

CITY 2
GYANVAPI SURVEY REPORT
SUBMITTED IN COURT**OPINION 6**
FLAWED COVID DEATH
COUNT DATA**WORLD 10**
LANKA POLICE QUESTIONS RULING
PARTY MPS OVER VIOLENCE

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY MAY 20, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

ROYALS
TO FACE
CSK IN IPL
12 SPORT

SC jails Sidhu for 1 yr in 34-yr-old road rage case

Ex-cricketer can contest election despite conviction, say legal experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The 1988 road rage case leading to murder of a senior citizen returned to haunt cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu on Thursday as the Supreme Court awarded him one-year rigorous imprisonment. The SC reviewed its earlier judgment on the petition filed by the victim's family.

Earlier, the SC had in May 2018 held Sidhu guilty of "voluntarily causing hurt" to a 65-year-old man. The court had spared him a jail term and imposed a fine of ₹1,000.

Despite his conviction, Sidhu can contest elections. Legal expert and former Lok Sabha secretary general PDT Achary told PTL: "If the sentence was two years or more, then he would have been disqualified from contesting elections for six years." He cited Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The bench comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and



SK Kaul said any "undue sympathy" to impose an inadequate sentence would do more harm to the justice system and undermine the public confidence in the efficacy of law.

Reacting to his conviction, Sidhu said, "A life was lost and everybody will regret it. But the court says it was an accident. I have submitted to the majesty of the law and whatever the court says I abide by it".

He went on to add, "I have been a survivor all my life. It is the grace of God which always prevails and bails me through. Every adversity has made me bigger and hence my reputation. From the age of 7 till 53, there has been no defeat".

In its 24-page review judgment, the apex court said in the given circumstances, tempers may have been lost but then the consequences of the loss of temper must be borne.

It also said this is a case where some "germane facts for sentencing" appear to have been lost sight of while impos-

ing only a fine on the Congress

Yasin Malik convicted for terror funding

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik was on Thursday convicted by a designated NIA court after he pleaded guilty in a case of terror funding and waging war against the country.

The special court directed the NIA to assess Malik's financial situation to determine the amount of fine to be imposed on him and posted the matter for arguments on quantum of punishment on May 25.

Malik had pleaded guilty to all charges, including those under stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act in a terror funding case.

Malik had told the court that he was not contesting the charges levelled against him that included Sections 17 (raising funds for terrorist act), 18

leader. Noting that the hand can also be a weapon by itself where a boxer, wrestler, cricketer, or an extremely physically fit person inflicts a blow, the SC said it did believe that



(recruitment terrorist act), 20 (punishment for being a member of a terrorist gang or organisation), 38 (membership of a terrorist gang or organisation), 39 (supporting a terrorist organization) of the UAPA, and Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 121 (Waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war, against the Government of India) and 121-A (Conspiracy to commit offences punishable by section 121) of the Indian Penal Code.

Continued on Page 9

indulgence was not required to be shown at the stage of sentence by only imposing fine and letting Sidhu go without any imposition of sentence.

Continued on Page 9

Stay Gyanvapi hearing, SC tells Varanasi court

SC hearing today; survey report says temple existed on premises

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed a Varanasi Civil court not to proceed with hearing the Gyanvapi case even as Special Court Commissioner Vishal Singh on Thursday submitted the report of the videography and survey of Gyanvapi mosque complex in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar. The SC will hear the matter on Friday.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and PS Narashima was informed by advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain that lead counsel Hari Shankar Jain for the Hindu devotees in the civil suit is indisposed for Thursday as he was discharged from hospital on Wednesday.

"We accordingly direct the trial court to strictly act in terms of the above arrangement and to desist from taking up further proceedings in the suit in view of the consensus which has been arrived at between the parties," the bench said in its order.

The bench directed for the listing of the matter before it on

May 20 at 3 pm and said the Registry may seek the administrative directions of the Chief Justice of India so that the bench may be constituted.

Advocate Jain mentioned the matter and urged the court to hear it on Friday.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the Committee of Management Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, said several applications have been filed across the country to "seal" various mosques, and in the Gyanvapi case in Varanasi, the hearing is going on and an application has been filed to "demolish" a wall around the "wazukhana" (ablution room).

Ahmadi said he cannot oppose adjournment on the grounds of the health of a counsel but an undertaking should be given that Hindu devotees will not proceed with the civil court proceedings.

He said it is necessary that the trial court which is continuing to hear the proceedings today may desist from doing so until this court takes up the proceedings on Friday.

The report of the survey submitted in the civil court allegedly supports the claim of Hindu petitioners claiming the presence of Hindu idols and symbols inside the Gyanvapi mosque. The Pioneer could not independently verify the report which went viral in the media and claimed that the pillars in the basement of the mosque have engravings of

flowers and a "kalash" (pitcher). The report also allegedly mentioned carvings in "ancient Hindi language" on a pillar in the basement besides the symbol of a "Trishul" on a wall of the basement.

Continued on Page 9

Mathura court admits lawsuit to remove Shahi Idgah Masjid

Mathura: The Mathura district court on Thursday said a plea seeking to remove the Shahi Idgah Masjid from the complex it shares with the Katra Keshav Dev Temple here is admissible.

The lower court which had earlier dismissed the plea is now bound to hear it.

The petition was originally filed in the lower court — the court of civil judge senior division — on September 25, 2020 by Lucknow-resident Ranjana Agnihotri and six others as the "next friend of Bhagwan Sri Krishna Virajman".

CAPSULE

LPG CYLINDER PRICE HIKED TO OVER ₹1,000

New Delhi: LPG price went on Thursday hiked by ₹3.50 per cylinder, the second increase in rate this month following the firming of international energy rates. Non-subsidised LPG now costs ₹1,003 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital, up from ₹999.50 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

MODI TO ATTEND TOKYO QUAD MEET ON MAY 24

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will join US President Joe Biden and Prime Ministers of Australia and Japan at a summit of the Quad leaders in Tokyo on May 24 which is taking place amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Making the announcement of Modi's participation at the summit, MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the US President Joe Biden and Japanese PM Fumio Kishida.

SC REJECTS PLEA TO REVIEW CYRUS ORDER

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed a plea of the Sapoorji Pallonji group firms seeking a review of the 2021 verdict which had upheld the Tata group's decision to remove Cyrus Mistry as the executive chairman of the Tata Sons.

INDONESIA LIFTS BAN ON PALM OIL EXPORT

Jakarta: Indonesia said on Thursday it will lift a monthlong ban on palm oil export, citing improvements in the supply and domestic price of bulk cooking oil. President Joko Widodo said exports will resume on Monday.

SC grants bail to Azam Khan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted interim bail to Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan, saying it is a fit case to invoke its extraordinary power under Article 142 of the Constitution as facts in the present case are very peculiar.

Khan is currently lodged in Sitapur jail in connection with several cases, including that of land grabbing, against him in Rampur. The Uttar Pradesh Government had earlier opposed Khan's bail plea and termed him as a "land grabber" and a "habitual offender".

"The petitioner is directed to be released on interim bail in respect of FIR being Case Crime No 70 of 2020, registered with Police Station Kotwali, Rampur, Uttar Pradesh for the offences punishable under Sections 420 and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code on such terms and conditions as found appropriate by the trial court," a bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said.

Continued on Page 9

HC annuls doorstep ration delivery scheme in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a jolt to Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi Government, the Delhi High Court on Thursday set aside the doorstep ration delivery scheme, "Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna".

Allowing two petitions filed by ration dealers challenging the doorstep delivery of ration scheme, a division bench of acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh said the Delhi Government is free to bring another doorstep delivery scheme but it cannot use grains provided by the Centre for this doorstep scheme.

The Delhi Government had defended the scheme on the ground that it was for the poor who were being threatened by fair price shop owners to opt-out of the home delivery mode otherwise they would not be given ration.

Reacting to the order, the Delhi Government sources said they would examine the order



and after that take appropriate steps.

"In the facts of the present case, the impugned scheme for doorstep delivery of rations to the beneficiaries under the TPDS framed by the Cabinet Decision no. 2987 on 24.03.2021 has not been approved/consented to by the Lieutenant Governor and, therefore, in any event of the matter, the same cannot be implemented in its present form," the court said in its 174-page judgment.

"The Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister is bound to communicate its

decisions/resolutions, including any such scheme or proposal to the Lieutenant Governor, so as to enable him to examine the same and to take a call on whether, or not, he has a difference of opinion with any such scheme.

"When any decision of the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister is placed before the Lieutenant Governor for his approval, he shall be mindful of the decision of the Supreme Court in State of (NCT of Delhi) (supra), and shall take his decision to express his difference of opinion, if any, in the light of the aforesaid judgment," read the judgment.

In case the Lieutenant Governor expresses his disagreement with his Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister, he may either require the Chief Minister to refer the matter to the President for his decision, or he may, on his own, refer the matter to the President for his decision.

Continued on Page 9

GST council suggestions not binding on Govts: SC

'Centre, State Govts both have powers to legislate on GST, Council must work harmoniously'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council's recommendations are not binding on Union and State but have a persuasive value as the country has a cooperative federal structure.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and Vikram Nath also held that the Centre and State Governments have simultaneous powers to legislate on GST but the council must work in a harmonious manner to achieve a workable

solution. The bench said that as per Article 246A, both Parliament and the State legislature have equal power to legislate on matters of taxation.

"Article 246A treats Centre and State as equal and Article 279 of the Constitution says that Centre and State cannot act independent of each other," said the apex court. The top court said that recommendations of the GST council are a product of collaborative discussions between the Centre

and States and it is not imperative that one of the federal units must possess a higher share. It said that Indian federalism is a dialogue between cooperative and non-cooperative federalism and the Centre and States always engage in dialogue.

The bench pointed out that there are no provisions in the GST Act of 2017 that deal with repugnancy between the laws drawn up by the Centre and the State and it is for the council to advise them suitably whenever such occasions come to fore.

The top court ruling came on a batch of pleas as it upheld a Gujarat High Court verdict to quash the levy of Integrated GST (IGST) on the importers on ocean freight under reverse charge.

Continued on Page 9

Nikhat becomes World Champion, 5th Indian woman boxer to achieve feat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen lived up to the expectations as she clinched the coveted gold in flyweight (52kg) division with a facile 5-0 victory over Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas in the Women's World Championship final in Istanbul on Thursday.

Capping off a stupendous campaign that saw her dominate all her rivals, the Telangana boxer out-punched her Thai opponent to win via unanimous verdict with judges scoring the bout 30-27, 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 29-28 in her favour.

With this win, Zareen, a 2019 Asian Championship bronze medallist, became only the fifth Indian boxer to be crowned world champion.



DANT KANTI Sensitive

with the goodness of 21 Precious Herbs

SCIENTIFIC AYURVEDIC SOLUTION for sensitivity

Tumru, Akarkara, Clove, Suvarchika, Kantakari, Apmarga, Green Tea, Vajradanti, Misvak, Honey, Babul, Camphor, Ajwain, Mint, Cinnamon, Big Cardamom, Eucalyptus, Nutmeg, Neem, Shubhra etc.

Scientific Formulation of Herbs

Cold & hot causing painful sensation
Give sensitivity a natural medication



NEW

24/7 Sensitivity Protection with Fresh Breath*

50 g

TOOTH PASTE

3in1 RAPID relief from sensitivity* Healthy Gums Strong Teeth

A product of Patanjali Ayurved



Long-lasting fresh breath



Creates protective layer on teeth



Get rid of germs



Strengthens gums



Beneficial in pyorrhea



100 g

TOOTH PASTE

3in1 RAPID relief from sensitivity* Healthy Gums Strong Teeth

A product of Patanjali Ayurved



100 g

TOOTH PASTE

3in1 RAPID relief from sensitivity* Healthy Gums Strong Teeth

A product of Patanjali Ayurved



100 g

TOOTH PASTE

3in1 RAPID relief from sensitivity* Healthy Gums Strong Teeth

A product of Patanjali Ayurved

Shop Online- www.patanjaliayurved.net | Customer Care Number - 18001804108 | Email ID - feedback@patanjaliayurved.org | Website - www.patanjaliayurved.org

Gyanvapi survey report submitted in court

PNS ■ VARANASI

Special Court Commissioner Vishal Singh, on Thursday, submitted the report of the videography and survey of Gyanvapi mosque complex in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar.

Meanwhile, the court posted the next hearing on May 23 on the application filed by the advocates of the plaintiff demanding the demolition of the wall of room-like structure beneath the sealed wazu khana where a "Shivling" is claimed to have been found during the survey. On the same day, the court will also hear the application moved by the district government counsel to shift the fishes from the sealed wazu khana to safer place. Special Court Commissioner Vishal Singh along with Assistant Court Commissioner Ajay Pratap Singh submitted the report of videography and survey conducted on May 14, 15 and 16 in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar on Thursday morning.

The court commissioners refused to divulge the details of the survey report to media persons but said it ran to 15

pages and covered the videography and survey of the inside area of Gyanvapi mosque complex, including the wazu khana where the Shivling is claimed to have been found.

The court commissioners reportedly also submitted two 32 GB memory cards containing the videos and photographs taken during the survey and 70 annexures. They also reportedly submitted some evidence materials in some boxes in the court.

It is learnt that earlier, late Wednesday evening, Court Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra had submitted his survey report of one and half pages. His survey report is based on the videography and survey conducted on May 6 and 7 of the outer side of the Gyanvapi premises in which Shringar Gauri temple is located besides the Gyanvapi mosque.

It is claimed that his report was leaked by someone in it states that some signs of Hindu religion were found on the walls of Gyanvapi mosque such as motif of sheshnaag on the backside wall of the mosque and four idols as vigrah on a signboard from north to western side of the wall of the mosque. It is said that the

court has taken this report on record.

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar will now hear the application filed by the advocates of plaintiff demanding demolition of the wall of the room-like structure of wazu khana in which Shivling is claimed to have been found, on May 23. The advocates of the defendant have raised objection to this claim, contending that the structure found is a fountain and not a Shivling. The court will also hear another application moved by district government counsel Mahendra seeking permission to shift the fishes in wazu khana to safer places the same day.

It is noteworthy that the Supreme Court will hear the same matter at 3:00 pm on Friday, so the Varanasi court extended the date of hearing on both applications to May 23.

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar had ordered videography and survey of Gyanvapi premises on a petition filed by five women seeking access to perform puja at Shringar Gauri temple and of other idols located on its premises.

Akhilesh stirs row with remark on temples

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party national Spresident Akhilesh Yadav stirred a controversy when he said that temples were being built under the Peepal tree by placing a stone and a red flag.

"As per our Hindu religion, place a stone anywhere. Put up a red flag, and a temple will be built. Such temples even come up under the Peepal tree," Akhilesh Yadav said in Ayodhya in reference to ongoing controversy over Adi Vishweshwar temple and Gyanvapi mosque in Kashi.

In reference to Ayodhya, he said there was a time when idols were kept in the dark of night and later nationwide controversy was created.

"Now, controversies are created through bulldozers. These bulldozers are just to scare people of the deprived section of society and Muslim brothers," Akhilesh Yadav said in reference to bulldozers that had razed shops and houses across the state.

Hitting out at the chief minister, Akhilesh Yadav said that Yogi Adityanath wanted to remove the shops of the poor.

"Prices of essential commodities are sky-rocketing.



First give them food. Instead, the government is sending bulldozers to demolish the houses of these people," he said.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party government has failed to arrest the rising prices of essential commodities. In an attempt to divert the attention of the people, the BJP is deliberately creating issues like Gyanvapi. Till now a 'One Nation One Ration' scheme was running but now the 'One Nation One Udyogpati' scheme is running," he said referring to industrial houses that were close to the prime minister and the chief minister.

CM: India has achieved new heights under Modi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Endorsing Prime Minister's vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat', Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that India had achieved new heights and achievements in every field during the successful eight-year tenure of Narendra Modi.

He said the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence fulfilled the prime minister's vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. He said if a person from every walk of life performed his/her duty with honesty, then a strong and a capable India would be built.

The chief minister was addressing a programme organised by Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan here on Thursday under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Appreciating the various programmes and events run by Vidya Bharti under the Aadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, Yogi said that through these programmes students had been made aware



of the valour of the soldiers who contributed towards the independence.

"Documentaries are being made on the lives of the soldiers who were awarded Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra, Ashok Chakra, Shaurya Chakra and Kirti Chakra. This inculcates new value among these children," he said. The chief minister also released a documentary on Major General Prabhakar, who received the Vishisht Seva Medal. "The aim of education is all-round development of the individual. We have to develop such an education system, through which such a young generation can be created,

which is full of patriotism and can face the challenges of life successfully," he said.

The chief minister said that the prime minister had done the work of defining the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence as Amrit Kaal and with this a new confidence was being seen in his leadership in the country. He said under Modi's leadership, the Central and state governments are working for the welfare of the people and every section of society was getting the benefits of Central and state government schemes without any discrimination. Officers and students of Vidya Bharti were present on this occasion.

Yogi govt distributed 200L MT food grains to ease pandemic impact

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To help mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 on the poor, Uttar Pradesh has set a record by distributing 200 lakh metric tons of food grains from April 2020 to March 2022.

"The Yogi Adityanath government also extended the distribution of free ration for three months soon after assuming office for the second term. Under the free ration scheme for the poor, 35 kg ration and along with pulses, sugar, edible oil and salt are being given to

the eligible households. Ration is being distributed under the fifth phase of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana," a government spokesman said here on Thursday. He said eight lakh metric tons of food grains worth Rs 195 crore were distributed by the state government between April and June, 2020, to all Antyodaya card holders and eligible households. On the other hand, 12,000 MT of food grains and 1100 MT of gram were distributed free of cost to the migrant labourers under the

Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme.

Apart from this, 134 lakh MT of food grains were distributed free of cost from the year 2020 to March 2022 under the PMGKAY. Between June, 2021 and August, 2021, 23 lakh MT of food grains worth Rs 564 crore were distributed free of cost to all types of card holders.

From December, 2021 to March, 2022, 18.71 lakh MT of wheat, 12.75 lakh MT of rice and 1.35 lakh MT of whole gram, refined soybean oil and iodised salt were distributed to the eligible beneficiaries.



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Alisha Mishra to Alisha Tiwari. In future, I should be known Alisha Tiwari D/o Shree Shashi Bhushan Tiwari R/o- 65 C-3 Chandra Nagar, Lal Bangla, Kanpur-208007

NOTICE

My daughter Samaira Khan is a class 10 student at La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow. In her school records, the father's name is incorrectly mentioned as Dr. Noor Alam. The correct name as per documents is Mohd Noor Alam. Mohd Noor Alam S/O Masood Akhtar, resident of 13-Badi Masjid, Satrikh Road, Chinhat, Lucknow.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that my daughter's name Shruti Mahendra in her school record mother's name Kanchan Lata Choudhary and father's name Mahendra Prasad Kanaoujia wrongly mentioned while correct mother's name Kanchan Lata Choudhary and father's name Mahendra Prasad Kanaoujia. Address Indira Nagar Lucknow

NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that in my school papers my father's name is written as Mohammad Saeed which is wrong, his correct and correct name is Shahid Khan. Mohammad Inshad Khan son Shahid Khan Resident Village - pure badhain, Mazre, Haswa Police Station, Mohanganj Tehseel Tiloi District Amethi

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 07.06.2022 अपराह्न 12:30 बजे उ०प्र० राज्य एड्स नियंत्रण सोसाइटी के रजिस्ट्रारगृह 'किसान भवन', मण्डी परिषद, विभूति खण्ड, गोमती नगर लखनऊ में निष्प्रयोज्य सामग्रियों तथा मारुति स्टीम :- यू०पी० 32 बी.जी. :- ०११९ की नीलामी, सिस्कोरिटी रु० 5,000/- नकद, निष्प्रयोज्य साम. ग्रियों/वाहन का निरीक्षण प्रातः 10 बजे - 12 बजे/आई.पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 03.06.2022 अपराह्न 04:00 बजे कार्यालय आयुक्त एवं निबंधक सहकारिता उ०प्र० 14-विधान सभा मार्ग, लखनऊ की निष्प्रयोज्य अम्बेसडर कारे :- यू०पी० 32-बी०जी० - 0439 यू०पी० 32-बी०जी०-0219 व जि०सी :- यू०पी० 53-जे०-0889 की नीलामी, सिस्कोरिटी रु० 10,000/- नकद प्रति वाहन/आई०पी० सिंह एण्ड सन्स

BJP conspiring to repeat Ayodhya: CPI-ML

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) in a statement said that the Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh brigade was flaring up the Gyanvapi mosque issue and was conspiring to repeat the Babri masjid demolition in

Ayodhya in Kashi too. CPI-ML state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said the BJP had started the preparations for parliamentary election in 2024 in the guise of Gyanvapi mosque issue. "It is BJP's agenda to polarise the country on communal lines for the 2024 election," he said.

Taking a jibe at the prime

minister, Yadav said Narendra Modi's ploy was to "find a chance in misfortune/disaster" and by this the government was diverting people's attention from inflation, unemployment and poor economy of the country. Yadav said the BJP's bid to raise the Gyanvapi issue was a clear violation of the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which guar-

anteed to keep intact the religious places which existed on August 15, 1947. "It is also against the Supreme Court's observation in the Ayodhya verdict that Babri mosque demolition was a criminal act and that the court hoped that the verdict would end such disputes in future by allowing construction of Ram temple," he said.

Govt to give sarees to BC-Sakhis

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Serving the twin purposes of empowering women and creating vast employment opportunities for handloom weavers in the state, the Yogi Adityanath government is going to provide over one lakh sarees to BC-Sakhis, designed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Rae Bareilly.

To promote the handloom industry, the UP government will provide two handloom sarees to the women working under the Banking Correspondent Sakhi scheme as uniform. For this, the government will buy the sarees made by the handloom weavers, UP Handlooms Managing Director KP Verma said.

He said the weavers involved in the work would be given Rs 750 per sari as wages through DBT (direct benefit transfer). The designs sent by the NIFT have been approved by the chief

minister and the sarees are being weaved. The cost of each saree amounts to Rs 1,934.15 and a fund of Rs 22,43,61,400 has been released to the department for 1.16 lakh sarees and dress materials, Verma said. The UP Handloom department has engaged five producer companies in this regard out of which, three are from Varanasi district and one each from Mau and Azamgarh. UP Handlooms has already made a payment of Rs 1.20 crore to almost 537 weavers and over 12,837 sarees are ready. Verma said due to the adverse economic conditions as a result of COVID-19, a crisis of employment had arisen for the weavers and through this scheme, employment had been provided to the weavers.

"Also, the scheme has eliminated the role of middlemen and the money is being directly transferred into the bank accounts of the weavers. The weavers covered by the scheme are getting maximum benefit and as a result,

other weavers are also getting attracted towards the scheme and enrolling themselves with the producer companies," Verma said.

On May 21, 2020, the Uttar Pradesh government had announced a proposal to induct 58,000 BC Sakhis, one for every existing gram panchayat. This is expected to have an enormous effect by virtually establishing a one-stop solution for all banking needs of every local household at the doorsteps. At present, the Rural Development department is conducting a thorough selection and recruitment process based on a robust mobile app-based mechanism. The incorporation of self-help group (SHG) members as BC Sakhis helps in ensuring financial inclusion, timely capitalisation, digitalisation of SHG transactions, and overall development of the community. It further strengthens the objective of building the entrepreneurial abilities of women.

UP government recommends dismissal of fugitive IPS officer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has sent a recommendation to the Central government for the dismissal of fugitive IPS officer Manilal Patidar of the 2014 batch of UP cadre.

Patidar has been booked for corruption and abetment to suicide and is on the run now for more than 19 months. A reward of Rs 1 lakh has also been announced on Manilal Patidar.

The state government had sent a report for dismissal of Patidar and the matter is presently pending with the Central government. He was recom-

mended for dismissal in a departmental inquiry after he was found guilty in the investigation on charges of corruption and abetment to suicide.

Patidar has been on the run ever since a case was registered in Mahoba following his suspension. The police have not been able to nab the fugitive IPS officer even after announcing a reward of one lakh on him.

Apart from the SIT set up under the leadership of ASP (Crime) in Prayagraj, the Uttar Pradesh Vigilance Establishment and the Enforcement Directorate are also on the lookout for Patidar. The Vigilance Establishment has already indicted Patidar for cor-

ruption in its investigation.

As he is absconding, all the legal formalities under the judicial process have been completed.

Patidar, who was suspended on September 9, 2020, had not cooperated in the investigation earlier also. He had also not appeared before the SIT headed by then IG Range Varanasi Vijay Singh Meena, probing the case.

After the death of Mahoba-based crusher businessman Indrakant Tripathi, his brother Ravikant Tripathi had on September 10 lodged a report against Patidar and some policemen of Kabrai police station.

CPI-M condemns second attack on LU prof

Lucknow (PNS): The Communist Party of India (Marxists) condemned the second attack on Lucknow University professor Ravikant and said the campus was in the grip of goons of manuwadi forces.

In a statement, CPI-M state secretary Heera Lal Yadav said a Dalit professor was victim of attack on the LU campus but the administration and police were taking no preventive measures.

"The Dalit professor was attacked when he was being escorted by policemen. In the previous attack on the professor, the police did not initiate any action. This has emboldened the anti-Dalit and casteist students. The professor was slapped even in the presence of the security men (policemen)," he said. Yadav said the UP government and the LU administration had turned a Nelson's eye towards those who

had anti-Dalit mindset and thus were promoting such elements. He said the CPI-M demanded stern action against those involved in the attack on Prof Ravikant and also action against the policemen who were in the security of the professor. On the other hand, social activist and former bureaucrat who is president of Bahujan Bharat, Kunwar Fateh Bahadur, also condemned the attack on the Dalit professor.

'Fraud journals a global concern'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A landmark event in the field of medical education and research is being organised by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. A national workshop on identifying predatory journals and reference management using Mendeley software was organised by the community medicine department of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. Forty faculty, residents and young researchers from medical colleges of UP, Bihar and Uttarakhand participated in the workshop, which was inaugurated by RMLIMS Director Prof Soniya Nityanand, who herself is a research scientist of international fame. She said predatory and fraud journals were a cause of global concern.

"There is an alarming need to make the medical fraternity aware of predatory, cloned and fake journals. With publications being mandatory for promotions, there is pressure on faculty and young researchers to get their research articles published. The young faculty and researchers are likely to fall into the trap of predatory journals. List of publications furnished is also tough on part of the screening committee, to identify how relevant the journal is particularly for other disciplines," she said.

उत्तर प्रदेश आवास एवं विकास परिषद									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									
आवास एवं विकास, भू-उपयोग, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश, भू-समावेश									

CM takes effective steps for women empowerment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday stressed on making continuous efforts to check harassment of women and children and controlling crimes against them and also making the system of empowerment of women more effective.

Giving this information here on Thursday evening, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi said that the government had decided to constitute a district unit of women and child protection organisations in every district of the state.

For this, a unit has been formed by merging various units related to women working in the commissionerate/district. This unit will work as a representative unit of the Women and Child Protection Organisation in its district. Awasthi said that as a result of this, in different districts of the state, various branches of the police, ie Women's Aid Cell, Women's Crime Branch and Child Welfare (CAW) which were running in different names in the past would now come under one umbrella.

Awasthi said that under the District Women and Child Protection Organisation, mahila police station and anti-human trafficking unit (AHTU) of the district concerned would work under the close supervision of the newly-formed unit.

Its supervision will be done by the district police in-charge. The monitoring of this unit will also be done by the Women and Child Protection Organisation at the state headquarters. The District Women and Child Protection Organisation will monitor the proceedings of women and child crimes in the district and will also help in preparing their database. Through this, effective disposal of complaints received from National Commission for Women, State Commission for Women, Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS), Women Help Desk, Public Grievances, Women and Child Protection Organisation (1090), CM

SP to celebrate birth anniv of Ahilyabai

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party will, on May 31, celebrate the 297th birth anniversary of Rani Ahilyabai Holkar, the legendary Maratha leader who rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath temple demolished by Mughal king Aurangzeb. The SP has directed all the district units to organise meetings and celebrate the birth anniversary of the legendary queen. Samajwadi Party ahead of March 2022 UP assembly elections had organised Brahmin sammelans and its president Akhilesh Yadav had inaugurated Parashuram temple on Lucknow-Sultanpur road.

Ahilyabai has an iconic place in Indian history for her contribution in building and preserving the temples demolished by the Mughal emperors. Ahilyabai rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in 1776 that was earlier plundered and demolished by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1669.

PM Narendra Modi on December 13, 2021, had inaugurated the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project in Varanasi, restoring an array of temples to their past glory. In his inaugural speech, Modi had paid floral tributes to Ahilyabai Holkar, Maharaja Ranjit Singh among other people, who played a pivotal role in reconstruction and renovation of Kashi Vishwanath in the past. The prime minister had said, "The role of Mata Ahilyabai Holkar in the reconstruction of the temple is noteworthy. Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent 23 men, 920 KG of gold for the temple." He said after Mata Ahilyabai Holkar, the expansion of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham had happened now.

And not just in words but in deeds too, Modi and the Centre paid homage to Maratha Queen Ahilyabai Holkar for her momentous contribution in preserving the heritage of Kashi Vishwanath. A figurine of Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar has been put up at the sprawling campus of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

Yogi inaugurates Neva Seva Kendra



CM Yogi Adityanath inaugurating the refurbished picture gallery and Neva Seva Kendra in the Vidhan Bhawan in the presence of UP Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana and Deputy CM KP Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, inaugurated the refurbished picture gallery and Neva (National e-Vidhan Application) Seva Kendra located in the Vidhan Bhawan in the presence of UP Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana. After the inauguration, the chief minister inspected the Neva Seva Kendra and got information about it. On this occasion, he

also visited the modernised legislative assembly pavilion.

The speaker apprised the chief minister of the operation of e-Vidhan in the upcoming session. It is to be known that in the Neva (National e-Vidhan Application) Seva Kendra, orientation and training will be given to the members of the legislative assembly, Vidhan Sabha secretariat and various officers of the state government on the works related to e-Vidhan. The Neva Seva Kendra will also have the

facility of video conferencing for training and communication with modern computers.

On this occasion Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Transport Dayashankar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Principal Secretary Legislative Assembly Pradeep Dubey and other senior Officers were present.

Helpline, UP 112 etc will be done. Awasthi said that the new district unit would work for wide publicity of women's rights and coordinate with various voluntary and child organisations to work for women, to provide proper assistance to the harassed women and to develop social consciousness for the prevention of women's oppression.

He said that coordination would be established by the police department for the successful and effective implementation of various schemes being run for the uplift of women by the District Women and Child Protection Organisation unit and other departments like Women and Child Development, Education and Health etc.

For providing medical,

judicial, psychological counselling services at the district level, coordination and cooperation would be ensured by this unit on behalf of the police department.

Awasthi said that according to the work in the district office of the Women and Child Protection Organisation, it had been decided to make four sections which would monitor cases related to women (Women Help Desk), Mahila Sahayata Cell (counselling centre), Mahila Samman Kosh (financial assistance), Women Commission and Women and Child Protection Organisation respectively.

It has been decided to give the charge of all these units to the deputy superintendent of police, additional superintendent of police, crime level offi-

cer available in the commissionerate/district. At the commissionerate/district level, the district unit of mahila thana/AHTU police station and the proposed Women and Child Protection Organisation would function under the supervision of DCP/additional superintendent of police/zonal officer. Under the Mahila Samman Kosh, the financial assistance received under various government schemes will be monitored and action will be taken by examining the applications received from the National Commission for Women, State Commission for Women, other commissions, Women and Child Protection Organisation, Lucknow under Women's Commission Cell.

Health dept strengthens dengue surveillance

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

The Health department has strengthened surveillance for dengue, both case-based and disease-based.

Joint Director, Vector-Borne Diseases, Vikas Singhal said people should understand that dengue is a viral fever for which no vaccine or medicine is available. Very few people understand that the most important thing is for patients to avoid dehydration, he said.

He said there is more emphasis on platelet count when people opt for treatment which is not as important as retaining the fluids in the body.

"In the first case, the fluids are lost in fever. The second thing is that intravascular fluids will go into the extravascular compartment because of the

increase in vascular permeability causing dehydration. This dehydration is important to handle since patient can go into a shock. Therefore, if dengue is detected, people should have water in extra quantity, including ORS solution, and liquid diet," he said.

He said if the patients get any warning signs such as stomach ache, continuous vomiting, difficulty in breathing, hand/feet turning cold and blood oozing from any part of the body, they should be taken to a hospital immediately. He added that quick heart beating is also a sign that should be paid attention to.

He said platelets can get less in other viral fevers too and hence the management of platelets is not directly related to dengue. "It's the doctors who decide when should the platelets be given to patients and there

are certain factors in which platelets need to be given. But prophylactically giving the platelets serves no purpose and can do more harm than good because if the fluid increases in the body, it will lead to increase of fluid in the stomach and lungs," he pointed out. He said the only thing which needs to be focused on is that one should have paracetamol to bring down the fever and cloth strips be placed on the forehead of the patient. He said they have already started disease and case surveillance in the state. "We are carrying out the surveillance of cases related to fever and through fever helpdesk, we come to know if there is a cluster of fever cases in any village or city. We take this as an early warning sign for the outbreak send out teams to these villages and urban areas," Singhal said.

Heavy purchase of lemon for prisoners in Barabanki jail points to a 'scam'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The officials of the Barabanki district jail are alleged to be involved in a 'scam' by supplying lemon to almost all prisoners when the common man found it difficult to 'taste' it due to soaring prices. A cursory glance at the purchase of lemon by the jail authorities in Barabanki in the first quarter of this year leaves one surprised, as the figures show that every prisoner was getting at least one lemon daily.

Sources said that about 40 kilograms of lemons were purchased daily by the jail officials which add up to 36 quintals in the first three months of this year. Interestingly, denying any scam or irregularity, jail officials said that due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, lemons were given to the prisoners every day on the advice of doctors. The prisoners, however, denied this and claimed that nothing was served for 'free' in the jail and if one was ready to pay for 'services', one could enjoy all comforts.

Sources said that when the price of lemon during this period was running from Rs 150 to Rs 300 per kg and the common man was craving for the taste of lemon, heavy purchases made by jail officials pointed to some scam but only a probe would reveal the truth behind the 'kindness' of the jail officials towards prisoners by serving them a lemon daily.

It may be mentioned that on an average, about 1400 prisoners are lodged in the 20-bar-

racks of the district jail. In January, February and March, when the prices of lemon were sky high, a lemon was given to a prisoner every day during that period. This way, about 40 kg of lemons were procured in a day. On an average, Rs 8,000 were spent on the basis Rs 200 per kg price of lemon. Jail officials are making different statements in this regard.

Jail Superintendent Haribaksh Singh said that due to COVID-19 pandemic, a lemon was being given to the prisoners every day with the meal and the lemon was procured from the vegetable supplier in Barabanki. Jailer Alok Shukla said on the advice of doctors, the prisoners were given lemon. Surprisingly, now in the scorching heat, not a sin-

AKTU exams now from June 4 to 27

Lucknow (PNS): AKTU exams will now be held from June 4 to 27. As many as 1.15 lakh students are expected to appear for the exams. In an official communique, it was stated that the changes were made in the timetable of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University's session 2021-22 for regular and carryover of even semester undergraduate and post-graduate exams, earlier scheduled to be held from May 25 to June 15.

The decision was taken on the request of AKTU's affiliated institutes and students so that they could get proper time to complete the projects and syllabus. As many as 117 examination centres have been earmarked across the state. The exams will be in offline mode.

It was further stated that to maintain the integrity of the exams, two observers would be there at each centre. The observers will remain at the centre during the entire examination period. Preparations have been intensified for the exams. Practical/project exams of all the students enrolled in other courses, except first year, second semester and second-year fourth semester of BTech and BPharma in the even semester of AKTU session 2021-22, will be held in offline mode from May 25 to June 2.

43-year-old man rapes minor girl, arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 43-year-old married man allegedly raped a minor and threatened to kill her father if he informed her family about the incident and a police case was lodged in this connection.

The girl kept mum and the accused kept exploiting her. However, the girl finally narrated her ordeal to her parents and a case was lodged with Madaion police. The accused, nabbed later by a team of police, was identified as Ejaz Hussain of Ayodhya.

As per reports, the accused, who lives close to the house of the victim, developed a fancy for her and would pass comments on her off and on. The girl had complained to her par-

ents in the past about his behaviour and he was warned.

However, he trapped the girl by offering her gifts. On April 11, he took the girl to a hotel in Jankipuram Extension and offered her drinks laced with sedatives. He later raped her. As the girl said he would complain to her parents, the accused threatened to kill her father.

He again took her to a hotel close to a hospital in Kalyanpur and raped her again. The girl finally narrated her ordeal to her parents and a case was registered against the accused on May 15. However, the accused absconded to evade arrest.

A team worked on the case and traced his location near a railway track under

Madaion overbridge. He was arrested and booked under sections 376, 504 and 506 of IPC.

Meanwhile, three members of a family, including a girl, were accused of thrashing their neighbour over a dispute related to a drain in Bijnor police station area. Police registered the case two days after the incident was reported on May 17.

As per reports, Ram Aasrey of Mullahlilhedra in the area had a dispute with his neighbour Ram Sagar aka Madhav over a drain passing via their houses. Both the parties indulged in a verbal spat on the issue. Later, Ram Sagar, his wife Munni and their daughter Priyanshi allegedly attacked Ram Aasrey after storming his house.

Hot, sultry weather conditions persist

Lucknow (PNS): The weather in Lucknow continued to remain hot and sultry on Thursday. The state capital recorded the maximum temperature at 42.5 degree Celsius, which was 2.6 degrees above normal. The minimum temperature at 27.8 degree was also 2.6 degrees above normal.

In the state, Kanpur and

Jhansi recorded the highest temperature at 46.3 degree Celsius each. Other districts which recorded high temperatures included Agra at 45.8 degree Celsius, Prayagraj 45.7 degree Celsius and Fursatganj 43.5 degree Celsius.

The forecast for Lucknow and neighbourhood is mainly clear sky while the maximum

and minimum temperature on Friday is likely to be around 44 degree Celsius and 27 degree Celsius, respectively. Very light to light rain thundershowers are likely at isolated places over the state while there is a warning of thunderstorm/dust-storm accompanied by gusty winds (30-40 kmph) at isolated places over the state.

Mandi secretary accused of duping man of ₹15 lakh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A group of men, led by a government official (mandi secretary) was accused of duping a man of Rs 15 lakh on the pretext of helping him start his business in a large marketplace in Vibhuti Khand police station area. He allegedly bullied and manhandled the victim, and also threatened him with dire consequences for demanding his money. The victim was forced to go into a hiding for several days. The incident took place in 2020 and a case was registered in this connection on May 12 last.

The victim had invested Rs 20 lakh and was given back Rs 5 lakh on the intervention of the then SHO, Vibhuti Khand. Those named in the case were identified as Sanjay Kumar Singh, who is the secretary of Naveen Galla Mandi on Sitapur road, Vijay Singh, Ajay Singh and their henchmen. As per the victim, identified as Vijay Pratap Singh of Vanasthali Apartment in Gomtinagar Extension, he visited the vegetable market on May 12 in 2020 to inquire about a license for his business. He met a middle-aged man

who introduced to Sanjay Kumar Singh.

Sanjay assured him help and asked him to meet Ajay and Vijay, who are owners of Singh Trading Company and deal in fruits and vegetables.

It was alleged that Ajay and Vijay told the victim that they manage marketing of fruits and vegetables and other items business and they also had 'benami' business.

In June, Vijay Pratap Singh was asked to invest Rs 20 lakh on the promise that he would get Rs 1.25 lakh as profit share per month. An unsuspecting victim invested the money but was not given the profit share after a month passed.

In the meantime, the victim fell sick and was given Rs 69,000 as monetary help. Later, he was asked not to show up in the market again.

In due course of time, the victim was given cheques for payment after he kept chasing the above-named accused, but all of them were dishonoured by the bank. On July 1, the victim was asked to visit Kisan Bazaar in Vibhuti Khand to settle the dispute.

"I found Vijay, Ajay and Sanjay and their men at the gate of Kisan Bazaar. When I

asked for my money, Sanjay lost his cool and threatened to frame me in a case. Their men then caught hold of me near Mantri Awas. However, commuters flocked to the scene and the attackers had to escape," the victim said.

He further said Sanjay's men were chasing him and keeping a watch on his movement since then. "I had to lock myself in my house as I feared being eliminated. On the intervention of the then SHO, Vibhuti Khand, they returned Rs 5 lakh through cheque but they have yet to refund the remaining sum," he alleged.

Police attempted to solve the case by 'settlement' allegedly because the prime accused was a government official. However, as negotiations came a cropper, a case was registered in this connection.

In his statement, Sanjay Singh said his adversaries were hatching a conspiracy to defame him. "There are over 1,800 *adhatis* in the market. I do not know all of them personally. The FIR was registered without getting my side of the story. The allegations are baseless and I have nothing to do with the case," he said.

56.69% children aged 12-14 yrs jabbed

Lucknow (PNS): The first Covid vaccine dose coverage as regards children in the age group of 12-14 years is 56.69 per cent in Lucknow while the same for UP is 77.06%. A total of 6,522,764 children in the age group of 12-14 years have been given at least first dose in the state, according to a senior health official.

Among other districts that have performed well include Shahjahanpur where 1,48,302 (116.45%) kids in 12-14 years age group have been given at least one dose, followed by

Ghaziabad where the coverage stands at 110.85%, Ballia 107.89%, Hathras 103.97%, Ambekar Nagar 102.45%, Kaushambi 99%, Muzaffarnagar 98.97%, and Mirzapur 96.74% coverage.

Paediatrician Dr Piyali Bhattacharya said there are several studies on vaccinations coming now. "One of these studies shows that the immunity given by vaccination is much more effective than that caused by infection, and hence people should get vaccinated," she said. She added that since

immunity also goes down after a certain period, vaccination is essential.

Organised Medicine Academic Guild secretary Dr Ishwar Gilada said the vaccination of children aged 12-14 years is going on very slowly because parents are not enthusiastic about getting their wards jabbed.

"When the cases are too few and far between, people tend to skip vaccination. They take interest in vaccination when the cases increase," he pointed out.

‘Dancing will always be first love’

Lucknow (PNS): Bollywood choreographer Ganesh Acharya said he loves the Kathak of Lucknow and has always been keen on promoting Indian dance forms. The choreographer was in the city for the promotion of his film 'Dehati Disco' which was shot in a village in Lucknow.

Ganesh, who has been seen in various videos and films, said he agreed to act because the filmmakers wanted me to be a part of the project. "They approached me and shared this film concept of a father and son. The film was shot in Lucknow," he said.

Ganesh insisted that dancing would always be his first love and that several projects would be coming in the future in which he would be seen as a choreographer. He said the story of the film is something which he has been carrying for a long time as a film script. "It is akin to the story of me



Ganesh Acharya with Saksham

and my father and I had a dream of bringing this up for him, but unfortunately it could not happen. This story on the screen is about the reel father and his son," he said.

Regarding choreographing for films having trendy dance steps and those with Indian steps, he said: "Most of the people will look down upon the word 'dehati' but I look at it in a completely different way because for me 'dehati' comes from the word 'deh' which

means body, which comes naturally." Ganesh said he is fond of Lucknow and keeps coming here time and again for shooting. Asked to name his favourite dancer whom he choreographed, he said it's none other than Govinda. Saksham, who is also a part of the film, while commenting on how he felt dancing with Ganesh Acharya, said, "Dancing was not a problem for me, though acting was something which I found difficult."

Rajbhar directs officials to prepare work plan

PNS ■ KANPUR

Chief Minister's 'Naya Savera Yojana' is to be spread out in a total of 200 hotspots in 20 districts and the objective was to declare these spots child labour free. The planning had already been done at the state level and was about to be implemented in the right earnest soon. Under this plan on International Child Labour Prohibition Day a special programme will be held at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow, on June 12 and for this the Labour department should make necessary preparations and extend a cordial invitation to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to be part of the big event.

This was informed by Uttar Pradesh Labour Minister Anil Rajbhar, while addressing the meeting along with Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, who also holds the additional charge of Labour Commissioner. He said call centres were brought under the purview of Labour Commissionerate and inaugurated six months ago. He said it was quite encouraging to know that more than 80 complaints and suggestions had been put up at these Call Centres. He said it was good to note that the complaints were being taken up and settled qualitatively and that too in the stipulated timeframe. He directed the Labour



Uttar Pradesh Labour Minister Anil Rajbhar inspects Labour Commissionerate along with Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar.

Commissioner to ensure that the helpline numbers were given a major hype and every effort made that it reached the people at the grass roots level as well. He then met the officials and staff of the Labour Commissionerate and reviewed the progress of the 100 days work plan. He warned the officials to ensure that they were punctual and attended the office work so that there was no problem faced by the people. He said as part of the Swachhta Abhiyan the Labour Commissionerate should be neat and clean and maintained in a proper manner. He said all the important documents should not only be preserved but there should be a better upkeep of the records and documents.

The DC suggested that there is an imperative need for digitalisation and the minister agreed and assured that the budgetary proposal will be put up to the government so that the work can take off at the earliest. Rajbhar directed the officials to prepare a work plan and then introduce it in a planned and phased manner in all the offices of the headquarter so that the renovation work of the offices can be carried out soon. He then toured the cafeteria and the newly constructed park.

He expressed satisfaction over the working at the Labour Commissionerate. Additional Labour Commissioner, Faizal Aftab and all the officials of the Labour Commissionerate were present on the occasion.

Couple's murder worked out

PNS ■ KANPUR

In connection with the murder of a newly-married couple, police arrested the elderly father of the deceased youth on Thursday afternoon a few hours after the crime was committed. During quizzing which lasted for around four hours, when police carried out the benzidine test, the blood stains found on father Deep Tewari and brother Monu's clothes matched with the blood of deceased couple. Immediately on being grilled, father Deep Tewari confessed his crime and revealed the truth.

A newly-married couple was killed in Rambagh locality under Bajaria police station area late on Wednesday night. They had a love marriage last December. Police rushed to spot on Thursday morning and carried out investigations. Police recovered the blood-stained knife used for committing the crime from the spot. Tea vendor Shivam Tewari (27) of Rambagh lived with wife Julie (25).

Around 6.30 am on Thursday, police received information about couple's murder in their house No 104A/5. Immediately, local police along with ACP Anand Prakash Tewari, DCP (West) BBGTS Turthy, forensic experts and sniffer dog squad rushed to spot and found the profusely-bleeding bodies of the couple. Assaultants had killed them by slitting their throats.

ACP Anand Prakash Tewari said apart from his wife, Shivam Tewari lived with other family members, includ-



Deceased couple (left top), accused Deep Tewari (left bottom) and forensic experts carrying out investigations (right).

ing father Deep Kumar and brother Monu in same house. Besides, seven other tenants were also living there. After locking the main gate, there was no other way to enter the house. The person who used to lock the main gate every night informed that the doors remained shut throughout the night. On Thursday morning after opening the main gate, he came to know about the couple's murder. It meant that somebody inside the house was involved in the murder case.

Keeping this in mind, when police along with forensic experts carried out investigations, the role of deceased Shivam Tewari's father Deep Tewari came to fore who, on being grilled, immediately confessed his crime.

Meanwhile a man was repeatedly stabbed by his land-

lord when the former opposed the latter's move of teasing his wife with mal-intent in Gangapur Colony of New Azad Nagar outpost area under Vidhnu police station on Thursday morning.

The landlord attacked his tenant allegedly with the intention of eliminating him from his way early on Thursday morning. Seeing the assembly of neighbours, he immediately fled from the scene.

Police have taken the landlord into custody and sent the injured tenant to a hospital. A factory worker (35) was living on rent in New Azad Nagar, Gangapur, with family for the past one year.

On Thursday around 3 am when he was fast asleep on folding bed landlord Shubham Hazaria of Bajaria attacked him with knife. By time the factory worker woke up, Shubham

stabbed repeatedly and caused him serious injury.

When the factory worker fled to enter his house, the assailant dropped him on the floor and repeatedly stabbed on his back also.

On hearing the noise, when neighbours rushed to spot, Shubham fled from the scene. Local police reached there and sent the injured factory worker to LIR (Hallet) hospital. Thereafter, police have arrested the assailant from his Bajaria house.

On the other hand, accused Shubham said that he had dispute with the factory worker over non-payment of rent and electricity bill for the past one year.

SHO Amit Kumar Mishra said investigation was on keeping in mind the love affair of Shubham with tenant's wife and rent dues on him.

Seminar on recent advances in dental implants on May 22

PNS ■ KANPUR

RD Hospital, Awadhपुरi, will hold a one day seminar on "Recent advances in dental implants" on May 22. The seminar was likely to be attended by several students of dental colleges not only in Kanpur but the state as well.

Current research and observations had evoked a paradigm shift during the past decade and instead of focusing mainly on topographical features, surface roughness, the new paradigm included now the role of wet-

ting properties for interfacial biological responses and considered interrelating effects of topography and wetting that is was microroughness and nanoroughness induced wetting phenomena.

This was stated by noted orthodontist, Dr Pravin Chopra, while addressing presspersons on Thursday.

He said latest findings also identified synergistic effects of nanostructured surfaces and hydrophilicity on biological response.

He said various materials used were ceramics, carbon

and polymers, hydroxyapatite, bone morphogenetic proteins and plasma spraying. He said the keynote address will be delivered by Dr Lakshamana Rao, Hyderabad who will discuss the recent advances in dentistry.

He said high-strength ceramics used for implants were very inert in the body and exhibited minimal ion release while aluminum oxide was regarded by many as the standard inert material as the remodelling of bony tissue adjacent to its surface was not altered by the presence of ions

released or by immune reactions.

He said ionic ceramic surface was in a high oxidation state, thermodynamically stable and hydrophilic minimal ion release had been noted for aluminum oxide or zirconium oxide under normal conditions.

He said zirconia was a ceramic material used in implantology because of biocompatibility superior aesthetics and mechanical properties which were better than alumina.

Dr Chopra said diagnos-

tic imaging techniques were also an essential tool in developing and implementing a cohesive and comprehensive treatment plan.

He said exceptional imaging modalities were employed to ascertain vital information concerning both preoperative and postoperative phases.

He said these imaging techniques can be grouped as either analog or digital and two-dimensional or three-dimensional.

He said Dr Rao will hold practical sessions as well.

Training programme on Intelligent Power Transmission & Distribution Systems

PNS ■ KANPUR

Training programme on Intelligent Power Transmission and Distribution Systems started at IIT Kanpur on Thursday to provide in depth knowledge about intelligent Power Transmission and Distribution Systems to the academia. The training programme was attended by delegates from IIT Guwahati, IIT Trichy, IIT Ropar, IIT Kharagpur, people from industry, delegates from KESCo, along with Opal-RT, Synergy Systems and Solutions.

The course was supported by Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and PFC consulting Limited (PFCCCL) and this course was to be carried out for five consecutive days. The course was being coordinated by Prof Ankush Sharma and Prof Alok Ranjan Verma from the Electrical Engineering Department of IIT Kanpur. Prof Sharma said the main objective of this course was to familiarise the participants from various academics, utilities and industries about different concepts and developments in the area of Intelligent Power Transmission and Distribution Systems. He said this will help them to understand the role of modern Information and Communication Technology




Training programme on Intelligent Power Transmission and Distribution Systems being inaugurated at IIT-Kanpur .


(ICT) infrastructure in better monitoring and controlling the power systems. He said with the increase in penetration of new technologies in power systems, there had been a growing demand for real time visualisation, monitoring and control of the power system. He said the present day electrical transmission and distribution systems were witnessing increased share of renewables, storage, EV charging stations, microgrids and smart metering at different levels in the net-

work. He said this led to transmission and distribution networks requiring cyber-secure Advanced Energy Management System (AEMS) and Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS) tools along with fast data acquisition mechanism.

He said large penetration of renewables, being intermittent in nature, will pose system stability and power quality concerns which will require proper compensation and controls.



U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED E-Tender Notice 1. E-TENDER NO: 08 ETC(GZP)/2022-23- Online e-Bids are invited for the work of replacement of gasket of 160 MVA, 220/132KV T/F (Aditya Vidyt Appliances Limited Make MFG. Year-2011) Installed at 220KV S/SW Ghazipur Under ETD-Ghazipur. E-tender uploaded up to 21/05/2022 http://etender.up.nic.in. Time period: 04 Month, E.M.D. cost Rs. 10,000.00 Last date of tender:20/06/2022 at 16: Hrs 2. E-TENDER NO: 09 ETC(GZP)/2022-23- Online e-Bids are invited for the work of carriage of ACSR/Zebra Conductor for Diversion of 220KV Saranath-Sahapuri S/C line Under ETD-Ghazipur. E-tenderuploaded up to 21/05/2022 http://etender.up.nic.in. Time period: 04 Month, E.M.D. cost Rs. 1,000.00Last Date of tender: 20/06/2022 at 16: Hrs 3. E-TENDER NO: 10 ETC(GZP)/2022-23- Online e-Bids are invited for the work of AnnualMaintenance of 132KV S/S Sikandarpur Under ETD-Ballia. E-tender uploaded up to 21/05/2022 http://etender.up.nic.in. Time period: 12 Month, E.M.D. cost Rs. 8,000.00 Last Date of tender:20/06/2022 at 16: Hrs 4. E-TENDER NO: 11 ETC(GZP)/2022-23- Online e-Bids are invited for the work of AnnualMaintenance of 132KV S/S Digbar Under ETD-Ballia. E-tender uploaded up to 21/05/2022 http://etender.up.nic.in. Time period: 12 Month, E.M.D. cost Rs. 8,000.00 Last Date of tender:20/06/2022at 16:16: Hrs Total Quality, of work, tender: specification and other terms & condition is as per tender documentavailable on the e-tender portal. Undersigned reserves the right to cancel any all the e-Bids without assigning any reason. Cotitendum. Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER ETC GHAZIPUR No. 1016 Dt. 19.5.22 राइट में मिलती बचार्थ



उपग्रो राज्य विद्युत उत्पादन निगम लि, ओबरा-सोनभद्र सूचना श्री संतोष कुमार, श्रमिक पुत्र स्व० लालजी प्रसाद, विद्युत अनुरक्षण खण्ड, प्रथम, 'ब' ताप विद्युत गृह, ओबरा-सोनभद्र (उपग्रो) स्थाई पता: ग्राम जलालपुर, पो० कछवाँ, जिला-मिर्जापुर (उपग्रो) आपको सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय के कार्यालय ज्ञापन संख्या: 328/विअनुख-प्रथम/ 'ब'ताप/ओबरा/पीएफ दिनांक 25.04.2022 के द्वारा आपकी उपग्रो राज्य विद्युत उत्पादन निगम लि० की सेवा दिनांक 25.04.2022 को समाप्त किया जा चुका है। अधिशासी अभियन्ता, वि०अनु०ख०-प्रथम पत्रांक : 50/ज० रा० का०/निविदा दिनांक 19.05.2022 "समृद्धि में मिलती बचार्थ"

Illegal plotting demolished

PNS ■ KANPUR

Under the ongoing drive, the enforcement squad (Zone 2) of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) has demolished the illegal plotting being carried out on six bigha land of arazi No 570 and 575, Shatabdi Nagar, Maqsoodabad, Kalyanpur, belonging to Sanchit Agarwal on Wednesday. The cost of this land was estimated to be around Rs 14.40 crore. Engineers and staff of Enforcement Deptt. (Zone 2), Tehsildar (Zone 2) and

his staff, local police and security personnel were present on the spot during the demolition drive. Meanwhile, under the directives of KDA Vice Chairman Arvind Singh, the OSD (Enforcement, Zone 1) Avaneesh Kumar Singh, after sealing the unauthorised constructions on premises No 104A/317A Rambagh and No 89/343 Part, Tukaniapurwa, has assigned them in security of Anwarganj and Bajaria police and directed the officials concerned to lodge FIR against the guilty builders.

Besides, an FIR was also registered against the builder Hazi Wasi at the Anwarganj police station for carrying out unauthorised construction on premises No.79/25 Part, Bansmandi, by removing its seal fixed by the KDA in the past.

At the same time, the work of unauthorised construction being carried out on premises No 88/561, Prem Nagar, Chamanganj, by removing the KDA seal was got stopped by the squad which also lodged complaint to respective police station for registering FIR against the

builder Hazi Wasi. The squad also initiated action against the unauthorised construction being carried out on premises No.105/203, Chamanganj, 88/333 Part, Chamanganj, 88/248 Maula Doodh Chauraha, 37A Shiv Katra, 204A Harjender Nagar by Hazi Wasi.

Premises No.204-A Harjender Nagar of Pappu Smart, SBI Compound, Ganga Vihar colony, Jajmau, of Mohd Ikhlaiq and 327/304A, Asharabad of Ashfaq were also sealed for carrying out construction beyond the approved layout.

Road safety awareness campaign flagged off

PNS ■ KANPUR

Deputy Transport Commissioner, Dr Vijay Kumar while flagging off the road safety awareness campaign from the RTO premises on Thursday, said the campaign is an initiative of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and thus there was a need to promote road safety awareness among people. He said vehicles decorated with banners and posters will move on roads of Kanpur to make people understand what was the importance of safety on roads. He said RTO and Traffic Police department jointly can ensure the success of the programme.

He said of late there was a chaos on Kanpur roads and thus it was decided to introduce road safety for the people in a big way.

Dr Kumar said floats, cars, and autos will move on road and catch the attention of commuters about road safety and it refers to measures and methods aimed at reducing the likelihood or the risk of people using the road getting involved in an accident or injury that may cause serious health concerns, death or property damage. He said it was not only the children but even adults who need to be explained the importance of road safety. He said all who move on the roads should understand they need to take care of not only themselves but others moving on the roads as well.

He said it was no exaggeration to state that majority of the people

Deputy Commissioner, Transport, Dr Vijay Kumar flags off vehicles on road safety on Thursday.

on the roads were unaware of traffic signs and said another cause of concern on the Kanpur roads was the speeding vehicles which overtake dangerously putting others at risk. He said it was the duty as parents, teachers and caregivers to also educate children about real traffic environments along with adult supervision to help them learn about roads, signals, traffic, risks involved and

how they can use the roads safely.

Dr Kumar said the use of shared roads had a lot of dangers and possibilities of injuries which impacted everybody and was therefore a vital topic of discussion for everyone.

He said while the common people faced crashes, injuries and even death, among them the majority were youngsters these days. He

advised that awareness started at home and parents were the first teachers who guide their children through various road traffic rules and regulations before anyone else.

He appealed to people of Kanpur to strictly follow traffic rules, move safely on roads use helmets and seat belts and refrain from chatting on mobiles while driving.

Union Bank signs MoU with Women’s World Banking

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Bank of India (UBI) and international organisation Women’s World Banking on Thursday signed a MoU for the overall economical upliftment of women through Jan Dhan accounts and jointly launched Union Jan Dhan Sankalp to empower low-income women account holders.

With an aim to provide financial security to women and with a corporate mission to enhance financial inclusion, the UBI signed a MoU with Women’s World Banking, an international organisation to extend financial access to women, at an auditorium in Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The UBI and the international organisation also launched UBI Jan Dhan Sankalp for the prosperity of women.

Speaking on the occasion, the General Manager, Financial Inclusion department of bank Ramkrishna Chaudhary said that the bank is determined for the financial inclusion as chief corporate mission and Union Jan Dhan Sankalp is as a model to be attached particularly with the women account holders. The bank has so far opened over 2.4 crore Jan Dhan accounts and the bank’s main



UBI signing a MoU with Women's World Banking at BHU in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

objectives are to encourage the women to make savings for their empowerment and make them more prosperous in future, he added.

Zonal Head of the bank Girish Chandra Joshi said that the bank supposes that its women customers could be more active customer but they need to be encouraged and cooperated to understand financial ecosystem and its benefit and added that the extension of alternatives for low-income women and financial access is beneficial not only for the bank and entire banking ecosystem but also for

the customers, their families and communities. The Jan Dhan Sankalp will be beneficial for the entire country, he added. Regional Chief of Varanasi Region of UBI Sunil Kumar said that the Women’s World Banking has started Jan Dhan Sankalp in 2019 in collaboration with a bank of public sector and added that it is a tested model and added that the main objective of this initiative is to encourage the Jan Dhan account holders to develop a habit of regular saving of a small amount as the habit of regular saving increases the possibility to get benefit of

overdraft, loan up to Rs 10000, micro loan and PMJDY. This initiative is a journey from zero to top for the women customers, he said further.

The objective of the initiative Jan Dhan Sankalp is to enhance financial illiteracy and ensure long-term financial security & bring prosperity for women customers for the financial solution by adopting women-centered point of view, the Regional Chief of South Asia of Women’s World Banking Kalpana Ajyan said, adding that the initiative aims to make empowerment of women.

Parcel packaging units to be set up

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A customer meet on mails and parcel business, organised by Departments of Posts, was inaugurated by Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav at Varanasi Cantt Head Post Office here on Wednesday. Details of all the innovations and facilities introduced in the field of mails and parcels were given through power point presentation. Postal officers interacted with representatives of various firms and important customers, their suggestions and feedback regarding services were taken and their problems were also resolved. The PMG also felicitated all the customers at the end of the programme.

The PMG said that mails and parcels are the basic services of the Postal department and due to modernisation of parcel services and providing better facilities to the customers, there has been a increase of 63 per cent in parcel revenue in Varanasi Region during the last financial year.



PMG KK Yadav felicitating a customer in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

Booking, sorting and delivery of parcels have been made more efficient through International Business Centre, Parcel Hub, Nodal Delivery Centre. ‘Due to the continuous growth in e-commerce, the Department of Posts has focused on modernisation of parcel services to provide better and customer oriented facilities to the customers. A new transport policy has been formulated by the department for speedy conveyance and delivery of mails and parcels,’ said Yadav.

While discussing the inno-

vation introduced and imple-

mented regarding parcel services, he said that under the pilot project, parcel packing units will soon be established at Varanasi and Varanasi Cantt Head Post Offices for the customers. In order to expand services, facility of return pickup of parcels, OTP based delivery, booking and delivery of parcels through smart machines will also be provided in coming days. Soon, new rates of postage fee will be implemented by reducing the charges for cash-on-delivery items and insured items. Yadav said that

a convenient facility to book parcels by volumetric weight for national and international destinations through cash and digital payment QR code is available in every Post Office in Varanasi Region. On-spot custom clearance facility is made available for international Parcel booking in the International Business Centre at Cantt Head Post Office premises. Online dashboards have also been developed to monitor the entire process of parcel processing, which is being monitored at every level, he added.

On this occasion, Senior Superintendent of Post Office (Varanasi East Division) Rajan, Superintendent of Posts PC Tiwari, Assistant Director Krishna Chandra, Brajesh Sharma, Senior Postmaster Varanasi Chandrashekhar Singh Barua, Postal Inspector Shrikant Pal, VN Dwivedi, Postmaster of Varanasi Cantt Head Post Office RS Verma along with representatives of various corporate institutions, departments attended the meeting.

Kangana, Rampal offer Ganga Aarti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Famous Bollywood actress Padma Shri Kangana Ranaut, along with other stars including Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta, offered Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat amidst the chanting of mantras here on Wednesday evening. They also watched the grandeur of Ganga Aarti there while boarding a motorboat. They were in the city for promotion of their forthcoming movie ‘Dhaakad’ along with director Razneesh Ghai and other film crew members.

After landing at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur, the Bollywood team reached Kashi Vishwanath Dham and offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple seeking the blessings of the Almighty for the success of their movie. Talking to the media persons there, Kangana said that Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are present in every particle in Ayodhya and Mathura so Mahadev exists in every particle in Kashi. Impressed by seeing the grandeur of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, she said that Mahadev does not need any structure because he exists in every particle in Kashi. When Kangana, along with Arjun Rampal reached the corridor, the devotees present there raised slogans of Har Har Mahadev to greet them. According to information, Kangana will be seen in a strong woman character in the film Dhaakad, which is produced by Sohail Malkai and



Bollywood stars Kangana Ranaut and others offering Ganga Aarti in Varanasi on Wednesday evening.

Pioneer

Deepak Mukut.

YOGA MAHOTSAV-2022 INAUGURATED: The Department of Yoga & Naturopathy Education Centre and Department of Physical Education of the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) are jointly holding a month-long Yoga Mahotsav-2022 which began on Thursday.

The students demonstrated various yogic exercises apart from aerobic gymnastic. The people present on the inaugural occasion of Yoga Mahotsav also performed different yogic asanas and Surya Namaskar. Inaugurating the Mahotsav, the chief guest and MLA Prof Awadhesh Singh said that the

sports brings an unprecedented change in personality and working style and added that the Yoga should be started from their homes in order to promote it.

The key speaker and Vice-Chancellor of MGKV Prof Anand Kumar Tyagi said that Yoga is established as certified medical system only in India and Yoga can play a key role to materialise the dream ‘Healthy India, Wealthy India’ and added that the Indian Government has recognised the Yoga as skill so that it could be accepted in the entire world.

The registrar of the university Dr Sunita Pandey said that the naturopathy and yogic exercises are proving fruitful in

maintaining the physical as well as mental health in the present time. Presiding over the inaugural session, the Dean of Education Faculty Prof Sushil Kumar Gautam said that Yoga is playing an important role to keep human life healthy and stress free and added that one can get rid of the number of diseases with the regular exercises of Yoga.

Dr Chandramani and Pratap Shankar Dubey jointly conducted it and Dr Bal Rup Yadav offered a formal vote of thanks at last. Many were present on the occasion including Dr Kundan Singh, Dr Pitambar Das, Dr Radheyshyam Rai, Dr Syeed Dulare Hussein and Yogacharya Ashish Tandon.

Key accused of mass murders arrested in encounter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The police succeeded in its mission of arresting Chintu Kharwar of Bihar after a brief encounter in Tharvai on Wednesday night. He was the main accused in mass murders of Khevrajpur in Tharvai, and Gohri. This gang had killed five persons of a family in Tharvai and four in Gohri, and had raped women after killing them.

The police had announced a reward of Rs 50,000 on the head of Chintu, son of Jeetlal Kharwar of Aurangabad in Bihar. His brother Navala Kharwar had already been arrested by the police after an encounter.

After receiving information regarding the presence of some criminals in Tharvai, the police

surrounded the area and asked the criminals to surrender, but they opened fire to escape from the scene. The police retaliated in the same language, and Chintu sustained a bullet injury near his right knee and collapsed there. His associate Sarangi Kharwar, however, managed to escape under the cover of darkness.

The injured Chintu was immediately taken to the SRN hospital where he is undergoing treatment.

With are arrest of five members of this gang, including two women last week, the police had worked out the mass murder mystery of Tharvai and Gohri. The main accused Chintu was arrested on Wednesday/Thursday night at 2.00 am. Still some members of this gang are absconding.

NEARLY 100% ELECTRIFICATION OF NCR ROUTE COMPLETED: Trains with electric locomotives will run on every track of North Central Railway (NCR). Nearly 100 percent electrification of the 3222 km route of NCR has been completed. Only 76 km of electrification is left. Trains with electric locomotives will save energy with environmental protection, reduce carbon emissions and with increasing speed, trains will reach the right time. Railways will also save crores of rupees through electric locomotives.

Etah, Mainpuri, Farrukhabad, Etawah, Firozabad and Agra in Uttar Pradesh and Gwalior, Bhind, Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur, Mainpuri-Shikohabad, Farrukhabad, Barhan, Panki,

Chunar, Saifai routes in Madhya Pradesh have been fully electrified. Jhansi-Babina, Bhuteshwar-Chhata, Dholpur-Bhandai (Agra Division) and Kanpur-Veerangana Laxmibai (Jhansi Division) have also been electrified. Prayagraj division is 100% electrified.

Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of North Central Railway (NCR) Dr. Shivam Sharma said that we are walking towards the target of Net Zero Emission by 2030. Electrification is of paramount importance along with setting up of renewable energy plants. Electric locomotives will increase the speed and punctuality of trains. There will be environmental benefits. In a phased manner, all trains will have electric locomotives instead of diesel engines.

Schools of several districts fail to register under Vidyanjali 2.0

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

At a time when the department of secondary education has instructed all government and government-aided secondary schools of the state to register on the designated portal of government’s Vidyanjali 2.0 scheme, not a single such school of Prayagraj has registered on the designated portal.

Vidyanjali 2.0 scheme was started to improve the level of education in all such institutions spread across the state and the country. The district has more than 225 government and government-aided secondary schools which need to register on the portal mandatorily.

The situation is not much different in many other districts of the state, say state education department officials in the know of the matter.

The districts in which not even a single school has registered on Vidyanjali-2.0 portal

include Basti, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Etawah, Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Lakhimpur Kheri, Amroha and Shamli besides Prayagraj.

Of more than 6,500 schools across the state that need to register on the portal as part of the initiative, only 1,943 schools have registered till date. Moreover, the state of affairs is not good in other districts also. For example, only one school each has registered in districts like Mau, Barabanki and Rampur, informed an official of the department, requesting anonymity.

As per government instructions, these schools are required to register on the Vidyanjali 2.0 portal and also post what services, infrastructure and equipment they need the most. Taking a strong cognizance of this negligence and failure of the officials concerned of the state secondary education department to ensure compliance, director, secondary education, Sarita Tiwari has sent a stern missive

to all the district inspectors of schools (DIOS) on May 13.

In her letter, Tiwari has expressed her displeasure over the non-registration of these secondary schools on the designated portal and has instructed the DIOS to ensure implementation of the scheme on priority in all schools that come under its purview in their respective districts.

District inspector of schools, Prayagraj, RN Vishwakarma, said all government or government-aided secondary schools of Prayagraj had been asked to immediately register on the designated portal. “We have made plain to them that no further delay would be tolerated in this regard,” he said.

Vidyanjali is an initiative taken by the ministry of education with the aim to strengthen schools through community and private sector involvement across the country. This initiative aims to connect schools with varied volunteers from the Indian diaspora,

namely young professionals, retired teachers, retired government officials, retired professionals, NGOs, private sector and public sector companies, corporate institutions and others. Vidyanjali has two verticals: “Participate in school Service/Activity” and “Contribute Assets/Material/Equipment” in which volunteers can support and strengthen the government and government aided schools. The initiative connects varied volunteers like professionals, school alumni, in service and retired teachers, etc., to the schools. The volunteers can connect with the schools in two forms: First, through participating in school service and activities and other through supporting government and government-aided schools through asset or material or equipment which will strengthen the infrastructure of these schools. The volunteers can also share their knowledge and skills which will help students in their career choices.

AU to hold UG final year online exams on MCQ pattern

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

After taking the decision for holding BA, BSc, BSc (Home Science) and BCom final year exams (2021-22) through online mode, authorities of Allahabad University have explained the pattern on the basis of which the forthcoming online exams would be conducted.

“The final exams of undergraduate courses shall be of multiple choice question (MCQs) pattern and will be conducted in online mode only. Although Allahabad University would be announcing the detailed timetable of the said exams in the coming days, tentatively the same would commence from June first week,” said AU public relation officer (PRO), Prof Jaya Kapoor.

The MCQ pattern is being followed in order to declare the results as soon as possible for the benefit of our final year UG students who want to join other courses for further studies, she added.

She further said that these MCQs will cover the reduced/curtailed syllabus as reported by the respective departments.

Moreover, MCQs of all subjects shall be bilingual (except mathematics, Statistics and literatures). As per the decision taken by the varsity administration, each of these MCQs will be of 1 mark only and accordingly the number of MCQs will be decided.

For example, if an exam is of 50 marks, it shall be based on 50 MCQs from the respective reduced syllabus. For these online exams, dates of which are yet to be announced by the university administration, students shall be appearing from their homes/hostels.

HEAT WAVE HITS WATERMELON YIELD: The heat wave and high temperatures have hit watermelon growers as the crop yield has fallen and the weight of fruit is

also less.

Farmers from Prayagraj, Kaushambi and Fatehpur districts, who grow famous watermelon varieties Saraswati, Arohi, and Muskan, are now finding it difficult to sell their produce in other districts and states.

The high temperature has hit production and the weight of melons is also less, said farmers. On an average, the production of watermelon varieties has dipped by 35% to 40% due to intense heat, they added.

Mohd Qayum, a farmer said, “We have been facing tough times since the past three years. While the corona pandemic had affected our sales in the past two years, the heat wave and high temperatures hit the crop this year.”

“It becomes difficult to save the crop when the mercury crosses 46 degrees Celsius. As a result, we are facing financial losses again,” said Qayum.

Normally, the weight of a single watermelon is around 3kg or more, but this time due to intense heat it was reduced

to around 1.5kg only, said another farmer. As a result, we are selling melons in the city and adjoining districts only, he added.

Farmers of the region grow Saraswati, Arohi, Baudi, Muskan and other varieties of watermelons through mulching methods and used to earn well.

City-based agriculture expert, Manoj Kumar Srivastava said, “The farmers growing watermelons are finding it difficult to earn profit this time. The crop production has been hit by high temperatures.”

The limited produce is being sold at higher price and there is not enough for sending to other states, he added.

The farmers in Prayagraj region had started growing the hybrid varieties of watermelons and melons by using the mulch cultivation technique as they have a higher Total Solid Sugar (TSS) value. The summer fruits are cultivated in more than 2500 acres in Prayagraj, Kaushambi and Fatehpur districts.

Emphasis on strong networking for FPOs

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS has laid emphasis on strong networking for the farmer producer organisations (FPOs) to earn more and more along with strengthening the nation by earning foreign currency. While presiding over the district level meeting of FPOs at Collectorate on Wednesday, she said it was the era of digitalisation in which digital platforms were proving to be an easy way to sell products so it was the need of the hour that FPOs get linkage of popular networking services to earn more. She said government is providing so many facilities, including subsidy to agriculture

sector, so it was our duty to avail them for the promotion of that sector. Deputy Director (Agriculture) Ashok Upadhyay appealed to FPOs to avail expert services through him and make the organisation more purposeful. He said the department is providing subsidy up to Rs 4 lakh on drone through which spraying of fertilisers and pesticides can be easy. He appealed to FPOs to make all possible efforts to spread the market of their products. Anubhav Dubey of Karmyogi FPO narrated his success story that how his organisation was earning through trade of dairy and helping other milk producers too. The other FPOs also shared their experiences and

sought support of the government machinery on some issues. Interacting with FPOs agriculture scientist Dr Shri Ram Singh gave some tips to increase production at less cost. District Agriculture Officer, Bhoomi Sanrakshan Adhikari, LDM and others were present in the meeting.

WORKSHOP: Under project Work for Progress a workshop was held on Wednesday in which experts involved in the project to promote entrepreneurship among youth shared their experiences based on problems and achievements of past four years.

Labour Enforcement Officer Nimesh Kumar Pandey threw light over departmental schemes through which

entrepreneurship among the youth was being promoted. The government officials related to NABARD, bank etc gave details of the process to be involved with entrepreneurship. Director of Jan Shikshan Sansthan Akhilesh Shukla threw light over training programmes run by his organisation. The representative of Fisheries department gave details about the subsidy being given in that trade. The programme was conducted by Ram Sajevar Dubey while the vote of thanks was proposed by Anuj Srivastava. Among those who participated in the workshop from Delhi, Prayagraj and other districts were Dr Asha Rai and Dr Sheela Singh.

Spoiling for war

The Russia-Ukraine war has been reduced to a long-drawn spectacle, with no winners

War is a macabre spectacle. In Ukraine, it is tragically theatrical and absurd as well. The Russian invasion has dragged on for close to three months. Perhaps even Vladimir Putin does not know if he is winning or losing. Wars are accountable to the people who launch them and the victims they kill. This war somehow seems different. It has caused enough mayhem already, disfigured several cities and suburbs of Ukraine, maimed, wounded or killed hundreds, maybe thousands, of civilians and soldiers. The breathless bodies decaying in mass graves are testimony to the depths of Russian villainy. And yet, look at the irony. The Ukrainians, who have cornered the world's sympathy and aid worth billions, are starving because of a food shortage. Ukraine is among the top exporters of grain, but Russia is denying Ukrainians access to produce. Russia, facing western sanctions, is earning more revenue than in peacetime. The sanctions are deliberately weak to probably ensure an unaffected supply of Russian oil and gas to Europe. Russia earned \$9 billion in additional revenue from energy sales in April due to spiralling oil prices. More bizarre things are happening as the war continues to take its toll, making one wonder if a surreal media spectacle is being played out around the wanton destruction. A big draw on US television was the sudden appearance of the wife of President Joe Biden in Ukraine. Jill secretly landed in Ukraine's Uzhhorod, on Mother's Day. She is used to such visits, having earlier gone to Baghdad in 2010 along with her husband, the then Vice-President.



The husband, now President, designed a tour of his own, even if it was to an Illinois family farm to "discuss" the war's impact on food supply and prices at home and abroad. Ukraine claims a part of the food problem is caused by Russia "stealing" its grain, vegetables and sunflower seeds and shipping them home. NATO did its bit too, going on an expansion binge and receiving joining requests from Finland and Sweden only for Turkey to object and use the opportunity to challenge the US. The diplomatic world is in turmoil as Russia expels dozens of Italian, Spanish and French diplomats because they did the same to Russian diplomats. At the same time, diplomats of BRICS members are busy preparing for the Summit meeting with India, Brazil and South Africa, readying for a cordial meeting with China and Russia. But what takes the cake is Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy taking time off his war to open the Cannes film festival, telling an elegantly dressed audience how "hundreds of people are dying every day" in Ukraine. And Zelenskyy seems to be in a hurry not to end the war but to launch publicised war crime trials against captured Russian soldiers. One such soldier has already pleaded guilty, a mass media campaign victoriously has declared. This war may one day tire of its publicity.

ed in Ukraine's Uzhhorod, on Mother's Day. She is used to such visits, having earlier gone to Baghdad in 2010 along with her husband, the then Vice-President. The husband, now President, designed a tour of his own, even if it was to an Illinois family farm to "discuss" the war's impact on food supply and prices at home and abroad. Ukraine claims a part of the food problem is caused by Russia "stealing" its grain, vegetables and sunflower seeds and shipping them home. NATO did its bit too, going on an expansion binge and receiving joining requests from Finland and Sweden only for Turkey to object and use the opportunity to challenge the US. The diplomatic world is in turmoil as Russia expels dozens of Italian, Spanish and French diplomats because they did the same to Russian diplomats. At the same time, diplomats of BRICS members are busy preparing for the Summit meeting with India, Brazil and South Africa, readying for a cordial meeting with China and Russia. But what takes the cake is Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy taking time off his war to open the Cannes film festival, telling an elegantly dressed audience how "hundreds of people are dying every day" in Ukraine. And Zelenskyy seems to be in a hurry not to end the war but to launch publicised war crime trials against captured Russian soldiers. One such soldier has already pleaded guilty, a mass media campaign victoriously has declared. This war may one day tire of its publicity.

PICTALK



Tourists enjoy rafting on the Beas river, in Manali

PTI

Right course?

The Oppn is trying to pin the Govt on the mat on inflation, unemployment

Of late, there's been some sudden stirring in the Opposition ranks. On the one side are politicians who are deserting their parent party and looking for greener pastures in a foster outfit. In this category fall leaders like Col Ajay Kothiyal (Retd), who was the Aam Aadmi Party's chief ministerial candidate in the Uttarakhand Assembly elections and who has recently resigned from the party. Another one in the same category is former Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar, who quit the Congress last week and has since made his way into the BJP's fold. Yet another is Patidar leader Hardik Patel, who has also parted ways with the Congress, saying during the ongoing Gyanvapi mosque controversy that the "Congress's aversion to pro-Hindu policies" was hurting its fortunes. Interestingly, in his resignation letter, Hardik had mentioned that the senior Congress leadership was more focused on ensuring that chicken sandwiches for leaders who had come from Delhi were delivered on time. However, unlike Jakhar, Hardik has "till now" not decided whether he would join the BJP. Though these developments might make it seem like the saffron party is having an easy time in terms of the threat of desertions, it is up against another kind of attack.



A few Opposition parties, which have been for a while now lying inert, have discovered their voice and are jumping out at the ruling BJP in an attack mode. After BSP supremo Mayawati, who hit out at the saffron dispensation earlier this week, now Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has put the Union Government in his crosshairs. Taking the Government to task over the rising inflation and unemployment rate in the country, the Congress scion has said that India currently "looks a lot like Sri Lanka". He also advised the Government to stop doing things to distract people since it's unlikely to change the facts. Elaborating on his litany of complaints, Rahul also shared graphs of unemployment, rising petrol prices and incidents of communal violence, and showing similar images of India and Sri Lanka citing various sources. Hours earlier, Mayawati had raised the same points while lashing out at the BJP-led Government. She alleged that the saffron party was targeting religious places to divert people's attention from issues like poverty, unemployment and inflation. She also claimed that such attempts would only end up weakening the country. Maybe they have a point!

After BSP supremo Mayawati, who hit out at the saffron dispensation earlier this week, now Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has put the Union Government in his crosshairs. Taking the Government to task over the rising inflation and unemployment rate in the country, the Congress scion has said that India currently "looks a lot like Sri Lanka". He also advised the Government to stop doing things to distract people since it's unlikely to change the facts. Elaborating on his litany of complaints, Rahul also shared graphs of unemployment, rising petrol prices and incidents of communal violence, and showing similar images of India and Sri Lanka citing various sources. Hours earlier, Mayawati had raised the same points while lashing out at the BJP-led Government. She alleged that the saffron party was targeting religious places to divert people's attention from issues like poverty, unemployment and inflation. She also claimed that such attempts would only end up weakening the country. Maybe they have a point!

Flawed COVID death count data

The World Health Organisation relied on a modelling methodology to reach its estimates, but the Indian Government has termed it 'flawed'



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report on excess mortality due to COVID-19 pegging the India figure at nearly 10 times the official toll at 47.4 lakh has created a controversy of sorts. On the one hand, WHO's data suggests that over 90 per cent of deaths in India have gone unreported and its death toll of 5.23 lakh so far is an undercount. The base number of expected deaths (in a non-COVID scenario) for 2020, which the WHO has used in its report, is almost nine lakh more than the average number of deaths recorded each year in India for the last 15 years. The WHO claims that its results are based on well-established mathematical models. Several other studies have shown India's COVID-related death count at anywhere between 25 lakh to 60 lakh. On the other hand, the report has received a lot of criticism in India.

The Health Ministers of various States who attended a three-day conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW) under the chairmanship of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya passed a resolution objecting to the WHO's estimates. They said the report was "intended to show the country in poor light", and that the modelling methodology used was "flawed". India has a robust, efficient and comprehensive system for registering deaths and all COVID-19 fatalities are recorded transparently, they said.

For its part, the track record of WHO on COVID has not been above board. Its own study concluded that crucial time was lost in fighting the virus because it delayed the announcement of an international emergency. It spent weeks persuading China to allow a team of international scientists to visit Wuhan after the outbreak. It then swung to the other extreme last year after the relatively less virulent Omicron surfaced, and it rang needless alarm bells instead of educating the world about the new variant.



However, the WHO's importance can't be underestimated. For estimating COVID deaths in India, the WHO study has relied, among various sources, on death registration data from the Civil Registration System (CRS). Several media houses had published monthly CRS for a few States last year and these numbers did not always match. Depending on which publication was selected to pick these numbers, the mathematical model would have been different.

According to experts, the WHO report, in case of India or other countries, doesn't go into the technicality of calculating the scale of the undercount. It has adopted a straightforward method of calculating excess mortality by estimating the total number of people who likely died in India in 2020 due to all causes and has subtracted from that the expected number of all-cause deaths if there was no COVID. These "excess deaths" are considered a result of COVID-19. There is general agreement that because most of the studies have been pointing to similar estimates, they must be reflective of the true toll. But the fact seems to be that the researchers and peer review-



FOR ITS PART, THE TRACK RECORD OF THE WORLD BODY ON COVID HAS NOT BEEN ABOVE BOARD. ITS OWN STUDY CONCLUDED THAT CRUCIAL TIME WAS LOST IN FIGHTING THE VIRUS BECAUSE IT DELAYED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY

ers belong to an overlapping set of people using similar methodology.

Going by deaths per thousand population, India does not figure among the top 100 countries, though the infection fatality rate of 1.2 per cent places it in seventh position, globally. Among the reasons for confusion over accurate COVID death estimates are: One, as accurate death statistics by causes is hard to come by — around 70 per cent of deaths take place at home even normally — attempts have been made to identify "excess" deaths; two, the Supreme Court's decision to consider all deaths within three months of COVID infliction as COVID deaths resulted in a surge in reporting; three, independent journalists and health statisticians who had sourced registration data and fragmented ground-level information have raised concerns over CRS' inadequacy. Consequently, the WHO placed India in the category for which COVID death figures are to be generated through modelling and not based on the officially reported numbers.

However, in reality, at this stage, any discussion on the undercount is premature

because India has not yet stopped counting its COVID deaths. The figure of 5.24 lakh deaths is under constant revision, and is likely to remain so for some time. Even the death numbers reported in 2020 and 2021 are not final. For example, more than 21,000 deaths Kerala has reported in the last four months have not happened this year. Most of them pertain to last year. Many deaths that would have happened in 2020 but are not included in the 1.49 lakh tally would have been accounted for at later stages. Those deaths have not been missed; these will reflect in the statistics. The same is true for 2021.

The need of an hour is to compile robust data from official sources which should be scientifically collated and validated through field surveys. Unfortunately, reliable data is not available with Government agencies, which is creating miscommunication and confusion leading to speculation. The Government should take appropriate steps to clear the doubts about the actual count of COVID deaths.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR INDIA

Sir — The Indian men's badminton team has made the nation proud by scripting history with a spectacular win against formidable opponents Indonesia in the Thomas Cup final. Such a feat of glory and achievement won million of hearts in the country and around the globe. It proves that the Indian badminton teams, both men and women, have come a long way. They have carved a niche for themselves like never before with the dint of constant hard work and dogged determination. The consistent positive approach and perseverance of players with right professional guidelines of mentors have yielded astounding results in the Thomas Cup, which had eluded us for long.

The individual women's individual successful records post-Olympics will forever remain as an inspiration to all. The experienced and veteran chief national coach, Pullela Gopichand, deserved accolades as he has helped the game of badminton reach a zenith at the international level as well as mould new talent. The men's badminton team's historic win will forever remain etched in our minds and be considered as the greatest thing that ever happened to India in the sport of badminton. It is also to be hoped that the feat will inspire youngsters to take to the game.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

RAJIV GANDHI ASSASSINATION CASE

Sir — The Supreme Court has ordered the release of AG Perarivalan, who has served over 30 years of his life term in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. A Bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao invoked its extraordinary power under Article 142 to grant relief to Perarivalan. Article 142 deals with enforcement of decrees and orders of the Supreme Court. On March 9, the apex court had granted bail to Perarivalan while taking note of his long incarceration and no history of complaints when out on parole.

The top court was hearing the plea of 47-year-old Perarivalan seeking suspension

Russia is destroying dreams



This refers to the May 18 article, 'War crime watch: Targeting schools, Russia bombs the future'. As the Ukraine-Russia war continues for nearly three months, heart-rending pictures of the suffering of Ukrainians continue to raise questions over the actions of Russian soldiers. The Russian troops have bombarded 1,000 schools so far, killing innocent children and citizens, even after writing in bold letters 'Children' on top of the school buildings. The Russian soldiers are committing cold-blooded murders. It is a serious war crime which Putin's

country is committing. Even after the imposition of sanctions and turning Ukraine into virtual rubble, there is no point of such heavy shelling on innocent Ukrainians.

The Russian troops' advancement didn't spare even kindergartens. This shows the cruelty and inhumanity of the Russian advancement. At this rate of fatality, the recovery of Ukraine is far from imaginable since schools are the foundation and future of any country. Damage to such institutions is far more hideous and puts the future in jeopardy. Russia must stop shelling civilians and educational institutions. The intention of Russia reeks of tyranny, which is not the healthy foundation of any nation. Russia is not only militarising Ukrainians, but also cutting down the feathers of their dreams. Russia should exercise its power morally. Right now, the world sees Putin as a tyrant who is committing genocide, and which is highly condemnable.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

of his life sentence in the case till the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency probe is completed. In its May 1999 order, the top court had upheld the death sentence of four convicts — Perarivalan, Murugan, Santham and Nalini. On February 18, 2014, the top court had commuted the death sentence of Perarivalan to life imprisonment, along with that of Santham and Murugan on the grounds of an 11-year delay in deciding their mercy pleas.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONGRESS MUST REVIVE ITS GLORY

Sir — More than the Congress' total dominance in national politics till the late 1990s, the subsequent sharp fall in its fortunes has led the way to the rise of the multi-party system in India. Unfortunately, the party, nurtured for long under the shadow of secularism after Partition, could not fully grasp the essence of Nehruvian context, which was not the separation of religion from the State but of

staying neutral towards all. Minority appeasement grew on it more a vice than virtue and the Congress remains blind-sided to it.

Also, their consistent failure to gel then ushered in the BJP with its calculated political strategies and adapting to the changing times, which brought Narendra Modi to the centre stage. History is witness to the waves of totalitarianism that inevitably tend to invite a backlash. Progressive societies have then striven to restore equilibrium, which today is skewed even more by the pandemic and the following economic travails. This is a time for the Congress to again undertake a *padyatra*, much like the Dandi march. Its pedigree in the fight for freedom, more than its subsequent dynastic credentials, must help it reclaim relevance.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

It's not just increasing internet speed but also the pace of development and creating jobs.

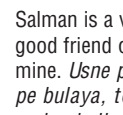


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



The next couple of months will be the most difficult ones of our lives.

Sri Lanka PM — Ranil Wickremesinghe



Salman is a very good friend of mine. *Usne party pe bulaya, toh main chali gayi.*

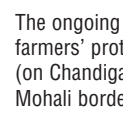


Actor — Kangana Ranaut



It'll take some time to get the timing and confidence back on my attacking moves.

Indian wrestler — Bajrang Punia



The ongoing farmers' protest (on Chandigarh-Mohali border) is unwarranted and undesirable.

Punjab Chief Minister — Bhagwant Mann

FIRST COLUMN

NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY OF INDIA-NEPAL

India has done well by refreshing its cultural shared narrative with Nepal



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hopped across to Nepal to mark Buddha Poonrma celebrations in Lumbini earlier this week. This one-day visit marks a renewed effort to amend ties with a long trusted partner and friend in the region. Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha and for many years India and Nepal have not managed to cooperate and integrate it within the larger Buddhist place-of-interest framework. There had been angst for decades among the Nepali citizens regarding India taking away the cream of Buddhist tourism-circuit, while ignoring the birthplace. Meanwhile Lumbini became a place of interest for China which has been using all avenues possible to increase its strength in Nepal. It has in the past announced as part of its muscular external infrastructure policy the possibility of investing nearly \$3billion in Lumbini to make it a world peace city and construct a railway line connecting Nepal with Tibet. The status of many of these announcements are on hold at present, but one doesn't know when they can be revived. The Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, enmeshed in shared cultural contexts of the region, has been an interest area for many power blocs including the US, European Union and China for some decades now. China has been on alert to the changing influence spheres in Nepal and has painstakingly built up its share of supporting voices amongst the political and cultural elite. Last month Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi was in Nepal to ratchet up support in its favour from the different factions of the Nepalese Communist



Party. It is understood that Wang Yi (also a known India-baiter), insisted on the quarrelling factions of the Nepalese Communist Party to stay united and work towards a larger agenda (dictated by Chinese communist party). It was during the reign of Nepalese Communist Party Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli that relationship between India and Nepal tanked to its historic low. He had nearly acted as an extended arm of Beijing's geopolitical strategy. Clearly, China has been trying to isolate India's long-term partners in the region by muscling its way into their domestic security, infrastructure and economic issues.

The Prime Minister's visit to Nepal, along with some other initiatives taken by the government in the past few months, suggests India's reinvigorated enthusiasm to engage with its immediate neighbourhood. In April, just before foreign secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla retired, a high-level inter-ministerial meeting took place to focus on India's neighbourhood first policy. It saw participation from the ministries of home, finance, commerce, fisheries and defence to name a few. It deliberated on ways to improve roads and other border infrastructure with Nepal, starting railway link with Bangladesh and providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Myanmar. Nepal was the focus during the meeting given the historical and cultural ties with the nation. India has done well by refreshing its cultural shared narrative with Nepal and announced a bunch of new measures to improve people to people connect. India's willingness to develop sister-city relations between Lumbini and Kushinagar, considered the holiest sites for Buddhists, has been well received and could be the game changer towards integration of Nepal in the tourism circuit and improving economic relations between the two countries. India has also signed 6 MoUs with Nepal during the PM's visit, 5 of which are on improving educational and cultural relations while the 6th relates to hydel power project. India and Nepal blessed with the abundant wealth from the Himalayas need to focus on reviving their deep and rich shared cultural heritage while making way for a new age bilateral relation.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Time for CPI(M) to change its style

There are examples of comrades who have acquired assets and incur expenses disproportionate to their known sources of income



VANAM JWALA NARASIMHA RAO

The largest arm of the Communist Party in the country the CPI (Marxist) founded by stalwarts like Pucchalapalli Sundarayya, EMS Nambudiripad, Harkishan Singh Surjit, Pramod Dasgupta, AK Gopalan, BT Ranadive, M Basava Punniiah, P Ramamurti and Jyoti Basu could manage to win just three Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 elections. For the first time since its formation in 1964, the party drew a blank in West Bengal. The CPI(M) which played a pivotal role in government formation at the centre in 1989, 1996 and 2004 is no more a confidant of Government of the day. The failure of the Communists will certainly enhance the influence and authority of right-wing politics and communalism and that is not healthy for the nation.

After India's Independence, a series of events like Sino-Soviet split and Sino-Indian war led to the split in the Communist Party of India in 1964. The breakaway Communist Party of India (Marxist) emerged stronger both in terms of membership and performance in Indian elections. CPI (M) has a glorious record in conducting class and mass struggles. It is the biggest contingent of the Left. It was once heading Left-led Governments in three States, now cut down to one.

In early 1950s, the united CPI was bitterly divided over the manner in which political power in India should be captured. The militant voices advocated the 'Chinese path', or capture of power through violent means and the other group was for the 'Indian path' or capture power within the constraints of Indian Constitution. Chandra Rajeswara Rao, who advocated Chinese Path, did not sail with CPI(M) after the split. Makineni Basava Punniiah, who advocated Chinese Path along with Rajeswara Rao, became a politburo member of the CPI(M) after the split in 1964. However, Sundarayya in his letter to the party Polit Bureau and Central Committee in August 1975 offered his resignation as party General Secretary and criticized Basava Punniiah for limiting his role in the party.

Pucchalapalli Sundarayya was a founding member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and a leader of the peasant revolt in the Telangana Rebellion. In 1936, Sundarayya became a member of the Central Committee of the undivided Communist Party of India. He went underground between 1948 and 1952. He was re-elected to the Central Committee in 1952. He was also elected to the Polit Bureau, the highest forum in the Party. When the Party leadership was in favour of supporting the Government at the time of the Sino-Indian War, Sundarayya resigned his positions protesting against the policies of the dominant leadership of the Party. He was arrested and imprisoned during November 1962 at the time of India-China border war. After the split Sundarayya was elected as



IT'S TIME FOR THE CPI (M) TO HAVE AN INTROSPECTION AND LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE. IT IS THEIR ESSENTIAL DUTY TO ALIGN WITH LIKE-MINDED FORCES OF SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST FORCES TO COUNTER RIGHT-WING POLITICS

(The writer is Chief Public Relations Officer to Chief Minister of Telangana. The views expressed are personal.)



its General Secretary. He continuously remained Party's General Secretary till 1976. In that year, which fell during the Emergency, he resigned as General Secretary and Polit Buro member for what he called the "revisionist habits" acquired by the Party.

Sundarayya in his resignation pointed out among others, the Polit Buro's failure to concretize party's tactical line, non-seriousness on agrarian resolution in practice, ignoring building of secret part of party's organization, Polit Bureau not functioning as a collective body and so on. Had the Party taken serious note of his anguish, CPI (M) position would have been much, much better than the present humiliating status.

The 19th CPM Party Congress held in 2008 at Coimbatore called for a rectification campaign against wrong trends in the Party. The rectification was meant to unify and strengthen the Party on correct principles. How far the objective could be achieved and how far the campaign percolated down below the cadre in its true spirit is not known.

There is no doubt that alien values and ideas affected CPI(M) Party leaders and cadres. Along with the concentration of wealth, the creation of business-politician nexus at all levels is intertwining between corporate and business interests and the political system. Even the CPI(M) Central Committee once observed that the role of money power has increased to an unprecedented level in politics, particularly in elections and CPI(M) cadres are no exception to

it. With the association with bourgeois parties at various levels, particularly through electoral understandings and with the rise of the business-political nexus, there is a corresponding rise in use of money and other bourgeois practices. These have corrosive effect on CPI(M) cadres. Its relationship with secular parties was also on the declining mode.

Majority of the Party membership consists of new entrants who are still to acquire the basic outlook of the Party and they are yet to be grounded in the class and mass struggles. Such a situation leads to all sorts of feudal, bourgeois and petty bourgeois trends emerging within the Party. The party top leadership noted that, in the leading committees of the Party only around 30 per cent belong to working class, poor peasants and agricultural workers. Violation of communist norms have also arisen. Due to parliamentary outlook and electoral opportunism, mass movements, launching struggles and building the Party is being neglected by CPI(M).

Due to distinct increase in parliamentary opportunism among CPI(M) cadre, increased numbers of individual comrades resorted to revolting when refused party ticket. The use of money, liquor and other corrupt practices has grown in the party. The money used in elections has reached an unprecedented level in states where the party is in existence even for namesake.

The party feels threatened when some leaders and cadres fail to live up to the communist stan-

dards and values. The party is no exception to a lavish lifestyle, building posh houses, spending large amounts on weddings, and organizing festivities on a big scale. There are examples of comrades who have acquired assets and incur expenses disproportionate to their known sources of income. There are cases of Party leaders running NGOs with no check or accountability for the funds being used. Real estate promoters, contractors and liquor contractors seek to establish connections with CPM cadre and those in elected positions. The tendency to collect big amounts of money from individuals and affluent sections, instead of mass collection, has increased specially to meet election expenses. Accounts for these are not properly maintained and submitted to the respective committees. Often the Party committees are unable to initiate action due to various reasons such as factional trends, liberalism and reluctance to antagonize an important Party cadre.

Against this background now it's time for the CPI (M) to have an introspection and live up to the expectations of the people. It is their essential duty to align with like-minded forces of secular, democratic and socialist forces to counter right-wing politics. Maybe it is time for the party leadership to think in terms of actively supporting the alternate national agenda proposed by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu so that the rise of the right-wing is checked and democratic forces are strengthened.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SWEDEN AND FINLAND WILL HAND IN OUR RESPECTIVE APPLICATIONS TO JOIN NATO, ABANDONING OUR NEUTRALITY POLICY. — SWEDEN PRIME MINISTER MAGDALENA ANDERSSON



THE MOVE POSES NO DIRECT THREAT TO US... BUT THE (NATO) EXPANSION WILL CERTAINLY PROVOKE OUR RESPONSE. — RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

Farewell neutrality: Sweden and Finland

Both are very much in the same position as Ukraine militarily

It's easy to imagine Vladimir Putin coming into the shop marked 'Sweden', breaking some fine china accidentally on purpose, and growling: 'Nice little shop you've got here. It would be a pity if something happened to it.' But Sweden is not a pottery shop, Putin is not a Mafia capo, and what's going on in the Baltic now is not a protection racket.

The Russian president has stampeded both Finland and Sweden, two neutral countries of long standing (almost eighty years for Finland, over two hundred for Sweden), into joining the NATO alliance, the very 'threat' that Putin claimed he was trying to drive away from Russia's borders. Finland has a 1,300-km. border with northern Russia. The Swedish and Finnish response to his invasion of Ukraine would have surprised



GWYNNE DYER

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)

Putin. He would see no connection between his invasion of Ukraine, a former Russian imperial possession that needed to be whipped back into line, and two independent countries that have not been in Russia's sphere of influence for over a century.

They, on the other hand, did see a connection. A neighbour they previously rated as dangerous but rational had suddenly revealed himself to be an aggressive and probably irrational gambler. No fully sane and competent Russian ruler would have attacked Ukraine with the inadequate forces and haphazard, overconfident strategy that Putin employed.

You might think that Putin's sheer incompetence would be reassuring to the Swedes and the Finns, but it was not. On the contrary, it frightens them, because



they are very much in the same position as Ukraine militarily: relatively small countries (Sweden has ten million people, Finland five million) with very good military forces.

I can vouch for this personally, because in the course of making a documentary film about neutrality I spent time at sea in the Baltic with Swedish fast attack boats out of Karlskrona,

and with Finnish reservists on exercises between Lappeenranta and the Russian border. They might even be able to stop the Russians dead (and nobody else is in a position to invade them). That's why the Swedes chose neutrality: they reckoned they were safer that way. If there were a general war, they were not a strategically vital place and they would be very costly to invade, so

maybe the major combatants would just leave them alone.

The Finns had neutrality thrust upon them by the Soviet Union after the Second World War. They lost a lot of territory to the Russians, but they fought hard enough that Moscow let them be neutral rather than reducing them to satellite status.

So why have both countries now decided to join NATO? They are still such tough nuts to crack that they could probably stop the Russians by themselves if Moscow was also engaged in a war with NATO. And why would the Russians attack only them alone? Stay neutral, and even in the worst case the Russians will probably pass you by.

That remained a valid assessment until 24 February 2022, and then it suddenly wasn't. Putin invaded Ukraine, probably to the

astonishment even of his own entourage, and from the start began issuing veiled warnings about resorting to nuclear weapons if he was thwarted.

The Russian attack in Ukraine bogged down almost at once, as it was bound to do unless the Ukrainian army was utterly useless. Too few Russian troops, too many lines of attack. And the hints from Moscow about resorting to nuclear weapons to compensate for a conventional defeat multiplied.

This is crazy stuff, and all military skills and hardware the Baltic countries could bring to bear in a conventional war would be irrelevant if they were faced with similar Russian nuclear threats themselves.

The only effective counter to a nuclear threat is a credible promise of nuclear retaliation.

Sweden and Finland have no nuclear weapons, and the only way they can have their security guaranteed by a nuclear deterrent is to join NATO. So that is what they are doing.

The Swedes still don't like nuclear weapons, and Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson emphasised that Sweden will not allow foreign troops or nuclear weapons to be based in the country, but the deal is done.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is demanding that the two Baltic countries expel some anti-Turkish Kurdish activists as a reward for not vetoing this NATO expansion, but this problem will be finessed. It will take months to do the legal work, but in practice the two Baltic countries are already covered by NATO's nuclear guarantee.

Wheat export ban will ensure delivery to most needy: India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

In a strong counter to the G-7's criticism of its wheat export ban, India said its decision will ensure delivery to the most needy. At the same time, it also hit out at them for hoarding food items and "unjustified increase" of food prices.

It was the first time New Delhi explained its position in the United Nations since it imposed wheat export curbs on May 13. Enunciating the Government's stand on the issue, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said in the United Nations late Wednesday food grains should not go the way of the Covid-19 vaccines. He also expressed apprehensions over hoarding and discrimination amid the "unjustified increase" in food prices.

He was speaking at the ministerial meeting on 'Global Food Security Call to Action' chaired by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken under the US Presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of May.

The meeting and India's assertion at the UN came just days after India's last Friday decision to ban wheat exports in a bid to check high prices amid shortage of wheat due to scorching heat wave.

The decision is aimed at controlling the retail prices of wheat and wheat flour -- which have risen by an average 14-20 per cent in the last one year -- and meet the food grain



requirement of neighbouring and vulnerable countries.

"A number of low income societies are today confronted with the twin challenges of rising costs and difficulty in access to food grains. Even those like India, who have adequate stocks, have seen an unjustified increase in food prices. It is clear that hoarding and speculation is at work. We cannot allow this to pass unchallenged," Muraleedharan said.

He said the Indian government has recognised the sudden spike in global prices of wheat which put "our food security and those of our neighbours and other vulnerable countries at risk."

He said India is committed to ensuring that such adverse impact on food security is effectively mitigated and the vulnerable cushioned against sudden changes in the global market. "In order to manage our own overall food security and support the needs of neighbouring and other vulnerable developing countries, we have announced some measures regarding wheat exports on

13 May 2022," he said.

The minister said these measures allow for export on the basis of approvals to those countries which are required to meet their food security demands. This will be done on the request from the concerned governments. "Such a policy will ensure that we will truly respond to those who are most in need," he said.

The minister emphasised that India will play its due role in advancing global food security "and it will do so in a manner in which it upholds equity, display compassion, and promotes social justice."

India called out the West and cautioned that the issue of food grains should not go the way of Covid-19 vaccines, which were purchased by the rich nations in quantities excess of what they needed, leaving the poor and less developed nations scrambling to administer even the initial doses to their people.

He said it was important to have equity, affordability and accessibility when it comes to food grains. "We have already seen to our great cost how these

principles were disregarded in the case of Covid-19 vaccines. Open markets must not become an argument to perpetuate inequity and promote discrimination," Muraleedharan said.

Ahead of Washington's signature events on food security, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said "We have seen the report of India's decision. We're encouraging countries not to restrict exports because we think any restrictions on exports will exacerbate the food shortages. But you've -- again, India will be one of the countries participating in our meeting at the Security Council, and we hope that they can, as they hear the concerns being raised by other countries, that they would reconsider that position."

Muraleedharan highlighted India's "track record" of helping its partners in distress, saying even in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts, India has never been found wanting.

He said India has provided food to Afghanistan, Africa, Sri Lanka and Myanmar "In keeping with our ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', (the world is one family) and our 'Neighbourhood First' policy."

India underlined that the global impact of Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts, including in Ukraine, has impacted lives of ordinary people adversely, particularly in the developing countries, with spiralling energy and commodity prices and disruptions in global logistical supply chains.

Congress has turned into a bhai-behen party, says Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Blaming the Congress for not giving space to "regional aspirations" and thus allowing the spawning of dynasty-run regional parties focused on only "family interests, BJP president J P Nadda on Thursday described the main Opposition party as neither national nor Indian and not a democratic either. He said, the Congress has turned into a "bhai-behen party" in an obvious reference to Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Nadda was addressing a seminar, organized by the Mumbai-based RSS-BJP-linked think tank 'Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (RMP) at Nehru Memorial Auditorium here, to discuss the impact of "dynasty-based political parties" on the health of democratic process in the country and "ways and means to regulate" party formation.

The recommendations will be submitted to the Election Commission of India for its consideration.

In his speech, BJP MP Vinay Sahasrabudhe, also the

Vice Chairman of the RMP, said only eight of the 54 political parties recognized by the Election Commission are free of a dynastic rule which, he cautioned, was a frightening reality. Family-run parties are against the spirit of democracy, he said.

Interestingly, senior JD(U) leader and Union Minister R C P Singh, invited to the seminar, also made a no-holds-barred attack on the Congress' choice of Jawaharlal Nehru as the country's first Prime Minister and fully backed the BJP line saying Sardar Patel had everything but he did not get the top post after Independence.

Giving a tongue-lashing to the family-run parties, Nadda said in dynastic parties one person's interest reigns supreme and that such parties are a threat to democracy. These parties lack any ideology and their sole aim is to grab power, Nadda alleged.

Nadda blamed the Congress for the growth of regional parties, accusing the main opposition party of not giving space to regional aspirations during its dominance



over national politics.

The BJP, he said, on the other hand believes in "unity among diversity" and gives space to regional aspirations while keeping the centre strong. He said personality cults have become "overbearing and overwhelming" in the regional outfits, sidetracking ideology and local aspirations.

The BJP is the only party where internal democracy is maintained, Nadda sought to claim as he described the opposition party as being undemocratic. Nadda said regional family-run parties have emerged all-over the country - from Jammu and Kashmir to Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha,

Maharashtra, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. "Family interests are supreme in these parties, vitiating the election process," he said.

Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis said regional parties are nothing short of a 'private limited' company and blamed these outfits for cases of corruption, claiming that they need money for families to maintain their absolute power.

In the Congress, he said the "prince" does not want to be the president of the party but nor does he want anyone else to take over, and the party is functioning without a head.

Jharkhar joins BJP days after resigning from Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar, who had this week tweeted "good luck and good bye" to the Congress leadership, joined the BJP here on Thursday in the presence of party president J P Nadda. Jakhar said he had to quit Congress as he

opposed its "divisive politics" and asserted he would play an important role for the BJP in Punjab.

Last month, the Congress' disciplinary panel had recommended that Jakhar be suspended from the party for two years and removed from all posts. "I had to leave after I was put in the dock for assert-

ing that Punjab cannot be divided," Jakhar, 68, said, in a reference to the Congress selection of Charanjit Singh Channi as the first Dalit chief minister of Punjab before the assembly poll which the Congress lost to the AAP. Jakhar was one of the strong aspirants for the post of the Chief Ministership in Punjab.

"Three generations of my family served the Congress party over the last 50 years. Today,

I have broken the 50-year-old tie with the party over issues of nationalism, unity and brotherhood in Punjab," Jakhar said addressing the newsmen at the BJP head office.

China protests US Special Coordinator's meeting with Dalai Lama in Dharamshala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

As US Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues met the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh on Thursday, China protested and said it violated Washington's commitment that Tibet is part of China and it does not support Tibetan separatists. Beijing also said the visit was an interference in the internal matters of China.

The sharp reaction came after the Special Coordinator met the Dalai Lama and expressed US President Joe Biden and the American people's greetings to the Dalai Lama. She also expressed the gratitude of the world for the messages of peace that the Dalai Lama espouses.

The Tibetan government-in-exile, in a press statement, said she discussed the rich tra-

ditions of freedom and democracy in the United States and India. Tibetan leaders Penpa Tsering, Norzin Dolma and Namgyal Choedup besides members of the US Special Coordinator's delegation also attended the meeting.

"His Holiness expressed his happiness to meet Zeyla and emphasised the oneness of all humanity. The Dalai Lama further said despite its best efforts, China has failed to win over the Tibetan people and transform their minds. Instead, he said, the thinking of the Chinese people itself is rapidly changing," it stated.

The US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues was on a two-day visit to Dharamshala. On Wednesday, she visited the Central Tibetan Administration and held discussions with its leadership. She also visited the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, the Tibetan Institute of Performing

Arts, the Tibet Museum, and also met with members of the Tibetan civil society, according to the statement.

China said the meeting violated Washington's commitment that Tibet is part of China and it does not support Tibetan separatists. The Chinese Foreign Ministry criticised Zeyla's visit, calling it an interference in China's internal affairs.

"Tibet is part of China and Tibetan religious affairs is China's internal affairs" China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing when asked about the Indian-origin senior US diplomat's meeting with the 86-year-old top Tibetan Buddhist leader. The US' appointment of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues is an interference in China's internal affairs, he said, adding China firmly objects to it and has never recognised it.

World must create resilient supply chains: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

As the world is facing the after effects of the corona pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said, "We must not only seek socio-economic recovery from the Covid pandemic but also create resilient and reliable supply chains."

He also said the knock-on effects of the Ukraine conflict have led to sharp increases in the costs of energy, food and commodities. This must be mitigated for the sake of the developing world, he stressed.

Putting across these points from the country's point of view in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)/foreign ministers' meet hosted by China, he also said the grouping has

repeatedly affirmed respect for sovereign equality, territorial integrity and international law. The meet took place in the backdrop of the Russian military action in Ukraine. "We must live up to these commitments and BRICS should unanimously and specifically support UN Security Council reform," he tweeted.

The minister also stressed that BRICS must display zero tolerance for terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism. It was in obvious reference to Pakistan supporting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Touching upon the environment issue, Jaishankar said the BRICS should press for credible commitment of resources by developed nations for climate action and climate justice.

He also said a globalized and digitized world will give due regard to trust and transparency and Sustainable

Development Goals must be approached in a comprehensive manner.

Issues including propelling economic recovery post Corona pandemic and development figured prominently during the foreign ministers summit.

Besides Jaishankar, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor, Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Franca and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attended the meeting chaired by China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Yi had visited India in late March and held bilateral dialogue with Jaishankar on the persisting stand-offs for the last two years at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. It was the first visit by a Chinese minister to India since the face-offs erupted at the border.

Monitoring situation, says India after reports on China building bridge on Pangong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after reports of China building a second bridge on the Pangong Tso (lake) in Ladakh emerged, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said here the government is monitoring the situation. "We always felt it was occupied," it added.

This reaction came as China is building a second bridge at the lake to enable its tanks and armoured columns to move speedily.

The stand-offs in Ladakh started from the Pangong lake in May 2020 leading to a major crisis. Face-offs are some flashpoints that are still on for the last two and half years.

Fielding questions on the issue after some satellite images highlighted the bridge,

ministry of external affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here, "We have seen reports on this bridge or a second bridge. We are monitoring the situation. Of course, we always felt it was occupied."

He also said talks are on with the Chinese side and "We will continue to remain engaged both at diplomatic and military levels."

Damien Symon, a geospatial intelligence researcher, who keeps track of Chinese activities along the LAC, posted satellite images of the new construction on Twitter.

Symon, who uses the handle @detresfa, said a "larger bridge" is being developed parallel to the first one, adding the likely aim of the construction is to "support larger/heavier movement" (of the military) over the lake.

Modi to hold bilateral meetings with Japanese, Aus counterparts, US Prez at Quad Summit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take part in the Quad Summit in Tokyo on May 24 and hold bilateral meetings with his Japanese and Australian counterparts and US President Joe Biden there. The summit, the fourth one, will take stock of the situation in the Indo-Pacific region where China is flexing its muscle. Moreover, the summit takes

place at a time when the Russia-Ukraine conflict is unabated.

The Quad comprises India, the US, Japan and Australia. The leaders had met for the first ever summit in Washington last year. The forthcoming high-level meet is the second to be held in person while two summits were held virtually.

Giving details of Modi's upcoming visit, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here on Thursday bilateral meetings with Japanese counterpart and

bilateral meeting with US President will take place the same day.

During the visit, Modi will participate in a business event with Japanese business leaders. He will also address and interact with the Indian community in Japan.

Bagchi said "We attach a lot of importance to the Quad. We have been keen to showcase what the Quad can do together and what it stands for. We will discuss contemporary issues and other issues of importance."

In November 2017, the US, Australia, India and Japan gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence, amidst China's growing military presence in the strategic region.

The Quad nations also carried out naval drills in the Indo-Pacific region in the last two years. China has all along criticized the combine claiming it will lead to militarization of



the region.

Announcing Biden's schedule, his National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in

Washington, "We believe that this summit will demonstrate both in substance and in vision that democracies can deliver and that these four nations working together will defend and uphold the principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific."

While he is in Tokyo, Biden will also launch a new and ambitious economic initiative for the region, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which will be a 21st century economic arrangement, designed to tackle new eco-

nommic challenges, he said.

The framework, he said, will involve work ranging "from setting the rules of the digital economy to ensuring secure and resilient supply chains to managing the energy transition to investing in clean, modern high standards infrastructure."

Biden will be joined in person by the Japanese Prime Minister for the launch of IPEF and virtually by leaders from a number of Indo-Pacific partners from down under to southeast Asia to northeast Asia.

Before arriving in Japan, Biden is scheduled to travel to South Korea for a summit meeting with its leaders. "We think putting that on display over four days bilaterally with Korea and Japan through the Quad, through the Indo-Pacific economic framework, it will send a powerful message. We think that message will be heard everywhere. We think it will be heard in Beijing. But it is not a negative message and it's not targeted at any one country," he said.

‘Amritsar-Jamnagar Expressway to be completed by Sept 2023’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The ambitious 1,224 km long Amritsar-Jamnagar Expressway project, which would connect the busy ports of Gujarat with industrial and agriculture centres from Punjab, is slated for completion by September 2023.

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the 277 km long Bikaner to Jodhpur section of the corridor is targeted to be completed and opened to the public by 2022 end. Passing through Punjab, Haryana,

Rajasthan and Gujarat, this greenfield corridor would decrease the distance between Amritsar and Jamnagar from 1,430 km to 1,256 km and cut the travel time by half from 26 hours to about 13 hours and is considered to be another major expressway similar to the Delhi Mumbai Expressway corridor.

Gadkari said the Amritsar-Jamnagar Greenfield corridor, one of the most important Greenfield corridors being developed by NHAI, is being constructed in a full capacity. He said the complete corridor is targeted to be completed by September 2023. Work on another

ambitious expressway Delhi-Mumbai with about 1400 km length is also scheduled to be completed by March 2023. Both the projects have been taken by the central road making agency NHAI under Bharatmala Pariyojana. The Minister said the flagship 1,224 km long Amritsar - Bhatinda - Jamnagar Corridor is being developed at a total capital cost of Rs 26,000 Crore and will connect the economic towns of Amritsar, Bhatinda, Sangaria, Bikaner, Sanchar, Samakhiali and Jamnagar across the four states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

He said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the construction of Greenfield corridors, the government is committed to the development of infrastructure in the country. Gadkari said the corridor will connect the northern industrial and agricultural centres of the country with the key ports of western India like Jamnagar and Kandla. This will help boost the industrial revolution connecting industrial belt of Baddi, Bhatinda and Ludhiana through spurs and the state of Jammu and Kashmir through Delhi - Amritsar - Katra Expressway, he added.

Railways to run passenger trains on DFCs during emergency situations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a big decision, the Indian Railway has decided to run passenger trains during exigencies on its Dedicated freight corridors (DFCs) which have been designed for the exclusive movement of goods trains at a high speed. According to an official order of the Railway Board, the new arrangements operations as of now on eastern and western corridors will come into effect in case of train accidents or natural calamities where passengers will be ferried to their destinations on the parallel DFC network.

"The move will benefit the passengers of the Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai routes -- two of the busiest rail routes in the country. These routes also run parallel to the two dedicated freight corridors (DFCs). The Railway Board has decided that in case of exigencies, running of passenger-carrying trains on the DFC network on corresponding IR lines can be permitted..." the order read. Railway Board officials said the eastern and western DFCs are being built only for freight and as a rule, high-speed goods trains (100 kmph) are being operated on the said corridors. There is no provision for

running passenger trains on the DFCs. The board has given permission to run passenger trains on the DFCs only under special circumstances. What is significant is that 80 per cent of the eastern and western DFCs run parallel to the Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai rail routes respectively. This will enable passenger trains to run on the DFCs in case of a disruption in the existing rail routes.

These busy routes witness disruptions if there is a breach in the tracks due to any reason. This leads to more congestion and diversion of trains, affecting the overall operations.

The EDFC, with a route length of 1,875 kilometres, will start from Sahnewal near Ludhiana in Punjab and pass through Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand to terminate at Dankuni in West Bengal. It will traverse through six states with the maximum length in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana having the least coverage.

The Western Dedicated Freight Corridor is a 1,504-kilometre-long, under-construction broad gauge freight corridor. It will connect Dadri in Uttar Pradesh with the Jawaharlal Nehru port in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai.

4 LeT ultras nabbed, Baramulla wine shop terror attack cracked

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir police Thursday claimed to have cracked the case of recent terror attack on a wine shop in Dewan Bagh in Baramulla area by arresting four Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorists and their accomplice along with 5 pistols, 9 magazines, 205 rounds, 23 grenades, an IED & other incriminating material.

According to the police, “Two bike-borne terrorists including a burqa clad pillion rider had dropped a grenade inside newly-opened wine shop at Dewan Bagh Baramulla in which one employee Ranjit Singh, son of Kishan Lal resident of Bakra Rajouri of the said shop, got killed and other three employees were injured. A case with FIR number 84/2022 under relevant sections of law was registered and investigation was set into motion to nab the terrorists involved in this terror act.

“The arrested terrorists have been identified as Shahid Showkat Bala son of Showkat Ahmad Bala resident of



Police personnel arrest four Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorists and a terror associate in connection with a grenade blast on May 17, in Baramulla district on Thursday

Banglowlagh, Safer Ahmad Mir, son of GH Nabi Mir resident of Mir Sahib Old Town, Mohd Maroof Soleh alias Adil, son of Nazir Ahmad Soleh resident of Kanlibagh, and Faisal Shaban Gojri son of Mohd Shaban Gojri resident of Chesti Colony, Baramulla, and terrorist associate has been identified as Hafiz Ahmad Sofi son of Bilal Ahmad Sofi resident of Arampora, Baramulla”, said the Police.

According to a Police spokesman, the same group of

terrorists were involved in various terrorist acts as was disclosed, which include last year's grenade attacks in Baramulla town, various firing incidents in & around Baramulla, transportation of proscribed weapons and explosives etc.

Meanwhile, in Jammu General Officer Commanding, XVI Corps, Lieutenant General Manjinder Singh Thursday reviewed the security situation in the Jammu region ahead of the commencement of the annual Amarnath yatra next

month. Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi had earlier toured forward areas in twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch to review the security situation and operational preparedness in the region.

“A security review meeting chaired by Lt Gen Singh was held at Nagrota. The meeting was attended by Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh and senior officials of various intelligence agencies operating in the region,” a defence spokesman said.

The meeting primarily focused on the prevailing security situation in the Jammu division, he said.

The security measures for the forthcoming Machail as well as Amarnath yatra were also discussed in detail to ensure streamlined coordination between intelligence and security agencies, the spokesman said.

The Amarnath yatra, scheduled to begin from June 30 to August 11, is taking place after a gap of two years.

CBI grills Bengal Min, TMC leader in recruitment scam case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

As a plethora of scams continued to rock the Mamata Banerjee dispensation, two senior Trinamool Congress leaders including a junior minister and a Trinamool Congress national working committee member were on Thursday subjected to intensive grilling by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

After remaining at large for two days Minister of State for Education Paresh Adhikari surrendered before the central agency for his alleged role in giving out-of-turn appointment to his own daughter in a government school by influencing the School Service Commission.

Adhikari's grilling came hours after his senior Cabinet colleague and State Industry Minister Partho Chatterjee was subjected to about three-and-a-half hours questioning by the CBI on large scale irregularities in SSC recruitment process.

Chatterjee --- the then Education Minister when the scams took place--- was on Wednesday questioned by the CBI. He allegedly ducked most

of the questions or gave “roundabout answers,” Agency sources said adding he could be summoned again.

Hundreds of people --- the figure may run into thousands as per claims--- were given appointments through back door allegedly in lieu of favours in various categories (from secondary level to higher secondary level teachers to Group D and C posts) of jobs by passing the successful candidates whose names were figured in the merit lists.

Even as the successful yet deprived candidates agitated on the streets the Calcutta High Court not only ordered dismissal of hundreds of the illegally appointed staff but also ordered filing of criminal cases against the politicians and the officials in charge of the entire process.

The Court of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay took the issue so seriously that it responded to a late evening petition on Wednesday directing the Central forces in the midnight to take charge of the SSC building so as to prevent tampering of electronic and other evidences. The entry of all staff,

save a few top officers had been prohibited in the building till Friday noon.

The high drama on Adhikari ended on Thursday evening when the Court directed him to surrender before the CBI or else face contempt proceedings. The Minister flew in from North Bengal and reported at the Agency officer for interrogation. He was being interrogated when last report was filed.

Meanwhile, after a Division Bench rejected his prayer for a respite from appearance Partha Chatterjee on Thursday appealed before the Supreme Court and his petition is likely to be heard on Friday noon, sources said.

In a related TMC strongman and party national working committee member

Anubrata Mandal was on Thursday grilled for more than four hours by the CBI in cattle smuggling case. Mandal, also the party's Birbhum district president, had been evading appearance before the Agency for the past several months.

According to sources Mandal who was asked 36 questions gave misleading

replies to many of them. The CBI officers have asked him to return with his bank details and income tax return files, sources said.

BJP running Tughlaqi raj: Mamata



PNS ■ KOLKATA

Under attack from the Opposition parties for running a Government steeped in corruption Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday came down heavily on the BJP Government saying it was running a “Tughlaqi raj.” She was referring to the allegedly imprudent regime of 14th century ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Addressing an audience in West Mindapore the Chief Minister said that the BJP which was running a Tughlaqi government with the help of (central) agencies should not think that they would be able to stop the TMC from moving forward. “They have no shame even after losing the elections (last year) ... so they are unleashing agencies against us ... they are running a Tughlaqi raj ... but if they think that they can stop us by doing so with the help of agencies they are wrong,” she said adding the BJP's actions were politically motivated. “They are thinking about 2024 elections ... they think that they will win by using agencies against us ... they are telling lies about violence ... but where is the violence ... it is only in Bengal that people of all the parties live very peacefully ... you talk of a few incidents here ... but what about the crimes taking place in your States (ruled by the BJP) what action you take there?” she asked.

Sanjay Raut, Ravi Rana share meal in Leh

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After a bitter public spat over the “Hanuman Chalisa” controversy, Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut and the Rana-couple — Ravi Rana and Navneet Kaur Rana — bonded well in the cool climate of Ladakh, setting aside the political differences.

So much so that Raut and Ravi Rana, husband of Navneet Rana, broke bread at Leh on Thursday.

A twitter user posted a photograph of Raut and Ravi having breakfast together and exchanging pleasantries. “In Leh today Sanjay Raut & Ravi Rana Husband of MP Navneet Rana. Cute Na ?,” Sameet Thakkar tweeted.

Raut and Navneet Kaur Rana, who are Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha members, respectively, are part of the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs that is currently on a visit to Leh, the



Shiv Sena's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut and Ravi Rana, husband of Independent MP Navneet Kaur Rana, having breakfast at Leh on Thursday

largest town in the union territory of Ladakh.

While Navneet Rana is an Independent MP from Amravati, her husband Ravi Rana is a three-time MLA from Badnera.

As per the regulations, an MP is allowed to take a family member and hence Ravi Rana is accompanying Navneet Rana. Over the last month, Raut and the Ranas have been at loggerheads over the latter's

threat to recite “Hanuman Chalisa” in front of chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's private residence “Matoshri” at Bandra in north-west Mumbai.

Ranas were arrested on April 23 for offences registered initially against them under sections 153A (causing enmity between different groups), 34 (common intention) and later under section 124A (sedition) of IPC for challenging the government machinery and making remarks against Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in a controversy arising out of their threat to recite “Hanuman Chalisa” in front of Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's Bandra residence.

It may be recalled that during the course of the “Hanuman Chalisa” controversy, Raut had the Rana-couple as “Bunty and Bubbly” and claimed that the BJP was behind the “bogus couple.”

Maha Zilla Parishads, Gram Panchayats ordered to remove curbs on widows

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking a cue from a progressive step by Herwad Gram Panchayat in Kolhapur district of western Maharashtra, the MVA Government has directed Zilla Parishads (ZPs) and Gram Panchayats (GPs) across the State to do away with the practice imposing various restrictions on the widowed women.

Within days after Herwad Gram Panchayat passed a resolution to remove restrictions imposed on the women after the death of their husbands, the Maharashtra Government on Thursday issued a Government Resolution (GR) directed ZPs and gram panchayats to put an end to the regressive practices followed by the widows.

The regressive customs and restrictions imposed on widowed women involved widows

removing their “mangalsutras” and ‘toe rings’, wiping ‘sindoor’ from their foreheads and breaking the bangles. The widows used to be ostracized and stigmatized in the villages by preventing them from attending any family, social, religious functions, celebrating festivals openly, interacting with other males and so on.

A fortnight ago, the gram panchayats of Herwad in Shirol taluka of Kolhapur district adopted a resolution removing all restrictions on widowed women in their respective villages. Mangaon village in the neighbouring Hatkanangale taluka of the same district adopted a similar resolution.

Having taken cognisance of the developments in Herwad and Mangaon villages, the State Rural Development Ministry — through a GR -- directed the ZPs and Panchayat Samitis to

follow the suit and adopt similar resolutions.

“In line with the progressive traditions of Maharashtra, we have taken a decision to do away with all restrictions on the widowed women,” Maharashtra Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif said.

MVA women leaders - Women and Child Development Minister Yashomati Thakur, School Education Minister Prof Varsha Gaikwad and Baramati MP Supriya Sule have backed the move.

“Big thank you...Hasan Mushrif sahab for taking such a progressive decision for widowed women on the grounds of the resolution passed by Herwad Gram Panchayat of Kolhapur,” Sule said. Earlier in the day, Mushrif called on NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

FROM PAGE 1

SC JAILS SIDHU FOR 1 YR IN 34-YR OLD ROAD RAGE

“The result of the aforesaid is that the review applications/petitions are allowed to the aforesaid extent and in addition to the fine imposed we consider it appropriate to impose a sentence of imprisonment for a period of one-year rigorous imprisonment to be undergone by respondent no.1 (Sidhu),” said the bench.

The judgment noted that some material aspects which were required to be taken note of appeared to have been somehow missed out at the stage of sentencing, such as the physical fitness of Sidhu as he was an international cricketer, tall and well-built, and aware of the force of a blow that even his hand would carry.

“The blow was not inflicted on a person identically physically placed but a 65-year-old person, more than double his age. Respondent no.1 (Sidhu) cannot say that he did not know the effect of the blow or plead ignorance on this aspect,” it said.

The bench noted the top court, to some extent, had been indulgent in ultimately holding him guilty of the offence of simple hurt under section 323 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The question is whether even on sentence, the mere passage of time can result in a fine of Rs 1,000 being an adequate sentence where a person has lost his life because of the severity of the blow inflicted by Sidhu, who was 25-year-old at that time, with his hands, the court said.

Section 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt) of IPC entails a maximum jail term of up to one year or with a fine which may extend to Rs 1,000 or both.

Siddhu and his aide Rupinder Singh Sandhu engaged in a fight with the victim in 1988, leading to the victim's death after some days. In 1999, Siddhu and other accused were acquitted but in 2006, Punjab and Haryana High Court convicted them for three years. The apex court had on May 15, 2018, set aside the HC verdict convicting Sidhu.

STAY GYANVAPI HEARING, SC TELLS VARANASI COURT

A conical structure besides remnants of temples allegedly exists below the central dome of the mosque, as per the report.

A stone below the third dome of the mosque reportedly has lotus engravings. The report also talked about the presence of a round structure of 2.5 feet height in the pond

in the mosque complex used for “wazoo” (purification ritual before namaz). Petitioners call it a “shivling” but the mosque committee says it was a fountain.

Advocate Jain said they are assuring the bench that the Hindu parties would not proceed with the hearing before the civil court at Varanasi and would not press any further until the court takes up the matter on Friday.

The bench noted in its order that the proceedings have been mentioned by advocate Jain, who appears on behalf of the original plaintiffs, namely, the first to fifth respondents (female Hindu devotees who have filed the suit) in the proceedings before this court under Article 136 of the Constitution.

On May 17, the top court had directed the District Magistrate of Varanasi to ensure the protection of an area inside the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex where a ‘shivling’ is said to have been found during a survey and allowed Muslims to offer ‘namaz’ and perform ‘religious observances’. “Balancing the equity”, the top court had while hearing a plea of the Committee of Management Anjanman Intezamia Masjid which manages Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, passed the order and refused to stay the ongoing proceedings before the lower court.

The apex court order had come after it was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh Government, that the plaintiff's lawyer Hari Shankar Jain had suffered some cardiac issues and was hospitalised in Varanasi. The Muslim side has been referring to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 and its Section 4 which bars filing of any suit or initiating any other legal proceeding for a conversion of the religious character of any place of worship, as existing on August 15, 1947.

Meanwhile, the Varanasi court posted the next hearing on May 23 on the application filed by the advocates of the plaintiff demanding the demolition of the wall of room-like structure beneath the sealed wazu khana where a “shivling” is claimed to have been found during the survey. On the same day, the court will also hear the application moved by the district Government counsel to shift the fishes from the sealed wazu khana to safer place.

Special Court Commissioner Vishal Singh, along with Assistant Court Commissioner Ajay Pratap Singh, submitted the report of videography and survey conducted on May 14, 15 and 16 in the court of the Civil Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar.

The court commissioners refused to divulge the details of the survey report to media persons but said it ran to 15 pages and covered the videography and survey of the

inside area of Gyanvapi mosque complex, including the wazu khana where the shivling is claimed to have been found.

The court commissioners reportedly also submitted two 32 GB memory cards containing the videos and photographs taken during the survey and 70 annexure. They also reportedly submitted some evidence materials in some boxes in the court.

YASIN MALIK CONVICTED FOR TERROR FUNDING

The court had earlier also formally framed charges against other Kashmiri separatist leaders, including Farooq Ahmed Dar alias Bitta Karate, Shabbir Shah, Masarat Alam, Md Yusuf Shah, Aftab Ahmad Shah, Altaf Ahmad Shah, Nayeem Khan, Md Akbar Khanday, Raja Mehrajuddin Kalwal, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali, Shabir Ahmad Shah, Abdul Rashid Sheikh and Naval Kishore Kapoor.

The NIA had also chargesheeted Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) founder Hafiz Saeed and Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, who have been declared proclaimed offenders (PO) in the case.

The 2017 case titled Hurriyat Terror Financing Case of Jammu and Kashmir pertains to the conspiracy by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Amir of Jammat-ud-Dawah, and the secessionist and separatist leaders, including the members/cadres of the Hurriyat Conference, who had acted in connivance with active militants of proscribed terrorist organizations like Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Dukhtar-e-Millat, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and others.

The outfits were accused of raising, receiving and collecting funds domestically and from abroad through various illegal channels, including hawala, for funding separatist and terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir to cause disruption in the Kashmir valley by way of pelting stones on security forces, systematically burning schools, damaging public property and waging war against India.

The NIA had registered the case suo moto on May 30, 2017 and filed a chargesheet against 12 accused persons, including two absconding accused persons--- Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, head of LeT, and Mohammad Yusuf Shah alias Salahuddin, chief of HM on January 18, 2018. The duo is based in Pakistan.

Subsequently, first supplementary chargesheet was filed against one accused person on January 22, 2019 and second supplementary chargesheet was filed against five accused persons, including Malik on October 4, 2019.

“Investigation had established that Yasin Malik alias Aslam is the head of unlawful asso-

ciation Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and is involved in terrorist and subversive activities in Jammu and Kashmir. In 2016, he along with other Hurriyat leaders formed a self-styled group called “Joint Resistance Leadership”, whereby they started issuing directions to the masses to hold protests, demonstrations, hartals, shutdowns, roadblocks and such other disruptive activities which would push the entire society into chaos and lawlessness,” the NIA said in a statement.

Malik was also involved in raising funds from cross-LoC (Line of Control) traders, various entities based abroad and distributing those funds among militants and stone-pelters for funding stone-pelting and demonstrations, it further said.

Charges were framed against Malik on March 16, 2022 and he had pleaded guilty on May 10, 2022. Further trial against the remaining accused persons in the case is continuing, it added.

HC ANNULS DOORSTEP RATION DELIVERY SCHEME IN DELHI

Even when the Lieutenant Governor requires the Chief Minister to refer the matter for his decision to the President, it is reference by the Lieutenant Governor and would, therefore, meet the requirement of the proviso to Article 239AA(4) of the Constitution.

The final decision shall rest with the President on the difference of opinion and the said decision shall prevail and bind the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor, who shall act in accordance with the said final decision, the order said.

The Kejriwal Government was set to roll out the scheme on March 25, 2021, and again in mid-June. Both times, L-G Anil Baijal opposed it. The argument was that the Delhi Government had called it the “Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana”. Days before its first scheduled launch, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs objected to the “Mukhya Mantri” part of the name.

The Ministry's argument was that as delivery of rations fell under the National Food Security Act, any change in the delivery mechanism had to be done through an amendment of the Act in Parliament. The Centre maintains that doorstep delivery of rations goes against the grain of the National Food Security Act, though it has not been able to convince the courts on this point.

The fight has continued. The scheme had become a flashpoint between the Centre and

the AAP-led State Government, with the former saying the plan violated provisions of the NFSA and would deprive migrants of food-grains, and the latter pointing out that it would root out the ration mafia and ensure that all beneficiaries received their share.

Considering the objection, the Kejriwal Government dropped the word “Mukhyamantri” from the name of the scheme and decided to implement it under the existing NFSA Act. However, the file of the scheme sent to the L-G failed to get his approval. The High Court had on January 10 reserved its order on the pleas by petitioners Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers Sangh and Delhi Ration Dealers Union after holding extensive hearings.

SC GRANTS BAIL TO AZAM KHAN

The top court said though FIR, in this case, was registered on March 18, 2020, and the charge sheet was filed on September 10, 2020, Khan has only now been implicated, i.e., after a period of one year and seven months, by order dated May 6, 2022, passed by the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Rampur. “Taking into consideration the delay in the implication of the petitioner in FIR No 70 of 2020 and the nature of the allegations made therein, we are of the considered view that it will not be in the interest of justice to deprive the petitioner of his personal liberty, particularly when in respect of 87 criminal cases/FIRs, which were the subject matter of Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 39 of 2022, he has already been released on bail,” the bench also comprising Justices B R Gavai and A S Bopanna, said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Khan, had submitted that from the facts, it is clear that the ruling party BJP is making every attempt possible to keep Khan behind the bars by implicating him in one FIR after the other.

GST COUNCIL SUGGESTIONS NOT BINDING ON GOVTS: SC

The High Court had held that no tax can be levied under the IGST on the ocean freight for the services provided by a person located in non-taxable territory by way of transportation of goods by a vessel from a place outside India up to the customs station in India. It had quashed the 2017 notification of the Centre by which IGST of five per cent would be levied on the services of transport of goods in a vessel.

Rahul to address meet at Cambridge University

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the deepening crisis in the party with two leaders — Sunil Jakhar and Hardik Patel — quitting the party, former Congress president Rahul



Gandhi left for London on Thursday. His second foreign visit in less than a month's time, Rahul will attend the 'Ideas for India' conference starting from Friday at Cambridge University.

There he will address 'India at 75: The Challenges and Way Ahead for a Resilient-Modern India' and interact with Indians present there. This program of Rahul will be held on 23 May.

Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala said that Rahul will also talk to the NRIs about the present and future of the country. Rahul is accompanied by senior party leaders Salman Khurshid and Priyanka Khadge to take part in the event.

However Rahul faced severe criticism as again at a time when the Congress is grappling with an exodus of party leaders from key states he left for abroad about which Hardik Patel took a jibe in his resignation letter to the party. Without taking names, Hardik stated in his letter senior that Congress leaders were busy checking messages on their mobile phones, and some leaders were “enjoying abroad” when the party and the country needed them.

Lanka police questions more ruling party MPs over violence

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan police on Thursday questioned three more members of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group over the violent clashes between anti- and pro-government protesters in the country that killed at least 10 people and injured over 200 others.

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

Nihal Thalduma, the police spokesman, said three former ministers were quizzed on Thursday in Parliament by a group of police's CID investigators.

Two of their colleagues who were arrested previously have been remanded till May 25.

Thalduma said 1,059 people have been arrested for attacks on the protesters and for the violence unleashed against the ruling parliamentarians where some 78 government parliamentarians had suffered arson attacks on property.

Thalduma said the death toll from violence had risen to 10 with the death of a



person admitted to hospital with serious head injuries dying on Thursday.

Politicians were charged with encouraging them to attack the protesters. At least two of them, a former state minister and another MP, who had been identified in video footage as instigators of violence were arrested and remanded.

The government parliamentarians blamed police inaction as the cause of arson attacks against their private properties.

They charged the opposition Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) with instigating violence which was vehemently denied by the Marxist party.

The mob destroyed several tents and other structures erected at Galle Face and also attacked some of the demonstrators.

The violence saw arson attacks on the homes of several politicians, including the ancestral home of the Rajapaksas in Hambantota.

Video footage showed the entire house of Mahinda Rajapaksa and his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Medamulana in Hambantota city was burning.

Prez: Lankan armed forces ended civil war with LTTE through humanitarian op

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has praised the country's military for ending the brutal conflict with the LTTE in 2009 and ushering in peace through a "humanitarian operation", saying there was no hatred, anger or revenge involved in the nearly three-decade-long civil war.

In a statement issued to mark the War Heroes Day on Wednesday, Rajapaksa, who is also the defence minister, asserted that the armed forces, who "safeguarded the freedom and territorial integrity" of the country will never be forgotten, under any circumstances.

"Our armed forces put an end to the war and brought peace to the country through a humanitarian operation. There was no hatred, anger or revenge in it. Therefore, there is no room for racism or any other form of extremism in the motherland where peace was established. We regard it as a unique value in Sri Lankan society," said Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Biden has an eye on China as he heads to South Korea, Japan

AP ■ WASHINGTON



President Joe Biden departs on a six-day trip to South Korea and Japan aiming to build rapport with the two nations' leaders while also sending an unmistakable message to China: Russia's faltering invasion of Ukraine should give Beijing pause about its own saber-rattling in the Pacific.

Biden departs Thursday and is set to meet newly elected South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. Their talks will touch on trade, increasing resilience in the global supply chain, growing concerns about North Korea's nuclear program and the explosive spread of COVID-19 in that country.

While in Japan, Biden will also meet with fellow leaders of the Indo-Pacific strategic

alliance known as the Quad, a group that includes Australia, India and Japan.

The U.S. Under Biden has forged a united front with democratic allies that has combined their economic heft to make Russia pay a price for its invasion of Ukraine. That alliance includes South Korea and Japan. But even as Biden is to be feted by Yoon at a state dinner and hold intimate conversations with Kishida, the U.S. President knows those relationships need to be deep-

ened if they're to serve as a counterweight to China's ambitions. "We think this trip is going to put on full display President Biden's Indo-Pacific strategy and then it will show in living color, the United States can at once lead the free world in responding to Russia's war in Ukraine, and that at the same time chart a course for effective, principled American leadership and engagement in a region that will define much of the future of the 21st century," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said.

The war in eastern Europe has created a sense of urgency about China among major U.S. Allies in the Pacific. Many have come to see the moment as their own existential crisis — one in which it's critical to show China it should not try to seize contested territory through military action.

Shaky Israeli coalition is jolted as another lawmaker quits

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Another member of Israel's parliament said Thursday she was quitting the ruling coalition, leaving embattled Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in control of a crumbling minority Government.

Ghaida Rinawie Zoabi's announcement further whittles away Bennett's hold on Israel's 120-seat parliament, reducing the coalition to 59 seats. Two other legislators from his own party have already bolted.

Rinawie Zoabi's departure further raises the possibility of new parliamentary elections, less than a year after the government took office. While Bennett's government remains



in power, it is now even more hamstrung in parliament and will likely struggle to function.

In a letter to Bennett, Rinawie Zoabi, who hails from the dovish Meretz party, said she was leaving the coalition because she said it too often adopted nationalist positions on issues of importance to her constituents, Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Turkey's leader says 'no' to Sweden and Finland's NATO bid

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkey will oppose Sweden and Finland joining NATO, the country's president flatly stated in a video released Thursday.

"We have told our relevant friends we would say 'no' to Finland and Sweden's entry into NATO, and we will continue on our path like this," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a group of Turkish youth in the video for Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, a national holiday.

Turkey's approval of Finland and Sweden's application to join the Western military alliance is crucial because NATO makes decisions by consensus. Each of its 30 member countries has the power to veto a membership bid.

World's highest weather station installed on Mt Everest

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A team of experts from the National Geographic Society has installed the "world's highest weather station" on Mt. Everest at an altitude of 8,830 metres to automatically measure various meteorological phenomena, the Nepalese media reported on Thursday.

Nepal's Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) said the automatic weather station was installed a few metres below the summit point (8,848.86 metres) last week as the snow and ice on the summit are not suitable for fixing equipment.

The weather monitoring system, powered by solar energy, is supposed to measure various meteorological phenomena like air temperature, wind speed and direction, air pres-

sure, change in surface height of snow, and incoming and outgoing short and long wave radiation. The NatGeo team, led by climate scientist Baker Perry from the Appalachian State University in the US, consisted of acclaimed climbers and scientists, many of whom scaled the world's highest peak while installing the weather station.

The team spent a month in the Everest region of Nepal and also carried out the maintenance of other stations, including a station at South Col, The Himalayan Times reported.

The DHM and National Geographic signed a memorandum of understanding to operate all five Automatic Weather Stations installed by NatGeo to provide near real-time information regarding mountain conditions.

Chinese Prez Xi hails conduct of local level polls in Nepal

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Chinese President Xi Jinping has congratulated Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for holding the local elections, saying the process of electing people's representatives from the people themselves was a good one.

Xi's message was conveyed to Nepalese Home Minister Balkrishna Khand when Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi met him here on Wednesday.

Hou called on Minister Khand at the latter's office in Singh Durbar Secretariat here, said Madhusudan Bhattarai, Press Coordinator, Home Ministry. Hou appreciated the recently held local level polls in the country, which went about largely peacefully and with a voter turnout of over 65 per cent.

House passes domestic terrorism bill after Buffalo shooting

AP ■ WASHINGTON



The House has passed legislation that would bolster federal resources to prevent domestic terrorism in response to the racist mass shooting in Buffalo, New York.

The 222-203, nearly party-line vote was an answer to the growing pressure Congress faces to address gun violence and white supremacist attacks — a crisis that escalated following two mass shootings over the weekend. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a member of the congressional committee investigating the attack on the U.S. Capitol, was the lone Republican to vote in favour of the measure.

But the legislative effort by Democrats is not new. The House passed a similar measure in 2020 only to have it languish

in the Senate. And since lawmakers lack the support in the Senate to move forward with any sort of gun-control legislation they see as necessary to stop mass shootings, Democrats are instead putting their efforts into a broader federal focus on domestic terrorism.

"We in Congress can't stop the likes of (Fox News host) Tucker Carlson from spewing hateful, dangerous replacement theory ideology across the airwaves.

Ukraine: Do not offer us ceasefire

AP ■ KYIV

An adviser to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says that the country won't accept any cease-fire until all the Russian troops pull back.

Thursday's statement from Mykhailo Podolyak, who was involved in several rounds of talks with Russia, reflects an increasingly confident stand taken by Ukraine as it has fought the Russian offensive to an effective standstill. "Do not offer us a ceasefire — this is impossible without total Russian troops withdrawal," Podolyak wrote on Twitter.

In a reference to a 2015 peace agreement for eastern Ukraine that was brokered by France and Germany and signed in the Belarusian capital Minsk, Podolyak wrote: "Ukraine is not interested in new 'Minsk' and the war renewal in a few years."

Several Ukrainian officials have recently issued similar statements. Podolyak didn't specify what would constitute "total" withdrawal. He added that "until Russia is ready to fully liberate occupied territories, our negotiating team is weapons, sanctions and money."

British military authorities say Russia's centralised command and control structure is likely to come under increasing strain as senior officers seek to avoid responsibility for failures during the invasion of Ukraine. The UK Ministry of Defence, in a briefing posted on Thursday

morning, said a number of senior Russian commanders have already been fired for poor performance during the war.

The ministry says Lt. Gen. Serhiy Kisel, who led the elite 1st Guards Tank Army, was suspended for failing to capture Kharkiv, and Vice Admiral Igor Osipov, who commanded the Black Sea Fleet, has probably been suspended following the sinking of the cruiser Moskva.

The ministry also said it is unclear whether Chief of the General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov retains the support of President Vladimir Putin.

The ministry says senior officials are likely to be increasingly distracted as they seek to avoid personal culpability amid this culture of "cover-ups and scapegoating." "This will likely place further strain on Russia's centralized model of command and control as officers increasingly seek to defer key decisions to their superiors," the ministry said. "It will be difficult for Russia to regain the initiative under these conditions."

The head of the Russia-backed separatist region in eastern Ukraine says that over half of Ukrainian troops holed up at a steel plant in the key port of Mariupol have come out.

Denis Pushilin, the head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, said Thursday that more than a half of Ukrainian servicemen who were holed up at the giant Azovstal steel plant have surrendered.

Jailed Egypt activist on hunger strike moved to new prison

AP ■ CAIRO

Egyptian authorities have transferred a prominent political activist from a maximum-security prison where he was allegedly tortured and denied basic rights to a new correctional facility, his family said on Thursday.

Alaa Abel-Fattah was transferred from Cairo's Tora prison complex to Wadi El-Natrun prison in the north of the country, where he was visited on Thursday by his family, his sister Mona Seif wrote on Twitter.

The transfer came as Abdel-Fattah had been on a hunger strike for nearly 48 days to protest his imprisonment conditions, according to his family. Abdel-Fattah had been serving time in one of Tora complex's most notorious prisons since his last arrest in September 2019. "We're really glad that Alaa Abd El Fattah has been removed from the guardianship" of officers who bore him a personal hatred. We're relieved that he is in a place which has some medical facilities," his aunt, award-winning novelist Ahdaf Soueif wrote on her Facebook page.

Abdel-Fattah has been constantly denied access to books, exercise time outside his cell, regular visits, and proper medical care, according to his family. He had previously filed several complaints documenting his mistreatment and alleging that he was beaten and humiliated by some prison officers.

Earlier this month, hundreds of Egyptian women filed a petition entitled "A Mothers' Plea" with the state-

appointed National Council for Human Rights. He has, demanding the release of the 40-year-old programmer. In response, Moushira Khattab, NCHR president announced that authorities agreed to transfer him to the newly-erected Wadi El-Natrun prison complex, where she said, human rights standards are met. Abdel-Fattah is an outspoken dissident who rose to prominence during the 2011 pro-democracy uprisings that swept the Middle East and in Egypt, toppling long-time President Hosni Mubarak.

The activist spent most of the past decade behind bars, and his detention has become a symbol of Egypt's return to autocratic rule.

Last month, Abdel-Fattah's family said that he had gained British citizenship through his mother, Laila Soueif, a math professor at Cairo University who was born in London. The family said they sought a British passport for Abdel-Fattah as a way out of his "impossible ordeal."

Abdel-Fattah arrived on Wednesday morning in his new prison, which is located in a desert valley 150 kilometers north of Cairo, said his sister. She added that he is being held in a big cell with three other prisoners, and is allowed to sleep on a mattress for the first time in years. The government of President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, a U.S. ally with deep economic ties to European countries, has been relentlessly silencing dissenters and clamping down on independent organizations for years with arrests and restrictions.

Israeli military ID's gun that may have killed journalist

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The Israeli military has identified a soldier's rifle that may have killed Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, but said it cannot be certain unless the Palestinians turn over the bullet for analysis, a military official said Thursday.

The confirmation marked a small sign of progress in the investigation into the killing of Abu Akleh, who was fatally shot on May 11 while covering an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian officials, along with fellow journalists who were with Abu Akleh, have said Israeli troops stationed nearby killed her.

The Israeli army says she was shot during a battle between troops and Palestinian gunmen, and it cannot be determined who fired the fatal bullet without a proper analysis.

Israel has called for a joint investigation with the Palestinians. But the Palestinians, who have the bullet, have refused, saying they don't trust Israel.

They say they are conducting their own investigation and are ready to cooperate with any country except for

Israel.

The military last week released the results of a preliminary investigation that offered two possible causes of death. It said that in one scenario, she may have been hit by Palestinian gunfire during a fierce shootout with Israeli troops.

In the second scenario, it said she might have been hit by an Israeli soldier who shot through a "designated firing hole" in a military vehicle at a Palestinian gunman who was shooting at the vehicle.

It said it could not determine the source of fire without analyzing the bullet.

Asked for further details on Thursday, the military official confirmed that investigators have turned their focus to a specific weapon.

He stressed that while the source of the shot is still unclear, "we have narrowed down the IDF weapon that might be involved in the fire exchange near Shireen."

He said if the Palestinians cooperate with the investigation, Israel will "hopefully be able to compare the bullet to that barrel and check if there is a match." He spoke on condition of anonymity under military briefing guidelines.

The Palestinians have been conducting their own investigation. Last Friday, the Palestinian public prosecutor said preliminary findings show Abu Akleh was killed by deliberate fire from Israeli troops.

The prosecutor said the investigation would continue.

Bellingcat, an independent Dutch-based open-source research firm, has conducted its own analysis of material gathered largely from videos on social media. It said its initial findings lent support to Palestinian witnesses who say she was killed by Israeli fire.

Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American and 25-year veteran of the satellite channel, was killed in the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank. She was a household name across the Arab world, known for documenting the hardship of Palestinian life under Israeli rule, now in its sixth decade.

The shooting drew condemnations and statements of concern from around the world. Israel also has been widely criticized for the behaviour of police, who pushed and beat mourners at her funeral last Friday, causing the pallbearers to nearly drop her coffin.

Red Cross registers hundreds of Ukrainian POWs from Mariupol

AP ■ KYIV

The Russian military said on Thursday that more Ukrainian fighters who were making a last stand in Mariupol have surrendered, bringing the total who have left their stronghold to 1,730, while the Red Cross said it had registered hundreds of them as prisoners of war.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said that the registrations of Ukrainian prisoners of war, which included wounded fighters, began

Tuesday under an agreement between Russia and Ukraine.

The Geneva-based humani-

tarian agency, which has experience in dealing with prisoners of war and prisoner exchanges, said however that its team did not transport the fighters to "the places where they are held" - which was not specified.

Ukrainian fighters who emerged from the ruined Azovstal steelworks after being ordered by their military to abandon the last stronghold of resistance in the now-flattened port city face an uncertain fate.

Some were taken by the Russians to a former penal colony in territory controlled by Moscow-backed separatists.

While Ukraine said it hopes to get the soldiers back in a pris-

oner swap, Russia threatened to put some of them on trial for war crimes.

The Red Cross cited rules under the Geneva Conventions that should allow the organisation to interview prisoners of war "without witnesses" and that visits with them should not be "unduly restricted."

The organisation did not specify how many prisoners of war were involved.

It's also not clear how many fighters are left at the plant. Russia previously estimated that it had been battling some 2,000 troops in the waterside plant.

Denis Pushilin, a senior

Russia-backed separatist official in a region that includes Mariupol, said that those Ukrainian soldiers who needed medical assistance were hospitalised while others were put in a detention facility.

He also claimed that Red Cross representatives were allowed to inspect the detention facility, but that could not be immediately verified.

Amnesty International said earlier that the Red Cross should be given immediate access to the Mariupol fighters who surrendered.

Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty's deputy director for the region, cited lawless executions alleged-

ly carried out by Russian forces in Ukraine and said the Azovstal defenders "must not meet the same fate."

Despite the setback in Mariupol, Ukraine's confidence has been growing after fighting the Russian offensive to an effective standstill and forcing Moscow to withdrawal from around Kyiv and narrow its military goals.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy who was involved in several rounds of talks with Russia, said Thursday in a tweet that at this stage "do not offer us a ceasefire - this is impossible without total Russian troops withdrawal."

Spain confirms 7 monkeypox cases as European outbreak grows

AP ■ MADRID

Health officials in Spain reported seven cases of monkeypox and Portugal updated its number of confirmed cases to 14 Thursday as an outbreak of a viral disease typically limited to Africa expanded in Europe.

In Spain, all of the reported cases to date involved men in Madrid, officials said. Health officials are currently testing another 22 suspected cases, said Antonio Zapatero of the regional health department. "It's possible that more cases will emerge in the coming days," Zapatero told Spanish radio network Onda Cero. Officials said all of the cases identified so far were mild and

that the infections appeared linked to close contact among two chains of transmission. No details were given as to whether the men had traveled to Africa or whether the cases were connected to other reported cases across Europe. Portuguese authorities said Thursday that the 14 cases confirmed in the country all were reported in the area surrounding the capital city of Lisbon.

Meanwhile, the tally of confirmed cases in Britain rose to nine. Britain's Health Security Agency said Wednesday that recent cases reported this week had been seen "predominantly in gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men," though it noted that it was unclear how exactly people had gotten infected.

FRANKFURT BAG EUROPA GLORY

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win Europa League title

AP ■ SEVILLE

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win the Europa League on Wednesday after the final in Seville finished 1-1 at the end of extra time.

Aaron Ramsey missed for Rangers in the shoot-out after coming on as a substitute with only three minutes left of extra-time, before Rafael Borre struck the winning shot to complete Frankfurt's remarkable triumph.

Borre was the hero of the night, after already cancelling out Joe Aribo's opener for Rangers as Frankfurt won their first European trophy since 1980 and booked their place in next season's Champions League.

"We are all heroes. Without the fans we wouldn't have made it," said Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp.

Both clubs were looking to win a second European title in their history, Rangers after clinching the Cup Winners' Cup in 1972 and Frankfurt after they lifted the UEFA Cup 42 years ago.

But Rangers came up just short at the end of an incredible run to the final. Only ten years ago this week, Rangers fell into administration before being liquidated and relegated to Scotland's bottom tier.

Frankfurt had already beaten Real Betis, Barcelona and West Ham en route to the final and they were probably deserving winners, shading a compelling contest that always seemed to lack real technical quality.

With a capacity of just under 43,000, Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan was never going to be big enough to house all the travelling fans, with Rangers bringing over an estimated 100,000 while around 60,000 followed Frankfurt to Spain.

It was a scruffy opening 15 minutes as Joe Aribo almost got away after a neat pirouette by Scott Wright before John Lundstram scraped his studs down the dipping head of Sebastian Rode, leaving the Frankfurt captain with a bloody shirt that had to be changed and a head that had to be strapped.

The German team gradually took control, faster to the ball and slicker in their passing, suffocating Rangers, who were reduced to speculative punts for-



"WE ARE ALL HEROES. WITHOUT THE FANS WE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT," SAID FRANKFURT GOALKEEPER KEVIN TRAPP.

The vast majority enjoyed the day in good spirits but security concerns were not unfounded, with skirmishes breaking out in the city centre during the day

on Wednesday while five German fans were arrested late on Tuesday night after police said 200 Frankfurt fans launched an attack on Rangers supporters.

ward to try to escape the press.

PRESSURE MOUNTING

Frankfurt's Ansgar Knauff went close, the penalty box opening up for the winger at the end of a winding run forward, only for Allan McGregor to tip wide.

Rangers had their moments and improved before the break as Lundstram's header had to be pushed over and Ryan Jack drove too high.

Frankfurt seemed rejuvenated for the start of the second half but it was Rangers who took the lead just before the hour, capitalising on two dreadful Frankfurt errors, each compounding the other.

First, Djibril Sow misjudged a header in midfield, sending it back behind his own defence for the lively Aribo to latch onto, and then as Frankfurt's Tutu chased, he slipped, gifting an free run to the Rangers striker, who calmly slotted home.

Lindstrom might have equalised almost immediately but his finish was blocked and then Daichi Kamada looped onto the roof of the net when Rangers had failed to clear.

The pressure was mounting and in the 69th minute, it told, as Filip Kostic was given too much space out wide to cross and then in the middle, Connor Goldson and Calvin Bassey both hesitated to clear. Borre nipped between them and prodded in.

There were precious few opportunities in the final minutes but the contest became stretched in extra-time, with Borre almost capitalising on a Bassey stumble.

Rangers were the better team in the second period and their golden chance came in the 118th minute as the sprinting Ryan Kent arrived at the back post but somehow hit keeper Trapp from five yards.

To penalties, and the Rangers fans roared when the coin toss put the shoot-out at their end. James Tavernier, Steven Davis and Scott Arfield all scored for Rangers as did Frankfurt's Christopher Lenz, Ajdin Hrustic and Kamada, whose shot squeezed in off the post.

But Ramsey fired too straight, hitting Trapp's left foot and after Kostic and Kemar Roofe converted, it was up to Borre to finish it. He made no mistake.

‘Blood, sweat and tears’ pays off for Tammy

AP ■ ROME

Tammy Abraham said to himself when he joined AS Roma from Chelsea last summer he would give his "blood, sweat and tears for this club". In keeping his promise he could be rewarded with European silverware next week.

The 24-year-old England international striker's nine goals have been pivotal in Roma's passage to next Wednesday's inaugural European Conference League final against Dutch side Feyenoord in Tirana.

With 25 in all competitions he has more than justified Roma coach Jose Mourinho's decision to convince the board to shell out 40 million euros — not including bonuses — for him.

It brought to an end a disappointing final few months for the homegrown Chelsea player who fell out of favour with manager Thomas Tuchel when the German replaced Frank Lampard.

Abraham failed to make either the FA Cup final or Champions League final matchday squads under Tuchel. The German even selected two substitute goalkeepers for the European showpiece.

However, Abraham has put those setbacks firmly behind him and from the first day in Italy his attitude was one of positivity.

"For me since day one, as soon as I touched down in Rome, it made me feel like one of their own straight away," he said.

"It was the love, the passion, the way they worked with me.

"I told myself, 'I'll give my blood, sweat, tears for this club,' and it's been an amazing year."

Abraham's impressive performances and the way he has adapted to a different lifestyle in a country where English players have not always flourished could well see him add to the 10 international caps he has accrued.

However, for the moment he is focused on bringing home Roma's first silverware since the Italian Cup in 2008 and first European trophy since the old Fairs Cup — the predecessor to the UEFA/Europa League — back in 1961.

The Europa Conference may be in its first year and some may sniff at it being the poor man of the three European club competitions but Abraham said that mattered little to him.

"For me it's not a little cup," he said.

"I believe every final is a final — no matter what competition it is.

"You get to the final, you want to win the final.



"It's a trophy and these are the moments you look back on in your career, saying you want to win trophies.

"For me this is an opportunity and for my teammates and for Roma fans this is an opportunity to lift a European title."

Mourinho, like Abraham, took the Roma posting to try and revive a career which had rather lost its lustre with a sour end to his spell at Manchester United and a disappointing time at Tottenham Hotspur.

"For me, he's been one of the best coaches in the world for a long time," said Abraham.

"He knows his stuff about football.

"When I spoke to him on the phone he had ambitions, the club had ambitions and a mindset where they want to get to a final, which they haven't been in many years, you can only see how well he's doing and how well we're doing."

Sindhu enters Thailand Open quarters, Srikanth out

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu remains the lone surviving Indian shuttler in the competition after she sailed into the women's singles quarterfinals of the Thailand Open here on Thursday.

The world No 7 Sindhu, seeded sixth, took just 37 minutes to get the better of Sim Yu Jin, who had played a pivotal role in Korea's Uber Cup win, 21-16, 21-13 in a second round match.

Sindhu, who had defeated world number 62, USA's Lauren Lam in the opening round, will next face second seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan.

Yamaguchi beat Korea's Kim Ga Eun 21-23, 21-15, 21-16 in another second round match.

However, Kidambi Srikanth, one of the main architects of India's historic Thomas Cup triumph, exited from the BWF World Tour Super 500 event after handing a walkover to his opponent in the men's



singles second round.

Srikanth, seeded eighth, gave a walkover to his Irish rival Nhat Nguyen. The reason for his withdrawal is not yet known.

The world No 11 Indian had earlier produced a gritty show to get the better of Brice Leverdez of France 18-21, 21-10, 21-16 in his opening round match. In the women's singles, it was curtains for Malvika Bansod, who lost 21-16, 14-21, 14-21 to Line Christopherson of Denmark in the second round.

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto also bowed out in the second round, losing 19-21, 20-22 against sixth seeded Malaysia combination of Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie.

Later, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam too crashed out in the women's doubles second round, losing 19-21, 6-21 against fifth seeds Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.



Top-ranked Axelsen out

AP ■ BANGKOK

Badminton world number one Viktor Axelsen pulled out of the Thailand Open on Thursday, citing an injury he sustained at last week's Thomas and Uber Cup finals. It means the top two seeds are out after the early exit of the out-of-sorts former world champion Kento Momota, who slumped out in the first

round on Wednesday.

"After slipping on the courts last week during Thomas Cup, I suffered a minor injury which I have been dealing with the last 7-8 days," the 28-year-old Dane said on Twitter.

"After my match yesterday it has gotten worse and therefore I have decided to pull out from the Thailand Open and get 100 percent again."



Ghosal loses in World C'ship last 16

PTI ■ CAIRO

India's leading squash player Saurav Ghosal could not match the quality of world number four Mostafa Asal and lost his pre-quarterfinal in straight games at the World Championships here.

The world number 17 from India lost 2-11, 7-11, 3-11 to the fast rising Egyptian, who is 14

years younger than him, on Wednesday night.

Ghosal came into the World Championship after the high of Tournament of Champions in New York where he reached the semifinals for the first time.

In the women's draw, Joshna Chinappa had to withdraw from her round of 16 match against Egypt's Rowan Elaraby due to a bout of food poisoning.

Stubblety-Cook smashes 200m breaststroke WR

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Olympic 200m breaststroke champion Zac Stubblety-Cook smashed the world record on Thursday at the Australian championships, touching in 2mins 05.95secs to send a warning for the world championships and Commonwealth Games.

The 23-year-old was under the record pace for the entire race to shatter the 2:06.12 mark set by Russia's Anton Chupkov in 2019. "I was just trying to swim fast — I didn't think that fast. I can't really believe it to be honest, but I'm very happy with that," he said poolside in



Adelaide. "Last year I put everything in and got that result (Olympic Gold), but this year there's a lot less pressure and obviously that pressure is nice not to have, and I'm just stoked."

Stubblety-Cook swam a blistering race to stun the field and win Gold in Tokyo last year in a new Olympic record time of 2min 06.38sec ahead of Dutch ace Arno Kamminga.

Bale named in Wales squad for WC play-off final

AP ■ CARDIFF

Gareth Bale has been named in the Wales squad for their World Cup play-off final against Scotland or Ukraine despite recent back trouble as they seek to qualify for the tournament for the first time since 1958.

The captain has made just two substitute appearances for Real Madrid since scoring both goals in Wales's 2-1 World Cup play-off victory over Austria on March 24.

The 32-year-old has been absent from Real's past five matchday squads with a back problem but has returned to training in the Spanish capital and is on course to be available for the club's Champions League



final clash against Liverpool on May 28.

Aaron Ramsey is included for the play-off in Cardiff on June 5 after suffering penalty shoot-out misery for Rangers in their Europa League final loss to Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday.

Leicester goalkeeper Danny Ward is available again after knee surgery and replaces Salford's Tom King.

Bournemouth forward Kieffer Moore also returns to the squad after missing the Austria win with a broken foot.

Wales also face four Nations League ties in June, with home and away games against the Netherlands as well as a trip to Poland and a visit from Belgium.

Aubameyang retires from international football

AP ■ MADRID

Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has retired from international football, his country's federation has confirmed.

Barcelona's Aubameyang, who is Gabon's all-time top scorer with 30 goals in 72 appearances, sent a letter to the federation on Tuesday, confirming his decision.

"After 13 years of pride in representing my country, I announce I am ending my

international career," wrote the 32-year-old.

"I would like to thank the Gabonese people and all those who have supported me in the good and bad times alike.

"I will keep a lot of good memories like the day I made my debut... or the day I came back from Nigeria with the African Ballon d'Or.

"I would also like to thank all my coaches, staff and the players that I have come across during this career."

No major surprises in Indian team for FIH Pro League away leg

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic medal-winning defender Amit Rohidas will continue to lead the Indian men's hockey team in the crucial last leg of the 2021-22 edition of the FIH Pro League in Belgium and the Netherlands, next month.

India are leading the FIH Pro League standings with 27 points from 12 games, three ahead of Argentina and the Tokyo Olympic Bronze medalist will look to utilise the four matches to extend their domination and also get much needed match practice ahead of the Birmingham CWG.

India will play world No 2

Belgium on June 11 and 12 in Antwerp before facing the Netherlands on June 18 and 19 in Rotterdam.

As has been the case in the last two legs at home, star drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will be Rohidas' deputy.

There are no big surprises in the squad as the Indian team management continues to test various combination from the core group in the Pro League ties ahead of a busy calendar year, which includes the CWG and the World Cup next year.

Goalkeeper Kishan Bahadur Pathak has made way for Suraj Karkera as he has sustained an injury at the last minute.

In the backline, there is only one change from the last Pro League squad with Gurinder Singh, who will lead India in the inaugural FIH Hockey 5s in Lausanne on June 5 and 6, missing out.

Sunder Kumar, Harmanpreet, Varun Kumar, Rohidas, Jugraj Singh and Jarmanpreet Singh make up for the rest of the defensive line-up.

Barring the exclusion of Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh and transfer of Akashdeep Singh from the forwardline, the midfield remains the same featuring experienced Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Shamsher Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, and Nilakanta Sharma.

I'm actually in the happiest phase of my life: Kohli

PTI ■ MUMBAI

In a declaration that is not commensurate with his current form, Virat Kohli says he is 'actually' going through the "happiest phase" of his life, when he is not receptive to either success or failure.

He is "not finding any self-worth or value" in what he is doing on the field now, a far cry from the man known for his intensity and passion, things that made him a cricket icon, besides his incredible range of shots with the bat in his pomp.

Kohli has not scored a hundred in competitive cricket for nearly three years and current edition of IPL happens to be his worst.

"I'm actually in the happiest phase of my life. I am not finding any self-worth or value in what I do on the field. I'm way past that phase. This is a phase of evolution for me," Kohli told *Star Sports*.

The former India skipper, who also gave up captaincy at Royal Challengers Bangalore last year, is enduring his worst run with the bat, leaving his millions of fans concerned.

He has had a disappointing IPL-15 so far with the bat having managed only one half-century in 13 matches for RCB. Kohli has bagged three golden ducks already this season and has managed just 200 runs at an average and strike rate that fail to define a player of his calibre.

At the same time though, the 33-year-old refuses to believe that the drive is not there.

"... Not to say that I don't have the same drive, my drive will never die down. The day my drive goes away, I'll not be playing this game."

"But to understand that some things are not controllable, the only controllable you have are things that you can work towards, which is working hard on the field and in life as well and from that point of view, I feel that I am in the most balanced space that I have ever been and I am happy with who I am and how



I am leading my life."

For Kohli, on-field success or failure is increasingly becoming irrelevant.

"I am not finding any source of encouragement or disappointment by what happens on the field."

"So, this has not been about myself, this is about the fact that I have not contributed to my team's cause as much as I would have wanted to or I pride myself to, and that is something that always disappoints me, not what I do as an individual."

"It's because I don't want to let my team down."

Speaking about his transition from a captain to a player, Kohli said, "To be honest, it's different. I won't say it's hard because it's something that you're involved in regularly. "So, the good thing is that my relationship with Faf (current RCB skipper Faf du Plessis) has always been good. We also have a leadership group in the team where we all share our inputs."

"Even on the field, when Faf is on the outfield and I am inside, I make sure to look after the fielding angles and the placement, so he's given me the liberty to adjust wherever I feel that there's a need, but always keeping him in the loop obviously."

"So, it's been a different way to look at the game, but because I've done it so much in the past, it's not something that I don't know how to do."

RCB LIVE ON; PBKS, SRH EXIT

Virat Kohli completes 7K runs for RCB as his 54-ball 73 scripts 8-wicket win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A fired up Virat Kohli roared back to form with a fine half-century as Royal Challengers Bangalore stayed alive in the IPL play-off race with a thumping eight-wicket win over table toppers Gujarat Titans here on Thursday.

This was after skipper Hardik Pandya scored a gritty 47-ball 62 to lift GT to a competitive 168 for five after opting to bat.

Kohli (73 off 54) and captain Fa du Plessis (44 off 38) shared a match-winning 115-run opening stand before Glenn Maxwell (40 not out off 18) went ballistic to ensure the team got home in 18.4 overs.

By virtue of this win, RCB moved to fourth place in the standings with 16 points but will have to wait for the Delhi Capitals-Mumbai Indians game on Saturday to know their fate. A loss for Delhi would ensure RCB a play-off berth.

As the 'Kohli Kohli' chants suggested, the whole of Wankhede and probably the country wanted to see the former India captain back amongst the runs and with a little bit of

luck going his way, he was back playing the shots he is known for. When Kohli picked Mohammed Shami for two lofted boundaries over the bowler's head and cover in the third over, it looked it would be his night. His next four was a streaky one off Hardik who bowled with the new ball.

The very next ball, Kohli was at his animated best as he whipped Hardik towards square leg with Rashid Khan missing a tough chance in the deep.

A sign of his growing confidence was an aerial straight drive off Rashid. Kohli was quick on his feet both against Rashid as well as the pacers. The Indian superstar brought up his second fifty of the season by whipping a full ball off Rashid over deep midwicket.

With Kohli on song, Du Plessis played his part perfectly and kept rotating the strike besides an odd boundary.

After the captain's dismissal, Maxwell joined Kohli and went ballistic from ball one. The Australian's cameo included a reverse scoop shot off Hardik that went all the way.

After collecting his second six off Rashid, Kohli tried one



too many and got stumped in the 17th over but the job had been well and truly done by then. Earlier, Hardik lifted GT to a competitive total. Coming

into the game with a string of low scores, he warmed up nicely for the play-offs with a well crafted fifty even though he was not at his fluent best.

RCB limited GT to 72 for three in 10 overs, largely due to their brilliance in the field despite Wriddhiman Saha's (31 off 22) threatening stay in the

► pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT (Q)	14	10	4	0	20	0.316
2.	LSG (Q)	14	9	5	0	18	0.251
3.	RR	13	8	5	0	16	0.304
4.	RCB	14	8	6	0	16	-0.253
5.	DC	13	7	6	0	14	0.255
6.	KKR	14	6	8	0	12	0.146
7.	PBKS	13	6	7	0	12	-0.043
8.	SRH	13	6	7	0	12	-0.230
9.	CSK	13	4	9	0	8	-0.206
10.	MI	13	3	10	0	6	-0.577

► boundarymeter

4s	1836
6s	956

middle.

Saha provided another brisk start with some clean hitting but his opening partner Shubman Gill perished cheaply. The right-hander poked at a good length ball and Maxwell, standing at a wishy first slip, plucked a stunning one handed catch diving to his right.

Royals eye No 2 spot against CSK



slight dip in form but the last league game is an ideal time to up the ante before the play-offs.

Rookies Mukesh Choudhary, Simarjeet Singh and 'Baby Malinga' Matheesha

Pathirana will like to show their wares one last time but the CSK unit's confidence has taken a big dent because of its poor batting efforts for the better part of the tournament.

While Buttler is at the top of the batting chart for Royals, Rituraj Gaikwad came to the party late with 366 runs, but none of the others have crossed the 300-run mark. Devon Conway, who played more matches in the second half, has 236 runs to his credit.

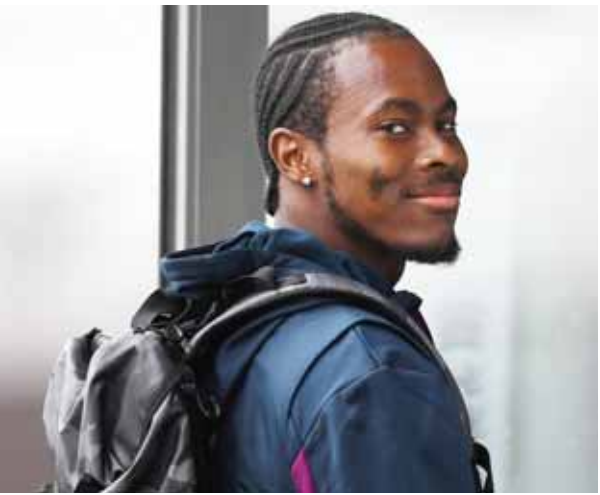
Most of CSK's senior players like MS Dhoni (206), Ambati Rayudu (271) and Robin Uthappa (230) haven't had a

great IPL and that has been the biggest failure of the 'Yellow Brigade'.

The bowling suffered a lot because of the absence of an injured Deepak Chahar and the inability to retain Josh Hazlewood. It was wafer-thin in terms of experience and they paid the price.

Pathirana, with a slinging action that is pretty similar to Malinga, has caught Dhoni's imagination but he is a work in progress. Similarly, the likes of Mukesh (16 wickets), Simar (3 wickets) and spinner Mahesh Theekshana (12) are good but not assured match-winners.

Stress fracture rules Archer out of English summer



PTI ■ LONDON

England pace spearhead Jofra Archer has been ruled out of the entire season due to a stress fracture on his lower back, the country's cricket board said on Thursday, which means he will miss the Test against India in

July.

"After being diagnosed with a stress fracture to the lower back, England and Sussex seamer Jofra Archer has been ruled out for the rest of the season," the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement.

The worst part is that he is

indefinitely out of competitive cricket as the ECB has not set any specific time-frame for his return.

"No time-frame has been set for his return. A management plan will be determined following further specialist opinion over the coming days."

India are scheduled to play a Test match (carry over from previous series) along with six white-ball games in the month of July.

The 27-year-old Jofra, who last played international cricket in March 2021 in an away series against India, had undergone an elbow surgery and then made a comeback to county cricket for Sussex before suffering a stress fracture.

The last competitive match that he played was a T20 game against Kent at Hove.

The Barbados-born Jofra has so far played 42 international matches for England across three formats and has 86 wickets to his credit.

'Mohsin will be playing for India soon'



PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

LSG skipper K L Rahul was relieved to finish on the right side of the result on Wednesday against Kolkata

Knight Riders.

"I should probably get paid more for games like these. Could easily have been on the losing side and have gone back home thinking we lost due to some poor cricket. Good way to finish the last game of the league season. Credit to both teams to make such a brilliant game of cricket."

"Can't say we held our nerves better because it was a matter of three runs. For Stoinis to execute those plans in the last two balls to get us the win, was brilliant," said Rahul.

He was also all praise for left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan, who returned with three wickets.

"Mohsin has been outstanding for us in the last few games. He's got the skills but the key thing has been his knowledge of when to use those skills."

"He'll be donning the Blue jersey soon the way he is going. India is always looking for left-arm pacers and he is right there," said Rahul.

Nikhat Zareen becomes World Champion



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen lived up to the expectations as she clinched the coveted gold in flyweight (52kg) division with a facile 5-0 win over Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas in the final of the Women's World Championship in Istanbul on Thursday.

Capping off a stupendous campaign that saw her dominate all her rivals, the Telangana boxer out-punched her Thai opponent to win via unanimous verdict with judges scoring the bout 30-27, 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 29-28 in her favour.

With this win, Zareen, a 2019 Asian Championship bronze medalist, became only the fifth Indian boxer to be crowned world champion.

Six-time champion Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006) and Lekha KC (2006) are the other pugilists who have won the world title.

This is India's first gold medal in four years. Mary Kom (48kg) had won the last title in 2018. Incidentally, it was the legendary Mary Kom who had participated in the flyweight category

in the 2019 edition of the tournament.

Zareen had been refused a trial by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), which decided to go by Mary Kom's consistent performances while making the choice and the Manipuri claimed her eighth world medal, a bronze.

The 25-year-old Zareen produced some beautiful combination of punches to outclass Jutamas.

Jutamas had a better start of the two but Zareen soon made up and took the upper hand. The first round was fought on an even keel but Zareen's blows were more powerful and her punches were eye catching.

The Indian took the first round comfortably but Jutamas made a strong comeback in the second.

The Thai boxer took advantage of her longer reach as she countered Zareen's attacks from a distance, while landing punches herself.

There was very little separating the two boxers but strength proved to be a key factor as Zareen used her powerful right hand and came up with beautiful combinations in the final round to seal the deal.

As the winner was announced Zareen was overcome by emotion and she jumped with glee and couldn't hold back her tears.

This is Zareen's second victory over Jutamas. She had got the better of the Thai boxer at the Thailand Open back in 2019 as well.

The Hyderabad pugilist has been in stellar form this year. She became the first Indian woman boxer to claim two gold medals at the prestigious Strandja Memorial in February.

Apart from Zareen's gold, Manisha Moun (57kg) and debutant Parveen Hooda (63kg) will return home with bronze medals.

A 12-member Indian contingent participated in the competition. While the medal haul has decreased by one, an Indian has been crowned world champion after four years.

India's best performance in the event remains the one in 2006 when the country snared eight medals, including four gold, one silver and three bronze.

India now have won 39 medals, including 10 golds, eight silver and 21 bronze in the Women's World Championships.

Chandimal, Dickwella help SL draw 1st Test

AP ■ CHITTAGONG

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka drew the first Test in Chittagong on Thursday after Dinesh Chandimal and Niroshan Dickwella hung on for the visitors in a vital seventh-wicket stand of 99.

On the fifth and final day the two teams settled on a draw 45 minutes before the scheduled close of play with Sri Lanka on 260-6 in their second innings.

Dickwella was unbeaten on 61 alongside Chandimal on 39 not out at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Hosts Bangladesh made 465 in their first innings in reply to Sri Lanka's 397 as Tamim Iqbal (133) and Mushfiqur Rahim (105) played starring roles.

Player-of-the-match Angelo



Mathews hit 199 to form the backbone of the Sri Lankan first innings and Nayeem Hasan claimed 6-105 for Bangladesh.

On Thursday left-arm spin duo Tajul Islam and Shakib Al Hasan had given Bangladesh hope of victory.

Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne made 52 off 138 balls before he gave a catch to his counterpart Mominul Haque

at midwicket off the dangerous Tajul, who ended with figures of 4-82.

Shakib soon had Dhananjaya de Silva out for 33 off 60 balls as Mushfiqur took the catch, also at midwicket, leaving Sri Lanka reeling at 161-6.

Dickwella swept the next ball high but Tajul could only manage to get a finger on it at square leg.

After the scare, he and Chandimal dug in at the crease before and after the tea break to stubbornly thwart the home side.

"We tried to do something differently and put them under pressure, but we played some poor shots and then we had to change tactics," Karunaratne said.