIC cards, seven Driving Licenses, two PAN cards, six fake stamps, one pen drive, and two hotspot modems from their hideouts. Superintendent of Police

(Cyber cell) Dr Triveni Singh told the mediapersons that a team of cybercrime cell (Prayagraj range) while investigating a case registered under section 406 and 420 of IPC and section 66 of IT Act wherein the unidentified cyber fraudsters had duped around Rs 17.39 lakh from the account of a victim on the pretext of offering franchise of an iconic brand, came to know that cyber fraudsters were operating and running a fake website from Nalanda in Bihar state and further managed to arrest three members of the racket including kingpin Vinay Kumar alias Ashok Singh and two of his accomplices.

SP claimed that the cyber crime cell had recovered Rs 8.39 lakh amount back into the victim's bank account and also managed to freeze Rs 10 lakh being deposited in the bank accounts of cyber frauds.

The arrested criminals confessed that before developing a fake website, they thoroughly analyse and scrutinize the genuine website and later draft similar websites with an intention that gullible victims could easily fall in trap.

They also added they used to keep a strict eye on government run welfare scheme websites and make efforts to ensure that their website was more attractive compared to others.

DM expresses concern over poor sanitation at CHCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

District Magistrate (Prayagraj) Sanjay Kumar Khatri conducted surprise inspections at Chaka and Jasra community health centres and expressed his concern over poor sanitation facilities at both the units.

At Chaka CHC, the DM asked the medical officer in-charge and other health staff about the daily footfall of patients and checked records.

The DM said that the daily OPD was not satisfactory and further ordered to stop the salary of the pharmacist when he failed to maintain the stock register. He also directed CMO to ensure that x-ray machines should be functional at the earliest.

At Jasra CHC, DM also took the medical officer in-charge to task for poor sanitation.

He also ordered a stop to the salary of pharmacists for not maintaining stock registers properly. The DM also interacted with patients and asked about the facilities being offered to them at the community health centres.

Railway contractor ends life : A railway contractor ended his life in a rented house on Thursday night in Industrial Area Naini. Family related tension is stated to be the cause behind this suicide, but the police did not come out with any statement in this regard.

The 45 year old contractor Vibhuti Narayan Singh son of Hans Narayan Singh was the resident of Chandauli. He was associated with MR Company to take railway contracts, and was residing in Narayan Apartment in Industrial Area. His work place was also in the Industrial area.

The police recovered liquor bottles from the spot. No suicide note could be recovered from his room. Other residents of the flat Indrajit Yadav and Jitendra Mishra informed the police that Vibhuti gunned himself down with his licenced pistol. He had placed the gun on his temple and had pressed the trigger.

GIRISH TIWARI ELECTED AS DISTRICT BAR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT: Girish Tiwari has been elected the president of the District Bar Association here in Prayagraj. Vidyavaridhi Mishra will be the new secretary. Awadhesh Kumar Mishra will be the senior vice-president while Dev Kant Shukla will be the junior vice-president.

The other elected office-bearers are-- Arvind Singh alias Sonu as treasurer, Rewati Raman Tripathi Sohaura as

joint secretary, and Priya Tiwari as auditor. Women advocates actively participated in this election, besides the seat of auditor, they captured four seats of Executive Committee members out of total 10. The women executive members will be Geeta Singh, Maya Singh, Sandhya Tiwari, and Savita Sahu. It is worth mentioning here that five women candidates contested the district bar election, and all of them secured enough votes to be declared as winners. Girish Tiwari defeated his nearest rival Rajendra Prasad Mishra with a margin of 826 votes. The elected president polled 1137 votes, the secretary Vidyavaridhi 800 votes, the treasurer Arvind Singh 908 voted, the joint secretary Rewati Raman 1183 votes, and the auditor Priya Tiwari 1148 votes.

DM exhorts pradhans to work with long-term vision

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar has said mere construction of drain, connecting roads and the Kharanja was not the parameter of the development for the village pradhans but it was the big responsibility of the pradhan to work for the overall development of the village. These views were expressed by him presiding over the programme organised under Mission Shakti Phase-4 as mega event Pradhan Sammelan at Zila Panchayat on Friday.

Speaking more on the occasion the DM exhorted the pradhans to work with long-term vision not with short-term vision because the pradhan was not a person but it was an institution whose priority was not the particular but the entire village. Pointing out the works of priority for the village

pradhans the DM said that it was the first duty as village chief to work without any discrimination and the benefits of government schemes must be made available even to those who were opponents in the election. Moreover the pensions under different welfare schemes should be provided to all the eligible and it was the duty of the pradhan to dare to report against the ineligible beneficiaries.

He was of the view that it was the duty of the pradhan to ensure the running of the schools in the larger interest of the future of the village. He further said that whether it was vaccination or other benefits related to the health of the people the pradhan should come forward for the betterment of the village. He concluded his address saying that the community toilets, panchayat

bhawan and the other government buildings were the asset of gramsabha so the proper use of such buildings must be done. Earlier to his address the DM honoured 25 pradhans for their remarkable achievements.

The programme was addressed by CDO Srilaxmi VS, ASP city Sanjai Kumar, DPRO Arvind Kumar, probation officer Shakti Tripathi and social welfare officer Gireesh Chand Dubey.

TOURNAMENT CONCLUDES: DIG police Vindhyachal range RK Bharadwaj took the part in the concluding ceremony of inter-district zonal tournament as chief guest at Police Lines on Friday. On the occasion the DIG awarded the winner teams and expressed his best wishes to players and said that the sportsman spirit was a must

among the sportsmen. On the occasion he was welcomed by SP Ajay Kumar Singh and ASP city Sanjai Kumar welcomed the SP.

As per the final result of the tournament the team of Mirzapur was winner and the team of Jaunpur was runner up in volleyball, in volleyball women team of Jaunpur was winner, while Mirzapur was runner up.

In basketball too the team of Mirzapur was winner and Jaunpur was runner up and the women team in basketball Jaunpur was winner and Mirzapur was runner up. In yoga competition the team of Sonbadra stood as winner, while Mirzapur as runner up. All the winner teams were conferred with shield by the DIG. On the occasion and the tournament concluded with march past.

Russia withdraws from city of Kharkiv

AP ■ KYIV

Russian troops are withdrawing from Ukraine's second-largest city after weeks of heavy bombardment, the Ukrainian military said Saturday, as Kyiv and Moscow's forces engaged in a grinding battle for the country's eastern industrial heartland.

Ukraine's general staff said the Russians were pulling back from the northeastern city of Kharkiv and focusing on guarding supply routes, while launching mortar, artillery and airstrikes in the eastern Donetsk province in order to "deplete Ukrainian forces and destroy fortifications."

Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said Ukraine was "entering a new - long-term - phase of the war."

As the country's top prosecutor put a Russian soldier on trial for war crimes, the first of dozens that could face charges, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainians were doing their "maximum" to drive out the invaders and that the outcome of the war would depend on support from Europe and other allies.

"No one today can predict how long this war will last," Zelenskyy said in his nightly



video address late Friday.

Russia's offensive in the Donbas, a mining and industrial region which Moscow-backed separatists have partially controlled since 2014, appeared to be turning into a back-and-forth slog with no major breakthroughs on either side.

After failing to capture Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, the Russian military decided to concentrate on the Donbas, but its troops have struggled to gain and hold ground.

Before the war, Ukraine had its most highly trained soldiers in the region to stave off the Russia-backed rebels.

Russia has captured some villages and towns during its invasion. The Ukrainian military chief for the Donbas' Luhansk province said Friday

that Russian troops had nearly full control of Rubizhne, a city with a prewar population of around 55,000.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine's forces had also made progress, retaking six Ukrainian towns or villages in the past day.

Western officials said Ukraine had driven Russian forces back around Kharkiv.

The largely Russian-speaking city was a Russian key military objective in the early phase of the war, when Moscow was still hoping to capture and hold major Ukrainian cities.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said Ukraine "appears to have won the Battle of Kharkiv."

It said, "Ukrainian forces prevented Russian troops from

encircling, let alone seizing Kharkiv, and then expelled them from around the city."

Regional governor Oleh Sinegubov said in a post on the Telegram messaging app that there had been no shelling attacks on Kharkiv in the past day. He said Ukraine had launched a counteroffensive near Izyum, a city 125 kilometers (78 miles) south of Kharkiv that has been under effective Russian control since at least the beginning of April.

Fighting was fierce on the Siverskyi Donets River near the city of Severodonetsk, where Ukraine has launched counterattacks but failed to halt Russia's advance, said Oleh Zhdanov, an independent Ukrainian military analyst.

"The fate of a large portion of the Ukrainian army is being decided — there are about 40,000 Ukrainian soldiers," he said.

However, Russian forces suffered heavy losses in a Ukrainian attack that destroyed a pontoon bridge they were using to try to cross the same river — the largest in eastern Ukraine — in the town of Bilohorivka, Ukrainian and British officials said, in another sign of Moscow's struggle to salvage a war gone awry.

US, Russian defence chiefs speak for 1st time since invasion

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu spoke with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday after months of refusing direct contact with his American counterpart. But officials said the call didn't appear to signal any change in Moscow's war in Ukraine.

A senior Defense Department official said Friday that while Austin believes the hour-long conversation was important in the effort to keep lines of communication open, it didn't resolve any "acute issues" or lead to any change in what the Russian are doing or saying as the war enters week 12.

The call — initiated by Austin — marked the highest level American contact with a Russian official since the war began in late February. Over the past several months, Pentagon officials have repeatedly said that Russian leaders declined to take calls from Austin and Army Gen.

New Lankan PM inducts 4 ministers into Cabinet

Peiris retained as foreign minister

PTI ■ COLOMBO



Ranil Wickremesinghe inducted four ministers into his Cabinet on Saturday, including G L Peiris as the Foreign Minister, as the country's new Prime Minister sought to complete the government formation to focus on efforts to rebuild the economy.

Dinesh Gunawardena has been sworn in as the Minister of Public administration, Peiris as the Foreign Minister, Prasanna Ranatunga as the Minister of Urban Development and housing and Kanchana Wijesekara as the Minister of Power and Energy, the Daily Mirror, an online news portal reported.

Peiris was also the Foreign Minister in the former Mahinda Rajapaksa-led Cabinet.

The government sources said Wickremesinghe's Cabinet is expected to be limited to under 20, the report said.

Sri Lanka's ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP)

party has decided to offer crucial support to Wickremesinghe, who has just one seat in Parliament, to help him prove a majority in the House.

Most of the opposition parties in Sri Lanka announced that they would not be joining the interim Government led by Wickremesinghe.

The 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader was appointed as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on Thursday as the country was without a government since Monday when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's elder brother and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned after violence erupted following an attack on the anti-government protesters by his supporters.

New Lankan PM Wickremesinghe invites Opposition leader to join hands to resolve country's worst economic crisis

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has urged the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) leader to leave aside party politics and join hands with him to form a non-partisan government to resolve the burning issues and stabilise the country's economy, according to media reports on Saturday.

73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader, who was appointed as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on Thursday, wrote a letter to SJB leader Sajith Premadasa, the Daily Mirror, an online news portal reported. In the letter, Wickremesinghe invited the SJB to support the joint effort made by them to immediately resolve the burning issues faced by the people and also to stabilise the country economically, politically and socially by obtaining foreign assistance.

Palestinian man dies of head wound sustained from Israeli police

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A 21-year-old Palestinian man died on Saturday from a head wound sustained last month after Israeli police fired rubber bullets at stone-throwing Palestinian demonstrators during violence at Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site. Israel's Hadassah hospital announced the death early Saturday, saying only that Waleed Shareef had died weeks after being hospitalised with severe head injuries. His family confirmed the death.

Shareef was injured on April 22 in the Al Aqsa Mosque compound — the site of repeated confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinian demonstrators in recent weeks.

Amateur video from the time shows a large group of Palestinians running away from the direction of heavy Israeli fire. Immediately after one shot, Shareef is seen falling



on his face and lying motionless on the ground. Israeli police quickly evacuated him.

At the time, police fired sponge-tipped bullets to disperse a crowd of masked Palestinians that it said was throwing stones and fireworks toward police and near the Western Wall — Judaism's most holy prayer site.

Palestinian witnesses and Shareef's family say he was shot in the head with a rubber bullet, while Israeli authorities have suggested he died from

injuries sustained when he fell on the ground. Hadassah officials on Saturday declined to give a precise cause of the head injury.

The family's lawyer, Firas Jebreeni, said the family has rejected an Israeli request for an autopsy, but that police refused to let them see the body and removed it without permission to Israel's main forensics institute. He said he has appealed to an Israeli court to prevent the autopsy and return the body to the family.

Peshawar mosque blast mastermind killed: Police

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

The mastermind of the Peshawar blast along with one of his companions was on Saturday killed in a targeted operation in the suburb of the district, which lies at the heart of Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

According to the police, the terrorist named Hassan Shah, a resident of district Khyber, was killed in Pishatkharra of Peshawar in a joint counter-insurgency operation conducted by Peshawar police and the Counter-Terrorism Department of Pakistan.

The slain terrorist was gunned down along with his companion, the police confirmed. According to the police, both the terrorists belonged to a banned outfit of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant organisation fighting the government of Pakistan to



enforce the law of Sharia across the South Asian nation.

The police said the security forces had geared up the search operation in the area to arrest the remaining culprits.

As many as 57 people were killed and over 200 injured in the suicide blast at the Ahle Tashih mosque of Kucha Risaladar in Peshawar city on March 4 this year.

The militant group Islamic State, claiming the responsi-

bility for the attack, had added that the lone suicide bomber was from neighbouring Afghanistan.

The attack in Peshawar's congested old city was the worst in years in Pakistan as the country faces renewed militant attacks mostly carried out by the Pakistani Taliban since last August when the Afghan Taliban swept into power and America ended its 20-year involvement in Afghanistan.

Emmanuel who? Right fighting hard-Left for French vote

AP ■ PARIS

The stakes are high, the fight nasty and the party of centrist President Emmanuel Macron is the one to beat. But to a visitor from outer space, June's parliamentary election in France could look like a contest between the far right and the hard-left. A month before the first round of voting, the campaign for the 577 seats in France's lower house of parliament has been brutal. Pressure has been mounting since the April presidential election when Macron won a second mandate, beating far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the run-off to quash her third bid for the job.

The pot bubbled over when Le Pen's political nemesis, hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melancon, clinched alliances with a swath of leftist parties, positioning himself to outdo

both her and, he hopes, Macron, in June.

So far now, Le Pen sees Melancon as her main opponent, as she seeks to keep her National Rally party politically relevant with a good showing in parliament.

Her party's campaign slogan, "The Only Opposition to Macron," attests to her rivalry with the hard-left leader. Melancon himself, bolstered by his alliances, has set his sights higher, declaring that he will steal Macron's majority to become France's next prime minister — an appointment made by the president alone. Le Pen's hopes are less grandiose: to create a "powerful" parliamentary group — at least 15 lawmakers — that would accord her anti-immigration party more speaking time and other privileges so it can be heard, and harass the powerful.

FROM PAGE 1

NOW, TRIPURA SURPRISE: NEW CM BEFORE POLLS

"Party is above all. I am a loyal worker of the BJP. I hope I have done justice to the responsibilities that were given to me -- whether it was BJP State president or Tripura Chief Minister. I have worked for the overall development of Tripura and to ensure peace for the people in the State," Deb told news persons at Agartala, the State Capital.

The BJP made a history in 2018 when it came to power ending 25-year-old rule of a well-entrenched Left front dispensation. Deb became the first BJP CM of Tripura.

The replacement of Deb with Saha is akin to changes in the top made by the central leadership (read Modi-Shah) in Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Karnataka, months before the elections in a bid to beat the anti-incumbency. While the BJP retained Uttarakhand, the result of its move in the other two States remains to be seen.

Though the sudden change in Uttarakhand played political dividends with the party returning to power in the hill State, Tripura is set to be a different ball game with the Left, the Congress and an aggressive Trinamool Congress (TMC) seeking to capitalize on the "groupism" in the Tripura BJP.

Health Minister Sudip Roy Burman, a challenger to Deb, recently quit the BJP and crossed over to the Congress.

Saha, a dental surgeon turned politician who quit the Congress and joined the BJP in 2016, was made the party's State president in 2020. Earlier this year, Saha was elected to Rajya Sabha in the lone seat from Tripura. Saha as State BJP president had announced an 18-member committee of office-bearers and seven spokespersons even as demands from within the party were made to remove him.

TMC Rajya Sabha member Sushmita Deb said, "The BJP has done course correction but very late."

She claimed that Burman joining the Congress prompted the exit of the CM who she said "did not deliver on the poll promises" and described Deb as "non-serious CM". Sushmita said her party is working hard in the State since last August before she joined the party.

Sushmita alleged that the BJP did not allow four by-elections as it feared defeat before the assembly contest, February-March, next year.

The TMC is looking at the large chunk of Bengali population in Tripura with the TMC General Secretary and West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee visiting the State twice this year.

The Left and the Congress too have problems with reorganizing their State organisations and cadre.

INDIA BANS WHEAT EXPORT TO REIN IN INFLATION SOARING TO 7.79% IN APRIL

New Delhi's decision would be a setback to global buyers who had been banking on India for supplies after exports from the Black Sea region dropped since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February. Russia and

Ukraine together account for almost a quarter of the global wheat supply.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi too had said, "If the WTO gives permission, India is ready to supply food stock to the world from tomorrow."

"Currently, there is adequate food stock in the country. There is a sudden spike in the prices of wheat in the country. Unregulated trade is the reason behind the prices going up. Our primary goal is to check the inflation," said Sudhanshu Pandey, Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution.

The move to ban wheat exports also comes after huge crop loss due to a heatwave in March. The Agriculture Ministry had in mid-February estimated India's 2021-22 wheat crop at a record 111.3 million tonnes but it has since scaled down the estimate to around 95 mt.

The ban move comes just a day after the government announced its big export plans. "The Centre will send trade delegations to Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Algeria and Lebanon for exploring possibilities of boosting wheat exports from India. India has set a target of a record 10 million tonnes of wheat in the 2022-23 amid rising global demand for the grain globally," a Government statement said on Thursday.

"We are extending our support to all the stakeholders in the wheat exports value chain for boosting shipment from the country," M Angamuthu, Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority, said at a sensitisation meeting on wheat exports in Karnal, Haryana, according to a Government release.

The Department of Commerce planned to organise several such meetings in major wheat growing states such as Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, it added.

Recently, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had also said India's wheat exports are likely to cross 100 lakh tonnes (10 million tonnes) during 2022-23, due to increasing demand for the commodity in the world market.

"We will continue to export wheat in a big way and meet the needs of the countries that are not getting their supplies from the conflict areas, and my own sense is that this time we will probably exceed our wheat exports (of) over 100 lakh tonnes comfortably," he said.

India is in final talks to start wheat export to Egypt, while discussions are going on with countries like China, Turkey and Iran to begin the outbound shipments of the commodity.

The exports have crossed 70 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 (worth over Rs 15,000 crore) as against 21.55 lakh tonnes (over Rs 4,000 crore) in 2020-21. It was only two lakh tonnes (Rs 500 crore) in 2019-20. The Minister said wheat exports have helped several countries in meeting the requirements of food security.

In a separate notification, the DGFT announced the easing of export conditions for onion seeds. "The export policy of onion seeds has been put under the restricted category, with immediate effect," it said. The export of onion seeds was earlier prohibited.

RAHUL, PRIYANKA NAMES PITCHED FOR 'CHIEF' JOB AT CHINTAN SHIVIR

Sensing that the situation was not conducive as some of the leaders present in the meeting remained silent, Sonia diverted the matter saying let Rahul focus on public awareness by travelling across the country. Sonia was presiding over a meeting to discuss the second phase of the mass contact programme to take on the policies of the Government as well as rising inflation and unemployment in the country.

The Congress had launched the mass agitation/contact programme - 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' - from November 14 to November 29, 2021 to highlight various issues, including inflation, recession, unemployment rate and farm distress.

Senior leader Digvijaya Singh, who heads the party's Sustained Agitation Committee, gave a detailed presentation.

The Congress is also likely to constitute its Parliamentary Board replacing the Congress Election Committee that decides candidates for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. This has been an important demand of many of the dissenters within the party.

Those like Sachin Pilot have pinned hopes about the party giving more representation to the youth leaders in the Rajasthan Assembly polls and the 2024 general elections. But the old guards like Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot are unlikely to yield space to the younger lot. Differences over ticket distribution were one of the main sticky points between Pilot and Gehlot.

19 STILL MISSING, DEATH TOLL IN MUNDKA INFERNO SET TO RISE

The Chief Minister along with his deputy, Manish Sisodia, visited the site of the blaze to take stock of the situation. The fire chief said that the building did not have a fire safety certificate or fire-fighting equipment and there was only a single entry and exit point, which is the reason behind so many casualties. "The building also did not have a proper blueprint. Most of the bodies were found on the second floor," said Garg.

Since Saturday morning, there was an atmosphere of grief at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri after hundreds of relatives waiting outside the hospital were yet to get any details of their kin. The injured and dead bodies were taken to the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial hospital after the incident on Friday evening. North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and other agencies officials were quick to put the onus on the owners of the building and claimed that commercial activity was going on "illegally" in the building. Meanwhile, the NDMC Commissioner on Saturday wrote a letter to the Additional Commissioner of Narela Zone, asking him to file a detailed report on the following incident in the next 48 hours. "The Additional Commissioner, Narela Zone, is hereby directed to submit a detailed report of the above incident within 48 hours indicating on the following aspects, type of the area— either residential, lal dora, agriculture, where the said building is located, ten-

tative year of the construction of the building, tentative height of the building, and whether building plan was sanctioned or not," the letter stated.

Police have arrested both brothers, Harish and Varun Goel, the owners of a CCTV camera and router manufacturing and assembling company while a manhunt has been initiated to nab Manish Lakra, the owner of the building who is at large.

All the floors of the building were being used by the same company, said Sameer Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district. A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against the owners of the company under sections 304 (punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 120 (concealing design to commit offence punishable with imprisonment) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

Several videos were doing rounds on the social media showing thick plumes of smoke billowing from top of the building as people trapped inside could be heard crying for help while some jumped down in a desperate attempt to escape the flames. Some could be seen using ropes to escape. The illegal commercial building, expected to be around 10 to 12 years old with one entry and exit gate, has once again raised a question of these manufacturing units being operated without authority's approval. It is not that the problems were not known. They were visible to the naked eye and amply corroborated by local residents and witnesses.

The building flouted safety and fire norms. It did not have emergency exits. Yet it continued to operate.

Under the Industrial Employment Act 1946, Labour Department is to take suo moto cognizance when there are more than 50 workers. In this case there is no knowledge of any checking by the department. It is clear that precious lives would have been saved if the department had been diligent and performed their duties.

3 COPS SHOT DEAD BY BLACK BUCK POACHERS IN MP, 1 SHOOTER KILLED

A poacher identified as Naushad Mewati of Bedoriya village in Guna district was also killed and his four accomplices, all residents of Ragohgarh of the same district, were arrested. Guna superintendent of police, Rajeev Mishra, said the police got information about blackbuck poaching in the Aron forest near Sagabarkhedha village of Guna. "When police personnel reached the spot at around 2.45am, they nabbed three poachers. But suddenly four poachers, who were on motorbikes, started firing," he said. The SP said the police personnel fired in retaliation and sudden firing caused injuries to them leading to the death of three personnel and injury to police vehicle driver. Police recovered carcasses and five heads of blackbucks. A carcass of the peacock was also found on the spot. Normally, blackbucks, Indian antelopes, are killed for their horns and skin. The Chief Minister has announced an ex gratia of Rs 1 crore each to the bereaved families of the three deceased police personnel.

N Korea confirms 21 new deaths as it battles Covid-19

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea on Saturday reported 21 new deaths and 174,440 more people with fever symptoms as the country scrambles to slow the spread of COVID-19 across its unvaccinated population.

The new deaths and cases since Friday increased total numbers to 27 deaths and 524,440 illnesses amid a rapid spread of fever since late April.

North Korea said 243,630 people had recovered and 280,810 remained in quarantine. State media didn't specify how many of the fever cases and deaths were confirmed as COVID-19 infections.

The country imposed what it described as maximum preventive measures on Thursday after confirming its first COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic.

It had previously held for more than two years to a widely doubted claim of a perfect record keeping out the virus that has spread to nearly every place in the world.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a ruling party Politburo meeting on Saturday described the outbreak as a historically "great upheaval" and called for unity between the government and people to stabilise the outbreak as quickly as possible.

Officials during the meeting mainly discussed ways to swiftly distribute medical supplies the country has released from its emergency reserves. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said. In a report presented to the Politburo, the North's emergency epidemic office blamed most of the deaths on "mistakes like overmuch taking of drugs, bereft of scientific medical treatment".

KKR beat SRH to stay in hunt

PTI ■ PUNE

Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 54 runs in a must-win IPL game here on Saturday.

Opting to bat, KKR rode on Andre Russell's counterattacking 28-ball 49 not out to post a fighting 177 for six. For SRH, Umran Malik (3/33) was back in form with a three-wicket haul, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/27), Marco Jansen (1/30) and T Natarajan (1/43) also claimed one wicket each.

Earlier, it was Russell (49 not out off 28 balls) along with Sam Billings (34 off 29 balls), who added 63 runs for the sixth wicket to give the total a semblance of respectability after KKR were in trouble at 94 for 5.

KKR added 58 runs in the last five overs, mainly due to Russell as he hit three sixes off three full-tosses bowled by off-break bowler Washington Sundar (0/40 in 4 overs). Malik (3/33 in 4 overs), who had gone for 120-odd runs in his last 10 overs (across 3 games) and that too wicketless, was back in his element as he bowled fast and straight to get rid of Nitish Rana (26 off 16 balls), Ajinkya Rahane (28 off 23 balls) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (15 off 9 balls) in his first two overs to peg back KKR.

He did get good support from T Natarajan (1/43), who nailed the block-hole deliveries with perfection, getting rid of Rinku Singh (5), who missed out on taking review although it would have counted for



little.

Venkatesh Iyer's "second season blues" continued as he chopped one from Marco Jansen (1/30 in 4 overs) onto the stumps.

As far as Rahane is concerned, he has well past his IPL sell-by date and even three sixes couldn't hide the fact that he played a lot of dot balls and once he started cramping, it became even more difficult to

rotate the strike.

Finally he was out when he slashed hard at a wide rising delivery and Shashank Singh at sweep-er cover fence maintained perfect body balance in a side on position to latch on to the catch.

The KKR batting finally looked good when Russell and Billings took the attack back to the opposition camp with some big

blows after initial period of struggle.

While the Jamaican had three fours and four sixes to his name, Billings, on his part, hit three fours and one maximum.

Towards the end of the innings, wily Bhuvneshwar bowled his change-ups to lessen Russell's scoring areas as he had an impressive 13 dot balls in his entire spell.

GT eye top-2 finish with win over out-of-reckoning CSK

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Their play-offs berth already secured, high-flying Gujarat Titans would look for nothing less than a win to ensure a top-2 finish when they take on out-of-reckoning Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

Under the brilliant leadership of Hardik Pandya, GT rose above expectations to book their play-offs berth with two matches in hand.

GT are currently at the top of the table with 18 points from 12 games and a win on Sunday will more or less secure them a top-2 finish, which means they will get an extra chance of making it to the final.

Lying at the second-last spot, defending champions CSK are out of the competition and will play for pride in their remaining two games.

While GT ensured their play-offs berth after a comprehensive 62-run win over Lucknow Super Giants, CSK slumped to a five-wicket loss against Mumbai Indians.

Young opener Shubman Gill, skipper Hardik, David Miller, Wriddhiman Saha and Rahul Tewatia have been GT's batting mainstay throughout the season and they would be hoping to carry on in the same vein.

The credit for GT's phenomenal run in their opening season



largely goes to their ability to fight back from adverse situations.

But of late, GT's batting unit has misfired and Hardik would be looking for some consistent performances from his batters.

In their last match, only Gill (63 not out) made a substantial score and batted through the innings to take GT to a modest 144 for 4, which they defended with ease. The GT team management would also be hoping for Hardik, Miller and Tewatia to return among runs.

But GT's main strength is their potent bowling attack, comprising world-class bowlers like Mohammed Shami, Lockie Ferguson and Rashid Khan.

Shami, the team's highest taker with 16 scalps, has been lethal upfront, while Ferguson's ability to generate pace is a cause of concern for any batting line-up.

Rashid too has got his mojo back after a slow start, scalping four wickets in the last match and when on song, he can tear apart any batting line-up.

Yash Dayal too has been among wickets but his economy is a cause of concern, while R Sai Kishore has complemented Rashid perfectly in his first game.

GT's main recipe for success has been a considerably mel- lowed down Hardik, who seems to be relishing the responsibility of captaincy. CSK, meanwhile, have endured a nightmarish season with nothing working for them from the start.

MS Dhoni's decision to hand over captaincy to Ravindra Jadeja backfired as the all-rounder never looked in his comfort zone with the responsibility, forcing him to return the leadership mantle to the talismanic stumper.

Rohit, Pant, Rahul, Bumrah to be rested for SA series

Dhawan, Pandya in line for captaincy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Many seniors including captain Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul are all set to be rested for the upcoming five-match T20 series against South Africa, with an eye on the marquee tour of England in July.

Besides, the national selection committee is also set to excuse Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant from the engagements against the Proteas.

It is understood that veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan and all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who has impressed one and all with his captaincy for Gujarat Titans in IPL-15, are in reckoning for the leadership role for both South Africa and the short two-match T20I series against Ireland.

The T20 rubber against the Proteas will start in the national capital on June 9 with the remaining matches being held at Cuttack, Visakhapatnam, Rajkot and Bengaluru respectively.

The squad for the SA series is likely to be selected on May 22 -- the last day of the league phase of this edition of IPL -- in Mumbai.

The PTI has already reported that an out-of-form Virat Kohli will also be given a much-needed break but it is understood that for the selectors as well as the BCCI, the tour of England starting early July is paramount.

"All the senior India players will get at least three and half weeks of complete rest. Rohit, Virat, KL, Rishabh and Jasprit will all directly go to England for the 'fifth Test' following the white-ball



series. We need all our key players to remain fresh for the England series," a senior BCCI source privy to the development told PTI on the

condition of anonymity.

As a part of workload management, all the senior all-format players will not be part of the next

seven T20 Internationals.

Asked about captaincy, the source said: "The selectors have a couple of choices. Shikhar Dhawan, as he has already captained India in absence of Virat, Rohit and Rahul during last year's Sri Lanka series.

But Hardik Pandya's impressive captaincy for Gujarat Titans hasn't gone unnoticed. So it will be a close call," he added.

While Umran Malik has generated considerable excitement with his 150 kmph plus pace, there is a feeling that he is too raw and time with the India A team could help him develop better.

While he remains in the mix with death overs specialist Arshdeep Singh, the man who is emerging as a 'Dark Horse' is Lucknow Super Giants' left-arm-er

Mohsin Khan. "Our pace bowling department is set and selectors might not experiment too much," he said."

But yes, Mohsin has impressed almost everyone with his pace, bounce and swing in this edition. He does have a chance.

Having said that, not ruling out Umran or Arshdeep either, but Mohsin might just be slightly ahead," he added.

It is understood that most of the players who recently played in the T20 series against Sri Lanka and the West Indies are set to be retained irrespective of their current IPL form. Obviously Suryakumar Yadav or Ravindra Jadeja's injury needs to be factored in and Deepak Chahar will also not be available.

India finish second in shooting at Deaflympics



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India wrapped up their shooting assignment at the 24th Deaflympics in Caxais do Sul, Brazil, by finishing in second place with three gold and two bronze medals.

Only Ukraine finished ahead of the 10-strong Indian contingent, with six gold and an overall tally of 12 medals. It was a commendable performance by the Indian shooters in ensuring the country's best-ever performance at Deaflympics.

India currently ranks eighth on the medals table with seven gold, one silver and four bronze medals.

This is the first time an Indian shooting team has participated at the Deaflympics on the initiative of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

An elated NRAI secretary general K. Sultan Singh said, "It makes me even prouder to have such a dedicated and high-quality team of professionals at NRAI. Without their hard work and dedication this phenomenal performance would not have been possible in such a short time."

"Our coaches Anuja Jung and Priti Sharma even went to the extent of learning sign language to better impart coaching."

"My President Mr. Raninder Singh, forever the shooting promotion man, also made it very clear from day one that there should be left no stone unturned in the preparations of the squad."

He also thanked the Sports Authority of India and the Sports Ministry for supporting the shooters.

"The Hon. Minister, Anurag Thakur, MYAS, was himself at hand to flag-off the team, inspiring confidence and providing much deserving recognition to the deaf shooters."

Dhanush Srikanth was the star of the shooting squad, bagging two gold medals in the men's 10m air rifle and 10m air rifle mixed team competitions respectively. Priesha Deshmukh was his partner in the mixed event.

Abhinav Deshwal won India's third gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event while Shourya Saini in the men's air rifle and Vedika Sharma in the women's air pistol won individual bronze medals.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the NRAI and the All India Sports Council for the Deaf (AISCD), just three months ahead of the Games, whereby the national governing body of the sport would be involved actively from the trials to selection to coaching and training of the team for the Deaflympics.

20 injured in Milwaukee shootings after Bucks playoff game

AP ■ MILWAUKEE

Twenty people were injured in two shootings in downtown Milwaukee near an entertainment district where thousands of people had been watching the Bucks play the Celtics in the NBA's Eastern Conference semifinals, authorities said.

None of the injuries from either shooting Friday night were believed to be life-threatening.

The first shooting, involving three victims, occurred adjacent to the Deer District -- an entertainment district with numerous bars and restaurants where large crowds often assemble for major sporting events.

The Milwaukee Fire Department said authorities took two people to a hospital, a 30-year-old man and a 16-year-old girl, and a third person drove to a hospital.

Police said a 29-year-old man was in custody. Seventeen more people were injured in a second shooting about two hours later, which happened a few blocks away.

Ten people were taken into custody and nine guns were recovered, WTMJ-TV reported.

There was no immediate indication whether the two shootings were related or involved fans who were watching the game.

Witnesses told WTMJ-TV that they saw a fight outside a bar following the basketball game.

Bill Reinemann, a parking attendant at lot adjacent to Deer District, said he heard gunshots but didn't see anyone get shot or see the shooter during the earlier shooting.

"It sounded like six to eight gunshots," he said "It was close."

After the shots were fired, scores of fans began running toward the Deer District, he said.

Reinemann, who has worked the lot for 18 years, remained at his post even as fearful Bucks fans ran past him.

"I sat in my chair here the whole while," he said.

"The incident took place outside of the Deer District area. We direct all questions to the Milwaukee Police Department," Bucks spokesman Barry Baum said.

Boston defeated Milwaukee in the game to force a Game 7 in the series.(AP)

Amandeep finishes 13th and Vani 23rd in Switzerland

PTI ■ FLUMSERBERG

Amandeep Drall held steady and carded 1-under 71 to finish inside Top-15 as she totalled 2-under 213 at the 2022 Flumserberg Ladies Open here.

Fellow Indian Vani Kapoor dropped a triple bogey late in the day on the Par-5 16th. Despite that she fought back for a birdie on 18th to card 73 and finished tied 23rd.

Amandeep dropped a shot on fifth, but picked birdies on Par-3s on seventh and 11th.

Vani, playing with Amandeep in the same group, birdied the opening hole and then parred the next 14. She had a disastrous triple bogey on 16th which spoilt her run. She birdied 18th for some consolation.

Dutch amateur Lauren Holmeyer won the tournament after a final day round of 2-under 70. The 19-year-old won by a single shot in just her third LETAS event.

After 14 straight pars to begin



her round, Holmeyer hung in at the top of the leader board, before back-to-back birdies on the 15th and 16th saw her through at the GAMS-Werdenberg Golf Club.

One shot behind the winner Holmeyer was Germany's Patricia Isabel Schmidt, who rattled in eight birdies and an eagle on the way to a score of 66 (-6) on the final day. Sweden's Anna Magnusson fin-

ished third on -6 after a final day score of 70 (-2), albeit having reached -8 with a birdie on the 13th, only for two bogeys on her last five holes to see her drop back into the pack.

The next LETAS event is the PGA Championship Trelleborg which takes place on May 19-21 at Tegelberga Golf Club in Sweden. PTI Cor

Swiatek equals Serena Williams with 27-match winning streak

AP ■ ROME

Not since Serena Williams seven years ago has another woman had such a hot streak.

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek routed Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 6-1 on Saturday to extend her winning streak to 27 matches and reach the Italian Open final.

Williams won the same number of consecutive matches over 2014 and 2015.

Aiming to defend her

Rome title and win her fifth straight tournament, Swiatek dominated the eighth-ranked Sabalenka with a mix of power, consistency and finesse.

While she struggled with her serve at times, Swiatek was able to consistently crush both forehand and backhand winners on the slow, red clay court at the Foro Italo.

The 20-year-old Polish player also hit a delicate backhand half-volley winner in the final game of the

first set.

Swiatek had the same number of winners and unforced errors, 15, while Sabalenka produced just eight winners and had a whopping 31 unforced errors.

The hard-hitting Sabalenka took a medical timeout late in the second set and had her back treated.

Swiatek, who was a surprise champion at the French Open in 2020 when she was ranked No. 54,

will be the favorite to add a second title at Roland Garros when the year's second Grand Slam starts next weekend.

First, though, Swiatek will face either Ons Jabeur -- who is on a 10-match winning streak -- or Daria Kasatkina of Russia in Sunday's final.

The men's semifinals later featured Novak Djokovic against Casper Ruud and Alexander Zverev against Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Pak will go ahead with tour of SL: PCB

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board has assured its Sri Lankan counterparts that it had no hesitation touring the country for a two-Test series in late July-August, despite the ongoing unrest in the island nation.

"We are always ready to support Sri Lanka Cricket even in difficult times and we have no issues touring the country for the test series," a PCB official said.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) is facing problems due to the current uncertain political and economic situation prevailing in the country with daily violent protests on the streets against the government.

Cricknet Australia which is to send its team to Sri Lanka before Pakistan has said it is monitoring the situation and will take a final decision based on it.

But the PCB official said that it was the

call of the Sri Lankan cricket and Pakistan would just follow their path.

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis with only 12 hours of electricity being provided to the locals who are facing severe fuel shortage.

"We have a very strong relationship with the Sri Lankan Board, the two countries have always supported each other in difficult situations," the official said.

He added that Pakistan would not refuse to play the series in July and August.

"Whatever decision the SLC deems best we will accept it playing in Sri Lanka or even at a neutral venue," he said.

Pakistan was also due to play three ODIs on the tour but the SLC requested the PCB to drop the white ball matches as they wanted to start their Lanka Premier League earlier by a week.

talktime

GOUROV DASGUPTA

The music composer, who has worked predominantly in Bollywood for popular films like Cash 2021 and Enemy, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his latest songs, his experience, upcoming projects among other things

'I AM SUPER EXCITED FOR MY NEW RELEASES'

■ You have three releases back to back. How excited are you?

Three releases back to back is a lot of pressure and lot of excitement. *Buhe Bariyan* is a folk song but it's been rendered and recreated beautifully along with Shruti Rane, who co-composed with me. It is written by Kunwar Juneja. Song *Dynamite* is very close to my heart for a long time now, it was supposed to go for a film but I just felt that this song needs to be out in a big way because it's the biggest club track that I have ever made. I couldn't be more grateful to Vinod Bhanushali and Hitz music for putting the song out with Dhvani Bhanushali and giving me a chance. They shot an amazing video for it. I am super excited for this one. Another song *Tutt Gaya*, is also very close to me is a ballet which is my personal favourite.

It's beautifully written by Kunwar Juneja and is sung by Stebin Ben. This was also supposed to go for a film, but am glad that it is coming out as a single.

I am very excited to showcase different sides of me. As a composer, it's a huge opportunity to show my versatility.

■ Tell us something about *Dynamite* and *Tutt Gaya*.

Dynamite is definitely a bomb of a song. I am more of a ballet person and I don't really make too many club songs. Howbeit, this is one of my special songs, which I knew would change a lot of things around when it comes out. This is a song which has been close to me for many years now. When I played it for Vinod Bhanushali for the first time, he fell in love with it and promised me that he will do something massive with it. I just had that faith in him, and voila!

It's an amazing video and I am super excited it's coming out on Hitz music. Probably my biggest club track

DYNAMITE IS DEFINITELY A BOMB OF A SONG. I AM MORE OF A BALLET PERSON AND I DON'T REALLY MAKE TOO MANY CLUB SONGS. HOWBEIT, THIS IS ONE OF MY SPECIAL SONGS, WHICH I KNEW WOULD CHANGE A LOT OF THINGS AROUND WHEN IT COMES OUT

ever and one of the biggest chartbuster this year. *Tutt Gaya* is kind of a similar story. I held on to this song for long time, lot of people wanted the song, this was also supposed to be a part of the film, but again something told me to hold on and give it to the right people and I am glad Saregama is putting it out. They are the best label to work with. Sung by Stebin Ben, written by Kunwar Juneja and beautifully shot by Aditya Dutt, it is very close to my heart and it's a lovely ballet.

■ How was it working with Dhvani Bhanushali and Kanika Kapoor?

Dhvani is very hard working and talented. She has done an amazing job in *Dynamite*. It looked like the universe is waiting for her to sing it and it just came in together. I am very proud of her. Kanika, is of course, a veteran. We have worked closely before and she is no less. She has done a magic in *Buhe Bariyan*.

■ What genre of music do you enjoy composing?


Personally, I am more of a ballet kind of a guy. I love making love songs, ballets and I think I am pretty good at it. My last year releases like *tere do naina*, *sayonee* and even film stuff like *anjagam*, *Ishq namaza*, *humdum* are my comfort zone. Once in a while like throwing a bomb like

■ What are your upcoming projects?

I am working on new songs. The idea is to work on new, interesting sound and have a couple of amazing writers working with me. I have an amazing team of musicians who support what I do and that's the reason why I am blessed and the whole idea is to change the sound skill. There are a few upcoming projects but I can't talk about it right now. Most of them are releasing in the end of the year and next year.

Plan Your Day

SPOKEN WORDS BOULEVARD



Explore the mesmerizing way of conveying emotions through beautiful Poetry and charming Storytelling to keep you awe-inspired and amazed. Portrayed by top sensations, get ready to sway to the allusive words and dive into the amazing world of pleasing Spoken words and still be thinking later on how meaningful each word meant

and touched. Do you want to learn artistic nail art at your home, and that too with no money spent? Or are you in the beauty industry already and want to skill up to work as a nail technician? What: Theatre & Arts Where: Online When: May 15, 2022 Time: 7 pm

Sound of music

Music is the best medicine. Here are the top 10 songs of the week that will lift up your weekend mood

Bollywood vibes

Dafa Kar (A R Rahman)

Saamna (Akasa)

Mast Nazron Se (Rochak Kohli)

Kya Kar Diya (Vishal Mishra)

Macha Macha Re (Mika Singh)

English Vinglish

Psychofreak (Camila Cabello)

Seven Bridge Road (Jake Bugg)

Wings Of Stone (Adam Levine)

FREE (John Legend)

Crazy (Doechii)

Masterstroke



Spring Collection 2022, is the luxury marbles sourced from the cream of the crop at Antolini, Italy that is a rage all over the world among enthusiasts for their natural stone processing. Look out for natural stones that are sourced from premium quarries — some of the best in the country — and boast a lustrous finish. The collection sticks to classics, which matches the brand ethos. What you can explore are marble flooring inlays that match your style. Expect to find marbles that can heighten the glamour of your floors or walls. The showcase here is designed to cater to plush residences, hotels, showrooms and even shopping malls. That apart, one can also look out for the onyx section. These slabs are well-liked as they add a dramatic element and make sure there's no monotony in the interiors. You can find a variety of onyx slabs for special projects with a specific minimum requirement. These stones, manufactured as per the industry standards, are not only resilient and one-of-a-kind but come in several shades and designs. Also, fancy granite countertops? Choose the best for your kitchen from slabs that include over 150 colours and varieties. Don't forget to check out the quartz, which is enjoying great popularity among enthusiasts at the moment because of its beauty and durability. Architects prefer it for the beautiful finish as well. Don't forget to check out their Statuario Rosso and Botanic Green collections as well, inspired by the beauty of florals and nature.

ADD A LITTLE GLAM FOR GOOD

A bouquet of flowers has the ability to quickly brighten up a space. Dried flowers and grass are a great way to bring nature into your house and to give a fresh look. Here are a few innovative ideas to dazzle up your living area

Dried grass and flowers have been professionally resurrected and are making a fashion comeback. Fresh flower bouquets have been efficiently traded for dried grasses and flowers by innovators. Despite the fact that dried flowers and grass are technically dead, they are still gorgeous and may lend a lovely and vintage touch to a little space in your home.

Repurposing, recycling, and do-it-yourself are at their apex with dried flowers. They're ideal for repurposing old items. On the other hand, even the most gorgeous bouquets fade with time. So, even if your favourite floral arrangements have started to droop, how can you keep enjoying them?

One of the most therapeutic activities is redecorating homes. It necessitates not just thorough planning, but also creative thinking and inventive concepts. Flowers are the first option that comes to mind for individuals looking to enhance their living spaces and create a lively mood. Fresh flowers offer color and aroma to a room, but they have a short shelf life. Dried flowers, on the other hand, are a fantastic option. They guarantee that your property will have a very trendy appearance! You can choose between a handful or a whole bouquet of dried flowers that have been elegantly packed. They are the finest alternative for redesigning the inside of your home because of their variety of hues and reasonable price range. One of the most therapeutic activities is redecorating homes. It necessitates not just thorough planning, but also creative thinking and inventive concepts. Flowers are the first option that comes to mind for individuals looking to enhance their living spaces and create a lively mood. Fresh flowers offer color and aroma to a room, but they have a short shelf life. Dried flowers, on the other hand, are a fan-



tastic option. They guarantee that your property will have a very trendy appearance! You can choose between a handful or a whole bouquet of dried flowers that have been elegantly packed. They are the finest alternative for redesigning the inside of your home because of their variety of hues and reasonable price range.

Dried grass could surely add a lovely touch to the decor of your warm living area. It comes in a wide range of sizes and colors, including

neutrals, nudes, and browns, as well as vibrant hues like ruby pink, pineapple yellow, and blue. It gives your home a natural, earthy appeal. Following a theme and blending colorful dried flowers with delicate pampas grass tones, or vice versa will substantially enhance the look and feel of your living spaces. These products can be regarded as go-to alternatives when it comes to refurbishing the interiors of your home and enhancing its décor, due to their low



prices and elegant appearance. The popularity of dried flowers and grasses has increased dramatically in recent years. They've gained demand among flower lovers as well as interior design enthusiasts. One reason is that they are durable and have a long lifespan. If properly cared for, dried flowers can survive for years, making them an excellent choice for individuals who prefer a low-maintenance solution. To care for them, keep them dry, away from

direct sunshine, and free of dust. Plants such as pampas have also become particularly popular on social media platforms especially on Instagram, as dried grass and flowers look aesthetic and have decorative appeal.

Dried grass and flowers can bring nature to your living space. With a more-is-more attitude toward indoor flowers and plants in our houses, Lockdown spawned a craze for trying to bring the outside in. But indoor plants require high maintenance and special attention which is not possible every time. While artificial flowers no longer conjure visions of plastic, cheap-looking stems resting on your grandmother's bathroom windowsill. Now the only option left is dried grass and flowers. They are appealing and lovely, can be maintained easily and also have a longer shelf life. Dried bouquets are more cost-effective (since they last a year or longer), eco-friendly, and add a natural atmosphere to the home when nature feels out of reach.

A bouquet of flowers has the ability to quickly brighten up a space. However, having bunches of blossoms has one unavoidable consequence: they will eventually wilt. While this may make you think twice about keeping flowers in your house, there is another way to appreciate their beauty. Dried flowers and grass are a great way to bring nature into your house and to give a fresh look. As the seasons change, a bouquet of dried flowers adds motion and depth to a room while also inviting nature in.

It's critical to distinguish dried flowers from pressed flowers, which are manufactured by pressing fresh blossoms that haven't yet wilted (under a stack of books, for instance). Flowers that have faded but are still in their recognized forms are referred to as dried flowers.

— Ashima Singla, Founder, CEO, Whispering Homes

QUIRKY TALE

Hitting a new milestone

It was a double celebration for &TV's cult-comedy show *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai!* The show completed not only the 1800-episode milestone but also its producer Sanjay Kohli was honoured by the World Book of Records, London, for their matchless contribution to producing an entertaining comedy serial with great humour. The epic comedy show continues to entertain its audience with its rib-tickling characters and tracks, and these two milestones are a testament to the show's immense popularity. Kohli said: "I am thankful to the World Book of Records, London, for honouring me for contributing to the entertainment industry. I dedicate this recognition to my entire Edit II team & all who have contributed to our journey."



Gear up for groovy moves

Over the last three decades, Zee TV has been a pioneer in shaping the contours of reality television in India, introducing audiences to homegrown non-fiction formats like *Antakshari*, *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, *Dance India Dance*, and *India's Best Dramebaaz*. After receiving an overwhelming response to the previous three seasons that introduced audiences to some truly exceptional talent and giving a chance to all the ladies of becoming a *Super Mom*, the channel is all set to launch the 3rd edition of its non-fictional property — *DIV Super Moms*. Bollywood choreographer Remo D'Souza will be seen in the seats of the judge as he will give them a chance to exhibit their talent and create a name of their own in the world of dance.



Grab your popcorn for the ultimate movie marathon

She is a super star who is Septimote of grace, she is an iconic dancing diva, she's the official *Dhak Dhak Day*, she's 101 per cent *shuddh* entertainer, she's Madhuri Dixit! The supremely talented actor has given us many super hit movies and continues to entertain the masses till date. Celebrating the actress' birthday with an infectious smile, Zee Bollywood - 101 per cent *Shuddh* Bollywood channel will have a day-long movie festival called 'Dhak Dhak Day'. The channel is bringing *ek, do, teen, chaar, paanch...* blockbuster films in this special movie marathon dedicated to the actress. Get set to watch some of her greatest films only on Zee Bollywood on May 15.



The movie marathon will kickstart with the mass entertainer *Dil* on at 7:30am. Next in line at 11:00 am, we have the romantic film *Aarzo* that also features Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan. Next up in the movie bonanza, there is *Beta* at 1:00pm. Catch the sundown special *Khalnayak* at 4:45pm. Increasing the entertainment meter up a notch, we bring in the *dhuandaar jodi* of Anil Kapoor and Jackie Shroff along with Madhuri Dixit that'll absolutely take this birthday celebration to another level. One is filled with sanity and love while the other brother is driven with vengeance, the classic film, *Ram Lakhan* takes you on a journey filled with action and romance. Tune-in at 8 pm to witness the magic of Madhuri in *Ram Lakhan*.

“Adoption of digital transactions by end customers provides a unique chance for lenders” says Rishabh Goel

When Benjamin Franklin said, “Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today”, he obviously didn't hear about 'Buy Now, Pay Later.' BNPL is well on its way to becoming a way of life for the young consumer, who is wary of credit cards, or lacks the credit worthiness to qualify for one, and prefers the visibility and flexibility provided by BNPL offerings. According to Credgenics, a digital debt collection platform, India's BNPL industry is expected to grow over ten-fold within four years as tens of millions of online shoppers take interest-free credit with fewer hassles. The last couple of years have seen a growing number of Fintech companies offering lines of credit to young spenders seeking short term, smaller ticket loans to purchase small ticket items, which they hope to repay fast. Unfortunately, this process isn't as simple as it sounds. Because, unlike credit cards which offer a single point of contact (the card issuing bank), BNPL schemes involve an NBFC providing a loan, while the Fintech company provides the interface — that's two different players for one short term consumer loan. “The higher adoption of digital transactions by end customers during the pandemic provides a unique opportunity for lenders to leverage tech advancements in this space. Credgenics enables completely digitised loan collections process including communications along with a digital payment platform to deliver a seamless experience for end customers,” says Rishabh Goel, CEO and Co-Founder, Credgenics.



Don't ever doubt
yourselves or waste a
second of your life.
It's too short, and
you're too special.
— Ariana Grande



There is a wide recognition that the creation of the IAS was one of the cardinal follies of the wise. It is irrelevant to the people at large but it has made itself hugely useful to the political class, writes

MANOJE NATH



HAS THE COUNTRY FAILED THE IAS?

Officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who demonstrate the capability to make money from the system and make it fast, inevitably endear themselves to people in power. So, whatever the outcome of the ongoing investigation against Jharkhand Mines and Industry secretary Pooja Singhal, IAS, it will not interfere with the chances of her appointment as Chief Secretary of Jharkhand, when her time comes. In its brief history of twenty years as a separate state, Jharkhand has honoured three such IAS officers by appointing them as Chief Secretaries. Among officers so appointed was a gentleman who was facing trial in two cases related to financial irregularities in purchase of fertilizer. Another one had spent many months in jail on charges of forcing entrepreneurs to donate money to his NGOs and finally won a reprieve from the Supreme Court. A third officer who was convicted in an animal husbandry case, and perhaps died in jail, had two stints as chief secretary of Jharkhand. Jharkhand's case may be an exception, but in popular imagination IAS officers can make money not only with impunity but with honour.

There are two standard explanations for the steady diminution of the stature and prestige of the IAS. The first consists of playing down the well-founded criticisms of servility and capitulation, corruption and chicanery. Even though sometimes the merit of the criticism is granted, its significant contribution to the polity and society is dwelt upon at great length; distortions and aberrations that may have crept in are laid at the door of the many extenuating circumstances.

If the IAS has failed it is because the country has failed (or is failing at an accelerated rate). It is only the extreme formulation of such an approach. The other strategy is to deflect and devalue - the criticism by outwitting and silencing the critic with a more vehement self-critical diatribe, an anguished self-loathing of their own, as if the act of advertising could, in itself, absolve the service of all the sins that were being advertised.

The IAS, according to one view, requires a particular kind of society to function to its full potential, something like the idylls of Nehruvian era. The post-Independence leaders and influencers like Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Ambedkar, Madan Mohan Malviya, T T Krishnamachari, Acharya Kripalani, Jyoti Basu, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Jaiprakash Narayan (to mention just a handful); industrialists like JRD Tata, Jamnalal Bajaj, Dinshaw Petit and GD Birla; editors like Desmond Doig, Arun Shourie, Sunanda K Dattaray, Kushwant Singh, Frank Moraes and Russi Karanjia have been mostly replaced by pygmies and carpet baggers. These people may win elections, make billion of dollars in one year or run up huge TRP ratings, but they are incapable of promoting public values or morals, or establishing ethical corporate standards, or writing an editorial (let alone investigating a story).

But that is hardly the case. The IAS has not only been quick to limber up to the changed political realities, it has scripted an even more indispensable role for itself in the era of "pygmies and carpet baggers."

Politics, to appropriate Balzac's remark, has become like, "Soldiering, ... chiefly a finan-



Jharkhand Mines and Industry Secretary Pooja Singhal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

cial undertaking, you need gold in order to do battle, and you need to do battle in order to get gold." Some governments are (were) headed by leaders from newly emergent political classes for whom English was not the language of choice, who did not feel constrained by rules, regulations etc and were quite upfront about their intentions to abuse their office for personal gains.

The longevity of governments challenged the myths that the IAS had forged out of isolated life stories of a young collector telling off a CM,

“THE IAS HAS NOT ONLY BEEN QUICK TO LIMBER UP TO THE CHANGED POLITICAL REALITIES, IT HAS SCRIPTED AN EVEN MORE INDISPENSABLE ROLE FOR ITSELF IN THE ERA OF “PYGMIES AND CARPETBAGGERS.”



a chief secretary recording his dissent in days long gone by, myths that made them intelligible to themselves, provided them with their reassurance during times of self-doubt. Governments were there to stay; they were here today, they were going to be here tomorrow. How long could they wait out in the cold?

Though supposed to be unaligned, personally free and subject to the executive authority only within a defined area, they choose to be incorporated in the apparatus of political power. Commitment to rule based governance, are pragmatically abandoned by such officers. They are for the government, the government is for them.

An interesting example from marine biology will serve as an apt metaphor. In the Bay of Naples, a common sea slug medusa, and a snail, start off as independent organisms but on close encounter become conjoined in such a manner that both the jellyfish and the snail shed off a lot of themselves. A small portion of the snail gets permanently affixed to the ventral surface near the mouth of the jellyfish to become one single organism. They get along nicely in a symbiotic arrangement, exploiting each other's biological capabilities and yet retain their specific otherness.

A clutch of trusted officers-the drastically edited version of service, the cadre may have hundreds of officers, in an arrangement

reminiscent of the medusa and the snail, handle the core sectors of the governments as also the entire range of political purpose. The others are kept in a state of idle splendour. But like an Englishman the IAS is "never at a loss for an effective moral attitude ... you will never find ... them in the wrong." It is responsible for the marginalisation of its own service and yet persists with the complaint of political interference.

There is a wide recognition that the creation of the IAS was one of the cardinal follies of the wise. It is irrelevant to the people at large but it has made itself hugely useful to the political class. In an unusual consensus, cutting across their ideological divide, they have found them to be even more valuable after retirement than they are in service. As heads of all the accountability institutions, all those roadblocks to arbitrary exercise of executive power, they render them defunct. In many states you can find officers recruited in the 60s, 70s, 80s making themselves useful to their political masters in a myriad ways. To stand an old saying on its head, "the dead lion is even more valuable than the living donkey."

The alliance of these two major institutions has significantly altered the balance of power much to the detriment of democracy.

Manoje Nath is a retired Government servant.



PREVENT HIGH BP FOR GOOD

Every year, on May 17, **World Hypertension Day** is observed in order to educate the public and create awareness on high blood pressure (BP) or hypertension which has no symptoms or warning signs. The HEALTH PIONEER reports

An alarming one in four Indian adults has high blood pressure. Known medically as hypertension, many people don't even know they have it, because high blood pressure has no symptoms or warning signs.

"But only about 10 per cent of them have their blood pressure under control," according to a report by the India Hypertension Control Initiative. Releasing the report, Indian Council of Medical Research Director-General, Dr Balram Bhargava, emphasised on making hypertension a national priority.

Prashant Mathur, director of ICMR's Na Mathur, director of ICMR's National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research, Bengaluru, and corresponding author of the study chips in that "recognising the low awareness and high rates of drop-outs between the diagnosis of hypertension, its treatment and control calls for better planning of providing continuum of care for high blood pressure."

For both women and men, the prevalence increases sharply with age. The increase is for all categories of hypertension, including pre-hypertension, for both sexes. About one-fourth of women and men aged 40-49 have hypertension, says the study.

The recent National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS-5) too presents an alarming picture of the chronic disease. It shows that when it comes to treatment, only 7 per

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cent women and 6 per cent men who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure are on medication.

The survey also found that 33 per cent of women and 46 per cent men have never got their blood pressures measured. Based on the blood pressure measurement, the NFHS-5 found 21 per cent of women and 24 per cent of men are having hypertension marked by the blood pressure measurement of 140/90 or above.

When elevated blood pressure is accompanied by abnormal cholesterol and blood sugar levels, the damage to your arteries, kidneys, and heart accelerates exponentially. According to a study presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference recently, hypertensive young people between the ages of 20 to 40 could experience brain problems in their midlife.

Last year, the World Health Organisation modified its blood

pressure control guideline, suggesting that a systolic pressure of 130 should be the threshold to start medication in people with a history of heart complications or other risk factors whereas for others such a threshold would be 140/90.

Fortunately, high blood pressure is easy to detect and treat. Blood Pressure can be kept under control in a healthy range simply by making lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, increasing activity, and eating more healthfully, say doctors.

YOGA REMEDY

Ishwar V. Basavaraddi, Director of Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) tells you, "We have a range of yoga asanas, pranayama and meditation that help to open up the chest cavity, improves lung capacity and increases cardiopulmonary function, which lead to maintain physical activity for longer." According to him, some of the Yoga



asanas that can help in beating high blood pressure are: Tadasana without heel raise/ Katicakrasana/ Ushtrasana/ Gomukhasana/ Uttanmandukasana/ Bhujangasana/ Ardha halasana/ Shavasana / Yoga Nidra/ Abdominal Breathing (30 times)/ Nadi shodhan pranayama/ Sitali pranayama/ Bhramari pranayama and Dhyana.

Three-layered healthcare system to aid common man

Prevention is better than cure. Its significance can be witnessed in the tri-layered healthcare mechanism introduced by the Governments. The mechanism encompasses Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs), Community Healthcare Centres (CHCs) and District Healthcare Centres (DHCs) after which big hospitals comes into play, whenever needed, says Gaurav Pandey

The objective of this mechanism is to ensure that larger number of ailments shall be diagnosed at the initial stage in rural pockets or small towns and effective medications may begin to uproot it.

The importance of PHCs is considerable as the locals receive medical aid the moment symptoms appear. Also, such Centres are responsible for spreading awareness about and bringing various government healthcare measures to the locals through Aanganvadi workers and Asha workers.

If one does not get cured at the PHCs, s/he is referred to the CHCs which has adequately equipped Diagnostic Laboratory as well. The consultations and investigations may help him to get fully cured. But if there is no respite, s/he may be sent to District Hospital and to higher referral hospitals like All

India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

It is quessential for every resident to understand the nuances and structure of this mechanism. Talking of private sector, a person visits a General Physician also known as Family Physician, usually an MBBS degree holder. In case of common diseases, a person gets cured there itself. There are Polyclinics where Specialists dealing with various body parts and related ailments are available and a patient may get synergized expert opinion of these Consultants in case of two-three ailments.

Then there are Nursing Homes where the patients can be admitted. It falls under primary healthcare. The bigger Nursing Homes equipped with Operation Theatre (OT) and Intensive Care Unit (ICU), they are considered as second-level or Secondary care Centres.

The big hospitals with more



The writer is an expert in health care management

than hundred beds, fully-equipped with latest machines, contemporary Modular Operation Theatres, ICU,

facilities of CT Scan, MRI, in-house pathology and Consultants related to every speciality are available fall under the category of Tertiary Care Hospitals.

The hospitals where Robotics Surgery, Proton Therapy, Heart Transplants, Lung Transplants and other advanced solutions are possible are known to be Fourth-level Healthcare Hospitals which are at the zenith in terms of providing medical solutions.

It may be true that these mechanisms and levels come into play once someone falls ill but it is important for all of us to be aware of these structures so that the illness can be diagnosed at the initial level through investigations and doctor's interventions and prescriptions and can be contained before it may cause serious damages.

In abroad, the cost of keeping every citizen healthy lies with the

Insurance Companies and the Governments. There exist Diagnostic Related Groups where annual medical tests are carried out so that contagious ailments can be contained in time and the burden of paying for cure and recovery may get lessened from the shoulders of the Insurance Company or Government.

Many Insurance Companies offer annual health check-ups to those who hold their mediclaim policies. The private hospitals also play their active part and offer significant rebates on various investigation packages.

The government-run and private hospitals organize free camps continually and the people in remote locations are investigated through mobile vans and people must take benefit of it without second thoughts as many serious ailments get diagnosed in time. More such drives are needed which is possible by effective Public Private People Model.

BEYOND THE STETHOSCOPE

When not pursuing their profession, a breed of doctors prefer to wear different hats to keep themselves fit and centered. The HEALTH PIONEER tries to catch up with them every week.



Doc's Iron Will For Iron Man

What started as a pastime activity in 2010—participating in the 5K category at the Airtel marathon—has now become a passionate hobby for this 48-year-old medico.

Dr. Hariprasad G, Additional Professor at Department of Biophysics, AIIMS, Delhi, has since then even successfully completed the Olympic Triathlon (1.5 Km swim; 40 km cycling; 10 km run) a few times in under three-and-a-half hours.

His thirst for a bigger challenge unquenched, he is now preparing for the Half-Iron Man Triathlon (1.9 km swim, 90 km cycling and a 21 km run) championship to be held this year-end at the Talkatora-SPM Swimming complex. In between this journey, Dr Hariprasad has graduated from a 5 km run to a 10 km and then half marathon and finally a 42 km Full marathon, which he comfortably does in four-and-a-half hours.

He has participated in several marathons including Mumbai, Standard Chartered Singapore, New Delhi and Omaha to name a few. The most recent one was the Hyderabad Marathon, which Dr Hariprasad recalls, was quite a challenge considering the number of steep flyovers in the city all along the route.

Hundreds of colorful medals from all these events and the many glittering gold medals decorate the walls of the living room of this clinician-scientist who along with his team are currently investigating the A-Z of Omicron virus.

The father of two sons who balances out work-family-friends-endurance training shares, "I mix-up of a lot of physical activities like walking, jogging, sprinting, swimming, cycling, stair climbing, yoga, core exercises, skipping to get the best out of my heart, mind and body."

Every event is a learning curve and the challenge only gets bigger and more significant with each passing year, says the doctor who has done his MBBS from a Karnataka Medical College, Hubli and later did his post-graduation MD and subsequently a PhD from AIIMS, Delhi. His inspirations are sports legends such as Phelps, Dressel, Ledecky, Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, and Kipchoge!

Of course, behind all these achievements is his rigorous efforts, a strong-will and most importantly the support of his family, particularly his better half Roopa, a doctor herself who is into cervical cancer prevention at National Institute for Cancer Prevention and Research, Noida. She doubles up as his nutritionist and a personal chef, and ensures he gets the right blend of food in the weeks leading up to the endurance event, during the race and post-event. As a general rule he usually consumes wholesome unprocessed food cooked at home and avoids fast-packaged foods. Even delicacies be it Pani puri, dosas, tacos, pasta, pan cakes, waffles and desserts are given a yummy but healthy twist at Dr Roopa's kitchen, and it is this that helps him in 'the long run', he chuckles.

"We always have a choice and end up with the easier one. I decided to change that," the doctor quips, adding that "Don't give up on your dreams, because you have no idea what all you are capable of."

(Medicos may write to us at healthp100@gmail.com)

NEWS BRIEFS

CUT DOWN BAD MICROBES

Healthy adults who eat a diverse diet, with at least 8-10 grams of soluble fibre such as grains, beans, lentils, nuts and some fruits and vegetables daily, have fewer antibiotic-resistant microbes in their guts, according to a study by Agricultural Research Service scientists and their colleagues in mBio.

'AYURVEDA AAHARA' ON THE PLATTER

The Union Ministry of Ayush and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), India's apex body for food regulation has formulated regulations of safety and quality standards for food products under 'Ayurveda Aahara' category. This comprehensive initiative will ensure manufacturing of quality Ayurveda food products and help in expanding the international market for Make-In-India products.

NEW THERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER

The world's first subcutaneous therapy for breast cancer that is effective and reduces treatment time by 90 per cent has been launched in India, Roche Pharma said recently. The treatment by Roche called PHESGO is the first ever fixed dose formulation in oncology that combines two monoclonal antibodies: Perjeta (pertuzumab) and Herceptin (trastuzumab) with hyaluronidase. It is administered via an under the skin injection in combination with intravenous (IV) chemotherapy for the treatment of early and metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer.

'ONE STEP' PORTAL FOR HEALTH INFO AT INDIAN EMBASSIES

Soon facilitation centres at Indian embassies across the world will be set up for people wanting to travel to India for treatment, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while addressing a roundtable conference with senior IFS officers on 'Building Brand India' in Delhi.

Sinn Fein a game changer in Northern Ireland

The Sinn Fein's historic win in the Assembly election is signaling a much-awaited change in the power corridors in Northern Ireland. It is the beginning of a new era. The old guards (Democratic Unionist Party) were forced to give way to a new political dispensation (Sinn Fein) in last week's election. Once again what has come to the forefront is that for long the Sinn Fein has been linked to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a paramilitary group that used violent tactics to free Northern Ireland from British control. Once it used to be the Catholics vs the Protestants that led to a series of violence for decades in Northern Ireland. The IRA is a Catholic and nationalist organisation that conducted an armed insurgency against the state for a united independent Ireland whereas the DUP mainly evolved from Protestant Unionist Party that itself came out of the Ulster Protestant Action Movement.

This election has spearheaded a new debate, a new narrative and a new future in this part of the UK. The total number of seats in the Assembly is 90, but constituencies are only 18. The Sinn Fein won 27, DUP 25, Alliance Party 17, Ulster Unionist Party 9, Social Democratic and Labour Party 8, and the rest of the smaller parties and independents one each.

In the 2017 election, the DUP won 28 seats and Sinn Fein 27. The margin of victory between the two main rival parties was very narrow. In 2017, the Social Democratic and Labour Party won 12 seats, the Ulster Unionist Party 10, the Alliance Party 8, the Green Party 2, while the People Before Profit and Traditional Unionist Voice had one seat each.

What does this victory of Sinn Fein mean for Northern Ireland? It means a lot for the party as it has won a majority for the first time in the Assembly election. And for the DUP, it is a loss of face. The Sinn Fein has received the most first preference votes in

the election. The party said that the Brexit move unleashed by the Boris Johnson Government in Britain accelerated the debate on reunification with the EU member Ireland because most of the Northern Irish people voted to remain with the Union. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 recognises the right of the people on the island of Ireland to reunify if border polls in Ireland and Northern Ireland support it. Whereas the existing British law says that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should order a vote if it appears likely that a majority of voters want a united Ireland but is unclear on how that should be decided. However, the Irish Government must also agree to the same.

Michelle O'Neill, the First Minister of the Northern Ireland Government, is the first nationalist politician to occupy that position since its creation. During the election, the DUP and the Sinn Fein were battling hard for the top post because it offers an entitlement to nominate the next First Minister. But it must be noted here that the office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister is an equal office with joint powers in Northern Ireland. But what has been termed as symbolically important is the allocation of the titles.

Why was it so important for the DUP to win the Assembly election in 2022? It was indeed crucial for the DUP to win the election as it has been the most dominant and largest political party since the formation of Northern Ireland in 1921 as a Protestant majority province. Earlier the Assembly was known as the Stormont Parliament in the name of the Stormont Estate in East Belfast where the building is located. Generally, the Stormont is the commonly used name to refer to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

What is Sinn Fein all about? Why is its win so significant for Northern Ireland? The Irish phrase "Sinn Fein"



From left, Sinn Fein's John Finucane, deputy leader Michelle O'Neill, party leader Mary Lou McDonald, and Conor Murphy speak to the media at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, on May 9

refers to "We Ourselves" or "Ourselves". The party was formed by Arthur Griffith in 1905 when the very ideology of Sinn Fein was brought into practice. Originally Griffith was the leader of the Cumannann Gaedheal i.e. "Party of the Irish". But the current form of Sinn Fein emerged only in the 1970s. The policy of Sinn Fein enunciated by Griffith highlighted passive resistance to the British, non-payment of taxes, the formation of an Irish ruling council and independent law courts.

Until the rise of the Easter Rebellion or Easter Rising in the month of April (24-29) 1916 in Dublin by the Irish republicans, the Sinn Fein was not in the limelight around the world. This rising was all but to challenge the colonial rule of Britain over Ireland and to establish an independent Irish Republic.

It was an armed insurrection launched for the first time during the Irish revolutionary period. After this rebellion, the Sinn Fein became the rallying point for a new brand of

ultranationalist sentiment which is also known as "Republicanism". The fury of the nationalists could well be gauged from the historic proclamation of the Republic published in 1916. The proclamation known as the "The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland" clearly says: "Irishman and Irishwomen, in the name of God, and of the dead generations, from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom... We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and inalienable..." This clearly hints that the Irish people wanted to come out of the colonial yoke of British imperialism when the latter was fighting the First World War in Europe.

Sinn Fein's basic objective is to unite all the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland and 6 counties of Northern Ireland under the umbrella of a

Democratic Socialist Irish Republic. For many years, this part of Ireland had the "Troubles" or better known as "Northern Ireland Conflict" that ravaged the land from 1968 to 1998. It was clearly a bloody flight between the Catholic and the Protestant community of Northern Ireland about their relationship with Britain.

Against this background, the historic win of the Sinn Fein is to be taken seriously by the people of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and of course by Britain. Now the political situation in Northern Ireland has become fragile. It seems the unionist DUP will not join the new government until the post-Brexit custom arrangements.

The Sinn Fein, the single largest party, now has the right to occupy the post of the First Minister. But a functioning Executive cannot be established without the DUP taking the role of the Deputy Minister in the new government. As per the constitutional mandate of Northern Ireland, the DUP

has to take the required role of the Deputy in the power sharing agreement. If this power sharing does not take place, it could trigger a constitutional crisis in Northern Ireland.

After the withdrawal of Britain from the 28-member European Union (EU) in 2020, the relationship between the UK and Northern Ireland and between the EU and Northern Ireland has come into question. And to set it right, what has emerged is known as the famous Northern Ireland Protocol or post-Brexit Customs Arrangement Deal. Under the protocol, checks are needed on goods coming into Northern Ireland from the UK. Since it came into force from the beginning of the 2021 when Britain formally left the EU, the protocol became a bone of contention between the UK and the EU.

Many wonder why the Unionists are against the deal. The Unionist parties are opposed to the protocol as to them placing physical border across the Irish Sea absolutely undermines the longstanding

union they advocate between Northern Ireland and the UK. Paul Givan of the DUP in fact resigned over this matter as the First Minister of Northern Ireland in February. Just before the Assembly election, in a public debate Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, the leader of the DUP, made it clear that his party may not take part in the new government unless the outstanding issues around the protocol are solved amicably.

Today, leaders like Donaldson have voiced concerns about a decisive action on the protocol at the earliest. Indeed, this protocol is very necessary as the border is too sensitive an issue which can't be ignored.

One must flash back on the fragile history of Northern Ireland and how the past peace efforts came after decades of armed fighting by the IRA against the UK. And clearly, the agreements to bring back peace to this part of the UK also included the removal of visible signs of border. Now, if any physical border is erected between Northern Ireland and Britain, this could rightly threaten the historic peace deal known as the Good Friday Agreement or the 1998 Northern Ireland Peace Deal.

It is very clear that Sinn Fein's victory will not push for the union of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, but it has simply started the process. Britain's future measures towards this part of its territory may be more cautious in the days to come. Politically speaking, the Sinn Fein has to go a long way to muster a clear majority as the roots of the DUP are still very solid in many areas across the island.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)

It is very clear that Sinn Fein's victory will not push for the union of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland at once, but it has started the process. Britain's future measures towards this part of its territory may be more cautious in the days to come. Politically speaking, the Sinn Fein has to go a long way to muster a clear majority as the roots of the DUP are still very solid in many areas across the island



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Islam and nation-state: Are they compatible?

Many scholars claim that there is no inherent issue whether textual or practice, within Islam that makes it incompatible with the nation-state system or even democracy. The case of liberal democracy is a separate category as many argue that Islam is inherently opposed to such ideas



PREM ANAND MISHRA

Any discussion on the compatibility between Islam as a faith and the idea of the nation-state as a political, social and economic reality has been exhausted in the hegemonic Islam and western modernity debate. The text and practice distinction has been a historical reality in Muslim societies, and it remained equally significant with the rise of the nation-state system. The question of the separation between religion and politics has been a different historical reality in the pre-scientific world.

The religious experiences among all faiths and societies have a different trajectory. However, there has been a homogenised notion of such division in Islam. The core vision of Islam doesn't make any distinction between sacred and secular, and political and temporal. The argument is that politics can't be separated from Islam as its core value.

Propagators of such ideas were not just orientalists but have been equally among Muslim scholars. The division between *din* (religion) and the *dawla* (state) has been a usual practice in Muslim societies since its origin, notably after Islam emerged as an organised form of life and the emergence of Islamic empires. But the question remains "why is it a contested concept, and are they compatible?"

The nation-state system is a few centuries old idea born in modern Europe. The nation-state system came to Muslim societies only in the 20th century, under two separate circumstances: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rubric of European colonialism.

The gaze of orientalism has been a central episteme in creating a sustained knowledge power discourse over western understanding of Islam and thus the idea of the Muslim world and idea of Islam has been categorised as a singular category. There is a vast generalisation over the accordance given to Islam and nation-state compatibility.

With failing democracies and the rising number of failing states in the current world system, and the authoritarian structure in the majority of Muslim states, there is a discussion whether Islam and nation-state are compatible.

Religion and politics: An Islamic context

The boundaries of religion have always crossed the boundaries of politics and vice-versa, both in practice and in the language of Muslim empires. James Piscatori argues that Islam and the nation-states debate has been broadly discussed under two schools of thought: Conformists and non-conformists.

The non-conformists' refutation is based on the thrust that comes directly from the Quran, shaping the whole human sphere of life; spiritual, physical, individual, social, economic and political through the divine law called Shariah.

The non-conformists' holy will is supreme, and God's sovereignty doesn't allow the human will to trespass God's divine decree.

After all, the human will is the core idea of the nation-state system, which defines the whole sphere of life.

Therefore, God's decree under the command of the

Quran and Shariah would decide the do's and don'ts for humans, which is insignificant in the nation-states system. In this regard, the case of Saudi Arabia is significant. The Saudi Arabian case is essential for two critical reasons: It's where Islam finds its origin, and for Muslims worldwide, it's the heart of Islam.

And secondly, the Saudi State's behaviour since the state's formation in 1932 under the command of the King has been an institutionalised form that foretells the contemporary image of Islam in Saudi Arabia. This is to understand the making of an institutionalised form of Islam or official Islam as many categories in Saudi Arabia under the aegis of the nation-state system.

This makes the case further critical to know how the state has dominated this space despite being considered the most conservative that follows a strict religious command in controlling the Saudi society, its religiosity and the everydayness of life.

In short, Saudi Arabia defies the core nature of the conformists' view, and therefore, the question of legitimacy needs serious analysis. The idea that despite being the most conservative country in the world that follows the Wahhabi brand of Islam, Saudi has managed to create a dominant space for the idea of the nation-state.

Therefore, the core assumption of an Islamic state is that authority, regardless of the status of exercising power over the subjects, is legitimate according to the Islamic juridical theory if it follows divine sources like the Quran and

Sunnah.

In that scenario, can a Muslim majority state necessarily become an Islamic state, or it can only become genuinely Islamic only by applying the Quran and Sunnah and Shariah laws in the realm of the socio-political feature of the nation as a basic constitution of the country?

The two critical elements of the Islamic state are command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*). However, the juridical sphere of the state follows the command and prohibition based on jurisprudential (*fiqh*) traditions based on the interpretations of the divine command of the Quran and sayings of the prophet.

Islamic philosophical/theological and legal enquiry creates a fundamental difference in the contested aspect of *fiqh* traditions that have been divided among four schools in Sunni Islam (Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki and Hanbali).

On the issue of Shariah, the vital principle for an Islamic State has four primary dimensions: First, enforcing ordinances of Shariah.

Second, for an administrative position, any stipulation of Shariah is unacceptable. Third, a properly constituted Islamic government is a Muslim's religious duty. People's consent is a part of forming an ISIS; fourth, the government comes into existence based on the people's free choice of the Quranic expression, "from among you."

As Muhammad Asad helps in understanding these significant distinctions in the rulings of Shariah based on *Fard* (obligatory-omission of which is a sin) and *Mubah*

(allowed) omission of which doesn't make a man sinner.

Mandub (recommended) has merit in it, and the deletion doesn't lead to sin. *Makruh*: Undesirable but committed acts can't be a sin. *Mutlaq*: Neither meritorious nor sinful. This significance of the diversity of ruling Shariah directs the Muslims to accept the divine law (Shariah) and an open road (*Minhaj*) where *ijihad* comes as a free enquiry despite the place for Shariah as divine law is the basis of the Islamic state system for fulfilling all spheres of life.

The practice, however, through *fiqh* rulings, is based on Qiyas. The room for the state to create its dominance comes from *fiqh* traditions in the absence of no strict divine commands.

The source of the state sovereignty in an Islamic State as a political framework for Muslim unity and cooperation and means for equity and justice is based on three guiding principles: Injunctions of the Quran and obey God, obey the Apostle and those in authority.

The injunctions, "He who follows me, obeys God; and he who disobeys me disobeys God. And he who heeds the Amir (head of the state) observes me, and he violates the Amir and disregards me."

Therefore, a Muslim, nature wise and superior ineligibility is a qualification under Shariah for the head of the state. In this sphere of a philosophical-technological and legal aspect, the Saudi state commands its legitimacy and creates a space for an official and institutionalised form of Islam.

Understanding official Islam and its multivariate dimensions

Despite the structural differences, the genealogy of Muslim societies and the historical processes overwhelmingly have placed Islam as an ideology.

This whole idea of putting Islam as an ideology is the root of the concept of Dar-ul Islam (House of Islam) and Dar-ul Harb (House of war) and the violent form of *jihad* as a language of the Islamic empires more than a Quranic command for Muslims against non-Muslims.

This has been a galvanising force for Muslims on the question of brotherhood and social justice. Second, the idea is Islam needs to be politicised. This has been a core factor of Islamic revivalism. The Islamic movement in the name of pan-Islamism started during the end of the Ottoman empire and the rise of the western intervention of colonial enterprise in the heart of the Muslim world.

This notion reached its more politicised form after the height of the Muslim Brotherhood and found a revolutionary expression in the 1979 Iranian revolution. The argument here is that politics in Islamic colleges lag in institutional development because Islam lacks an organised priesthood.

This has had two consequences. One is that there was no effort of reformation in Islam in the absence of institutional efficiency and the second consequence is that the *ulama* or clergies were never established sufficiently to wield real power and lacked the ide-

ology and organisational characteristics.

It might be assumed therefore the future stability of Saudi Arabia may well depend on how the government balances demands for political participation and the traditional concentration of power within the Saudi elite. On the ideological factor, a tendency in orientalist tradition is that Islam is antithetical to modernisation.

If the 1950s and the 1960s were dominated by Arab nationalism, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed the rise of "Islamic fundamentalism," challenging secular ideologies and Muslim governments by appealing to religious dogma, symbols, and rhetoric.

Democracies are failing across the world under the reign of authoritarianism, but no other religious group receives so much attention on the question of compatibility as Islam.

Hence, the final point that many scholars offer is that there is no inherent issue whether textual or practice, within Islam that makes it incompatible with the nation-state system or even democracy.

The case of liberal democracy is a separate category as many argue that Islam is inherently opposed to such ideas. Still, even Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Algeria have classic compatibility cases between Islam nation-state and their multiple forms of expression, including constitutional democracy.

(The writer is PhD from Centre for West Asian Studies, JNU, New Delhi, and is a former journalist)

