

OPINION 6 UPSHOT, PROSPECTS OF BIDEN'S ASIA POLICY

NATION 8 ISRAEL DEF MIN TO VISIT INDIA NEXT WEEK

WORLD 10 EX-LANKAN PM QUESTIONED BY CID OVER MAY 9 VIOLENCE

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Budget focus on self-reliance, overall development of UP

Khanna tables over ₹6.15 lakh crore budget

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna tabled the over ₹6.15 lakh crore maiden budget of Yogi Adityanath government 2.0 in the UP assembly on Thursday.

Before being tabled in the House, the budget was passed at a cabinet meeting chaired by the chief minister at his official residence on Thursday morning.

The ₹6,15,518.97 crore budget for 2022-23 fiscal has a provision of ₹39,181.10 crore for new schemes. In the last 2021-22 fiscal, the Yogi government had presented a budget of ₹5,50,270.78 crore.

Soon after the budget was tabled in the House, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath tweeted, "The latest budget is focused on ensuring self-reliance in the state."

Yogi Adityanath promised that the budget would be dedicated to the overall development of Uttar Pradesh.

"The economy of the state is improving rapidly. We believe that we will be successful in taking the state's economy to \$1 trillion," Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said while tabling the



Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna presenting the budget in UP Assembly in Lucknow on Thursday Pioneer

budget. Seated next to the chief minister in the assembly, Khanna said that ₹276.66 crore had been proposed for Uttar Pradesh Special Security Force entrusted with the task of securing courts and historical and religious places, including Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura.

For the Police Emergency Management System, the finance minister said that the second phase of the 112 scheme would start in this fiscal and a provision of ₹730.88 crore had been proposed for strengthening it. "For women, the budget has proposed setting up of cyber help desks at district level and a provision of ₹72.50 crore has been made for women empowerment schemes. A provision of ₹20 crore has also been proposed for safety and empowerment of women and their skill development under Mission Shakti in micro and small scale industries sector," he

added. The finance minister informed the House, "The budget has proposed ₹650 crore under farmers' accident scheme and there is a provision to provide a maximum of ₹5 lakh in case of accidental death/disability of farmers under the scheme. A total of 15,000 solar pumps will be set up in 2022-23 fiscal and 60.20 lakh quintal seeds are proposed to be distributed to farmers.

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Yogi: A vision document for next five years

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said the 2022-23 UP budget is a vision document for the next five years.

He said the budget had been prepared to meet the aspirations of all sections of people and carry forward the goal of integrated development of the state.

"We had made 130 announcements in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra ahead of the 2022 UP assembly polls. Of those 130 sankalps, this budget includes 97. Forty-four of them are new, the rest are the carry forwards from the previous Sankalp Patra. For the 97 sankalps, a provision of ₹54,888 crore has been made in the budget," he said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed a press conference after the budget was presented in the state assembly by Finance Minister Suresh Khanna.

Continued on Page 10

Sex work legal, police can't punish them: SC

Treat sex workers with dignity, don't abuse them, verbally or physically, apex court orders police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark judgment that will come as relief for millions of sex workers, the Supreme Court has decided to provide legal protection to them and directed police forces in all States and Union Territories to treat them with dignity and not to abuse them, verbally or physically.

"Sex workers are entitled to equal protection of the law. Criminal law must apply equally in all cases, on the basis of 'age' and 'consent'. When it is clear that the sex worker is an adult and is participating with consent, the police must refrain from interfering or taking any criminal action," a three-judge Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao said.

The court passed the order exercising its special powers under Article 142 of the Constitution. The court said the constitutional protection that is given to all individuals in this country shall be kept in mind by the authorities who have a duty under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

Any sex worker, who is a victim of sexual assault, should

be provided with all facilities available to a survivor of sexual assault, including immediate medical assistance, in accordance with law, it said.

The court held that the child of a sex worker should not be separated from the mother merely on the ground that she is in the sex trade. "Basic protection of human decency and dignity extends to sex workers and their children," the court noted. The court also noted that if a minor is found living in a brothel or with sex workers, it should not be presumed that the child was trafficked.

"It has been noticed that the attitude of the police to sex workers is often brutal and violent. It is as if they are a class whose rights are not recognised."

The police and other law enforcement agencies should be sensitised to the rights of sex workers who also enjoy all basic human rights and other rights guaranteed in the Constitution to all citizens. Police should treat all sex workers with dignity and should not abuse them, both verbally and physically, subject them to violence or coerce them into any sexual activity," said the SC.

The court also directed the police not to discriminate against sex workers who are subjected to sexual offences and provide them with every facility, including immediate medico-legal care.

The court also said the Press Council of India should

be urged to issue appropriate guidelines for the media to take utmost care not to reveal the identities of sex workers, during arrest, raid and rescue operations, whether as victims or accused and not to publish or telecast any photos that would result in disclosure of such identities.

"Besides, the newly introduced Section 354C, IPC which makes voyeurism a criminal offence, should be strictly enforced against electronic media, in order to prohibit telecasting photos of sex workers with their clients in the garb of capturing the rescue operation," it said. It also directed the State Governments to do a survey of shelter homes so that cases of adult women detained against their will can be reviewed and processed for release in a time-bound manner. "Measures that sex workers employ for their health and safety (e.g., use of condoms, etc.) must neither be construed as offences nor seen as evidence of commission of an offence."

"The Central Government and the State Governments, through National Legal Services Authority, State Legal Services Authority and District Legal Services Authority, should carry out workshops for educating the sex workers about their rights vis-a-vis the legality of sex work, rights and obligations of the police and what is permitted/prohibited under the law.

Continued on Page 10

Tamil language eternal, its culture global, says Modi

PM takes swipe at KCR, says 'parivaarvadi' greatest enemy of democracy

PTI ■ CHENNAI/ HYDERABAD/BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Tamil Nadu as a special place and lauded the Tamil language as eternal and its culture as global.

In his address after inaugurating new completed projects and laying foundation stone for fresh schemes in various sectors, including housing, Modi quoted a popular verse of nationalist poet Subramania Bharathi and said in every field someone from Tamil Nadu was excelling.

Recently, Modi said he had hosted the Indian Deaflympics contingent at his residence. The PM said this time it was India's best performance in the tournament. "Do you know out of the 16 medals we have won, a youngster from Tamil Nadu had a role in 6 of those medals and this is among the best contribution to the team."

He referred to the Subramania



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin during the ceremony for the laying of foundation stones of multiple developmental projects at Jawaharlar Nehru Stadium in Chennai on Thursday PTI

Bharathi chair at the Banaras Hindu University in his Varanasi constituency and the full funding to the Central Tamil Classical Institute by the Centre.

Underscoring the National Education Policy, he said technical and medical courses can be pursued in local languages and youngsters from Tamil Nadu could benefit from this.

Earlier, Modi and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu on Thursday took apparent potshots at each

other, even as the TRS supremo gave a miss to the PM for the second time in a year during an official visit to his State.

While Modi lashed out at family politics saying "parivaarvadi" is democracy's "greatest enemy," KCR, who flew to Bengaluru to meet former PM HD Deve Gowda, said despite "bhaashanbaazi" (rhetoric), industries were closing down, the nation's GDP was crashing and the rupee was falling drastically compared to the US dollar and said all sections of the society were suffering.

In Chennai, Modi said India is providing all possible support to the economic crisis-hit Sri Lanka including financial, fuel, food, medicine and other essential items and recalled that he was the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Jaffna earlier.

Pointing to the new schemes, including those launched and foundation stone for new projects, he said the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway would connect two key centres of economic growth.

Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, Chief Minister M K Stalin and Union Minister L Murugan among others participated in the event, held coinciding with the PM's maiden visit to Tamil Nadu after the DMK came to power last year.

Will turn Delhi into City of Joy: LG

Saxena takes oath as 22nd LG of Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former chairperson of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday took oath as the 22nd Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.

In a glittering ceremony at Raj Niwas, Saxena was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, Vipin Sanghi.

"I want to tell Delhi people that I will work as a local guardian rather than the Lieutenant Governor," Saxena said after taking the oath. "I will be more visible on roads than at the Raj Niwas," he told reporters. "Having taken the oath, I want to tell every citizen of Delhi that I will not be their 'Lieutenant Governor'; instead, I will be their 'local guardian'. I will always be on the streets of Delhi to work for the betterment of the city," the



Lt Governor of Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Justice Vipin Sanghi during the former's oath-taking ceremony as the 22nd Lt Governor of Delhi, at Raj Niwas in New Delhi on Thursday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

LG said. "It is a harsh reality that Delhi is considered one of the most polluted cities of the world. Also, the city faces a major problem of traffic jams. With the support of Delhi Government, the Central Government and with the cooperation of each one of you, we will work to get rid of traffic jams and make Delhi free of all pollution, be it air pollution, water pollution or noise pollution. With the mantra of 'Sabka

Sath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas' we will make Delhi the City of Joy and the City of Flowers," the LG said.

Saxena also spoke about recent incidents of communal riots in the city and recited a poem to give a message of love and peace, asking people to let go of violence.

He asked people to forget past violence and bloodshed and show the world their love for the country.

Continued on Page 10

CAPSULE

CM YOGI HONEST AND HARDWORKING: SHIVPAL

Lucknow: Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL) founder Shivpal Yadav on Thursday praised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as "honest" and "hardworking" while claiming that the Opposition would have been in power had it taken his support.

GYANVAPI ROW: NEXT HEARING ON MAY 30

Varanasi: The district court here Thursday heard arguments on maintainability of a plea by five Hindu women seeking permission for daily worship of the Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi complex, and posted the matter for further hearing on May 30.

THREE PAK TERRORISTS GUNNED DOWN IN J&K

Jammu: A joint team of security forces on Thursday foiled a major infiltration bid along the line of control in north Kashmir district of Kupwara by eliminating three Pakistani terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. One Army porter, who had received injuries during the exchange of firing, succumbed to his injuries.

4 more pilgrims die in Kedarnath, toll 41



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Four more pilgrims died in the inhospitable climate of Kedarnath on Thursday, raising the death toll to 41.

If 13 deaths reported from Badrinath and 24 deaths reported from Yamunotri and Gangotri till Wednesday evening are added to it the number of deaths in the Char Dham yatra has soared to 78. All four deceased were

over 60 years of age, said Rudraprayag Chief Medical Officer BK Shukla.

They were identified as Nandu, 65, from Nalanda in Bihar, Haridwar Tiwari, 62, from Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh, Ram Narayan Tripathi, 65, from Lucknow, and Hemraj Soni, 61, from Bara in Rajasthan. Yamunotri has reported 20 deaths and Gangotri four. Continued on Page 10

BJP launches events across States to celebrate 8 years of Modi Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi was busy in public rally and road show down South, the Central Ministers on Thursday fanned out across different States to launch celebratory programmes marking eight years with Modi at the helm.

Vignettes of political journey of Modi, 72, and the theme of him "turning himself to Pradhan Sevak" in the last eight years as he "served" the nation as Prime Minister would be splashed through the print and television media, including the national broadcaster, according to party sources.

Anniversaries of the Modi Government when Modi shifted the power centre from State of Gujarat to the Raisina hills have without exception been



BJP supporters play drums to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon his arrival at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad on Thursday PTI

packed with party programmes to reach out to the public with Government policies, particularly Prime Minister's flagship schemes.

Continued on Page 10

Centre 'hoodwinking' its own people with jumlas: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday attacked the Modi Government on its eighth anniversary alleging that this period has been marked by misery and misgovernance with high inflation, low employment and communal polarisation being the hallmark. The party alleged that the promise of "achche din" made to people has only turned out to be "achche din" for the BJP and a select group of crony capitalists and industrialists whose wealth has increased manifold.

The Congress also released a booklet in Hindi "8 saal, 8 chhal, BJP Sarkar Viphal" (8 years, 8 deceptions, BJP government failed) to highlight, what it called, the "failures" of the BJP Government on various fronts.



Senior Congress leaders Ajay Maken and Randeep Singh Sujrewala release a booklet at AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

Addressing a joint press conference here, Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala and former Union Minister Ajay Maken claimed the BJP Government has broken all records of "hoodwinking" its own people with fake "jumlas"

and slogans during its eight years of rule. Maken also invited the Prime Minister to come out and debate with facts to counter the claims of "failures" made by it against the BJP Government. Continued on Page 10

₹100 cr for Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has made a budgetary provision of ₹100 crore for the preparations for Maha Kumbh to be held in Prayagraj in 2025 with Finance Minister Suresh Khanna claiming that the government is making every effort to make this event a grand affair.

Devotees from all over the country and abroad will come to this event. In such a situation, to provide them every convenience, schemes are being executed expeditiously, he added.

The Yogi Adityanath government does not want to leave any stone unturned for the

Maha Kumbh to be held in the year 2025. Pucca ghats will be constructed on the Sangam bank.

Cleanliness efforts and widening of city roads will be completed at the Mela site. The government also plans to increase facilities like food courts, exhibitions, water sports etc. in the Mela area.

It may be recalled that due to the successful organisation of Kumbh in the year 2019 by the Yogi government, the state had achieved global recognition.

The respect and efficiency of the state had increased due to the event organised under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while the cleanliness was especially appreciated.

The government is emphasising on the preparations for the upcoming Maha Kumbh on the same lines.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name Rutuja Kolhe to Rutuja Dubey after marriage. In future I should be known as Rutuja Dubey, Rutuja Dubey W/o Nitin Dubey K-1148A, Sector K Ashiyana LDA Colony Lucknow-226012

CLASSIFIEDS

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I have changed my Name from Sachin Tangri To Sachin Kumar Tangri for all future Purpose, Sachin Kumar Tangri S/O Vinod Kumar Tangri R/O 117/L/317 Naveen Nagar Kakadeo Kanpur 208025 (U.P.)

सूचना

मेरे भूखण्ड सं० -171 वृंदावन योजना नं० 1 उत्तर प्रदेश आवास विकास लखनऊ 2260 10 पत्रांक संख्या 4524 पंजीकरण संख्या 077/30/R1-C/20040548 मूल आवंटन खो गया है इसका प्रयोग अवैध होगा, जगदीश सोनकर S/O Late दयाराम सोनकर

NOTICE

I Vivek Kapoor son of Mr. Vijay Kapoor, s.5/38-120, resident of Vinohyavasi Nagar, Orderly Bazar, Varanasi, formerly known as Vivek Kapoor alias Tony, presently I have accepted my name as Vivek Kapoor. Therefore, from now onwards I should be known and called by the name of Vivek Kapoor.

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NOTICE

LIC Policy No. 230587973 is in the name of Rohit Kumar Uttam having DOB 10.12.1997 while real name is Avinash Uttam having DOB 10.12.1999. Thus in the said policy name be read as Avinash Uttam having DOB 10.12.1999. Avinash Uttam S/o Sri Bhagwandas Uttam, R/o H.No. 298/20B, Phase-1, Jaraul, Kanpur Nagar.

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To be informed that in my high school Mark sheet and certificate my Name is written Vipin Kumar while in my adhar card and pan card my name is Vipin Kumar Srivastava Vipin Kumar and Vipin Kumar Srivastava both are one and same parson Vipin Kumar Srivastava R/o H.N-23, Sector-F, pocket-1 Sushant golf city Lucknow

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सूचना

प्रार्थी रचना अग्रवाल जिसकी प्रॉपर्टी 583 ओबरी बाहरी सीमा नवाबगंज बाराबंकी में स्थित है वह प्रॉपर्टी राकेश कुमार शुक्ला पुत्र आदित्य प्रसाद शुक्ला से खरीदी गई थी जिसकी चेन डीड पुच संख्या 125 -150 डॉक्यूमेंट नंबर 2936 दिनांक 17/7/2001 है, यह डीड भूलवस कहीं खो गई है जिसकी सूचना प्रार्थी ने ई FIR से करवाई है प्रार्थी अपनी स्वतः इच्छा से इसको पब्लिश करना चाहता है।

Budget gives big push to urban development

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Giving a big push to urban development by creating a long chain of smart cities in the state, the Yogi Adityanath government has made a provision of ₹2,000 crore for 10 cities selected under the Central Smart City project and ₹210 crore for seven cities selected in the State Smart City Scheme.

"The main focus of the government is on making cities beautiful and clean under the Smart City Scheme. It is also the aim of the government to provide all the basic facilities to the people living in cities," Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said in the budget document.

The Smart City Mission scheme in UP is moving forward on the path of development. Five cities of the state have been included in the first 20 cities of the country to be developed as smart cities.

Along with this the government has also made a provision of ₹550 crore for the development of infrastructure in the newly created, upgraded and expanded municipal bodies in the state.

A budget of ₹10,127 crore has been proposed for the Urban Development department for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-- Housing for All (Urban) scheme.

MORE FACILITIES TO SLUMS AND NAGAR PANCHAYATS

The Yogi government has made a provision in the budget for the development of slums in the state and to increase the facilities in nagar panchayats.

For the development of nagar panchayats, the government has made a provision of ₹200 crore under Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Adarsh Nagar Panchayat Yojana and ₹215

₹2,100 cr earmarked for medical colleges in 14 districts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sharpening the focus on boosting medical education in the state, the Uttar Pradesh government has earmarked ₹2,100 crore for medical colleges in 14 districts.

The budget also proposes ₹100 crore for the treatment of chronic diseases among the economically poor people in the state.

"The government has made remarkable progress in the direction of developing high-quality and specialist medical facilities in the state. In line with the goal to make the state self-sufficient in medical and health facilities, funds have been proposed for different schemes in the sector," Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said. He said work is in progress to set up at least one medical college in every district.

At present 65 medical colleges are in operation in the state and 45 districts have at least one medical col-

lege while medical colleges are under construction in 14 districts.

The budget claims that medical colleges will be set up in 16 un-served districts. The finance minister said as promised in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra-2022, ₹500 crore had been provided for increasing MBBS and PG seats in the state, while ₹50 crore had been proposed for the running of autonomous state medical colleges.

NURSING HUB

To establish the state as the biggest nursing hub, ₹25 crore has been allocated for setting up nursing colleges. A provision of ₹145 crore has been made for establishing the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University in Lucknow. Besides, ₹50 crore has been earmarked for Pt Deendayal Upadhyay State Employees' Cashless Medical Scheme. The budget has also proposed ₹113.52 crore for setting up an AYUSH University in Gorakhpur.

For the Chief Minister Urban Underdeveloped and Slums Scheme.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

The Yogi government has proposed ₹1,353.93 crore in the budget for the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) of the Government of India

Govt announces 'Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Giving a push to energy reform, the state government announced an ambitious 'Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme', a reforms-based and results-linked scheme with an outlay of Rs 31,000 crore in the 2022-23 budget. The state is set to get associated help from the Central government as well.

Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said that provision of Rs 5,530 crore had been made for the project in the latest budget and the scheme would be completed within the next three years.

The scheme aims at improving quality, reliability and affordability of power supply to consumers through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector.

Besides, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has made a provision of Rs 1,000 crore to ensure uninterrupted power supply in rural areas from 7:00 pm to 6:00 am during summers.

Taking a pro-farmer stance, the government has also made a provision of 50 per cent discount on power bills of private tube well consumers from January 1, 2022.

Under 'Babu Ji Kalyan Singh Gram Unnati Yojana', solar street lights will be installed on roads of all villages of the state for which a provision of Rs 22.50 crore has been made.

in the state.

"The intention of the government is to make the cities more clean under the scheme," the minister said.

₹2,200 CR FOR AMRUT YOJANA

To give impetus to the plan of the Government of India to provide pure drinking water through taps to every household, the government has earmarked a budget of ₹2,000 crore for Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0, whereas for the works of the already

running AMRUT scheme, a budget of ₹2,200 crore has been proposed.

KANHA GAUSHALA, ANIMAL SHELTER SCHEME

The effort of the government is to provide shelter to the destitute animals. Kanha gaushalas and animal shelters are being opened for animals in gram panchayats.

In the budget, the government has made a provision of ₹100 crore for Kanha gaushala and destitute animal shelter scheme.

Special emphasis on flood control, irrigation

Lucknow (PNS): Presenting the state's first paperless budget for the fiscal 2022-23, Finance Minister Suresh Khanna announced that the government would install 15,000 new solar pumps in the state to provide free irrigation to the farmers under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha and Utthan Mahabhayan Yojana. The budget has also made provision for free irrigation facilities to the farmers through 34,307 government tube wells and 252 small branch canals. Besides, the state government will get 2,100 new state tube wells installed with the help of NABARD at a cost of ₹423 crore while ₹150 crore has been proposed for modernisation of 6,600 state tube wells and ₹130 crore for reconstruction of 569 defunct state tube wells.

₹2,751 CR FOR FLOOD CONTROL

The Yogi government has also given special emphasis on flood control in the budget and has proposed ₹2,751 crore for the purpose.

The government is gearing up to accelerate construction, upgradation and reinforcement of embank-

ments ahead of the rainy season and has proposed ₹356 crore for the purpose in the budget. The government has also proposed ₹1,328 crore for improvement of rivers and checking soil erosion. Furthermore, a provision of ₹144 crore has been made for water outlets, whereas ₹800 crore has been proposed to provide free water for irrigation to farmers from canals and government tube wells.

FUNDS EARMARKED FOR 3 CANAL PROJECTS

The government has also made special budgetary provision for development of canals in the state and has proposed ₹600 crore for the Madhya Ganga Canal Project, ₹310 crore for the Saryu Canal Project and ₹20 crore for the Arjun Sahayak Project.

₹1,000 CR FOR MINOR IRRIGATION

With focus on improving farmers' income, top priority has been accorded to irrigation and water supply schemes for which Rs 1,000 crore has been earmarked in the state budget for Mukhya Mantri Laghu

Sinchai Yojana for 2022-23 fiscal. Free irrigation facility is already being provided to farmers through 34,307 government tube wells and 252 minor canals. Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana has been implemented from September 14, 2019, under which there is provision to give a maximum of Rs 5 lakh in case of accidental death/disability. An amount of Rs 650 crore has been proposed for this scheme in the budget for 2022-23 fiscal. "Quality seeds are of utmost importance in boosting agricultural yield and the state government will distribute 60.20 lakh quintals of seeds in 2022-23 while 119.30 lakh metric tons of fertiliser will be distributed in the current fiscal," Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said. Khanna said that the government had made record payment of cane price to farmers, worth Rs 1,72,745 crore, till May 16, 2022, which was Rs 77,530 crore more than the payment of Rs 95,215 crore made by the previous government. "Besides, under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme, Rs 42,565 crore were transferred in Uttar Pradesh," the minister said in his budget document.

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Schedule

Part of Arazi No. 211a (Admeasuring Area 678.00 Sq. Meter) situated at Mauja- Karmi Bijlamau, Pargana- Hadaha, Unnao bounded as below- East- Lucknow Kanpur National Highway West- Plot Meena Jaiswal North- 20 ft. Road Gajpur South- Plot Paras Gupta

Part of Arazi No. 211a (Admeasuring Area 502.00 Sq. Meter) situated at Mauja- Karmi Bijlamau, Pargana- Hadaha, Unnao bounded as below- East- Remaining land of Arza (seller) West- 10 ft. Road North- 20 ft. Road South- Plot Paras Gupta

(Shiva Kam Dixit) Advocate
Mob:- 9941540399

Budgetary provision to improve policing

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In what appears to be the first of its kind move in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government has made budgetary provision of crores of rupees to improve policing and ensure law and order in the state.

Pursuing its zero tolerance policy towards crime and as part of its commitment to protect every citizen of the state, the Yogi government has proposed Rs 730. 88 crore for strengthening of Police Emergency Management

System and has allocated Rs 276.66 crore for setting up UP Special Security Force.

The budget has also proposed Rs. 523.34 crore for women's safety programmes under Safe City Scheme, which will be launched in Lucknow, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Agra, Varanasi, Gorakhpur and Prayagraj.

Further, the state government has made a budgetary provision of Rs 250 crore for safety equipment, arms and ammunition for district police stations.

The budget also proposes Rs 800 crore each for police housing and non-residential buildings, Rs 300 crore for residential /non-residential buildings in newly-created districts and Rs 65.70 crore for purchasing land for setting up Police Lines in newly-created districts.

The Yogi government is also setting up the UP Forensic Science Institute in Lucknow and its construction is expected to be complete by December this year, while the academic session is likely to start in 2023.

₹19,500 crore allocated for Jal Jeevan Mission

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To accomplish the twin objectives of effective management of water and ensuring provision of pure drinking water in water-scarce regions, the UP government has allocated Rs 19,500 crore in its budget for 2022-23 fiscal for Jal Jeevan Mission, which is a sizeable increase over the purse of Rs 15,000 crore allocated under the head in the 2021-22 fiscal year. Giving priority to water, quality sanitation and good hygiene, a target has been set for setting up water purification plants based on ultrafiltration technology in 28,041 schools in about 14 districts under the Chief Minister RO Drinking Water Scheme.

In the biggest-ever paperless UP budget, Rs 1,328 crore has been proposed for river improvement and anti-erosion schemes by the Yogi Adityanath government.

In one of its farmer-centric policies, the state government has also announced to dedicate a total of Rs 800 crore for providing free water to farmers from canals and government tube wells. Besides, Rs 130 crore has been proposed for reconstruction of 569 defective state tube wells. Besides, Rs 1000 crore has been earmarked

for Chief Minister Minor Irrigation Scheme.

Under LTIF (Long Term Irrigation Fund), a budgetary provision of Rs 600 crore has been made for the Madhya Ganga Canal Project, Rs 310 crore for the Saryu Canal Project and Rs 20 crore for the Arjun Sahayak Project has also been announced for the 2022-23 fiscal. A total of Rs 423 crore has been allocated for construction of 2,100 new state tube wells (NABARD funded) and Rs 150 crore for modernisation of 6,600 state tube wells (NABARD funded). A target of providing 2.64 crore tap connections has been set under Jal Jeevan Mission in Uttar Pradesh. In the first phase, work under the drinking water scheme has been started in 6,831 revenue villages of nine districts of Vindhya, Bundelkhand regions, which is targeted to be completed by December 22.

In the second phase, work is in progress in 33,039 revenue villages of 61 districts and is to be completed by December 23. Under the third phase, work of making detailed project reports (DPRs) is in progress in 30,016 revenue villages of 61 districts. The target is to provide safe piped drinking water to every rural households by 2024.

STATE BANK OF INDIA

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property under Rule 8(1))

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized officer of the State Bank of India Branch R.B.O-5 Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice. The Bank issued demand notice on the date mentioned against account and stated herein after calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Legal Heirs having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower's/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercises of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rule on the dates mentioned against each account.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Legal Heirs in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India Harringtonganj Branch for the amounts and interest thereon.

The Borrower/Guarantor/Legal Heirs attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Detail of Property where possession had been taken are as follows :-

Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantor/ Mortgagee/A/c No.	Description of the Immovable Property Mortgaged	Total Amt. O/S [as per Notice u/s 13(2)]	Date of Demand Notice
Branch :- Harringtonganj (05463)			
Sri. Suresh Kumar Singh S/o Sri. Hanuman Dutt Singh Vill. Malethu Kanak Tahsil - Bikapur Dist : Ayodhya A/c.No. 38066178099	All the part and parcel of the property consisting of situated at Gata & Plot No- 904, Property Situated at 1 Km. From Bikapur Railway Station to Inayat Nagar Road owned by Sri. Suresh Kumar Singh S/o Sri. Hanuman Dutt Singh, Total Property Area : 280.00 sq.m. Boundaries:- East - Road Bikapur to Inayat Nagar, West - House of Sri. Sanjay Singh, North- Land of Sri. Lalita Singh, South- House of SriAwadhesh Pratap Singh	Rs. 9,25,907.00 with future interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31.12.2021	31.12.2021 21.05.2022
Smt. Nirmala Devi W/o Sri. Gaya Prasad, Vill. - Mohddinpur, Post- Barun Bajar, Tahsil- Sohawal, Paragana- Magalsi, Dist - Ayodhya. A/c.No. 38066175611	All the part and parcel of the property consisting of situated at Gata No.-1187, Sale Deed Dated-08-09-2006, Bahi No.-1.Zild No.- 725, Page No.- 83 to 108, Serial No.-2106. owned by Smt. Nirmala Devi W/o Sri. Gaya Prasad, Total Property Area :- 72.59 sq.m. Boundaries:- East - House of Sri. Raja Ram, West - Land of Sitapali, North- Pakka Road Kuchera to Shahganj after that Shahganj to Barun Bajar, South- Remaining Land of Seller	Rs. 5,85,158.00 with future interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31.12.2021	31.12.2021 21.05.2022
Sri. Karam Ali S/o Sri. Shahjad Ali Vill. Nasirpur, Musi Chaubey Ka Purwa, Tahsil- Bikapur Dist: Ayodhya A/c.No. 38089373739	All the part and parcel of the property consisting of situated at Gata & Plot No- 106, Tin Shed Room Property Situated at 1 Km. From Bikapur Thana Left Side 1 Km. In owned by Sri. Karam Ali S/o Sri. Shahjad Ali, Total Property Area :- 590.00 sq.m. Boundaries:- East - Land of Lallan Chaubey, West - Rasta Kashi Ram Colony, North- Land of Mo. Raja, South- Land of Rahman Ali	Rs. 3,27,800.00 with future interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31.12.2021	31.12.2021 21.05.2022

Date : 27.05.2022 Place : Ayodhya Authorised Officer : State Bank of India, R.B.O-5

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Budget a *makad-jaal* of stats: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The opposition parties on Thursday slammed the Uttar Pradesh budget. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav called it a web of statistics while Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said it was a cliched exercise and lacked measures in public interest.

Termining the budget a "makad-jaal" (spider web) of statistics, Akhilesh Yadav said this was the sixth budget of the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and allocations under every head had been reduced. "The common man does understand it. Under the double-engine government, inflation has doubled," he said.

"Youngsters who want employment are depressed. Employment is seen in the statistics but not in reality," Yadav said, adding that the government talks about unemployment but does not give out the figures. He said in the sixth budget presented by the BJP government there was no increase in allocation under any head of expenditure and people's welfare was missing from the budget.

The SP chief said the BJP failed to honour the promises it had made in the election manifesto for 2022 UP assembly elections. He said the promise of doubling the income of the farmers had been conveniently forgotten by the BJP. He said there was



no let-up in inflation and no relief for the common man had been announced in the budget. The Left parties also strongly criticised the UP budget saying there was nothing for the welfare of the people in the budget and it would break the spine of poor people of Uttar Pradesh.

Communist Party of India state secretary Dr Girish said the BJP government's sixth budget would break the backbone of the poor people. "The government has done juggling of data to sound genuine and impress the people. The villagers, farmers, youths, unemployed, common man, factory workers are very disappointed," he said.

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav also made similar criticism and said the state government had admitted at the time of presenting the budget that it provided jobs to only 4.5 lakh unemployed. "The BJP had announced to give 70 lakh

jobs to the unemployed, 14 lakh each year. The government provided jobs to 4.5 lakh youths only. Several of youths in different districts including Prayagraj committed suicide as they failed to get jobs," he said.

He said there was no provision for cutting down the inflation by relaxing VAT and other taxes. He also spoke about poor law and order and increase in crime in UP.

Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh termed the budget as low on welfare. He said the budget was not *lok kalyankari* but *low kalyankari*.

Singh said people were disappointed by the UP budget and added that issues related to schools, hospitals, electricity and water supply, road construction and employment did not find an adequate place in the budget.

Rashtriya Lok Dal national secretary Anil Dubey said the farmers were again cheated by the BJP as their concerns did not get a proper place in the budget. "The government presented data to impress but utterly failed. Its claim to clear the arrears of sugarcane farmers by 2022 is a farce as the government is yet to clear ₹3,000 crore arrears of sugarcane farmers," he said.

Dubey said the government did nothing for the poor who were reeling under the burden of inflation. "The promise to double the income of farmers proved a tall talk this time also," he said.

Industry gives a thumbs up

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

UP State Chapter of PHDCI, Confederation of Indian Industry (UP) and Indian Industries Association welcomed the Rs 6.15 lakh-crore UP Budget-2022, which was tabled in the state assembly on Thursday.

Chairman of UP State Chapter of PHDCI Lalit Khaitsan said the budget is another step towards 'Atmanirbharta Uttar Pradesh', providing every opportunity required for a sustainable economic momentum and growth.

He said the budget outlays a strong focus on infrastructure, healthcare, capital spending, disinvestment, monetisation, job creation and agriculture. He pointed out that these measures are progressive and recovery-led and, if implemented correctly, would ease the burden on the economy and lead UP towards becoming a trillion dollar economy.

"I believe the methodical approach of identifying focus areas where health and infrastructure, with significant increase in allocations, sit on the top is in the right direction to revitalise the economy and invest in the well-being of people," Khaitsan said.

IIA national president Ashok Agarwal welcomed the provisions made in the budget

for agriculture sector, women welfare, child welfare, social security, medical and health, public works, irrigation & water resources, small irrigation scheme and rural development. However, he said that after the agriculture sector, the most important sector is MSME but no provision has been made for it in the budget.

"Although MSME is a priority sector in the statements of the government, there must have been some compulsion of the government behind this sector not getting a place in the budget. We hope the government will not ignore this sector," he said.

Agarwal said that the enthusiasm which was there in the year 2018 in the pace of industrial investment and industrialisation in the state also seems to be slowing down, for which the figures presented in the budget are self-evident. "In the year 2018, investment proposals worth Rs 4.68 lakh crore were received in the first investor summit, out of which even after four years, the implementation of investment proposals of only Rs 3 lakh crore is going on in various stages," he pointed out.

Chairman of CII, UP, Vinamra Agarwal said the budget emphasises on making the state self-reliant. "The announcement

regarding the establishment of cyber desks in each district under the Women Samartha Mission Shakti and womenfolk. Also, construction of ATS centres under the Police Emergency Management System will further the safety of civil society and boost industrial development," he said.

The core infrastructure of the state, that is roads, will get a facelift with the allocation of Rs 18,500 and Rs 897 crore for the PM Gati Shakti Yojana. Also, the Green Energy Corridor in Bundelkhand will be a significant step forward in harnessing the solar energy dividend of the region, he added.

Meanwhile, traders under Adarsh Vyapar Mandal said there is nothing in the budget for them. "Traders have contributed towards increasing the revenue of the state but they have got nothing in return. We expected the government to do something as regards the e-commerce policy or health insurance scheme for us, they said. However, Akhil Bharatiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal president Sandeep Bansal welcomed the budget and said it focuses on development.

Rajya Karmachari Sanyukt Parishad said there are no welfare schemes for government employees.

Man got brother killed following property dispute

Mystery unravelled after 9 months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man got his brother bumped off by contractual killers in Sarojini Nagar police station area. The motive for murder was a property dispute between the brother duo.

The stunning revelation caught the police as well as villagers by surprise as the mystery was unravelled nine months after the murder of Mahesh Lodhi of Amasui Bazaar in Sarojini Nagar. The case was registered on September 26, 2021. The police worked on the case but success eluded them till Thursday.

Most of the villagers had lost hope that the case would be cracked. Even the cops termed it a blind case with no clue at their disposal. However, the probe was in progress and the police were taking all possible angles in consideration.

On Thursday, the police zeroed in on two persons after going through a telephonic conversation. Surprisingly, one of the phone numbers happened to be of Mahesh's brother Nand Kishore. The police further worked on the case and identified the other person, who was identified as Buta

Lodhi of Soharmau in Unnao. Both were rounded up and during interrogation, they owned up to their crime. Nand Kishore said his brother Mahesh was a liquor addict and wanted to sell off their parental land to meet his expenses. He said as he wanted the land, he decided to get Mahesh eliminated.

Nand Kishore contacted his wife's maternal uncle Veerpal, who had a criminal past and who had served a jail term in the past.

Veerpal arranged two shooters Buta Lodhi and Raju Pasi (also of Unnao) to execute the crime for Rs 1 lakh. The shooters were given Rs 5,000 in advance while the rest of the amount was supposed to be given after the murder was executed. On the fateful day, Buta Lodhi and Raju Pasi reached Mahesh's house by Veerpal's bike. Both attacked Mahesh with bricks, causing him to bleed profusely. They also made sure that he was dead before fleeing the scene. Mahesh was later found dead with head injuries. Buta confessed to his crime and disclosed that he and Raju got Rs 35,000 each while Veerpal got Rs 30,000.

Ex-minister Nakul Dubey joins Cong

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Former cabinet minister of Uttar Pradesh and expelled Bahujan Samaj Party leader Nakul Dubey joined the Congress in the presence of senior leader Rajeev Shukla in Delhi on Thursday.

Dubey later met Congress general secretary and party's Uttar Pradesh in-charge, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Speaking to media persons on Dubey's induction into the Congress, Shukla said, "Former UP cabinet minister Nakul Dubey, who was considered a pillar of Bahujan Samaj Party, has joined the Congress. We believe that his arrival will strengthen the Congress in Uttar Pradesh."

Expressing gratitude to the Congress leadership, Dubey said, "In the coming times, we will work together to strengthen the party not only in Uttar Pradesh, but in the entire country."



Nakul Dubey with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

During Mayawati's regime between 2007 and 2012, Nakul Dubey held the responsibility of many important departments as a minister in the BSP

government of Uttar Pradesh and was considered as one of the prominent Brahmin faces of the party.

On April 16, BSP president

Mayawati had expelled Dubey from the party on charges of indiscipline and indulging in anti-party activities.

An advocate by profession, Nakul Dubey is known for his proximity to BSP general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra and had played a key role in the success of Mayawati's social engineering formula which helped the party form the government in Uttar Pradesh in 2007.

Nakul Dubey also tried his luck in the 2014 Lok Sabha election but he could only manage a third spot.

In the 2019 general elections, Dubey contested from Sitapur as Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance candidate but got a drubbing by the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate. In the 2022 UP assembly election, the BSP projected him as a prominent Brahmin face, but the party could not come up with an encouraging poll result.

Bank manager accused of sexually exploiting woman

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): A bank manager allegedly sexually exploited a woman in Gontinagar police station area, hiding his marital status all this while. After the victim lodged a complaint, police registered a case in this connection and arrested the accused on Thursday. He was identified as Pranav Dwivedi, a native of Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) residing in Suryalok Apartment, Vibhuti Khand.

It was alleged that the accused inveigled the 26-year-old woman into an affair and then sexually exploited her.

The accused kept the victim in the dark about his marital status and even promised to marry her in order to come closer to her.

When the victim learned of his marital status, she said he would marry her and divorce his first wife. However, the woman came to know in due course of time that it was a fake assurance as Pranav never intended to marry her. His first wife had also accused him of thrashing her in the past.

Meanwhile, a youth was killed in a road mishap in

Mohanlalgarh police station area on Tuesday night. He was identified as Rohit (25) of Belhiya village in the area. He was going to the house of his in-laws in Gopal Kheda locality on a bike. When he reached Panchayat Bhawan in Ganesh Kheda around 10 pm, a speeding vehicle knocked the bike from behind, leaving Rohit injured. He was rushed to a CHC where he was pronounced dead.

Meanwhile, thieves made off with Rs 5,000 in cash from a house in Sairpur police sta-

tion area of Lucknow on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. Reports said house owner Ashutosh Bhattacharya is an employee of NTPC in Rae Bareilly.

"My family and I left the house for Rae Bareilly on April 10 after locking the house. I got a call from a neighbour who told me that thieves had entered my house. I returned home and found the locks broken. The thieves could make off only with some cash as the neighbours raised an alarm," he stated in an FIR.

Raped by neighbour, minor ends life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a minor girl ended her life by hanging herself at her home on Thursday morning after being raped by her neighbour four days back in Rampur.

Her family members claimed that they tried to pursue the kin of the accused to marry the victim to save family honour but when they refused, she chose to end her life rather than face embarrassment.

As per reports, Sartaj from Saifani police station area of Rampur entered the house of a minor girl when she was alone on Sunday and forced himself on her. After execut-

ing his nefarious plan, he handed out death threats to the girl before fleeing the scene.

The victim, however, narrated her ordeal to her kin when they returned home. The family decided to register a case against the accused but later they contacted the youth's family and pleaded to marry the accused to the victim to save social ignominy.

However, the family of the accused refused the proposal on Wednesday claiming that their son was also a minor and not ready for marriage.

Upset with the development and already under grave mental trauma, the victim decided to end her life. On

Wednesday night, she retired to her room and did not come out on Thursday morning. When her mother went to enquire she was shocked to find her body hanging from the ceiling. The family members immediately informed the police and the cops sent the body for autopsy and arrested the accused.

Meanwhile in Aligarh, the headless body of a man was found in Jadopur village in Atrauli police station limits on Wednesday. The identity of the deceased could be ascertained after his kin contacted the police on Wednesday evening.

The deceased was identified as 33-year-old Gopal Singh of Dibai area in

Bulandshahr. His severed head was found buried in the field of his father-in-law Horam in Bamni village of Dibai on Wednesday. Gopal had visited his in-laws' house two days prior. The two in-laws -- Horam and Brajesh -- are reported to be absconding.

A sharp-edged weapon was also found nearby.

It came to light that Gopal had lent Rs 3,000 to father-in-law Horam and when he asked for his money, Horam called him to the village on May 23. He also attended a wedding in the village the same night and had a dispute with his brother-in-law Brajesh. Gopal's family said he had been missing since then.

LDA to launch three major housing projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Three major housing projects will be launched by the Lucknow Development Authority on Sultanpur road by August this year. Private partners will also be invited for participation under the PPP model.

The stress will be on building large number of low-cost houses keeping in mind the middle class families. The engineers are said to be designing the houses in such a way that maximum facilities can be provided in an area of 850 square feet. These will be three-storeyed complexes rather than multi-storeyed towers.

LDA chief engineer IS Singh said the number of housing units will be much less in numbers than in other housing schemes but there will be no compromise in designing. Over 500 such units are expected to come up.

The fourth phase of the project under Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) will

also come up adjacent to these three housing schemes. It is expected that there will be more than 550 flats in the housing towers for people belonging to the low-income group. The estimated cost of a house has been increased by Rs 2 lakh and it will now cost Rs 6.50 lakh. The LDA has also planned to carve out 50 residential plots in the same area in two categories -- 800 square feet and 2,100 square feet.

Meanwhile, the anti-encroachment squad of LDA on Thursday pulled down finished & semi-finished structures and also evicted illegal grabbers from Mahdampur in Gomti Nagar extension.

The anti-encroachment squad, which was led by LDA secretary Pawan Gangwar, reached the spot around 8 am. Initially, there was a heated exchange between the locals and the officials but the protest was neutralised with the intervention of police personnel.

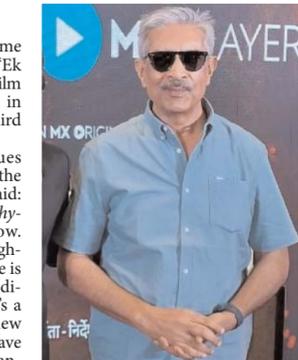
Godmen don't want to meet me: Jha

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Godmen don't want to meet me. After the web series titled 'Ek Badnam Ashram' was aired, said film director Prakash Jha, who is in Lucknow for promotion of the third season of the web series.

Commenting on the issues which he faced while making the third part of the web series, he said: "It was *param anand* and *adhyatmik anand* doing the show. Challenges have been there throughout all the seasons. The challenge is to be able to tell a story to the audience in an engaging manner. It's a story which people already knew because on the one hand, we have those gurus who are running scandalous ashrams while on the other, we have real gurus, real tradition and real culture in our country. It is all about telling the story and everyday is a challenge."

On whether OTT's gain is cinema's loss, he said, "When you start a job, your responsibility is to take it forward and it requires time because it is such a huge thing. One



season is equal to three films. 'Ashram' could have been seen in cinemas and it would not make a difference." Jha said that engaging the audience in season three was a challenge as everything from the size to the godman was bigger.

Regarding OTT series having a high quotient of intimate and explicit scenes, he said if it is not required,

it is unnecessary but if the character and the script demands, it is necessary. On the psychology of the godmen, he said: "We as *bhaktis* are responsible for making them sit on a pedestal and giving them the power which they have. We are weak because we don't want to work hard and practise real *adhyatam*. We don't want to understand the real *adhyatam* and hence we go for short cuts. This message has reached the audience and they can relate to the characters that appear on the screen."

Commenting on the way he sculpted an actor out of Bobby Deol, he said he chose Deol as all these babas look sweet, talk sweetly and are convincing. "Bobby Deol was shocked when asked to play the godman. When I narrated the story and told him that he is playing the godman, he was surprised because he thought he would play the police officer," Jha said.

Darshan Kumar, who plays the cop, said he is excited to be a part of the third season. "We put our heart and soul into the project and people will love it," he said.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank **DEMAND NOTICE**

Regional Office-2: 11/9, Silver Line Building, VIP Road, Civil Lines, Kanpur

NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH RULE 3 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

This Demand notice is hereby given under section 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 hereinafter calling upon the borrowers/Guarantors to repay the amount with further interest and incidental expenses, cost, etc, for the credit facilities granted to them/on their guarantee within 60 days from the date of this notice, failing which, the Bank will exercise all or any of the rights detailed under Section 13 (4) and other applicable provisions of the said Act.

The Borrowers/ Guarantors are also put on notice that in terms of Section 13 (13), they shall not transfer by sale, lease or otherwise the secured assets detailed below without obtaining written consent of the Bank and any contravention of this statutory injunction/ restraint, as provided under the said Act, is an offence.

This notice of Demand is without prejudice to any other rights available to the Bank under the said Act and/or any other law in force and shall not be construed as waiver of any other rights or remedies which the bank may have including further demands for the sum found due and payable. Details of Borrowers/Guarantors, Credit facilities, property secured date of NPA and Liability are given below.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower/Guarantor	Details of Property Secured	Date of Demand Notice & Liabilities
Branch: Jhansi II And Jhansi Kanpur Road			
1	Borrower And Mortgageor: Mr. Pushpendra Kumar S/o Mr. Satya Prakash	Moveable: Royal Enfield- Classic 350 ABS- Signals Stormrider Sand Engine- UJSS52KC448746- Chassis No. MEJ3J535C2K0468498	18.04.2022
	Co-Borrower: Mrs. Himanchali W/o Mr. Pushpendra Kumar	Immovable: Residential House (Land & Building) of Arazal No. 0426 MIO Mouja Lahargird Jhansi Dist and Tehsil Jhansi Uttar Pradesh. Name of Owner: Mr. Pushpendra Kumar S/o Shri Satya Prakash, Area: 74.35 Sq. Mtr.,	Details of Liability Rs. 22,96,935.14 as on 31.03.2022 + Further Interest & other Charges
	Borrower: Pichhor Medical College Jhansi Khas Dist Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh 284128	Boundaries :- (As per Sale Deed) East- 9.15 Mtr, West - Plot of Gmb Dass, North- Plot of Seller, South- House of Sanit. Sudha	

Date: 27.05.2022 Place: Jhansi Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण

सार्वजनिक सूचना

एतद् द्वारा सर्वसाधारण का सूचित किया जाता है कि आवास एवं शहरी कार्य मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार की अमृत योजना के अन्तर्गत कानपुर विकास क्षेत्र की तैयार करायी गयी जी.आई.एस. बेस्ड कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) की प्राधिकरण बोर्ड की 134वीं बोर्ड बैठक दिनांक- 30-12-2021 में अनुमोदनार्थ प्रस्तुत किया गया था, जिस पर बोर्ड द्वारा लिए गये निर्णय के अनुपालन में दिनांक- 20.04.2022 से 19.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे तक जन-सामान्य से आपत्ति एवं सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने हेतु 'सार्वजनिक सूचना' को स्थानीय स्तर पर पढ़े जाने वाले लोक महत्व के विभिन्न दैनिक समाचार पत्रों में दिनांक- 13.04.2022 को प्रकाशित कराया गया था।

कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) के व्यापक प्रचार-प्रसार हेतु निम्न स्थलों पर प्रदर्शनी आयोजित की गई है, जिसमें कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) के प्रतिवेदन एवं मानचित्रों की हाई प्रति उपलब्ध रहेगी-

- कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, कार्यालय परिसर।
- क्लेक्टेट परिसर, कानपुर नगर।
- नगर पंचायत कार्यालय परिसर, बिदूर।
- नगर पालिका कार्यालय परिसर, शुक्लामंज, जिला-उन्नाव।
- कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, स्थल कार्यालय, अकबरपुर-माती, कानपुर देहात।

लोकहित एवं महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) की पारदर्शिता के दृष्टिगत जन-सामान्य के संज्ञानार्थ 'सार्वजनिक सूचना' के निम्नानुसार संक्षिप्त प्राारूप को विभिन्न दैनिक समाचार पत्रों के दिनांक- 05.05.2022, 12.05.2022, 13.05.2022 एवं 17.05.2022 के संस्करणों में 'सार्वजनिक सूचना' का प्रकाशन कराया गया था, जिसमें दिनांक- 20.04.2022 से दिनांक- 19.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे तक जन-सामान्य से आपत्ति एवं सुझाव आमंत्रित किये गये थे। उक्त अवधि को विभिन्न दैनिक समाचार पत्रों के दिनांक- 19.05.2022 के संस्करणों में पुनः प्रकाशित कराकर दिनांक- 26.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे तक बढ़ाया गया था। आपत्ति एवं सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने की समयावधि दिनांक- 26.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे समाप्त हो रही है।

जनहित एवं कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) की पारदर्शिता हेतु जन-सामान्य में व्यापक प्रचार/प्रसार के दृष्टिगत उपरोक्तानुसार महायोजना की प्रदर्शनियों की अवधि को बढ़ाये जाने एवं कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) पर जन-सामान्य से आपत्ति एवं सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने की समयावधि को दिनांक- 26.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे से दिनांक- 31.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे तक बढ़ाया जाता है। जी.आई.एस. बेस्ड मास्टर प्लान- 2031 (ड्राफ्ट) के प्रतिवेदन एवं मानचित्रों की प्रति प्राधिकरण की वेबसाईट- www.kdainfo.co.in पर उपलब्ध है, जिसे उक्त वेबसाईट से डाउनलोड कर अवलोकित किया जा सकता है।

उपरोक्तानुक्रम में कानपुर विकास क्षेत्र की जी.आई.एस. बेस्ड कानपुर महायोजना- 2031 (प्राारूप) पर यदि कोई व्यक्ति / संस्था एवं शासकीय / अर्द्धशासकीय विभाग तथा स्ट्रेटकोल्डर्स अपनी आपत्ति / सुझाव देना चाहें, तो उपरोक्त निर्धारित समयावधि के अन्दर उपाध्यक्ष, का.वि.प्रा. को सम्बोधित अपनी आपत्ति/सुझाव डाक अथवा नगर नियोजक, कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के मोतीझील, कानपुर नगर स्थित कार्यालय (प्रथम तल) में तीन प्रतियों में लिखित रूप में किसी भी कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय समयावधि में प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं। निर्धारित समयावधि दिनांक- 31.05.2022 की सायं 5:00 बजे को उपरान्त प्राप्त होने वाली आपत्ति/सुझाव पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

सचिव
कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण

Services of two cops terminated for helping slain gangster Vikas Dubey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a big action initiated after 22 months of Bikru carnage, the city police authorities have terminated the services of the then Station Officer Vinay Tewari and beat incharge KK Sharma, lodged in the jail, on charges of helping the slain gangster Vikas Dubey, on Thursday. During long-drawn departmental inquiry, charges against both the cops were proved which held them guilty for their acts. After terminating their services, the state administration has been apprised of the action initiated

by the city police authorities. It may be recalled that on July 2, 2020 night, during the police raid on the house of gangster Vikas Dubey in Bikru village of Chaubepur police station area, his henchmen had attacked the police party which led to the killing of as many as eight cops, including the Circle Officer (CO) Devendra Mishra. Thereafter, police had gunned down six assailants, including Vikas Dubey, within next one week in an encounter with them. During investigations the then Chaubepur SO Vinay Kumar Tewari and Beat Incharge KK Sharma were found instrumental in helping the gangster Vikas Dubey. They

were alleged to have apprised Vikas Dubey of police raid on his house on July 2, 2020 night in advance. Besides, for their remaining in regular contact with Vikas Dubey and relations with him, both the cops were suspended, arrested and sent to jail. Separate departmental inquiries were also set up against them to be carried out by the Special Investigation Team (SIT). On the report of SIT submitted to the state administration, both the cops were found guilty of their charges and terminated from service. Investigation Officer/Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) Anand Kulkarni said on the SIT report submitted to state admin-

istration, though the decision to terminate the services of both the cops was taken in April last itself but it could not be implemented due to delay in recording their statements. However, the decision about the punishment to other cops involved in the carnage had already been taken in the past, he added. It was informed that during investigations, SIT had found over four dozen police personnel guilty for their relations with the slain gangster Vikas Dubey who included the four IPS and 11 gazetted officers. The SIT, in its report, had already recommended to initiate major and minor penal action against all these cops, he said.

DM inspects Ursula Hospital Burn Ward

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Neha Sharma after inspection of Ursula Hospital Burn Ward later inaugurated four air conditioners and two water coolers donated by State Bank of India (SBI) and appealed that more organisations should come forward to provide all necessary equipment to the hospital so that it can run smoothly and cater to the needs of the people of Kanpur. She said more people must donate for the hospital upkeep and other provisions and said this will directly benefit the needy. She then interacted with

the kin of the patients of the hospital and took a feedback from them.

Assistant Superintendent Dr Vinay Tripathi said in burn ward it was highly essential to maintain cool environment, especially because the burn patients need to be directly under the AC so that there was no fungal growth on the skin. He said in burn cases the major problem was to prevent any fungal growth on the skin, especially after the couple of days when the skin started showing signs of healing. He said at such time it was essential to ensure the skin was washed by antiseptic regularly

so that there was no fungal growth and that the skin remained dry in a cool environment.

The DM later addressing the Udyog Bandhu meeting at Collectorate directed the officials to ensure they themselves took part and refrained from sending their subordinates to attend the meeting. She directed the officials concerned to ensure that the entrepreneurs did not face any problem. She said major complaint was regarding littered garbage and unclean surroundings and said in areas where there were no safai karamcharis they should be deployed on priority.

She said another area of concern was the entry of heavy vehicles in the industrial areas and thus directed that movement of heavy vehicles should be streamlined on priority so that entrepreneurs do not face any problem. She said because the entry of heavy vehicles was also necessary for loading and unloading thus special arrangements should be made to ensure that their entry and loading and unloading did not hinder the smooth flow of the traffic in the industrial area. Prominent among those who took part in the meeting were ADM Atul Kumar and a large number of entrepreneurs.

COURT NOTICE
(BY ADVERTISEMENT)
(Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 61 OF 2022
IN THE MATTER OF
THE GOODS OF
Lale Mohd, Tahir Khan, Son of Late Kasim Khan, resident of Village and Pargana Usia, Post Usia, District Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh
.....Deceased.
Mehar Jamal Khatoun.....Petitioner.
WHEREAS an application has been made by Mehar Jamal Khatoun, Daughter of Late Tahir Khan, Resident of House No. 20 Street Kulpur, Village Usia, District Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh- 232330, for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Mehar Jamal Khatoun, who died at Usia, Zamania, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, 232330 on 28.03.2022 AND WHEREAS, the 13th day of July, 2022 has been fixed for hearing of the said application. THIS CITATION is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the proceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration).
Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 23rd day of May, 2022
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD
Shri Vishesh Rajwanshi,
Advocate Counsel for the Petitioner.

Seminar on agriculture patterns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Director Extension, CSA University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr AK Singh while addressing a two day seminar on 'Indian Natural Agriculture Patterns' jointly organised in association with Internal Quality Assurance Cell on Thursday said natural farming was one of the most potential crop cultivation methods to drastically cut down produc-

tion costs by reducing dependence on market for purchase of critical inputs.

He said being considered as an agroecologically diverse farming practice, it brought hosts of ecological and social benefits. He said it was a fact that NF adopted farmers who applied farm yard manure harvested better crop yields than those who did not apply. He said organic agriculture will prosper in India and will contribute in feeding 1.5 billion people by 2030. He said as per the statistics by ASSOCHAM and TechSci the organic farming market in India had reached around US \$1.36 billion in 2020. He said the Agriculture Ministry was ready with a new central scheme to promote natural farming in the country with an estimated outlay of ₹2,500 crore. He said the new scheme has been designed after looking at alternatives for existing fertiliser and pesticide-based farming. He said CSA as per the directives of the UP government had mooted a scheme to adopt a complementary and cluster approach, to begin with and will focus on intensive handholding of farmers practising natural farming,

marketing of the produce and providing extension services.

Dr Singh said the objective of the scheme was not the conversion of chemical farming but promoting natural farming in areas where chemical farming had not reached yet. He said the fact was that chemical farming was not much practised in dryland areas. He said it was also termed as agroecology based diversified farming system which integrated crops, trees and livestock with functional biodiversity. He said it was estimated that around 2.5 million farmers in India were already practising regenerative agriculture. Informing about natural farming he said it can be termed as increase in production, sustainability, saving of water use, improvement in soil health and farmland ecosystem. He said it was considered as a cost-effective farming practice with scope for raising employment and rural development. He said chemical intensive farming had severely affected the ecosystem, climate and health and had increased the cost of cultivation and thus making agriculture unviable for small and marginal farmers. He said Zero Budget Natural was a method of chemical-free agriculture drawn from the traditional Indian practices. He said the Yogi government was stressing upon return to the basics of the Indian agriculture. He said although the increase in the food production was essential but increasing cost of cultivation was leading cause of indebtedness among the farmers. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr PK Rathi. Over a dozen scientists of the varsity and research students took part in the seminar.

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. OFF LINE TENDER NOTICE
Following Off line Tenders are invited from the experienced/reputed contractors/agencies for the execution of following works:- For more details Please contact/go through to the notice board of the Office Executive Engineer, Electricity Trans. Division Sidhauri, Azamgarh 2. Off line very very short term tender No. 02/ETD(A)/2022-23. Work of dismantling/de-stringing to attend the breakdown of collapsed/fallen towers of 220 KV Aural- Azamgarh IISC line under ETD Azamgarh. Earnest Money: Rs. 2000.00 (Rs. One Thousand) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 236.00 (Rs. Two Hundred Thirty Six) only. Earnest money will be in the shape of RTGS/NEFT duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Electricity Trans. Division Sidhauri, Azamgarh. Documents of Tender No. 02 will be purchased upto 15:00 hrs of 04.06.2022 and completed tender will be accepted upto 16:00 Hrs same day in the office of undersigned and will be opened on 04.06.2022 at 17:00 Hrs. respectively. Please visit our Notice board Office of the Executive Engineer Electricity Transmission Division Azamgarh for details for any other corrections/amendments/modification extension till the date of submission of tender. In case the tender opening date is holiday or undersigned remain out of headquarters the date of submission and opening of tender will stand extended to next working day. Undersigned has the right to reject/divide any tender without assigning any reason therefor. Conditional tenders shall not be accepted. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (TRANS), DIVISION AZAMGARH No. 804 Dt. 26.5.22 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्स्मिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड
डी०एल०एल०, मिखागीपुर, वाराणसी-221004 ई-निविदा सूचना (1) अत्यकालिक ई-निविदा संख्या-26-ई०टी०सी०(सी०)/2022-23- 220 के०वी० उपकेंद्र साहपुरी पर 220/132/33 के०वी० स्वीचगार्ड में जानली पौचों तथा घास की कटाई एवं अन्य संबंधित कार्य। निविदा खुलने की तिथि-10-06-2022। निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य-रु 236/- जी०एस०टी० सहित। वरी हर राशि - रु 2000/- (रु दो हजार मात्र)। निविदा संबंधी अन्य विवरण जैसे निविदा में संशोधन अथवा निविदा खुलने की तिथि में विस्तार होता है तो इसकी सूचना ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध करायी जायेगी। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल, वाराणसी पत्रांक 384 दिनांक - 26.5.22 राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचायें

कार्यालय प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षण (उत्पादन)
मध्य प्रदेश, सतपुड़ा भवन, भोपाल
दूरभाष एवं फैक्स नं. 0755-2674354 E-mail: pccfprod@mp.gov.in
क्रमांक/उत्पा./निर्वर्तन/विज्ञापन/124/1394 भोपाल, दिनांक 23.05.2022
वनोपज के घोष विक्रय की सूचना
मध्यप्रदेश शासन, वन विभाग के विभागीय कार्यालयों/बैंसगावों में माह जून, 2022 में विभिन्न स्थलों पर विभिन्न तिथियों में ईमरती काष्ठ, जलाऊ चट्टे बाँस एवं अन्य सामग्री के नीलाम की तिथियाँ पूर्व से अधिसूचित हैं। Covid-19 संक्रमण के दृष्टिगत भविष्य में शासन स्तर से जारी होने वाले निर्देशों के अनुरूप नीलामों की कार्यवाही की जाएगी। नीलाम की तदर्थ तिथियाँ, नीलाम का प्रकार तथा कार्यालयों में विक्रय हेतु उपलब्ध वनोपज व अन्य सामग्री की जानकारी मध्यप्रदेश शासन, वन विभाग की वेबसाइट mpforest.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है।
अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षण (उत्पादन)
म.प्र. भोपाल

कार्यालय : अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-8, जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ
पत्रांक : 120/EE-8/2022-23 दिनांक : 26.05.2022
(अति-अल्पकालीन निविदा-सूचना)
जलकल विभाग में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अल्पकालिक निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र किसी भी कार्यदिवस में दिनांक 2.6.2022 को अपराह्न 03:00 बजे तक अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-8 के कार्यालय के केश काउन्टर से प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। सील निविदाएं दिनांक 2.6.2022 तक अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-8 के कार्यालय में अपराह्न 3:30 बजे तक सील टेन्डर बाँस में प्राप्त की जायेंगी। प्राप्त सभी निविदाएं दिनांक 2.6.2022 को उपस्थित निविदादाताओं के समक्ष 4:00 बजे जोन-8 के कार्यालय में खोली जायेंगी।
1. कानपुर रोड स्थित एल०डी०ए० कालोनी, मानसरोवर/आशियाना में विभिन्न 08 स्थानों पर विभिन्न साइज की क्षतिग्रस्त पाइप लाइन की मरम्मत/बदलने का कार्य, धरोहर राशि रु 6400/- एवं निविदा मूल्य रु 350/-
अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-8
जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
Nishtha Parisar, Bijalee Nagar, Govindpura, Bhopal-23
Phone : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636
Ref. : MD/MK/04/NIT/436 Date : 26.05.2022
TENDER NOTICE
MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering.

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee (Rs. Lakh)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference (In Rs.)	Date of opening of tender
MD/MK/04/782	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of MDAS at 33/11 KV Substations.	493	11800/-	13.06.22	28.06.22 at 3:30 PM

Other details and full Tender documents will be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.
CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)
M.P. Madhyam/105078/2022

KDA V-C holds meeting with bank officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a bid to facilitate its all-tees and general masses, Vice-Chairman of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) Arvind Singh held a meeting with top officials and technical staff of the ICICI Bank and Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC), strategy and technical consultant appointed by it on Thursday afternoon. Senior officers of KDA, including additional secretary, chief engineer, finance controller along with its technical staff were also present in the meeting. On the occasion officials of ICICI Bank gave a presentation of their module operating in different states of the country.



KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh watching a presentation with representatives of ICICI Bank and PWC officials on Thursday

focused on accounting and financial management, property management, workers management etc. Discussions were also held about empowering the KDA to deliver value-added services and in other technical aspects. After going through the presentation, Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh asked them to prepare terms and conditions of the MoU to achieve set targets within prescribed time limit. He stressed on introducing the new technology/electronic module in KDA as available in Delhi Development Authority and directed the Bank's representatives to soon workout a plan and give presentation of the same before him in due course.

UP Minority Commission member interacts with Sikhs, takes feedback about problems

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The member of Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission, Parminder Singh, while addressing presspersons at Circuit House said as per the directive of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, efforts need to be made to bring Sikhs and minorities to come across the negotiating table for a direct dialogue and also to provide a feedback of their problems to the government and to ensure that welfare projects reached the people at the grassroots level and also made them aware. He claimed that after 37 years the Chief Minister had set up a SIT under which the victims of 1984 anti-Sikh riots will be properly compensated and the process could be given further momentum as well. He said apart from this people behind the large scale massacre will be identified and punished. He then interacted with District Magistrate Neha Sharma and advised her that the schools run by the Gurudwara at Sarsaia Ghat be



Member of Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission Parminder Singh addressing the officials at Circuit House.

respond positively. **BUDGET:** The president of the Uttar Pradesh Khadi Gramudhyog Mahasangh, Suresh Gupta, while reacting to Uttar Pradesh Budget 2022-23 said it was enticing but fails on umpteen parameters. He said this budget's success will rest majorly on full removal of GST on Khadi and ensuring that the officials supported the move transparently. He said its benefit had to reach the grassroots level as well. He said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had established 800 units in the year 2022-2023 and this aimed at providing employment to 16,000 people and this was something which reflected the intentions of the UP government. He said the CM talks high about Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Khadi Vipadan Sahayta Yojana but ironically in the budget he had made a meagre allocation of ₹15 crore. He said the budget seems to have been prepared without taking up the issues which can give impetus to Khadi production.

allowed to run again and survey of madarsa and financial help to the boy who recently died of drowning at the ghat. He also directed that the scholarships for minorities be released at the earliest which was currently not being provided. He then met the prominent people of the city and interacted with the members of Sikh community and took a feedback from them about their problems. He said the UP government was concerned about the welfare of Sikhs thus it had directed to ensure to act as a bridge between the community and the government. He said it was highly necessary

for bringing the Sikhs to the negotiating table so that their problems could be heard and sorted out. He said the Sikh community was famous for philanthropy and thus directed the community members to take part in it in a big way. Prominent who took part in the meeting were DM Neha Sharma, top police authorities, Director of the Minority Board, prominent members of the Sikh community and from other minority communities as well. He said the government had opened its door and thus now the onus on the Sikh community to accept it and

'Sankalp Diwas' function held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Trade was in fact essential to engendered the need for faster, innovation, improvement of productivity and to provide higher income and more opportunities to people. Trade also benefited lower-income households by offering consumers more affordable goods and services. However, the local trade stood threatened by online trade and thus all the traders need to join hands and make efforts to prevent the growth of online trade which was hitting them below the belt. This was stated by

Secretary of Udyog Vyapar Mandal, Gyanesh Pandey while addressing the 'Sankalp Diwas' function held to discuss traders' problems and to felicitate traders at GS Tower on Thursday.

He said umpteen issues were still pending and thus had retarded growth. He said inefficient or inadequate systems of transportation, logistics or customs, poor connectivity in telecommunications, financial markets complicated regulatory environments were major hurdles in the growth of local trade. He said the retail sector had been unorganised and there was no standard procedure and planning that would aid a retailer in establishing and running ones business. He said when a retailer sets up its outlets in the urban localities, sourcing the materials from the remotest parts of the country becomes a big problem and this made way for middlemen. He said apart from this the overall maintenance cost in terms of electricity, rents, water was much more for the retailers. He said the local traders were dangerously threatened by internet age and technological advancements had opened a number of possibilities in every sphere of life. He said the new trend which has surfaced was

customers did not want to go out in the sun, look out for a parking spot, search for their desired products and then stand in a queue to pay for their items. He said thus they preferred their products were home-delivered by the click of a few buttons and as a result the retailers did not witness the rush of customers. He said unless a joint effort was made the retailers will be facing survival problems in the times to come. Later they felicitated over a score of traders. The vote of thanks was delivered by joint secretary, Naveen Dubey.

Bhindi, lychee exported to Gulf

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The first consignment of 1.2 metric ton of Bhindi, Kunru and lychee was dispatched from the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur for hyper market in the Gulf countries which was flagged off here on Thursday by the Divisional Commissioner (DC) Deepak Agrawal. Speaking on the occasion, Agrawal said that the vegetables and fruits being exported from here to the Gulf countries are proving to be a milestone in the direction of doubling the income of farmers of not only Varanasi but also of the districts of Purvanchal (eastern UP). He hailed the efforts of Agricultural and Processed



DC Deepak Agrawal flagging off export consignment of vegetables to Dubai from Varanasi on Thursday.

in packaging of materials etc here, he said, laying special emphasis on ensuring that the officers and people of FPOs present on the spot ensure that vegetables and fruits are sent regularly from here to the Gulf and other countries according to their demand. According to the DC, the second consignment of vegetables and fruits would also be dispatched from here soon. The DC, while encouraging the farmers and FPOs present on the spot, laid special emphasis on the quality of the products. 'The quality of the products should be ensured at par with the international market standards,' he added. On the occasion, CB Singh of APEDA, Director of LBLSI, farmers and FPOs were also present.

Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) associated with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) of Varanasi and Lulu Group. 'The newly construct-

ed pack house near Babatpur will be ready soon, due to which the farmers will get the requisite support to send their products to other countries. Better facilities will be available

Court posts May 30 as next date of hearing in Gyanvapi case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As the hearing on the maintainability of the Shringar Gauri-Gyanvapi mosque complex civil suit could not be completed on Thursday, the Varanasi court posted May 30 for the next hearing.

The hearing on the maintainability of the Shringar Gauri-Gyanvapi mosque complex began in the court of the District Judge Dr Ajay Kumar Vishvesha on Thursday afternoon and lasted for around two hours. It was said that the Muslim side (Defendant) put its argument first and demanded the rejection of the petition filed by five Hindu women (plaintiffs) seeking permission for the worship at Shringar Gauri temple and preserving other idols, located in Gyanvapi complex in which the Gyanvapi mosque is also located.

The counsels of Muslim side argued that the petition filed by the plaintiffs is not maintainable and it should be rejected under Order 7 Rule 11 of CPC. By putting its argument, the Muslim side said that the rumor is being spread out about the 'shivling', claimed by Hindu side to have been found in wuzu khana of Gyanvapi mosque complex during the



Advocates coming out after hearing in Gyanvapi case in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

commission survey, to invoke sentiments of the people. The Muslim side put its argument the maximum time during the hearing. The Hindu side argued that the people were worshipping in Shringar Gauri temple even before the year of 1991 and so, this case is different to the Places of Worship Act, 1991. As the hearing could not be completed, the court

posted May 30 for the next hearing. It is learnt that the five women filed a petition in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar seeking the permission to worship in the Shringar Gauri temple and preserve the idols located in Gyanvapi mosque complex. The defendants including the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee,

which looks after the management of Gyanvapi Mosque, submitted an application in the Supreme Court under the Order 7 Rule 11 of Civil Procedure Code (CPC) raising question on the maintainability of the suit. The SC on May 20 transferred the petition to the court of District Judge from the court of Civil Judge, Senior Division.

Traders protest against anti-encroachment drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Traders at Katra, Netram crossing and adjoining areas on Thursday pulled down their shutters and blocked vehicular movement for few hours to mark their protest against the anti-encroachment drive by the authorities of Prayagraj Municipal Corporation (PMC) and district police.

Deputy SP (Colonel) Ajay Singh Chauhan said that a delegation of traders have put up their demands before the authorities concerned on Wednesday with an appeal that PMC and district police authorities should not disturb their shops if they keep articles/products to a limited distance from their shops.

DSP, however, made it clear to traders that any sort of

encroachment in terms of displaying of products or extending the shop on road/footpath would not be accepted and claimed that action would be initiated against the errant traders. Officials of district police and PMC have appealed to traders not to extend their shops towards footpath or road as it has been constantly giving inconvenience to commuters as well as shoppers. On Wednesday night, a group of traders protested against the anti-encroachment drive at Netram crossing and demanded to roll drive back.

HAAL CHAL DASTA RENAMED AS JAN SAMVAD DASTA: The 'Haal Chal Dasta' set up to know the well-being of citizens and helping police connect with people in Sangam City will now be known as Jan Samvad Dasta.

Top cops renamed Haal Chal Dasta as Jan Samvad Dasta on Wednesday and claimed that 25 women constables in the team have so far connected with more than one lakh people.

The Haal Chal Dasta was set up at reserve police lines in February to connect with people, know their well-being, and record grievances. IG (Prayagraj range) Rakesh Singh and SSP (Prayagraj) Ajay Kumar on Wednesday held a meeting with all 25 women constables of Jan Samvad Dasta and encouraged them to make best efforts for better policing. "Women cops were encouraged to do better and collect important inputs that help improve policing. We are trying to connect with people and aim to act promptly on inputs" he added. This is the first time in the state

when cops are connecting with citizens by calling and asking them about their well-being.

The employees at Jan Samvad Dasta have compiled a list of doctors, bank officials, businessmen, lawyers, teachers, public representatives, senior citizens, pensioners and call them on fixed days to ask about their well-being. On Monday the cops interact with bank officers, employees of other financial services and security guards while they interact with mediapersons on Tuesday.

Every Wednesday calls are made to industrialists and businessmen, while public representatives like MPs, MLA, corporators are contacted on Thursday. Calls are made to lawyers on Saturday and to police pensioners and senior citizens on Sunday.

Illicit liquor worth ₹ 2 crore seized

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Special Task Force (Prayagraj unit) claimed to have busted an interstate racket involved in liquor smuggling and arrested its three key operatives near Sanjay nagar on Bhadohi-Jaunpur highway and seized illegal liquor consignment worth ₹ 2 crore from them.

Police have also seized two truck containers involved in smuggling of illegal liquor (1,970 cartons), one Aadhaar card, one driving license and one PAN card from their possession. The arrested persons were identified as Mintoo Singh of Ambala, Jatin Kumar

of Mohali (Punjab) and Bunty Khan of Ambala.

Deputy SP (STF) Navendu Kumar told reporters, "The STF received a specific tip-off that an illegal consignment of liquor was being sent to many districts of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand from Haryana, Punjab and Delhi via different highways."

A team of STF swung into action and intercepted the two truck containers with fake registration numbers near Sanjay Nagar, in district Jaunpur on Bhadohi -Jaunpur highway. The arrested persons told the police that a man, named as Sahib Singh alias Gagga of Mohali, was involved in smuggling

of liquor from Haryana, Punjab to different states. They also told the police that liquor smugglers were using WhatsApp chat groups as communication mode to deliver the consignments and stay in touch.

YOUTH FOUND MURDERED: A 22-year-old youth, identified as Salman Khan and a resident of Gadauri Khurd village, was found murdered near Narsinghar village under the limits of Raniganj police station of Pratappur district on Thursday morning. The body of the deceased has been sent for autopsy to find out the exact cause of death, police said.

The slain youth, as per police, had left the house on Wednesday evening after telling his family members that he was going to attend a marriage party. However, the body of the youth was found near Narsinghar village with several injury marks. The unidentified killers had also removed his clothes and a bike was also found parked a few metres from the body.

Upon being alerted senior police officers rushed to the spot and carried out investigations. The police after initial investigations claimed that only motive of killers was to eliminate the youth. No arrest has been made so far.

UP Budget hailed for 'gifts' to Kashi by Yogi govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The continuous focus on the overall development of this parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the Yogi government through the UP Budget was welcomed not only by a majority of local people but also by the senior leaders of the ruling party. In this first Budget of Yogi 2.0 government (sixth in all) presented by UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna in Vidhan Sabha on Thursday, there was a proposal to construct the first international cricket stadium in Kashi for which there was a provision of budget allocation of ₹ 95 crore. The allocation of funds for the construction of a road bridge

between Kashi Vishwanath and Raighat was also welcomed. The Banarasi also hailed the decision of a metro in this holy city, along with Gorakhpur, for which there is a provision of ₹100 crore in the budget. Several years ago, efforts were made to start a metro in Varanasi but later on, its files were put in cold storage on the ground that the metro in Varanasi is not economically viable.

Expressing his happiness, former Mayor Ram Gopal Mohley, terming the UP Budget-2022 as a progressive, development oriented and all inclusive one, said that the budget presented under the efficient guidance of Yogi Adityanath presented an

unmatched glimpse of the public welfare and vision of the state. "It is clear from the provision of the Budget that this is the Budget for the achievement of self-reliant India" he said.

Expressing gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for paying special attention to tourism development in Kashi in the Budget, he has said that museums of Sant Ravidas and Sant Kabir will be built in Varanasi and for which there were provisions of budget of ₹ 25 crore for each has been proposed, along with ₹ 77 crore for the road from Ganga bank to Kashi Vishwanath temple. He also praised the state government for making provision of ₹ 100 crore for the develop-

ment of tourism facilities in this holy city so that religious tourism as well as others can be encouraged further.

"All sections including farmers, women, students and youths have been fully taken care of in the budget. While the amount of destitute women and old age pension has been doubled in the budget and now the beneficiaries of Ujjwala Yojana will get 2 cylinders free in a year.

The target is to have free irrigation in the next five years. One person from each family will get employment. MBBS seats will be doubled," said the ex-Mayor, adding that special attention has been given to the empowerment of youth in the budget.

Life sentence to Yasin Malik welcomed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The activists of Pranam Vande Mataram Samiti welcomed the life sentence given to Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik by the upper court of NIA in a terror funding case at the district headquarters here on Thursday. Led by Samiti President Anup Jaiswal, the activists, along with a section of advocates, welcomed the court decision. They said that the Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik should be given death penalty. They said that by hanging the separatist to the



Vande Matram activists burning posters of Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik, Pakistan in Varanasi on Thursday.

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death, some relief can be given to the families of those victims who lost their lives in terrorist attacks. On the occasion, they also burnt the posters of Yasin Malik, Pakistan and former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. The event was conducted by Dinesh Kalra, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Vipul Pathak. Several advocates and social workers including Anup Gupta, Dharendra Sharma, Roshan Bharti, Mukesh Mishra, Kanchan, Sujit Prajapati, Sandeep, Basant, Sanjay Gupta and Dharamchand were also present.

CDO launches 2nd phase of Abhinav Pahal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Development Officer (CDO) Abhishek Goyal launched the second phase of the Abhinav Pahal (innovative initiative) at Panihara Anganwadi Centre under Aranjiline block here on Wednesday to strengthen the immunity among the children, adolescent girls and pregnant women by distributing them nutritious food and articles through the Child Development Services and Nutrition department.

On the occasion, the children of red and yellow categories consumed protein and mineral supplements in the presence of the CDO. The rituals of annaprashan of two children above six months of age and godharai of a pregnant woman were performed. Goyal also gave nutritional and health related counselling to the beneficiaries present at the centre.

Speaking on the occasion, the CDO said that the first phase of the innovative initiative was launched in October last year and after seeing the better results, the second phase of the campaign has started in all the development blocks of the district during the day. "This campaign will run for a

full year," he said, directing all the Anganwadi workers to make all the beneficiaries consume these subtle and complementary elements in front of them.

"The main objective of this campaign is to strengthen the nutritional level of children, adolescent girls and pregnant women by providing essential micro and supplementary nutrients like multi vitamins, iron etc," he added.

According to him, in coordination with the medical officer-in-charges of community/primary health centres (CHCs/PHCs) complete health check-up of all the children of red and yellow categories will be done and if necessary, they will be admitted to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) located at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (DDU) Hospital (Pandeypur). At least, four prenatal check-ups of pregnant women will be done compulsorily by an ANM and institutional delivery will be ensured, Goyal said and instructed that during pregnancy, the woman will be registered under the Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana and the schemes of the Labour department.

District Programme

Officer (DPO) DK Singh informed that pregnant women will be given Albendazole tablets for removing stomach worms apart from iron folic acid (IFA) tablets (one tablet daily for 180 days) for treating anaemia after the completion of three months. Adolescent girls will also be given Albendazole and IFA (twice a week) while the children of red and yellow categories will be given doses of albendazole, multi vitamin syrup and IFA syrup according to age. He informed that in collaboration with Vedanta Foundation, nutrition power (protein mineral paste) is also being given to the children of red and yellow categories in the Aranjiline block. CDPO Sarla Devi, gram pradhan Anil Kumar Pandey, Vedanta's district representative Mohammad Arshnal, Anganwadi workers and ANMs were also present.

₹606 CR BOI NET PROFIT FOR Q4: Bank of India reports a twofold jump in Net Profit by 142.31% YOY, which went up from ₹ 250 crore in Q4FY21 to Rs.606 crore for Q4FY22. The bank's stand-alone net profit increased to ₹ 3,404.70 crore from ₹ 2,160.30 crore in 2020-21.

The total standalone income during the January-

March quarter of 2021-22 rose to ₹ 11,443.46 crore against ₹ 11,155.53 crore registered previous year. On the asset front, the bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) fell to 9.98 per cent of the gross advances as of March 2022 compared to 13.77 per cent in the year-ago period.

The net NPAs or bad loans too came down to 2.34 per cent from 3.35 per cent a year ago.

RAM (Retail, Agriculture and MSME) Advances grew by 15.70% YOY, accounting for 54.97% of Advances. Global Business increased by 4.56% YOY from ₹. 10,37,549 crore in March, 2021 to ₹.10, 84,910 crore in March, 2022. As on March 31 last, the Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CRAR) stood at 17.04% against 16.66% in Dec'21 and 14.93% in Mar'21Vis-à-vis 11.5% mandate).

During the year, the Bank successfully raised QIP of ₹2,550 crore and Tier-II Bonds of ₹1,800 crore for augmenting capital base. With regards to guidance for FY23 Credit Growth is projected to be around 10-12% in FY'23 and Gross NPA is expected to be lower than 8%. The bank projects the NIM is projected to be around 3%.

Complete examination of private witnesses first: High Court

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad high court has directed the sessions courts across the state to make an endeavour to complete the examination of private witnesses first. "This will curb the menace of frequent incidents of witnesses turning hostile," the court said.

While dismissing a criminal

appeal filed by Ram Chandra, a murder convict, a division bench comprising Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Vikas Kumar Srivastav further directed the trial judges in the state to take up the examination of private witnesses first before proceeding with that of official witnesses.

A private witness is someone who is witness of the hap-

pening of the crime like an eye-witness of a murder, whereas official witness includes doctor, who conducted postmortem or a policeman, who is investigating officer of the case.

PETITION NOT HEARD: The petition filed by Jagadguru Paramhans in the Allahabad High Court, seeking permission to enter the Taj Mahal in Agra by wearing a dharmadand and saffron

clothes, could not be heard. The hearing could not be held due to lack of information and paucity of time to the opposition advocates.

The petition was presented before a division bench comprising Justices AR Masoodi and Vikram D Chauhan. Petitioner advocate Abhishek Tiwari had requested for a hearing before the term.

Retired S-I commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a shocking incident, an 82-year-old retired sub-inspector (S-I) from the Police department committed suicide by shooting himself with his licensed gun. The incident took place in South Kotwa village of Sarainayat area here on Thursday.

When the news spread, the police of Sarai Inayat police station reached and took possession of the gun. Police said that the suicide note revealed that prolonged illness was the reason behind the retired S-I taking this extreme step. SP Gangapar and CO Phulpur also visited the spot and inspected and talked to the family members of the deceased.

After retiring from the Police department about 22 years ago, Raghav Pratap Singh was living in South Kotwa. After lunch on Thursday, he picked up the licensed gun and went out of the house saying that it was stored in the police

station, so it has to be cleaned. He took the gun and sat on the chair outside the house. When the family members came out after hearing the sound of firing, they saw that Raghav Pratap had collapsed on the ground near the chair. His head was damaged. A gun was lying nearby. Raghav Pratap

was killed due to bullet injury. After receiving the news, along with the police of Sarai Inayat police station, CO and SP Gangapar also reached there. When the police inspected Raghav Pratap's room, a two-page suicide note was found, which showed that he was suffering from illness, so he

committed suicide. It was also written that he has no complaint against anyone and post-mortem of his body should not be done. Family members said that in the past he was admitted to the hospital for 15 days. Police said that it has become clear in the investigation that it is a suicide case.



Congress workers protest against the recovery of ration cards by the District Supply Officer in Prayagraj.

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'Ensure availability of medicines in PHCs, CHCs'

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Yogeshwar Ram Mishra has directed the officials concerned to ensure minimum three days in a week for inspection in the field to become updated with progress in works positively. Such a direction was issued by him while reviewing the schemes under 37 points fixed by the government under priority in his office on Wednesday. Reviewing the schemes point wise the DC directed the SE (Irrigation) to ensure cleaning

and repair of canals within 15 days and submit the plan under MGNREGA to get the fund. About plantation he asked the departments concerned to complete all preparations like digging of pits as per allocated target so that plantation could be done on time without delay. He directed the Health department to ensure availability of medicines in all PHCs, CHCs and wellness centres along with vaccines. He directed to ensure cent per cent distribution of golden cards under Ayushman Bharat Scheme and regular visit of doctors to shelter homes

and taking proper care of cattle. He also said to organise camps in villages to ensure vaccination of cattle to save them from diseases. Reviewing other developmental schemes the DC expressed discontent over tardy progress in roads and bridges. He made it clear that prevailing condition was not tolerable and if the such a situation remained till next month action will be taken. On matters pending on Jhatpat and Nivesh Mitra the DC directed officials to dispose them of without delay, report to him on time and warned to

take action against the defaulters. In the review meeting the DC directed the revenue officials to dispose of the cases which were pending for more than five years. In the meeting law and order situation was also reviewed and police was directed to take all preventive measures to control crime. The meeting was conducted by Joint Development Commissioner (JDC) Suresh Chandra Mishra and attended by DIG (Police) RK Bharadwaj, DMs, SPs and CDOs of the division, divisional officers and other officials concerned.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Rule of the gun

The Robb Elementary School carnage again raises the issue of gunman fetish among America's youth

The American myth is turning on itself. Pet phrases, like the "world's policeman" or the post-9/11 "world's soldier", are boomeranging. A larger-than-life portrayal of the American Marine in Hollywood and addictive video games has acquired bloody connotations. The American "Special Operator", who is the quintessential symbol of the "American way of life", is the latest Frankenstein. And, it is now happening in Texas, the land of the self-claimed frontiersmen, those buccaneers who still wear cowboy hats and boots and ride horses, the guns and rifles and repeaters completing their macho image. The latest incident of mass killings in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday gives Americans a long-overdue wake-up call: The previous mass killers were labelled as Islamist jihadists, white supremacists or right-wing local terrorists. Today's American killer is nothing of that sort. Mostly male, he is an ordinary citizen with a neighbourly attitude that hides the ghosts of penury or social ostracism, a generally wasted life or a pitifully impaired mental status. The killer, ashamed of his situation, decides to get justice the only way he knows: By the gun. But first, the would-be killer has to get into the role. He chooses the image that hits him from every TV screen, chewing gum wrapper, muscle-building whey tin, and film, in fact from every advertisement in the US: the macho, gun-toting American vigilante. So, he acquires the tactical battle uniform including the hat, vest, gloves and



cargo trousers, the toughest 'costume' Americans like him swear by.

The "Special Operator" must have thought a lot about the weapon. He chose the DDM4 Rifle, the civilian version of the military's M4 Carbine. Luckily, the civilian version does not switch to fully automatic; otherwise, more would have died. The AR-15 rifle and 375 bullets must have cost him between \$400 and \$2000, the holographic sight an additional \$700. The killer symbolises the current American fetish for the olive-green-clad American military superhero. The world got a hint of such looming disasters quite early in the Donald Trump era as these gun-toting mutants of the Special Ops Forces (SOFs) roamed the country in their pick-ups without purpose other than to advertise their trigger-happy right-wing attitudes. The world remembers the rioters who stormed the US Capitol this January on Trump's calling, wearing Kevlar and metal helmets and fancy weapons. Such "activists" fired bullets in the air to protest COVID mask mandates. They want to shoot guns and say they love America. The gunman fetish has come out of Waco; it is now mainstream. The armed pretenders are the foot soldiers of right-wing 'heroism', settling debts with bullets. The Republicans glorify gun culture; the Democrats make half-hearted attempts to ban it. It is the indifference that is costing that country today. The American mindset needs urgent formatting. It is not just about limitations on guns, but erasing the puffed-up machismo image that makes disturbed people take to guns. It is insulting democratic common sense to insist that owning guns is being liberal.

PICTALK



An aerial view of the flood-affected areas after heavy rainfall, in Assam

Upshot, prospects of Biden's Asia policy



SUMIT KUMAR

There are several reasons why the Biden Administration's efforts to infuse a new movement in the ties with Asean assume huge significance

Amid a gloomy picture of the world order due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, President Joe Biden has redirected his attention to deepening and consolidating America's ties with its allies and partners in Asia. In this context, the US hosted Asean leaders for a special summit on May 12-13 to take stock of its relationships. Biden paid a five-day visit to South Korea and Japan during May 20-24, launching a mega-regional economic plan for the Indo-Pacific.

While commemorating the 45 years of US-Asean relations, Biden declared the beginning of a new era in their relations. He argued that "a great deal of history of our world in the next 50 years is going to be written and the Asean countries and our relationship with you is the future in the coming years and decades". Undoubtedly, there are several reasons why the Biden Administration's political and others efforts to infuse a new movement in the ties with Asean assume huge significance. Of course, one factor that has dominated the US pivot to Southeast Asia is China's increasing footprints in the region through the Belt & Road Initiative, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Therefore, to contain China's influence and maintain its permanence in the region, it is imperative for the US to accelerate the level of cooperation with Asean. On the other hand, Asean countries have become alarmed at China's assertive posturing in the South China Sea. Consequently, they not only want strong American military presence in the region, but are also trying to increase trade and commerce with the US to reduce their economic dependability on China.

Sadly, President Donald Trump's unpredictable behaviour, the absence of Asean centrality in the Indo-Pacific strategy, the US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement created huge distrust among



Asean countries about the US' desire to invest in the relationship. The Biden Administration's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, the initial ambiguity in its approach towards Russia's invasion of Ukraine and other issues only compounded Asean's apprehensions about the future direction of the relationship.

Expectedly, the special summit addressed certain critical issues of Southeast Asian countries. One, the US reiterated that its Indo-Pacific strategy will be Asean-centric. This acknowledgment was important because Asean has generated the concern that the US Indo-Pacific strategy will dilute its position in US policy towards Asia. Two, Biden also announced to invest \$150 million in new projects to bolster Southeast Asia's climate, maritime and public health infrastructure. Three, Asean countries, except Singapore, have adopted the policy of neutrality on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This in turn signalled the decline of US influence in the region. Thus, before starting his Asia tour, Biden wanted to

BEFORE STARTING HIS ASIA TOUR, BIDEN WANTED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO RUSSIA AND CHINA THROUGH THE SPECIAL SUMMIT THAT THE US CONTINUES TO ENJOY CLOSE TIES WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

send a message to Russia and China through the Special Summit that the US continues to enjoy close ties with Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, though the joint statement issued after the Summit did not mention the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Biden must have reportedly asked Asean members to take a tough stand on the Russia-Ukraine war.

On the other hand, during his Asia visit, the launch of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework during the second in-person QUAD Summit emerged as a major development. Ever since the reemergence of QUAD in 2017, formally known as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, it has made huge progress. This can be gauged from the fact that the QUAD meeting was initially held at the junior bureaucratic level. Now, it is organised at different levels, including the heads of State. While QUAD has played a pivotal role in dealing with the COVID virus, the group has become the anchor of promoting a free, open, prosperous and secure

Indo-Pacific. Addressing an overdue lacuna in the Indo-Pacific strategy, QUAD has launched Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. In turn, it will play a crucial role in limiting China's economic clout in the region.

Earlier, QUAD had shown hesitation in adding security issues to its priority. However, the launch of an Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) has indicated the willingness of the QUAD countries to foster security cooperation. The IPMDA will offer a near-real-time, integrated and cost-effective maritime domain awareness picture and help Quad members' allies as well to fully monitor their shores.

Of course, Taiwan appeared as a major issue on the priority list of Biden's visit to Asia. In fact, he said in no uncertain terms that the US would intervene militarily if Taiwan came under Chinese attack. This strong presidential statement, with the presence of the major Asian powers in Tokyo, certainly assumes huge importance, indicating the possible shift in the US' approach towards 'One China' policy. Thus, while the visit has crystallised the Biden Administration's readiness to lead the regional and global efforts to contain autocratic tendencies in Asia and beyond, it needs to be realised that the success of the Indo-Pacific strategy and QUAD singularly depends on whether the US and other powers can protect Taiwan's independence or not.

Thus, while the US has indicated to end the policy of ambiguity on Taiwan, global and regional efforts must be channelised to make Taiwan an integral element of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and QUAD.

(The author is a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs Visiting Fellow, NCCU, Taipei. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AAP'S EXEMPLARY ACT IN PUNJAB

Sir — The news of a Minister of the AAP Government of Punjab indulging in corruption is in the headlines as well as the speedy action taken by the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on this corrupt Minister. Mann without delay dismissed the Minister from the Cabinet. In a way, such Ministers also have to be praised that as soon as their name cropped up in the bribery case, they accepted their mistake. But one thing is incomprehensible that how many days it has been since the formation of the AAP Government and it is very unfortunate to have such allegations against a Minister of a reputed department in as many days.

But the good thing is that the Minister did not take any recourse to power to save himself, as usually happens. Or say that the Government did not delay in paying compensation for the Assembly elections of Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. The Punjab Government and AAP have proved by the immediate dismissal that the mobile number given to prevent corruption is working fine. It is a request to the Almighty that this number keeps working fine. Other State Governments should also provide similar numbers to the common man.

Rajender Kumar Sharma | Rewari

NEED TO BE REASONABLE

Sir — These days we find many discussions going on, some in favour and some against, about the release of Perarivalan, one of the accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Some have even gone overboard to say that the Supreme Court has committed a grave mistake in releasing Perarivalan, thereby proving to be more Catholic than the Pope! It should not be forgotten that one of the senior inquiry officers has regretted that he had recorded Perarivalan's statement wrongly, thereby implicating him in the heinous crime.

Reputed legal luminaries, including Justice Krishna Iyer, have raised their

Cong must wake up to reality



Hardik Patel, Ashwani Kumar and RPN Singh. The leadership is at a loss for how to tackle the exodus the party faces. In fact, Sibal had resigned from the party a day after the much-talked about conclave held in Udaipur, aka Chintan Shivir.

By his action, he has dropped a hint that he was dissatisfied with the brainstorming session in Udaipur. It may be recollected that Sibal was part of G-23, a group of dissenting Congress leaders who have been demanding radical changes in the party. Sibal's quitting the Congress is a wake-up call for the party. Its leadership must not take such desertions lightly. The party leadership needs to wake up to reality. A weak Congress party cannot counter the BJP even in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The party leadership needs to come out of the cocoon it is settled in and take immediate steps to rejuvenate it.

Venu GS | Kollam

voice in favour of release of Perarivalan confirming that he had only been arrested and kept in jail for three decades only out of suspicion. Can anyone of those who are opposing the release of Perarivalan categorically state that he was involved in Rajiv's assassination with unambiguous and authentic evidence? Let us give the benefit of the doubt to Perarivalan at least now after he has been made to waste his entire youth in custody and allow him to spend the rest of his life peacefully with his mother.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

THE GOOD MORNING HABIT

Sir — Reading newspapers early in the morning along with a cup of tea is still a morning trend in India. Although in many families, newspapers have been replaced by mobile phones, there are many who recognise newspapers as a more reliable source of information. People believe that anything available on the internet may be untrue and to cross-check people prefer

newspapers or any other printed source (magazines, letter, etc). A newspaper has more advantages than disadvantages while it is the other way round in the case of smart phones. Newspapers increase reading skills, vocabulary, general knowledge and don't affect one's eyesight.

We can get newspapers to update ourselves on various current issues and news from across the world. These are handy items, made of papers and, therefore, eco-friendly and easy to recycle. Most importantly, it is the easiest and cheapest source of information. Entertaining things like puzzles, stories and crosswords are also available in a newspaper. The Indian Readership Survey (IRS) reveals that newspaper readership at the end of Q1 of 2019 has grown to 425 million. The trust which the people have for print media can never be replaced by any other source.

Ishita Patidar | Ujjain

SOUND BITE

We only know how to run the Government. We don't do vote bank politics.

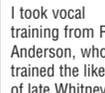


Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal



This is a stupid war which your (Vladimir) Putin started. This war was built on lies.

Kremlin critic — Alexei Navalny



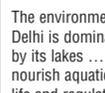
I took vocal training from Ron Anderson, who has trained the likes of late Whitney Houston and Ariana Grande.

Actor — Madhuri Dixit-Nene



The last game we played, we felt almost like we played our best game of this campaign so far.

RCB captain — Faf du Plessis



The environment of Delhi is dominated by its lakes... they nourish aquatic life and regulate climate.

Delhi Environment Minister — Gopal Rai

Slipping into abyss

Kerala is experiencing one blow after another in the LDF Government's second term in office

Swami Vivekananda, during his tour to Kerala in 1892, had described the province as a "lunatic asylum" as he was shocked by the vacuous communalism. The Kerala of 2022 needs an epithet stronger than what the renowned monk had used. Despite democratically electing India's first Communist Government and being a social, economic and educational model for the country, the State often spawns communal battle cries, threats and one-upmanship among religious leaders and organisations which even the Kerala High Court has described as "terrorist outfits". The threats and challenges touched a new high as a 10-year-old boy was used by the activists of Popular Front of India, an Islamic outfit, to raise slogans against Hindus and Christians. Though the slogans raised during a Republic Rally at Alappuzha last Saturday are not fit to print, it can be said that these were a blot on Kerala's psyche. Political murders, dowry deaths, student violence and drug trafficking have become regular features in the State's daily life. The CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front Government under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, which retained power in the 2021 election, is clueless or suffering from selective amnesia since it assumed office last May.



This is the first time in four decades that a Government succeeded in retaining power for the second term in Kerala. Despite making a lot of sound and fury, Vijayan's second innings stands out because of its indifference to burning issues. Another news that

shook Kerala's conscience pertains to a rape survivor who approached the Kerala High Court with the charge that the trial court has a hidden agenda to derail her case. The victim, herself a popular actress, had named Malayalam cinema's top actor Dileep as the prime accused in the 2017 case in which the latter hired a petty thief to rape the woman. A series of dowry deaths reported from various parts of the State has caused anguish in the mind of Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who staged a day's fast as a mark of solidarity with the victims. Nothing is going right to date in the second tenure of the LDF Government. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister and his party colleagues accusing the rape survivor of playing politics has further shocked women in the State. Kerala deserves a much better deal than this sexist approach.

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

QUAD LEADERS' SUMMIT OUTCOMES FOR FUTURE

Maritime data sharing provides weather and waterway watch



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Tokyo for the second in-person QUAD leaders' summit. He had bilateral discussions with Prime ministers of Japan and Australia and US President Joe Biden. It underscores the importance of the Indo-Pacific as the external strategy of the QUAD members. The apprehensions regarding the US losing focus on this crucial region due to Ukraine stand resolved. This group of 4 nations, though not a military alliance, shares common threat perceptions from China. Australia had pulled out from the group in 2007 as it was then in a tight embrace with China. However, an aggressive China in Australia's backyard, used military power to expand its territorial controls, forcing the Australians to get back into QUAD. The Tokyo summit saw a mint-fresh Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese attending the meeting in person along with his foreign minister. The QUAD political leaders expanded on their targets they had set out in their meetings since March 2021. One important outcome was announcement of Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA). In a statement, the White House elaborated that IPMDA would provide for "faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners' waters. This common operating picture will integrate three critical regions—the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean region—in the Indo-Pacific." Earlier a senior US administration official



had highlighted that maritime arrangement will allow countries "The ability to know what is happening in countries' territorial waters and in their exclusive economic zones." This cooperation could be one of the most significant outcomes from QUAD so far as it brings together all the QUAD partner countries together to share the data they collect individually about their maritime resources and far away islands and get a big picture. This data sharing could lead to early warnings for disasters, climate change incidents and most important be the eyes at the largest waterway in the world. It will keep an eye on illegal military interventions, illegal fishing activities and potentially criminal activities using the sea route. The QUAD leaders were categorical in stating the purpose as nonmilitary but at a level of sharing surveillance data amongst the coast guards. Any analyst would be able to pinpoint the actual reason behind this initiative is to contain China's aggressive illegal occupations and economic activities in many of the islands in the Indo Pacific region.

It is a shared concern for India, Australia and Japan. However, increasingly it has been a major issue of conflict for several countries in South and Southeast Asia which have felt bullied by China. The QUAD decision to make the shared data "unclassified" and therefore open for any country in the region, makes IPMDA an inclusive framework. The focus is on identification and working on cutting edge future technologies to collect the data and make it most meaningful for users. This could make QUAD a unique partner for many countries in the region, as they could fall back on QUAD data and intelligence for securing their maritime economic interests and prevent criminal activities in their backyard. Another key aspect of the recently concluded QUAD summit was the focus on cyber security vulnerabilities faced by each nation and sharing of information between the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT). It was also stated that "the Quad will improve software and Managed Service Provider (MSP) security by coordinating cyber security standards for Quad Governments' procurement of software." This should create a common framework for governments in each of the 4 nations to be effective in case of cyber-attacks on their critical infrastructure.

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

The world must unite for fighting inflation



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

To control inflation, decisions of all Central banks need some kind of real-time coordination, a mechanism for which needs to be worked out and activated

It seems that for the entire world, high inflation is going to be the new normal, at least for the foreseeable future. In April 2022, the IMF's World Economic Outlook predicted that during 2022, inflation will be at 5.7 percent in advanced economies and 8.7 percent in emerging markets and developing economies—1.8 and 2.8 percent higher, respectively, than its earlier projections in January. The unprecedented supply disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine War, now about to enter its fourth month, have been driving commodity prices for quite some time, and conditions are expected to deteriorate progressively.

Worsening supply-demand imbalances and further increases in commodity prices could lead to persistently high inflation at least in the medium term, which in turn would lead to a spiral of rising interest rates, higher wage demands and consequent fall in the profitability of companies forcing them to curtail production, leading in turn to still higher inflation and more losses in real wages. Post-pandemic, the world is already struggling for economic recovery while trying to manage much higher debt levels than before due to the expansionary fiscal policies triggered by the pandemic. Now the higher inflation would expose countries, especially the emerging markets and developing economies, to serious debt vulnerabilities, let alone building fiscal buffers.

The drivers of this rising inflation - the war, sanctions, lockdown in China due to a resurgence of Covid, and the massive supply-chain disruptions as a result of all these - are beyond the control of central banks. Hence monetary policies alone may not suffice to tame the menace of inflation, though the responses of different countries to such policies would vary depending on their conditions and the strength of their fundamentals. Governments would also be weary of reversing their expansionary fiscal policies which would translate into economic hardships for their people trying hard to recover from the losses suffered during the pandemic years. In the unfolding scenario, growth will likely take a back seat for the entire world for the time being.

In India, the retail inflation measured by the CPI had shot up to 7.8 percent in April 2022 from 7 percent in March, the highest in the last 8 years. While the urban inflation was 7.1 percent, the rural inflation soared to 8.4 percent. In the CPI basket, food and beverages carry a weightage of 45.9 percent and fuel another 6.8 percent; even if we take these out, the core inflation still remained at 6.5 percent, way above the RBI's inflation target of 6 percent at the upper band. Factory output also remained sluggish, with the index of industrial production (IIP) rising only by 1.9 percent in March 2022, down from the peak of 134.4 percent recorded in April 2021, mainly due to the low performance



IT IS STRANGE WHY THE RBI TOOK SO LONG TO ACT AND WHEN IT FINALLY DID, WHY IT HAD TO ACT IN SUCH AN ABRUPT MANNER THAT WAS SURE TO JOLT THE MARKET, LEADING TO PANIC SELLING BY FOREIGN INVESTORS LEADING TO SUSTAINED MAYHEM IN THE STOCK MARKET AND SEVERE EROSION IN THE VALUE OF THE RUPEE

(The author is a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and an academic. The views expressed are personal.)



of the manufacturing sector which has been hit hard by rising input prices and supply disruptions.

A part of the inflation is also imported, since more than 80 percent of our fuel and 60 percent of edible oil are imported from countries which are also facing severe inflation, and the inflated import bill is reducing our foreign exchange reserves which have come down to US\$ 598 billion providing an import cover of about 11 months in April 2022, from US\$ 635 billion in January 2022. The inflation figures are already exceeding 9 percent in certain states like West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Telangana. The optimism of the Union Finance Ministry that the gradual recovery of aggregate demand was reducing the risk of sustained high inflation may be rather misplaced. Even the higher collection of GST as seen in the recent months may also be partly fuelled by the rise in prices of commodities rather than due to the expansion of economic activities.

Following the US Fed's 0.5 percent hike in inflation, the RBI has increased the repo rate as well as the CRR by 0.4 percent on 4th May. It is widely expected that there would be another steep hike in both the interest rate as well as the CRR in June. CRISIL Ratings has projected inflation to be around 6.3 percent for the current fiscal; it also expects the RBI to raise repo rates by another 0.75 percent to one percent during FY-2023. Economists and corpo-

rate leaders expect the interest rate to finally settle down around 5.5 percent by the mid FY-2023.

Indeed, given the huge difference between the repo rate of 4.4 percent and the yield of 10-year G-Sec at above 7 percent which is a benchmark for interest rate in the economy, there is scope for still higher increases. But every increase in interest rate contracts the space for fiscal manoeuvrability of the government and growth becomes the ultimate casualty. Already the growth forecasts for India have been slashed by all agencies - RBI has itself lowered its growth projection to 7.2 percent in 2022-23, down from 7.8 percent it had earlier estimated.

The wholesale inflation measured by the WPI has been much higher than the CPI inflation throughout - it rose to a four-month high of 14.55 percent in March 2022 from 13.11 percent in February. Prices accelerated across all segments - 10.71 percent for manufactured products, 25.97 percent for basic metals, 34.52 percent for fuel and power, and 15.54 percent for primary articles, despite a marginal slowdown in the cost of food articles. On a monthly basis, wholesale prices increased by 2.69 percent in March, the most since the series began in 2004. The reason for such divergence between the WPI and CPI is partly due to the different weightages in their respective baskets - in the WPI basket, manufactured articles get 64.2 percent weightage which is much higher than in the CPI,

whereas primary articles get 22.6 percentage weightage, followed by 13.2 percent for fuel and power.

While the RBI considers retail inflation for its policy decisions, the wholesale price rises ultimately get reflected on the retail prices after a lag of a few quarters as companies tend pass on the burden to consumers. Thus, the high WPI inflation in March for primary articles is likely to get translated into still higher food prices which will affect the poor more than the rich, again belying the Finance Ministry's assumption that at the lower end of the economic strata, the impact of inflation is not as deep as at the upper end.

It is really strange why the RBI took so long to act and when it finally did so, why it had to act in such an abrupt manner that was sure to jolt the market severely, leading to panic selling by foreign investors leading to sustained mayhem in the stock market and severe erosion in the value of the rupee. The increase in interest rates could have been affected in a little more predictable manner, using the mechanism of regular MPC meetings. If inflation is to be controlled, decisions by all central banks need some kind of a real-time coordination, a mechanism for which needs to be worked out and activated without delay. The WTO, must also be involved simultaneously in the battle against inflation. Inflation is as bad as Covid if not worse, and only by coming together, the world can fight it effectively.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

AGAIN, RAHUL GANDHI MEETS UK MP JEREMY CORBYN WHO IS KNOWN FOR HIS HATRED AND DISLIKE FOR INDIA... ADVOCATES KASHMIR'S SECESSION.
— UNION LAW MINISTER
KIREN RIJUJU



AM AMAZED AS TO HOW DEAREST FRIENDS IN TV MEDIA HAVE TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO SERVE THE GOVERNMENT'S IDIOTIC AGENDA.
— CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Arson exposes violent social underbelly of Konaseema

The violence was the result of longstanding community rivalries and discontent with the Govt rather than antagonism towards Ambedkar

What happened in Konaseema district in Andhra Pradesh on May 24 was unprecedented and totally unforeseen. Houses of a Minister for Transport, Pinipe Viswaroop, a Dalit, and MLA, P. Satish, a fisherman, were set on fire by a mob which also indulged in arson and vandalism in Amalapuram town. Violence broke out when the police attempted to prevent a procession taken out by Joint Action Committee (JAC) as part of 'Chalo Amalapuram' from meeting the district collector. Had the police allowed the protestors to submit their memorandum to the collector, things might have been different.



RAMACHANDRA MURTHY KONDUBHATLA

(The writer is a senior journalist and Editor, primepost, a news website based out of Hyderabad. The views expressed are personal.)

District. People of Konaseema are sentimental about the name of their district. The movement for a separate district of Konaseema was on for many years. It acquired momentum with the State Government's decision to create Konaseema district and to add Ambedkar's name to it. Top leaders of major parties supported the proposal though many others, transcending party differences, privately opposed the change. Nara Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP and Pawan Kalyan of the Jana Sena Party gave their consent when YSRCP government sought their approval.

Konaseema district has a peculiar demographic picture. Kapus, Settibalij as and Dalits are the three dominant communities which are equally large, vocal and militant. There



used to be frequent clashes between the Kapus and Settibalij as till 1993 when some leaders such as Gudipudi Prabhakara Rao brokered peace between the two warring communities. The two communities have not been quarrelling ever since barring some isolated incidents. However, the Dalits have been at loggerheads both with the Kapus and

Settibalij as who are part of the BCs. Konaseema district has one Lok Sabha seat (Amalapuram) and three (out of a total of seven) assembly seats reserved for SCs. Anuradha, an SC, is representing Amalapuram constituency in Lok Sabha. The Minister from the district Viswaroop is considered very close to YSR's family. Dalits are in command in the district and this is detested by Kapus and Balijas.

When AP Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy visited Marumalla village near Amalapuram last week, Viswaroop had taken a delegation of Dalits to him. They submitted a memorandum requesting the Chief Minister to name Konaseema district after Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Jagan Mohan Reddy accepted

the request but wanted the opposition parties to approve the proposal. TDP and JSP leaders had welcomed the idea. A gazette notification was issued last week renaming the district as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema District and it asked the people to let the government know within one month if anybody has any objection.

The GO was not openly opposed by any noted political leader. But WhatsApp messages were sent in their thousands by the general public, supporting or opposing the move. The Dalit protagonists were as aggressive as Kapus and Balijas. Viswaroop reportedly told the police to use force in dealing with the situation. The police had clamped Section 144 and Section 30 by way of preventive

measures. But the force which the protestors unleashed in a matter of hours was not foreseen by the police who were unprepared. They used lathis and fired in the air for five times to control the mob. Till 8 pm the street battles between the police and the protestors were going on. The police could bring the situation under control by late in the night. DIG Palraju (Eluru range) and four SPs have been camping at Amalapuram which remained peaceful on Wednesday. Extra forces have been rushed to the town. Forty-six persons have been taken into custody till Wednesday afternoon, according to DIG Palraju. He had spoken to community leaders. He appealed to the people to maintain peace and harmony. Konaseema which is

known for its greenery, coconut trees and high yielding crops, has all of a sudden exploded in the face of the police officials. Nothing of this sort had happened in the last four decades. Even at the time of Vangaveeti Mohan Ranga's murder in Vijayawada in 1989, the riots were all over coastal Andhra and only Kapus in Konaseema were involved in sporadic violence.

This time it was SCs versus all others. It was mostly the result of long-standing community rivalries and discontent with the present Government rather than antagonism towards Ambedkar. The dominant profile of Dalit leaders also added fuel to the fire. Former Speaker of Lok Sabha, GMC Balayogi, hailed from the same place.

'Covid killed 1.6L people in 2020' Israel Def Min to visit India next week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 killed 1,60,618 people in 2020 and accounted for 8.9 per cent of the total 18.11 lakh medically certified deaths in country, according to Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death-2020 released by Office of Registrar General of India (RGI) on Wednesday.

This is, however, higher than officially declared Union Health Ministry's Covid death count of 1,48,994 in 2020.

While Covid-19 was fourth biggest cause of medically certified deaths nationally in 2020, it was second biggest in seven States — Maharashtra (17.7 per cent), Manipur (15.7 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (15 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (13.5 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (12 per cent), Punjab (11.9 per cent) and Jharkhand (7.6 per cent).

In 2020, the most Covid deaths in absolute numbers were reported in Maharashtra (61,212) followed by Uttar Pradesh (16,489), Karnataka (15,476), Andhra Pradesh (12,193) and Delhi (8,744). Only one State — Arunachal Pradesh — and one Union Territory — Lakshadweep — did not report any medically certified Covid death during 2020, as per RGI data. For purposes of Report



on Medical Certification of Cause of Death-2020, a separate group Covid was added for data collection after pandemic broke out in 2020.

In the report, Covid deaths have been reported under two sub-heads: One in which code 'virus identified' is assigned to a 'disease diagnosis of Covid 19 confirmed by laboratory testing'; and second in which code 'virus not identified' is assigned to 'a clinical or epidemiological diagnosis of Covid 19 where laboratory confirmation is inconclusive or not available.'

Overall, heart diseases, pneumonia and asthma together claimed highest number of lives — over 42 per cent — of total 18,11,688 medically certified deaths

registered in the country in 2020.

However, the total number of registered deaths in country was 81,15,882. A total of 5.7 per cent of total medically certified deaths were reported among infants (age less than 1 year) while about 71.7 per cent of all infant deaths were reported to be caused by certain conditions originating during perinatal period.

In age-group of 15-24 years, diseases of circulatory system claimed 18 per cent of deaths — the highest — followed by injury, poisoning, and certain other consequences of external causes, which constituted 15.7 per cent of deaths, implying age group to be peculiarly vulnerable to 'injuries and poisoning related deaths.'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
AGENCIES/NEW DELHI/JERUSALEM

In a boost to the growing ties between the two countries, Defence Minister Benny Gantz of Israel will visit India next week to mark 30 years of diplomatic and defence relations. He will sign a Letter of Intent (LOI) on the occasion.

The Minister was earlier scheduled to visit New Delhi in March but had to postpone it due to terror attacks across Israel.

Moreover, Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had to call off his visit to India to celebrate 30 years of establishment of diplomatic ties with India as he tested positive for corona. The visit was to take place from April 3-5.

The Israeli defence minister's visit signifies growing strategic and defence ties between India and Israel. In the last 30 years, Israel has emerged as one of the top suppliers of high end weapon



systems and allied equipment to the Indian armed forces across the entire spectrum. The two countries are now foraying into joint development and production of weapon systems.

The two countries elevated their bilateral ties to a strategic partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in July 2017. Since then, the relationship between the two countries has focused on expanding knowledge-based partnership, which involves collaboration in inno-

vation and research, including boosting the 'Make in India' initiative. "Defence Minister Benny Gantz will conduct an official visit to India next week (01.06) during which he will sign an LOI marking 30 years of diplomatic and defence ties between Israel and India.

A detailed schedule will be released in the coming days," a statement from his office said. Informed sources told PTI that he will be on a three-day visit to India and will meet his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh. Other details of the trip are being worked out, they said. Some local media reports interpreted the signing of the LOI as a "special security declaration."

Prime Minister Modi said in January this year that there cannot be a better time to set new goals for taking forward India-Israel relations and asserted that the cooperation between the two countries has played a key role in the growth stories of the two nations.

In a special video message on the completion of 30 years

of full-fledged diplomatic relations between India and Israel, Modi said this period has been very important for both countries.

Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has earlier described the "deep relationship" between India and Israel as one coming from the heart and not being about interests and asked Prime Minister Modi to work together to take the bilateral ties to "a whole new level".

Though India had recognised Israel on September 17, 1950, full-fledged diplomatic relations between the countries were established on January 29, 1992.

Since then, the bilateral relations between both countries have developed into multifaceted strategic partnerships.

Earlier in January, Israel's envoy to India Naor Gilon said the 30th anniversary of India-Israel diplomatic ties is a good opportunity to look ahead and shape the next 30 years of relations.

K'taka Cong head Shivakumar, others booked under PMLA



PTI ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet under the anti-money laundering law against Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar and others, officials said on Thursday.

The prosecution complaint has been filed under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) before a Delhi court, they said.

The federal probe agency, in the chargesheet, has included the statements of various people it recorded during the course of investigation and the

evidence it gathered. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said all "political weapons" were being used against him, ahead of the Karnataka assembly polls expected to be held next year.

He claimed that the chargesheet is "part of a plan to eliminate people, whom the ruling dispensation fear may create trouble for them politically or don't surrender to them", adding that he is ready to "face everything".

The ED had in September 2018 registered a money laundering case against Shivakumar, Anjaneya Hanumanthaiah, an employee

CBI raids ex-J'khand Sports Min in multi-crore equipment purchases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday conducted searches at 16 locations, including the residence of former Jharkhand Sports Minister Bandhu Tirkey in then BJP-led Arjun Munda Government, over alleged irregularities in multi-crore equipment purchases for the 34th National Games 2011 held in Ranchi, officials said.

Besides Tirkey, who is now the working president of the Congress in the state, the CBI also searched the premises of noted lawyer R K Anand, who was the working chairman of the National Games Organising Committee, in the national capital. The premises of former director of sports of



the state P C Mishra, organising secretary of national games Madhukant Pathak and organising secretary H M Hashmi are also being searched, the officials said.

As part of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) operation, seven places in Ranchi and five locations in Dhanbad are also being searched, they said. Tirkey was recently convicted for amassing disproportionate assets by a Jharkhand court

and stripped of his assembly membership. He was a close confidante of Babul Marandi of the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajaantik) before Marandi decided to merge the outfit with the BJP.

Tirkey did not agree with Marandi's decision and joined the Congress after the 2019 assembly elections.

The case of alleged corruption in the purchase of games equipment was probed by the state anti-corruption branch and later, handed over to the CBI by the Jharkhand High Court in April this year.

The order was passed by a division bench of Chief Justice Dr Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad while hearing a public interest li-

gation filed by Sushil Kumar Singh in 2018 seeking a speedy inquiry into the alleged National Games scam.

The bench observed that the ACB had not concluded its investigation even after more than a decade of the games being hosted by the Jharkhand government.

In his petition, Singh had mentioned that the expenditure incurred in hosting the National Games in the state had been pegged at Rs 28.38 crore.

He had claimed that public money was squandered by office bearers of the National Games' organising committee who embezzled money by quoting high prices of sports equipment and accessories.

at the Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, and other people allegedly linked to him. Shivakumar, 60, was arrested by the ED in this case in 2019, after multiple rounds of questioning.

A number of people, including his daughter Aishwarya and Congress MLA Lakshmi Hebbalkar, were questioned by the agency during the probe. The Congress leader, a former cabinet minister of Karnataka, is out on bail in the money laundering case.

The case is based on an earlier Income Tax Department chargesheet filed against Shivakumar and others before a court in Bengaluru on charges of alleged tax evasion and hawala dealings.

The I-T department has accused Shivakumar and his associate S K Sharma of transporting huge amounts of unaccounted cash on a regular basis through hawala channels with help of three other accused after it carried out raids in Delhi and Bengaluru against

them in 2017. Shivakumar, after I-T department raids, had said that his "instrumental role" in ensuring safe stay of Gujarat Congress MLAs in a Karnataka resort during the Rajya Sabha polls in 2017, amid allegations that the BJP was trying to poach them, was the reason for the I-T searches and subsequent ED action against him.

The I-T department claimed that Shivakumar set up an extensive network of persons and premises across Delhi and Bengaluru in order to transport and utilise "unaccounted" cash. The other accused in its case were identified as Sachin Narayan, Hanumanthaiah and N Rajendra.

According to department, Narayan was a business partner of Shivakumar and Sharma is proprietor of Sharma Transports, which ran a fleet of luxury and passenger buses and provided transport services to various concerns and individuals on rental basis.

IN BRIEF

VP TO VISIT GABON, SENEGAL, QATAR SOON



New Delhi: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will embark on a nine-day visit to Gabon, Senegal and Qatar beginning May 30 during which a number of bilateral pacts are expected to be inked to expand cooperation in specific areas. It will be the first-ever high-level visit from India to Gabon and Senegal. Naidu will be accompanied by Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar and MPs Sushil Kumar Modi, Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and P Raveendranath.

HONCHO HELD IN YES BANK LOAN CASE

New Delhi: The CBI on Thursday arrested promoter of ABIL group of companies, Avinash Bhosale, in connection with the DHFL-Yes bank loan case. The agency had conducted multiple searches at his premises last month.

'APPLICANTS CAN'T CLAIM RIGHT ON JOB PROCESS'

New Delhi: A candidate who has applied for a job does not have a legal right to insist that the recruitment process set in motion be carried to its logical end, the Supreme Court has said. A bench of Justices K M Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy said that even the inclusion of a candidate in the select list may not provide the candidate with such a right.

KEY ACCUSED IN TERROR ATTACK CASE ARRESTED

New Delhi: The NIA has arrested a person believed to be a key accused in the Sunjwan terror attack case that happened in April on the outskirts of Jammu. The accused, Abid Ahmad Mir of Putrigam in south Kashmir's Pulwama, is alleged to be an overground worker of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed.

SC permits Maha to submit proposal for 20 open shelters under Child Protection Services scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has permitted the Maharashtra Government to submit a proposal to start 20 open shelters under the Child Protection Services (CPS) scheme for the 2022-2023 financial year to provide community-based facilities to Children in Street Situations (CISS).

A bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said in addition to the request for approval under the CPS scheme, the state of Maharashtra shall also make an application to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for approval for starting the open shelters.

The apex court also directed the Union of India to take a decision and grant its approval within a period of two months from the date of receipt of the application.

"The State of Maharashtra



is permitted to submit a proposal for starting 20 open shelters for the financial year 2022-2023 within a period of one week from today.

Union of India shall take a decision and grant its approval within a period of two months from the date of receipt of the application," the bench, also comprising justices B R Gavai and A S Bopanna, said in its May 19 order.

Covid jab reduces risk of death by 34%: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Even vaccinated people with emild breakthrough Covid-19 infections can experience debilitating, lingering symptoms that affect the heart, brain, lungs and other parts of the body, according to a study published in Nature Medicine.

The study of more than 13 million veterans also found that vaccination against the virus that causes Covid-19 reduced the risk of death by 34 per cent and the risk of getting long Covid by 15 per cent, compared with unvaccinated patients infected with the virus.

However, vaccines were shown to be most effective in preventing some of the most worrisome manifestations of long Covid — lung and blood-clotting disorders — which declined about 49 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively, among those who were vacci-



nated. "Vaccinations remain critically important in the fight against Covid-19," said first author Ziyad Al-Aly, MD, a clinical epidemiologist at Washington University. "Vaccinations reduce the risk of hospitalization and dying from Covid-19. But vaccines seem to only provide modest protection against long Covid."

People recovering from breakthrough Covid-19 infection should continue to monitor their health and see a health-care provider if lingering symptoms make it difficult to carry out daily activities."

The researchers classified patients as fully vaccinated if

they had received two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine.

At the time the research was conducted, the database used for this study did not include information about whether patients received boosters.

"Now that we understand that Covid-19 can have lingering health consequences even among the vaccinated, we need to move toward developing mitigation strategies that can be implemented for the longer term since it does not appear that Covid-19 is going away any time soon," said Al-Aly, who is also the chief of research and development at the VA St. Louis Health Care System.

"We need to urgently develop and deploy additional layers of protection that could be sustainably implemented to reduce the risk of long Covid."

#YogaSeAyu to promote concept of Yoga, Ayurveda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In a run-up to the International Day of Yoga on June 21, the All India Institute of Ayurveda, under the Union Ayush Ministry on Thursday launched a campaign #YogaSeAyu to promote the concept of combining Yoga and Ayurveda to achieve holistic healing.

"The integrated campaign is in sync with the MoA's 'Yoga Utsav' and aims to promote the concept of combining Yoga and Ayurveda to achieve holistic healing.

Moreover, having their origin in the Vedas, the sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga are two sides of the same coin. Although beneficial on their own, combining the two ancient Indian sciences could help realize their true potential," said a statement from the AIIA. AIIA director Dr Tanuja Nesari said, "Every year on

International Day of Yoga, we take pride in walking on the path shown by our Prime Minister Modiji, and this year is even more special as we are celebrating 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

The Ministry of Ayush has framed the Yoga Day theme with a focus on "Brand India Globally" and to showcase India's iconic places.

Dr Nesari said that bringing Yoga and Ayurveda together provides a spiritual aspect to Ayurvedic treatment, helping it realize its complete Vedic healing powers.

"Being one of the nodal institutes for Ayurveda in the country, we believe that combining the powers of Yoga and Ayurveda creates holistic wellbeing.

They complement and benefit each other and can lead to balancing of all doshas when practiced properly. "We are excited about launching this campaign and look forward to

the 8th International Yoga Day," she added.

In the run-up to International Day of Yoga, several events and activities will be organised at the Institute, including lecture series, workshops, poster-making competition, essay competition, asana competition, and Yoga protocol, culminating into a grand finale Yoga performance on IDY, the statement said.

The lecture series opened with a session by Dr IV Basavaraddi, Director, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga. In the meantime, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been inked between Ayush Ministry and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to bring out the expertise under one platform towards evidence based biotechnological interventions in Ayush sector.

The inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministry of Ayush and DBT is expected to



generate knowledge and new means of intervention strategies for difficult to treat diseases, said Dr. Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary, DBT.

Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush,

said that the MoU is expected to pave the way for coordinated research in Ayush sector and the huge untapped potential of Ayush health care system may be utilized for the community benefit.

Desi survey ship Nirdeshak launched in Bay of Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The indigenously designed and built survey ship Nirdeshak was launched on Thursday in the Bay of Bengal. It is the second of the four survey vessels (Large) built by the public sector Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata in collaboration with Larsen and Toubro (L&T) for the Indian Navy.

Giving details of the ship, Navy officials said here, the vessel was launched at Kattupalli, Chennai. The ship made its first contact with water of Bay of Bengal at 1038 hrs at the launch ceremony graced by the Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Naval Command.

His wife Sarbani Dasgupta launched the ship in keeping with the naval tradition. The ship has taken its name from erstwhile Nirdeshak which was also an Indian Naval Survey ship and was decommissioned after 32 years of glorious service in December 2014.

Part construction of three out of four ships of survey vessels is being undertaken at L&T, Kattupalli as part of collaborative approach between GRSE and L&T shipbuilding.

This model of public private partnership shall be harbingers of future successful collaboration for warship construction in India, they said. The contract for building four ships was signed between defence ministry and GRSE in 2018.

The first of class ship 'Sandhayak' was launched on in December last year. The new survey ships will replace the existing Sandhayak Class survey ships with new generation hydrographic equipment to collect oceanographic data.

The Survey Vessel (Large) ships have a deep displacement of about 3,400 tons and a complement of 235 personnel. The



ship is designed to operate at cruise speed of 14 knots and maximum speed of 18 knots.

Bow and stern thrusters have been catered for better manoeuvring at low speeds required during shallow water survey operations.

The hull of these ships is made from indigenously developed DMR 249-A steel manufactured by Steel Authority of India Limited.

With a capability to carry four survey motor boats and an integral helicopter, the primary role of the ships would be to undertake full scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic surveys of ports and navigational channels.

The ships would also be deployed for collecting oceanographic and geophysical data for defence as well as civil applications.

In their secondary role, the ships are capable of providing limited defence, besides serving as hospital ships during emergencies.

Despite challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic, the GRSE has made substantial progress and aim to deliver Sandhayak, the first ship by January next year. The delivery of the second ship Nirdeshak is likely by April 2023.

Launch of the second survey vessel reinforces resolve for indigenous shipbuilding as part of the vision of 'Make in India', and 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat'. The Survey Vessels Large will have over 80 per cent indigenous content by cost.

This will also ensure that large scale defence production is executed by Indian manufacturing units thereby generating employment and capability build up within country.

Major infiltration bid along LOC foiled

Security forces eliminate three Pak JeM terrorists in Kupwara

One Army porter succumbs to injuries

PNS ■ JAMMU



A joint team of security forces Thursday foiled a major infiltration bid along the Line of Control in North Kashmir district of Kupwara by eliminating three Pakistani terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Toiba outfit. One Indian Army porter, who had received injuries during the exchange of firing, succumbed to his injuries later in the hospital.

So far the security forces have eliminated 26 foreign terrorists since January 1, 2022 while six of them have been gunned down in the last 24 hours. Out of these 14 belonged to JeM and 12 to LeT, official sources said.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range Vijay Kumar Thursday termed the

elimination of 03 Pakistani LeT terrorists as a big success and congratulated the joint forces for successive operations.

The security forces have also recovered arms & ammunition including 03 AK series rifles, 12 AK Magazines, 01 Pistol, 02 Pistol Magazines and 03 mobile phones from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, "based on a specific input developed by Kupwara Police regarding infiltration attempt of terrorists in village Jumagund near LoC area of Kupwara, an ambush was put in place by police and Army in the said area". As the infiltrat-

ing terrorists were intercepted by the joint party of Police & Army, they were challenged who in return fired indiscriminately upon joint party which was retaliated by the joint party leading to an encounter.

In the ensuing encounter, all the three infiltrated terrorists were killed. Based on the source report and as per the documents recovered from them, the killed terrorists have been identified as Pakistani LeT terrorists. Police spokesman said, One civilian porter namely Ab Lateef Mir S/o Majeed Mir resident of Kuchiban Jummagund, had received injuries during the firing and later succumbed to

injuries in hospital.

Meanwhile, ten locals, who were involved in anti-national sloganeering and stone-pelting outside Yasin Malik's house in the Maisuma area of Srinagar prior his verdict on a case related to terrorism and secessionist activities, have been arrested by the Srinagar police.

In a statement, police spokesman said a case vide FIR No. 10/2022 under relevant sections of law was registered in Police Station Maisuma and investigation was initiated. Accordingly, midnight raids were conducted at many places that led to the arrest of 10 accused persons including the key accused involved in the commission of crime. However, other accused persons involved in the commission of crime are being identified and will be booked soon under relevant law. Police spokesman maintained no attempt of creating law & order situation in the valley will be tolerated and all mischievous attempts of provoking law & order situation by vested interests will be treated with full force of law.

ED raids Parab's multiple premises

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major jolt to the ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided multiple locations belonging to State Transport Minister and senior party leader Anil Parab, a close aide of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in Mumbai, Pune and Ratnagiri in an alleged money laundering case. Fifty-seven-year-old Parab himself was at Ajinkyatara, his official bungalow in Mumbai, when the ED officials carried out the searches.

The simultaneous raids on seven premises belonging to Parab in a simultaneous operation that lasted for 12-long hours. The ED officials began their raids at 6 am. Among other places they raided since morning were Parab's official residence 'Ajinkyatara' in south

Mumbai, his private residence, the residence of his close associate at Kothrud in Pune with whom the minister had financial dealings.

Among the places where raids were conducted included Ratnagiri town and Dapoli, a hill station in Ratnagiri district where the minister has constructed a holiday resort.

After the arrest of two ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ministers - Nawab Malik and Anil Deshmukh - both of the NCP, Parab is the third State minister to come under the scanner of the ED. Earlier, State Ministers Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik were arrested November 2, 2021 and February 23, 2022 in two separate money laundering cases. Deshmukh and Malik are currently behind the bars.

The ED has booked Parab under the Prevention of Money

Laundering Act (PMLA).

Considered close to Thackerays for a few decades, Para is a lawyer. He played a role in the formation of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in November 2019. It was at Parab's suggestion that Aadiya Thackeray contested the Worli seat during the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly polls.

Though the specific details of the raids were not yet known, official sources said that the ED was investigating, the allegations include purchase of a parcel of land in Dapoli by Parab in 2017 for a consideration of Rs 1 crore. The ED had summoned Parab on August 29, 2021 in connection with allegations of corruption made against him by the incarcerated police officer Sachin Vaze.

It may be recalled that in a four-page handwritten letter to

the Special Judge of the NIA court on April 7, 2021 Vaze - who is currently in the central investigating agency's custody in the twin SUV planting and alleged Manshukh Hiran murder cases - had claimed that Parab had called him July-August, 2020 to his official bungalow and look into a complaint concerning the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), which was under preliminary enquiry and asked him to bring the SBUT trustees to him for negotiations about the enquiry. "He (Parab) also insisted to initiate primary talks to get Rs.50 crore from the SBUT in order to close the said enquiry. I had expressed my inability to do any such things as I do not know anyone from the SBUT and also I did not have any control over the enquiry," Vaze contended in his letter.

Four Cong leaders in race for lone RS seat DMK has allocated to party

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Four prominent Congress leaders from Tamil Nadu are the front runners for the lone Rajya Sabha seat which the DMK had allocated to the party. Six seats are at stake from the State in the poll scheduled for June 10. Going by the current party position in the

Legislative Assembly, the ruling DMK will have a cake walk in winning four seats while the Opposition AIADMK would win two. The DMK has allotted one seat from its kitty to the Congress. According to a senior TNCC leader, P Chidambaram, former finance and home minister, KS Azhagiri (TN chief of the party), Viswanathan (former

MP who had represented Kancheepuram Parliamentary Constituency) and C D Meyyappan, AICC leader and former president of the Tamil Nadu unit of the Youth Congress are the front runners for the lone seat.

Chidambaram, the party ideologist and main think tank is the senior leader from the State. "But his statement that a

veshti wearing Congress leader would become the PM has not been taken seriously by the party high command", said a party veteran. Moreover, the recent Chinthan Shibir held at Udaipur has adopted a resolution saying that not more than one person from a family should be allowed to hold important positions like MLA, MP etc.

Centre reports 18% fall in road accidents

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major respite, the Centre on Thursday reported there has been a sharp decline in the road accidents parameters in the years 2020 when compared to years 2019. The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) informed that over the previous year's average, total road accidents decreased on an average by 18.46 per cent, whereas the number of persons killed too decreased by 12.84 per cent and the number of injuries decreased by 22.84 per cent.

According to the report 'Road accidents in India - 2020', prepared by the Transport Research Wing (TRW) of the MoRTH, the number of road accidents has been on a decline since 2016 except for a marginal increase of 0.46 per cent in 2018. For the second consecutive year, the total number of road accident fatalities has declined in 2020. Similarly, the number of persons injured has been on the decline since 2015.



"A total of 3,66,138 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2020, which claimed 1,31,714 lives and caused 3, 48,279 injuries," said a Press statement by MoRTH.

As per the report, there has also been a decline in the number of fatal accidents, i.e., accidents involving at least one death. A total of 1, 20,806 fatal accidents were reported in 2020, which is 12.23 per cent lower than the 2019 figure of 1, 37,689. Interestingly, during 2020, National Highways, State Highways and Other Roads reported a smaller number of accidents, fatalities, and injuries

as compared to the previous year. "For the third consecutive year in 2020, the fatal road accident victims largely constitute young people in the productive age groups. Young adults in the age group of 18 - 45 years accounted for 69 per cent of victims during 2020. People in the working age group of 18 - 60 years share 87.4 per cent of total road accident fatalities," said the official release.

The Major States that achieved a significant reduction in road accidents in 2020 are Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. And the major States that achieved a significant reduction in road accident

fatalities in 2020 are Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh.

"The overall reduction in road crash deaths is driven by the decline in road crash deaths during the months of April and May, which overlapped with the period when the country was under COVID-19 induced lockdown. During 2020, many states notified provisions of the Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, and some marginal decrease in the first quarter of 2020 can be attributed to that. However, it's too early to say if the implementation of the legislation has led to a decline in road crash deaths in 2020. Perhaps 2021 data shall provide more insights into the effectiveness of the implementation of the legislation, if at all," said Piyush Tewari, Founder and CEO, SaveLIFE Foundation, that has associated itself with the MoRTH and other road stakeholders to do conduct studies and research on road accidents and preventive measures.

Bengal to swap Guv with Didi as Chancellor of universities

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a new twist to the perennial tussle between the Raj Bhavan and Nabanna (State secretariat) the Bengal Government on Thursday decided to replace Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the chancellor of the State-run universities.

The decision was taken in a hurriedly called Cabinet meeting on Thursday noon, sources said adding after the Cabinet decision the Government will now amend the existing law and get the Bill passed in the State Assembly.

State Education Minister Bratya Basu said that the "Cabinet has unanimously passed a resolution to replace the Governor with the Chief Minister as the chancellor of all the state-run universities ... now a Bill to this effect will be placed in the Assembly and the law will be amended."

Though the Minister would not dwell on any possible alternative measure should the Governor refuse to sign the Bill, another senior minister said "the Government has the option of sending it for the presidential assent or pass an ordinance to that effect." The second option was more likely he hinted.

Basu had in an earlier statement said that "if the Governor continues not to cooperate with the Government ... by sitting on the files the Government will have no option but to replace him with the Chief Minister so that academic process does not get hampered due to political reasons."

The ruling Trinamool Congress has often attacked the Raj Bhavan calling it a BJP office and the Governor an "agent of the BJP." The Governor on the other hand had alleged that the State had appointed about 25 Vice

Chancellors illegally without taking the consent of the Raj Bhavan and that at the instance of the State Government the V-Cs do not come to attend the meetings called by him.

There was uproar both in the civil and political society soon after the Cabinet decision with opposition BJP calling the decision an attempt to usurp even the academia. "After having extend its sway in all the departments ... after having devoured everything the Government now wants to usurp higher education," said BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya.

Another BJP leader and former MP Anupam Hazra said that "the way the Chief Minister is taking her decisions would have made even Muhammad bin Tughlaq feel threatened to ... today she telling that she is the Chancellor ... tomorrow she will say that she is the Prime Minister of Bengal."

MBBS grad duped of ₹52L

Gurugram (PNS): An MBBS graduate has allegedly duped of Rs 52 lakh here on the pretext of admission to a medical college in Kolkata to pursue a master's degree, police said. The complainant Sudhanshu Vats, a resident of sector 4, alleged that he received a text message on his phone offering admission at KPS medical college and hospital in Jadavpur, Kolkata, they said.

When he called on the given number, one Satish Malik replied and asked Vats to share his documents on WhatsApp and later on e-mail, they said.

On March 13, Malik asked him for a demand draft (DD) of Rs 23 lakh in the name of the medical college, however, Vats sent a DD of Rs 8 lakh. After three days when Vats visited the college in Kolkata, Malik introduced him to three people who returned his DD and told him to give Rs 50 lakh to one Dr NP Dutta for admission under management quota. Dutta came to Gurugram on March 19 and took the money from him and gave an allotment letter which was later found to be fake.



Villagers take shelter in makeshift tents near a railway track due to flooding at Chaparmukh in Nagoan district on Thursday

Photo | PTI

PC George sent to jail for 'hate speech'

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

PC George, a seven-term MLA of Kerala Legislative Assembly, was sent to Thiruvananthapuram District Jail on Thursday as the Judicial Magistrate cancelled the bail granted to the former on May 1 for the Ananthapuri Hindu Mahasammelan Speech at Thiruvananthapuram which the police described as hate speech.

George, a maverick politician, is the lone senior leader from the non-BJP parties to caution the people about the increasing instances of inter-caste marriages happening between Hindu girls and Muslim youth in the State. He was very critical of the Halal food controversy and had asked all those who do not subscribe to the Quranic concept to stay away from establishments sell-

ing Halal products. A Bench of the Kerala High Court that was to consider the plea for regular bail filed by George on Thursday postponed the hearing to Friday. George was held by the Police on Wednesday evening when he had gone to the Kochi City Police Commissioner for questioning in connection with another hate speech made by him at Ernakulam. While the interrogation was in progress, the Thiruvananthapuram Judicial Magistrate issued an order cancelling the conditional bail granted him by the Judicial Court on May 1.

The arrest of George is seen as a sign of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan cracking the whip on political leaders resorting to hate speeches in the backdrop of the bye-election scheduled from assembly con-

stituency on May 31. The Congress, the CPI(M) and the BJP are trying to wrest the seat. Vijayan is leading the election campaign from the front and has stayed put in Thrikkakkara. All LDF ministers and MLAs too are working round-the-clock for the victory of Dr Joe Joseph.

The Chief Minister took time off from the hectic campaign at Thrikkakkara on Thursday to meet the victim of the 2017 rape and assault case as she had approached the High Court with allegations that some CPI(M) leaders were hand in glove with the main accused, Dileep and the trial court was out to derail the trial process. Vijayan later told reporters that the victim is fully satisfied with the investigation carried out by the State Police.

Woman, paramour booked for murder of husband

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 40-year-old woman, her 'lover' and a habitual criminal for allegedly killing her husband in central Delhi's Daryaganj area. Police said the accused woman wanted to get rid of her husband and for that she had given Rs three lakh as 'supari'.

The accused have been identified as Zeeba Qureshi, a resident of Daryaganj, Shaobai (29), a resident of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, and Vinit Goswami (29), a resident of Ghaziabad, UP. On May 17 around 10 pm, one Moinuddin Qureshi (47) was shot dead in Daryaganj area, police said. According to Shweta Chauhan, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP),

central district, during investigation, it was ascertained that the shooters may have belonged to UP as the white colour motorcycle used in murder was found abandoned near Tara Hotel, Daryaganj and on verification, it was found stolen from Meerut. "Later, police received specific inputs regarding the accused persons following which raids were conducted and accused, including the wife of the deceased, were arrested," said the DCP. "Zeeba has two sons and one daughter. Her husband Moinuddin was indulged in property dealing business. She was not happy with her husband and wanted to get rid of him and to solemnize nikah with some other person, the DCP said.

After babu's dog row, players' time in stadium extended

Revenue Secretary, his wife shifted out of national Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After reports surfaced that Athletes at Delhi's Thyagraj Stadium were forced to cut short their practice because an IAS officer sought to walk his dog there, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Government on Thursday ordered all stadiums to remain open for players till 10 pm.

The order came after reports of Delhi Revenue Secretary Sanjeev Khirwar using the Thyagraj Stadium to walk his dog surfaced. Athletes were allegedly asked to wind up early to facilitate the walk. Delhi BJP demanded an action against Khirwar.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Government is issuing instructions to all sports facilities to stay open for sportspersons till 10 pm. "It has come to my notice that sportspersons are facing

problems because of the heat and the stadiums get closed by 6 or 7 pm. We are issuing instructions that all sports facilities should remain open till 10 pm so that the sports-person can use them," Kejriwal told reporters.

On Thursday evening Khirwar, a 1994 batch IAS officer, was transferred to Ladakh. His wife Rinku Dugga, a 1994 batch IAS officer, has been transferred to Arunachal Pradesh. Sources said that the Centre has taken his conduct at Thyagraj Stadium seriously.

Earlier, Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia on Thursday tweeted that the Chief Minister has extended the timings of all stadiums in Delhi till 10 pm. "News reports have brought to our notice that certain sports facilities are being closed early causing inconvenience to sportsmen who wish to play till late night.

Kejriwal has directed that all Delhi Government sports facilities to stay open for sportsmen till 10pm," Sisodia tweeted.

Meanwhile, stadium administrator Anil Chaudhry denied the allegations and said official timings were being adhered to.

Terming it shameful, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore said, "It's shameful that sportspersons have to empty the stadium (Delhi's Thyagraj Stadium Complex) premises because an IAS officer wants to walk with his dog. The officer should apologise. This is a misuse of his authority."

Earlier the Delhi BJP had demanded action against Khirwar for forcing the players to vacate the stadium. The service department comes under the Lieutenant Governor.

Noted activist and lawyer Prashant Bhusan wrote, "Wow! Stadium is emptied, athletes told to leave, so that Delhi Govt's Principal Secretary Revenue Khirwar can walk his dog! Certainly an appropriate babu to serve the Aam Aadmi Party Government."

Eight years of BJP rule marks darkest chapter, says TMC

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Thursday hit out at the BJP Government for "navigating India towards complete darkness." In a tweeted video the party said that the eight years of Narendra Modi Government had given nothing but all-round failure. "The eight year of BJP rule can be explained in terms of acute price rise, unem-

ployment, falling rupee, crippling economy, intolerance and injustice," the video said.

Explaining the contents of the tweeted video party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said that the "eight years of BJP rule is nothing but an eight-year-bluff ... an eight year Jumla ... they came promising achhe din (good old days) they gave us inflation, social despondency, intolerance ...

Prime Minister Modi's eight years in power is the darkest chapter of Indian history post Independence."

The right to life of the people has been hit by the anti-people policy of the Government he said. "The bank interests are down, prices are high with acute unemployment ... the citizens of India had never felt so threatened ever," he said.

Ex-Lankan PM questioned by CID over May 9 violence

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan police have questioned former prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and recorded a 3-hour-long statement over the violent clashes between his supporters and anti-government protesters in the crisis-hit country that killed at least 10 people and injured over 200 others, according to a media report on Thursday.

On May 9, violence erupted in Sri Lanka after supporters of the 76-year-old former premier 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.

Over 200 people have also been injured in the violence in Colombo and other cities.

The Criminal Investigations Department (CID) has recorded a statement from Mahinda Rajapaksa on Wednesday over May 9 incidents at Kollupitiya and Galle Face Green, the official residence of the Sri



Lankan prime minister, the Daily Mirror website reported.

Police said the CID recorded a nearly three-hour-long statement from the former Prime Minister last evening at his residence in Colombo, the report added.

On May 23, a top bureaucrat of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Security who is in charge of

the police department resigned over his failure to curb the violent clashes.

Last week, Sri Lanka's CID also quizzed three members of the ruling SLPP parliamentary group over their alleged involvement in the clashes.

Two of their colleagues who were arrested previously have been remanded in cus-

tody till May 25.

On Friday, Namal Rajapaksa, a former minister and the son of Mahinda Rajapaksa also summoned and his statement was recorded.

Members of the ruling coalition government blamed Opposition party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna for instigating the violence on May 9,

which was vehemently denied by the Marxist party.

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

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

The properties of some 78 government parliamentarians faced arson in the ensuing attacks.

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

The country of 22 million is grappling with unprecedented economic turmoil since its independence from Britain in 1948.

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

Russia takes steps to bolster army, tighten grip on Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

President Vladimir Putin issued an order Wednesday to fast track Russian citizenship for residents in parts of southern Ukraine largely held by his forces, while lawmakers in Moscow passed a bill to strengthen the stretched Russian army.

Putin's decree applying to the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions could allow Russia to strengthen its hold on territory that lies between eastern Ukraine, where Moscow-backed separatists occupy some areas, and the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized in 2014.

The Russian army is engaged in an intense battle for Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, known as the Donbas. In a sign that the Kremlin is trying to bolster its stretched military machine, Russian lawmakers agreed to scrap the age limit of 40 for individuals signing their first voluntary military contracts.

A description of the bill on the parliament website indicated older recruits would be allowed to operate precision weapons or serve in engineering or medical roles. The chair of the Russian parliament's



defense committee, Andrei Kartapolov, said the measure would make it easier to hire people with "in-demand" skills.

Russian authorities have said that only volunteer contract soldiers are sent to fight in Ukraine, although they have acknowledged that some conscripts were drawn into the fighting by mistake in the early stages of the war.

Three months into Russia's invasion of the neighboring country, Putin visited a military hospital in Moscow and met with some soldiers wounded in Ukraine, the Kremlin said in a statement on its website.

Wednesday's event was the Russian leader's first publicly known visit with soldiers fighting in Ukraine since he

launched the war on Feb. 24. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has visited wounded soldiers, civilians and children -- including at times when Russian troops were fighting on the outskirts of Kyiv.

A reporter for the state-run Russia TV channel posted a video clip on Telegram showing Putin in a white medical coat talking to a man in hospital attire, presumably a soldier. The man, filmed from behind standing up and with no visible wounds, tells Putin that he has a son. The president, accompanied by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, responds: "He will be proud of his father," before shaking the man's hand.

'Horrifying' conspiracy theories swirl around Texas shooting

AP ■ PROVIDENCE

By now it's as predictable as the calls for thoughts and prayers: A mass shooting leaves many dead, and wild conspiracy theories and misinformation about the carnage soon follow. It happened after Sandy Hook, after Parkland, after the Orlando nightclub shooting and after the deadly rampage earlier this month at a Buffalo grocery store.

Within hours of Tuesday's school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, another rash began as internet users spread baseless claims about the man named as the gunman and his possible motives. Unfounded claims that the gunman was an immigrant living in the U.S. illegally, or transgender, quickly emerged on Twitter, Reddit and other social media platforms. They were accompanied by familiar conspiracy theories suggesting the entire shooting was somehow staged.

The claims reflect broader problems with racism and intolerance toward transgender people, and are an effort to blame the shooting on minority groups who already endure higher rates of online harassment and hate crimes, according to disinformation expert Jaime Longoria.

"It's a tactic that serves two purposes: It avoids real conversations about the issue (of gun violence), and it gives people who don't want to face reality a patsy, it gives them someone to blame," said Longoria, director of research at the Disinfo Defense League, a non-profit that works to fight racist misinformation.

In the hours after the shooting, posts falsely claiming the gunman was living in the country illegally went viral, with some users adding embellishments, including that he was "on the run from Border Patrol."

"He was an illegal alien wanted for murder from El Salvador," read one tweet liked and retweeted hundreds of times. "This is blood on Biden's hands and should have never happened."

The man who authorities say carried out the shooting, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, is a U.S. Citizen, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said in a news conference on Tuesday. Other social media users seized on images of innocent internet users to falsely identify them as the gunman and claim he was transgender. On the online message board 4Chan, users liberally shared the photos and discussed a plan to

label the gunman as transgender, without any evidence to back it up.

One post on Twitter, which has since been deleted, featured a photo of a trans woman holding a green bottle to her mouth, looking into the camera, headphones hanging from one ear.

None of that was true. The photo actually depicted a 22-year-old trans woman named Sabrina who lives in New York City. Sabrina, who requested her last name not be published due to privacy concerns, confirmed to The Associated Press that the photo was hers and also said she was not affiliated with the purported YouTube account. Sabrina said she received harassing responses on social media, particularly messages claiming that she was the shooter. She responded to a number of posts spreading the image with the misidentification, asking for the posts to be deleted. "This whole ordeal is just horrifying," Sabrina told the AP.

Another photo that circulated widely showed a transgender woman with a Coca-Cola sweatshirt and a black skirt. A second photo showed the same woman wearing a black NASA shirt with a red skirt.

China's Foreign Minister starts Pacific tour in the Solomons

AP ■ WELLINGTON

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and a 20-strong delegation arrived in the Solomon Islands Thursday at the start of an eight-nation tour that comes amid growing concerns about Beijing's military and financial ambitions in the South Pacific region.

China says the trip builds on a long history of friendly relations between Beijing and the island nations.

But Australia scrambled to counter the move by sending its own Foreign Minister Penny Wong to Fiji to shore up support in the Pacific. Wong had been on the job just five days following an Australian election and had just arrived back Wednesday night from a meeting in Tokyo.

In Fiji, Wong said it was up to each island nation to decide what partnerships they formed and what agreements they signed, but urged them to consider the benefits of sticking with Australia.

"Australia will be a partner that doesn't come with strings attached nor imposing unsustainable financial burdens," Wong said. "We are a partner that won't erode Pacific priorities or Pacific institutions." Meanwhile, the Media Association of Solomon Islands called on its members to boycott a news conference in the capital, Honiara, held by Wang and his counterpart from the Solomon Islands, Jeremiah Manele, following a meeting between the pair.

That's because only selected media were invited to the event, and the schedule allowed for just a single question to be asked of Wang by China's state-owned broadcaster CCTV. "It's a tough call to make regarding the media boycott for the press event on Thursday," wrote association president Georgina Kekea on Twitter. "Our protest is for our govt to see our disappointment. They have failed us &amp; they failed to protect #democracy."

According to an official Chinese sum-

mary of the meeting, Wang told his counterpart that China would firmly support the Solomon Islands in its efforts to maintain national security and territorial integrity, while Manele described the visit as historic and a "milestone in the relations" between the two countries.

China signed a security pact with the Solomon Islands last month in a move that sent shock waves around the world. That pact has raised fears that China could send troops to the island nation or even establish a military base there, not far from Australia. The Solomon Islands and China say there are no plans for a base.

In another move by China, a draft document obtained by The Associated Press shows that Wang is hoping to strike a deal with 10 small Pacific nations during his visit. The sweeping agreement covers everything from security to fisheries and is seen by at least one Pacific leader as an attempt by Beijing to wrest control of the region.

FROM PAGE 1

BUDGET FOCUS ON SELF-RELIANCE, OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF UP

A target to distribute 119.30 lakh metric tons of fertilisers has also been proposed. A provision of ₹1,000 crore is proposed for the Chief Minister's Minor Irrigation Scheme.

Khanna further said, "Free tablets and smartphones scheme for the youth was started in December 2021 and till now approximately 12 lakh tablets/smartphones have been distributed. As per the Bharatiya Janata Party's Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra, two crore smartphones/tablets are to be distributed to the youth in the next five years. Besides, ₹1,500 crore has been proposed in the budget for Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment Scheme."

"Also, to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in various fields among youth, under the new UP Start-up Policy-2020, a target to establish a total of 100 incubators and 10,000 startups in the next five years has been set. With the objective of providing coaching to students preparing for competitions near their homes, Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana has been implemented by the government in all divisional headquarters, which is now being expanded to all districts of the state and a provision of ₹30 crore is proposed for the it," the minister said.

Khanna further said that a provision of ₹10 crore had been proposed to provide financial assistance to young lawyers for purchasing books and magazines for the first three years of work.

"Also, a provision of ₹95 crore has been proposed for purchasing land for establishing an international cricket stadium in Varanasi. Earlier, the foundation stone of Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut district was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 02, 2022, on which an amount of ₹700 crore would be spent for development of sports and to prepare players of excellent quality. A provision of ₹50 crore is proposed for establishment of the university," the minister noted.

Khanna said, "For employment generation, under the MGNREGA schemes, 26 crore man-days were created in 2021-22 and a target has been set to generate 32 crore man-days under the scheme in the 2022-23 fiscal. Under the Chief Minister's Village Industries Employment Scheme, a target is to provide employment to 16,000 people by establishing 800 units in the 2022-23 fiscal."

"In secondary education, 40,402 teachers have been selected and 7,540 posts have been created by ending interviews in the teacher selection process," he said.

The finance minister further said that there was a huge potential for employment generation in the field of medical education. "About 3,000 nurses have been appointed in government medical colleges/hospitals and about 10,000 posts have been created, which will be filled in the coming years," he added.

YOGI: A VISION DOCUMENT FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

Yogi said the size of the state's economy had doubled in the last five years. He said as per the FRBM Act (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act) the state could borrow only up to 3 per cent of the GSDP (gross state domestic product). He said the Centre, during the pandemic, increased the limit to 4.5 per cent and the state borrowed only 3.96 per cent due to better financial management during the pandemic.

The chief minister said the budget size in 2017-18 was ₹3 lakh crore which had now more than doubled to ₹6.15 lakh crore. He said the government had increased the revenue collection significantly. He said the revenue from value-added tax (VAT) in 2017 was ₹51,800 crore and it had increased to ₹90,000 crore.

"The revenue from excise in 2017-18 was ₹14,273 crore and has increased to over ₹36,000 crore in 2021-22. The revenue from stamps and registration in 2017 was ₹11,564 crore and has increased to over ₹20,000 crore in 2021-22," he pointed out.

The chief minister said all the beneficiaries of the Ujjawala scheme would be given two cylinders in a year and a provision of ₹3,301 crore had been made in the budget for this. He said a price stabilisation fund for ensuring remunerative price to the farmers of tomato, onion and potato had been set up. He said 14 new medical colleges would be opened at Bijoor, Kushinagar, Sultanpur, Gonda, Lalitpur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Chandauli, Bulandshahr, Sonbhadra, Pilibhit, Auraiya, Kanpur Dehat, Kaushambi and Amethi. The chief minister said a provision of ₹500 crore had been made in the budget for it. He said the MBBS seats had already been doubled in the last five years and seats would be further increased in the next five years.

Yogi said employment was provided to 1.81 crore youth in the private sector through private investment in the state and more than 60 lakh youth were linked to self-employment. He said through a fair and transparent process, 4.50 lakh youths were provided government jobs in the last five years.

The chief minister said for promoting and preserving the dialects and local culture, academies for Bundeli, Avadhi and Brij would be set up. He said a provision of ₹1 crore had been made and Keshavdas Bundeli academy, Tulsidas Avadhi academy and Surdas Brij Bhasha academy were proposed to be set up.

He said Maharshi Valmiki Cultural Centre at Chitrakoot, Nishadraj Cultural Centre at Prayagraj, Sant Ravidas Museum and Cultural Centre at Varanasi were proposed to be set up at a cost of ₹31 crore. To commemorate the memory of former Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, Babu Kalyan Singh Gram Uन्नat Yojana has been formulated. Under the scheme solar street lights will be installed in villages. For this scheme a provision of ₹22 crore has been made in the budget.

The total receipts in the current financial year

are estimated at ₹5,90,951.71 crore, including revenue receipts of ₹4,99,212.71 crore and capital receipts of ₹91,739 crore. The share of tax revenue in revenue receipts is ₹3,67,153.76 crore. This includes the state's own tax revenue of ₹2,20,655 crore and the state's share in central taxes of ₹1,46,498.76 crore. The fiscal deficit is estimated at ₹81,177.97 crore which is 3.96 per cent of the estimated Gross State Domestic Product.

TREAT SEX WORKERS WITH DIGNITY, SC TELLS POLICE

"Sex workers can also be informed as to how they can get access to the judicial system to enforce their rights and prevent unnecessary harassment at the hands of traffickers or police," the bench said.

The court passed the directions on recommendations of a panel formed for the rehabilitation of sex workers. The top court was also informed that the Government of India has certain reservations in respect of the recommendation that sex workers are entitled to equal protection of the law and the police must refrain from interfering or taking any criminal action.

The bench said every individual in this country has a right to a dignified life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

"The constitutional protection that is given to all individuals in this country shall be kept in mind by the authorities who have a duty under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. The other recommendations that are made by the panel shall be taken up after summer vacation," the bench said.

The court was hearing a plea that has raised the problems faced by sex workers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The plea has highlighted the destitution faced by sex workers on account of Covid-19 and sought relief measures for over nine lakh women and transgender sex workers across India.

BJP LAUNCHES EVENTS ACROSS STATES TO CELEBRATE 8 YEARS OF MODI GOVT

Emerging out of the Covid-19 phase of past two years when anniversaries remained subdued with the theme of "seva and samarpan", the BJP, this time round, is seeking to scale up the celebratory mood with all Central Ministers asked to visit different States to create nationwide awareness on the benefits delivered by the major policies in last eight years. The BJP will mark the Modi Government's completion of 8 years in power along the theme of "Sewa, Sushashan and Gareeb Kalyan" (service, good governance and welfare of the poor) from May 30. Union Ministers have been tasked to connect with party workers and beneficiaries of several Central Government schemes from May 30 to June 15 and collect feedback.

The outreach programme is being conducted over a span of two weeks across 140 Parliamentary constituencies. On Wednesday, BJP President JP Nadda had held a meeting with the Central Ministers to work out a schedule for the fortnight-long campaign.

As Ministers busied themselves detailing their stay plans in various States, the Prime Minister addressed party workers in Telangana and led a BJP road show in Chennai where he also inaugurated projects worth ₹31,000 crore.

Modi himself will be addressing a public rally in the poll-bound Himachal Pradesh's Shimla on May 31. Prior to this the Prime Minister will be in Gujarat, which too is to elect a new Assembly by the year end, and attend an event in Rajkot and Gandhinagar.

According to the 8th anniversary plan of the BJP, Union Ministers, including Smriti Irani, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Dharmendra Pradhan, will be visiting West Bengal where the party seeks to galvanize cadres after a slew of reverse defection to the TMC of the MLAs who had joined the BJP before Assembly polls last year.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will be visiting Punjab, where the party has marginal presence and wants to expand its political base after poor showing in the recently held State elections which brought the AAP Government in power there.

The party wants to focus on the States where it is playing the role of Opposition in the anniversary marking exercise and thus also reach out to voters by way of rallies, events and press conferences in Odisha too which would go to polls in 2024. Similarly, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh will be the "target States" during the fortnight-long anniversary marking public rallies, events and media briefing.

Ministers will hold conferences, move with party workers and interact with beneficiaries of government schemes and assess the public mood, particularly those under poverty line. BJP Yuva Morcha has been assigned to organise mini rallies at the block level while the district unit of the party will hold rallies and "Vikas yatra" at the headquarters of the 36 organisational districts of the party.

WILL TURN DELHI INTO CITY OF JOY: L-G

"In recent times, I saw that many riots and disturbances took place in Delhi," he said. "I want to say apas mein lade aur khoon bhi bahaya hai bahut par, jo kuch bhi hua hai, achha hai usse bhula do (We clashed and spilled much blood, it's better to forget whatever happened)."

He said people, irrespective of their religion, should show the world how much they love their country. "Anything can be achieved if people are united," he said through the poem. The LG also thanked President, Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah for entrusting him with the responsibility of the Lieutenant Governor and said he would do his best to fulfill this responsibility.

The LG further said Delhi is home to millions of people from the weaker sections. "Even the poorest of the poor, particularly those working in the unorganised sectors like potters, cobblers, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, street vendors and con-

struction workers, live in this city. Unfortunately, these people were disconnected from the mainstream of society and were forced to live in misery. "We will bring new schemes to empower these classes and bring them back to the mainstream," Saxena added. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Cabinet colleagues, Union Minister Giriraj Singh, Delhi MPs and MLAs, and top bureaucrats of the city Government attended the ceremony.

4 MORE PILGRIMS DIE IN KEDARNATH, TOLL 41

Health screening of pilgrims aged above 50 years has been made mandatory before they embark on the uphill trek to the Himalayan temples. Elderly pilgrims are being advised by authorities not to undertake the arduous journey if they have Covid history or are suffering from post-Covid complications such as breathlessness, as oxygen level drops at high altitude. A record 10 lakh pilgrims have visited the Himalayan temples in less than one month since the start of the yatra on May 3.

With COVID restrictions no longer in force the temples are witnessing an unprecedented rush of pilgrims. Online and offline registration slots for Chardham yatra are already full till June 7.

CENTRE 'HOODWINKING' ITS OWN PEOPLE, ATTACKS CONGRESS

He should first debate with us and can later debate with our leader Rahul Gandhi, he said.

Asked why the claims made by the Congress were not bearing any fruit during elections, the BJP continued to win them, Maken said the Congress is raising issues like a strong and alert Opposition and both election results and Opposition activeness are two different things.

"We are fulfilling our responsibilities and as far as better performance in elections is concerned, we have taken some decisions at the party's Chintan Shivir in Udaipur and expect better results in the future. You will see better functioning of the Congress in coming times, but highlighting the failures of the Government is very important," he said, urging the media to take its message to the masses. Maken accused the BJP of garnering votes in the name of bravery of soldiers but did not even recognise their services by giving them one rank, one pension as was promised by the previous Congress-led UPA Government. Accusing the BJP of spreading hatred in society through communal polarisation, Maken alleged that 10,000 cases of communal clashes have taken place during the last eight years of Modi Government.

Surjewala said the slogans given by the BJP ahead of 2014 polls are now being assessed by the people of the country as all have proved wrong. He cited several such slogans given by Modi to attack the previous UPA Government on issues of price rise, unemployment, economy, deteriorating value of the rupee and on India's sovereignty and integrity and said "all those slogans, promises and 'jumbas' highlight the failures of the Modi government".

AP ■ TIRANA

Nicolo Zaniolo won Roma their first ever major European trophy on Wednesday with the only goal in a 1-0 win over Feyenoord in the inaugural Europa Conference League final.

Italy international Zaniolo struck with a well-taken finish in the 32nd minute to earn Roma their first trophy of any kind since 2008 and cap a successful first season for coach Jose Mourinho in Rome.

Mourinho was moved to tears by his fifth continental cup as a coach, the first for an Italian team since he led Inter Milan to the Champions League 12 years ago.

"It was a real struggle but I'm really happy," Zaniolo said to Sky.

"It was my dream and now I've done it."

Roma, Fairs Cup winners in 1961, rode their luck with Feyenoord having the lion's share of the play and twice striking the woodwork in the second half.

But they remained solid in the face of Dutch dominance and brought joy to one of Europe's most passionate and success-starved fan bases.

Over 50,000 fans packed the Stadio Olimpico in the Italian capital to watch their team make a little piece of history in Albania and poured onto the pitch once the trophy was secured.

Meanwhile the small corner of supporters allowed into Tirana's National Stadium roared with delight once referee Istvan Kovacs blew his whistle to end their team's trophy drought.

"We know that after these amazing victories it's always difficult to start again but a real team wins, celebrates and then gets



ROMA MAKE HISTORY

Serie A club beat Feyenoord 1-0 to win inaugural edition of Europa Conference League

going again," said Rome-born captain Lorenzo Pellegrini.

For 1970 European champions Feyenoord it was their first ever defeat in a European final as well as being the first loss in the competition for Arne Slot's team.

Zaniolo broke the deadlock with the only real moment of magic in what was a tight, scrappy

opening half.

He expertly brought down Gianluca Mancini's ball over the top that just escaped Gernot Trauner before flicking a finish past the onrushing Justin Bijlow.

The goal made Zaniolo the first Italian to score in a European final since Filippo Inzaghi in 2007 as well as a confirmed hero for Roma

fans. Feyenoord had dominated the ball, creating nothing of interest, but that changed almost immediately after the restart.

Trauner diverted a low cross off the post and seconds later Rui Patrício made his first real save of the match, the Portuguese reacting well to push Guus Til's shot away. And the 34-year-old was called

into action again four minutes after the break, flinging himself to his left to just tip Tyrrell Malacia's rocket of a shot onto the woodwork.

Almost straight after Tammy Abraham had his hands in the air in disbelief when he was pulled back by Marcos Senesi just as he was charging through on goal, but

Mourinho hails Conference League 'history' for Roma

AP ■ TIRANA

Jose Mourinho said that he and Roma had made history after winning the Europa Conference League on Wednesday, the club's first ever major European trophy.

Portuguese coaching icon Mourinho tried and failed to hold back the tears after Roma beat Feyenoord in their first continental final in over three decades and he was still emotional by the time he hailed his team after the trophy ceremony.

Roma fans have taken Mourinho into their hearts during an up and down season which culminated in Wednesday's 1-0 win in Tirana which ended a 14-year trophy drought for the capital club.

"I've been at Roma for 11 months, I knew the moment I arrived what it meant to the people. They had been waiting for something like this," Mourinho told Sky.

"This was not work tonight, this was history. We had to write history. We wrote it."

Wednesday's triumph was his fifth European title and made



him the first coach to win all current UEFA competitions.

And he confirmed that he would be staying at Roma next season to build on the solid work done in his debut season.

"I am staying, there's no doubt about that," he said.

"We need to see what our owners, who are fantastic people, want to do next season because this is history, but we can build a special project."

"Now I'm going to go on holiday, sit on the beach and think about it all for a while."

Feyenoord were clearly on top. The Dutch side continued to push but a spirited defensive dis-

play typical of Mourinho's teams held them off and handed Roma a rare moment of glory.



Sreeshankar claims long jump Gold in Greece

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's premier long jumper Murali Sreeshankar won the Gold medal at the 12th International Jumping Meeting in Kallithea, Greece with an effort of 8.31m.

The Tokyo Olympian is the current national record holder with a jump of 8.36m, which he had achieved last month.

Sreeshankar was followed by Swede Thobias Montler, who claimed Silver with an 8.27m jump, and Jules Pommery of France, who bagged Bronze with an 8.17m effort in the 10-man field. Only the top three jumpers crossed the 8m-mark.

Jeswin Aldrin, meanwhile, finished fifth after he hit the 7.69m mark at the 17th Iberoamerican Meeting in Huelva, Spain.

Filip Pravdiva of Croatia (7.91m), Uruguay's Emiliano Lasa (7.82m) and Peruvian José Luis Mandros (7.77m) completed the top three of the seven-man field.



"Sreeshankar consistently jumping far. In 12th International Jumps Meeting, Kallithea, Greece, event part of World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze. Performance 8.31 meters," Athletics Federation of India tweeted. Competing in his first outdoor international meet since the Olympics campaign, Sreeshankar warmed up on Wednesday evening with jumps of 7.88 and 7.71 metres before leaping 8.31 metres.

Sreeshankar came into the competition on back of his excellent domestic form where he repeatedly breached the 8m mark. The Kerala athlete logged 8.14m and 8.17m at the season-opening Indian Open Jumps Competitions in Thiruvananthapuram before breaking his own national record at the Federation Cup in Kozhikode after a close battle with Tamil Nadu's Jeswin Aldrin.

Indian athletes have been training and competing in Europe over the last few weeks



India enter knockout stage of Asia Cup with 16-0 win over Indonesia

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Rising to the occasion, Indian men's hockey team slammed six goals in the final quarter for a crushing 16-0 victory against Indonesia, a result that took the holders into the knockout stage of the Asia Cup but shut the World Cup door on Pakistan, here on Thursday.

India needed to win the Pool A contest by at least a 15-0 margin to qualify and the young players of the side delivered under pressure.

Both India and Pakistan finished on four points each in Pool A behind Japan but the defending champions qualified for the Super 4s due to better goal difference (1).

Pakistan had lost 2-3 to Japan earlier in the day.

The result not only pushed Pakistan out of the tournament but also dashed their hopes of World Cup qualification since only the top three teams here will be given tickets for the big event.

India, being the hosts, will play the World Cup later in the year and hence Hockey India

decided to send young players to this tournament for exposure.

Dipsan Tirkey (5 goals) and Sudev Belimagga (3 goals) shared eight goals between them, playing a key role in team's crucial win. Veteran SV Sunil, Pawan Rajbhar and Karthi Selvam scored a brace each while Uttam Singh and Nilam Sanjeep Kess were the other goal getters for India.

UPROAR IN PAK

Erstwhile powerhouse of the game, Pakistan's failure to qualify for the men's hockey World Cup has created a furore in the nation with former players finding it "hard to digest" and calling for heads to roll in the national federation.

Once the undisputed champions of world hockey, Pakistan has reeled from one crisis to another and from one disappointment to another and Thursday's blow has led to renewed calls for the sacking of the long-serving president of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Brigadier (ret'd) Khalid Sajjad Khokar and coach Khawaja Junaid.

Sen to train with Axelson in Dubai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Championship Bronze medallist Lakshya Sen is all set to train with World No. 1 Victor Axelson in Dubai from Sunday with the Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) approving his request, keeping in mind the upcoming Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

The MOC also cleared two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu's request for her fitness trainer M Srikanth Madapalli to accompany her abroad under Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), the ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

Sen, the 20-year-old from Almora, was part of the Indian men's team that won the prestigious Thomas Cup this month

and is a big Gold medal prospect at the Birmingham event to be held from July 28 to August 8.

"Lakshya is set to train with Axelson in Dubai from May 29th till 5th June (8 days) and then head out to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on June 19th to train at the Malaysian Training Centre from 19th till 26th June (8 days)," the ministry said.

"Both the training proposals were approved by MOC in preparation for the Commonwealth Games."

"The sanctioned amount will cover the cost of his and his physio's air travel, boarding and lodging, and out-of-pocket allowance among other expenses."

The ministry also approved Sindhu's proposal for financial assistance towards her fitness trainer's travel along with her.

Real remain Europe's most valuable football club

AP ■ PARIS

Real Madrid remain Europe's most valuable football club despite the ever-increasing dominance of the English Premier League, according to a report published on Thursday by analysts Football Benchmark.

The report ranks Europe's 32 most prominent clubs, calculating their value based on their annual financial statements and assessing squad values.

Real, who face Liverpool in Saturday's Champions League final, came out on top for the fourth consecutive year of the report, with a valuation of 3.184 billion euros (\$3.4 billion).

Bopanna-Middelkoop enter French Open pre-quarterfinals



PTI ■ PARIS

India's Rohan Bopanna and his Dutch partner Matwe Middelkoop marched into the pre-quarterfinals of the French Open men's doubles event with a straight set win over Andrey Golubev and Fabrice Martin here on Thursday.

Bopanna and Middelkoop won the second round with a 6-3, 6-4 scoreline against their opponents in one hour and six minutes.

The Indo-Dutch combo, seeded 16th, broke the from Kazakhstan-French pair at 4-4 in the second set and then Middelkoop served out the match at love. Bopanna's best performance at the clay court major is reaching the last-eight stage in 2011, 2016, 2018 and 2021.

Later in the day, Ramkumar Ramanathan and Sania Mirza will be in action in their respective doubles events.

AP ■ PARIS

Nadal easily wins 300th Grand Slam match

Spanish teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz and third seed Alexander Zverev both saved a match point in five-set French Open thriller, while 13-time winner Rafael Nadal and reigning champion Novak Djokovic eased into the third round Wednesday.

Alcaraz, widely tipped as a title contender, rallied from the brink to defeat compatriot Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-1, 6-7 (7/9), 5-7, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 after four hours and 34 minutes.

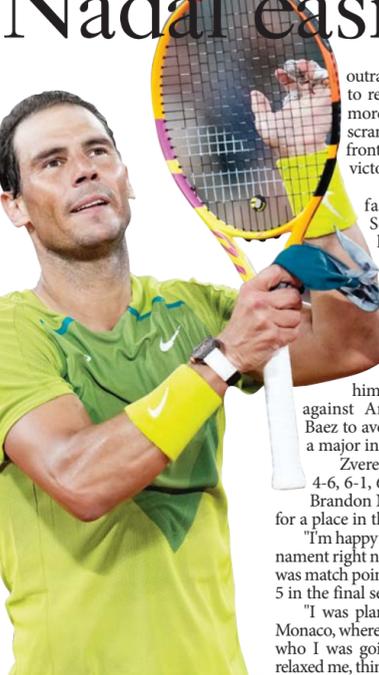
"I feel tired," said Alcaraz. "It was a great battle, a great match and we fought until the last point."

The 19-year-old Alcaraz is attempting to become just the eighth teenager to capture a major men's title, and backed as the man to break the stranglehold of Djokovic and Nadal.

But he was pushed to the limit by the seasoned Ramos-Vinolas, 15 years his elder and whose best performance at a Grand Slam came when he made the quarter-finals in Paris six years ago.

Alcaraz, the tour's dominant player in 2022 with a season-leading four titles, fought off a match point to break Ramos-Vinolas as he served at 5-4 in the fourth set.

He then clawed his way back from 3-0 in the decider, producing an



outrageous backhand pass to retrieve the break and more sensational baseline scrambling to move 5-4 in front before closing out victory with an ace.

Alcaraz goes on to face US 27th seed Sebastian Korda, the last man to defeat him at Monte Carlo in April in what was his only loss in 19 matches on clay this season.

Zverev, a 2021 semi-finalist, dug himself out of a deep hole against Argentina's Sebastian Baez to avoid his earliest loss at a major in three years.

Zverev overcame Baez 2-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 7-5 and will play Brandon Nakashima of the US for a place in the last 16.

"I'm happy still being in the tournament right now," said Zverev, who was match point on serve at 4-5 in the final set.

"I was planning my holiday in Monaco, where I was going to go and who I was going to with and that relaxed me, thinking about the beach.

"You just have to find a way." It was the third comeback from a two-set deficit in Zverev's career. He trailed fellow German Oscar Otte 2-0 in the opening round at Roland Garros a year ago before his run to the last four.

300 UP

Nadal breezed past French wildcard Corentin Moutet 6-3, 6-1, 6-4 for the 300th Grand Slam win of his career. Roger Federer (369) and Djokovic (325) are the only men to have more than the record 21-time major champion.

His French Open record now stands at a staggering 107 wins and just three losses since his 2005 title-winning debut.

"I think it was a good match against a very difficult player with lots of talent," said Nadal, whose build-up to the tournament was hampered by a foot injury.

"The last couple of months haven't been easy. The victories help a lot."

Djokovic made comfortable work of Slovakia's Alex Molcan, the world number one winning 6-2, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) against a player trained by his long-time former coach Marian

World No. 227 adds Pliskova to casualty list

AP ■ PARIS

Karolina Pliskova became the sixth top 10 women's seed to exit the French Open on Thursday when she was knocked out by world number 227 Leolia Jeanjean.

Eighth-seeded Pliskova, last year's Wimbledon runner-up and a semi-finalist in Paris in 2017, lost 6-2, 6-2 to the 26-year-old Frenchwoman who cut her teeth as a leading college player in the United States.

Former number one Pliskova joins fellow top 10 seeds, defending champion Barbora Krejickova, Maria Sakkari, Ons Jabeur, Anett Kontaveit and former winner Garbine Muguruza in failing to get through to the third round.

Jeanjean is the lowest-ranked woman to beat a top 10 player at Roland Garros in 34 years.

Vajda, the man who inspired most of his 20 Grand Slam titles.

"So far so good. I'm pleased with the way I'm feeling on the court,"



"I don't really realise what's going on. I find it just incredible," said Jeanjean, all smiles on the court just after his victory.

Considered a future star at 12, Jeanjean saw her career abruptly halted by injuries, including a triple dis-

location of the knee. She then left to study in the United States, only returning to top-level tennis at the end of 2020.

"I wanted to come back so as not to regret anything. I think I made the right choice," she said.

Pliskova has made the second week at Roland Garros just once in 11 visits.

World number three Paula Badosa overcame a scare to defeat 68th-ranked Kaja Juvan of Slovenia 7-5, 3-6, 6-2.

Badosa, a quarter-finalist in 2021, recovered from a break down in the decider to set up a meeting with 29th seed Veronika Kudermetova for a spot in the last 16.

Also going through was US 11th seed Jessica Pegula who needed eight match points to defeat Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine 6-1, 5-7, 6-4.

Djokovic said after reaching the last 32 at Roland Garros for the 17th straight year. "It was never going to be an easy match, but I thought I performed very well. Everything is going in the right direction. I'm looking forward to the next challenge."

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

12

I think it's quite obvious - the reasons why we didn't win. We let ourselves down in the field. Dropping easy catches never helps. Difference was obviously Patidar playing such a knock. — KL RAHUL



ROYAL BATTLE

On a roll, RCB fancy their chances against Rajasthan in Qualifier 2

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Rajasthan Royals will need to shake off an ordinary bowling performance in their last outing when they clash with Royal Challengers Bangalore, a team which seems to be peaking at the right time, in the high-stakes IPL Qualifier-2 here on Friday.

Having sneaked into the play-offs, RCB are on a roll and a tight win over Lucknow in the Eliminator has fuelled expectations for a long-awaited trophy.

They take on Rajasthan, a team which has all bases covered but still came up short against Gujarat in Qualifier 1. The IPL caravan moves to Ahmedabad after a couple of high-scoring games in Kolkata. It has been a quick turnaround for RCB but they won't mind that as they look to ride the momentum.

"The best thing is that we have one day and we play again. Cannot wait to be in Ahmedabad and take the field again. We are so excited and happy with how things have gone. Hopefully, two more games and we all can celebrate," star RCB batter Virat Kohli told the IPL website after the win over LSG.

Rajasthan vs Bangalore
Live from 7:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Rajat Patidar, who played the innings of his life on Wednesday, will be a man with supreme confidence in another high-pressure knockout fixture.

For someone who went unsold in the IPL auction and came into the RCB squad as a replacement player, it has been a career-changing season for him.

Both the high-profile openers, Kohli and Faf du Plessis, are big match players and will be itching to make an impact after low returns in the previous game.

Dinesh Karthik has managed to maintain consistency in a tough role and the team management would be also hoping for more runs in the back end of the innings from Glenn Maxwell.

The team is likely to stick to the winning combination. While Wanindu Hasaranga has shown the courage even when he has been taken to the cleaners, Harshal Patel has been the go-to pacer in slog overs.

Samson will be eager to convert his 30s and 40s into a substantial knock and lead from the front. It remains to be seen how the bowlers come back after a forgettable outing. R Ashwin had a rare off day against Gujarat while Prasad Krishna paid the price for bowling length balls to David Miller in the final over.



I don't shy away from bowling in slog overs: Harshal

PTI ■ KOLKATA

RCB seamer Harshal Patel does feel the nerves while bowling in the death overs but says he wants to be in those extreme pressure situations game after game.

The 31-year-old, who represents Haryana at the domestic circuit, has been the most improved bowler in the recent past and has cleverly used his variations to get the better of batters in the death overs.

Harshal also enhanced his reputation as a 'death overs specialist' in the IPL Eliminator against LSG.

"Whether I would be able to deliver or not, I don't really know, I can't say. But I want to be in those situations, there is no doubt about that," Harshal said after inspiring the team to a 14-run win over LSG on Wednesday.

"I have been wanting to do that for the past two-three years, I have been doing that for Haryana, and I wanted to do it at the bigger stage

and I will continue to put myself in those situations, sometimes it is going to come off, sometimes it is not going to come off.

"There will be games where I will end up losing for the team and I am okay with that as long as I don't shy away from challenges," said Harshal.

On Wednesday, while defending 208 against Lucknow Super Giants, Harshal bowled a tidy spell of 2-0-8-0 in the middle overs.

But with KL Rahul and hard-hitting Marcus Stoinis looking to break free at the death, the seamer was summoned to bowl the 18th over with 41 runs to defend.

"First of all, yes, I was nervous, there is no doubt about that. If you are defending 35 off 18 balls, then you're going to be nervous around it.

"I knew when I gave away six runs without bowling a ball — gave away those wickets, I knew that the wide yorker won't work.

"So I thought that worked for me in the first two overs, I want to go back to that and give myself the best opportunity to get KL (Rahul) and Stoinis out. Fortunately, I got Stoinis out at the boundary," he said.

Harshal, who had bagged 32 wickets for RCB last season, once again has been their bowling backbone and has 19 wickets from 15 matches in this IPL.

Trailblazers clinch win but Velocity through to final



PTI ■ PUNE

Trailblazers defeated Velocity by 16 runs but Women's T20 Challenge will have a new champion as Velocity move ahead into final on better run-rate. Velocity needed to cross 158 to move ahead of Trailblazers on NRR and set up a final against Supernovas on Saturday.

Batting duo of Sabhinini Meghana and Jemimah Rodrigues slammed scintillating fifties to propel Trailblazers to 190 for five against Velocity in a must-win Women's T20 Challenge match here on Thursday.

Meghana, who was left out of their opening game, smashed a strokeful 73 off 47 balls en route to a 113-run partnership off 73 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues (66 off 44 balls) to set the foundation.

Hayley Matthews (27 off 15) and Sophia

Dunkley (19 off 8) provided the late charge as the defending champions scored the highest total in the history of the tournament.

The only team to open their account yet, Trailblazers came into the match need a huge win to qualify for the finals. They will have to restrict Velocity within 158 to make the summit clash.

Sent into bat, Meghana took the responsibility to steer the team after Trailblazers lost skipper Smriti Mandhana (1) early.

The 25-year-old from Andhra Pradesh, who was dropped at 16 and 63, displayed her big-hitting skills, clobbering seven fours and four maximums.

Rodrigues too had seven hits to the fence and one six in her 44-ball innings.

Velocity was extremely sloppy on the field as their butterfingers fielders dropped as many as four catches -- two in Simran Bahadur's over.

Meghana produced two good hits down the ground off Kate Cross but the bowler returned to dismiss Mandhana with Simran taking an easy catch.

Cross could have added Meghana's wicket to her list but Sneha Rana dropped her at the point.

Rodrigues then slammed two fours off Deepti Sharma as Trailblazers scored 47 for 1 in the powerplay.

Meghana took apart the attack, dispatching Radha Yadav for two sixes -- one an inside out shot over covers and the second one over the bowler's head -- en route to her fifty in the 10th over.

Rodrigues too played some exquisite shots and reached her fifty in the 14th over off 30 balls.

We were trying to hit boundaries but RCB bowled well: Rahul



PTI ■ KOLKATA

When Mark Zuckerberg famously said: "The biggest risk is not taking any risk," KL Rahul ought to have paid attention.

The India player is too good a batter to not take on the bowlers at any stage of a game, but his conservative middle-

overs approach did not help Lucknow Super Giants' cause in the eliminator against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

At the end of the game, the LSG skipper acknowledged that "two big hits" would have probably done the job for his team in a chase of 208.

"Yes, I think now, looking back, yes, it was just about two

big hits in the middle overs and that could have gotten us over the line," Rahul said in the post-match press conference here.

There was a seven-over period after the powerplay during which Rahul managed to hit just one boundary.

Rahul was in red-hot form this season with two centuries and four fifties, but his approach

One of best innings I've ever seen under pressure: Kohli on Patidar

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Batting stalwart Virat Kohli says Rajat Patidar's match-winning century in the IPL Eliminator was one of the best innings produced under pressure.

Little-known Patidar from Indore slammed a 54-ball 112 not out to single-handedly win the IPL Eliminator for Royal

Challengers Bangalore on Wednesday night here.

"That was one of the best innings I've ever seen under pressure by Rajat Patidar, and I've seen many," Kohli, who had added 66 with Patidar, said on RCB's Game Day segment.

"That level of striking in this game is some level of batting. Watch out for him!" he said.

while chasing is something he needed to work on. The IPL debutants lost five of their seven matches while chasing.

"We won a few games but generally overall we did not do well chasing. It's something that we need to learn," Rahul said.

"For me, I think this season has been like every other season, has been a good learning experience. We, as a team as well, it's been a very challenging season. We've learned a lot."

Rahul, who is only the second batter this IPL to go past 600 runs, scored 79 off 58 balls on Wednesday, which was not enough in their stiff chase.

"I've really done well in other seasons, and I enjoy chas-

ing. Yeah, you become successful and at times you fail," Rahul said after the 14-run loss.

"But it's a team game and the team has really stepped up even when we're chasing," he added.

Rahul, who will lead India in the upcoming five-match T20I series against South Africa next month in the absence of Rohit Sharma, has been in imperious form this season, with 616 runs from 15 matches at an average of 51.33.

But his stats while chasing give an altogether different picture.

He has scored just 191 runs from seven innings while batting second, with an average of 27.28 at a strike-rate of 113.01.



Mathews, Chandimal, bowlers get SL closer to series win

AP ■ DHAKA

Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal hit centuries as Sri Lanka raised hope of winning the second Test after reducing Bangladesh to 34 for 4 on day four on Thursday.

The host still needs 107 runs with six wickets remaining on the last day to force Sri Lanka to bat a second time. Bangladesh was in survival mode after its hope of a first home series win over Sri Lanka was shattered.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das, who helped Bangladesh

recover from 24 for 5 to post 365 on Tuesday with a record 272-run partnership, were in the middle at stumps after another top-order rout. Mushfiqur was 14 not out and Liton on 1.

Mathews followed his 199 in the first innings with an unbeaten 145, and Chandimal scored 124 to give Sri Lanka a 141-run lead. Sri Lanka was all out after tea for 506 in the first innings.

Mathews and Chandimal combined for 199 runs for the sixth wicket to take the game away from Bangladesh, despite Shakib Al Hasan's 5 for 96.

Langer hits out at politics in CA

PTI ■ PERTH

Former Australia coach Justin Langer has slammed the politics in the national cricket board as he opened up on his messy departure from the top job, specifically hitting out at interim chairman Richard Freudenstein.

In February, the 51-year-old stepped down as the senior men's team coach after rejecting a six-month contract extension, having hoped for a multi-year deal after overseeing a successful T20 World Cup campaign and an Ashes triumph.

The day after quitting his job, Langer had a heated conversation with Freudenstein.

Several Australian legends, including Mark Waugh, Adam Gilchrist, Ricky Ponting, Steve Waugh, Matthew Hayden and the late Shane Warne, came to their former teammate's defence and questioned Cricket Australia (CA) for the treatment meted out to Langer.

"The first thing he (Freudenstein) said to me was, 'It must make you feel so good that all your mates are support-



ing you in the media," Langer told a Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA event in Perth.

"I said, 'Yeah it is, acting chairman, but with all due respect, those mates are also the all-time greats of Australian cricket. They are the fabric of Australian cricket. They are Australian cricket. They also work all around the world in cricket."

"So yeah, I'm glad my mates are looking after me. Imagine if you had have."

"Ironically, the last six months of my coaching career

were the most enjoyable period of 12 years of coaching. Not only did we win everything, but I had energy, and I had focus, and I was happy - besides the bull**** politics."

The former Australia opener also clarified he had never spoken to anyone about taking the England coaching job after the sacking of Chris Silverwood.

Langer's departure coincided with the sacking of Silverwood, and the Australian's name was immediately linked to the England coaching position.

The former Australia opener also said he had never spoken to anyone about taking the England coaching job after the sacking of Chris Silverwood.

"I've never spoken to English cricket," Langer said. "Former England captain) Andrew Strauss rang me the day after I resigned... But I have known Andrew Strauss for a long time and that was 14 weeks ago."

"(Apart from that) I've never spoken to English cricket."

"The thought of coaching England ... mate (shakes his head)."

KL becomes 1st batter to score 600+ runs in four IPL seasons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even though his dream of winning the Indian Premier League (IPL) title ended once again with a heartbreaking 14-run defeat against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Wednesday (May 25), Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper KL Rahul reached a unique batting milestone during his 58-ball 79-run innings against the Faf du Plessis-led side at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

The 30-year-old became the first cricketer in the cash-rich league's history to score 600 plus runs in four different seasons. In the 15 matches of this year's edition of the IPL, the right-handed opening batter has scored 616 runs at an average of 51.33 and a strike rate of 135.38. He scored back-to-back hundreds against five-time winners Mumbai Indians and crossed the fifty-run mark on four occasions.

Before this year's edition, the top-order batter from Bengaluru had scored 626 runs in 13 matches of the 2021 edition, 670 runs in 14 matches of the 2020 season and 659 runs in the 2018

edition of the world's richest franchise cricket league.

KL, who is the second-highest run-getter in this season of the league up till now, finished as the third-highest run scorer in the 2018 and 2021 seasons, the second highest in 2019 and won the Orange Cap in the 2020 season, when the tournament was played in the United Arab Emirates.

Besides four 600+ seasons, KL scored 593 runs in the 2019 edition. West Indies T20 batting legend Chris Gayle and star Australian opening batter David Warner have scored more than 600 runs in the IPL on three different occasions and are now second on the list.

Both these left-handed batters have won the Orange Cap on two different occasions and are among the top 10 run-getters in the history of the league.

The 42-year-old Gayle crossed the 600 run mark in three consecutive years (2011-2013) while he was part of the Royal Challengers Bangalore side. On the other hand, David Warner also achieved the feat in three consecutive seasons from 2016 to 2019 as the Sunrisers Hyderabad captain.

