

WORLD 5
PAKISTAN PM URGES
NAWAZ TO RETURN

MONEY 6
FAST-TRACK CLAIM SETTLEMENT
FOR BIPARJOY, DIRECTS IRDAI

SPORT 7
SPAIN TO FACE CROATIA
IN NATIONS LEAGUE FINAL

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Manipur consumed by rage, mobs vent wrath on forces

Security forces foil attempts to set BJP leaders houses on fire

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a disturbing turn of events on Saturday, Manipur witnessed a fresh wave of violence as mobs clashed with security forces in Imphal, resulting in injuries to two civilians. According to officials, mobs attempted to set the houses of BJP leaders on fire.

These attacks came just a day after a mob of approximately 1,200 individuals, armed with petrol bombs, set ablaze the residence of Union Minister RK Ranjan Singh.

The strife-torn State has been grappling with clashes between the Kuki and Meitei communities for over a month, leading to multiple incidents of mob gatherings, violence, and attempted arson.

The sound of automatic gunfire reverberated through the air, amplifying the already heightened tension in Kwakta of Bishnupur district and Kangvai in Churachandpur district, Manipur.

In a joint effort to restore peace and control the situation, the Army, Assam Rifles, and Manipur Rapid Action Force conducted marches in the State capital throughout the night.

Their aim was to prevent rioters from gathering. Notably, a mob of approximately 1,000 people tried to set buildings near the palace compound ablaze. To disperse the crowd, the Rapid Action Force resorted to the use of tear gas and rubber bullets.

Further incidents unfolded as a mob gathered near the res-



Tires and construction materials set on fire by miscreants amid ongoing ethnic violence in Imphal East district on Friday. PTI

idence of MLA Biswajeet, attempting to set the house on fire. However, the Rapid Action Force successfully dispersed the crowd, averting a potential disaster. Similarly, another mob surrounded the BJP office in Sinjemai after midnight, but swift action by the Army prevented any harm.

In a midnight act of vandalism, the mob targeted the residence of State BJP president Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi in Imphal West. The Army, along with the Rapid Action Force, swiftly intervened and prevented the attackers from causing damage.

Friday witnessed clashes between the mob and Rapid Action Force personnel after the warehouse was set on fire. The situation worsened as the group obstructed traffic by burning tires, logs, and waste in Wangkhei, Porompat, and Thangapat areas, causing dis-

ruptions in the city. The gravity of the situation has prompted Manipur Assembly Speaker Thokchom Satyabarta Singh, along with MLAs, to schedule a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The focus of the meeting will revolve around the recently formed peace committee, following Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the violence-stricken state.

In an effort to restore normalcy, the Manipur Government has instructed schools to resume classes from June 21, as mentioned in an official statement. However, the ban on internet services in the State has been extended for an additional five days until June 20. The clashes initially erupted on May 3 during a 'Tribal Solidarity March' organised in the hill districts, aimed at protesting the Meitei community's demand for ST status.

NPP to review ties with BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Deputy Chief Minister and ex-DGP of Manipur, Yumnam Joykumar Singh, has voiced concerns over the ongoing situation in Manipur and hinted at a potential reassessment of the alliance between his party, the National People's Party (NPP), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) if the conditions fail to improve in the coming days.

Continued on Page 2

41 killed at Uganda school, boys set on fire, girls hacked to death

AP/AFP ■ KAMPALA

Militants belonging to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), linked to ISIS, hacked and burned 37 students, one guard, and two members of the local community to death at a secondary school in Uganda's Mpondwe, 2 km from the Congo border, on Friday.

Major General Dick Olum told AFP that intelligence suggested the presence of the ADF in the area at least two days before the attack, and an probe would be needed to establish what went wrong.

"They knew where the boys' and girls' dormitories were. That's why they locked the boys' dormitory and set it on fire. They did not lock the girls' section, and the girls managed to get out, but they were cut with machetes as they ran for safety," said Olum. The ADF has been accused of targeting civilians in remote



parts of eastern Congo. A Ugandan military assault forced the ADF into eastern Congo, where rebel groups are able to operate because the central government has limited control there.

Detailed report on P5

Kutch picks up pieces, Biparjoy brings heavy rain in Rajasthan

PNS ■ BHUJ/JAIPUR

Shops and business establishments in Gujarat's Kutch district opened shutters on Saturday in signs of return to normalcy as authorities stepped up efforts to restore electricity in several towns and hundreds of villages battered by Cyclone Biparjoy.

The weather system, which hit the landmass near Jakhau port as a very severe cyclonic storm on Thursday evening, turned into a deep depression and will further lose steam to become a depression, the India Meteorological Department said in its latest update.

Meanwhile, several places in Rajasthan received heavy rainfall on Saturday due to Cyclone 'Biparjoy'. The MeT department has issued a 'Red Alert' in Barmer, Jalore and Sirohi districts.

Adipurush insult to Hindu religion: Opp; C'garh mulls ban

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Om Raut's film "Adipurush," based on the Valmiki Ramayana, has ignited a storm of controversy as Opposition parties on Saturday accused the movie of insulting the Hindu religion with its use of "tapori" language and its poor depiction of gods.

Chhattisgarh Chief

Minister Bhupesh Baghel, alleged that the film aimed to tarnish the image of Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman, expressing concerns that the Congress government might consider banning it in the State if demanded by the people. Baghel condemned the film's dialogues as "objectionable and

indecent" and questioned the apparent silence of political parties that claim to be custodians of religion, taking a direct jab at the BJP.

When questioned about the possibility of a ban, Baghel responded, "The Government will contemplate a ban if there

is a significant demand from the people."

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has strongly criticised the movie, condemning its shameful dialogues and its disrespectful portrayal of Hindu gods. AAP MP Sanjay Singh asserted that the film had insulted the Hindu religion, accusing BJP leaders of promoting it.

Continued on Page 2

Brahmos, drones to be made in UP



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced on Friday that the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) will not only manufacture nuts and bolts but also cutting-edge technologies such as BrahMos missiles, drones, electronic warfare systems, and aircraft.

The UPDIC aims to reduce India's reliance on foreign suppliers in the aerospace and defence sectors, promoting self-sufficiency.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

WINE CUSTOMER KILLED AS GANG MAN OPENS FIRE

Gurugram: Two armed men fired more than 15 rounds at a crowded liquor shop in Gurugram, killing a customer and injuring two others, police said on Saturday. The incident, captured in CCTV cameras installed at the outlet, took place around 8.30 pm on Friday in Panchgaon in the Manesar area here, they said. Police suspected that the attack could have been carried out by a gang as part of an attempt to take control of the shop.

2 KILLED IN STONE MINE COLLAPSE IN RAJASTHAN

Jaipur: Two labourers were killed coming under the debris of a stone mine collapse in Tonk on Saturday. The victims were identified as Sheru Khan and Dev Lal. The incident was caused by rainwater collected outside leaking into the mine.

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MCD seals 25 properties used by drug peddlers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has sealed 25 properties which were being used for drug trafficking purposes. These properties are likely to be demolished. This comes after Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's direction to send a strict message against drugs trafficking and deter such activities.

According to Raj Niwas officials, the properties were sealed by the MCD on recommendation of the Delhi Police. Interestingly, 24 out of the total properties sealed by MCD are residential properties and they were conveniently being used by drug peddlers without raising a suspicion. Out of the 25 properties, 07 properties have been sealed in Shahdara (North) zone followed by 04 properties each in Central and Narela zones.

Saxena, while chairing the fifth meeting of the State Level Committee of NCORD (National Narcotics Coordination) on April 27, directed the agencies concerned to seal the properties/buildings being used to peddle drugs and begin proceedings to demolish those. Apart from sealing/demolishing the properties, the LG has also directed the Transport Department, Delhi government, to make

necessary provisions for cancelling the permit of the vehicles involved in drug trafficking. Subsequently, the properties were sealed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on the Delhi Police's recommendation.

During the meeting, Saxena had directed the Delhi Police and other concerned agencies to ruthlessly curb the drugs menace. Apart from sealing/demolishing the properties, the Lt Governor also directed the city government's Transport department to make necessary provisions for cancelling the permits of vehicles used in trafficking drugs.

The steps aim at making Delhi 'drug-free', with active participation of all stakeholder agencies of the State and the Central Government.

The LG noted that drug trafficking was not merely a petty criminal act but an international design to weaken the country. He exhorted the law enforcing agencies to work in a mission mode to fight this menace.

To tackle the menace of drug abuse, a joint operation of crime branch and district units of Delhi Police — Operation Kawach — was launched across the national capital last month. More than 100 locations were raided across Delhi and 31 drug traffickers and 12 bootleggers were arrested.

Makers of Adipurush face AAP, BJP's ire

Film made to tarnish image of Lord Ram, alleges AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A controversy erupted after the release of "Adipurush" starring Prabhakar as Ram, Kriti Sanon as Sita, and Saif Ali Khan as Ravana after AAP and the Delhi BJP slammed the makers for "objectionable and indecent", dialogues.

The AAP has alleged that the film was made to tarnish the image of Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman. "Adipurush", a retelling of the epic Ramayana directed by Om Raut, was released on Friday.

The AAP said the movie once again proved that BJP is a cheap, 'sadak-chhap' party as the movie received blessings from several BJP and ally leaders including Yogi Adityanath, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Eknath Shinde,



Devendra Fadnavis, Manohar Lal Khattar, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Pushkar Singh Dhami, and Narottam Mishra.

"The BJP is not of the Ram, aam (general public) or kaam (work). It only does its dirty politics," AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said at a press conference.

"The dialogues are so derogatory like kapda yere baap ka, tel tere baap ka, jale-

the film, PM Modi and JP Nadda should apologise to the country," Singh added.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor on Saturday demanded that the Censor Board temporarily bar screening of the film "Adipurush" until a re-examine of its "controversial" scenes and dialogues.

"Adipurush" has been panned on social media over its poor VFX and colloquial dialogues, with writer Manoj Muntashir Shukla coming under fire for Lord Hanuman's dialogues in the "Lanka Dahan" sequence, among others.

Citing the public criticism, Kapoor requested Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur that the film's controversial scenes and dialogues should be re-examined.

In a tweet in Hindi, "Respected Anurag Thakur ji, film Adipurush is being opposed everywhere. Therefore it is requested that its controversial scenes and dialogues should be re-examined. The Censor Board should temporarily suspend its censor certificate and its exhibition should be banned till it is reviewed again."

AAP slams BJP over Vikas Yatra amid Manipur violence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday slammed the BJP over its 'Vikas Yatra' in Delhi for holding it at a time when Manipur was racked with sectarian violence, and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to contain the situation there swiftly.

Addressing a press conference, AAP Chief spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar accused the BJP government of failing to control the situation in Manipur which has been in grip of tribal tension for more than a month.

Kakkar spoke about the burning of houses of Union Minister of State Rajkumar Ranjan and another female minister by rioters to indicate the escalation of tension in the state.

She said these incidents have "sparked widespread distress among the people of Manipur and raised serious questions about the ruling BJP's ability to maintain law and order in the region."

"In light of these distressing events, AAP demands immediate resignation of Manipur Chief Minister N



Biren Singh. It urges Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take swift action, provide clarity on the situation in Manipur, and take decisive steps to bring an end to the violence," she said.

Kakkar said the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar started his 'Vikas Tirth Yatra' on Saturday to woo the voters ahead of the 2024 general elections. She also contrasted the BJP celebrating its nine years at the Centre with the arson and mayhem in Manipur.

She criticised the BJP's 'vikas model' saying everyone gets a taste of it when they go out to buy fuel or groceries or milk at an inflated price.

"Everyone has seen this vikas model in the nation, under which farmers, instead of getting right compensation for their crops, are caned by the central government's police," she said.

Forest around Malcha Mahal set to get facelift

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The forest around the 14th century monument - Malcha Mahal — at the central ridge and its immediate vicinity is all set to get a facelift as Delhi Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday directed the authorities concerned to immediately commence the five-layered plantation of various flowering trees in the forest on the side facing the Sardar Patel Marg, Jacaranda, Gulmohar, Chinar, Bougainvillea and Amaltas trees will adorn the Central Ridge area near Malcha Mahal.

Saxena, who planted trees near the gate leading to the monument built by Feroz Shah Tughlaq, directed officials that the plantation of flowering trees like Jacaranda, Gulmohar, Bougainvillea and Chinar should be completed by August 15, according to Raj Niwas officials.

During his visit, Saxena was informed that agencies



concerned will do the facelift of the forest area facing the Sardar Patel Marg, which is the main road that is traversed by visitors and dignitaries coming to and going from the national capital to the Indira Gandhi International Airport.

The Tughlaq-era hunting lodge, built by Feroz Shah Tughlaq in the 14th century, is situated 1.5 km from the main road, deep inside a forest in Chanakyapuri.

It is named after Malcha Marg, which houses the elite of

the city, including diplomats, businessmen and authors. The Mahal was lying abandoned for centuries before it came to limelight for serving as home to a mysterious family, claiming to be descendants of the Nawab of Awadh, whose last member, 'Prince' Ali Raza, died in 2017. Raza, known as Cyrus, was found dead inside the mahal on September 2, 2017, having led a life in abject penury, devoid of any material comforts that one associates even with a commoner, let alone a royalty.

In another move that will help further enrich and strengthen the ecological character of the ridge, the LG asked for water bodies to be developed in the existing natural depressions in the ridge forest, which is spread over 3.5 hectares along the Sardar Patel Marg, the official said.

Saxena suggested that the plantation should be done in a grid pattern to provide the area with a colourful glimpse.

Explain reasons for salaries non-payment to board staff, HC asks Waqf Board CEO

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a development, the Delhi High Court has directed the chief executive officer of Delhi Waqf Board to come before it and explain the reasons for non-payment of salaries to board employees for several months in spite of a court order directing clearance of the outstanding dues.

Justice Jyoti Singh said the petition of the Delhi Waqf Board Employees depicts a "very sorry" state of affairs as admittedly the employees have not received their salaries for nearly nine months.

The authorities have been "totally insensitive" to the plight of the employees working at Delhi Waqf Board who were finding it difficult to make two ends meet, the judge said.

Prima facie, the court said, there is scant regard for court orders, as despite there being an assurance on the last date of hearing, there was no certainty

as to when salaries would be paid and now the "usual and casual response" is that the matter is under consideration and there is deficiency of funds.

"In this view of the matter, this court deems it appropriate to direct Md Rehan Raza, Chief Executive Officer/Respondent No. 1 (Delhi Waqf Board) to remain present in Court on the next date of hearing i.e. 11.07.2023 at 2.30 pm, to explain the alleged non-compliance of the orders passed by this court and non-performance of the statutory obligations of the Delhi Waqf Board to pay salaries and allowances to its employees," said the court in its order passed on June 1.

"It appears that the respondents are totally insensitive to the plight of the employees who are without their salaries and it needs no emphasis that they are finding it difficult to make two ends meet and fend for themselves and their families," it said.

BJP leaders inform traders about Modi's Govt work

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva, former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and MP Sushil Kumar Modi and MP Hansraj Hans on Saturday held a meeting with the traders at Khatu Dham Mandir Hall, Alipur and discussed about the work done by the Modi government for the traders and about current business conditions in detail.

They also lashed out at the Arvind Kejriwal government for giving step motherly treatment to traders in the national capital.

On this occasion, Sachdeva said that the Kejriwal government has always been giving step-motherly treatment to the businessmen. Many times promises are made to help the traders or to develop the markets but as soon as the elections are over, these promises also get lost in those markets.

Sachdeva said that Sadar Bazar is the biggest market in



Asia where there are both retail and wholesale markets but in the name of convenience there is nothing here and there is a mess of encroachments.

Sachdeva suggested to the Kejriwal government that the rate of VAT on diesel in Delhi should be reduced slightly, so that commercial transport owners can buy diesel for their vehicles from Delhi itself, so that the revenue can increase.

Modi said that due to the steps taken by the Modi government for the traders business in India is continuously increasing today. According to the data of the Ministry of Finance, in the month of May 2023, the government received a revenue of Rs 1.57 lakh crore from GST. This earning to the exchequer during May 2023 is 12 percent more than a year ago i.e. May 2022. This shows that year after year the exchequer is getting more money from GST than before.

He said even at the world level, India has become a favorable investment option for any company today and the reason behind this is the far-reaching thinking of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Liquor mafia kills man at wine shop

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Two armed men fired more than 15 rounds at a crowded liquor shop in Gurugram, killing a customer and injuring two others.

According to police, the incident, captured in CCTV cameras installed at the outlet, took place around 8.30 pm on Friday in Panchgaon in the Manesar area.

Police suspected that the attack could have been carried out by a gang as part of an attempt to take control of the shop.

Police said two armed assailants reached the shop and asked the employees sitting at the cash counter whether it was owned by Kuldeep Singh. Thereafter, they threatened the employees and started firing at the roof first and then at the customers. They fired around 15 rounds before fleeing the spot, they said.

Three customers — Sandeep, a resident of Bhahila village in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district, Devraj Sharma and Rajendra Prasad, residents of Alwar in Rajasthan — were hit by bullets and rushed to a hospital, the police said. Doctors declared Sandeep as brought dead, they said, adding Sharma and Prasad, who were critically injured, are undergoing treatment at the facility.

The liquor shop owner, Kuldeep Singh, said that a week ago he had received a call from a foreign number wherein the



caller, who identified himself as Lipin Nehra, the brother of jailed gangster Pawan Nehra, threatened him that he should hand over the shop to him.

After the firing incident, he again received a call from the same number and the caller claimed responsibility for the attack, Singh, a resident of Bohra Kalan village, said.

"I was at the office behind the liquor shop and came out after hearing the sound of firing. When I shouted for help, the two accused fled from the scene. In the hospital, I again got a call from the foreign number and the caller claimed that it was the consequence of not handing over the shop to him. He again threatened to kill me," he said in his complaint to the police.

Police said an FIR has been registered against an unidentified caller and shooters under sections 302 (murder), 307 (murder attempt), 506 (criminal intimidation), 34 (common intention), 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and section 25/54/59 of the Arms Act at Manesar police station.

Atishi visits primary school in London, says insight gained will help reinvent MCD schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Atishi visited a community-based school for children from low-income groups in London, to gain insights into its "successful education model" with an aim to improve civic schools here, her office said on Saturday. The Delhi Minister is currently on a visit to the UK.

She visited the Tollgate Primary School, "a community-based institution catering to the academic needs of children from low-income groups and diverse cultural backgrounds in London, known for providing high-quality education," her office said in a statement. During her visit, she was deeply impressed by the school's unique approach to education.

"The school challenges the conventional 'blackboard-faced' model of a classroom, instead fostering group-based, community learning,



allowing children to interact and learn with remarkable freedom.

"The most captivating aspect of classroom learning at Tollgate is the use of roundtables, where students sit and learn together in a group," Atishi was quoted as saying in the statement. She said the insight gained during the visit will help reinvent primary education in schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), according to the state-

ment. AAP is the ruling party in Delhi government and the MCD.

Moreover, the school's commitment to promoting students' excellent work was evident throughout the galleries and classrooms, she said. The students' artwork and achievements were prominently displayed, celebrating their accomplishments. Teachers at Tollgate are trained to cultivate basic skills in each student through diverse methods and practical applications in everyday knowledge, the minister said.

"Learning from Tollgate Primary School will aid us in reinventing our MCD schools and creating a conducive learning environment for our students. Following the success of Delhi government schools, our primary focus is now on developing MCD schools into world-class institutions, with the aim of eliminating long queues outside private schools for nursery admissions," Atishi added.

College student falls to death from 8th floor of Noida building

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

A 21-year-old college student died after he allegedly fell off the eighth floor of a tower in a posh group housing society in Noida, police said on Saturday. The police said they are yet to ascertain whether the student accidentally fell off the building or it was a suicide.

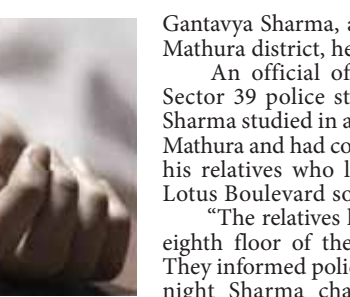
Assistant Commissioner of Police (Noida 1) Rajneesh Verma said the incident took place around 11.15 pm on Friday at the Lotus Boulevard society in Sector 100.

"A security guard of the society informed the police that a person has fallen on a balcony of the first floor of tower number 10 from an upper floor of the building

and suffered severe injuries, including on his head," Verma said.

"A police team immediately reached the spot and took the person to the district hospital where doctors declared him brought dead," the officer said.

The family of the deceased was informed after which his identity was established as



Gantavya Sharma, a native of Mathura district, he said.

An official of the local Sector 39 police station said Sharma studied in a college in Mathura and had come to visit his relatives who live in the Lotus Boulevard society.

"The relatives live on the eighth floor of the building. They informed police that last night Sharma chatted with them after which he stepped out of the flat and then the incident happened. It is yet to be ascertained if it was a suicide or an accident," the official said. The relatives of Sharma are into construction business, the official added.

Police said the body has been sent for post-mortem and further legal proceedings are being carried out.

"You can't just sit there and wait for people to give you that golden dream. You've got to get out there and make it happen for yourself!"
— Diana Ross



TIGER RESERVES OR BIG CAT GRAVEYARDS

The recent tiger deaths are not isolated incidents within Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Since 2020, a total of ten tigers have perished in the area, writes BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Tigers dying in the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, known for its abundant biodiversity and thriving tiger population, has been struck by a series of perplexing deaths that have raised alarm bells. Over the past two weeks, three tigers and one leopard have tragically lost their lives, leaving the Forest Department deeply distressed and concerned. The negligence and inefficiency displayed by the monitoring teams responsible for safeguarding these endangered species are now under scrutiny. While two tigers and one leopard are believed to have died as a result of mutual conflict, another tiger was found dead in a waterhole. These incidents have exposed the inadequacies of the reserve's monitoring efforts.

"The recent spate of tiger deaths has highlighted the need to assess and strengthen ranger monitoring systems in Dudhwa National Park. Rangers play a critical role in safeguarding wildlife and enforcing conservation regulations. However, certain gaps and challenges need to be addressed to ensure their effectiveness," emphasized wildlife conservationist R.S. Bhadoria.

In response to the alarming series of incidents, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has launched an investigation into the tiger deaths at Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. A team comprising retired IFS officer Shailesh Prasad, wildlife conservationist RK Singh, and NTCA official Hemant Singh has been formed, with a 15-day deadline to submit their report.

The distressing sequence of events began approximately two weeks ago when the lifeless bodies of two tigers and one leopard were discovered. Forest officials initially suspected a clash between the animals, but the circumstances surrounding their deaths remain unresolved. Adding to the mystery, another tiger carcass was found in a pond in the Mailani range of the Kishanpur Sanctuary on June 9. On examination, it was revealed that the tiger's body had been submerged in the pond for over a week, leading to advanced decomposition. This discovery raises questions about the Forest Department's claim of continuous monitoring. Despite assurances of round-the-clock surveillance, the tiger's remains went unnoticed for an extended period. It was only when the foul odor permeated the area that a search was initiated, ultimately leading to the grim discovery.

The post-mortem examination of the deceased tiger was conducted at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI). Dr. KP Singh, Joint Director of IVRI, shared that the post-mortem report suggests the tiger found dead at Dudhwa Tiger Reserve may have been involved in a fight with a large animal, such as an elephant or rhinoceros, approximately three weeks ago. The tiger sustained severe injuries, rendering it unable to hunt for prey.

Over time, these wounds worsened, ultimately leading to decomposition. The report indicates that the tiger's death can be attributed to a combination of factors, including hunger, dehydration, and weakened conditions caused by the injuries. As the tiger was unable to hunt, it experienced hunger pangs exacerbated by the scorching heat and lack of available water, leading to dehydration.

"The post-mortem report suggests that the tiger's death was a result of a combination of factors, including wounds, decomposition, hunger, and thirst," stated Dr. Singh. "The report has been forwarded to the relevant authorities for further analysis and action."

The death of the fourth tiger has flummoxed all and sundry. Forest officials were left astonished and deeply concerned by their failure to detect the carcass of a tiger in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Such a critical lapse in monitoring raises serious doubts about the Forest Department's ability to fulfill its duty of safeguarding these magnificent creatures. The incident has sparked public outrage as citizens express their disappointment with the ongoing spate of tiger deaths within the reserve.

"The failure to locate the tiger's carcass for eight days raises serious questions about the effectiveness of our monitoring system," lamented an anonymous forest official. "We pride ourselves on round-the-clock surveillance, but this incident highlights a significant lapse in our monitoring efforts."

News of the tiger deaths at Dudhwa Tiger Reserve has ignited public outrage and disappointment. Concerned citizens and wildlife activists are expressing their frustration and disappointment with the repeated occurrences of tiger deaths in the reserve. They argue that the recent incidents underscore a lack of proper monitoring and conservation measures.

"The continuous loss of tigers in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a distressing trend that cannot be ignored," stated Rakesh Kumar, a local wildlife activist. "It reflects a failure on the part of the Forest Department to ensure the safety and

THE RECENT TIGER DEATHS ARE NOT ISOLATED INCIDENTS WITHIN DUDHWA TIGER RESERVE. SINCE 2020, A TOTAL OF TEN TIGERS HAVE PERISHED IN THE AREA, RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT THE RESERVE'S CONSERVATION EFFORTS. WHILE POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED, THE EXACT CAUSES OF DEATH REMAIN ELUSIVE

well-being of these endangered animals."

The recent tiger deaths are not isolated incidents within Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Since 2020, a total of ten tigers have perished in the area, raising concerns about the reserve's conservation efforts. While post-mortem examinations have been conducted, the exact causes of death remain elusive.

In a previous incident, a post-mortem examination of a tigress from Rampur Dhakaiya village revealed an empty stomach, suggesting severe hunger and thirst as contributing factors to her demise. This revelation further emphasizes the urgent need for robust monitoring and conservation measures.

Forest Minister Arun Saxena has assured the public that they are dedicated to the conservation and promotion of tigers within the reserve. He claims that sufficient food and water resources are available for the tigers, but recent events have cast doubts on these assertions.

Saxena said, "We understand the public's disappointment and frustration, and we are actively investigating these incidents. The investigation teams will provide crucial insights into the causes of death and guide our future conservation strategies."

The Forest Department has launched an investigation into the recent tiger deaths and hopes to uncover the truth behind these tragic incidents. A comprehensive report will be crucial in determining the exact cause of death and shedding light on any underlying factors contributing to the alarming mortality rate.

As the plight of the tigers in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve worsens, urgent action is needed to address the deficiencies in monitoring and ensure the survival of these majestic creatures. The Forest Department must take immediate steps to rectify the failures in their surveillance systems and enhance their conservation efforts to protect the remaining tiger population in the reserve. Time is of the essence, and the fate of these magnificent animals hangs in the balance.

(Writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow).

Tigers dying in territorial battle

Tigers Under Threat: Startling Surge in Fatalities Sends Tremors through India's Wildlife Conservation Efforts

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A startling surge in tiger deaths has reverberated through the hearts of wildlife enthusiasts across the country, sending tremors through India's efforts in wildlife conservation. In a devastating blow, eleven majestic tigers lost their lives within the first 17 days of June. Maharashtra lost three tigers while Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand mourned death of two big cats each. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha recorded one fatality each.

In this year, till June 17, a total 87 predators have died across the country.

This alarming escalation in tiger fatalities marks the highest number witnessed in the past three years, despite the recent announcement of India's Tiger Census figures during the fifth cycle by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 9. The aim of this initiative was to bolster the protection and preservation of these iconic feline wonders.

Thorough data analysis conducted by the renowned National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) reveals a somber reality for tigers across the nation. A staggering total of 87 magnificent big cats have succumbed to various threats till now this year, with Madhya Pradesh bearing the brunt of the losses, reporting a heartbreaking 23 casualties. Among the fallen warriors, 28 tigresses and 12 cubs leave behind a void in the already fragile tiger population.

Merely a week ago, The Pioneer brought to light a chilling statistic: the country witnessed the tragic deaths of 76 tigers in the past five months alone, presenting the grim reality of one tiger perishing every other day.

A poignant comparison with the same period last year paints a distressing picture: a total of 64 felines met untimely demises, as indicated by the NTCA's data under the Union Environment Ministry.

The data for 2023 further unravels a deeply concerning trend, with a majority of deaths—no fewer than 47—occurring within tiger reserves. The intensifying territorial

conflicts among these majestic predators have emerged as significant contributors to the surge in mortalities. Senior officials from the Ministry have drawn attention to the insufficiency of habitats to accommodate the growing tiger population, compelling these creatures to venture into human territories. This perilous incursion poses grave risks to both the tigers' lives and those of humans.

The severity of the situation is further accentuated by the fact that seven tiger deaths occurred within the boundaries of their own territories within the first 17 days of June, underscoring the urgency for immediate intervention.

Experts unanimously attribute the rise in deaths to territorial conflicts among the tigers themselves. Typically, tigers demarcate territories spanning 10-12 square kilometers, fiercely guarding against rival intruders. When a challenger encroaches, a battle for dominance ensues, with the stronger tiger prevailing and the weaker one pushed to the periphery.

Life is far from easy even for those tigers that manage to survive and relocate to the fringes. They often become victims of poaching or fall prey to human-animal conflicts when they venture beyond their territorial boundaries, as witnessed in recent days.

For instance, in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, a frail cub succumbed to the harsh elements of cold and rain after its mother was killed in a territorial clash back in February. Ranthambore TR, considered the nation's third-most congested tiger habitat, lags behind Uttarakhand's Corbett National Park and Assam's Kaziranga National Park in terms of overcrowding.

As India grapples with this disquieting surge in tiger deaths, urgent measures are needed to safeguard these magnificent creatures. Wildlife conservation efforts demand immediate attention to address the underlying causes of territorial conflicts and habitat insufficiency. Time is of the essence, and concerted action is imperative to ensure a future where tigers thrive

9 Tigers Killed in Three Years

- February 2020: A tigress's body was found in Kataiya Beat of Kishanpur Sanctuary.
- August 2020: A tigress's body was found in the Jatpura beat of the Mailani range of the Buffer zone.
- January 2021: The dead body of a female tiger cub was found in the Sikandarpur beat of Gola range. Death confirmed from septicemia.
- February 2021: Tiger hunting in the Belrayan range of Dudhwa National Park.
- April 2021: A tigress's body was found in Kishanpur Sanctuary. Diarrhea was reported.
- September 2021: The body of a female tiger cub was found in the Mailani range of the Buffer zone.
- April 2023: A tiger carcass was found in the Salempur beat of the Mailani range of the Buffer zone. Postmortem confirmed death due to internal organ failure and a bone getting stuck in the intestine.
- June 2023: A tigress entered Rampur Dhakaiya village of Grunt number three beat of Mailani range of Bufferzone at 12 o'clock on Friday night. Died on Saturday morning. Confirmation of death of tigress due to hunger and thirst in the postmortem.
- June 9, 2023: The body of a male tiger was found lying in a pond in the Mailani range of Kishanpur Sanctuary. It is speculated that the death occurred during a mutual conflict.

On World No Tobacco Day on May 31, India became the first country to make it mandatory for the OTT platforms to carry anti-tobacco warning messages as seen in theatres and TV programmes. While activists and health experts have lauded the long-awaited move given that the tobacco claims over 13 lakh lives annually, OTT streaming giants are citing implementation issues. However, undoubtedly the move has thrown a spanner in the tobacco industry's nefarious plans to tacitly use such services to lure youth and kids into tobacco addiction. ARCHANA JYOTI brings a report

OTT STREAMING SMOKE UNDER SCANNER



A study by Truth Initiative, a public health nonprofit group, says that 60% of the 15 most popular streaming shows among 15- to 24-year-olds it analyzed contained depictions of tobacco, "effectively exposing 25 million young people to tobacco imagery" in 2021. The data is alarming given the rising usage of OTT markets among youths.

Yet another report, titled 'Entertainment Goes Online', by The Boston Consulting Group confirms the trend. The Indian OTT market is expected to reach USD5 billion in size by 2023. "This development is being driven by rising abundance, increment in the infiltration of information into country markets, and selection across segment sections including ladies and more established ages. Hence, the impact of the content streaming across these platforms will have an impact on the habits and eventually the lives of its viewers."

tioned that the rules will significantly impact consumer viewing experience, and "throttle creativity and artistic expression".

To this, renowned global health advocate, Vandana Shah opined that there was a need to work with all the stakeholders in the sector. "To counteract any potential resistance, it is crucial for the government, civil society organizations, and public health advocates to work in collaboration to emphasize the evidence-based harms of tobacco consumption and the need for robust regulations to protect vulnerable populations, particularly our youth from tobacco-related products."

She also said such tactics are aimed to delay the implementation of such crucial life saving decisions.

In fact such strenuous opposition from the players like IMAI was expected. In fact, a health expert recalled that how Bollywood and the Ministry of Information and Broadcast had joined those opposing the Union Health Ministry move when it had issued a complete ban on tobacco imagery in movies and television programmes in 2005.

Finally, in 2012, India implemented groundbreaking rules to blunt the effect of onscreen smoking and other tobacco use. "Any film with smoking has to have a warning and advertisement about the dangers of tobacco use produced by the Union Health Ministry before the film or video at the intermission," recalled Dr Amit Yadav from the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease and Professor Stan Glantz from the Centre for Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. In their study "Tobacco imagery in entertainment media: evolution of tobacco-free movies and television programmes rules in India," published in BMJ in 2020, they noted that the move had cut down tobacco scenes—ie in 2015, less than 48% of movies had tobacco imagery compared with 89% in 2005."

"With the ever-fastening world, roughly 80% of millennials are subscribed to at least one OTT service." So, it was important that the noose should be tightened around such streaming platforms in the interest of the youth and Gennext. Researchers from the College of Vocational Studies, Delhi University agreed. In their report, "Correlation between smoking scenes shown in OTT content and potential impact on its viewers," they noted that, "the number of cigarettes smoked by a viewer is impacted by the number of hours spent by them on TV series, movies, containing smoking imagery...".

So the new regulations are timely and need of the hour, asserted policymakers, anti-tobacco activists and doctors. Tobacco users are more likely to pay attention to the health warnings and understand the risks associated with smoking, they shared.

However, not everybody is happy. The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) as well as streaming giants have cau-

tioned that the rules will significantly impact consumer viewing experience, and "throttle creativity and artistic expression".

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WHAT ARE THE NEW RULES?

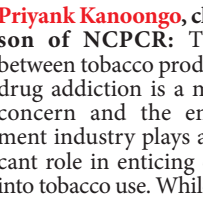
- Health spots, messages, and disclaimers: Publishers of online curated content that display tobacco products or their use will be required to comply with specific guidelines. These include the display of anti-tobacco health spots, lasting a minimum of thirty seconds each at the beginning and middle of the program. Furthermore, publishers must exhibit anti-tobacco health warnings as a prominent static message at the bottom of the screen during the display of tobacco products or their use. Additionally, an audio-visual disclaimer on the ill-effects of tobacco use, lasting a minimum of twenty seconds each, must be shown at the beginning and middle of the program.
 - Access to content: The health spots, messages, and disclaimers will be made available to the publisher of the online curated content on the website "mohfw.gov.in" or "ntcp.mohfw.gov.in."
 - Legibility and language: The anti-tobacco health warning message displayed as a static message must be legible and readable, with black font on a white background, and must include the warnings "Tobacco causes cancer" or "Tobacco kills." Furthermore, the health warning message, health spot, and audio-visual disclaimer should be in the same language as used in the online curated content.
 - Limitations on display: The display of tobacco products or their use in online curated content is prohibited from including the brands of cigarettes or other tobacco products or any form of tobacco product placement. Additionally, the display of tobacco products or their use in promotional materials is strictly prohibited.
- The failure to comply with the provisions outlined may result in action taken by an inter-ministerial committee comprising representatives from the Union Health Ministry, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology either suo moto, or on receiving a complaint. The committee will identify the publisher of the online curated content, issue a notice providing a reasonable opportunity to explain the failure, and require appropriate modifications to the content.

WHAT THEY SAY



Dr Manuskh Mandaviya, Union Health Minister: Rising tobacco consumption among the young generation, which is the future of our nation, is worrisome. The people need to break free from the shackles of tobacco and embrace a healthier lifestyle. It is time to create wide awareness among youth and the nation regarding the seriously debilitating and harmful effects of tobacco consumption. India has taken various measures to free the people from Tobacco addiction and prevent tobacco use. The OTT guidelines will go a long way to dissuade tobacco consumption.

Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary: India has been at the forefront in taking various anti-tobacco control measures. We already have guidelines on restrictions on depiction of tobacco products in TV and films and now we have it for OTT platforms as well. Efforts such as these are important as nearly 13.5 lakh deaths every year in the country can be linked in some way to tobacco consumption. The theme for this year's World No Tobacco Day — "we need food, no tobacco" — counters the argument that tobacco control will lead to loss of livelihood for farmers.



Priyank Kanoongo, chairperson of NCPCR: The link between tobacco products and drug addiction is a matter of concern and the entertainment industry plays a significant role in enticing children into tobacco use. While we had rules requiring warnings on tobacco product scenes in films, there was a pressing need for regulations regarding

OTT platforms, which have gained popularity in recent times and were being misused. The commission had recommended the regulation of tobacco use on OTT platforms to address this issue effectively. And now, we are delighted that the government has introduced this much-needed regulation, addressing the importance of curbing tobacco use on OTT platforms.

Now we are looking forward to a green nod to proposed amendments in the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), which can serve as an important tool in curbing tobacco use, especially among children.

Restricting all forms of tobacco advertising at the point of sale, doing away with designated smoking zones in public places will keep children away from harmful tobacco products



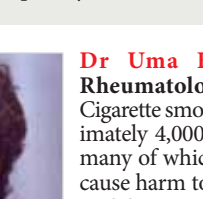
Dr Jagdish Kaur, regional advisor, Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO: The OTT regulations were long awaited. As people are becoming more aware about the tobacco menace and the Government taking bold steps to curb its usage, the industry is adopting innovative ways to trap the youth. The use



of pictures to warn people about the health risks of tobacco use is an effective way to make people aware of the dangers of tobacco use and encourage them to change their behavior, such as by quitting or reducing tobacco consumption. We are glad that a move has been initiated to regulate OTT contents'



Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South East Asia: Congratulations India on becoming the first country in the world to regulate anti-tobacco warnings on OTT platforms. The move demonstrates India's unstinted commitment to protect the health of people from the harmful effects of tobacco. I commend the country's strong leadership and all stakeholders for this landmark step.



Dr Uma Kumar, Head of Rheumatology, AIIMS Delhi: Cigarette smoke consists of approximately 4,000 different chemicals, many of which are active and can cause harm to the body, including toxicity, mutation, and cancer. Nicotine, the main ingredient in tobacco, is so addictive that it can cause an addiction comparable to that of heroin. Over 13 lakh people die annually in the country due to its consumption. Through this platform, I take opportunity to urge the Government to now take a lead by clearing the COTPA Amendment Bill which will not only save lives but also reduce the burden on the healthcare system. Because each second matters, given that the product is claiming a large number of youths in the country.



Siddhant Sarang, climate activist: Big thank you to the government for taking a significant stride towards public health! The decision to introduce anti-tobacco warnings on tobacco scenes in OTT platforms is a commendable move that will protect viewers from the harmful influence of tobacco. Let's prioritize our well-being! It's a big win for all campaigns for OTT regulations. A robust anti-tobacco policy can save million of lives and ensure healthy world to our kids.

OTT Tobacco Regulation: India a role model for the world

Renowned global health advocate and public policy expert VANDANA SHAH tells The HEALTH PIONEER why bold regulations seeking anti-tobacco warnings on Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming platforms matter so much and how such positive moves aimed at curbing the deadly tobacco consumption habit will motivate other countries to adopt similar policies

Do you think the recent notification regulating tobacco scenes on OTTs will impact India's efforts to control tobacco and promote public health?

These regulations, which extend the existing rules for theatrical movies and television to OTT platforms, mark a significant milestone in India's tobacco control initiatives. India's pioneering efforts have made it the first country in the world to issue regulations specifically targeting tobacco use in all content that appears on OTT platforms. India's long-standing leadership in protecting youth from tobacco use, particularly in curbing imagery that glamorizes tobacco in movies, has garnered international recognition.

These landmark regulations have already gotten a lot of positive global attention and public health experts around the world have applauded this as a major step forward in tobacco control. It will motivate other countries to adopt such policies as well.

In fact, India has been at the forefront of implementing robust

tobacco control measures, and these regulations demonstrate its commitment to protecting public health. India's comprehensive ban on all emerging products in 2019 and its adoption of 85% graphic warnings on all tobacco products in 2016 are evidence of its strong commitment to bold tobacco control measures. By extending the existing film rules to online streaming platforms, India is addressing a key access point for Big Tobacco to reach young people.

How do you envision these regulations aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Healthy India?

Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Swasth Bharat' or a healthy nation aligns perfectly with the objectives of these regulations. The Prime Minister has greatly emphasized the need to combat tobacco use in his popular radio programme, "Mann Ki Baat." These regulations are a testament to the government's dedication to translating his vision into concrete actions.



VANDANA SHAH
Global Health Advocate and Public Policy Expert

These regulations complement the ongoing efforts to amend the tobacco control act COTPA, further strengthening our tobacco control framework and reinforcing India's commitment to becoming a healthier nation.

Considering the influence and power of the companies operating OTT platforms, as well as their global parent companies, do you anticipate them leveraging their

combined strength to oppose these regulations?

The possibility of powerful companies opposing these regulations cannot be ignored. We have seen instances where industries have challenged regulations that seek to protect public health and tied these up in litigation for years to come. The tobacco industry, in particular, has a long history of using its resources and influence to undermine tobacco control measures in any way they can, including by suing governments, to prevent or delay the measures.

To counteract any potential resistance, it is crucial for the government, civil society organizations, and public health advocates to work in collaboration to emphasize the evidence-based harms of tobacco consumption and the need for robust regulations to protect vulnerable populations, particularly our youth from tobacco-related products.

Additionally, we should leverage the power of public awareness and education campaigns to mobi-

PASSIVE SMOKING

41% male & 39% female in India are exposed to second-hand smoking at home

35% adults in India consume tobacco in some form

32% Indian male and 19% female are exposed to second hand smoke at work

Tobacco kills 1.3 million people in South East Asia region every year, this includes those who never smoked

33% men in the WHO South East Asia region are tobacco smokers

STREAMING MAJORS MAIN CONTENTIONS

- Will have to edit millions of hours of existing content.
- Will affect customer experience and force production houses to block their content in India.
- Ministry of IT & IB have powers over streaming giants, not the Health Ministry.
- There is no way content can be edited in three months.

will send a strong message that these regulations are to be taken seriously.

Ultimately, our collective determination to prioritize public health should guide our actions.

There is an ongoing effort to amend the tobacco control act COTPA also. What's your take?

The proposed amendments to the tobacco control act COTPA hold immense potential to strengthen India's tobacco control initiatives. If these amendments are implemented, it would signify India's commitment to addressing the tobacco epidemic in a holistic manner.

Such decisive actions would undoubtedly earn significant appreciation worldwide and further solidify India's position as a global leader in tobacco control.

It is essential to understand that tobacco control requires a multi-faceted approach, combining regulatory measures, awareness campaigns, and supportive policies.

India's G20 Presidency and trade opportunities

As India holds the G20 presidency this year, it becomes crucial to analyse the effect of this presidency on the Indian economy across various aspects. Recently, India hosted a meeting of Development Ministers in Varanasi from June 11 to June 13, along with the third G20 framework working group meeting in Kochi on June 13-14. There are numerous upcoming meetings scheduled, such as the third G20 trade and investment working group meeting, among others. This study primarily focuses on the impact of the G20 presidency on the trade of goods, with the Gravity framework providing insights in this regard.

The theme for this year's G20 summit is "One Earth, One Family, One Future," reflecting India's presidency. The media extensively covers news and headlines related to the summit, leading to fundamental yet crucial questions: What is the G20? What is the G20 presidency? How does the G20 presidency affect member countries? The Group of 20 (G20) comprises the central bank governors and finance ministers of the world's 19 most systemically significant nations and the European Union. Its inaugural gathering took place in Berlin on December 15-16, 1999, as an immediate response to the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Currently, the G20 nations represent one of the most important forums, accounting for 80 per cent of global trade, 85 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP), and 65 per cent of the world's population. Notably, the annual summits commenced in 2008, almost a decade after its establishment, as a proactive response to the global financial crisis of 2007.

The G20 operates through two tracks: the Sherpa Track and the Finance Track. The Sherpa Track is led by an elected Sherpa, while the Finance Track is headed by ministers and central bank governors. Substantive work, including discussions on the summit's



agenda and related proceedings, is conducted by the Sherpas from all member countries. For the current year, Amitabh Kant is the Sherpa from India. It's worth mentioning that the G20 does not have a permanent secretariat; instead, the troika, consisting of the past, present, and incoming presidents, supports the presidency. The current troika

comprises Indonesia, India, and Brazil.

This study examines the goods trade of G20 president countries from 2011 to 2021 and analyses their impact on trade with other G20 countries. The results indicate mixed outcomes. Some countries, like Mexico and Italy, experienced a significant positive impact on goods trade during their pres-

idencies, while others, such as Japan and China, witnessed significant negative impacts. In the remaining countries, both positive and negative impacts were observed, but they were deemed insignificant. The significant positive impact suggests that the G20 presidency led to increased goods trade with other G20 countries, while the significant negative impact

implies a decrease in goods trade. Therefore, the impact of the G20 presidency on goods trade depends on the policies and agenda of the country holding the presidency.

"Till now in India, two G20 working group meetings have occurred on trade and investment. It is known as the Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) meeting. The

first TIWG meeting was held in Mumbai from March 28 to March 30, and the second TIWG meeting was held in Bengaluru from May 23 to May 25. In both meetings, over 100 delegates from G20 countries, regional groupings, international organisations, and invitee countries were present.

In the first meeting, there was a discussion regarding

building resilient Global Value Chains (GVCs), integrating MSMEs in global trade, and increasing the participation of developing countries in global trade. The focus was on building efficient logistics and making GVCs work for inclusive growth.

In the second meeting, the importance of technology in trade was discussed to facilitate easy and efficient processing of trade, such as the digitalisation of paper documents. There was also a plan for creating a Meta Information Portal for MSMEs. Additionally, they discussed the need for an open, transparent, and inclusive functioning of the WTO by reaffirming the foundational principles of the WTO as stated in the Marrakesh Agreement and its multilateral trade agreements.

India aims to build a shared understanding of the challenges faced in accelerating trade and promoting inclusive growth.

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the impact of the G20 presidency on goods trade is contingent upon the policies and agenda of the country holding the presidency. India has thus far demonstrated a focus on enhancing the efficiency of goods trade through discussions at the TIWG meetings. In addition to trade, India is also emphasising various other areas, including green development, fintech, global social welfare, reducing the trade finance gap, and more. India's G20 presidency, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to bring countries together to develop trade relationships and foster socio-cultural and language proximities. Through multiple rounds of meetings, it is hoped that political conflicts and trade wars among countries can be addressed. India's socio-cultural and economic settings provide enormous potential to benefit from these efforts.

(Pratap C Mohanty is Associate Professor, IIT Roorkee; Soma Bharti is a PhD scholar)

India's G20 Presidency's influence depends on India's policies and agenda. India aims to enhance trade efficiency and address challenges while emphasising green development, fintech, and reducing the trade finance gap. The G20 Presidency fosters trade relationships and seeks to resolve conflicts



PRATAP MOHANTY



SOMA BHARTI

PERSPECTIVE

Modi's US visit: Cementing ties, checkmating China

Modi-Biden talks are also likely to focus on protecting South Asian nations, and enhancing defence cooperation. The visit will also promote India's self-reliance vision and explore agreements in technology, defence, and clean energy. The importance of India-US collaboration in challenging China's influence and preserving regional security is emphasised

The three-day visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United States has caught the world's attention as it will be crucial to cement ties between the two nations, besides finalising a long-term strategy to checkmate China's expansion and debt trap policies, which have threatened security aspects in Asia and the West.

In this changed geopolitical scenario, Modi tweeted, "I am honored to accept and look forward to addressing a Joint Meeting of Congress once again. We are proud of our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership with the US, built upon the foundation of shared democratic values, strong people-to-people ties, and an unwavering commitment to global peace and prosperity."

India and the US can jointly evolve a mechanism to counter China's aggression.

Experts believe that China is camouflaging the world by holding several rounds of dialogue with India, as it has adopted an inflexible stance on its transgression of Indian territory and patrolling points. Hence, India is keen to have an effective long-term plan to give a befitting reply to China, which may continue its policy of aggression on the Line of Control (LOC). Experts also believe that India and America need to protect South Asian nations from China's debt trap policy, which helps in controlling its growing influence and tentacles, thereby enhancing the security threat in the region. Modi and Biden may dwell upon these security issues, which are of vital importance to both countries.

Modi's visit will lay emphasis on defence industrial cooperation to accelerate the 'Atmanirbhar' vision.

Several meetings held between top officials of the US and India have broadly finalised the roadmap to enhance technology cooperation and defence industrial cooperation, which will give a boost to Modi's vision of 'Atmanirbhar' in this field. The proposed agreements will also be related to sur-



veillance and reconnaissance, the undersea domain and munitions, mobility systems, air combat, and intelligence. Modi and Biden are set to give practical shape to the agreements, which will help India gain access to cutting-edge technologies, thereby boosting India's defence modernisation plan in the future. The cutting-edge technology will be pushed to an advanced stage with the help of a new initiative called the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X). Biden and Modi may discuss issues of global relevance, including the Afghan crisis and its implications, cross-border terrorism, boosting the strategic clean energy partnership, bolstering bilateral trade and investment, emerging technologies in the world, etc.

The Ukraine war may prominently feature

The entire world is aware of the decades-old strong defence and traditional relations between India and Russia, which have kept the oil supply channel open despite the strong opposition of America and the West. Prime Minister Modi may dwell upon this factor, and America has to accept India's stand, which is in the interest of the people of India.

Modi's visit will also clear the air on this front, and a long-term policy may be discussed so that an alternative to the current dependence on Russia can be reduced, and America can step in to fill the void, which will unnerve China.

The US visit takes place against the backdrop of world-level upheavals

Experts believe that Modi's visit assumes worldwide importance as America has opted to fall upon India to counter China, though the latter also needs a strong alliance to check the expansion policy of China. The visit will open new avenues and new alternatives. Second, Modi's four-day visit from June 21 to 24 has a lot of relevance and significance as it will lead to the signing of agreements related to defence and the economic field, which will be of mutual interest. Third, foreign policy experts and former diplomats feel that America is taking China's Belt and Road Initiative seriously, which is a tactical tool to trap South Asian nations. It can be checked

by India only, which will prefer to alienate Pakistan and China. Fourth, China is constantly eyeing the South China Sea, and even Japan feels threatened, which makes other allies unsafe. Modi will definitely prefer to counter it with the help of the Biden administration. Fifth, India is fast emerging as a digital and technology giant, which can prove fruitful in creating alternative supply channels and a manufacturing hub to replace China, which is already feeling the heat owing to America's initiatives to reduce dependence on China. America is aiming at its last resort to completely stop chip supply in the future to cripple China's computer-based industry. India is certain to enter this arena, which will come up for discussion between the two leaders of the biggest democracies.

Top officials of both countries recently concluded six months of preparations to finalise the agenda and issues that will come up for discussion between Modi and Biden. US National Security Adviser Sullivan concluded his discussion with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval in Delhi prior to Modi's visit to the US. Both NSAs unveiled an ambitious long-term plan for Indo-US collaboration in seven specific high-technology areas, next-generation telecommunication strategy, semiconductors, defense, and artificial intelligence. Similarly, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra met Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland in the US to prepare the ground for Modi's visit, and the above engagements highlighted the shared objectives of the two nations in terms of close cooperation and regional security.

Analysts opine that Modi's visit is being billed as a path-breaking event that may take India-US ties to new heights and checkmate China's policy of aggression on the LOC, besides helping the US to retain its status as a superpower, which seems to be in danger due to the over-ambition of China to displace it in the future.

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla).



KS TOMAR



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week, your health may make you feel good. You should be full of energy and optimism for the future. Consider your regular frame of thought, and keep in mind that your attitude impacts your health. Maintain an optimistic mindset. You are now able to mentor others and share your spiritual insights. On the professional front, you are approaching the point where professional achievement and recognition are firmly within your reach. Make every effort to be orderly and productive. This will compensate you. Now is not the time to gamble or take chances. On the personal front, good fortune will accompany you in matters of the heart. If you are already in a relationship, it could deepen and improve. You are emotionally satisfied.
Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Despite the strain and stress this week, you stay calm and composed. Your support system is your boundless energy and stamina. You must channel your enthusiasm into something productive. Your health is still fine, and you have control over your sensory delights. On the professional front, your dedication and willpower will help you reach your goals; otherwise, you will face several obstacles and delays in your job. In times of crisis, your tough decisions will give you the strength to proceed and set out the plan. Follow the advice of a senior person who understands your boundaries and is close to you. This week, you may confront pushback from close friends and family members. Family rifts and disagreements are probable. Be a little softer and more kind.
Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you are constrained in terms of your health. Fear, worry, and negative thoughts are interfering with your ability to live a normal life. You must strike a balance between your body, mind, and soul. When one's thoughts are negative or filled with anxiety, one's health suffers. If you meditate and listen to your body's voice, 50% of your issues will solve themselves. On the job front, you may experience an unexpected setback or unfairness. The post you have been eyeing may be filled by another candidate of comparable caliber. The dilemma of whether to stay in the current one or join the new one will prevail. On the relationship front, try to stay connected to keep the flame alive.
Lucky number 102 | Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, your health difficulties will be resolved. You are aware that health is extremely essential and requires special care and attention. The phrase "prevention is better than cure" applies to you well. You attend healing therapy sessions and seminars and put them into practice in your life. On the professional front, you must break free from the self-imposed constraints that are impeding your career advancement. In some situations, you must be fluent and quick-witted, yet your mental confusion and dualism prevent you from doing so. Reduce your spending. Keep your eyes and ears open for chances that come your way. On the personal front, commitments are not made to be broken; if you do, you may suffer in terms of relationships.
Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You are feeling down and gloomy this week since things are not going your way. There are several additional health conditions that have you concerned. Do not be too tense; this is only a passing phase. All tests will pass. The strain is the most serious sickness. You are likely to advance professionally. There will be money, status, and honor on the line. Business owners may make a lot of money. You schedule time for healing and massage therapy. This has been a decent emotional week. Romance is on the cards for the new love. Married partners must be concerned about and comprehend one other's sentiments. There is a communication gap that must be addressed since it is the primary cause of distance and isolation.
Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Monday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, your health is likely to be good. You will be full of energy and excitement. However, exercise should be done with caution because minor sprains or injuries can occur. If you have been slacking on your health, it is time to get back on track. On the job, you may come across a man of influence and leadership abilities who would like to mentor you. His presence is required to point you in the proper route. If you have been dealing with difficulties, now is the moment to take command of the issue. You will be incredibly goal-oriented and visionary. This week will be spectacular in terms of relationships. This is a moment to follow your intuition.
Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Your anxiety is evident in all your efforts. When it comes to your health, trust your instincts. Get a second opinion if a diagnosis does not feel right. Individuals who consume alcohol or drugs should avoid or take a break from intoxication at this time. You need to be a more caring and generous person at work. People turn to you for assistance; your friend or colleague may want financial assistance from you. This is the moment to make long-term investments. Your generosity and kindness will make you a good name. There is anguish and grief in the connection. For the relationship to survive, both sides must be willing to work on and discuss it. This is the time to reflect and contemplate.
Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Off-white
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

It will be beneficial if you pay attention to your health this week. The week begins with creative energy that makes you feel lively, nimble, and joyful. However, as the week develops, various health concerns may arise that require your quick treatment. There is a cure for everything. Be optimistic; everything will work out. Professionally, if you are not committed to your work, you may have to pay for it. People are observing you and providing up-to-the-minute information to higher authorities. You may be questioned about your irregularities in tasks and funds. This is a very emotional phase in your relationship. Things can rapidly turn sour and awkward. Take a rest if necessary. Pick your battles wisely, and always treat your partner as a friend.
Lucky number 31 | Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



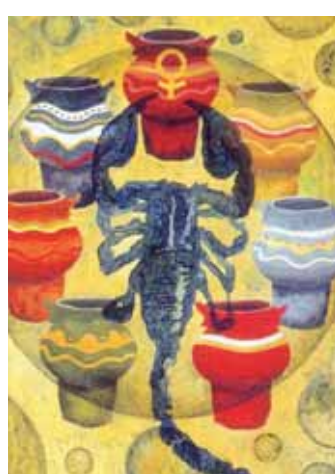
AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week will be difficult for you in terms of your health. Panicking at this point will just make matters worse. Every crisis is followed by the promise of a good time. It all relies on what you do about it. Be upbeat about it and seek assistance from others. Meditation will be quite beneficial. Things may not be going so well in your job. You are nearing the end of a project or assignment when you are confronted with another problem or task at work. You must be resilient and not be frightened by those who want to bring you down. On the personal front, you will have disagreements with people. You must recognize that honest communication with your partner may help you settle all your disagreements.
Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, your health and vitality should be excellent. If you need to change your behaviors to safeguard your health, now is an excellent moment to do so. Starting with minor objectives, such as a daily walk, might lead to a healthier and stronger you. Spend time balancing your body, mind, and soul. On the job front, there might be a monetary loss or a condition of unemployment. Your anxieties, addictions, and other unpleasant impulses may be causing a negative atmosphere around you. You are depressed and have a negative outlook on life. Be optimistic; now is the time to learn from your blunders. On the personal front, your situation is favorable, particularly considering an ongoing romance. Your relationship will enter a lighter, more balanced phase in which you will respect each other as equals.
Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, focus on health and follow-up workouts for people with serious illnesses. You could finally find it within yourself to give up certain unhealthy behaviors that you are aware are harmful. Take care of yourself first; only then will you be able to properly care for others. This week, you may receive some excellent news at work. You could get a call about a job with a better viewpoint, benefits, and facilities. Those who are waiting for posting may be able to travel to their selected location. This week brings monetary rewards for business people. Relationships are not going as well as you imagined. You must work hard. Put your thoughts and opinions to your loved ones in a way that they will be easily accepted; else, they will be rejected.
Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week has some excellent news for you. Even if you are dealing with major health issues, a cheerful attitude may do miracles. If you believe something is amiss with your physical being, make sure you have access to medical care. Believe your intuition. On the job front, there is joy and celebration. You are going to see the fruits of your labor and efforts. If you are seeking work, you will find something greater than you could have imagined. Your contributions are recognized and respected. In terms of your relationship, your spouse's attitude may irritate you, and you may feel unhappy and lonely. You may have a sense of isolation. Try to broaden your horizons and think optimistically.
Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Preconditioned mind restricts vision



Ordinary mortals engaged just in usual run of life, seldom remain conscious about exploring one's inherent frame of mind – its strengths, weaknesses, working tools, and operational mechanism. Truth, however, remains that unless one is conversant with the design and working pattern of the instrument in use, can't use it efficiently.

In ancient India's learning tradition, exposure to mind and its mechanism used to be a matter of routine. That used to begin in the family itself. Youngsters were also given exposure to the realities of life in holistic terms. Applying bed-time story telling method, the elders used to educate their children in small digestible as a part of the usual upbringing process. So, by the time children grew up, they were well grounded to steer through the course of their life reasonably well. Paradox, however, is that modern education system doesn't seem to pay any attention to such living realities of life.

Often the need to impart value system is talked about. But unless the basics are well grounded, any cosmetic surgery will do no good. Of late, the

concern for identifying individual-specific potentialities seems to have captured their attention. Moral lessons are given in terms of dos and don'ts. But seldom does one care to explore as to what lies at the root of one's flawed perceptions. Or for that matter what inherent potential one carries. Unless corrective initiatives are taken from the base level, our infirmities can't be resolved. Also, if we don't hone our indwelling potential well, it will not offer desired fruit.

As we are already aware, the way our life is expected to take off, is seeded in the imprints of our past Karma. Evidently, the character and content of the thought-seeds define the quality of life we become due for. We, thus, take off in life with a pre-set programme guiding its course, which is essentially individual-specific. That involuntarily develops a self-belief, which conditions our mind-set one way or the other. That restricts the scope of our vision. Such a tunnelled vision doesn't let us look beyond for a reality check or better option if any available. Ordinarily, as the programme unfolds, it excites thought currents to which we invariably

prefer to flow by. Of course, as you grow and mature, you could exploit inbuilt tool – the buddhi – to make any amends needed, provided we remain conscious about it. So, despite all the limitations exercised by our

Karmic imprints, we are not necessarily bound by predefined limits of destiny. Provided we remain conscious about exploiting our most profound empowerment tool buddhi – the faculty of discriminate intelligence.

As already explained in earlier issue, because of preconditioning of mind broadly speaking three types of characters are found in evidence – Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa oriented. Sata oriented people are marked with positive tendencies. Rajasa deals with our wanton desires. Tamasa points to inertia, indolence, and negative tendencies.

It needs to be appreciated that preconditioning if any, whatever may be its orientation - good or bad - is always limiting. That narrows down our scope of vision. And with a restricted vision, one fails to look at things in a broader perspective. So, often larger truths elude our attention. One, thus, fails to comprehend things in the right perspective due. It is pertinent to note here that our perception defines how we are to negotiate life – act, react, and respond. That is subject to how each mind is predisposed. Evidently, for want of a holistic perception, the probability of making a reasoned choice gets compromised. Consequently, one may fail to strike the right note, but for which it becomes difficult to steer life with prudence, ease, and comfort.

What could be the implications of preconditioning of mind in applied sense? The first in reckoning would obviously be pre-set desire-trends (Rajasa side) that are invariably reflection of impressions of unfulfilled desires carried over from the past. Often that does not leave much of a scope to consciously explore beyond for a reality check or in search of better options if any. This is not to suggest that external factors do not influence our mind. The impressionable mind of desire-driven people, which most of us are, does get drawn towards tempting influences of the seeming world. That, however, does not happen because one would be consciously looking for better options with an open mind, in a bid to figure out the best possible choice. One, rather chances upon the glare and glitters of environmental influences, and then instinctively gets caught up, which could be deluding.

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