

CITY 3
VIJAY KUMAR TAKES ADDITIONAL
CHARGE OF UTTAR PRADESH DGP

OPINION 6
MODI'S CHARISMA
TRANSCENDS BORDERS

WORLD 10
N KOREA SPY SATELLITE
LAUNCH FAILS

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY JUNE 1, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



HAZLEWOOD
PRAISES KOHLI'S
WORK ETHICS
12 SPORT

— Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri right to worship —

Hindu women plea maintainable: HC

Mosque panel's petition rejected

PNS/PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday rejected a plea challenging the maintainability of a suit filed by five Hindu women seeking permission for regular worship of Shringar Gauri and other deities in Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque compound.

Justice JJ Munir dismissed the mosque management committee's revision petition that contended that the suit is barred under the Places of Worship Act, 1991, which prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provides for the maintenance of its religious character as it existed on August 15, 1947. The Anjuman Intezamia Masjid (AIM) committee had filed the petition in the high court against the order of the district judge of Varanasi in September last year that turned down its objections on the maintainability of the suit filed by the five Hindu women.

The suit filed in August 2021 sought permission for daily worship at Maa Shringar Gauri Stal in the Gyanvapi



complex.

The district judge had on September 12, 2022, dismissed the plea of AIM filed under Order 7 Rule 11 of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC). It had observed that the suit by the Hindu women was not barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, The Wakf Act 1995, and the UP Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act, 1983, as was being claimed by the AIM.

The counsel for the petitioner, SFA Naqvi, contended the claim of the Hindu side that the devotees were restrained from worshipping Shringar Gauri and other deities on the outer wall of Gyanvapi in 1993 is an "artificial" claim and an example of clever drafting.

According to him, no order was passed by the then State Government in writing in 1993.

He said that the aforesaid claim has been made only to avoid the application of the Places of Worship Act, 1991.

He pointed out that even if the claim of the Hindu side is accepted, why did they not file suit in 1993 when they were so restrained or thereafter. Hence, the suit filed before the Varanasi court is illegal under the Limitation Act which bars the filing of any suit for declaration after three years of an incident. He claimed that Gyanvapi is on a Waqf property, hence in case of any grievance, the claim should be made before the Waqf Tribunal.

Continued on Page 9

Cong guarantees betrayal of your trust: Modi

By boycotting new Parliament, Opp insulted 60,000 labourers, says PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In poll-bound Rajasthan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched his party's month-long pan-India campaign, "Maha Jansampark" from Ajmer and urged people not to be 'misled' by "the guarantee habit" of the Congress which he said "is not new but 50-years-old."

Addressing a public rally at Ajmer, Modi said people of Rajasthan have suffered on account of policies of the Congress which is in the habit of "tricking people".

"Fifty years ago, the Congress guaranteed that it will remove poverty. But it turned out to be their biggest betrayal to the poor. It has been a policy of the Congress to mislead the poor."

"The Opposition insulted the hard work of 60,000 labour-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves at supporters during a public meeting in Ajmer on Wednesday. Former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje is also seen

PTI

ers (Shramik) and the sentiment of the country," by boycotting the inauguration of the new parliament, said Modi.

The rally marked the start of a series of BJP public meetings over a month in a major outreach campaign as the party completes nine years in power at the Centre.

Modi compared the "slow speed" of vaccination coverage in the country under the Congress with its speed under the BJP Government at the Centre. "When there was a Congress Government, the

vaccination coverage could reach only around 60 per cent.

At that time, 40 out of 100 pregnant women, and children could not receive life-saving vaccines. Had there been a Congress Government (now), 100 per cent vaccination coverage in the country would have taken 40 more years. Several generations would have passed by then. Can you imagine the number of poor women and children who would have died in the absence of life-saving vaccines?" Modi said.

Continued on Page 9

PM thinks he knows everything: Rahul; BJP calls him 'fake Gandhi'

PNS/PTI ■ SANTA CLARA/NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, describing him as a "specimen" who thinks he knows more than God and alleged that the idea of India is under attack, prompting a furious BJP to slam him as a "fake Gandhi" who "insults" India on the foreign soil in his bid to target Modi.

Addressing Indian Americans in Santa Clara in the US, the Congress leader said, "That is the disease. We have a group of people in India, who are absolutely convinced that they know everything. In fact, they think they know even better than God. They can sit down with God and have a



conversation and explain to him about what is going on. Of course, our prime minister is one such specimen."

Speaking at the 'Mohabbat Ki Dukaan' event organised by the Indian Overseas Congress USA, Rahul said, "They can sit with God and explain to him what's going on. And of course, our prime minister is one such specimen. If you sat Modiji with God, he will explain to God how the universe works and God will get confused about what have I created," he said, evoking laughter from the audience.

With Rahul likening the alleged targeting of Muslims in India to what he said used to happen to Dalits in Uttar Pradesh in the 80s, Thakur said he forgot to tell people that it was the Congress that was in power in the country and the State then. The Congress leader also alleged that other minorities like Sikhs and Christians besides Dalits and tribals were also being targeted.

Attacking him for criticising the state of affairs in India under the Modi government, Thakur said this was not the first time that Gandhi had insulted India and Indianness in his trips abroad.

It has become a habit for him as he does not consider India a nation, the BJP leader said, claiming that Gandhi had himself said so earlier.

In a hard riposte, Senior BJP leader and Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi claimed that the Congress leader's knowledge of history did not go beyond his family.

"It is funny how someone who knows nothing is suddenly an expert on everything. A man whose knowledge of history does not go beyond his family is talking about history," the senior BJP leader said.

Tengnoupal district, followed by a tour to Kangpokpi district, and had wide ranging discussions with civil society organisations.

Amit Shah said, "We are committed to restoring peace in Manipur as early as possible and ensuring their (refugees) return to their homes."

Continued on Page 9



Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a meeting with a Kuki delegation, in Moreh, Manipur on Wednesday

PTI

Court raps police for summons only through WhatsApp

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A court here has criticised the Delhi Police for serving summonses on public witnesses only through WhatsApp and referred the matter to the deputy commissioner of police, West district, for "appropriate action".

Additional Sessions Judge Hem Raj was hearing a murder case registered at Punjabi Bagh police station which was at the stage of prosecution evidence.

Noting that one of the prosecution witnesses was absent and did not respond to repeated calls, the judge said the Delhi Police Commissioner had issued a standing order in February last year regarding the service of summonses upon the witnesses. The judge also noted in another case, a letter was received from the DCP (west) stating there is no circular from Delhi Police to serve the summons on WhatsApp.

"Earlier also, this court has noted in several cases that the witnesses are being served by the police officials on WhatsApp...", the judge said.

Govt working on 3-pronged plan

PNS/PTI ■ IMPHAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said here that the Government is committed to restore peace in Manipur and ensuring an early return of all internally displaced people back to their homes. Meeting victims from both Meitei and Kuki communities in relief camps in the State, he assured them of security and said the Government's focus is to ensure their safe return home.

The Centre is working on a three-pronged approach to bring the warring Meitei and Kuki communities into a narrow common ground for lasting peace in trouble-torn Manipur, sources said on Wednesday. These include dialogue with the affected people, rehabilitating those who had to leave their homes with

enhanced security and control over insurgents, the sources privy to the development said. The major task before the Government is to build confidence between the Meitei and Kuki communities.

On his third day of a trip to Manipur to broker peace between warring communities, Shah visited Moreh in

Cops refute claim of 'no ample proof' against WFI chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Wednesday refuted reports which claimed that there was no adequate evidence against BJP MP and the Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, saying the sexual harassment case against him is under consideration and the status report of the investigation will be submitted to court. The Delhi Police also cordoned off India



Gate and barred public entry to the memorial's lawns on Wednesday.

Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal on Wednesday issued a notice to police seeking to file a case against a man who allegedly revealed the identity of a minor wrestler who has filed a sexual harassment complaint against Singh.

Earlier, official sources said police had not found sufficient evidence to buttress the allegations levelled against Singh by female wrestlers and that it will submit the report within 15

days.

As the news came out in the media, the Delhi Police took to Twitter saying: "It is clarified that this news is 'wrong' and the investigation into this sensitive case is under progress with all sensitivity."

A police spokesperson also shared the same message with reporters, but after nearly an hour, the Delhi Police deleted its tweet. The public relations officer (PRO) also removed the message she had shared in the

official WhatsApp group for reporters.

Later, the police spokesperson shared another message in Hindi that read: "The cases filed by women wrestlers are still under consideration. Status reports are being filed before the court regarding the investigation in the said cases. As the cases are under investigation, it would be against the procedure to say anything before the report is filed in the court."

Continued on Page 9

India first to regulate anti-tobacco warnings on OTT platforms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has become the first country in the world to regulate anti-tobacco warnings on OTT platforms with the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday issuing a notification in this regard on the occasion of "World No Tobacco Day" that would be applicable after three months.

It notified the amended rules under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2004, making it mandatory for OTT platforms to display anti-tobacco warnings as are seen in movies screened in theatres



and TV programmes.

Soon after the issuance of notification, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South East Asia Region welcomed the move saying, India has become the first country in the world to regulate anti-tobacco warnings on OTT platforms.

Continued on Page 9

India's feat in 10 yrs astonishing: Morgan Stanley

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has transformed, gaining a position in the world order and becoming a key driver for Asia and global growth, said Morgan Stanley. In a report, Morgan Stanley said significant scepticism about India, particularly with overseas investors, ignores the significant changes that have taken place in India, especially since 2014.

Rejecting criticism that India has not delivered its potential (despite it being the second-fastest-growing economy and among the top-performing stock markets over the past 25 years) and that equity valuations are too rich, saying such a view ignores the sys-

tematic reforms in the last nine years.

"This India is different from what it was in 2013. In a short span of 10 years, India has gained positions in the world order with significant positive consequences for the macro and market outlook," it said. "India has transformed in less than a decade."

Listing the 10 big changes that have happened since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, the brokerage said bringing corporate tax at par with peers and infrastructure investment picking pace are one of the biggest supply-side policy reforms.

Also, the rising collection of GST — the uniform tax that replaced more than a dozen different central and state taxes



— and the rising share of digital transactions as a percentage of GDP indicate the formalisation of the economy.

Transfer of subsidies to accounts of beneficiaries, insolvency and bankruptcy code, flexible inflation targeting, focus on FDI, government support for corporate profits, a new law for real estate sector

and MNC sentiment at multi-year high were other significant changes, it said.

Manufacturing and capital spending as a percentage of GDP has continuously risen, Morgan Stanley said, adding export market share is projected to more than double to 4.5 per cent by 2031.

Continued on Page 9

GDP grows 6.1% in March quarter, 7.2% in 2022-23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew 6.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2022-23, pushing up the annual growth rate to 7.2 per cent, official data showed on Wednesday.

Growth in the January-March period was higher than the 4.5 per cent expansion in the previous October-December quarter of 2022-23.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had expanded by 4 per cent in the January-March period of 2021-22,



according to data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

As per the data, the economy expanded 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 against a 9.1 per cent growth in 2021-22.

The NSO in its second advance estimate of national accounts had pegged the country's growth at 7 per cent for 2022-23.

Navyug professor’s book released

Lucknow (PNS): Assistant professor, Department of Chemistry, Navyug Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Neha Agarwal has got her book “Food Chemistry” (Chemistry Vocational 1) published. The book is strictly according to the latest syllabus of "Vocational Course 1-Food Chemistry" introduced by University of Lucknow under New Education Policy for second semester students. Principal Manjula Upadhyay



congratulated Neha Agarwal on her book.



NOTICE

Notified that before marriage my name was Payal Sahni & after marriage my name is Payal Dua. Both names are of the same person. Payal Dua W/o Vineet Dua R/o 182 ground floor sector F-1 Sushant golf city Arjun Ganj, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I Priya Porwal W/o IC 79374P Major Chilikala Kishore Reddy R/o H. No. 24-19-86 Cross Road Guntur Andhra Pradesh Stating that my name was wrongly entered in official documents as Priya Reddy correct name is Priya Porwal I shall be known by this name for all future purpose and references.

NOTICE

My father's name is wrongly spelled as SUBANBHU TRIVEDI in my intermediate (CBCS) marksheet, whereas the correct spelling in Aadhar card and other documents is SUBANDHU TRIVEDI. Therefore, correct the spelling of my father's name and mark it in the marksheet. Devansh Trivedi S/o Shri Subandhu Trivedi 9/69, Aryanagar Kanpur-208002

आवश्यकता है

कृष्णपाल सिंह लॉ कॉलेज

तंबौर सीतापुर

आवश्यकता है

विधि संकाय (निवर्षीय व पंचवर्षीय) प्रचार्य- 01 पद (योग्यता - एल. एल. एम., पीएचडी डी० व 15 वर्ष अध्यापन अनुभव) सहोद आचार्य - इतिहास 01 पद (एल.ए. नेट) सहा आचार्य-समाजशास्त्र 01 पद (एलएन० नेट) सहोद आचार्य-अर्थशास्त्र 01 पद (एलएन०, नेट) सहोद आचार्य-राजनीतिशास्त्र 01 पद (एलएन०, नेट) सहोद आचार्य-नारीविज्ञान 1 पद (एल० ए० नेट) सहोद आचार्य-हिन्दी 01 पद (एल० ए०, नेट) सहोद आचार्य-अंग्रेजी 01 पद (एल० ए०, नेट) सहोद आचार्य-विधि 05 पद (एल. एल. एम., नेट) इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी अपना आवेदनपत्र महाविद्यालय केम कार्यालय B-1/108,सैक्टर-५, कलौनज, लखनऊ-226024 पर जमा करावें।

प्रबन्धक - 8853999999

NOTICE

NOTICE
My house No. 127/U/232 Block "U" Nirala Nagar Kanpur Nagar Lease Deed dated 31.12.1962 which was registered on 21.09.1963 Book No. 1, Volume No. 22 Page 38 May Mussanna Additional File Book No.-1, Volume Number 2238, page number 935 to 954, the original copy recorded on original number 922 and Musanna number 923 dated 17.05.2023 has actually been Lost somewhere, any kind of use of which will be illegal.
Shailendra Mishra S/o Shri Ram Babu Mishra R/o 17 E/3 Dabauli, Udyog Nagar, Kanpur Nagar- 208022
Mob. No. 99 36333118

आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है
मदरसा अनवारूल उल्म हदिया बहादुरगँज प्रयागराज में प्रधानाचार्य का एक पद रिक्त है। प्रधानाचार्य हेतु शैक्षिक योग्यता फाजिल अथवा दीनियात अरबी / फारसी में न्यूनतम 50 प्रतिशत अंकों सहित स्नातकोत्तर उपाधि तथा तीन वर्षों का (मुन्शी / मौलवी कक्षाओं का) शैक्षणिक अनुभव। वेतनमान 47600-151100 लेवल-08 एवं अन्य मत्ले न्यूनतम आयु 30 वर्ष। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी विज्ञापन की तिथि से 21 दिन के अन्दर अपना आवेदन पत्र समस्त शैक्षिक योग्यताओं के साथ प्रबन्धक मदरसा के पदनाम से मदरसा उपरोक्त पर भेजें।
प्रबन्धक
मदरसा अनवारूल उल्म हदिया बहादुरगँज प्रयागराज

4 of a family killed as SUV hits scooty

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, an over speeding SUV knocked down a scooty, killing four members of a family, including two minors, in Vikas Nagar police station area in the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief at the deaths in the accident and directed the officials to take strict action against the driver of the SUV.

A police team, which reached the scene of the accident on getting information, rushed the victims to the King George's Medical University Trauma Centre and seized the SUV. The victims were pronounced dead by the doctors.

Those killed were identified as Ram Singh (34), his wife Gyan Devi (31) and their sons

Ansh (8) and Raj (13), all of Tambore locality of Sitapur district.

As per reports, the victims, all riding a scooty, were passing near the Gulacheen temple in Vikas Nagar police station area when an over speeding Scorpio hit the two-wheeler. The scooty, which got stuck under the SUV, was dragged up to 100 metres from the spot of the accident.

The high-speed Scorpio hit the scooty near Gulacheen temple at around 2 o'clock in the night on Wednesday. After the scooty got stuck under the Scorpio, the couple and the two children were dragged for about 100 metres.

“The couple and both the children who were trapped under the scooty were pulled out by the people and all four were rushed to the KGMU Trauma Centre where the doc-

tors pronounced them dead,” eyewitnesses said.

DCP (North) Qasim Abdi said the accused SUV driver, identified as Rajendra Kumar Pal of Rajajipuram in Talkatora, had been arrested.

“The accused is a property dealer and has his office in Bakshi Ka Talab. He was heavily drunk when he was driving the SUV and that was why he could not apply brakes to avoid hitting the scooty, which was ahead of his SUV,” he said.

He said the SUV, which was abandoned at the accident scene, was seized.

“A police team found the owner of the SUV and he confessed to his crime during interrogation on Wednesday afternoon,” he said.

“We are examining the CCTV footage to find the actual sequence of the heart-rending incident,” he said.

ASI to start restoration of several monuments

Lucknow (PNS): The Archaeological Survey of India will begin work of restoration on several monuments in the city. Giving this information, ASI Superintending Archaeologist Aftab Hussain said that work would shortly begin at the Chhota Imambara in the main mausoleum area shortly.

“The restoration work is being done after 8-10 years at the Chhota Imambara and all the works, including water seepage, will be taken up for the restoration. There are a few cracks in the plaster which need to be restored,” he said.

He said that work would also be taken for restoration of Bibiapur Kothi in the Cantonment area - another beautiful monument under ASI.

“The wooden ceiling of the monument has fallen and hence it needs to be restored. The pillars of its porch are breaking which also are to be restored,” he added. Talking about the General Wali Kothi adjacent to Chhatar Manzil in which the ASI organises competitions for children, Hussain said that the monument had developed a crack because of the river Gomti flowing near-

by. “This building will also be conserved,” he added. He said that work would also be carried out at the Janabe Alia Maqbara in Golaganj this year. “We had visited the place and there are several encroachments there and work needs to be carried out on the dome. We have made a full plan and have got it approved from the headquarters,” he added. He said the ASI was currently working in the Residency building where restoration of the wooden beams was being done in the part of the monument where the light and the sound show was held and also work was being carried out in the Banquet Hall. He said that work was also being done at the Roomi Gate. Talking about the budget for the entire restoration work he said that the work was carried out as per the requirement of the monument and as per the estimate the money was demanded. te was only to protect the monuments or even attract the general public to them, he said that the work which ASI carried out was for the public and they spread awareness by holding exhibitions in which they highlighted the monuments.

CITYBRIEFS

ADVANCE MOUNTAINEERING COURSE

Under Officer Shalini Singh of 67 UP Battalion NCC, Lucknow Cantonment is the only girl NCC cadet to have completed the Advance Mountaineering Course. This advance mountaineering course was organised from 26 April to 23 May 2023 in Uttarkashi.

It may be noted that only those NCC cadets who have completed the Basic Mountaineering Course get the opportunity to join the Advanced Mountaineering Course, which Shalini Singh successfully completed last year in 2022 at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir. A BA student, Shalini Singh was the only girl cadet included in the 45-member contingent selected at All-India level for Advance Mountaineering Course-173. Under this course, Shalini successfully completed the summit Hurra Top in the Himalayas in Uttarkashi region on May 18, 2023. Located in the Dring valley (Dokrani Bamak Glacier area), this peak of 15,400 feet height is extremely inaccessible and covered with snow, which was difficult to climb.

TRAINING CAMP CONCLUDES

Combined Annual Training Camp organised for 400 girl cadets of 20 Uttar Pradesh Girls NCC Battalion concluded oon Wednesday at La Martiniere Girls' College.

During the camp, cadets were trained in weapon drill, disassembling and assembling of

weapons and map reading at the firing range of Lucknow Cantt. Various sports events along with debate, speech and firing competitions were also organised. Several guest lectures were also held in the camp, which included lectures on NDRF, cybercrime, women's health, opportunities for commission in Indian forces, etc. A gratification program was organised on the concluding day, which was attended by La Martiniere Girls' College principal Ashrita Das, Brigadier Neeraj Punetha, Meghana Punetha, Col Arun Suryavanshi, Subedar Major Devpal, Sushma Joshi, and Manavika Rao.

PLACEMENT

In the placement drive organised by the Training and Placement Cell of Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Lucknow, eight students got on-campus placement in Infosys.

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Lucknow Alok Kumar Rai and Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Technology AK Singh congratulated the selected students.

The V-C said that we aimed at the overall development of the students and the University was providing an ideal environment for the overall personality development of the students.

“We give importance to the dreams of our students and are providing the best platform to the students for their placements” he said.

PAC members inspect various NER junctions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Members of Railway Board Nominated by Indian Railways as Passenger Amenities Committee (PAC) conducted an inspection of passenger facilities at Lucknow Junction, Aishbagh Junction, and Gomtinagar station on Wednesday.

Ashok Kumar Shukla, Richa Pandey Mishra, Geeta Thakur, Madhusudan P, Abhijit Tahsil-Nizamabad, Distt-Azamgarh Pincode-276304 now known me as.

Aditya Kumar said that the suggestions given by the members of 'PAC' were very useful for improving passenger facilities.

He said that Lucknow Division had achieved success in the field of passenger trains movement and capacity increase, increase in railway revenue, development of infrastructure and passenger facilities, energy conservation, safety and security.

drinking water supply, and other passenger facilities. Moreover, they also assessed the electrical system, second-class waiting room, IRCTC facilities, and other offices at the railway station.

The PAC members later held a detailed discussion on various aspects of passenger facilities with divisional railway manager Aditya Kumar, additional divisional railway manager (Operations) Shishir Somvanshi and chief project manager an a g e r / G a t i s h a k t i Raghavendra Kumar.

Aditya Kumar said that the suggestions given by the members of 'PAC' were very useful for improving passenger facilities.

He said that Lucknow Division had achieved success in the field of passenger trains movement and capacity increase, increase in railway revenue, development of infrastructure and passenger facilities, energy conservation, safety and security.

Meanwhile, Divisional Railway Manager, Lucknow Division, Suresh Kumar Sapra along with other officers of the division inspected the catering arrangements and quality of food at Varanasi junction on Wednesday.

During the inspection, the DRM assessed the cleanliness of various areas including the kitchen, washrooms, and other spaces. Additionally, he engaged in conversations with railway employees, discussing the facilities provided to them.

MODERN RAIL COACH FACTORY

The Modern Rail Coach Factory in Rai Bareilly achieved a significant milestone by manufacturing 157 coaches in the month of May, which is the maximum production of coaches in a month so far in MCF.

Earlier, the production of the highest number of coaches in May was 134 coaches in 2019.



Two commuters cover themselves with a scarf in the scorching heat in Lucknow

LDA to sell unsold flats on first-come, first-serve basis

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Development Authority has made a decision to sell its unsold flats on a first-come, first-serve basis. This was decided in the 177th board meeting of the Authority, which was chaired by Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob at LDA head office on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the board made important decisions regarding the unsold flats owned by the authority in various locations across the city. It was determined that these flats, totaling 912, would now be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis, with full payment required at the time of purchase. In the meeting attended by LDA vice chairman Indramani Tripathi and secretary Pawan Gangwar, the board resolved to compulsorily conduct annual audits of buildings and multi-storied structures.

In order to enhance the strength of the enforcement team, the decision was made to incorporate a retired army officer, with a rank equivalent to Colonel, along with other retired army personnel. Additionally, all resolutions that were presented in the previous meeting were also successfully passed.

Meanwhile, the revised layout of the Mohan Road township has been finalised and forwarded to the chief town planner's office for approval on Tuesday. The township is likely to be inaugurated on UP Divas, i.e. January 24.

The Mohan Road project is planned to be developed on a 850-acre land. After a two-month struggle, the LDA administration successfully reclaimed the land, which had been unlawfully seized by private developers and property dealers through unscrupulous means.

Driver who escaped with a company's Rs 49.5 lakh held

Lucknow (PNS): A driver of the owner of a company who escaped with the company's Rs 49.5 lakh on May 29 was arrested from Sarojininagar on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Rahul Shukla of Chinhat, was employed in the private limited company in Hazratganj for the last five years and was entrusted with the job of depositing the company's cash in bank. On May 29, Parv Bhugra of Madan Mohan Malviya Marg lodged a report with the police that Rahul Shukla was sent to deposit Rs 49.5 lakh in the Hazratganj branch of HDFC Bank and he had escaped with the cash after parking the car in a parking and had switched off his mobile phone. After the case was registered, the police teams started working on the case. On Wednesday, a police team led by Inspector Sarojininagar, Santosh Kumar Arya, and crime branch sleuths got a tip-off about the miscreant who was passing via the Gudaura bridge on Shaheed Path and he was nabbed.

Only 25 pc vehicles have HSRP in Lko

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Only 25 per cent of the vehicles have high security registration plates (HSRP) in Lucknow.

Giving this information, ARTO (Administration) Akhilesh Dwivedi said that the rule was being followed in the new vehicles but they were facing problems in getting it implemented in the old vehicles though the last date of fixing HSRP was long over.

He said regular challans were being issued for the same by both the Transport department and the police.

“Awareness is required amongst people because a challan of Rs 5,000 is issued the first time a vehicle is caught without HSRP and Rs 10,000 the second time,” he said. He said there were very few registrations because the public was lax and the process took some time.

“The booking is done online on the website of SIAM. One has to go to the website and then click for booking. It takes 7-10 days to get the plate. Having these plates brings about uniformity in size and letters because otherwise people have plates with Hindi numerals and the sizes are also different,” he added.

Gkp, Ayodhya, Varanasi routes most profitable for Lucknow Roadways

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow to Gorakhpur via Ayodhya and Lucknow to Varanasi routes are the most profitable for UPSRTC Lucknow in terms of revenue generated.

Giving this information, UPSRTC Lucknow Regional Manager Manoj Pundir said, “While Ayodhya draws tourists for religious reasons, Gorakhpur draws tourists because of the places of Buddhist circuit close by and also it falls en route to Nepal. Varanasi has been drawing tourists since the time the Kashi Vishwanath Dham corridor was constructed,” he said.

He said that the passengers were mostly from Rajasthan, Gujarat and West Bengal.


One bus, running with full occupancy between Varanasi and Lucknow fetches around Rs 28,000 a day for UPSRTC. Almost similar is the amount which is earned through buses running on Gorakhpur via Ayodhya route. “Our occupancy is currently 72 per cent and 38 buses are going every day from Lucknow to Varanasi while 120 buses move on the Gorakhpur via Ayodhya route per day. Ayodhya is emerging as a very hot destination,” he said. He said that occupancy was equal in both the cases.

Pundir said that in the summer vacations the buses to the religious and the tourist places run full because of vacations of children.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that house number 117/H-2/214, Pandu Nagar, which is constructed on plot number 443 Block H Scheme No.1 Kakadeo, Kanpur Nagar. The Said property was given by Smt. Mrs. Satyarani Puri bequeathed the said Property in favor of her legal heirs 1- Manoj Puri 2- Kumari Usha Puri. Now the said Manoj Puri and Kumari Usha Puri are selling the said property to Harpreet Singh and Mrs. Ruchi Bhasin. Any person who has objection can register his objection within 10 days at the address, mentioned below.

Mrinal Lalchandani, Advocate, Chamber No. 14, First Floor Moti Lal Advocate Bhavan, Civil Court, Kanpur Nagar, M. No. 9919606060



M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
NISHTHA PARISAR, BIJALEE NAGAR, GOVINDPURA, BHOPAL-23
Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636

Ref. MD/MK/04/NIT/786

Date : 31.05.2023

TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids through e-tendering.

Tender specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/ 933	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for SCADA Part-B Line Equipments namely Auto Reclosure, Sectionalizer, 23/4 Way RMUs and 11 KV & 33 KV Fault Passage Indicator (FPI) installed under MPMKVCL, Bhopal	357.00	11800	08.06.2023 03.00 PM	16.06.2023 03:00 PM

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.
M.P. Madhyam/110144/2023

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and Published by Vijay Prakash Singh for and on behalf of CMYK Printer Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at Tin Tin Printech Pvt Ltd., C-33 Amausi Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Officiating Executive Editor: Vijay Prakash Singh. RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: 100K, Milap Bhawan, 8/A, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Communication Office: F-31, Sector 6, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar-201301, U.P. Phone: 0120-4879800 & 4879900

Vijay Kumar takes additional charge of Uttar Pradesh DGP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh again got an officiating director general of police after the government on Wednesday issued an order directing 1988 batch IPS officer Vijay Kumar to take additional charge of the state police chief from DGP RK Vishwakarma who retired on May 31.

Vijay Kumar currently holds the charge of DG Crime Branch (Criminal Investigation Department) and the Vigilance Establishment.

Kumar, a native of Jhansi, will hold the post till the government appoints a permanent DGP or till his retirement next year in January. He succeeds RK Vishwakarma, who had been the officiating DGP since March 31 this year. Vishwakarma, who retired on Wednesday, was also holding the post of chairman of Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board. He had taken over the charge from Dr Devendra Singh Chauhan, who remained the officiating DGP for nearly 11 months before his retirement. Chauhan was made the officiating DGP after the government removed 1987-batch IPS officer Mukul Goel from the post following allegations of “inaction” and “lack of interest towards work”. Goel is



the senior most IPS officer in the state.

Anand Kumar, who is the DG of UP Police Cooperative Cell, is the next senior-most IPS officer after Vishwakarma. Instead of giving charge to senior-most IPS officers, the state government superseded both Mukul Goel and Anand Kumar to make Vijay Kumar the acting DGP.

Sources said that the government may later on post Vijay Kumar as full-time DGP

as he belongs to Dalit community and with the parliamentary election scheduled for next year, the Bharatiya Janata Party may play the caste card to win the polls. Sources also confirmed that if Vijay Kumar was posted as full-time DGP then he would continue till the Lok Sabha elections as the government would give him extension.

Meanwhile, soon after taking charge of the DGP, Vijay Kumar claimed that due to the

outstanding contribution of the sleuths of the Anti-Terrorists Squad and Special Task Force (STF) in the last six years, not a single terror case was reported from anywhere in Uttar Pradesh.

Kumar said that the arrest of absconding mafia Guddu Muslim, along with Shaista Parveen, and other top listed criminals would be his top priority besides ensuring that the citizens continued to feel safe in the state.

CM: Complete flood mgmt preparations by June 15

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Directing officials to be on alert mode, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that saving lives and property was our priority during floods. He asked all the district-level officials to be on high alert mode and complete preparations for flood management by June 15.

The chief minister on Wednesday, reviewed the ongoing preparations for flood management and gave necessary guidelines. The district magistrates of flood-prone districts informed the chief minister of their preparations.

“Because of the efforts made in the last six years to find a long-term solution to the flood problem, there has been an unprecedented reduction in the number of flood-prone districts. Coordination between departments has been effective in ensuring that people are safe from floods,” he said.

The chief minister said in the last six years, 982 flood projects had been completed, out of which 282 projects had been completed in this fiscal alone and the work was underway on 412 projects.

There are 24 districts which are flood prone. These include Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Gorakhpur, Basti, Bahraich, Bijnor, Siddharthnagar, Ghazipur, Gonda, Ballia, Deoria, Sitapur, Balrampur, Ayodhya, Mau, Farrukhabad, Shravasti, Badaun, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Sant Kabir Nagar, Pilibhit, and Barabanki.

“Adequate reserve stock should be collected for flood emergencies in these vulnerable areas. Adequate lighting arrangements and necessary

equipment should also be arranged at these places,” the chief minister said.

In UP there are 523 embankments with a total length of 3,869 km. In view of the possibility of flood, continuous monitoring of all the embankments should be done and all flood-prone embankments should be repaired.

“Designated officers in charge should be in 24x7 alert mode on all vulnerable embankments. The embankments were continuously inspected and monitored by the regional officers,” he said.

The Uttar Pradesh government also released 113 as flood emergency number and Uttar Pradesh Police Radio Headquarters has been asked to ensure it remains active round the clock during the entire monsoon period.

The chief minister also directed that no one with criminal background, or having a bad reputation be permitted to bid on projects for the irrigation department. Any discrepancy in this will be strictly dealt with.

“Chances of the spread of diseases increase during and after floods. In such a situation, special health kits should be prepared by the Medical and Health Department and sent to the districts. In case of a dog or snake bite, the affected people should get immediate medical help,” he said.

The chief minister also urged the people to drink the water only after boiling it.

There should be no compromise on the quality of relief material provided to the flood-affected people. The quality of food items should be ensured at the relief commissioner level and packaging material should be strong, and easy for people to carry.

BJP launches Maha Sampark Abhiyan

Lucknow (PNS): As the Bharatiya Janata Party started a month-long mass contact programme in which party workers and leaders would interact with people to educate them about the achievements of the nine years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi rule, BJP state president Bhopendra Singh Chaudhary said that Modi's regime was a reflection of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, the BJP state president said that the Maha Sampark Abhiyan would be organised in all the 80 Lok Sabha and 403 assembly constituencies of Uttar Pradesh where party leaders would meet people from all walks of life.

“The programme will be held in all 1,918 mandals, 27,634 power centres and 1,74,359 booths. At the organisational level, a campaign committee has been formed at the state, region, district and divisional level for coordinating with the leaders,” Chaudhary said.

The BJP state president said that 80 Lok Sabha constituencies had been divided into 21 clusters.

In each cluster, programmes had been prepared by assigning responsibilities to the Central ministers. The ministers in Yogi Adityanath government and senior office-bearers of BJP will also participate in this campaign.

“Guests from the Centre and the state will also participate in this programme. A press conference will be held on the achievements of the Central government. Conferences with intellectuals, traders, beneficiaries of the government schemes, women and students will be held in each Lok Sabha constituency,” the BJP state head said.

In each Lok Sabha constituency, 1,000 distinguished families such as Padma Shri awardees, sportspersons, artists, industrialists, doctors, former judges, martyrs' family members and other famous families will be contacted.

Besides, Chaudhary said, a joint convention of the seven frontal organisations comprising Yuva Morcha, Mahila Morcha, Kisan Morcha, Scheduled Caste Morcha, Minority Morcha, Scheduled Tribe Morcha, and Backward Classes Morcha would be organised in each district.

Congress questions posting of acting DGP, extension to CS

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Congress, on Wednesday, attacked the Uttar Pradesh government, claiming that the seriousness of the state government on law and order or on administrative front could be gauged from the fact that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had failed to find a permanent director general of police for the last over one year.

The Congress also said the post of chief secretary was also held by a retired officer after giving him extension.

“The seriousness of the Bharatiya Janata Party government and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who makes tall claims on law and order and checking crime, can be gauged from the fact that even after more than a year since the

unceremonious removal of Mukul Goel, they could not provide a permanent DGP to Uttar Pradesh,” said UP Congress spokesman Anshu Awasthi.

Attacking the government on Wednesday, Awasthi said that after Goel, the chief minister handed over the additional charge of DGP to DS Chauhan and later to RK Vishwakarma and now to Vijay Kumar.

Awasthi claimed that in such a situation, there was confusion and ambiguity in the work of the police force while the government continued to act on certain individuals on the basis of religion, and on the other hand, crimes were increasing day by day.

He said that in the absence of a permanent DGP, the state

was witnessing a spurt in crime but as part of ‘propaganda’, UP police were killing criminals in fake encounters or using bulldozers to demolish property owned by criminals of a particular community.

Awasthi further claimed that not only DGP, Home department was being headed by a principal secretary rank officer instead of additional chief secretary rank officer. He said on the post of chief secretary also, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had failed to find a competent officer as replacement and went on giving extension to DS Mishra.

It may be mentioned here that Mishra has got extensions two times of one year each and his extension period would end in December this year.

Minor girl critical after gang-rape in Gorakhpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The condition of a minor girl was critical after she was gang-raped in Gorakhpur.

She was admitted to the medical college hospital and the local police registered a case and claimed to have detained a suspect.

The cops will record the statement of the victim before a magistrate before initiating further legal action.

According to reports, three youths forcibly took a 15-year-old girl inside a closed factory in Kusamhi forest under Khorabar police station in Gorakhpur on Tuesday. It is alleged that the girl was kept hostage for the whole night and the youths raped her one by one after which her condition deteriorated due to excessive bleeding. The girl was admitted to the emergency ward of the district hospital in a critical condition from where she was referred to the medical college hospital.

The police registered a case against Rajan Rajbhar, nephew of the sitting gram pradhan, and took him in custody. The villagers claimed that Rajan lured the victim from Khorabar

Girl set ablaze after gang-rape dies in hospital

Lucknow (PNS): A teenage student, who was earlier abducted by a youth from Sultanpur and was set ablaze after being gang-raped in Surat, succumbed to her injuries after two months of ordeal at a hospital in Lucknow on Tuesday.

At the end of January, a youth had kidnapped the girl student and gang-raped her along with his accomplice after taking her to Surat. On protesting, she was burnt by the accused who poured petrol on her. She was undergoing treatment in Lucknow.

Police have sent two accused to jail in this case. Police said on January 30, the girl, who belonged to

Jaisinghpur Kotwali area, was abducted by Mahavir alias Beere of Bahri village in Kotwali area, with the help of some others. The main abductor had taken her to Surat.

On the complaint of the father, a case of kidnapping was registered against the youth and others. Two months later, on March 28, Mahavir and his associates raped the girl and when she protested, the accused poured petrol on her and burnt her.

The accused himself informed the girl's father about the incident on the phone. After this, on March 29, the victim's father met Superintendent of Police Somen Verma and narrated

the incident. On the orders of the SP, a police team went to the hospital in Surat and brought back the girl in a critical condition. Then her treatment started at SPM (Civil) Hospital in Lucknow.

The SP formed three teams under the leadership of CO Prashant Singh that raided Surat and other places to arrest the accused. The police arrested Mahaveer alias Beere and Dhaniram and sent them to jail. The student, who was burnt up to 60 per cent, was brought back home on May 16. When suddenly her health deteriorated on Tuesday afternoon, the kin took her to hospital where she died during treatment.

nephew.

Circle Officer of Cantonment, Yogendra Singh, said that the accused had been taken into custody after registering a case. He said that the case was being investigated and action would be taken on the basis of investigation.

Meanwhile, a youth was arrested in Ballia for allegedly

abducting a 15-year-old girl from this district and repeatedly raping her for four months, police said.

The survivor's mother lodged a complaint after the accused, identified as Rajesh Bind (22), threatened the girl and abducted her on January 11, Bansdih Station House Officer Yogendra Singh said.

After taking her to different places in Haryana and Kolkata, the accused raped her on several occasions for four months, following which the girl became pregnant and Bind returned to Ballia with her, Singh said.

The police launched a search operation and rescued the minor on May 26 from a house but the accused managed to flee. Five days later, based on a tip-off, Bind was nabbed from near the Rajpur trisection here on Wednesday, the SHO said.

Based on the statement of the survivor, who is three months pregnant, other relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act have been added to the case against the accused, he added.

Tikait announces ‘mahapanchayat’ in Muzaffarnagar on Thursday

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

BKU leader Naresh Tikait said a ‘mahapanchayat’ will be held in Muzaffarnagar's Soram village on Thursday to discuss the ongoing protest by wrestlers against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Singh over sexual harassment charges.

Tikait, the head of Balyan khap, on Tuesday night said the matter will be discussed in detail in the mahapanchayat.

On a drama-filled Tuesday, some of India's best wrestlers accompanied by hundreds of supporters gathered on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar, threatening to immerse their World and Olympic medals in the holy river, but refrained after being convinced by Khap and farmer leaders who sought five days to address their grievances.

Olympic medallists Sakshi

Malik, Bajrang Punia and Asian Games gold medallist Vinesh Phogat went to Har ki Pauri on Tuesday to protest the inaction against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief who has allegedly sexually harassed several women grapplers.

However, after spending an hour and 45 minutes, they returned after several khap and political leaders urged them not to take such an extreme step.

Tikait said several representatives of different khaps and their heads hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab Rajasthan and Delhi will be participating in the mahapanchayat to decide the next course of action in the wrestlers protest.

On May 28, the Delhi Police had detained the wrestlers and filed FIRs against them for violation of law and order.

Several injured as groups clash in Aligarh

Aligarh (PTI): Several persons were injured in brick-batting between two groups during celebrations to mark the birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar in the Madrak area here on Wednesday, police said.

The clash broke out when the two groups belonging to the same community started arguing during a bike rally on the occasion, the police said. As the argument escalated, both parties started hurling brickbats at one another, injuring several persons, they added. A police force rushed to the spot and dispersed the mob, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalandi Niithani said. One of the injured persons was hospitalised and is reported out of danger, while with minor injuries were discharged after first-aid, Niithani said. Several persons involved in the violence were detained and additional police force has been deployed in the area, he added.

SP Maurya receives ‘death threat’

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party national general secretary Swami Prasad Maurya on Wednesday said that he received a death threat on Twitter and sought strict action against those involved.

“On May 29, 2023 at 7.12 pm, a Twitter account named ‘International Bhagwa Rakshak Force Jai Shri Ram’ posted a tweet saying ‘You will be finished within a month’ and has pasted a sword on my neck in the photo, which directly indicates murdering me. Please @UPGovt@ChiefSecyUP@Uppolice@dgpp@lkopolice@LkoCp take serious action

and initiate legal proceedings in this matter’, Maurya said in a tweet in Hindi. He shared screengrabs of the Twitter post, and also tagged the Union Home Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office in another tweet asking them to take cognisance of the matter. Maurya, a prominent OBC leader who is also an SP MLC, had sparked a controversy early this year when he said that certain verses of the Ramcharitmanas “insult” a large section of society on the basis of caste, and demanded that these be banned. Maurya had contested the 2022 assembly polls from Fazilnagar on an SP ticket but lost.



districts were using more nitrogen than the prescribed standards. In districts such as Shamli, Sambhal, Farrukhabad, Hapur, Kannauj, Prayagraj and Meerut, the nitrogen levels exceeded 200.

“Excessive use of nitrogen fertilisers not only hampers crop growth but also has serious consequences for human

health. Plants only utilise around 30 per cent of the applied nitrogen as urea, while the excess is lost through evaporation and leaching. This excessive nitrogen use contributes to climate change and groundwater pollution,” Dr Pathak said.

He said urea seeping into the ground combines with

nitrogen to form nitrosamines, which could lead to diseases like cancer, reduction of red blood cells and the formation of tumors when contaminated water is consumed.

Furthermore, the purification process of fertilisers such as DAP, which is derived from rock phosphate, introduces heavy elements like cobalt, cadmium and uranium into the soil and water. These elements can have adverse effects on human health. Dr Pathak explains, “During purification, heavy elements such as cobalt, cadmium and uranium remain in it, the use of which contaminates soil and water.” Consuming crops grown in such contaminated soil can lead to health complications.

To address these issues, the Agriculture department has established soil testing laboratories at the tehsil and block levels in the state. These labs assess the levels of various elements in the soil, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, sulphur, zinc and boron. Farmers are urged to get their soil tested to identify any deficiencies and adjust their fertiliser usage accordingly. Dr Pathak recommends using nano urea 40 days after sowing the crop, as it requires less quantity and provides longer-lasting benefits.

Agriculture Production Commissioner Manoj Kumar Singh has directed the Agriculture department to conduct similar surveys for other

crops as well. The aim is to formulate an action plan and raise awareness among farmers about the potential harms of excessive fertiliser use. Singh emphasises that just because there is no shortage of fertilisers does not mean they should be used beyond crop demand, as this can have detrimental effects.

The findings of this report underscore the urgent need for a shift towards sustainable farming practices in Uttar Pradesh. Increased awareness among farmers about the appropriate use of fertilisers, coupled with regular soil testing, can help prevent further degradation of the soil and safeguard human health in the long run.

Excessive use of chemical fertilisers in UP poses risk to soil and human health

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Ignorance and excessive use of chemical fertilisers by farmers in Uttar Pradesh are posing a significant threat to both the soil and human health, according to a report prepared by the Agriculture department.

The report, based on a survey conducted in 15 districts, highlights the need for creating awareness among farmers to prevent future crises.

“The excessive use of chemical fertilisers not only harms the soil but also poses risks to human health. The department has submitted a report to the government, emphasising the need to raise awareness among farmers to

prevent future troubles,” Ashok Mitta told “The Pioneer” on Wednesday.

The impact of high nitrogen levels extends beyond the immediate health risks. It also contributes to climate change and groundwater pollution, affecting the environment and overall ecosystem. The excessive use of chemical fertilisers leads to nitrogen loss through evaporation and leaching, resulting in increased greenhouse gas emissions and contamination of water sources.

“The Agriculture department's report highlights the need for a shift towards more environmentally friendly farming methods to mitigate these consequences,” Mitta said.

While the government has

been promoting natural farming, farmers in the state continue to rely heavily on chemical fertilisers in their quest for higher crop yields. This has led to a decline in soil fertility and an imbalance in essential elements. The report, presented by Joint Director Fertilisers Dr Amit Pathak to top officials of the Agriculture department, emphasises the urgent need for action.

The survey focused on four major crops: paddy, sugarcane, potato and wheat. The nitrogen levels in these crops were specifically examined, with the recommended levels being 150 in paddy, 180 in sugarcane and potato, and 150 per hectare in wheat. However, it was found that farmers in 15

Fire breaks out in godown

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A fire broke out in the chips, cold drink and refined oil godown in Sankarcharya Nagar of Naubasta police station area on Wednesday morning. Five fire tenders from different fire stations controlled the fire after around two hours.

Mahesh Prasad Sahu of Sankaracharya Nagar has a godown for storing chips, cold drink, refined oil and many other products. Due to an electric short circuit, it caught fire on Wednesday morning and spread to the entire godown after coming in contact with the chips and refined oil. The neighbours informed Mahesh Prasad who, in turn, apprised the police control room and fire brigade. Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Deepak Sharma along with five fire tenders from Fazalganj, Kidwai Nagar, Meerpur and Jajmau fire stations reached the spot and controlled the fire after around

two hours. The firefighters had to face a tough time in extinguishing the fire with the help of foam tender and pouring water from three sides.

The CFO said a short circuit was the cause of the incident and efforts were on to ascertain amount of loss.

TWO KILLED: Two persons were killed when a speeding trailer knocked down their minitruck on the elevated highway near Barra village late on Tuesday night. The incident took place when they were replacing the wheel of the minitruck. On being knocked by the trailer, both minitruck owner and driver were seriously injured. The police took them to the LLR (Hallet) hospital where they were declared dead by the doctors. Raj Kumar Gupta of Patera, Rewa (MP) after loading vegetables on his minitruck was going with driver Chand Ali. On the elevated highway near Barra village the tyre of his minitruck got

punctured. After parking the minitruck on the roadside, when they were replacing the tyre, a speeding trailer laden with the building material knocked down their vehicle from behind. Both got entangled in the minitruck and sustained serious injury. Trailer driver and cleaner escaped after leaving their vehicle on the spot. The Barra police rushed to spot and after rescuing both the injured persons from the minitruck, took them to the LLR (Hallet) hospital where they were declared dead by the doctors. SHO Manvendra Singh said the kin of the deceased had been informed about the incident. On their arrival, further action will be taken in the matter, he said.

STRANGLER: A youth after making a futile bid to molest his minor sister-in-law strangled her in Taiyapur village of Dibiyaipur police station area of Auraiya on Tuesday

night. When the girl was found dead on Wednesday morning, panic prevailed among the family members. The police have taken the guilty youth into custody and started quizzing him. The 12-year old girl of Rasoolabad, Kishanpur (Firozabad) had arrived at her sister's place about a month ago. The elder sister of the deceased has accused her husband of killing the girl. She said her husband returned home drunk on Tuesday night and made futile attempt to molest her younger sister. On protest he brutally beat up her and strangled her. The police have started a probe in it. As there were bite marks on different parts of her body, it was apprehended that she was killed for protesting. ASP Digamber Kushwaha said the accused was in police custody. With the help of forensic team, evidences were being gathered, he said. The body had been sent for an autopsy.

‘Smoking increases risk of tuberculosis’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of doctors under the banner of Indian Medical Association, Kanpur Chapter symbolically cigarettes and tobacco products on World No Tobacco Day. The members tried to convey the message to masses that cigarette smoking and consuming other tobacco products were harmful to human health and often fatal. They appealed to the people to give up smoking and refrain their teenager children from doing so.

Addressing the gathering president of IMA-Kanpur, Dr Pankaj Gulati said it was a matter of concern that despite medical practitioners trying their level best to create awareness among masses to refrain from smoking yet the impact remains weak. He said smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which included emphysema and chronic bronchitis. He said smoking also increased risk of

tuberculosis, certain eye diseases and problems of immune system, including rheumatoid arthritis. He said this year the theme for the World No Tobacco Day was “We need food, not tobacco”



and this message needed to be strongly promoted by not only medical practitioners but people from every walk of life. Secretary Dr Amit Singh Gaur said

warnings on packaging, using anti-smoking advertising and encouraging media to share messages about harms associated with smoking should also be taken up effectively. He said studies has shown that an increase in price of tobacco products of 10 per cent causes a fall in smoking of four per cent in adults and six per cent in children, thus reducing prevalence while increasing revenue. He said progressive and regular increases in the price of tobacco products through taxation at least in line with the cost of living and preferably more can therefore have a considerable impact on smoking prevalence. Later noted dermatologist, Dr PS Bhatia and ENT specialist, Dr Rajan Bhargava also addressed the gathering.

IIT (BHU), UBI to set up incubation centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) and Union Bank of India (UBI) are teaming up to establish a joint incubation centre, providing an exciting opportunity for students, fintechs, and startups to learn and engage in innovation. The centre will be based at IIT (BHU) with support from the Ideation Innovation & Incubation Foundation. The main goal of this centre is to create a platform for technological advancements and value creation in society. It will focus on key areas such as software development, quantum computing, cyber security, internet of things (IoT), and data analytics. By encouraging innovation in these domains, the centre aims to boost the growth and competitiveness of the Indian economy.

After several rounds of meetings with UBI officers, the idea of a joint incubation centre was crystallised, said Prof Vikash Kumar Dubey, Dean (Research and Development), IIT (BHU). He informed

that recently, General Managers (GMs) Girish Joshi and Rajiv K Jha, DGM Subhrajit Guha and other officers of UBI had meeting with the Director of IIT (BHU) Prof Pramod Kumar Jain for giving the final shape of the incubation centre. Prof Jain said that the partnership between IIT (BHU) and UBI signifies the collaboration between academia and industry. “By combining their strengths, the collaboration will create an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship. This joint incubation centre is expected to foster the development of cutting-edge solutions and contribute to economic growth and step towards ‘Innovate in India’ and ‘Make in India’ vision of the Prime minister. With its establishment, the center aims to create a vibrant atmosphere for innovation, nurturing the next generation of technological advancements and social impact initiatives,” said, IIT (BHU) Director. According to Prof Jain, one of the centre’s priorities is product life cycle innovation, which involves

improving efficiency in design, manufacturing processes, and sales for specific industries and products. “This approach will help businesses streamline their operations and deliver better products and services. The centre will also concentrate on value creation for society by leveraging technology-based solutions in sectors like health, education, and sustainability. By utilising the expertise available at IIT (BHU) and collaborating with industry stakeholders, the centre aims to address pressing societal challenges and make a positive impact on communities,” he said. He said that skill development is another important aspect of the incubation centre as it plans to provide training programmes for youth in collaboration with institutions and fintech companies, focusing on areas such as app development and web design. These programmes will equip young individuals with valuable skills, enabling them to contribute to the digital economy and participate in the ongoing technological transformation.

Tobacco causes 13% male deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In 6.5 second, one smoker loses life because the smoking which causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, Prof TP Chaturvedi, former Dean of Faculty of Dental Sciences, IMS, BHU, Convener of Anti Tobacco Campaign- Save the World and Central Council Member of Indian Dental Association (IDA) informed on the eve of the ‘World No Tobacco Day’ which is observed on May 31 every year since 1987 by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This year’s theme of the Day is “We need food not Tobacco”. In India, almost 50 per cent users chew tobacco followed by smoking and dual use of tobacco. At present around 27 crores (270 millions) population is using tobacco in India. An average age of a person to start tobacco use in India is 18.7 years as per global adult tobacco survey. People who

drink and smoke are at higher risk for certain types of cancer, particularly those of the mouth and throat. Alcohol and tobacco cause approximately 80 per cent of cases of cancer of the mouth and throat in men and about 65 per cent in women. Tobacco causes 13% male deaths and 5% female deaths in India, he informed adding that 27% of all cancers in India are attributable to tobacco use. Among adults (age15+), 28.6% of the population currently uses tobacco products (men 42.4%; women 14.2%), he informed. The smokeless tobacco is a known cause of cancer. In addition, the nicotine in smokeless tobacco may increase the risk for sudden death from a condition where the heart does not beat properly (ventricular arrhythmias). 21.4% of adults use smokeless tobacco (men 29.6%; women 12.8%). The common forms consumed by men are khaini and gutka whereas females use betel quid with tobacco followed by oral application of tobacco and khaini. Oral cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers and 10th most

common cause of death. It’s shameful that India ranks 1st in the world in oral cancer cases. As per research and data collected, around 95% of oral cancer is due to use of tobacco, khaini, sunghani, bidi, cigarette etc. New cases of oral cancer are detected in India per year more than 1 lakh patients every year. Total number of cases in India itself is more than 20 lakhs. More than 2,200 deaths every day are tobacco related. Younger people less than 35 years are getting affected due to the habits like gutkha, pan, supari & cigarettes, he added.

The harm from smoking and tobacco chewing can be prevented by following some preventive factors and quitting this habit. The firm determination is a key factor to quit the habit of tobacco. Yoga can be helpful for breaking tobacco habits. By the advice of a doctor, the nicotine replacement therapy might be useful, he said and emphasised that the awareness of tobacco related diseases needs to be done seriously by the medical/dental fraternity of the country.

Vendor Meet inaugurated at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A Vendor Meet was organised in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) which was inaugurated by the General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda here on Tuesday. The meet was organised to ensure availability of spare parts for diesel locos manufactured by BLW and it was participated by the representatives of about 40 companies from all over the country. In this vendor meet, especially those items were discussed in which BLW is facing supply related problems. Many such important items were also displayed for



GM Basudev Panda addressing the vendor meet at BLW in Varanasi on Tuesday.

the vendors. The representatives of the companies who came to the vendor meeting also discussed their problems, for which proper explanation was given by the officials of BLW. The

organisation of this vendor meet saw enthusiasm from the representatives of the companies, which would help in ensuring availability of spare parts for diesel locos in future. The meet was conducted by Deputy Chief Design Engineer (Engine) Manoj Kumar. The meet was also attended by Principal Chief Material Manager Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Prabir Kumar Saha, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer SK Srivastava, Chief Design Engineer (Diesel Loco) RR Prasad, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Service) Neeraj Jain, Chief Material Manager (Engine) Atul Saxena and Chief Material Manager (Headquarters) SK Mishra and other officers were also present.

‘CorporateShala’ begins tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) will organise a two-day programme

called ‘CorporateShala : 2023’ from June 2 and its objective is to provide students with knowledge and skills about the evolving corporate environment. Giving this information while addressing a press conference in BHU here on Wednesday, Dr Nidhi Sharma of the Economics department said that the academia-industry dialogue programme is aimed at pondering on various aspects of green energy and sustainable development.

She along with other faculty members said that during this two-day event, on the first day, there will be competitions in the Department of Economics such as quizzes, panel discussion, poster-making, article writing, business ideas, storytelling, and stand-up comedy/poetry. “These competitions will not only promote healthy competition among students but also provide them with a platform to showcase their talents, creativity and skills in front of industry professionals,” she said.

According to Dr Sharma, on the second day, renowned personalities from the corporate industry, including corporate coach Rahul Malodia, Flipkart’s associate director Sumit Premi, Jindal Steel’s director Vijay Sharma, L&T finance head Rajan Suri, sustainometric Rajani Pandey, Bamdeo Tripathi from ONGC and other experts, will interact face-to-face with students and answer their questions. The winners of the competitions will be honoured with medals and certificates, she added.

vide them with a platform to showcase their talents, creativity and skills in front of industry professionals,” she said.

According to Dr Sharma, on the second day, renowned personalities from the corporate industry, including corporate coach Rahul Malodia, Flipkart’s associate director Sumit Premi, Jindal Steel’s director Vijay Sharma, L&T finance head Rajan Suri, sustainometric Rajani Pandey, Bamdeo Tripathi from ONGC and other experts, will interact face-to-face with students and answer their questions. The winners of the competitions will be honoured with medals and certificates, she added.

Workshop on making research projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Centre for the Study of Society and Politics (CSSP) organised a two-day workshop in virtual mode to train scholars in making research projects. Over 60 professors and research scholars from 12 states — Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Kerala, MP, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Karnataka were trained. Director, Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research (MPISSR), Ujjain, Prof Yatinendra Singh Sisodia, pointed out that research eco-system and research culture are adversely impacting learning, teaching and research. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 talks of equitable and viable knowledge society but institutional challenges are many. Research should be socially oriented and in tandem with government policy preferences. Technology has impacted research both positively and negatively. Every research proposal has to keep all these and the proposal reviewers’ expectations in mind. Director, CSSP, Dr AK Verma, dealing holistically with the process of

making research proposals told that researchers must visualise and conceptualise projects substantively and procedurally and pay attention to its operationalisation and monetisation. He emphasised on the necessity to pay attention to theoretical and conceptual frameworks, sampling and familiarisation with data collection and analysis skills. He suggested strategic thinking with a chain of reasoning to connect research problem with its socially useful output. Dr Sanjay Kumar, YD College, Lucknow University, trained teachers on how to guide undergraduate and post-graduate students in making research projects under NEP. Prof Arun Kumar Sharma, formerly at IIT-Kanpur, cautioned that every component in research proposal must be integrated, consistent and congruent with each other. Most proposals lack that harmony and suffer rejection. About 95 per cent proposals submitted to funding agencies are rejected. Dr Dharmendra Pratap Srivastava, Assistant Director (Academic), CSSP, took the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) proposal format and explained every requirement. He cautioned that overbudgeting or underestimation must be avoided and the timeline adhered to. Dr Samuel Jacob, Kerala University, enquired about funding agencies. Dr Ketki Tara, Kumayun University wanted CSSP to connect with national and global think tanks. Prof BK Sinha, St Xavier College, Ranchi, Prof Jitendra Narayan, Mithila University, Dr Sandhya Chaturvedi, Bengaluru, Dr Anjali Srivastava, Christ Church College, Kanpur, Monalisa Pattanaik, Odisha, Abhishek Vardhan Singh, Delhi University, Devendra Kulhar, Jodhpur, Chandrakala Wasnik, Ujjain etc made valuable interventions. Kamal Srivastava, Research Assistant, CSSP, proposed the vote of thanks.

PROTEST: The residents of posh high-rise buildings have strongly protested the dog owners’ apathy in cleaning dog poop withing the limits of the society. Over a dozen multi-storied complexes have lodged a complaint with the Kanpur Nagar Nigam to impose a fine on all pet dog owners who allow their pets to poop on roads or in front of

their gates. Verbal duels have increased over dog poops lying littered all over the garden and pathway smudging shoes of residents and children of the society. A retired PCS official, Rama Kant, residing in a high-rise building in Swarup Nagar said as per Section 4 (V) of the bylaws no pet owner shall allow dog to defecate on roads, streets or drains within the municipal limits. He said “It shall be the duty of the person concerned to scoop the poop and dispose it of in a proper manner.” He said despite much hue and cry raised over it dog owners refuse to ensure that they properly disposed of the dog poop from within the society limits. He said like few cities the Kanpur Nagar Nigam should also impose fine on those who flout the norms. He said fine amounts have been introduced under the KNN solid waste management rules. He said poop left for a day or more on the street attracted insects and flies and can pose a health hazard for people living nearby. He said the divisional commissioner was making every effort to make Kanpur a smart city but unless the pet owners were made to clean their dog poop it can never stand in the queue of smart city.



PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Office: Chief Engineer/ P&M, PSACL, Ludhiana)
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
website: www.pspcl.in

Tender Enquiry No. 03/CE/P&M/2023
CE/P&M, PSACL, Ludhiana invites e-Tender for Manufacture, testing, supply & delivery of different types of Fire Extinguishers as per PSACL specifications. For detailed NIT and tender specification, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 31-05-2023 from 11:00 AM onwards. Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

Dated CSH :- 5/31/2023

GIAN LIFE CARE LIMITED											
Regd Office : 7/216 (6) Swaroop Nagar (Infront of L.L.R. Hospital), Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh - 208002 CIN: L85100UP2018PLC110119; Mobile: 8800851576 Website: https://gianlifecare.org/ ; Email: arunuguptagpx@gmail.com											
Extract of the Audited Standalone & Consolidated Financial Results for the Quarter & Year ended on March 31, 2023											
PARTICULAR	STANDALONE					CONSOLIDATED					Year ended 31.03.2022
	Quarter ended 31.03.2023	Quarter ended 31.12.2022	Quarter ended 31.03.2022	Year ended 31.03.2023	Year ended 31.03.2022	Quarter ended 31.03.2023	Quarter ended 31.12.2022	Quarter ended 31.03.2022	Year ended 31.03.2023	Year ended 31.03.2022	
	Audited	(Unaudited)	Audited	Audited		Audited	(Unaudited)	Audited	Audited		
Total Income	172.86	525.51	275.18	1261.7	1643.48	172.86	525.51	275.18	1261.7	1643.48	
Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	-76.92	219.55	-155.2	178.65	585.3	-81.76	205.04	-155.54	159.31	584.96	
Net Profit for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	-76.92	219.55	-155.2	178.65	585.3	-81.76	205.04	-155.54	159.31	584.96	
Net Profit for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	-90.15	188.94	-116.53	125.71	437.45	-94.99	174.42	-116.87	106.37	437.11	
Total Comprehensive Income (net of tax) for the period	-87.54	188.94	-116.53	128.32	437.47	-97.6	174.42	-116.87	108.98	437.11	
Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value of Rs.10/-each)	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	10341524	
Reserves (Excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of Previous Year)	-	-	-	497.21	368.88	-	-	-	477.5	368.53	
Earning per Share (of Rs. 10/-each) (not annualised) Basic & Diluted	-0.87	1.83	-1.13	1.22	4.23	-0.92	1.69	-1.13	1.03	4.23	
Notes											
1. The above result of the Company were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on 30.05.2023 which were audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.											
2. The figures of previous period/year have been re-grouped and/or recast wherever found necessary.											
3. The above is the extract of the detailed format of Audited Quarterly Financial Results as filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full Quarter/Year to date Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange website at www.bseindia.com and the company's website - https://gianlifecare.org/											
For and on behalf of the Board of Directors											
Sd/- Arun Kumar Gupta Managing Director DIN:- 01331593											
Place : Kanpur Dated : May 30, 2023											



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Three students from Kanpur have secured international ranks in the SOF Olympiad examination. The trio are Kavya Singh Gardenia Public School, Kanpur, Veera Srivastava, Seth MR Jaipuria School, Rooma, Kanpur and Randeep Jaiswal, Allen House Public School, Kanpur. While Kavya ranked first in English Olympiad, Veera secured first rank in science olympiad. While the first two secured gold medals the third silver medal. The Science Olympiad Foundation conducted an award ceremony in Delhi to honour and present these awards to the Olympiad winners, teachers and principals for the academic year 2022-2023. The top three SOF worldwide rank winners from classes I to XII that participated in seven

Olympiad exams were felicitated during the ceremony.

The occasion was graced by former Chief Justice of India Justice Dipak Misra.

FAREWELL: The members of Pensioners' Forum bid a warm farewell to Dr Manjul Kumar, CMO incharge, RK Nagar, in a grand function organised on Tuesday. She had also been the additional director, CGHS, at Kanpur. Forum's general secretary Anand Awasthi said her behaviour towards the CGHS beneficiaries was nice and there were no complaints during her regime. Additional Director Dr Kiran said Dr Kumari had always been dedicated to her duties. Dr Arun Krishna said she was a role model for all in the department. All office-bearers of Pensioners Forum, colleagues of the retiring Dr Manjul Kumar and staff of the department wished her a long and cheerful life. Dr Amit Kumar of COD, AIDAEA Kolkata president Satish Chandra Singh, Satya Narain, Subhash Bhatia, Arunesh Tiwari, Vinod Yadav, Mani Ram Tiwari and CGHS staff were present at the farewell function.

TT: Students of DPS, SPSEC dominate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The students of DPS Azad Nagar and Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) dominated in the Stag Kanpur Table Tennis tournament 2023 jointly organised by Kanpur Table Tennis Association and DPS Azad Nagar from May 29 to 31. In the tournament, matches for U-

Sunil Singh, Arun Dubey, Sanjay Pal, Ashutosh Satyam Jha, Keshav Dwivedi, Avinash Yadav, Manoj Rawat, Vikas Saini, Anmol Deep, Anil Pal and Ravi Poptani were also present. In the finals of U-19 boys' match, Adwit Gupta defeated Chitransh Shalkya, in the men's, Satyam Giri Gupta beat Deepak Yadav while in U-19 girls, Tanya Rana outsmarted Srishti Mishra



11, U-13, U-15, U-17 and U-19 (girls and boys) and men's and women's were played. In the concluding ceremony Joint Commissioner of Police Anand Prakash Tewari, educationist and social worker Vandana Mishra, president, UPTTA, Sanjiv Pathak, Principal, DPS Azad Nagar Puneeta Kapoor and secretary, KTTA, Sanjay Tandon, awarded the prizes.

to emerge victorious. In the girls' category, Abana Lial, Muskan, Inika, Kenisha, Preksha won title in their respective categories. On the basis of performance in this tournament, players were selected for the UP Cup championship. Aditri Banerjee and Ahlan were adjudged the best budding players. As many as 300 players took part in the tournament.

BHU scientists' innovation on SARS CoV-2 gets German patent

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has got another feather in its cap with the granting of German patent to one of the milestone works of the varsity's scientists. The work is about a breakthrough innovation in the fight against the SARS CoV-2 virus for a system to develop the Somnifericin Phyto molecule growth inhibitor. The patent has been granted by DPMA (German Patent and Trade Mark office) to the team of researchers comprising Prof Parimal Das, Prashant Ranjan, Neha, Chandra Devi, Dr Garima Jain, Prashasti Yadav, Dr Chandana Basu Malick, and Dr Bhagyalaxmi Mohapatra from the Centre for Genetic Disorders, Institute of Science.

The Somnifericin Phyto molecule growth inhibitor holds significant potential as an effective weapon to combat the SARS CoV-2 virus, which has posed a global threat to public health. This breakthrough development aims to provide a novel approach in containing the growth and proliferation of the virus, potentially leading to improved treatment options and preventive measures.

The innovative system, protected by the recently granted German patent, harnesses the power of the Somnifericin Phyto molecule to effectively inhibit the growth of the SARS CoV-2 virus. The interdisciplinary team of researchers has spent considerable time and effort in developing this cutting-edge solution, combining their expertise in virology, pharmacology, and molecular biology.

Prof Parimal Das, Coordinator, Centre for Genetic Disorders, and one of the lead researchers, expressed excitement about the patent grant. He said, "This German patent is a testament to our



Prof. Parimal Das



Prashant Ranjan



Neha



Chandra Devi



CGD



Dr. Garima Jain



Prashasti Yadav



Dr. B. Mohapatra



Dr. Chandana Basu Mallick

team's dedication and commitment to finding innovative solutions to combat the SARS CoV-2 virus. We believe that the Somnifericin Phyto molecule growth inhibitor has the potential to make a significant impact in the ongoing battle against this global pandemic."

The research team's breakthrough discovery has opened up new possibilities for the development of antiviral therapies and preventive measures against the SARS CoV-2 virus. The granting of the German patent signifies a major mile-

stone in their journey towards translating scientific advancements into practical solutions that can benefit individuals and communities worldwide.

With the patent protection in place, the research team is now poised to further explore the potential applications of the Somnifericin Phyto molecule growth inhibitor. They are actively seeking partnerships and collaborations with pharmaceutical companies, research institutions, and healthcare organisations to accelerate the development and eventual

deployment of this groundbreaking innovation.

As the world continues to grapple with the challenges posed by the SARS CoV-2 virus, this German patent serves as a beacon of hope, signifying progress and the collective efforts of dedicated researchers. The team behind the Somnifericin Phyto molecule growth inhibitor remains committed to advancing their research and ultimately making a meaningful impact in the fight against this global health crisis.

Joint committee chief reviews progress of women schemes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Joint Committee of UP Legislature on Women and Child Development led by its Chairperson Neelima Katiyar reviewed the progress of various schemes related to women at Circuit House here on Tuesday. The committee members also carried out on-the-spot inspection of various government programmes especially related to women and children in the district. In the review meeting, Neelima Katiyar took detailed information on various schemes including Mukhyamantri Bal Seva Yojana and Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana and gave guidelines regarding the promotion of schemes in women's hospitals.

While reviewing Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya, she was informed by the officers that at present six such schools are being run in which 600 girls are studying.

The committee chief instructed the concerned officers to have a good overview of the existing resources and ensure that all the necessary facilities should be provided to the girls.

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam briefly explained about the special efforts being made in the name of Kashi Prerna. "The cafe is being opened by women. Along with this, the work of making bouquets is being done by the self help groups (SHGs) of women apart from the work of making prasad and paint from cow dung in the temples," he said.

When asked about the participation of women in MNREGA during the meeting, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal said that while the participation of women in MNREGA is 33 percent at the state level, in Varanasi district, this is 49 percent.

Praising the same, the committee instructed to make special efforts for the women engaged in the manufacture of Banarasi sarees.



UP Legislature Joint Committee inspecting a hospital unit in Varanasi on Tuesday.

In reply, the CDO said that women running power looms are being equipped with solar systems through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, which will reduce their electricity expenditure and increase income.

When Neelima Katiyar inquired about progress in POCOS (the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act cases, she was informed that Varanasi Police Commissionerate is at a high position in dealing with the cases in the state and in traffic control system, pink booths are being constructed and all the main crossings are equipped with CCTV cameras.

The committee chief, while directing about the innocent people lodged in the jail in connection with dowry, said that the innocent victims who have been falsely implicated should be acquitted.

At the end, calendars were presented to the 20 girls of Varanasi who have brought laurels in various fields.

The committee members also inspected the District Women's Hospital and directed the Medical Superintendent to arrange shade to protect women from the scorching heat and implement a token system.

During the inspection, when Neelima Katiyar found no doctor available for consultation at some rooms, she expressed deep displeasure and instructed the superintendent for necessary action. The committee also inspected the maternity ward, operation theatre and nursing room and directed that the duty list should be updated daily according to the roster. The members also inspected Jan Aushadhi Kendra and instructed the concerned that the list of medicines should be clear.

After this, Kasturba

Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Shivpur was inspected, where detailed information about food and education was taken from the resident girls.

Then the committee reached District Jail and reviewed the facilities being provided to convicted and undertrial women prisoners. Neelima Katiyar asked the jail superintendent to take measures to provide legal aid to under-trial prisoners.

The committee also visited Panini Kanya Mahavidyalaya and after talking with the resident girls, reviewed the arrangements for their education and food. The Committee also inspected the 'One Stop Centre' located at the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital premises and inquired about the activities. The committee instructed to provide speedy justice and benefits to the victimised women.

Teenager's murder: Police team formed to nab accused

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A police team has been formed to arrest the accused in the murder of a teenager in Bal Mukund Nagar of Sirsa town of Meja. Kotwal Meja Dnyaneshwar Mishra said the police team is conducting raids to arrest the accused. All the accused will be nabbed and sent behind bars soon.

If sources are to be believed, the police have taken many people into custody for questioning. Everyone is being questioned. Action will be taken against the accused soon.

Sharda Prasad Yadav of Balmukund Nagar under Sirsa town of Meja Kotwali area, lives by running a tea shop. Shiv Kumar Yadav (17), the youngest of his three sons, had left the house at 9.30 pm on May 20 saying he was going to a wedding ceremony, but did not return till late at night. He was found lying half dead at some distance from the house

around 3.30 pm. He was taken to a private hospital in Bhirpur Karchhana and the doctors sent him to the district hospital after first aid in view of his critical condition. He died on Sunday morning. The youth was battered to death but the family members have no idea who did it.

According to the father, when the teenager regained consciousness after the incident, during interrogation, he accused neighbours Sanjay Giri, Lastna Giri, Amit Nishad, Aditya of thrashing him with sticks. However, the family members have not even spoken about enmity with these people. The police have targeted the named accused. Many other suspects are also on target. Police sources only tell that the police have come very close to the whole matter.

FEARED DROWNED: In a bid to save his younger brother and friend who were drowning bathing in Sangam in

front of selfie point at Arai Ghat under Naini Kotwali area here a student of class IX went into deep water on Tuesday evening and was feared drowned, last reports received here said. A team of water police and divers were deployed in search of him, but could not find him due to darkness. Ramesh Chandra Gupta, who lives behind Chak Raghunath Ram Mandir under Naini Kotwali of Yamunanagar, has his own business. He has three sons and two daughters. Wife Gudiya Gupta is a housewife. Elder son Ujjwal Gupta (17) was a student of class IX. On Tuesday evening on Ganga Dussehra, Ramesh Chandra Gupta along with his wife Gudiya Devi, son Ujjwal Gupta, Lalla Gupta, daughter Bittu and Chhoti went to Arai pucca ghat for Sangam snan along with other family members.

Ujjwal had also invited some of his friends to bathe in the Sangam. Everyone was tak-

ing a dip in the Sangam and Ujjwal was playing with his friends and brother in the water. Meanwhile, his younger brother Lalla and friend Harsh started drowning as they went into the deep water. When people raised an alarm seeing both of them drowning, Ujjwal ran to save them. Lalla and Harsh held on to the barricading of the deep water, which saved them both. On seeing Ujjwal drowning, the family members along with mother, sister and father started screaming. The police were informed and divers were called. The water police team reached the spot. Divers also tried to find him, but it had become so dark that it was difficult to search in the water. Additional Inspector, Naini, Mohammad Ali, reached the spot, sent the family back after persuading them and assured that a team of divers and water police will soon search for Ujjwal.

Lodge owner commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A lodge owner committed suicide in Shaturkhana locality under the Colonelganj police station here. On getting information, the police reached the spot and searched the room. No suicide note was found, but a diary of accounts was recovered in which many number games are written. The police is investigating on the basis of diary.

Neeraj Verma (40) of Shutarkhana used to run his lodge. His wife Kiran Verma had gone to her maternal home, Uncharah, Rae Bareilly, 10 days ago with her two sons and a daughter. Neeraj Verma and his nephew and sister were in the house. He had dinner on

Tuesday night and then went to sleep in his room.

When the nephew woke up in the morning, he went to wake up his uncle, the door of Neeraj's room was open and he was hanging from the rod inside the room with the help of a lungi and he started screaming.

On hearing the screams the people around woke up and the police was informed. The Colonelganj police reached the spot. The body was sent to the post-mortem house.

A diary has been recovered by the police from Neeraj's room. In which accounts and some number games are written. Investing money in online crypto currency bitcoin is coming to the fore.

The Colonelganj police said that anything can be said only after the completion of the investigation.

His suicide has created panic in the family. Wife Kiran also reached her home along with children on getting the news. All family members are in a state of shock.

FORGERY: A case of forgery in the name of CT scan report in Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital (SRNH) has come to the fore wherein brokers are collecting Rs 25,000 by making fake signatures of junior doctors of the hospital.

The matter came to light when the police reached SRN Hospital for verification of the report of 15 days back. The investigation revealed that the

serial number entered in the report is fake.

Junior doctors complained to the principal and head of the Radiodiagnosis department in the matter. The junior doctors had made a written complaint on December 19, 2022 and May 12, 2023. However, no step was initiated by the medical college and hospital administration.

Talking to mediapersons, Principal of Motilal Nehru Medical College Dr SP Singh, said, "It has been reported that fake CT scan reports have been prepared. A person has also been caught who is an outsider. Earlier he also used to do the training in the hospital. Soon the system will be rectified."

Mystery shrouds electrician's death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

An electrician was found dead under mysterious circumstances near a graveyard in Kanihar village under the trans-Ganga area of Jhusi on Wednesday morning. There was a strangulation mark on his neck besides injuries on head, arms and legs which suggest that he had been killed somewhere else and the body was thrown at the deserted place above.

It is learnt that in connection with the murder of his first wife, Chiranjil Lal (35) son of Ramraj Bind of Langaripur, Sarai Inayat, had been sent to jail, and after his release he was living with his second wife and children in a separate house. He had left for Allahpur

on Tuesday evening, but did not return home. His mobile was also switched off. Family members got worried and a search operation was launched to trace him out.

On Wednesday morning passers by spotted a body and informed the Jhusi police.

After identification process, the body was found to be of Chiranjil Lal. Forensic team reached the spot for thorough investigation.

The police have registered a murder case and the near and dear ones are being interrogated to gather some clue. Marks on the body suggest that he had been dragged to the graveyard from somewhere else. He had been seen last at a nearby vegetable shop. His mobile phone is untraceable.

FOCUS ON CLEANLINESS: Mayor Ganesh Kesarwani said grievances of citizens of city will be sorted out on a priority basis and focus will be on cleanliness of the city. He said all drains and nullah will be cleaned before the arrival of monsoon so that city streets did not face water logging problem. Adequate number of sanitary workers will be deployed in each and every ward as per the requirement and a mass level awareness campaign will also be taken out, he added.

The mayor also sought active cooperation from the citizens of Sangam city to keep the city clean and green. The mayor also stressed on the need of the waste disposal management and assured res-

idents that issues pertaining to potable water supply and cleanliness will be taken up promptly.

On the complaint of Smart City department of nagar nigam taking the already constructed Durga Park in zone IV under its tender, mayor has sought explanation from chief engineer. Meanwhile, leaders of BJP have welcomed decision in which officials and employees of nagar nigam were asked to reveal their property details with Manav Sampada portal under the state government's zero tolerance policy against corruption. Following this, the mayor has asked all officials and employees of the nagar nigam to enrol their property details on the portal concerned.

Campus-level environmental initiative starts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A week-long programmes began at Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Allahabad to mark the Environment Week at Jhalwa campus. A campus-level environmental initiative started on Wednesday by downloading the Meri LiFE application to come together and unite in commitment to sustainability.

Dr Anurika Vaish, coordinator said the Meri LiFE app offers a user-friendly platform to actively participate in Environment Day week. "We will invite everyone to share their photo with the Meri LiFE app showcasing their dedication to environmental consciousness. By embracing this initiative, we will collectively make a positive impact on our surroundings and create a greener future. This event also brings opportunities for creative expression and practical action". The institute will organise an e-slogan and poster competition during World Environment Week. Through this online competition, students will showcase their artistic skills while raising awareness about crucial environmental issues. The winners for

e-slogan and e-poster competitions will be announced on Friday and Saturday respectively.

On the first day of Institute's Environment Day event, every individual of institution took the initiative to use air conditioners at 24°C. By adjusting the temperature to an energy-efficient level we can collectively save power and contribute to a greener campus. Remember, "Cool and conscious, together we can make a difference!" Students and residents of IIIT-A advocated creation of kitchen gardens and terrace gardens at home.

The IIIT-A deeply values and prioritises sustainable practices. A special recognition event for canteen owners located within the campus took place in Admin Block auditorium in presence of Director Prof Mukul Sharad Sataone. This event aims to celebrate and showcase efforts of vendors who have actively embraced sustainable practices within their businesses. Their choice to embrace eco-friendly materials demonstrates their role in environmental stewardship, setting an inspiring example for others to follow.

In the evening a plantation

drive was carried out by planting a variety of beneficial plants, including tulsi, giloy, ashwagandha, aloe vera and mint.

On June 2 focus on cleanliness and energy conservation will be given in the Jhalwa campus. Registrar Dr Satish Kumar Singh will lead a team in cleaning solar energy plants and panels, ensuring maximum efficiency in renewable energy systems. Students will advocate taking the stairs instead of elevators, promoting physical fitness and reducing energy consumption. They will also spread the message of switching off unnecessary lights and electric gadgets to conserve energy.

The institute will also promote the practice of crushing leaves through a leaf crusher. This eco-friendly method helps reduce the volume of leaves and facilitates their decomposition ultimately enriching the soil.

To promote sustainable shopping practices, students will encourage the use of cloth bags for groceries instead of plastic bags on June 3. By making this simple switch, one can significantly reduce plastic waste and protect our environment.

The institute will also pro-

mote the timeless principles of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" by encouraging everyone to carry a non-plastic water bottle while stepping out of their homes.

On June 4 emphasis on the importance of reducing food and water wastage in mess facilities. The Dean of Student Affairs along with wardens of respective hostels will appeal to students to serve small portions. Sunday will also be the last day of submission of entries for the e-poster competition. On the final day of Environment Day event on June 5, the director will initiate the day by administering a pledge to make a positive change and then recognising students who won the e-slogan and e-poster competitions as well as the volunteers.

Prof Mahesh Shindikar and Prof Parag Sadgir, will deliver a talk on "Sustainable Development Gateway for a better tomorrow" and "Decentralised Wastewater System" respectively.

The IIIT-Allahabad Nursery has selected specific plants that will be meticulously labelled with the year they were planted, in addition to everything else that has already been mentioned.

Check hyperbole

Rahul mocks and slams PM Modi at a gathering of Indian diaspora in San Francisco, US

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is at it again: he has lambasted and lampooned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on foreign soil. Addressing a gathering of Indian diaspora in San Francisco, US, he ridiculed Modi for having the pretensions of being omniscient. In fact, he mocked the top leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party of being delusional about their knowledge: "some groups of India think that they know everything. Even if they have a conversation with God, they might explain to him." He added, "Prime Minister is one of them." Deriding BJP leaders, Rahul continued: "They can speak to scientists and explain science to them. They can explain history to historians, warfare to the army and flying to the air force. But at the heart of it, they don't know anything." Barbed sarcasm can be effective, but Rahul seems to be going too far. His claim that the "normal instruments for doing politics were not working anymore." He also blamed the Modi Government for threatening people and deploying Central agencies against political opponents. The use of law enforcement bodies to harass the Opposition is old in India; the present dispensation is no exception. But should the underbelly of our country be put on showcase? There is much that is wrong with governance and other aspects of India, but a senior Opposition leader advertising that in the United States doesn't make much sense. Rahul may succeed in scoring a few political points, but not without damage to India's image in the world.



To that extent, the BJP's sharp reaction to his remarks is justified. Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said, "During his foreign visits, Rahul Gandhi insults India, which is unacceptable. He wants to insult PM Modi but ends up insulting India, questioning India's progress. He is trying to tarnish India at a time the world is acknowledging our growing stature." Just as in Rahul's comment, there is also an element of hyperbole in Thakur's reaction too. Rahul's remarks are bad for India's image, but not an insult. Besides, Congress leaders are not the only ones who discuss domestic matters abroad; PM Modi has also criticised previous governments on foreign soil in the past. Indian politicians will do well by scaling down the ingredient of hyperbole in political debate. Gruesome murder of a minor girl in Delhi doesn't mean that there is no fear of the police in the national capital; unjust arrest of a journalist doesn't imply that the entire press has been gagged in the country; India leaving the UK behind in terms of GDP doesn't mean that we have become a developed nation. Also, politicians should grow a thicker skin; every adverse comment their adversaries make against them shouldn't become an excuse to indulge in rant and cant. And they should also ensure that domestic political disputes are not internationalised.

PICTALK



Volunteers raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco consumption on World No Tobacco Day, in Kolkata

Modi's charisma transcends borders



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

PM Modi's recent tour of Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia can be seen as a marker of his growing popularity and influence

In a world filled with diverse cultures, ideologies, and ambitions, PM Modi Ji's engagements have gone beyond the realm of mere diplomacy, becoming more of a celebration of India's global leadership and cultural heritage.

The immense respect and goodwill that the world leaders feel for India and its leader, PM Modi Ji is reflected in their various extraordinary gestures—be it President Biden seeking his autograph or Prime Minister James Marape of Papua New Guinea showing his respect by touching PM Modi's feet at the airport or Australian PM Albanese referring to PM Modi as 'The Boss'.

The New Zealand Prime Minister specially came all the way down to Papua New Guinea to meet our leader, demonstrating a deep appreciation for India's leadership. All these countries may have varying opinions on several issues, but such heartfelt gestures highlight PM Modi Ji's popularity and India's growing stature.

Several unprecedented honours came India's way too. The highest awards of Papua New Guinea (Companion of the Order of Logohu) and Fiji (Companion of the Order of Fiji) were conferred upon PM Modi Ji, symbolizing his tireless efforts in championing the unity of Pacific Island countries and spearheading the cause of the Global South. Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, James Marape, referred to PM Modi Ji as the 'leader of the Global South'. These accolades firmly establish PM Modi Ji's standing as an international leader and further enhance India's reputation on the world stage.

At the community reception in Australia, leaders of all hues—the Australian PM—accompanied by the Leader of the Opposition, Foreign Minister, former Prime Minister, and several other ministers—walked hand in hand with PM Modi Ji. The illumination of the Sydney Opera House in the colours of the Indian flag, and the renaming of Harris Park to Little India further emphasize the influence of India and its diaspora in Australia.

Great Push for Indian Culture, Values, and Ethos.



PM Modi Ji also effectively utilized global platforms to showcase Indian culture, values, and ethos.

By wearing recycled materials at the G7 and the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), and hosting a lunch for FIPIC leaders featuring Indian cuisine and millet-based items, PM Modi Ji showcased India's commitment to sustainability. Hiroshima which was the first to face atomic bombing in the history of mankind, today serves as the most fitting setting for commemorating the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and PM Modi Ji's unveiling his bust in this historic city symbolises the message of non-violence that Gandhi ji stood for.

Also, the release of the timeless Tamil classic, "Thirukkural," in the Tok Pisin language, was an effort to bring Indian thought and culture closer to the people of Papua New Guinea. In his engagements with industry leaders, scientists, academicians, and cultural icons, PM Modi Ji positioned India as the world's preferred investment destination, fostering economic growth and job creation.

Nobel Laureate Brian Paul Schmidt, who met the PM, highlighted India's scientific prowess and its ability to undertake world-class

research. "PM Modi is one of the most visible leaders that India has had in my lifetime. He takes an interest in whoever he talks to, whether it's the President of USA or someone he meets for first time from society. India's ability to do world class science has become an order of magnitude higher," he told reporters after the meeting.

In Professor Toby Walsh's words, India is "absolutely world's most extraordinary democracy. UPI is a wonderful example of how India can do things itself." During his diplomatic parleys in the Quad, FIPIC, and G7 summits, the Prime Minister underscored India's active role in shaping the global agenda and fostering collaborations among nations. He interacted with over two dozen world leaders throughout his visits. The community event in Sydney was attended by around 20 thousand people.

In contrast to some leaders who blame others or badmouth the country, PM Modi Ji's speech singularly focussed on the India Story, highlighting its progress, achievements, and aspirations. From Japan to Papua New Guinea and Australia, the newspaper headlines widely featured PM Modi Ji, capturing the collective attention and fascination of

readers everywhere. The world today looks at India with awe and respect. Under PM Modi Ji's leadership, India's ascent to becoming the 5th largest economy has been swift and promises peace, opportunity, development, and sustainability.

Opposition politicians, like Rahul Gandhi, have developed a regrettable habit of resorting to abuse and falsehoods. They regularly undermine India's image, and our democracy and heap insults on our Prime Minister, our government and also our nation and leave no stones unturned to downplay India's staggering achievements. By this, they are doing a huge disservice to the nation and people will never forgive them.

PM Modi Ji's leadership, diplomacy, and vision have strengthened international relations, garnered admiration from world leaders, attracted investments, and fueled economic expansion. Without indulging in such petty politicking, we all must work together for India's progress, celebrate its growth and development, in line with the Prime Minister's principle of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas.

(The writer is MoS, Electronics & Information Technology.)

THE WORLD TODAY LOOKS AT INDIA WITH AWE AND RESPECT. UNDER PM MODI 'S LEADERSHIP, INDIA'S ASCENT TO BECOMING THE 5TH LARGEST ECONOMY HAS BEEN SWIFT AND PROMISES PEACE, OPPORTUNITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A GOOD OMEN FOR CONGRESS!

Sir — Given that its warring stalwarts namely poll-bound Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot have decided to put their longstanding issues on the back burner for the time being in the party's interests. After a meeting between the Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and former chief Rahul Gandhi, also participated by Mr Gehlot and Pilot, the latter duo said that the central leadership will decide on the problems between them after the upcoming significant assembly polls in the Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are over. This rapprochement might help the grand old party replicate its Karnataka landslide win in the rest of the States, going to polls as also in next year's Lok Sabha polls.

However, the Congress, the AAP and the TMC being on different page vis-a-vis 'The Congress' inclusion in the proposed United Opposition Front driving at taking on the BJP in the grand finale unitedly, the scenario seems to be going in the BJP's favour.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

PRANNOY HAS BROKEN THE JINX

Sir — After the USA open title six years ago, in the 2017 Grand Prix, India's top-ranked men's badminton player HS Prannoy has broken the jinx of being a giant killer without lifting the trophy by winning the Malaysia Masters 2023 crown. Although Prannoy has beaten contemporary stalwarts like Viktor Axelsen, Taufiq Hidayat, and Chen Long to name only a few, a big trophy consistently eluded him till the win at Kuala Lumpur. Even there, things seem to go awry for the Indian as China's Weng Hongyang came from behind to equalise at 18-18 in the final set, but Prannoy recouped to have the last laugh. All along, after 2017, the lingering feeling was that despite oodles of talent the 30-year-old was mysteriously unable to click at the right moment when it mattered most.

They are super kings!



The IPL meant CSK aka Chennai Super Kings for many cricket lovers. There is a worthy reason why this team is titled Super Kings. Yes, they are the super kings of the Indian Premier League, as recently the team clinched the Fifth trophy marking one of a kind triumph for itself. MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja and Kadamli like legendary stars proved that old is gold for IPL.

Despite fans missing the Helicopter shots of MS Dhoni in T-20, ODI and World Cup-like events, fans are lucky to never miss his magic on IPL pitches. It's a great victory of the Chennai Super Kings over the Gujarat Titans of Hardik Pandya. It's time for celebration for entire cricket lovers, Dhoni lovers and CSK lovers.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Nerves said many, temperament said some, but Prannoy overcame all to finally come up with trumps.

The Indian champion has, however, continuously ranked within the top ten in the world. From number nine, now he is ranked seven. En route to the Malaysia Masters title, the hero of India's 2022 Thomas Cup win had the better of All England Champion Chinese Li Shifeng in round 16 and almost pipped Indonesian Christian Adinata who retired hurt in the semis. Again big names were scalped by Prannoy; the only difference this time was that he went all the way to finish at the top. After Prakash Padukone and Pulella Gopichand, no Indian has been able to lift the All-England title. Lakshya Sen came within striking distance of the crown but fell at the final hurdle in 2022.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

PROOF OF POPULARITY

Sir — If any foreign leader touches the feet of any Indian leader or issues any

Costly higher education a problem

The escalating cost of education is denying higher education to students who wish to pursue it but cannot afford its prohibitive cost

Baban Bhagat, from Chand Kewari village in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar, works as a daily wage labourer in the nearby town. His meagre income barely covers the subsistence needs of his family, let alone the educational aspirations of his two sons. While his elder son's academic journey abruptly ended after completing Class 12, his younger son, due to lack of money, just managed to get enrolled in Class 12. "I have tried my best to provide education to both my sons, but our financial circumstances render it impossible for me to bear the equivalent expenses for both of them, even for an undergraduate program at an ordinary institution," lamented Baban. Presently, his elder son, a high school graduate, has also become a labourer, trapped in the same cycle of limited opportunities.

A recent official survey reveals how a significant increase in education expenditure in India, has placed a substantial financial burden on households. Particularly for those households from rural areas with minimal income, educating their chil-



dren becomes a burden than an investment, especially when it comes to girls. According to Pankaj Kumar, a resident of the same village, due to prevailing poverty, most children can only study up to the 10th or 12th standard. With the increase in enrollment and examination fees for graduation in government colleges, dropout rates have further aggravated. Awadhesh Kumar Das who works as a teacher in a private school in Muzaffarpur, emphasized that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds face significant challenges when it comes to pursuing education in fields like engineering, medicine, or enrolling in coaching classes for exams like the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) or Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC). This difficulty stems from the increasing privatization of

educational institutions.

In recent times, several reports have raised concerns about the potential impact of the New Education Policy on the privatization of higher education, leading to increased costs that could make education unaffordable for many students. According to a report, the National Education Policy is designed to support a neo-colonial economic order, favouring those from affluent backgrounds while potentially discriminating against the poor and oppressed. Addressing similar concerns, Devesh Chandra, the former District Councilor of Muzaffarpur, expressed his apprehension that the new education policy could make it increasingly difficult for underprivileged children to access higher education. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive policy that ensures equal educational opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic background. On the other hand, Ajay Kumar Singh, the District Education Officer of Muzaffarpur, reassures that the new education policy is designed to provide equi-

table education to everyone.

Whereas highlighting on dropping out of girls from higher education, Dr Shri Bhagwan Rai, an Assistant Professor at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, believes the government and parents share equal responsibility for this situation. "The government can be held accountable for the expensive nature of education, as it has become a major obstacle for girls to pursue higher education. Additionally, parents cannot be absolved of their role in perpetuating gender disparities by treating the education of boys and girls differently," the Professor expressed. The escalating cost of education has undoubtedly presented formidable challenges for individuals seeking higher education, particularly impacting girls. It is crucial to recognize that girls are disproportionately affected by these financial barriers and encounter significant limitations in the absence of accessible, free, and affordable education.

(The writer is Charkha's Volunteer Trainer) Charkha Feature



SAPNA KUMARI

FIRST COLUMN

EFFICACY OF SATSANG MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

Satsang is association with good people; It is also about the inner quality of ‘sattva’ or purity



RAVI VALLURI

It was a desolate sight to see my nonagenarian grandmother. A deeply religious person whose life was dedicated to the Almighty, she lay afflicted by Alzheimer’s, in an incapacitated condition in a small nursing home in Bangalore. There was just a nurse to attend to her needs. Misty-eyed, I entered the room along with two gentlemen.

Grandma was quite unexpectedly injected with vital prana as she stared at us. “Moorty garu!” she exclaimed, much to the astonishment of the nurse who was involved in an animated conversation with Moorty garu. As we left, my grandmother looked forlorn and her benefactor blessed her. A somnolent 94-year-old woman abruptly awakening upon seeing Shri VSR Moorty, obviously meant that the satsangs he rendered were exemplary. There was one rendition of the Narada Bhakti sutras at our house in Hyderabad which is etched in my memory bank.

The year was 2014 and it was a crisp and cool morning in early November. I was posted in Secunderabad on South Central Railway. As I was poring over files, I walked Shri VSR Moorty. Moorty Garu focused his attention on my computer screen. Pictures of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar were flipping across the monitor. He looked at Gurudev’s photograph quite intently and uttered, “Ravi, I would like to have an interaction with Guruji.” This interaction or satsang would be recorded by Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel (SVBC).

My jaws fell in astonishment. Millions of devotees of Gurudev wait to have a glimpse of the Master and I had this onerous task of organising an interaction with the Master himself. But that is a challenge for any seeker and I promptly sent a mail to the Master and his secretariat seeking an appointment.



He then shared, “Ravi, the Sankalpa needs to be pure, rest Almighty God will take ensure that things fall in place, Sai Ram.” I was stunned that evening when the Secretariat agreed to fix the appointment at such short notice. We made the peregrination to the Bangalore Ashram of the Art of Living along with the staff from SVBC. For three days and three nights, we were witness to something transcendental. The interaction ranged on a variety of subjects from ancient Hindu practices, and various schools of Hindu philosophy to the present day. It is well-nigh impossible to decode the divine and pen the interaction.

A senior teacher of the Art of Living, Shri Vinod Menon was to tell Moorty Garu, “This is the closest one could unravel divinity, you are indeed blessed, coming so close to the Divine.”

In the amphitheatre on my mind the graphic scene of BR Chopra’s Mahabharata, the television serial played out, where Lord Krishna tells Bhishma, “Arjun woh nar hai jo Narayan ke darshan karwayega.” (That is, Arjuna is the person who will be the medium to reveal the resplendence of Narayana himself). So, this was satsang ... What does one mean by Satsang?

(I quote Yogapedia to describe Satsang) Satsang is a Sanskrit term derived from two roots: sat meaning true and sangha meaning community, company, or association.

It can be translated as “associating with good people” or simply “being in the company of truth.” It refers to the act of gathering like-minded, uplifting people, especially those on a spiritual path. Satsang is associated with the inner quality of sattva (goodness or purity), which is one of the three gunas (natural attributes) alongside rajas (passion) and tamas (inactivity). A sattvic person makes a natural Satsangi, or “seeker of truth.”

So let us all be satsangis in quest of the quintessential truth.

(The writer is an author and a spiritual teacher)

Manual scavenging is a curse, must end now

To end this menace Govt must provide alternative employment opportunities and encourage mechanised cleaning technologies

“Death does not discriminate, but the system does,” cried out Rukmani Devi, a grief-stricken relative who lost her cousin, Nand Kushwaha, and his son Nitesh, in a horrifying incident that unfolded in Bahora Ramnagar village. The tight-knit community mourns the loss of four lives, all victims of the archaic and inhumane practice of manual scavenging. On a sombre Sunday morning, tragedy struck as these brave souls descended into a septic tank, unaware of the deadly consequences that awaited them.

The incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Nebua Naurangia police station in the Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, a region plagued by the persisting men-



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

(Writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow)

ace of manual scavenging. Despite numerous promises and legislative measures to eradicate this degrading practice, it continues to thrive, claiming innocent lives and shattering families.

Manual scavenging, a practice that involves the manual cleaning of septic tanks, drains, and dry latrines, has been banned in India since 1993 under the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act. However, the law remains largely ineffective, with thousands of individuals still forced into this hazardous occupation due to poverty, social discrimination, and a lack of alternative livelihood options.

Incidentally, the government, which has introduced

several measures to prohibit manual scavenging and rehabilitate those involved, does not consider septic cleaning as manual scavenging, despite the National Human Rights Commission’s (NHRC) recommendation to expand the definition of manual scavengers. The incident serves as a stark reminder of the hazardous conditions faced by manual scavengers. “Nand was our sole breadwinner,” sobbed Rukmani Devi, her voice heavy with grief. “We had hoped for a brighter future for Nitesh, but now he is gone too. Why does no one care about our lives?”

The tragedy that befell the Kushwaha family is not an isolated incident. According to a report by Safai Karamchari Andolan, an organization

fighting for the rights of sanitation workers, there have been over 1,800 deaths related to manual scavenging in the past decade alone. In four years, between 2017-2021, 330 people lost their lives due to “hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks” in India, as per the data presented in Lok Sabha in August 2022.

“Each death represents a life cut short, dreams left unfulfilled, and families left devastated,” Dinesh Kanojia, an office-bearer of Safai Karamchari Andolan said and added: “We clean society’s waste, but society refuses to acknowledge us as humans.”

Despite the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and the Rehabilitation Act of 2013, which outlawed the employ-



UTTAM GUPTA

Rs 2k note exchange: Demonetisation 2.0

Rs 2000 note exchange will not have any impact on black money. It will only help hoarders by exchanging Rs 2000 notes without disclosing their identity



In its decision to withdraw Rs 2000 currency notes from circulation announced on May 19, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that they will continue to be legal tender. The notification issued in this regard states:- “...in pursuance of the “Clean Note Policy” of the RBI it has been decided to withdraw the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation. The banknotes in Rs 2000 denomination will continue to be legal tender.”

From the above, prima facie one gets a sense that it is not a demonetization exercise as it happened over six years ago when, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared on November 8, 2016, that Rs 500 and Rs 1000 denomination currency notes won’t be legal tender with immediate effect.

If not demonetization then, what is?

Is it merely a “Clean Note Policy” - as the RBI puts it? The central banks’ argument runs something like this: high denomination notes such as Rs 2000 is normally avoided for cash transactions. Yet, these had to be brought in following the note ban of 2016 to address the logistics of swapping the mammoth old Rs 500/1000 notes for new currency within a short time frame and thus minimize economic disruption. Nearly 90 per cent of the Rs 2000 notes valued at Rs 673,000 crore at their peak as on March 31, 2018, were issued from November 8, 2016, to March 31, 2017.

The intent was to phase them out after the RBI had pumped in a sufficient stock of lower denomination Rs 500 (albeit new) notes to meet the transactional requirements of the economy.

Already, the stock of Rs 2000 notes has declined from Rs 673,000 crore representing 37.3 per cent of notes in circulation on March 31, 2018, to Rs 362,000 crore constituting only 10.8 per cent of notes in circulation on March 31, 2023. Further, these being at the end of their estimated



THE CIRCULAR ALSO ALLOWS A PERSON TO DEPOSIT RS 2000 NOTES INTO HIS BANK ACCOUNT WITHOUT ANY LIMIT. FOR DEPOSITS ABOVE A SPECIFIED LIMIT, THE BANK IS REQUIRED TO REPORT TO THE INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

(The writer is a policy analyst)

lifespan of 4 - 5 years and the stock of Rs 500 denominations adequate to meet the currency requirement of the public, it was logical to completely phase out the Rs 2000 note.

The RBI circular says that beginning May 23, 2023, the public may deposit Rs 2,000 banknotes into their bank accounts and or exchange them with banknotes of other denominations up to a limit of ten notes of Rs 20,000 value ‘at a time’ in banks until September 30, 2023. The facility for the exchange will also be provided at the 19 Regional Offices (ROs) of RBI having Issue Departments.

First, holders of Rs 2000 notes get 131 days to get rid of them which is two-and-a-half times the time given to the holders of Rs 500/1000 notes in 2016 i.e. 52 days to exchange them with the new currency. Second, Rs 2000 notes are only 10.8 per cent of the currency in circulation value-wise (as of March 31, 2023) against old Rs 500/1000 notes being a whopping 86 per cent of the corresponding figure in 2016, this time the load on the system is much less.

Can we simply treat this as a routine exercise?

At a fundamental level, the ‘withdrawal’ of the Rs 2000 banknotes - an exercise that the RBI hopes will get consummated on September 30, 2023 - doesn’t gel with its reiteration that these notes will remain legal tender even after September 30. Imagine a scenario whereby all of the Rs 2000 notes come back to the banks by this deadline then, any talk of whether it will remain legal tender is irrelevant. Look at it from another angle.

If, the intention is to maintain the legal status of the Rs 2000 note even after September 30, 2023, implying that it will continue to be accepted for settlement of payments, then why would holders come forward for exchange or deposit in the bank account? To understand the real intent behind the RBI move, we need to know to what use Rs 2000 notes worth Rs 362,000 crore (as on March 31, 2023) are being put. Do these support legitimate economic activity or people are simply using them to ‘hoard their unaccounted income? It can’t be the former; had it been the case then, given the RBI issuing predominantly Rs 500 notes after March 31, 2017, Rs 2000 notes would have disappeared by now.

The bulk of these notes are likely held as black money. Daily reports of enforcement agencies raids yielding a mountain of cash from the premises of dubious bureaucrats, politicians, businesspersons and so on confirm this. Unfortunately, the measures outlined in the RBI circular and subsequent clarifications given by the governor and public sector banks (PSBs) such as the State Bank of India (SBI) fail to address this menace.

The RBI allows a person to exchange Rs 2,000 banknotes with other denominations up to a limit of ten notes of Rs 20,000 value ‘at a time’ in banks. While exchanging he is not required to share his identity. This means he can visit a branch any number of times in a day and increase the value of exchange. By doing say ten trips, he can get rid of Rs 2 lakhs worth of black money in a day. If this is repeated for 131 days, he can dis-

pose of Rs 262 lakh.

Under such an arrangement which doesn’t insist on the identity at the time of exchange, a person holding say Rs 100 crore in Rs 2000 notes as ‘unaccounted cash’ can get this exchanged with smaller denominations of Rs 500/100 notes by hiring a number persons to visit branches of any number of banks and repeat for over 4 months. With anonymity preserved, he could go for a less tedious process. He could simply conspire with the bank manager - under a quid pro quo - to have those Rs 100 crore exchanged. All that the latter needs to do is to show in records multiple entries of Rs 20,000 each.

The circular also allows a person to deposit Rs 2000 notes into his bank account without any limit. For deposits above a specified limit (Rs 10 lakh in a savings account), the bank is required to report to the income tax department. But, the hoarder of black cash won’t take this route when the other option (read: exchange) where he can remain anonymous, is available.

To conclude, far from combating black money, the RBI operation will only help hoarders keep it in a safer zone by exchanging Rs 2000 notes with smaller denomination Rs 500 notes without having to disclose their identity. The RBI/government should go for a course correction. First, it should say upfront that ‘from October 1, 2023, Rs 2000 note won’t be legal tender. Second, for every exchange, the bank should insist on a person’s identity either PAN or Aadhaar. Third, for depositing money in the account, the banks should strictly enforce KYC norms.

Govt OK's ₹1L-cr for massive co-op grain storage capacity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹1 lakh crore programme to create a massive grain storage capacity in the cooperative sector to reduce crop damages and prevent distress sales by farmers, besides strengthening the country's food security. The Government is planning to create 700 lakh tonne of grain storage capacity in the cooperative sector over the next five years and said the move will also help in creating job opportunities in rural India.

Briefing media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Cabinet has approved the "world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector". On investment, he said the programme will start "with an expenditure of around Rs 1 lakh crore". As per the plan, a godown of 2,000 tonne capacity will be established in each block.

This will help in strengthening the cooperative sector, as



Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) can diversify into the storage of food grains. There are 1 lakh PACS in the country, out of which around 63,000 are functional. Thakur said the country's foodgrains production is around 3,100 lakh tonne, while the storage capacity is only 47 per cent of the total output.

In developed economies, he said, the storage capacities are higher than output. Asked about the source of funding, Thakur said the funds available in Ministries of agriculture, food processing and food and consumer affairs would be

utilised. At present, the total grain storage capacity in the country is about 1,450 lakh tonne, he said, adding that 700 lakh tonne storage capacity will now be established in the cooperative sector. This will take the total capacity to 2,150 lakh tonne.

On benefits, the minister said the creation of decentralised storage capacity at the local level would reduce food grain wastage and strengthen the food security of the country. This would hugely reduce the cost incurred in the transportation of food grains to procurement centres and again

transporting the stocks back from warehouses to ration shops, he said.

According to an official statement, the Cabinet approved the Constitution and Empowerment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for the facilitation of the 'world's largest grain storage plan in Cooperative Sector' by the convergence of various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Ministry of Food Processing Industries. To ensure time-bound and uniform implementation of the plan, the Ministry of Cooperation will implement a pilot project in at least 10 selected districts of different states/UTs in the country. The IMC will be constituted under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Cooperation, with the Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Minister of Food Processing Industries and Secretaries concerned as members.

Fish moving to colder regions, deep waters due to global warming: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to stay cool as global warming makes their current swimming zones hot, the majority of fish populations in the sea are either moving towards colder waters nearer the north and south poles or deeper waters, as per a study on the impact of climate change on oceans.

The researchers from the University of Glasgow in the UK found that, in response to ocean warming, many marine fish populations are shifting towards the Earth's poles or are moving to deeper waters.

For marine life such as fish, the temperature of the surrounding water affects critical functions such as metabolism, growth and reproduction.

Marine species also often have a very narrow livable temperature range making even small differences in the water impossible to cope with. As a result, marine life changes caused by global warming have been up to seven-fold faster than animal responses on land, the researchers said.



The study, published in the journal Global Change Biology, examined data on 115 species spanning all major oceanic regions, totalling 595 marine fish population responses to rising sea temperatures.

"We observed a striking trend (where) species living in areas that are warming faster are also showing the most rapid shifts in their geographical distributions," said Carolin Dahms, lead author of the study.

"It's possible that the rate of warming in some regions may be too fast for fish to adapt, and so relocating may be their best coping strategy. At the same time we see that their ability to do so is also impacted by other factors such as fishing, with commercially exploited species moving more slowly," Dahms said.

Chopper MH-60R made maiden landing on aircraft carrier INS Vikrant: Navy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to commence flight operations from the indigenously-designed and built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, the maiden landing of MH-60R helicopter was undertaken on Tuesday, Navy officials said here on Wednesday.

"In another milestone for the Indian Navy, MH60R helicopter undertakes maiden landing on the indigenously designed and constructed aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant. A major boost to the Indian Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare and Fleet Support capability," a Navy statement said.

The helicopter landing took place days after the aircraft carrier witnessed night landing of MG-29 K fighter jets last week.

Giving details of the landing in pitch dark conditions considered to be demanding, officials had said this landing was indicative of Navy's impetus towards 'aatmanirbharta'.



This challenging night landing trial also demonstrates the resolve, skill and professionalism of the Vikrant crew and the naval pilots, they added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the Navy for undertaking a successful night landing and said, "This remarkable achievement is a testimony to the skills, perseverance and professionalism of the Vikrant crew and Naval pilots. Kudos to them."

Landing fighter jets on a normal runway is different compared to landing on a flight deck of an aircraft carrier due to the shorter length of the deck.

Delhi HC refuses to quash CBI case against RAW official for revealing secrets in book

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to quash a CBI case registered against a former RAW official for allegedly revealing secret information in his book 'India's External Intelligence- Secrets of Research and Analysis Wing'. Justice Mukta Gupta dismissed the petition by Major-General (retired) VK Singh seeking quashing of the case against him under the Official Secrets Act, and said whether the revelations in the book were likely to affect the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country was a matter of trial and what prejudices national security cannot be decided by courts.

"It would be a matter of trial after the witnesses are examined to see whether the revelations by the petitioner in his book is likely to affect the sovereignty and integrity of



India and/or the security of the State. In view of the discussion aforesaid, this Court finds no merit in the petition. Petition and application are dismissed," said the court.

The petitioner, who is a former joint secretary of India's external spy agency, contended his intention to write the book was to highlight issues of lack of accountability and corruption in Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the allegation of revealing secrets harmful to the country's security and sovereignty were totally baseless and unfounded. Singh retired from service in June 2002 and his book was published in June 2007. The

FIR was registered against him in 2008.

The court observed that although the "entire tenor" of the book highlighted certain irregularities at RAW, the grievance of the CBI was with respect to the use of names of officers, location of the places and recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GOM) etc. It noted the petitioner reproduced the recommendations of the GOM verbatim and that he has, in another matter, himself said similar revelations made by two other authors and publishers amounted to an offence under the Official Secrets Act.

"This Court ...Has noted that what prejudices the national security cannot be decided by the courts. Even in the present case, the recommendations of the GOM, which were deleted from publication, have been reproduced verbatim by the petitioner," it stated.

PFI radicalisation of youth in Bihar town: NIA raids 25 spots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Intelligence Agency (NIA) on Wednesday raided 25 locations in three States in connection with the 2022 Popular Front of India (PFI) Phulwari Sharif conspiracy to radicalise and train its cadres and members for carrying out acts of terror and violence.

The NIA conducted searches at the premises of suspects in Katihar district of Bihar, Dakshina Kannada, and Shimoga districts of Karnataka; and Kasaragod, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala, the NIA said.

A slew of digital devices, including mobile phones, hard disk, SIM cards, pen-drives, data cards, incriminating documents and materials related to

the banned organisation were seized during the searches.

The agency also seized Indian currency of the face value of ₹17,50,100. So far, a total of 85 locations have been raided during investigations of the case. Acting on a tip-off, Bihar police had carried out a raid at the rented premises of one Athar Parvez on July 11, 2022, and had seized incriminating articles related to PFI including a document titled "India 2047 Towards Rule of Islamic India, Internal Document: Not for circulation".

Athar Parvez was arrested, along with other accused, identified as Md. Jalaluddin Khan, Arman Malik alias Imteyaz Anwer and Nooruddin Zangi alias Advocate Nooruddin.

A chargesheet was filed by NIA against these four on January 7, 2023.

India equipped with modern tech for any robust response if needed: Army chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With rapid modernization of the armed forces thereby enhancing their operational readiness, Army Chief General Manoj Pande said here on Wednesday India stands enabled not just for deterrence but also to undertake robust response if required. It was in apparent reference to China and Pakistan.

Speaking at the Brahmos User Meet, Pande said "Today the nation is at the cusp of transformational changes, we are witness to the growing stature of our country in the international environment and higher expectations from the world community. Our current growth and development, and the rising aspirations of our people, all reflect the confident optimism of a rising nation".

"Due to our legacy issues of unsettled borders and related



security challenges, possession of strategic deterrence instruments in our case is essential. And the three services of the defence forces as users of the Brahmos missile system, now stand enabled to not just stand deterrence but also to respond robustly when required," the Army chief said.

Addressing the meet, IAF chief V R Chaudhari highlighted the role of BrahMos supersonic missile and said it has galvanized India's firepower.

"As one of our most lethal air-combat assets, the BrahMos

supersonic missile has really galvanized the way we will equip ourselves with precision firepower in the coming years. Seeing the conflicts that are happening across the globe the importance of precision, long-range firepower can't be underscored," he said.

Chaudhari said the BrahMos missile has added to the deterrence capabilities of the IAF. "The combination of BrahMos on the Sukhoi Su-30 has really given us a tremendous capability that has enhanced our firepower. It has made the deterrence value of the IAF go up by leaps and bounds," he said.

The Air Force Chief also said "As the situation unfolded in Northern borders three years ago, we realised that the potent weapon can be used very effectively for land attacks." He also said smaller versions of the next-generation BrahMos missiles are being developed for fitment to other combat aircraft.

EAM to take part in BRICS conclave in SA, make maiden visit to Namibia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit South Africa and Namibia starting Thursday. During his three-day visit to Capetown, he will participate in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) conclave.

Thereafter, Jaishankar will travel to Namibia for a visit from June 4 to 6, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) here on Wednesday.

Incidentally, it will be the first visit by an Indian External Affairs Minister to Namibia.

The BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade.

Besides, Jaishankar will also hold a bilateral meeting with his South African counterpart Naledi Pandor.

IAF's Rafales carry out six-hour mission in Indian Ocean Region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to hone combat-readiness of its Rafale jet fleet, IAF's four Rafales recently carried out a "strategic" mission lasting more than six hours in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The sortie was a significant demonstration of the long range combat capabilities. The mission took place at a time when China has significantly increased its presence in the strategically important Indian Ocean.

Giving details of the mission, sources said here on Wednesday the Rafale jets took off from the Hasimara Air Force station in the eastern sector, carried out the mission involving various manoeuvres and simulated operations and returned to the base after meeting the desired results.

The mission by the four Rafale jets demonstrated their operational capabilities and readiness in dealing with various challenging situations, sources said but refrained from divulging details. The IAF also tweeted about the mission.

"Four IAF Rafales flew a long range mission for over six hours into the IOR. The aircraft 'fought' their way through a large force engagement en route to their Weapon Release Point. Pickle on time, weapon on target-the IAF way!" it said. The IAF too did not divulge the day of



the operation.

The Rafale jets are India's first major acquisition of fighter planes in 23 years after the Sukhoi jets were imported from Russia. The French manufactured Rafale jets are capable of carrying a range of potent weapons.

At present, the IAF has 36 Rafale jets with one squadron (a squadron has 18 jets) based at Ambala to look after the western sector including China and Pakistan and the other squadron in Hasimara, West Bengal to cover the entire eastern sector facing China.

Induction process of Rafale jets started in 2020 and ended last year. India and France inked a government to government deal in 2016 for acquiring 36 Rafale jets from its manufacturer Dassault. The deal is worth over 7 billion Euros.

Prachanda in Delhi on four-day visit to India

Nepal PM to discuss host of issues with PM Modi; visit Ujjain, Indore

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' arrived here on Wednesday on his first overseas visit after assuming office in December last year. He was welcomed by Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi at the airport. He is here on a four-day visit to India.

"The visit will impart renewed momentum to the close and unique India-Nepal relationship," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

Prachanda will hold delegation-level talks with Modi on June , according to reports from Kathmandu. The talks will be followed by a joint press meet by the two Prime Ministers. Modi will host a luncheon in honour of his counterpart from Nepal and his delegation.

Reports from Kathmandu said Prachanda will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders to further strengthen the age-old, multifaceted and cordial ties.



The visiting Prime Minister will address the Indian business community and meet the Indian President and Vice President in New Delhi. The Prime Minister is also scheduled to visit Ujjain and Indore, Madhya Pradesh after completing his engagements in New Delhi.

The two Prime Ministers will remotely inaugurate the railway yard in Biratnagar, the Jaynagar-Janakpur railway that has been expanded up to the Bijalpura, and the integrated check posts in Biratnagar and Nepalgunj, it said.

Prachanda would also raise long-term power trade issues with New Delhi, hoping that this "bottleneck" will be sorted out and ensure that the Himalayan nation will be a favourable market for its surplus energy.

SII asks Health Min to allow in-house testing of Cy-Tb jab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) has urged the Union Health Ministry to allow in-house testing of its Cy-Tb injection for the detection of latent tuberculosis, saying the testing facility for this product is not available in any Government lab, official sources said on Wednesday. A letter in this regard was written by Prakash Kumar Singh, Director at SII. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approved market authorisation of Cy-Tb injection on May 9, 2022, but even after a year of approval, Cy-Tb is not available in the market due to the non-availability of testing facility in any Government lab, Singh wrote. Singh is also learnt to have mentioned that Cy-Tb is important for the detection of latent TB and the Government should allow it so that the injection can be made available in India and the world at large.

Junk food affects deep sleep, immunity: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Consuming an unhealthy diet is associated with a lower quality of deep sleep, the third stage of sleep, repairs and restores necessary functions such as memory, muscle growth, and immunity.

Researchers at Uppsala University in Sweden analysed how junk food affects sleep. Healthy participants consumed an unhealthy as well as a healthier diet in a randomised order.

The study, recently published in the journal Obesity, shows that after eating the junk food, the quality of the participants' deep sleep deteriorated, compared with those who followed the healthier diet.

"Both poor diet and poor sleep increase the risk of several public health conditions," said Jonathan Cedernaes, Associate Professor at Uppsala University.



A total of 15 healthy normal-weight young men participated in two sessions of the study. Participants were first screened for aspects such as their sleep habits, which had to be normal and within the recommended range of seven to nine hours per night.

The participants were randomly given both a healthier diet and an unhealthy diet. The two diets contained the same number of calories, adjusted to each individual's daily requirements.

Among other things, the healthier diet contained a higher content of sugar and saturated fat and more processed food items. Each diet was consumed for a week, while the participants' sleep, activity and meal schedules were monitored at an individual level.

"What we saw was that the participants slept for the same amount of time when they consumed the two diets. This was the case both while they were following the diets, as well as after they had switched to another, identical diet," said Cedernaes.

The researchers looked at slow-wave activity, a measure that can reflect how restorative deep sleep is.

"Intriguingly, we saw that deep sleep exhibited less slow-wave activity when the participants had eaten junk food, compared with consumption of healthier food," Cedernaes said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Used for smoothening wrinkles, correcting frown lines, and combating the signs of aging, now it has been found that drugs applied for the Botox procedure can cause paralysis, as per a recent study by the researchers from the University of Queensland.

Botox is a toxin produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum. The treatment was initially developed for eye conditions such as strabismus and as a quick remedy to relieve migraine and chronic pain. However, in recent years, Botox treatment found uses in plas-

tic surgeries and gained popularity in the cosmetic industry.

Although muscle paralysis was a known side effect of Botox treatment, earlier research could not identify how the neurotoxin worked to relax muscles.

In the latest study, the researchers evaluated how Clostridium botulinum damages the communication between the brain neurons, resulting in paralysis.

"We used super-resolution microscopy to show that a receptor called Synaptotagmin 1 binds to two other previously known clostridial neurotoxin receptors to form a tiny complex that sits on the plas-



ma membrane of neurons," Frederic Meunier, a lead-author of the study, said.

"The toxin hijacks this complex and enters the synaptic vesicles, which store neurotransmitters critical to communication between neurons. Botox then interrupts the com-

munication between nerves and muscle cells, causing paralysis," Meunier explained.

The discovery also opens the potential to identify new therapeutic targets for effective treatments of botulism--a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection caused by Clostridium botulinum.

"Clostridial neurotoxins are among the most potent protein toxins known to humans. We now have a full picture of how these toxins are internalized to intoxicate neurons at therapeutically relevant concentrations," Dr. Merja Joensuu, another co-researcher of the study from UQ's Queensland Brain Institute, said.

Meghalaya reservation: Govt reconstitutes panel

State Law Minister to head the committee

PTI ■ SHILLONG

The Meghalaya Government has reconstituted a committee to review the state reservation policy in the backdrop of an indefinite hunger strike launched by the opposition Voice of the People's Party (VPP) seeking changes to the existing reservation formula, an official said on Wednesday.

The committee was reconstituted on Tuesday and will hold a meeting with political parties on the issue on Wednesday, he said.

The committee will be headed by the State Law Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh. A final decision on the reservation policy will, however, be taken only after Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma holds a meeting, his deputy Sniawbhalang Dhar told PTI on Wednesday.

"The issue is sensitive and needs to be discussed at length. However, it should not be discussed in the streets but across the table ... The government will take a decision with the best interests of the people



and the state in mind," he said. The VPP is raking up the reservation issue, which does not have the support of the other parties, he claimed.

The party is demanding the review of the "outdated and unfair" job reservation policy in existence in the state. A hunger strike by its president Ardent Basaiawmoit here, on the issue entered its ninth day on Wednesday.

The party, which has four MLAs in the 60-member House, is demanding a review of the 40:40 job reservation for Khasi-Jaintia community and Garos. The party claims that the population of the Khasis has increased and hence there was a need for a review. The committee invited the agitating

VPP MLAs for talks on Wednesday, which was promptly refused.

Basaiaawmoit said the agitation will be withdrawn only if the government expresses its readiness to review the 1972 job reservation policy which awarded 40 per cent of reserved jobs to Garos, 40 per cent for Khasi-Jaintia tribes, 5 per cent for other tribes and 15 per cent for general category candidates.

"Our stand was made clear to the government. I will not leave the venue (of the hunger strike) till the government agrees to review the job reservation policy," he said. Dhar criticised Basaiawmoit's absence at the all-political party meeting on Tuesday last week which was chaired by Sangma.

A government-instituted committee on reservation roster had met on Monday too but the VPP and several organisations did not attend it. Lyngdoh said the committee will inform the government on the need for a discussion since there is a demand to review the reservation policy.

Af-made cooker IED found in anti- infiltration op

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Famous Afghan pots, made of aluminium and used for cooking delicious recipes, have now been introduced by the Pakistan based terrorist handlers to trigger powerful explosions targeting security convoys inside the Indian territory.

On Wednesday one such pressure cooker, made in Afghanistan, was recovered by the Indian troops after they successfully foiled a major infiltration bid along the line of control in Poonch.

The IED weighed approximately 10 Kgs and had markings of a local manufacturer identified as Pir Baba, makers of Afghan Pressure cookers.

Indian army troops also managed to apprehend three terrorists after a brief exchange of firing in which one of the jawans also received injuries.

According to a Jammu based Defence Spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Devender Anand, "during the intervening night of May 30-31 a joint team of security forces intercepted a group of terrorists attempting to infiltrate inside the Indian territory taking advantage of the bad weather conditions and heavy rains in the region". Lt Col Anand said, "around 1.30 a.m when an Indian army ambush challenged the group of terrorists they were fired



upon. In the retaliatory firefight terrorists received injuries. The blood trails have been traced in the forward area", he added.

The Defence Spokesman said, during the search operations in the area the security forces apprehended three terrorists with some weapons, war like stores including one pressure cooker IED and packets of narcotics.

During their preliminary interrogation the apprehended terrorists revealed their sinister plot to target the security forces with the help of pressure

cooker IED. One Indian Army soldier was injured in the ensuing firing and has been evacuated. Search operations are in progress, the defence spokesman added.

The security forces have recovered 01x AK-56 Rifle with balance 10 rounds in the magazine(rest ammunition has been fired by the terrorist who is subsequently injured), 02x Pistol with 02x Magazines and 70 rounds, 01x IED of approx 10-12 kg, 06x Chinese Grenades and 20 Packets of Narcotics.

NIA raids 51 J&K areas to nip new ultra groups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday cracked down once again on the newly floated terrorist outfits in Jammu and Kashmir, and seized incriminating literature and several digital devices.

The searches were conducted at three locations in the Kashmir Valley at the residential premises of sympathisers/cadres, hybrid terrorists and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) linked with the newly-formed offshoots and affiliates of several proscribed

Pakistan-backed terror outfits, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al-Badr and Al-Qaeda among others, the NIA said in a statement here.

"The day-long raids and searches were conducted at locations in Srinagar and Budgam districts, as part of the ongoing NIA investigations into the activities of the recently formed terrorist groups, including The Resistance Front (TRF), United Liberation Front Jammu & Kashmir (ULFJ&K), Mujahideen Gazwat-ul-Hind

(MGH), Jammu & Kashmir Freedom Fighters (JKFF), Kashmir Tigers and PAAF," the agency said. As many as 51 locations have been searched recently in connection with the terror conspiracy case which was registered suo moto by NIA on June 21, 2022.

The case relates to hatching of a conspiracy, both physical and in cyber space, and plans by the proscribed terrorist organisations to unleash violent terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir with sticky bombs, IEDs and small arms. The plans are part of a

larger conspiracy to carry out acts of terror and violence, by radicalising local youth and mobilising overground workers, to disturb the peace and communal harmony of Jammu and Kashmir.

Cadres and workers of the newly formed outfits have been found to be involved in the collection and distribution of sticky bombs/magnetic bombs, IEDs, funds, narcotic substances and arms/ammunition, it said. Such outfits are spreading its wings relating to terror, violence and subversion in Jammu and Kashmir, the NIA probe has revealed.

Few legislators from Shinde group in touch with Uddhav Sena, claims Sanjay Raut

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Wednesday claimed some lawmakers from the Shiv Sena headed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde were in touch with the Uddhav Thackeray-led party.

His remarks came a day after an editorial in the Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' claimed 22 MLAs and nine MPs from rival Shiv Sena were feeling suffocated due to "step-motherly treatment" by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and could quit the group led by CM Shinde. Asked whether lawmakers from the rival Sena camp are in touch with the Shiv Sena (UBT), Raut, who is the party's spokesperson, told reporters here, "Communication is always there. They (those from Shinde camp) ventilate their grievance, but it is not right to tell this publicly. They

have made a mistake (to leave Uddhav Thackeray) and they have to handle it."

"Those in the Shinde group will have to contest on the BJP symbol. This is the stand of the BJP. We have this information," the Rajya Sabha member further said. Latching on to Shiv Sena MP Gajanan Kirtikar's remark that his party was getting step-motherly treatment, the editorial in 'Saamana' on Tuesday dubbed the Shinde group MLAs and MPs as "hens and cocks" imprisoned in the BJP's coop and added that it cannot be said when they could be slaughtered.

The Thackeray-headed Shiv Sena (then undivided) exited National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2019 and joined hands with Congress and Nationalist Congress Party to form a government in Maharashtra. PTI

Maha renames Ahmednagar dist after Ahilyadevi Holkar

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major announcement made on the occasion of 298th birth anniversary of queen of Malwa kingdom Ahilyadevi Holkar, Maharashtra Chief Minister Shinde said here on Wednesday that the Ahmednagar district would be renamed 'Ahilyadevi Holkar Nagar' in her memory.

Simultaneously, State Health Minister Girish Mahajan announced the naming of a new government medical college at the NCP chief Sharad Pawar's home town of Baramati in Pune district after Ahilyadevi Holkar.

Speaking at a function organised on the 298th birth anniversary of Ahilyadevi Holkar at her native village of Chaundi that he and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis attended, Shinde

made a formal announcement about the re-christening of Ahmednagar district as Ahilyadevi Holkar Nagar.

Ahilyadevi, the Holkar Queen of the Maratha Malwa kingdom who is known for building temples and 'dharamshalas' throughout India, was born in Chaundi in Ahmednagar district on May 31, 1795. She ruled the Malwa kingdom from 1767 to 1795.

Minutes after Fadnavis expressed desire that Ahmednagar district be renamed as 'Ahilyadevi Holkar Nagar', Shinde said: "All of us want Ahmednagar district be renamed after Ahilyadevi Holkar. Keeping that in view, I announce that the state government is renaming Ahmednagar district 'Ahilyadevi Holkar Nagar'".

Heaping praise on Ahilyadevi Holkar, Fadnavis said: "If Rajmata Ahilyadevi Holkar weren't there, Kashi wouldn't have remained in a form it is today. If she wasn't there, we wouldn't have temples of Lord Shiva. That's why people want Ahmednagar renamed Ahilyanagar." "We are the people who chant the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. We have renamed Aurangabad as Sambhajanagar under your (Shinde's) leadership, we have renamed Osmanabad as Dharashiv.

The chief minister himself is 'mawala' (soldier) of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. That being the case, Ahmednagar will be renamed as Ahilyanagar," the deputy chief minister said. Later in his speech, Shinde said: "Ahilyadevi's maiden name is Shinde. Even I am a Shinde.Ahilyadevi Holkar is an inspiration for all of us.

Savitribai Phule: Maha CM orders action against two sites over offensive content

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious cognisance of offensive articles published against Savitribai Phule in two websites, Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday directed the State chief Secretary to initiate stern action against two websites in question for putting out defamatory content against Maharashtra's iconic social reformer.

The chief minister's directive to the state chief secretary came hours after a delegation of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) -- led by its state president Jayant Patil and leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Ajit Pawar -- met Mumbai Commissioner of Police Vivek Phansalkar and demanded action against the two websites. They also

demanding that the defamatory content against Savitribai Phule be removed from the two websites. Apart from Patil and Pawar, the other NCP leaders who were part of the delegation that met the Mumbai Police Commissioner included senior leader Chhagan Bhujbal and MP Sunil Tatkare. They submitted a two-page memorandum to the Police Commissioner, listing the names of the websites and their offensive remarks.

Among other things, the memorandum submitted by the NCP delegation said that a person claiming to be some 'Bharadwaj' had made the scurrilous remarks against Savitribai (1831-1897) who is considered the pioneer of women's education from the mid-1850s - who is revered in the state and country.

2 dead, 6 critical as molten iron falls on workers at Bankura factory

PTI ■ DURGAPUR/BANKURA,

Two workers of a sponge iron factory in West Bengal's Bankura district succumbed to their burn injuries on Wednesday, while six others are fighting for their lives after molten iron fell on them, officials said.

The accident happened at a factory in Ghutgarya in Barjora around 9 am on Tuesday, injuring at least 17 people, they said. Eight of them were admitted to a private hospital in Durgapur where two persons died in the early hours of Wednesday while undergoing treatment, officials said.

The conditions of the other six people are also critical as they have received over 80 per cent burn injuries, doctors treating them said.

FROM PAGE 1

CONG GUARANTEES BETRAYAL OF YOUR TRUST: MODI

Modi launched the BJP's month-long country-wide 'Maha Jansampark' which includes over 51 huge rallies, public meetings at more than 500 places, and over 600 Press conferences in over 500 Lok Sabha and 4,000 Vidhan Sabha constituencies. Around five lakh "distinguished families" will also be contacted in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

In the backdrop of the Congress winning the Karnataka elections where it offered five pre-poll guarantees, Modi in his rally cautioned voters in Rajasthan not to be swayed by the Congress' guarantees.

"This 'guarantee habit' of the Congress is not new, it is old. 50 years ago, the Congress gave the 'garibi hatao' slogan to the country. This is the Congress party's biggest treachery with the poor," said Modi.

He further said, "The Congress' strategy has been to trick the poor. People of Rajasthan have suffered due to this. The policy of the Congress has been to cheat the poor and make them suffer. The people of Rajasthan have also suffered a lot due to this."

Reminding people of nine years of his Government at the Centre, Modi said, "Nine years of BJP Government were dedicated to the service of the people of the country, good governance and welfare of the poor." All top BJP leaders from Rajasthan, including the freshly-inducted Law Minister Arjun Meghwal accompanied Modi during the rally.

HINDU WOMEN PLEA MAINTAINABLE: HC

On the other hand, the counsel representing the Hindu women had taken the plea that old maps showed the existence of sculptures of Hindu deities in the Gyanvapi mosque structure and the Hindu devotees were regularly worshipping Shringar Gauri and other deities on the outer wall of Gyanvapi since long.

They said it was only in 1993 that the then government restrained regular worship and they were permitted to worship only once a month. Hence, the Act of 1991 is not applicable to them. Further, they claimed, the place in dispute is not a Waqf property.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad welcomed the Allahabad High Court's decision.

"The technical objections have been

negated. The suit would now proceed on merits and we do see success at the end of the tunnel," VHP national working president Alok Kumar said.

"We hope that now the suit will expeditiously proceed towards a final judgment," he added.

COPS REFUTE CLAIM OF 'NO AMPLE PROOF' AGAINST WFI CHIEF

The Delhi Police on Wednesday also cordoned off India Gate even though there was no formal announcement by the police about the decision to bar the entry of the public. Early on Wednesday, the underpass leading to the India Gate lawns was blocked for pedestrian visitors but vehicles were allowed to pass on the roads running across the lawns. Policemen were also deployed at different points to ensure that people did not make their way to the lawns.

"The grass was damaged in the recent rains. To help the grass grow, they needed to be left alone for a day or two without the public stamping it," an officer said.

"It is also a preventive measure by us to keep the wrestlers away from landing up here to protest," he added.

Meanwhile, taking a serious note, DCW chief tweeted, "A man posing as the uncle of a minor girl who had filed a complaint against Brij Bhushan is revealing the identity of the girl by showing her documents to the Press. I am giving notice to the police. There should be an FIR against this man under the POCSO Act. Are they letting Brij Bhushan roam free so that the victim can be pressured?."

AAP WANTS POWER OVER BABUS TO HALT PROBES: MAKEN

Interestingly, Kejriwal has sought an appointment with the Congress leadership on the issue of the Ordinance but his request has been kept on hold so far.

"Will be meeting Tamil Nadu CM Thiru @mkstalin in Chennai tomorrow (June 1) to seek DMK's support against Centre's unconstitutional-undemocratic 'Anti-Delhi' Ordinance," he tweeted on Wednesday. "Day after tomorrow, on June 2, I will meet Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in Ranchi. Will seek his support against the Ordinance promulgated by Modi Government against the people of Delhi," he

said in another tweet.

On the other hand, taking to Twitter, Maken alleged that Kejriwal's true motives are exposed as he "aims to take control" over the vigilance department and is "challenging" decades of established governance norms. "Investigations into scandals like liquor-gate, Sheeshmahal (his lavish 171-crore residence violating MPD 2021 rules), Power Subsidy scam, bus purchase scam, and others will reveal the extent of corruption within his administration. And this is what he wants to stop," the Congress leader alleged.

"Kejriwal is openly seeking enhanced powers over services, aiming to take control over the vigilance department and challenging decades of established governance norms. He conveniently downplays his true intentions," Maken tweeted. "Let's not forget that the powers Kejriwal seeks were intentionally vested in the Central Government by eminent leaders like Ambedkar, Nehru, Patel, Shastri, Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee, and Manmohan Singh to prevent a multiplicity of authority in the National Capital Territory," Maken said on Wednesday.

INDIA FIRST TO REGULATE ANTI-TOBACCO WARNINGS ON OTT PLATFORMS

"Today's 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," she said.

According to the notification, publishers of online curated content displaying tobacco products or their use will be required to display anti-tobacco health spots each of a minimum of 30 seconds at the beginning and middle of the show.

They shall also be required to exhibit an anti-tobacco health warning as a prominent static message at the bottom of the screen when tobacco products or their use are displayed during the show.

Also, an audio-visual disclaimer of a minimum of 20 seconds on the ill-effects of tobacco use will also have to be displayed at the beginning and in the middle of the programme, the source stated.

"The anti-tobacco health warning message as specified in clause(b) of sub-rule (1) shall be legible and readable, with font in black colour on white background and with the warnings "Tobacco causes cancer" or "Tobacco kills" the notification stated.

Besides, the anti-tobacco health warning

messages, health spots and audio-visual disclaimers will have to be in the same language as used in the online curated content.

INDIA'S FEAT IN 10 YRS ASTONISHING: MORGAN STANLEY

Also, there has been a major shift in the consumption basket following lower volatility in inflation and shallower interest rate cycles.

All these have led to a profit boom for corporate and stock market investors and a breakdown in correlation with global oil prices. "Indian stocks have become more defensive," it said.

The steady increase in manufacturing and capex as a percentage of GDP is likely to result in "a new cycle in manufacturing and capex, as we estimate the share of both to rise in GDP by approximately 5ppt by 2031," it said, adding India's export market share will rise to 4.5 per cent by 2031, nearly 2x from 2021 levels, with broad-based gains across goods and services exports.

"As India's per capita income increases from USD 2,200 currently to about USD 5,200 by 2032, this will have major implications for change in the consumption basket, with an impetus to discretionary consumption," it said. "We expect inflation to remain benign and less volatile, which would imply shallower rate cycles. Shallower rate cycles could also imply more benign equity market cycles."

On the benign trend in the current account deficit, it said it believes "India's structural transformation will feed into the saving-investment dynamics, implying gains for its external balance sheet, with a progressively narrower trend in the CAD."

"The share of profits in GDP has doubled from all-time lows hit in 2020 and are set to rise further -- maybe even double from here -- leading to strong absolute and relative earnings. This explains India's apparently rich headline equity valuations. Triggered by supply-side reforms by the government, we expect a major rise in investments, a moderation in the CAD and an increase in credit to GDP to support the coming profit growth," it said.

The brokerage saw a lower correlation with oil prices as well as with the US recession. "As India's reliance on global capital market flows has reduced, the market's sensitivity to a US recession and US Fed rate changes also seems to be fading.

"This reflects persistent domestic

TMC hits the streets in favour of grapplers

Kolkata: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday hit the streets against the alleged mishandling of wrestlers in Delhi when they were trying to move towards new Parliament building on Sunday. The new parliament building was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday amid boycott by a large number of opposition parties.

Banerjee, who had on Tuesday criticized the alleged police attack on the wrestlers "who had brought fame to our country," led a 2-km procession from Hazra Road in south Kolkata to Rabindra Sadan.

Players and functionaries of Kolkata's big three clubs -- Mohan Bagan Club, East Bengal Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club -- took part in the rally, iterating that the rally would continue on Thursday too. Banerjee said, "We are with the wrestlers in their fight and so we have taken out this rally which will continue tomorrow also ... Wrestlers are the pride of our country." Wondering as to why the person who had been "accused of physical assault" on wrestlers was not being arrested, Banerjee had said on Tuesday, that people (BJP leaders) who were busy in Puja Paath (worship) had forgotten that such holy activities suit only those people who worship humanity.

Banerjee, who has no love lost with the BJP Government is likely to attend the meeting of the opposition leaders this month in Patna. "I am with all those parties that oppose the BJP and will support them," subject to conditions of reciprocation, Banerjee had said. PNS

Ahead of House debt ceiling vote, Biden shores up Democrats

McCarthy scrambles for GOP support

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Hard-fought to the end, the debt ceiling and budget cuts package is heading toward a crucial US House vote as President Joe Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy assemble a coalition of centrist Democrats and Republicans to push it to passage over fierce blowback from conservatives and some progressive dissent.

Biden is sending top White House officials to meet early Wednesday at the Capitol to shore up support ahead of voting. McCarthy is working furiously to sell sceptical fellow Republicans, even fending

off challenges to his leadership, in the rush to avert a potentially disastrous U.S. default.

Despite deep disappointment from right-flank Republicans that the compromise falls short of the spending cuts they demanded, McCarthy insisted he would have the votes needed to ensure approval.

“We’re going to pass the bill,” McCarthy said as he exited a lengthy Tuesday night meeting at the Capitol.

Quick approval by the House and later in the week the Senate would ensure government checks will continue to go out to Social Security recipients, veterans and others and would prevent financial upheaval at home and abroad.

Next Monday is when the Treasury has said the U.S. would run short of money to pay its debts, risking an eco-

nomically dangerous default.

The package leaves few lawmakers fully satisfied, but Biden and McCarthy are counting on pulling majority support from the political centre, a rarity in divided Washington, testing the leadership of the Democratic president and the Republican speaker.

Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years, suspends the debt ceiling into January 2025 and changes policies, including new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and greenlighting an Appalachian natural gas line that many Democrats oppose.

For more than two hours late Tuesday as aides wheeled in pizza at the Capitol, McCarthy walked Republicans through the details, fielded questions and encouraged



Scott Perry,left, and Chip Roy, R-Texas, speak with reporters as member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus talk about the debt limit deal during a news conference Tuesday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Agencies

them not to lose sight of the bill’s budget savings.

The speaker faced a sometimes tough crowd. Leaders of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus spent the day lambasting the compromise as falling well short of the spending cuts they demand, and they vowed to try to halt passage by

Congress.

“This deal fails, fails completely,” Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the chairman of the Freedom Caucus, said earlier in the day, flanked by others outside the Capitol. “We will do everything in our power to stop it.”

A much larger conservative faction, the Republican Study Committee, declined to take a position. Even rank-and-file centrist conservatives were unsure, leaving McCarthy desperately hunting for votes.

Rep. Nancy Mace, R-S.C., said after the “healthy debate” late into the night she was still a no.

Ominously, the conservatives warned of potentially trying to oust McCarthy over the compromise.

“There’s going to be a reckoning,” said Rep. Chip Roy of Texas. Biden was speak-

ing directly to lawmakers, making more than 100 one-on-one calls, the White House said. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the spending restrictions in the package would reduce deficits by \$1.5 trillion over the decade, a top goal for the Republicans trying to curb the debt load.

McCarthy told lawmakers that number was higher if the two-year spending caps were extended, which is no guarantee. But in a surprise that could further erode Republican support, the GOP’s drive to impose work requirements on older Americans receiving food stamps ends up boosting spending by \$2.1 billion over the time period.

That’s because the final deal exempted veterans and homeless people, expanding the food stamp rolls by 78,000

people monthly, the CBO said.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said it was up to McCarthy to turn out votes from some two-thirds of the Republican majority, a high bar the speaker may not be able to reach. In the 435-member House, 218 votes are needed for passage.

Still, Jeffries said the Democrats would do their part to avoid failure.

“It is my expectation that House Republicans would keep their promise and deliver at least 150 votes as it relates to an agreement that they themselves negotiated,” Jeffries said.

“Democrats will make sure that the country does not default.” Liberal Democrats decried the new work requirements for older Americans, those age 50-54, in the food aid programme.

UK govt hails first post-Brexit trade deals with Aus, NZ

AP ■ LONDON

The UK government hailed an era of cheaper Australian wine and New Zealand kiwi fruit as free-trade agreements with the two Southern Hemisphere nations took effect on Wednesday.

UK Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch said that the start of the first all-new trade deals that Britain has struck since it left the European Union marked “a historic moment”.

Economists, however, said the economic effect would be limited. Trade expert David Henig called the new deals “a bit of a nothingburger”.

The agreements remove tariffs on most goods, streamline some regulations and make it easier for Britons to work Down Under, and for Aussies and Kiwis to work in the UK.

Britain marked the occasion by sending the Australian and New Zealand governments care packages of products it hopes will get an export boost, including Welsh whiskey, English gin, leather bags from the Cambridge Satchel Co. and Beano, a kids’ comic book. The UK says the deals will boost bilateral trade by 53 per cent with Australia and 59 per cent with New Zealand, though the overall volumes are relatively modest: Australia accounts for 0.9 per cent of UK trade, and New Zealand for 0.2 per cent.

Henig, director of the UK Trade Policy Project at the European Centre for

International Political Economy, said that the deals “could make bits and pieces of difference. For individual companies it can make a difference”.

But, he said, “the likeliest outcome is very little changes”. Many economists say no amount of new trade deals will make up for the economic hit of leaving the EU, which before Brexit accounted for about half of all UK trade. Britain’s exit erected new trade barriers with the bloc, an economic behemoth of 27 countries and 500 million people. Britain’s independent Office for Budget Responsibility estimates Brexit knocked 4 per cent off UK gross domestic product.

The new deals together are expected to bring an estimated boost to GDP of about 0.1 per cent by 2035. Some former UK government officials also say the deals are skewed towards Australia and New Zealand.

Environment Secretary George Eustice, who was a member of the government when the deal was struck, said last year that “the UK gave away far too much for far too little in return”.

British farmers, meanwhile, fear beef and lamb from the antipodean nations’ large livestock industries will flood the British market under the deal’s vastly increased quotas. The UK government insists the deals have “robust protections” for British farmers.

New US aid package for Ukraine may be up to \$300 million

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A US military aid package for Ukraine that is expected to be announced this week will total up to USD 300 million and will include additional munitions for drones, US officials said on Tuesday. The drone ammunition comes after new attacks by unmanned aircraft targeted Moscow.

There has been no suggestion that US-made drones or munitions were used in the recent attacks on Moscow, and US officials have repeatedly said that Ukraine has agreed not to use any American-provided weapons for attacks on Russian soil. The Kremlin blamed Kyiv for Tuesday’s attack, but Ukrainian officials had no direct comment.

But the new aid package comes at a tense moment in the war. The latest drone attack on Moscow follows Russia’s seizure of the eastern Ukrainian city Bakhmut after a nine-month battle that killed tens of thousands of people. Ukraine is also showing signs that its long-awaited spring counteroffensive may already be underway.

The Russian Defence Ministry said five drones were shot down in Moscow and the systems of three others were jammed, causing them to veer off course. President Vladimir Putin called it a “terrorist” act by Kyiv. A US defence official said the drone strikes would not affect the weapons aid

packages the US is providing Ukraine, to include drone ammunition. The official said the US has committed to supporting Ukraine in its effort to defend the country and Ukraine had committed to not using the systems inside Russia, so the aid would likely continue unchanged.

All of the US officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because the latest aid package has not yet been publicly announced.

US officials did not provide details on the drone munitions in the new aid package or specify which unmanned aircraft would use them. The Defense Department has given Ukraine a variety of unmanned aircraft over the last year, for both surveillance and attacks, including at least two versions of the Switchblade, a so-called kamikaze drone that can loiter in the air and then explode into a target. Other more sophisticated drones can drop munitions, but the US has been reluctant to publicly share details about those. Also included in the newest package will be munitions for Patriot missile batteries and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), Stinger missiles for the Avenger system, mine-clearing equipment, anti-armour rounds, unguided Zuni aircraft rockets, night vision goggles, and about 30 million rounds of small arms ammunition, said the US officials.

Imran Khan gets bail till June 19 9 more to be tried under stringent Army Act

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistan anti-corruption court on Wednesday granted bail to former premier Imran Khan until June 19 in the Al-Qadir Trust case involving an alleged corruption of over Rs 50 billion. Khan appeared before the Islamabad-based accountability court after the high court here earlier in the day extended the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief’s protective bail for three days and directed him to seek bail from the anti-corruption court within this period.

Accountability court Judge Muhammad Bashir, presiding over the hearing, granted Khan bail till June 19 against surety bonds worth Rs 500,000.

Earlier, Khan travelled from Lahore to the capital and first appeared before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) where Justice



Security personnel with bulletproof shields escort Pakistan’s former Prime Minister Imran Khan, center, as he leaves after appearing in court, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Wednesday.

AP/PTI

Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rifat Imtiaz granted him three-day protective bail with direction to go to the anti-corruption court for bail. The court had earlier on May 17 given him bail till May

Khan’s arrest on May 9 in the Islamabad High Court premises.

The cricketer-turned-politician’s arrest led to massive protests across Pakistan that left more than 10 persons dead and thousands of PTI supporters behind bars.

The PTI chief was two days later released by the Supreme Court with the direction to seek bail from the Islamabad High Court. In an informal chat with the media persons on the occasion, Khan said the powerful establishment was running the country.

“The government and establishment are the same thing, the latter is running the former,” he said, adding that there is no choice except to hold elections.

Khan has been demanding early general elections in

PTI ■ LAHORE

Nine more members of Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party were arrested and handed over to the Pakistan Army on Wednesday to be tried under the stringent Pakistan Army Act over their alleged role in the May 9 attacks on sensitive military installations and government buildings.

With these arrests, the number of PTI activists to be tried under the Army Act and the Official Secrets Act has exceeded 50.

“On the orders of the anti-terrorism courts, nine suspects belonging to PTI and involved in the attack on the ISI buildings (in Faisalabad) and military installations in Multan Cantonment were handed to the Pakistan Army on Wednesday for their trial under the Army Act and Official Secrets Act,” a court official said.

On May 9, violent protests erupted after paramilitary Rangers arrested 70-year-old Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party from the Islamabad High Court premises in connection with a corruption case. His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander House, the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad in response to Khan’s arrest.

N Korea spy satellite launch fails

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea’s attempt to put the country’s first spy satellite into space failed Wednesday in a setback to leader Kim Jong Un’s push to boost his military capabilities as tensions with the United States and South Korea rise. After an unusually quick admission of failure, North Korea vowed to conduct a second launch after learning what went wrong with its rocket liftoff. It suggests Kim remains determined to expand his weapons arsenal and apply more pressure on Washington and Seoul while diplomacy is stalled.



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea’s rocket launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on Wednesday.

AP/PTI

South Korea and Japan briefly urged residents to take shelter during the launch.

The South Korean military said it was salvaging an object presumed to be part of the crashed North Korean rocket in waters 200 kilometers (124 miles) west of the southwestern island of Jeocheongdo. Later, the Defense Ministry released photos of a white, metal cylinder it described as a suspected rocket part.

A satellite launch by North Korea is a violation of UN Security Council resolutions that ban the country from conducting any launch based on ballistic technology. Observers say North Korea’s previous satellite launches helped improve its long-range missile technology.

North Korea long-range missile tests in recent years demonstrated a potential

range that could reach all of the continental US, but outside experts say the North Korea still has some work to do to obtain functioning nuclear missiles.

The newly developed Chollima-1 rocket was launched at 6:37 a.m. at the North’s Sohae Satellite Launching Ground in the northwest, carrying the Mallyong-1 satellite. The rocket crashed off the Korean Peninsula’s western coast after it lost thrust following the separation of its first and second stages, the North’s official Korean Central News Agency said. South Korea’s military said the North Korean rocket had “an abnormal flight” before it fell in the water. Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters that no object was believed to have reached space.

North Korean media said

the country’s space agency will investigate what it calls “the serious defects revealed” by the launch and conduct a second launch as soon as possible.

“It is impressive when the North Korean regime actually admits failure, but it would be difficult to hide the fact of a satellite launch failure internationally, and the regime will likely offer a different narrative domestically,” Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said.

“This outcome also suggests that Pyongyang may stage another provocation soon, in part to make up for today’s setback.” Adam Hodge, a spokesperson at the US National Security Council, said in a statement that Washington strongly condemns the North Korean launch because it used banned ballistic missile technology, raised tensions, and risked destabilizing security in the region and beyond.

The UN imposed economic sanctions on North Korea over its previous satellite and ballistic missile launches, but has not responded to recent tests because China and Russia, permanent council members now locked in confrontations with the US, have blocked attempts to toughen sanctions.

Seoul’s military said it boosted military readiness in coordination with the United States, and Japan said it prepared to respond to any emergency.

The US said it will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and the defense of South Korea and Japan.

South Korea’s capital, Seoul, issued alerts over public loudspeakers and cellphone text messages telling residents to prepare for evacuation after the launch was detected, and Japan activated a missile warning system for Okinawa prefecture in southwestern Japan, in the rocket’s suspected path.

“Please evacuate into buildings or underground,” the Japanese alert said.

Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said Japan plans to keep missile defense systems deployed to its southern islands and in southwestern waters until June 11, which is the end of North Korea’s announced launch window.

US complains of unsafe move by Chinese jet

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US military said Tuesday that a Chinese fighter jet flew aggressively close to a US reconnaissance aircraft over the South China Sea, forcing the American pilot to fly through the turbulent wake.

The Chinese J-16 fighter pilot “flew directly in front of the nose of the RC-135,” which was conducting routine operations in international airspace last Friday, US Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement. It called the Chinese move an “unnecessarily aggressive maneuver”.

US defense leaders have complained that China’s military has become significantly more aggressive over the past five years, intercepting US aircraft and ships in the region. And tensions with China have only grown in recent months over Washington’s military support and sales of defensive weapons to self-governing Taiwan, China’s assertions of sovereignty to the contested South China Sea and its flying of a suspected spy balloon over the US.

In a further sign of the tensions, China said its defense chief will not meet with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin when the two men attend a security conference in Singapore this coming weekend. Austin is scheduled to address the Shangri-La Dialogue on Saturday, while Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu will speak at the gathering on Sunday.

China responds to US complaint over plane intercept

Beijing (AP): Beijing responded on Wednesday to complaints from the United States about a Chinese fighter jet’s dangerous interception of an American Air Force reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace over the South China Sea by demanding an end to such flights.

The incident adds to military, diplomatic and economic tensions between the countries over US support for self-governing Taiwan, China’s refusal to engage in dialogue between their armed forces and Beijing’s flying of a suspected spy balloon over the US.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters at a daily briefing that China would keep taking measures it deems necessary to safeguard its sovereignty.

“The US should immediately stop these dangerous provocations,” Mao said. The US Indo-Pacific Command called the Chinese plane’s actions an “unnecessarily aggressive maneuver,” adding to complaints that China’s military has become significantly more aggressive over the past five years, intercepting US aircraft and ships in the region. China says it owns the South China Sea virtually in its entirety, a claim not recognised internationally and directly challenged by nations along its coast including the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia.

China facing complex security challenges, warns Xi

Beijing (PTI): China is facing more complex and difficult security concerns, President Xi Jinping has said, as he warned citizens to prepare for “worst-case and extreme scenarios” amid deepening tensions with the United States and the European Union.

Xi, who presided over a meeting of the National Security Commission on Tuesday, said the complexity and severity of national security problems faced by the country increased dramatically, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

“The national security front must build up strategic self-confidence, have enough confidence

to secure victory, and be keenly aware of its own strengths and advantages,” he said.

The report said that it was stressed at the meeting that “we must be prepared for worst-case and extreme scenarios, and be ready to withstand the major test of high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms.” More efforts must be made to modernise our national security system and capacity, and be prepared for actual combat and in dealing with practical problems,” it said. Documents including “guidelines on speeding up the building of risk monitoring and early warning system for

national security” and “guidelines on strengthening extensive public education about national security” were deliberated and adopted at the meeting. Xi, 69, has been placing more emphasis on ramping up security and increasing the combat levels of the troops ever since he was re-elected as head of the ruling Communist Party of China for an unprecedented third time last year.

He is the only leader after the party found Mao Zedong to continue in power for more than two five-year terms.

This is not the first time that Xi highlighted the security situation faced by China.

Latvia’s Parliament elects Rinkevics as President

Helsinki (AP): Latvian lawmakers on Wednesday picked the country’s long-serving and popular foreign minister, a strong backer of Ukraine, as its new head of state in a tight vote. The 100-seat Saeima legislature elected Edgars Rinkevics, the country’s top diplomat since 2011, as president to serve for a four-year term.

He received 52 votes, one vote more than required to win the race. Incumbent Egils Levits, Latvia’s head of state since 2019, didn’t seek reelection. Rinkevics, who announced in 2014 that he is “proudly” homosexual, will be the first openly gay president in the Baltic nations — all former

Soviet republics where attitudes to sexual minorities have been less tolerant than in western Europe.

His closest rival, businessman Uldis Pilens, got 25 votes in the third round of voting between the two remaining contenders after the third candidate, Elina Pinto, had dropped out of the contest. Rinkevics, 49, served — among other posts — as a state secretary with the defense ministry and worked as a journalist with Latvian Radio in the 1990s.

As foreign minister, he has enjoyed high popularity among Latvians due to his hard stance toward neighbouring Russia

and his unwavering support for Ukraine that is under assault from Moscow.

Levits had been expected to seek reelection. But in a surprise move announced earlier this month, Levits said he was disappointed that parties in Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins’ three-party coalition government hadn’t been able to agree on a joint candidate, and said he wouldn’t run in such a situation.

Latvia’s presidency is largely a ceremonial post and the head of state acts mainly as an opinion leader and unifying figure in the country where almost a third of residents speak Russian.

Olympic sports bodies meet amid uncertainty over Russians competing at Paris Games

AP ■ LAUSANNE

Olympic sports bodies were meeting Wednesday amid ongoing uncertainty about if and how Russian athletes could return to their competitions ahead of the 2024 Paris Games. The annual meeting of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) comes more than two months after the IOC detailed advice on how individual athletes from Russia and its military ally Belarus could be reintegrated as neutral athletes, despite those countries' ongoing war on Ukraine. Exactly how that neutrality is being defined is not very much clearer now as key qualification events start for the Olympics that open in July next year.

The International Olympic Committee in March advised that some Russians and Belarusians could return in individual events but not team sports, if they had not actively supported the war in Ukraine,



and are not contracted to "military or national security agencies."

The IOC also suggested ASOIF and the winter sports umbrella group, AIOWF, could oversee "creating a single independent panel" to run and "harmonize" the neutral status evaluations of hundreds of athletes, coaches and support staff.

That has not happened and there was no move Wednesday on the ASOIF agenda in the IOC's home city of Lausanne toward taking on that complex responsibility.

IOC president Thomas Bach told leaders of governing bodies on the 32-sport Paris program, who have ultimate control over their own events,

some had proven how Russian and Belarusians could continue to compete.

"You are doing so against the backdrop of the many traditional, I may say, naysayers who want to make people believe that it would never work," Bach said. He did not speak with reporters when leaving after his speech.

Bach and the IOC led calls within days of the invasion of Ukraine in February of last year to banish Russia from international sport, including to protect the security of athletes.

As the war continued and the 2024 Olympics approached, the IOC and Bach started to suggest it was discrimination to exclude all Russians and Belarusians. If approved to compete, the IOC said Russian and Belarusians would not be allowed to use their flag, anthem or uniforms in national colors.

ASOIF officials previously cautioned "each sport has different realities," including where Olympic qualification events are being hosted and the influence of Ukraine's allies in sports and governments, especially in Europe.

In gymnastics, a top-tier Summer Games sport where Russians excel, a decision on reintegrating them was pushed back to at least July. World championships that are a key qualifier for Paris start Sept. 30 in Antwerp, Belgium.



Djokovic draws flak for political messages at French Open

AP ■ PARIS

French Sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said Wednesday that Novak Djokovic's political message about Kosovo was "not appropriate" and warned the former top-ranked Serb player that he should not do it again.

Speaking on TV station France 2, Oudea-Castera said French Open director Amelie Mauresmo spoke with Djokovic and his entourage to insist on the principle of "neutrality" on the field of play.

"When it comes to defending human rights and bringing people together around universal values, a sports person is free to do so," she said. But Oudea-Castera added that Djokovic's message was "militant, very political" and "must not be repeated."

Djokovic has drawn criticism from Kosovo's tennis federation after offering his thoughts on clashes in northern Kosovo between ethnic Serbs and police and NATO peacekeepers.

After a first-round victory in Paris on Monday, Djokovic wrote in Serbian on the lens of a court-side TV camera: "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia. Stop the violence."

Kosovo's tennis federation said Tuesday that Djokovic's comments were "deplorable" because he was stoking tensions between Serbia and Kosovo.

A former province of Serbia, Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence is not recognized by Belgrade. Ethnic Albanians make up most of the population, but Kosovo has a restive Serb minority in the north of the country bordering Serbia.

Djokovic, who has won 22 Grand Slam titles, is scheduled to play in the second round at Roland Garros on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters in Serbian, Djokovic said Monday that he thought what he wrote on the TV camera was "the least I could do. I feel responsibility as a public figure ... as well as a son of a man who was born in Kosovo."

Without mentioning Djokovic by name, French

Debutant Stearns beats former champ Ostapenko to reach French Open 3rd round

AP ■ PARIS

French Open debutant Peyton Stearns produced the biggest win of her career by defeating former champion Jelena Ostapenko to reach the third round at Roland Garros on Wednesday.

Stearns, a former player at the University of Texas, only turned professional in June last year.

Ostapenko won the 2017 French Open but has since failed to advance past the 3rd round. The 17th-seeded Latvian dropped her serve five times against Stearns and hit 28 unforced errors in her 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 loss.

The 21-year-old Stearns has been climbing the WTA rankings and entered the French Open at No. 69 on the back of an encouraging clay-court campaign.

Third-seeded Jessica Pegula also advanced after Camila Giorgi retired due to injury. The American led 6-2 when her Italian rival threw in the towel.

Only hours after husband Gael Monfils won a five-set thriller in Tuesday night's session, Elina Svitolina rallied past qualifier Storm Hunter 2-6, 6-3, 6-1.

In the men's bracket, former runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas ousted Roberto Carballes Baena 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-2. The fifth-seeded Greek was a bit slow to find his range and was made to work hard for two sets but rolled on after he won the tiebreaker.

Open organizers indicated in a statement issued Tuesday that no rules had been broken, saying: "Occasionally, discussions about international news events enter the realm of the tournament, which is understandable."

Only matter of time before India becomes leading chess nation in world: Carlsen

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen feels it is only a matter of time before India becomes a leading chess nation, saying the country is "doing a lot of right things". Carlsen who is the current world rapid chess champion, is widely regarded as the best player of the current generation. While Indian chess players have done extremely well in global circuit in recent years, the country also successfully hosted the Chess Olympiad last year.

"I think India is doing a lot of right things so far, and it is a matter of time before it is clearly the leading chess nation in the world," Carlsen was quoted as saying in a press release.



The Norwegian Grandmaster is one of the icon players for the inaugural Global Chess League, which is the world's first and largest official franchise league of its kind, with chess players from all over the world competing in a unique joint team format.

The GCL is a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and the international chess federation (FIDE), which will witness six teams competing in a minimum of 10 matches each in a double round-robin, rapid format from June 21 to July 2 in Dubai.

"It is an exciting prospect for me to be a part of. This will be something new. Something that has not been done this way in over-the-board chess. I am looking forward to exploring this format for future."

The league will see each of the six franchises play a total of 10 matches in a double round-robin format, with the winner of each match being decided in a best-of-six board scoring system played simultaneously.

MGU-Kottayam bag KIUG athletics c'ship

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU), Kottayam bagged the athletics championship of the 3rd Khelo India University Games-2022 with 89 points. In the athletics competition which concluded at Guru Gobind Singh Sports College in Lucknow, Mangalore University (74 points) and Shivaji University (46 points) finished second and third respectively.

Panjab University, Chandigarh (PUC) won 10 golds to soar to the top of the medal tally in the 3rd KIUG-2022 being hosted by Uttar Pradesh, leaving behind rivals Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, who are now second with initial leaders and defending champions Jain University, Karnataka in the third position.

PUC picked up five golds in rowing, two each in athletics and shooting and one in judo to end the day with a tally of 21 gold, 12 silver and 16 bronze medals.

Day nine of the KIUG also saw three new Games records being created, all in athletics at the Guru Gobind Singh Sports College (GGSSC) grounds in Lucknow.

The men's pole vault, women's javelin and heptathlon KIUG records were re-written. Sidharth AK of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam (MGU, Kottayam) cleared 4.90m to create a new record in men's pole vault while Harita of Chaudhary Bansi Lal University (CBLU) sank the old



Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh

women's javelin record with a throw of 50.14m en route to gold. Harita's mate Pooja at the Ramgarh Taal in Gorakhpur. Panjab University picked up three while Calicut University won two gold medals. Overall, PUC won 11 gold, four silver and six bronze medals in rowing for a total of 21 medals, a big reason for their top position in the standings. Their winners on the day included Ravinder and Dinesh Kumar in the light weight men's doubles sculls, Sonu Verma, Ajeeth, Sudarshan Lamba and Gurpreet Singh in the light weight men's fours,

Khushpreet Kaur and Diljot Kaur in the light weight women's doubles sculls, Khushpreet, Diljot, Gurbani and Poonam in the women's fours sculls and Sukhdeep, Rajat, Sahil and Aditya in the men's fours 500 metre races.

At the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range, Olympian Manu Bhaker and India international Sarabjot Singh won the 10m air pistol mixed team gold medal with a facile 16-2 victory over Varun Dubey and Vibhuti Bhatia of Delhi University.

These were the first of two golds won at the range by PUC with Prabha Pratap Singh Chahal and Parinaaz Dhaliwal winning the mixed team skeet competition. It was Parinaaz's second gold at the KIUG-2022 after she

had won the women's individual skeet gold earlier.

Across three venues of Lucknow, finalists in the recurve archery and football disciplines were also identified on the day. At the BBD University Cricket Ground, Guru Jambheshwar University (GJU) and Punjabi University reached two finals each in recurve archery. Pawan of the latter will take on Ankit Rana of Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) in the men's recurve final while Bhargaviben Bhagora of Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University (HNGU) will clash with Anshika Kumari of Kolhan University, Jharkhand, for the women's individual recurve title on Friday.

On the same day, Adamas University of Kolkata will take on Punjabi University in the men's football final at the GGSSC, Lucknow. Also, at the Ekana Sports City, GJU will take on CBLU in the women's football final. While Punjabi University were 2-1 winners over MGU, Kottayam in their semi-final on Wednesday, Adamas had to come through penalties over GNDU, Amritsar. GJU, Hisar were 3-2 winners over GNDU in the first women's semis while CBLU defeated Annamalai University, Chidambaram, by a solitary goal.

The day 10 of the competition will see the commencement of the yogasana competitions at the IIT-BHU indoor hall in Varanasi. The three-day competition will culminate with the closing ceremony of the games in the same city.

Alonso gives Spaniards hope of ending F1 drought

AP ■ BARCELONA

It's been nearly a decade since there was this much hype surrounding the Spanish Grand Prix.

The last time the Formula One crowd in Spain had such high hopes of celebrating a victory by Fernando Alonso — the country's biggest racing idol — was back in 2013, when the two-time champion was driving for Ferrari.

Alonso went on to win that race in Barcelona, but since then has never been in a realistic position to make it to the top step of the podium again at home. That was his last win in F1 anywhere, and the last by any Spaniard in the local race.

The 41-year-old Alonso arrives revitalized with an Aston Martin team that is one of the surprises of the season and has been running near the

top from the start. Alonso has five podium finishes in six races so far, and is coming off a season-best second-place finish in Monaco last weekend.

"One step higher than any other podium this year, but we're still aiming for one step (higher) hopefully in the future races," Alonso said. "Barcelona is going to be a celebration. We have so many Aston Martin fans in Spain now."

A record crowd is expected this weekend to support Alonso and fellow Spaniard Carlos Sainz Jr. at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya. More than 40,000 tickets were sold in the first few hours after being put on sale last year, and more tickets were made available again earlier this year. More than 100,000 people are expected for Sunday's race.

Alonso, who won his F1 titles with Renault in 2005-06,

is seeking his 33rd victory in the series. After coming up short of the title in 2013, he had a lackluster 2014 season with Ferrari and then struggled with McLaren from 2015-18.

He spent a few seasons away from F1 before returning with Alpine in 2021, when he made his only podium appearance since leaving Ferrari in the race in Qatar.

Alonso, who also won in Barcelona in 2006, downplayed expectations ahead of this year's Spanish GP despite his good start to the season, noting that defending champion Max Verstappen and Red Bull will remain the big favorites.

"And we have to see in a normal circuit, what is the package of Mercedes and the upgrades that Ferrari will bring apparently to Barcelona as well. So we have to have the feet on the ground," Alonso said.



US men's soccer to play Germany, Ghana in October exhibitions

AP ■ CHICAGO

The US men's soccer team will play exhibitions against Germany and Ghana in October.

No. 14 Germany will play the 13th-ranked US on October 14 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, Connecticut, and No. 60 Ghana will face the Americans three days later at Geodis Park in Nashville, Tennessee, the US Soccer Federation said on Tuesday.

The US has an automatic berth for the 2026 World Cup as co-host and Germany has an automatic spot in the 2024 European Championship, which it is hosting.

Top surfers to compete in Indian Open with an eye on Paris 2024

PTI ■ MANGALORE

With an eye on next year's Paris Olympics, top Indian surfers will vie for top honours in the three-day Indian Open at the Sasiithlu beach beginning here on Thursday.

Organised by the Surfing Federation of India, the fourth edition of the meet assumes significance as the sport marks its debut at the Paris Olympics next year.

A four-member team based on their last year's rankings is currently competing at the Olympic qualifying World Surfing Games in El Salvador.

The others will compete here in a field of 70 with an eye to make the cut for upcoming International meets in the lead up to Paris 2024.

Some of the top names who would be in action include Sathish Sarvanan, Ruban V,



Srikanth D, Surya P, Sanjaikumar S, Manikandan Desappan and Nithishvarun T, a stated a press release.

This edition will also include teen sensation Kishore Kumar in the Male Groms category.

Competition will be held in four categories — Male Open, Male Groms (U-16), Female Open and Female Groms (U-16).

Shrishti Selvam, Sinchana D Gowda and Sugar Shanti Banarse are some of the top women surfers who will be vying for top honours.

Chotrani, Anahat win National Circuit squash

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's Veer Chotrani and teen sensation Anahat Singh of Delhi bagged the men's and women's singles titles respectively in the sixth NSCI Open National Circuit squash tournament, here on Wednesday.

Chotrani defeated second seed Suraj Chand 11-9, 11-8, 11-6 in a one-sided final, while Anahat downed top seed Urwashi 11-7, 11-8, 11-3 without breaking a sweat to emerge senior champions.

At 14, Anahat had become India's youngest Commonwealth Games 2022 participant in Birmingham.



Chotrani applied a lot of pressure on the defensive game of Suraj, who in return attempted to engage his opponent in long rallies.

However, Chotrani managed to come out on top on every time and maintained his lead to seal the issue.

Chotrani does not participate in national level competitions and is thus ranked No 16 in the country.

Man City's Grealish emerging as the face of English soccer

AP ■ LONDON

Armed with the boyish charm and marketability of David Beckham and the skills and playfulness of Paul Gascoigne, Jack Grealish has a potent mix that has seen him quickly emerge as the face of English soccer.

Now that he is starting to add trophies to his growing list of endorsement deals that already include Gucci and Puma, the possibilities appear endless for the Manchester City winger who is the most expensive English soccer player of all time.

Grealish — he of the bulging calf muscles and swept-back hair — was already hot property in the English game

before a 2021 move from Aston Villa to City for 100 million pounds (then \$139 million) that took his appeal to a new level.

Nearing the end of his second season at City, the 27-year-old Grealish has finally established himself as a key part of a Premier League-winning team that is seeking to clinch the second leg of a treble of major titles this season by beating Manchester United in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

He is far more than a soccer player these days, though. "People like Jack Grealish are the new sports lifestyle icons," Alan Seymour, a sports academic and author in business and marketing, told The Associated Press. "As he's



matured and got more attuned to what is required of him as a footballer, on the field and off the field, it's why he is right up there with the very best sports personalities for marketability, not only in football but away from football."

Elements of the wild-child

image that shadowed him in the early years of his career remain.

At the height of the lockdown amid the pandemic, Grealish was found slurring his words after crashing his car in a residential estate and was later banned from driving for nine

months. Then there were those images of him playing a prominent role in City's Premier League title celebrations last year, when he was seen swigging a beer and — bleary-eyed and with a croaky voice — aiming a dig at Newcastle midfielder Miguel Almiron that gained plenty of air time.

Grealish unashamedly accepts that's who he is. He recently said he might have been a nightclub promoter if he wasn't a soccer player and that he'd always be prone to the kind of excesses that mean he embodies the spirit of a regular soccer fan.

But the lovable, charming part of Grealish's personality is inescapable. It shines through in every interview he does —

he pinches himself that he is a soccer professional, playing against the likes of Real Madrid in the Champions League — and in his public friendship with a young City fan named Finley, who has cerebral palsy. He's a popular member of the City squad, striking up a particularly close relationship with superstar striker Erling Haaland off the field.

"I feel so much more confident in this team," said Grealish, who was left out of many of City's big games last season while he adapted to the demands of manager Pep Guardiola. "I feel fitter and back to what I know, what I can do. This is why City bought me and I have so much to offer."

ICC seeks PCB assurances on team to India for ODI World Cup

PTI ■ KARACHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman and CEO are in Lahore to seek guarantees from the PCB that it will not push for implementing a hybrid model for its matches in the ODI World Cup in India later this year.

Insiders confirmed to PTI that ICC chairman Greg Barclay and CEO Geoff Allardice have specifically come to Lahore to get some assurances from the Pakistan Cricket Board on the national team's participation in the World Cup in October-November.

The development comes after PCB chief Najam Sethi made it clear that the team will not travel for the World Cup in India if the Rohit Sharma led side doesn't visit Pakistan for the preceding Asia Cup.

"The ICC and World Cup hosts, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) are concerned with the hybrid



model being pushed by Najam Sethi who heads the cricket management committee of the PCB.

"Although the hybrid model has been suggested by Sethi for the Asia Cup which precedes the ICC event, the concern remains

that once accepted for the regional event the PCB might also then ask the ICC to implement it for the World Cup when it comes to Pakistan playing in India," he explained.

Sethi has already indicated that if the Pakistan government

doesn't give clearance or has security concerns about sending the team to India, PCB could ask the ICC to hold Pakistan's matches at a neutral venue.

"Naturally neither the ICC nor the BCCI want such a situation since Pakistan's unequiv-

ocal participation in matches in India would guarantee the success of Indo-Pakistan matches and also the tournament itself."

Another source said this was the primary reason why BCCI secretary Jay Shah was still reluctant to accept the hybrid model for the Asia Cup and support having three or four matches of the tournament in Pakistan and the remaining games in UAE or Sri Lanka.

Pakistan are the hosts of the Asia Cup and Sethi has said repeatedly that if the tournament is moved to one neutral country from Pakistan, it will not take part in the competition.

He has also hinted that if Pakistan didn't get to host some Asia Cup matches it could have an adverse bearing on the World Cup as well.

"The ICC officials are trying to work as a bridge between the PCB and BCCI and resolve the outstanding issues pertaining to the Asia Cup and World Cup."

Indian bowlers focus on building workload ahead of WTC final

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

The Indian cricket team is focussing on building workload for the bowlers, who had an extensive run in the IPL, ahead of the World Test Championship final against Australia starting on June 7 at The Oval.

In the bowling department, while the likes of Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Jaydev Unadkat and Umesh Yadav were part of the first batch to travel to England, pace spearhead Mohammed Shami's departure was delayed as the IPL final in Ahmedabad last Sunday was moved to the reserve day after incessant rain.

The middle-order mainstay Virat Kohli was also among the players who left in the first batch along with the Rahul Dravid-led coaching staff. Kohli joined the camp on Monday along with Cheteshwar Pujara, who linked up with the squad in England as he was busy playing County Championship for Sussex.

The Indian team is expected to have a few practice sessions at the Arundel Castle Cricket Club in Sussex ahead of the big final.

"The preparation has been good so far. The initial bit was to ease into the practice session but the last two sessions have been pretty happy — I think we pushed them a little bit. Just adding a little bit of workload for the bowlers, just kind of preparing them for the Test match," said India's bowling coach Paras Mhambrey in a video released by the BCCI.

"(We are) happy with the conditions, I think it is a lovely ground, (it is) kind of what you can



expect. The weather is holding up, it has been sunny, a little windy, a little chill but something that we have to get used to (when) playing in England," he said.

India's fielding coach T Dilip said the focus will be on close-in catching since the running part of the fitness drill was covered in the IPL.

"The players have been coming from an IPL so a key thing for us to take care of was the workload, how much they have run, how much they have taken care.

"What we understood and got out of that is things (like) ground fielding have been covered in the IPL, so the focus here was more on the volume of catching, especially when you are talking about close-in catching, the slip catching and the flat catches. These are the catches that we tend to increase the volume (of)," he said.

Mhambrey said while the bowlers will get some rest in days leading up to the WTC final, the group is determined to extract the maximum benefits from the training sessions.



Dhoni will take medical advice for knee injury and decide: CSK CEO Viswanathan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be seeking expert opinion from sports orthopedics in Mumbai on the state of his dodgy left knee before taking a call on his treatment, CEO Kasi Viswanathan said on Wednesday.

Dhoni had played the entire IPL season with a heavily strapped left knee and although he looked absolutely okay while keeping, more often than not batted as late as No.8 and didn't look swift while running between the wickets.

"Yes, it is true that Dhoni will be taking medical advice for his left knee injury and accordingly decide. If surgery is advised, it can only be ascertained after reports come out, it will be completely his call," Viswanathan told PTI.

Is there a possibility that Dhoni will decide against playing next season and thus free up a purse of Rs 15 crore for the mini auction, the CEO replied: "Frankly, we are not even thinking on those lines as we haven't reached that stage.

"It will be completely Dhoni's call. But I can tell you in CSK, we haven't entertained those thoughts," Viswanathan said.

Asked if CSK supremo N Srinivasan addressed the players after the fifth IPL Trophy and if celebrations were in the offing. "He is very happy but there were no celebrations. The players dispersed for their respective destinations from Ahmedabad only. Also if you have seen CSK, we are never big on celebrations," the veteran official said.

Asked if the fifth IPL title feels the sweetest, considering the spate of injuries to its top players, Viswanathan said: "It's all about team spirit and every player knowing his role which is very well defined in our set up. "Even a player of Ben Stokes' stature despite his nature was brilliant around the group and the youngsters looked upto to him. This has been possible because of our captain."

What has been CSK's hallmark over the years which enabled them to reach final in 11 of the 14 editions that they have been a part of?

"I have been associated with CSK from season 1 and we have never deviated from our process. The key has been to keep things simple and explain every player what is expected of them. In our franchise, the skipper keeps everything uncomplicated," Viswanathan said.

CSK were barred from the league for two editions.

Hazlewood praises Kohli's work ethics

PTI ■ LONDON

Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood has spoken highly of Royal Challengers Bangalore teammates Virat Kohli and Mohammed Siraj ahead of the World Test Championship final against India at The Oval starting June 7.

Hazlewood, who has been battling with multiple injuries over the last six months, had to cut short his IPL stint with a side issue. However, he feels he is not far from bowling full tilt as Australia gear up for the big final.

Talking about Kohli, whose wicket he will be targeting at The Oval, Hazlewood said the Indian superstar's work ethic makes him the player that he is.

"I think it's probably how hard he works (that stands out). His fitness first of all - and then his skill work and batting and fielding in particular.

"He is always out there (training) first and leaves last ... and the intensity he trains at all the time is at such a high level it drags everyone else along for the ride. That can leak on to the other players and improve them as well," Hazlewood told the ICC.

On RCB's leading wicket taker Siraj, who is expected to play a big part in the WTC final, Hazlewood said: "I was a bit late getting there (to RCB this year),



but before then he was on fire.

"He is up there at the top of the wickets every time, and the economy rate was probably the thing as bowling at Chinnaswamy (RCB's home ground) is impossible sometimes and he was going at six or six-and-a-half an over. His control was great and he is bowling well."

'CLOSE TO BOWLING FULL PACE: The Australian cricket team has been training in Formby in England ahead of the WTC final. Hazlewood trained with the team on Monday and said he is feeling good going into

the big game.

"My fitness is pretty good and it is just a matter of ticking off every session from here until that date (June 7) basically. "We will probably have anywhere from three to four more sessions - bat versus ball and then a couple of longer days in the nets as well or centre wicket down in London — so it is just ticking off those last few boxes and pulling up well from every session," he said.

"It was pretty close (to full pace today). I came down for a little bowl yesterday just to

loosen up and to get a bit more out of today's session, so it is feeling good. It is always good to get the first one out of the way and when we get to London we will steam in," he added.

Hazlewood could feature in only three games in the IPL before his injury flared up.

"In T20 you are bowling a lot of various different balls every over. A wide yorker, to a bounce, to a slower ball and it probably got jammed up a little bit and a bit of scar tissue from previous injuries flared up.

"It calmed down pretty quickly, I had a week off but I didn't quite get back to going 100 percent at IPL. But the last few bowls have been good and I have been building up nicely," he said.

Having played as many as 15 Tests against India, Hazlewood is looking forward to the challenge of playing the Asian giants at a neutral venue. "It is a strange stat that as I think I have just played a lot of cricket against them. What is going to be interesting is playing them here in England.

"It is going to be interesting for both teams how they go about it and how different it is to playing them in Australia or in India as typically you only play them there," he said.

"That is the exciting thing about it and everyone is looking forward to next week," he added.

Stokes plans to play as allrounder in Ashes

AP ■ LONDON

England captain Ben Stokes Eased concerns about his ability to bowl in the upcoming Ashes series because of long-standing knee issues and said Wednesday he is planning to play every test this summer.

"Unless I can't walk, I'll be on the field," Stokes said with a smile the day before England begins its one-off test against Ireland, which serves as a warmup for the five-match Ashes series against Australia.

After having knee issues during the tour of New Zealand in February, Stokes played only twice for Chennai Super Kings in the recently-finished Indian Premier League, sending down just one over for 18 runs.

However, the 31-year-old Stokes said his knee is much better than it was in New Zealand and he will take his place in the England team as an allrounder against Ireland at Lord's and then Australia.

"What I have done is I have got myself in a position where I'm not able to look back and regret or say I've not given myself the best opportunity to play a full role with the ball this summer," Stokes said.

"I've worked incredibly hard with the medical team in Chennai, liaising with the ECB



guys. I have got myself into a place where I feel like back at 2019, 2020 space in terms of my own body and fitness and everything like that."

Pushed about the exact nature of his knee problem, Stokes said: "We know what it is and it's about managing it"

"It's managing it with workload," he added, "and working it with the med team just to get through it"

England has already named its team for the Ireland test, with seamer Josh Tongue making his debut while fast bowlers James Anderson and Ollie Robinson are rested. Ireland has lost all six of its matches since gaining test status in 2017. That includes a defeat against England at Lord's in 2019.

Captain Andrew Balbirnie has said beating England would be "the biggest moment in Irish cricket history."



Thai Open: Kiran stuns Shi Yuqi

Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag too win, Sindhu makes early exit

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's Kiran George scripted a stunning straight-game win over world number 9 Shi Yuqi of China but double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu made an opening round exit from the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament here on Wednesday.

Ashmita Chaliha and Saina Nehwal also made winning starts to their campaign in women's singles, while Lakshya Sen and world number 4 pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also progressed to the pre-quarterfinals.

On a day when Kidambi Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth also failed to cross the opening hurdle, 2022 Odisha Open winner Kiran, a product of the Prakash Padukone academy, notched up a 21-18 22-20 win over third seed Shi Yu Qi, who is a 2018 world championships silver medallist. Kiran will take on China's Weng Hong Yang next.

His academy mate Lakshya also dug deep to eke out a hard-fought 21-23 21-15 21-15 win over Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei. He is likely to square off against All England champion Li Shi Feng of China.

Commonwealth Games champion and top seeds Satwik and Chirag too had to work hard to outwit the Danish combination of Rasmus Kjaer and Frederik Sogaard 21-13 18-21 17-17 in a thrilling match.

A former world champion, Sindhu, however, faltered in the opening round, going down fighting 8-21 18-21 18-21 to Canada's Michelle Li in 62-minute match. In other matches, Ashmita, who came through the qualifiers, beat compatriot Malvika Bansod 17-21 14-21, while London Olympics bronze medallist Saina defeated Canada's Wen Yu Zhang 21-13 21-7.

Bharat over Kishan, Umesh over Shardul for WTC XI: Sarandeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India selector Sarandeep Singh says picking KS Bharat over Ishan Kishan as the wicketkeeper for the World Test Championship final against Australia is a no brainer and he would also choose Umesh Yadav over Shardul Thakur in the playing eleven.

In the absence of the injured Rishabh Pant, Kishan, who is yet to play Test cricket, can provide the x-factor but Sarandeep feels Bharat walks into the eleven as the frontline wicketkeeper.

"KS Bharat for sure. He is a proper Test match wicketkeeper and we saw that against Australia at home, he kept superbly. He has been around for a while and he should get the

opportunity," Sarandeep told PTI on Wednesday. The WTC final will be played at the Oval in London from June 7. The former India spinner said Kishan's time will come.

"Ishan is an opener. I am not saying he is not capable of playing Tests. He is one for the future but he opens in limited overs cricket. Things will be different at number six. "Yes he goes hard from ball one, which can be counter productive in England, but Bharat can also bat well and play shots also," he reasoned.

'Umesh's extra pace and old ball skills will come handy': Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj, who were breathing fire in the recently-concluded IPL, will share the workload in the pace depart-



ment and the Indian team will need to choose between Umesh Yadav and Shardul Thakur as the third fast bowling option.

"I am picking Umesh ahead of Shardul because he has that extra pace and he can reverse the old ball, he can be very helpful on that Oval track," said Sarandeep.

"All of India's batters are in good form going into the one off game and that bodes well for the team," he said.

Pujara's inputs invaluable for Indian batters: Gavaskar

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

Former captain Sunil Gavaskar on Wednesday reckoned Cheteshwar Pujara could provide valuable insights to his Indian teammates ahead of the World Test Championship final against Australia, having played extensively in the English County Championship.

With Pujara's knowledge and captaincy experience (at Sussex), his inputs could prove invaluable, especially against Australian batter Steve Smith, who is also a part of his county side.

The WTC final is scheduled to be held at the Oval in London from June 7-11.

"The fact that he is been around will mean that he will have also seen how the pitch has been behaving at The Oval.

"He might not have played at The Oval, he might be in Sussex not too far away from London but he will have kept an eye on what is happening and his inputs will be invaluable as far as the bat-

ting unit is concerned or even as far as the captaincy is concerned," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

"He will have the captains here as far as the Oval pitch is concerned and don't forget he has also been captaining the team, so he definitely will have worked out quite a few strategies seeing that Steve Smith, the Australian is his teammate at the moment."

Gavaskar also said the Indian batters, coming off the IPL, will have to adjust their bat speed ahead of the WTC final, and advised them to play as late as possible.

"I think they are going to look at their bat speed. Coming from T20 where the bat speed is very fast to Test cricket where the bat speeds got to be a lot more control, that is something they'll need to do," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

He also emphasized the need for batters to play as late as possible in English conditions, allowing for swing and avoiding the mistake of reaching out for the



ball.

"They'll need to play in England as late as possible to allow for the swing to do it's bit, not to reach out for the ball which often a lot of people make the mistake having played on good pitches.

"Wherever you play on good pitches, you tend to play through the line, not necessarily half volleys, but in England those deliveries can move just that little bit. So, I think those are the things that as a batter you need to watch out for."

He asked the bowlers to bowl fuller length deliveries to allow the Dukes ball to swing.

"As a bowling unit also you'll need to bowl a much fuller length for your new ball, for the bowlers to be able to get the movement in the air as well as after pitching."

Gavaskar highlighted the challenges India would face playing in English conditions.

"I think the English conditions are challenging because firstly we are used to play with the sun on our backs. When you are playing in England, often you are playing in conditions where there is no sun, it's a little overcast, the weather is a little bit cooler, so you sometimes wear a jumper.

"That's something that you know, the Indian player, West Indian players and Sri Lankan players are not really used to so that can be just a little bit of a dampener, little sort of light but you just feel little bit encumbered by that.