

CITY 3
YOGI LAYS FOUNDATION STONE
OF SDMA BUILDING**OPINION 6**
SYNCRETISM: A VISION
FOR INDIA'S FUTURE**WORLD 10**
NATO PRESSES TURKIYE TO APPROVE
SWEDEN'S MEMBERSHIP

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11 SPORT

Judicial probe to resolve Manipur violence: Shah

HM emphasises need for dialogue as sole solution to ongoing crisis

PNS ■ IMPHAL

In a significant development aimed at resolving the recent clashes in Manipur, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Thursday to set up a judicial probe led by a retired Chief Justice of a High Court. Shah announced this during a Press conference, stressing the imperative need for dialogue as the sole solution to the ongoing crisis.

Furthermore, Shah unveiled plans to establish a peace committee under the leadership of Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey. This committee will consist of representatives from all political parties, as well as members from the Kuki and Meitei communities and various social organisations.

Its primary objective is to facilitate constructive discussions and foster peace-building efforts in the region.

During the Press conference, Shah declared, "We will soon announce a judicial probe headed by a retired High Court Chief Justice and set up a



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses a Press conference in Imphal on Thursday

PTI

peace committee."

In an additional endeavour to address the situation comprehensively, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will launch an investigation into multiple FIRs alleging criminal conspiracies behind the violence in Manipur.

Despite the recent outbreaks of violence, Shah expressed optimism regarding the state of affairs, affirming that violence is merely a temporary phase and that misunderstandings will eventually be resolved.

He revealed that he personally visited relief camps, met with representatives from the Kuki and Meitei civil groups, and engaged in discussions pertaining to the peace process. Leaders from both the Meitei and Kuki communities, along with other civil

society representatives, assured Shah of their unwavering commitment to easing tensions and addressing misunderstandings. Shah also disclosed plans to establish an Inter-Agency Unified Command to enhance coordination among various security agencies operating in Manipur. Presently, approximately 10,000 personnel from the Army and Assam rifles have been deployed in the State, in addition to the Central and State police forces.

In response to concerns regarding the Indo-Myanmar border, Shah emphasised the criticality of completing the border fencing between the two countries.

The porous nature of the border has raised apprehensions about drug smuggling and the movement of militants. Additionally, biometric data

of individuals arriving from neighbouring countries is being collected to monitor the influx of refugees from Myanmar.

Addressing the origins of the clashes, Shah clarified that the ethnic riots were triggered by the Manipur High Court's request to the State Government for its opinion on granting Scheduled Tribe status to a particular community.

When questioned about the Kuki community's demand for a separate administrative unit, the Minister refrained from making any sensational statements, reiterating the central government's unwavering commitment to preserving Manipur's territorial integrity.

Shah proudly highlighted the accomplishments of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government in Manipur over the past six years, underscoring that the State has remained free from strikes, curfews, and blockades, experiencing substantial growth and harmony.

Shah assured the public that the Government would soon announce a relief and rehabilitation package.

This package aims to provide financial assistance to families who have suffered losses, injuries, or property damage as a result of the violence. The funds will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the victims and their relatives, serving as a crucial step toward recovery and restoration.

Ties with Nepal 'super hit': Modi

Nepal PM hails Modi's 'neighbourhood first policy'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Nepal on Thursday reviewed their historic bilateral ties during talks here between Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda," and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He described the relationship between the two countries a "hit" and said the two sides will strive to take their relationship to "Himalayan heights."

The two Prime Ministers also jointly unveiled the plaque of the Kurtha-Bijalpur section of the Railway. Both leaders jointly flagged off the Indian Railway cargo train from Bathnaha in Bihar to Nepal Custom yard.

The two sides also signed seven agreements to boost cooperation in a range of areas, including extension of cross-border petroleum pipeline, development of integrated check posts and boosting cooperation in hydroelectric power. One of the key pacts signed was the revised India-Nepal treaty of transit.

Prachanda arrived here on Wednesday on a four-day visit. It is his first bilateral visit to a foreign country since he



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Nepali counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' during their joint press statement after a meeting at the Hyderabad House, in New Delhi, Thursday

PTI

assumed office in December last year.

The Nepalese PM said he appreciated Modi's "neighbourhood first policy".

In his media statement after the talks, Modi said he and Prachanda took many important decisions to make the partnership between the

two countries a "super hit" in the future. The two leaders remotely inaugurated a number of projects and laid the foundation stone of some others.

"We will continue to strive to take our relationship to Himalayan heights. And in this spirit, we will resolve all issues, be it boundary related or

any other issue," Modi said in the presence of Prachanda.

Modi also referred to his priority in strengthening ties with Nepal after he took charge as Prime Minister nine years back. "I remember, nine years ago, in 2014, within three months of taking office, I made my first visit to Nepal. At that time I had given a 'hit' formula for India-Nepal relations — Highways, I-ways, and Transways," Modi said.

"I had said that we will establish such a relationship between India and Nepal that our borders do not become barriers between us," he said.

Modi said he was feeling proud to say after nine years that "our partnership has been really a 'hit'."

Following the talks, the two leaders virtually inaugurated integrated check posts at Rupaidiha in India and Nepalgunj in Nepal. They also virtually flagged off a cargo train from Bathnaha in Bihar to Nepal custom yard.

To further strengthen cultural and religious ties, "PM Prachanda and I decided that projects related to Ramayana circuit should be expedited," Modi said.

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IAF aircraft crashes in K'taka field, pilots hurt



PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/CHAMARAJANAGAR (KARNATAKA)

A Kiran trainer aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on Thursday crashed in an open field at a village in Chamaraajanagar district of Karnataka. The two pilots, including a woman, managed to eject safely from the plane before the mishap. A mandatory court of inquiry was initiated by the IAF to find out the cause of the crash.

The training aircraft, which took off from the air force station in Bengaluru, crashed in the morning at Bhogapura village. It was good fortune that aircraft hit the ground on barren land and not in the nearby village, a villager said.

District officials said the pilots, identified only as Tejpal and Bhumika, sustained minor injuries. No casualties were reported. According to the IAF, the pilots were on a routine training sortie when the incident occurred. A court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of accident.

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Khap to take up with Prez

wrestlers' fight for justice

PNS ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

In a significant development, a Khap Mahapanchayat held in Muzaffarnagar on Thursday announced its decision to form a delegation to meet President Droupadi Murmu to seek justice for wrestlers who have bravely come forward with allegations of sexual abuse against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the BJP MP and outgoing chief of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday came out in support of protesting wrestlers who have been seeking arrest of WFI chief stating that she will fight till they get justice.

"I will request the wrestlers to continue their movement. This fight is for life, for independence, for humanitarian justice," she said.

But Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur maintained that the Government is handling the issue "sensitively," and has agreed to the wrestlers' earlier demands.

Security was tightened at Delhi's border points on Thursday in view of a call for nationwide demonstrations given by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) in support of wrestlers protesting against WFI chief.

Security personnel are maintaining strict vigil at the border points and extra pickets have been put up to prevent



Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait addresses a Khap Mahapanchayat organised over the ongoing protest by wrestlers against WFI President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, at Soram village, in Muzaffarnagar on Thursday

PTI

any untoward incident, Delhi Police officials said.

Led by farmer leader Rakesh Tikait, the mahapanchayat was convened by Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Naresh Tikait, a day after they successfully dissuaded

several prominent wrestlers from discarding their hard-earned medals into the Ganga river as a mark of protest against the alleged inaction of the police regarding the accused.

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CAPSULE

LAWRENCE BISHNOI GANG 10 SHOOTERS ARRESTED

Gurugram: Ten shooters allegedly associated with gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldie Brar were arrested here, police said on Thursday. Four pistols, 28 live cartridges, two vehicles and seven police uniforms were seized from their possession, they said, adding one of the vehicles recovered was reportedly stolen from Delhi.

CONG SHOULD CELEBRATE INDIA'S SUCCESS: RIJJU

New Delhi: With India reporting 7.2 per cent growth rate, Union Minister Kiren Rijju on Thursday asked the Congress to celebrate it and not take "sadistic pleasure" by undermining the country's success stories.

TMC'S ABHISHEK LEADS RALLY IN NANDIGRAM

Nandigram: Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee led a 20-km-long march to Nandigram in Purba Medinipur on Thursday, taking the fight for the panchayat elections to the stronghold of Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari who defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in this seat in the 2021 Assembly polls.

All must resolve to fight terror, its financing: EAM at BRICS meet

Jaishankar urges BRICS nations to show sincerity in reforming UNSC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/CAPE TOWN

In a veiled attack on Pakistan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday described terrorism as the key threat to international peace and security and said all nations must take resolute measures against this menace, including its financing and propaganda. In his opening remarks at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting here, Jaishankar also said that terrorism must be combated in all its forms and manifestations, and never be condoned under any circumstances.

"Among the key threats to international peace and security is that of terrorism. All nations must take resolute measures against this menace,



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar shake hands with Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan at BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in Cape Town on Thursday

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including its financing and propaganda," the Minister said at the forum attended by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor among others.

Jaishankar has in the past described Pakistan as the "epi-centre of terrorism" where terrorists like Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, Sajid Mir and Dawood Ibrahim are sheltered.

He also called on BRICS nations to demonstrate their sincerity in reforming multi-

lateral institutions, including that of the UN Security Council. "For two decades, we have heard calls for reform of multilateral institutions, only to be continuously disappointed. It is, therefore, imperative that BRICS members demonstrate sincerity in regard to reforming global decision-making, including that of the UN Security Council," he said in his opening remarks at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting here.

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Democracy no more in NCERT Class X book

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) has dropped chapters on the Periodic Table, the contribution of agriculture to the national economy, challenges to democracy, and sustainable management of natural resources from the Class 10 textbook as part of a "rationalisation" exercise. The changes were based on expert recommendations and the revised textbooks are now available in the market.

While the entire chapter introducing the Periodic Table has been dropped from the Class 10 Chemistry textbook, it remains a part of the syllabus for Class 11. The significance of the topic is highlighted in the Class 11 Chemistry textbook,



which includes a quote by American chemist Glenn T Seaborg stating that the Periodic Table is the most important concept in chemistry.

The NCERT justified the changes by stating that reducing content load on students is crucial in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Education Policy 2020 also emphasises the need to decrease content load and promote experiential learning.

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AAP gets DMK support on ordinance row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday accused the Centre of creating a crisis in the non-BJP ruled States and said the ruling DMK would strongly oppose the Central ordinance on control over administrative services in the national Capital.

"The Centre is creating a crisis to the Aam Aadmi Party and is preventing a duly elected Government from functioning independently.

Despite the Supreme Court verdict in favour of the AAP Government, the Centre brought the ordinance. The DMK will strongly oppose it," Stalin, who is president of the DMK, told reporters outside his Alwarpet residence here.

Flanked by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, addresses the media after their meeting at his residence in Chennai on Thursday

PTI

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Stalin described Kejriwal as his "good friend" and said the discussion between them on opposing the ordinance was fruitful.

"The Chief Ministers in the non-BJP ruled States and also the political party leaders

should extend their support in opposing the ordinance," Stalin urged.

"This sort of healthy discussion among the Opposition parties should continue to protect the democracy in the country," he added.

Accusing the BJP-led

Government of bringing the ordinance nullifying the Supreme Court order, Kejriwal, who air-dashed to Chennai and sought Stalin's support, said the DMK agreed to strongly oppose it and stand by AAP Government and the people of Delhi.

"This ordinance should be collectively defeated in the Parliament as it is undemocratic, against the federal structure and unconstitutional," he said and termed the coming together of opposition parties to defeat the ordinance as semi-finals to the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Mann said the DMK Government had to put up a fight against a Governor who not only refrained from passing the Assembly bills but also did not read out the speech prepared by the State Government.

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Delhi excise case: Hyd trader turns approver; pardoned

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Thursday allowed Hyderabad businessman P Sarath Chandra Reddy, accused in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam, to turn approver. Special Judge MK Nagpal allowed his prayer and granted pardon to Reddy on an application moved by him. Special Judge Nagpal passed this order on May 29. Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is also an accused in the case.

The development may compound the legal woes of other accused in the politically sensitive case for both Sisodia and the AAP, which is only regional political outfit that runs the Governments in Delhi and Punjab.

The court made the decision on an application moved by Reddy, who in his application said, "I am ready to make true disclosure voluntarily about the case and want to be an approver in the case."

Reddy was recently granted bail by the Delhi High



Court on medical grounds.

According to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Reddy is the head of Hyderabad-based company Aurobindo Pharma, and was also engaged in liquor business. Reddy had in the past accused the ED of putting undue pressure and using force on witnesses to sign "pre-dictated" statements. However, in the course of investigation, he had later said the allegations were "baseless".

The CBI and the ED have alleged that irregularities were committed while modifying the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, undue favours were extended to licence holders, licence fee was waived or reduced and L-1 licence was extended without the competent authority's approval.

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Flood damages restricted to 4-5 districts: Yogi

Lays foundation stone of SDMA building

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Eulogising the work done by 'Aapda Mitra', Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that due to the excellent work done by the state government, it was able to restrict flood damages to 4-5 districts while earlier this menace affected 40 districts.

The chief minister was addressing people after laying the foundation stone of the new building of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) on Thursday. The five-storey building will be constructed at a cost of Rs 66.40 crore.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said, "UP is a state with the largest population in the country. Due to being a state with a large geographical area, there are also numerous challenges. Previously, around 40 districts in the state were affected by floods, but today we have managed to confine this danger to only 4-5 districts."

"If a disaster strikes today, people have confidence that the government will provide relief," he said.

The chief minister said 'Aapda Mitras' were currently working in 25 districts of the state. He instructed the Revenue department to place them in each of the state's 75



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath laying foundation stone of SDMA building in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

districts and pay a proper honorarium to those who perform well.

Pointing out that UP had nine different climatic zones where threat of disaster was always present, the chief minister said, "Due to rivers coming from the Himalayas, there is a constant risk of flooding from July to October. Lightning strikes are common in Vindhya and Bundelkhand, and western Uttar Pradesh is located in an area that is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes. The Terai region adjacent to Nepal is

known for human-wildlife conflicts."He added, "During flood, the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, flood units of Provincial Armed Constabulary, Aapda Mitras, local police, administration and public representatives work together to take steps to minimise financial losses."

The chief minister continued by saying that in order to provide relief, many categories have been brought under the purview of disaster management for the first time.

Human-wildlife conflict falls under one of these categories. Additionally, work is underway to install an early warning system for lightning alerts in all districts of the state. Several steps are being taken like installing a rain gauge system in every village council, he added. The chief minister released two books, three short films, and a radio jingle for public awareness. He also launched books on Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Plan-2023 and the Flood Action Plan-2023.

Campaign launched to register MSMEs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In order to give recognition to the micro, small and medium enterprises of Uttar Pradesh, the MSME and Export Promotion department has started a registration campaign on the MSME Udyam portal in the entire state. This campaign will be run in the entire state till June 15.

The Directorate of Industries will organise camps for the registration of micro, small, and medium enterprises in each district. Additionally, the MSMEs themselves can also register by visiting the portal. All eligible MSMEs can register. The objective is to provide a platform for the active micro, small, and medium enterprises in the state so that they may benefit from the schemes implemented by the Yogi Adityanath government for MSMEs. According to officials, there are more than 90 lakh active MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh, but only 14 lakh MSMEs are registered on the portal so far. All these units contribute directly and indirectly to the state's gross domestic product (GDP).

"The state government has set a target to get all these enterprises registered, for which the campaign has been launched simultaneously in all districts of the state from June 1 to June 15," an official said on Thursday. He said the greatest relief for the registered MSMEs was the accessibility of accident insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh for micro entrepreneurs, which could be provided after obtaining approval from the cabinet.

Civic bodies performing well to be rewarded

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, stressed the importance of encouraging mutual competition to further improve the municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayats of the state and declared that the municipal bodies that perform well would be rewarded.

Participating in a one-day orientation workshop organised for the newly-elected mayors of municipal corporations, and chairpersons of municipal councils and nagar panchayats, the chief minister said that five parameters had been set for this, including cleanliness, pure drinking water, good roads, safe city and self-reliance.

"The municipal corporation, municipality, and nagar panchayat of the state that meets the parameters and comes first will be rewarded. Based on these five parameters, the nagar panchayat occupying first place at district level will receive Rs 1 crore, the municipality occupying first place at the divisional level will receive Rs 2 crore, and the municipal corporation occupying first place at the state level will receive Rs 5 crore," he said.

The chief minister said that many individuals attempted to disrupt the municipal elections by approaching courts, but the urban development team remained steadfast and dealt with each issue as it arose.

"For the first time, the municipal elections in the state have been completed by implementing the report of the Other Backward Classes Commission. It was the first time in the state's history that an election was held with such fairness and peace," Yogi noted.

The chief minister explained to the newly-elected members that as representatives of the people, it was their responsibility to improve urban life. "Your board has many powers, if they are used properly, then your tenure will be remembered for a long time by the public," he said.

In addition to outlining the various government development initiatives, the chief minister stressed on cleanliness and said, "It is our responsibility to maintain our city in



the same way that we maintain our homes tidy. We should form Mohalla Swachhta Committees to make people aware of cleanliness."

The chief minister noted how India's stature had increased in the past nine years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, saying, "Whenever there is a crisis, the entire world looks towards Prime Minister Modi with hopeful eyes. The biggest power of the world is accepting the leadership and giving respect to Prime Minister Modi. India got the vision of a smart city for the first time in these years only."

Maintaining that the government was giving enough money for every household tap, Yogi said, "All the municipal bodies should make their own action plan. There should be no encroachment on the roads anywhere. Your municipal corporation, municipality and nagar panchayat should be good from the point of view of smooth traffic, and for this, there should be proper arrangement of street vendors and taxi stands. Drains should be desilted before the rains. There should be a system of fogging to prevent mosquitoes."

Yogi also emphasised that destitute cattle should be sent to 'Kanha Upvan' rather than being allowed to roam the streets. "Make sure that there are no stray dogs in the city. There should be arrangements for night shelters for the people coming in search of employment. Beggars should be made self-sufficient and included in government programmes in order to ensure that no one begs on the street," he said.

Govt to develop plastic processing parks in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In view of the increasing demand for plastic products across the globe, the Uttar Pradesh government is going to develop plastic processing parks, one of which will be set up in the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) area.

"The YEIDA Board has approved the proposal and the Planning department is working on the outline of the park. After the approval, work on the project will start and the process of setting up industries

will accelerate," a government spokesman said here on Thursday.

The Yogi Adityanath government has a plan to set up a plastic park on the lines of medical device park, toy park, textile park, leather park, and electronic park in UP.

"Units for processing, manufacturing and other related technology of plastic products will be set up in the plastic park, which will meet the plastic needs of not only Uttar Pradesh but also the country and the world," an official said. He said hundreds of plas-

tic units would be set up in an area of 100 acres.

The All India Plastic Industries Association has already presented a proposal in this regard.

The plan has also been approved by the YEIDA Board. More than 20 investors have proposed to invest in the plastic processing park to be set up in the YEIDA area.

Deepak Balani of the Plastic Industry Association said: "Data of the Government of India reflects that more than 10,000 plastic companies are registered in UP. The per capi-

ta plastic consumption in India and the globe is about 15 kg and 36 kg respectively. In that sense, we are not even 50 per cent of that. India being a consumption country, there is a lot of potential for plastic growth with UP being a big consumption state."

Balani further said that with the development of a plastic park, the state would not only be able to meet the demand for its consumption but would also be able to export it to neighboring states and abroad.

"Everyone has seen the

contribution of plastic during the COVID-19 period. Plastic is used in many products, including areas like health-care, pharma, food packaging, protective equipment, PPE kits, among others. In a way, plastic has saved millions of lives. Apart from this, plastic is also widely used in packaging, infrastructure, and pipes used in buildings," he said.

The officials said that several upcoming dedicated industrial parks in the YEIDA area near Jewar International Airport witnessed a boom in the progress of industries.

Lovers commit suicide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fearing opposition from their family members, two lovers allegedly committed suicide.

Their bodies were found lying in the forest of Lavedi area in Etawah district on Thursday morning. Both the girl and the boy were distant relatives and recently the girl was married to another youth.

According to Subhash, father of the deceased youth Anuj, he and his entire family had participated in the marriage of the deceased girl, Kalpana, on May 4. They also gave financial support to Kalpana's family.

Subhash said that they never thought that Anuj was in love with Kalpana and whenever they saw the two togeth-

er, they took them just as brother-sister.

He said that on Wednesday their secret affair came before the entire family and it shocked them all.

Anuj used to work in a travel agency in Raychopra, Hyderabad and had come to the village last month just before the wedding. Kalpana's brother Satish also worked with Anuj in Hyderabad. He said that after returning, he and Anuj gave money to Kalpana's father so that he could construct his house before the wedding on May 4.

Subhash said that at midnight on May 25, both Anuj and Kalpana left home, saying that they were going to attend Bhagwat Katha. When they did not return, a 'missing' report was lodged with the

local police.

Subhash said that till then they were unaware that the two were in love and only on Wednesday they learnt about it through one of Anuj's friends.

Subhash said before they could trace out both, they were shocked to learn from the villagers on Thursday morning that the bodies of Anuj and Kalpana were hanging from a tree outside the village.

He claimed that Kalpana was married in Madaiya Dilip Nagar in Jalaun and she seems to have planned to elope with Anuj, hence she returned home on May 22 and three days later, on May 25, they both eloped and fearing that the family members would not accept their relationship, they ended their lives.

UP STF nab two for duping PM AWAS Yojana applicants

Lucknow (PTI): The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) have arrested two men for allegedly duping applicants of central housing scheme PM AWAS Yojana by posing as government officials, police said on Thursday.

According to a police statement, the accused — identified as Rajesh Singh alias Cheeta and Anil Singh alias Pradeep Mishra — were arrested on Wednesday from Rajendra Factory area under Raniya Police Station of Kanpur Dehat district. The duo would at random call people who have applied for the housing scheme and ask them to send Rs 4,000-

5,000 for clearing the money allotted under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the statement said. "They would also ask people to open a bank account, and send the passbook and debit card of the account to them. They used this account to make fraudulent transactions," an STF official said. Rajesh Singh is also accused in a 2020 murder and kidnapping case 2020. He began duping people after coming out on bail in October 2022, the statement said.

The STF has lodged an FIR at Raniya Police Station and further investigation is underway, police said.



Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani pays a courtesy call on Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow on Thursday Pioneer

Newlywed couple found dead

Bahraich (PTI): A newly married couple was found dead in the Kaiserganj area here, police said on Thursday.

Pratap (23), along with his wife Pushpa (21), arrived at in-laws' house in Teprahan Purwa village on Wednesday after his marriage on May 30. The cou-

ple went to sleep late in the night after performing rituals, they said. When the two did not come out of the room Thursday morning, the family members called them and when there was no response, they broke open the door and found that both were lying

dead, police said.

There was no visible injury mark on the bodies and it is difficult to say anything about the cause of death before the post-mortem report arrives, Station House Officer Rajnath Singh said, adding investigation is underway.

Akhilesh Yadav ready to pedal soft Hindutva

To organise workers' training camp in Naimisharanya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party has announced its strategic move to commence the preparations for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Naimisharanya Dham, throwing a hint that Akhilesh Yadav is now ready to pedal soft Hindutva.

Over the past week, Akhilesh Yadav has been actively engaging with party workers and has decided to organise a two-day workers' training camp at Naimisharanya from June 9.

Political experts believe that the SP has formulated a plan to incorporate a strategy of soft Hindutva politics alongside the Bharatiya Janata Party's hard Hindutva agenda, particularly evident in their focus on Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura.

Considering the SP's recent electoral setbacks, including defeats in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, 2017 and 2022 assembly elections, and the municipal elections in 2023, the party is striving to regain its foothold and mount a

formidable challenge to the BJP's supremacy.

"The choice of Naimisharanya as the launch pad for the SP's campaign holds symbolic significance. According to the Puranas, Naimisharanya derives its name from the swiftness with which demons were vanquished by devas. The SP sees this as an opportune moment to begin its efforts to challenge the BJP's dominance," a former MLA said.

Approximately 5,000 party workers, including 3,000 booth committee members, are expected to participate in the programme, while senior party leaders have been requested to be present throughout the two-day event.

Political experts suggest that this decision stems from the SP's intent to appease the Brahmin voters, in addition to its traditional support base of Yadavs, Muslims, and Dalits. Swami Prasad Maurya's past comments on Ramcharitmanas are believed to have caused a rift between the SP and a section of the electorate, necessitating a fresh approach to



regain their trust.

Akhilesh Yadav has instructed party spokespersons to exercise caution in religious matters and refrain from making statements that could offend a section. He has further prohibited party leaders from discussing religious topics on social media platforms.

The training camp will focus on imparting effective election-winning strategies to party workers, including booth management, voter list verification, and mobilisation strategies.

Akhilesh Yadav had kick-started his 2022 assembly election from

Chitrakoot.

Insiders in the party interpret the SP decision to commence training in 80 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh as a crucial move. The party is reportedly preparing its youth members to contest the election on approximately 30 to 40 Lok Sabha seats.

Insiders claim the SP is attempting to unite Lohiaites and Ambedkarites, aiming to present itself as an alternative to the BJP. The party is actively working to establish a connection with Dalits and Other Backward Classes, emphasising its commitment to these marginalised communities. Having secured around 38 per cent of the votes in the recent assembly elections, the SP has set a target of obtaining 40-45 per cent of the votes in the upcoming polls.

As the SP commences its training camp and sets its sights on the 2024 elections, the political landscape in Uttar Pradesh appears poised for an intense battle for power, with the SP attempting to reshape its political strategy and broaden its support base.

SP leader, four members of his family die in road mishap

Lucknow (PNS): In a shocking incident, a Samajwadi Party leader along with four family members, including his pregnant wife, died in a road accident in Kannauj in the early hours of Thursday.

The deceased included the SP leader, his father, mother, wife and daughter.

According to reports, SP leader Rahul Savita of Shekhpur village under Erwakatra police station of Kannauj, had come to Lucknow to attend a marriage ceremony along with his family members. When they were returning, the driver dozed off near Tirwa on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in the early hours of Thursday. The car crashed into the road divider and overturned, claiming the lives of five persons, including the SP leader, who were in the car.

Two others were critically injured and were shifted to hospital by the police.

The relatives confirmed that on the way back home after attending the function in Lucknow, the driver dozed off on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Kannauj which led to the accident.

Besides Rahul Savita (30), Krishna Murari 55, Asha Devi 50, Lakshmi 27, Ayesha 7 died on the spot, while two others were battling for their lives in the medical college hospital in Kanpur Nagar.

The local police registered a case and were making further investigations.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND

Corrigendum

In continuation of the notice published in the various newspapers on 26.05.2023, it is to mention that, instead of walk-in-interview only on dated 14.06.2023 for the post of Clinical Psychology Tutor & Psychiatric Social Work Tutor, the selection process will be done on the basis of written exam (MCQ Based) to be held on 13.06.2023 from 11.30 A.M. onwards followed by Department Assessment on 14.06.2023 from 11.30 A.M. onwards. Details can be seen on the Institute website www.cipranchi.nic.in.

Sd/-Director

एचडीएफसी म्यूचुअल फंड - निवेशक जागरूकता कार्यक्रम

म्यूचुअल फंड्स के बारे में और अधिक जानने के लिए इसमें अवश्य भाग लें.

दिनांक तथा स्थान :

शनिवार, 3 जून 2023; शाम 6:00 बजे से.

अभिनंदन होटल, गोवर्धन चौराहा, मयपुरा, उत्तर प्रदेश.

रजिस्ट्रेशन कराने के लिए, कृपया संपर्क करें: निशांत कुमार झा, मोबाइल: 73690 83535.

रजिस्ट्रेशन अनिवार्य है. रजिस्ट्रेशन का समय सुबह 9:30 बजे से शाम 5:30 बजे तक होगा.

कार्यक्रम के दौरान कोविड सुरक्षा दिशानिर्देशों का पालन करना अनिवार्य है.

वॉक-इन की अनुमति नहीं दी जाएगी.

HDFC
MUTUAL FUND
भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
An Investor Education by HDFC Mutual Fund

म्यूचुअल फंड में निवेश करने के लिए, एकाधिकार अनेक श्रवक को जानिए (KYC) की अनेकताओं को पूरा करने की प्रक्रिया के बारे में अधिक जानकारी हेतु <https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how> पर विजिट करें. निवेशकों को केवल रजिस्टर्ड म्यूचुअल फंड के साथ व्यवहार करना चाहिए. रिस्क विवरण का सारगर्भक स्रोत की वेबसाइट (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html) पर विजिट जा सकता है. किसी चुनौत, विवाद या समस्या के समाधान के लिए निवेशक एग्रीजेशन लाइन/या निवेशक संबंधी अधिकारों से संबंधित कर सकते हैं. इसके साथ ही, अन्य निवेशक एग्रीजेशन लाइन हेतु या सहायता से सहाय न होंगे <https://discoms.gov.in> पर भी विचारना चाहिए कर सकते हैं. स्वतंत्र वित्तीय विश्लेषकों को सेवा के अतिरिक्त निवेशक फंड को सेवा प्रदाता द्वारा प्रदान की जा सकती है. म्यूचुअल फंड निवेशक बाजार के जोखिमों के साथी हैं, योजना से जुड़े सभी दस्तावेजों को ध्यान से पढ़ें.

KDA to conduct demand survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) has decided to carry out a demand survey prior to the launch of multi-storey group housing schemes. Such a demand survey will be conducted for the construction of flats in multi-storey group housing scheme in Daheli Sujampur area. The scheme envisaged construction of two and three BHK flats. Law Officer/Public Relation Officer (PRO) SB Rai in a press statement issued on Wednesday, said the scheme had been floated on the directives of Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh. He said the demand survey will be held between June 2 and 30. For this a citizen had

to pay a token amount of ₹30,000 and ₹20,200 for three and two BHK flats respectively. People interested may get the application form and demand survey booklet on payment from the HDFC Motijheel branch. He said this was only a demand survey and the final decision will be taken for launching the scheme subject to receipt of sufficient number of applications. Thereafter, all formalities related to registration etc will be completed by registering in RERA as per the rules, he added.

OATH ADMINISTERED: On the occasion of World No-Tobacco Day on Wednesday, KDA secretary Shatrohan Vaishya administered oath to officers and employees not to

consume tobacco and appealed to make other people aware about its harm. He appealed to the officers and employees to keep their office clean and



KDA Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya administering oath on No-Tobacco Day on Wednesday.

tobacco free.

BUSTED: The state STF squad busted a gang of criminals involved in duping people on the pretext of providing

them the house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and arrested two persons from Rajendra Factory compound, Rajendra Chauraha, including the mastermind, in Rania of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday. The accused used to collect data of applicants eligible under the PM Awas Yojana through different mobile apps. They were identified as Rajesh Singh alias Cheetah alias Deepak Mishra and Anil Singh alias Pradip Mishra of Arya Nagar (I), Rania, Kanpur Dehat. The police recovered six mobile phone, five fake voter ID, four fake Aadhar cards, three ATM cards, one PAN card, two pass-books, one SIM card packet and photocopy of nine documents from them.

Air Cmde Praveen takes over as AOC of Knp Air Force Stn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Air Commodore MK Praveen took over as Air Officer Commanding (AOC) of Air Force Station Kanpur on Thursday in an informal function. He took charge of the office and met the officials and subordinates. The officer in his maiden address to the station personnel urged everyone to contribute to do the good work towards operational preparedness at all times and focus on mission 'Atmanirbhar'. He expressed the hope that they will continue to work with same zeal and patriotism. Air Commodore Praveen



was commissioned in the Aeronautical Engineering (Mechanical) Branch of Indian Air Force (IAF) on April, 4, 1993. He is a postgraduate in

Technical Management from Defence Institute of Advanced Technology and also an alumnus of Military Institute of Technology, Pune. In his career spanning 30 years, he has held various prominent field and Command appointments, including that of Commanding Officer of Central Indigenisation and Manufacturing Depot, Ojhar. In recognition of his contribution to the IAF, he was commended by the AOC-in-C in 2001 and also by the Chief of the Air Staff in 2009. He is also a recipient of Presidential Award of Vayu Sena Medal in 2015.

Challenges before dairy farmers highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Milk production in Uttar Pradesh mainly consisted of cow and buffalo milk and the dairy market size of UP had reached Rs 1,626.7 billion while under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath it was likely to reach Rs 3,613.2 billion by 2028, exhibiting a growth rate of around 14.24 per cent during 2023-2028 period. The World Milk Day is observed on June 1 every year and this year the theme was "showcasing how dairy was reducing its environmental footprint, while also providing nutritious foods and livelihoods." This was stated by Prof CP Sachan of the Dairy Development Department of the Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) while addressing students of dairy development of the varsity on Thursday. He said UP had increased its milk production to 328.821 lakh tons by the end of 2021-22 and concert-

ed efforts are being made to ensure the production increased so as to meet the common man's demand. He said UP produced between 90 lakh litres and 150 lakh litres milk per day. He said Uttar Pradesh contributed to 17 per cent of milk in the all India share. Prof Sachan said it was true that dairy farmers were solely responsible for milk production and this day also focused on safety and quality of raw milk which will satisfy the highest expectations of the food industry and consumers.

He said the onus rested on the dairy department of the farm universities to ensure they make efforts to reach out to dairy farmers. He said the most important factor was genetic as milk composition varied considerably among breeds of dairy cattle, especially cows and buffaloes. He said it was a matter of concern that most of the dairy farmers were unaware of interval between milkings and also overlooked the age of milch

cattle. He said feeding was one of vital importance with special care of health of milch cattle.

He said major challenges before dairy farmers of Uttar Pradesh were high feed cost, land shortage, space limitations, feed quality and availability also as inadequate extension and veterinary services were the most dairy production system constraints in both urban and rural areas. He added in India around 70 per cent farmers were marginal and 77 per cent of them earned even a miserable income. He said in addition to this animal holding had been found to be more equitable as compared to land holding as 85 per cent of Indian farmers, who were marginal and small, own only 45 per cent of farm land but 75 per cent of bovines.

He said as per national survey report the livestock sector contributed significantly to rural income about 26 per cent in case of the poorest households and about 12 per cent in case of overall rural income and doubling real income of farmers

requires annual growth of 10.41 per cent in farmer's income. He said there was a need to increase programmes for cattle breed improvement and large cow shelters in development blocks could be useful for this work. He said the UP government had directed this farm varsity to hold reviews on animal husbandry, milk production, sale, breed improvement etc.

TWO INJURED: Two labourers were seriously injured when they fell from the pole after coming in contact with electric current near Maitha station under Sheoli Kotwali police area of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday morning. They were engaged in laying the cable after the shut down of the power line. Suddenly, the power supply restored and they after coming into contact with the electric current fell from the pole.

Both the injured were immediately taken to community health centre (CHC) from where after the first aid they were referred to Kanpur's LLR (Hallet) hospital.

World Milk Day celebrated in BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the occasion of World Milk Day, a national seminar on 'Sustainable Dairy: Good for Planet, Good for You' was organised at Atal Incubation Centre by DDU Kaushal Kendra, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Thursday. The seminar was inaugurated by chief guest Prof Dr. PK Mishra, former Vice-Chancellor AKTU Lucknow and Jharkhand University of Technology by garlanding the bust of Mahatma Mahatma followed by Kulgeet presented by students of Agribusiness. In the seminar, distinguished guests like Prof Dr SK Mishra, Dean, Prof Dr ON Singh, Coordinator, DDU Kaushal Kendra, Dinesh Kumar Maurya, Director, Arban Dairy, S Mahapatra, HR, Parag Dairy, Manoj Solanki, Factory Manager, Parag Dairy and Dr RS Mishra, Convener were also present. Earlier, Prof RS Mishra welcomed the distinguished guests and gave the introductory speech on the importance of the day. Addressing the



A seminar being held on World Milk Day at BHU, Varanasi on Thursday.

function, chief guest Prof Dr PK Mishra has elaborated on the importance of sustainability at each and every point of life. He has asked to focus on developing Indian breeds of cattle for the development of the Indian Dairy sector. DK Maurya has discussed the success story of Arban Dairy and assured of the best cooperation to students of BHU. S Mahapatra has described the various steps to be taken care of the day-to-day practices of the industry. Ajay Srivastava of Parag Dairy has elaborated on the importance of time management in the dairy industry. Manoj Solanki has focused on day-to-day problems and its solution in the context of the indus-

try. The vote of thanks was given by Tanya Singh and the seminar was coordinated by Surbhi Pandey. The seminar covered a range of topics aimed at promoting sustainable dairy practices and their benefits. Speakers highlighted the importance of rural farmer welfare in the dairy industry, emphasising their integral role in sustaining and driving its growth. Discussions revolved around empowering farmers through education, technology, and access to financial resources. India's substantial contribution to global milk production was also a key focus, with experts shedding light on the country's achievements and potential in this sector. Participants engaged in discussions about innovative farming methods, technological advancements, waste management, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a greener and more sustainable dairy industry. Students of Vocational Studies participated in oral and poster presentations on different topics for sustainable dairy.

plary work carried out, many recognitions came from national and international organisations. He said currently R&D laboratories at the institute had world class facilities and the same had been praised by various foreign delegations too. Prof Mohan said the institute worked in all directions and many other infrastructural facilities had been developed during the period which included construction of hostels, outdoor stadium, development of open gym and children park. He said with the installation of 300 KW roof top-based solar power system and water harvesting, it is a clean and green campus. He said revenue generation also gives a broad measure about activities of the institute and claimed that the same was meagre ₹30 lakh in 2012-13 which escalated to ₹640 lakh by 2022-23.

'NSI has made its presence felt globally'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The National Sugar Institute (NSI) during the last 10 years has made its presence felt globally as large number of sugar producing countries are looking towards it to meet training requirements for technical manpower required for sugar and allied industry and for modernisation of their units. This was stated by its Director Prof Narendra Mohan while addressing the press and the NSI officials on Thursday. He said in a decade of his leadership of the institute MoUs had been signed with Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia and Kenya, while the process of signing MoUs with Cuba and Fiji were in the final stages. He said the NSI had also conducted teaching and training programmes for many countries, mainly Nigeria, Kenya, Yemen, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and



NSI Director, Prof Narendra Mohan, addressing presspersons

Indonesia. He said teaching and training facilities had been upgraded to a great extent with addition of sugar refining unit, specialty sugar division, ethanol unit and brewery. He said it is the only institute perhaps in the world to have such facilities for hands-on training and added that today it had smart classrooms, interactive seminar rooms and students' laboratories to perform analysis as per international protocols. Prof Mohan said NSI kept a close watch on industry requirements and to cope with same new courses on Quality Control, Environment Science, Sugarcane Productivity and Maturity Management and Industrial Instrumentation were introduced during the last 10 years and added the new laboratories for environment science and industrial instrumentation were set up to meet the requirement. He said the NSI had also extended library facilities in boys' and girls' hostels to facilitate students to refer to books even at late hours and during holidays. He said the Institute proved its worth by developing many innovative processes and products out of the byproducts and waste from the industry. He said the institute not only filed patents but for the exem-

plary work carried out, many recognitions came from national and international organisations. He said currently R&D laboratories at the institute had world class facilities and the same had been praised by various foreign delegations too. Prof Mohan said the institute worked in all directions and many other infrastructural facilities had been developed during the period which included construction of hostels, outdoor stadium, development of open gym and children park. He said with the installation of 300 KW roof top-based solar power system and water harvesting, it is a clean and green campus. He said revenue generation also gives a broad measure about activities of the institute and claimed that the same was meagre ₹30 lakh in 2012-13 which escalated to ₹640 lakh by 2022-23.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

Regional Office Kanpur Metro Region :
118/330, 1st Floor, Kaushalpur
Gumti No. 5, Kanpur -208012

Public Notice [Branch: SSI Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur]

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/ private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Sl. No.	Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice
1.	Borrower : Shri Bhole Nath S/o Late Ramesh Chandra, R/o: (1) House No. 666, Patel Vihar, Jarouli Phase-2, Barra, Kanpur Nagar (2) Flat No. D-5/5 Shivalik (First Floor), Sulabh Awas Yojana, Type-3, Shatabdi Nagar, Phase-4B (Panki Gangagani), Kanpur Nagar. (3) Plot No. 4, Patel Vihar, Jarouli Phase-2, Kanpur Nagar, N.P.A. Date : 09-03-2023 + Demand Notice Date : 10-05-2023 Immoveable Property : Land & Building Situated at Flat No. D-5/5, (First Floor) Shivalik, Sulabh Awas Yojana, Type-3, Shatabdi Nagar, Phase-4B (Panki Gangagani), Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Bhole Nath S/o Late Ramesh Chandra. Area : Covered Area 28.70 Sq. Mtr. and Undivided Share in Land 12.30 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Block No. D-4, South : Flat No. D-5/8, East : Block No. D-5/6, West : 12 Mtr. Wide Road. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs.9,61,286.00 + Intt. + Others Charges
2.	Borrower : Shri Jagdamba Prasad Sharma S/o Late Ram Charan Sharma, R/o: (1) 117/46, Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur (2) 2/168, Mini MIG, Awas Vikas No. 1, Panki Road Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar. Guarantor : Shri Satyendra Kumar Kushwaha, R/o: House No. 117/P/5, Flat No. 35, Kedarnath Apartment, Kakadeo, Kanpur N.P.A. Date : 29-04-2023 + Demand Notice Date : 05-05-2023 Immoveable Property : Land & Building Situated at I-2/168, Mini MIG, Yojana No. 1, Panki Road Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Jagdamba Prasad Sharma S/o Late Ram Charan Sharma, Area : 103.12 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : 18 Mtr. Road, South : I-2/200 House, East : I-2/167 House, West : I-2/169. House. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 13,75,401.68 + Intt. + Others Charges
3.	Borrower : M/s Adrash Interiors, Proprietor : Shri Jagdamba Prasad Sharma S/o Late Ram Charan Sharma, R/o: (1) 117/46, Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur (2) 2/168, Mini MIG, Awas Vikas No. 1, Panki Road Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar. N.P.A. Date : 29-04-2023 + Demand Notice Date : 05-05-2023 Immoveable Property : Land & Building Situated at I-2/168, Mini MIG, Yojana No. 1, Panki Road Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Jagdamba Prasad Sharma S/o Late Ram Charan Sharma, Area : 103.12 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : 18 Mtr. Road, South : I-2/200 House, East : I-2/167 House, West : I-2/169. House. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 28,89,329.68 + Intt. + Others Charges
4.	Borrower : M/s Riya Enterprises, Proprietor : Shri Bhole Nath S/o Late Ramesh Chandra, R/o: (1) House No. 666, Patel Vihar, Jarouli Phase-2, Barra, Kanpur Nagar (2) Flat No. D-5/5 Shivalik (First Floor), Sulabh Awas Yojana, Type-3, Shatabdi Nagar, Phase-4B (Panki Gangagani), Kanpur Nagar. (3) Plot No. 4, Patel Vihar, Jarouli Phase-2, Kanpur Nagar. (4) Nala Paar Kurara Hameerour-Hamirpur Tehsil, Distt. Hamirpur. N.P.A. Date : 09-03-2023 + Demand Notice Date : 10-05-2023 Moveable Property : Hypothecation of Stock, Book Debt and Plant & Machinery O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 4,59,954.35 + Intt. + Others Charges

Date : 02-06-2023 **Place : Kanpur / Hamirpur** **Authorised Officer**

19 retire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 19 personnel of Indian Railways including seven of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and 12 of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) retired on Wednesday. At a farewell function held at the Hall of Fame in BLW, seven personnel including Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (Block) BL Nag and Work Manager (Engine) Munna Ram retired. Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Ranvijay bid farewell to all the retired employees by presenting them with medals and folders. The PCPO suggested the retired employees should use their accumulated wealth in a proper way. Divisional Medical Officer of BLW Central Hospital Dr Amit Gupta wished good health to all the retired employees and highlighted the health related medical points. The representatives of the bank in their address urged the retired employees to invest their accumulated money properly. The function was conducted by Senior Personnel Officer (Headquarters) Raj Kumar Gupta. In the end, Assistant Personnel Officer Piyush Minj gave the vote of thanks. The officers of the Accounts department were also present. At Premchand auditorium room (DRM office) at Lahartara, the function was held under the chairmanship of DRM Ramashray Pandey.

Two killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two tractor-trolley-borne persons were killed and a truck driver was injured when their vehicles collided on Jhansi-Kanpur highway near Chaura village under the Bhognipur Kotwali police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Thursday morning. The injured truck driver Manoj of Umra, Haliaapur, Sultanpur, was admitted to the CHC. The deceased were identified as Vikas Katheria (22) and Pramod Sahu (25) of Sujagwa. Amraudha outpost incharge Rajneesh Kumar said after the panchnama, both the bodies had been sent for an autopsy. Crime inspector Mahendra Singh said the truck had been impounded. On receipt of complaint, further action will be taken in the matter. The treatment of the injured driver was on. The kin of the deceased had been informed, he said.

Meanwhile a youth was killed when his dumper rrammed into a stationary truck near Chamari nullah on the national highway in Ata police station area of Orai late on Wednesday night. He got badly trapped in dumper's cabin and succumbed to his injuries on the spot. After loading pebbles from Jhansi when the dumper going towards Kanpur reached near Chamari nullah it rrammed into a stationary truck in a bid to overtake it. The front portion of the dumper got badly crushed and Brijendra sitting in it got entangled in its cabin. He was taken out and sent to Orai hospital where the doctors declared him as brought dead.

Urticaria a very common disease: Dermatologist

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted dermatologist Dr RP Singh while addressing a seminar on urticaria organised by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Kanpur Chapter, said it occurred when a trigger caused high levels of histamine and other chemical messengers to be released in the skin. He said these substances cause the blood vessels in the affected area of skin to open up and become leaky. He said urticaria was a very common disease characterised by itchy and transient plaques that involved skin and mucous membranes. He said umpteen factors such as infections, medicines, food, psychogenic factors and respiratory allergens

were the reason for the disease. He said if respiratory tracts were involved it may be life threatening and should be treated urgently. He said the diagnosis was usually straight forward and H1 antihistamines and sometimes short-term systemic corticosteroids were preferred for treatment while H2 antagonists may be added during resistant cases although other treatment options may be considered during missed events. Dr Singh informed substances which are added to various foods for the purposes of colouring, flavouring and preserving where the major reason for this disease. He said other factors like food dyes and colouring, antioxidants, sta-

bilisers, taste enhancers, and preservatives all were the triggers. He said if GPs suspect food additive reaction immediate allergy testing may be possible for certain natural substances. He said another way to diagnose an adverse reaction to food additives was to undergo an oral challenge which involved eating increasing amounts of suspected problem food while under the close supervision of an allergist. He said nonprescription anti-itch (antihistamine) pill that did not cause drowsiness may help ease itching. He advised that to soothe the skin it needs to be covered, especially the itchy area with a cold wash cloth or rubbing an ice cube over it for a few minutes.


TSH players win medals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The players of The Sportz Hub (TSH) won many medals, including four silver medals, in the district open Karate championship held at SGM International School, Indira Nagar. Riyan Ahmad, representing 6-8 years category won silver medal in kata and bronze medal in kumite events. In 10-12 years age group, Tista Trivedi, Ansh Singh and Swarnima won the bronze medal in kata. Likewise, in 14-16 years age group, Parth Gupta bagged the bronze in kata while Abhiudh Pandey did so in kumite in 10-12 years age group.



The winners of district open karate championship.



इंडियन बैंक
Indian Bank

ALLAHABAD

Zonal Office: 92A, Civil Lines, Bank Chauraha, Jhansi - 284001, Email ID: zojhansi@indianbank.co.in; (Phone: 0510-2471922)

POSSESSION NOTICE (Rule 8(1) for Immoveable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Indian Bank, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice (details of which have been mentioned hereunder) calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Section 8 & 9 of the said rules. The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount and interest & charges there on as described here in below: We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules framed there under which deals with borrowers rights of redemption over the securities.

S. No.	Name of the Borrowers	Name of Mortgageors	Description of the Immoveable property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice
	Branch	Guarantors			Outstanding Amt.
1.	Mr. Pawan Sahu S/o Mr. Vinod Sahu	Mr. Pawan Sahu S/o Mr. Vinod Sahu 1. Mr. Vinod Sahu S/o Mr. Gaddu Prasad Sahu 2. Mrs. Suman Sahu W/o Mr. Vinod Sahu	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of land and building situated at H. No. 428/4, Arazi No. 518, Ward No. 6 Mohalla - Police Chowki Nainagarh, Behind Saint Jude School, Sir Sayed Nagar Gadiyagaon, Jhansi having area 1000 Sq. ft or 92.94 Sq. Mt in the name of Mr. Pawan Sahu S/o Vinod Sahu as per sale Deed dated 16/03/2016 registered on Bahi No. 1, Zild No. 5727 Page 1 to 38 Serial No. 2124 in the office of Sub Registrar 2 Jhansi. Boundaries:- North : House of Noor Malik and House of Dr. Raheesh, South : House of James, East : House of Noor Malik, West: 4.57 meter wide road	16.02.2023 25.05.2023 (Rs. 14,91,617.00 (Rs. Fourteen Lakh Ninety One Thousand Six Hundred and Seventeen Only) as on dt. 24.05.2023 with further interest w.e.f. 25.05.2023 charges and other expenses	

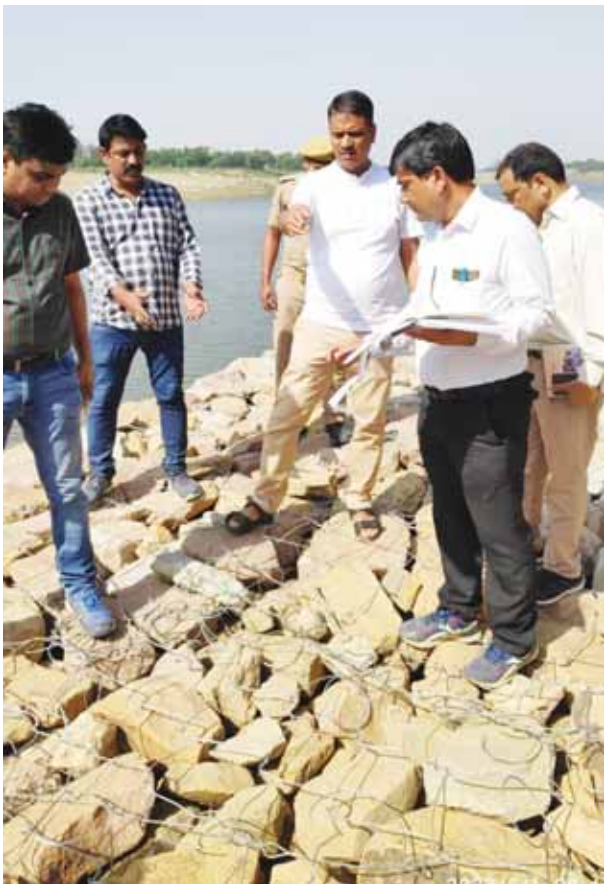
Branch: Kanpur Road **Date : 02.06.2023** **Place: Jhansi** **The Authorized Officer: Indian Bank**

DM visits flood-prone villages

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam visited some flood-prone areas including Gangapur and Ramchandipur villages near Balua Ghat which are generally affected badly during the floods and saw the preparations to control floods here on Thursday. Gangapur with around 160 families is surrounded by floods from all sides and often faces erosion of soil along the banks of river Ganga. During his visit, the DM was informed by the assistant engineer (AE) of Bandhi Division of Irrigation department that in order to secure the village, 300 metre long cutters are being made by tying the boulders of the mountains of Ahraura region with wires and the work will be completed before the monsoon at a cost of Rs 527.63 lakh.

The DM instructed the ADM (Finance and Revenue) to prepare a proposal to get about one kilometre long CC or interlocking roads in order to connect Gangapur village with the main roads. When the DM reached Ramchandipur, he saw the same situation. He was informed by Irrigation department AE that to prevent erosion, eight cutters of 35-35 metres each which are six metres high and six metres wide with about 245 metres length are being constructed at a cost of Rs 100.21 lakh and the work will be completed by June 15. Rajalingam ordered to give notice to the concerned contractor for using small boulders and instructed him to increase the number of labour-



DM S Rajalingam inspecting a flood prone village near Balua Ghat in Varanasi on Thursday.

ers there. The residents informed the DM that the roads of Ramchandipur, Mokai and Gobarha get blocked as they are generally submerged on both sides of the Ganga bridge during floods. The DM directed the ADM (F&R) to prepare a proposal for upgradation of the roads there.

Earlier, Rajalingam inspected the progress of the Lahartara-Phulwaria four-lane construction work. Expressing deep displeasure over the slow progress of the work during the construction of overhead bridges on Rail Level No 4 and 5C falling on Shivpur route and Lahartara Phulwaria routes

respectively.

Warning the concerned officers of the contract agency, he instructed them to increase the number of labourers and run a campaign on a war footing to complete the work soon.

During his 40 minutes stay, the DM asked different queries from the officers of Setu Nigam (Bridge Corporation) and Public Works Department (PWD) and said that as the construction of this four-lane road is on the priority of the government, there should be no negligence at any level. "Wherever there is any problem, it should be informed immediately," he said.

The DM was informed that more than 85 per cent work has been done by the Bridge Corporation and it is busy in completing the remaining work in time.

The work is scheduled to be done by June. There are four bridges on this four-lane route including a bridge over the Varuna river, two Railway Over Bridges (ROBs) and a flyover. With the construction of this four-lane, people will get relief from frequent jams at Cantt railway station, roadways bus stand and Andhrapul.

At present, it takes half an hour to 45 minutes to reach Katchery and Shivpur from Lahartara but after the construction, it would be completed in just 10 minutes.

ADM (F&R) Sanjay Kumar and the officers of the PWD, Bridge Corporation nd concerned organisations were present during the inspection.

DM, CP inaugurate Mission Life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain inaugurated the Mission Life campaign at Dashhashwamedh Ghat, offering their shramdaan, removing the wastes and sweeping the ghat stairs here on Thursday. The other senior district and police officers also collectively launched a cleanliness drive on the banks of river Ganga.

Speaking on the occasion, the CP said that the Police department launched a cleanliness drive through shramdaan at the Ganga ghats and this type of campaign is run by the Police department from time to time. The DM said that such campaigns strengthen cleanliness and also create awareness among people about the environment. Explaining the importance of cleanliness, he appealed to everyone to keep the environment around them clean. Many officers including ADM (Administration) Ranvijay Singh, ADM (City) Gulab Chandra, ADM (Protocol) Bachchu Singh, Nagar Swasthya Adhikar (Nagar Nigam) Dr NP Singh



DM S Rajalingam offering shramdaan under Mission Life in Varanasi on Thursday. and many others also participated in the campaign along

with police officers.

Earlier, the DM S Rajalingam reviewed preparations for the closing ceremony of the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) with the officials at a meeting held at Rifle Club. The closing function will be held on June 3 at 7 pm at the Techno Pavilion, IIT Gymkhana Ground, BHU in which the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be the chief guest.

Laying emphasis on fool-proof preparations, the DM directed the concerned officers to complete their assigned tasks on priority. He also instructed them to ensure timely entry to the people coming to the programme through two gates. The DM directed the Nagar Nigam officers to make arrangements for mobile toilets at the venue and asked the District Supply Officer (DSO) to make proper arrangements for drinking water. He also directed the police officer that the traffic system should be smooth in any condition and no one should face any kind of trouble. In view of the scorching heat, the organisers were also directed to arrange fans at the venue.

Minister inspects progress of Atal Residential School work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of Labour and Employment Anil Rajbhar on Thursday inspected the progress of the under-construction Atal Residential School, a dream project of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, which is being built on 12 acres at a cost of Rs 66.54 crore in Karsada area under Rajatalab tehsil here. Directing the engineers of the concerned agency, Rajbhar said that the construction work of the remaining hostels of this school being built by the government for the education of the children of labourers should be completed immediately by launching a campaign on a war footing. The deadline was set for completion of the work before December and till now more than 82 per cent work has been completed. However, during the inspection, the Minister expressed his displeasure over the incomplete works of the hostel and instructed the concerned to complete the same soon. He said that the Atal Residential School would be inaugurated soon by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the academic session will start in July. He asked the officers to take personal interest so that the hos-



tel should be completed soon. He said that negligence would not be tolerated at any level. Rajbhar said that from July itself, classes 6 to 12 will be started in the school and this year, a total of 80 children will be admitted in class 6, in which 40 will be boys and 40 will be girls. "Admission process has already started as the admission result of children will come soon," he said. Additional Labour Commissioner said that the process for admission in the school in Varanasi has already been started and the admissions would be given to the boys and girls of registered workers of Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare

Board and orphan children who have lost their parents during COVID-19. "The students can get education up to class 12 in this school. There is a residential arrangement from class 6 to 8. Education will be completely free. There will be hostel facilities for boys and girls. More than 500 students will be able to get education in this school," he informed.

In this Atal Residential School being set up in Varanasi division, there will be internal electrification, fire alarm system, weight rise system (fire fighting), construction of overhead tank of 100 kilolitre capacity, sewer line, 100 mm peripheral grid, 150 mm to 300

mm storm water drain, horticulture (vertical plantation), signage, tubing and boring, boundary wall, cattle catcher and supply and installation of STP/ETP, site development work, electrical substation, solar photovoltaic, power generation system, CCTV and street light development site etc on the school campus. The work of supply and installation of electricity connection and 32 KVA DG set and construction of boys and girls hostels, classrooms etc has been done. During the inspection, Rohania's former MLA Surendra Narayan Singh and other officials of the Labour department were also present.

Stress on increasing use of Hindi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A virtual meeting of the projects of the Regional Language Implementation Committee was organised under the chairmanship of General Manager Pramod Kumar in the premises of Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) here. The GM said that it is the responsibility of the head of the office to propagate the official language.

Chief project directors of projects should ensure dissemination of official language in their office. He said that the use of Hindi should be increased in the original correspondence.

He stressed on giving 100 per cent answers to the letters received in English from the offices of region A and B in Hindi. The GM said the projects should ensure the utilisation of the allocated budget for promotion of official language and special attention should be paid to the organisation of seminars and workshops.

The GM directed to remove all shortcomings related to the inspection of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee in time.

Earlier, Chief Official Language Officer and Chief Electrical Engineer SS Negi while welcoming all said that if we all will be devoted towards the use of Hindi, then definitely we will be able to achieve the set goals for its use. This is our constitutional responsibility. We have to fulfil it with full sense of responsibility.

The meeting was attended by HoD VK Garg, Senior Deputy General Manager, Suresh Kumar, Chief Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer, DK Gupta, Chief Financial Adviser, KK Singh, Chief Personnel Officer, SK Mishra, others.

Through video conferencing chief project directors of projects and deputy chief official language officers and liaison officers of all departments at the CORE headquarters also participated.

The meeting was conducted by Senior Official Language Officer and Member Secretary Sunila Yadav while the vote of thanks was proposed by Deputy Chief Official Language Officer and Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer Upendra Kumar, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) SK Dwivedi said..

TRIAL RUN: The authorities of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) held the trial run of the first loaded goods train in the last section of the corridor (38 km) from New Deendayal Upadhyaya Junction to New Dagmagpur, on Wednesday. With the commissioning of this section, 80 per cent of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor has become operational. The trial run bears significance as now the freight trains will start running at the entire stretch of 1,070 km from Dadri to Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya (PDDU) Junction.

The trial run will be followed by a safety inspection this month and then a green signal for regular operations in the stretch will be given. Now the 422 km section route of Prayagraj unit and 1,070 km track section of EDFC have become operational. The EDFC is the dedicated freight corridor which runs from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal, a distance of 1,875 km.

The maximum part of the corridor passes through Uttar Pradesh as the goods trains are running from New Dadri to New Dagmagpur station in

the corridor. The section of Prayagraj unit is from New Bhaupur to New DDU which is 422 kms.

"Today 58 wagons of the goods train, loaded with coal were operated from New Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction to New Dagmagpur on the newly constructed double rail line track which is 39 km distance. Along with this, a goods train with 42 loaded wagons of wheat was operated to NDDU Junction", informed Chief General Manager (East) Omprakash.

Omprakash said in the financial year 2022-23, the work done under EDFC included New Ruma to New Sujatpur (February 22) and Chunar to Cheoki (September 20) and New Karchana to New Iradatganj (November 29) and New Karchana to New Sujatpur (December 31), New Kanpur to New Bhimsen (October 21) and New Bhimsen to New Bhaupur and likewise.

The chief general manager said with the opening of this section, goods trains will now run from New Bhaupur to Son Nagar which means that the connectivity of trains will be from Bihar (Son Nagar) to Sanand in Gujarat.

Vijay Mishra's property attached

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Bhadohi police on Thursday attached a property of mafia don Vijay Mishra in Allahpur area here under Gangsters Act. Papers have been pasted on the gate of the building. An advocate who lived there as a tenant request-

ed the police that he should be given some time to shift his belongings which was granted by the authorities who asked the advocate to remove his belongings within 24 hours.

District magistrate Bhadohi had issued orders to attach this palatial three-storeyed building in Allahpur

here registered in the name of Bindu Mishra, wife of Manish, nephew of Vijay Mishra. The value of this house 13 MIG Phase-II is evaluated to be Rs 8.30 crore.

Two buildings of Vijay Mishra, including his residence and a shopping complex in Allahpur itself have already

been demolished.

Efforts are being made to trace some more properties of Vijay Mishra in Allahpur area where the gangster had established his empire.

The Bhadohi police will visit the house once again on Friday to put a seal on the property.

Retired army personnel killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A retired army man was bludgeoned to death by some unidentified miscreants near Abubakarpur intersection under Dhoomanganj police station. The murderers ran away after snatching gold chain from his neck, money, purse and other items from his pocket. After the information, the police reached the spot and took him to the hospital where the doctors declared him as brought dead. On the basis of the statement of the friend present with him, his wife filed a complaint against half-a-dozen unknown gunmen at the Dhoomanganj police station. Police started investigation by registering an FIR on the basis of written complaint. The body has been sent for the post-mortem examination.

Dharmendra Kumar Singh of Madhuvan Bihar Colony, Umar Kot, Neeva under Dhoomanganj police station

area was a retired soldier from the army and lived in Dhoomanganj with his wife, Sushila Singh, and children. According to his wife, he along with his friend Soheb Pal had gone on a motorcycle to buy goods in the market. Dharmendra had withdrawn the pension money on Wednesday itself. While returning, he started buying some more items at Abubakarpur Chauraha, Pritam Nagar. At the same time six unknown people came on three bikes and started abusing him. The miscreants misbehaved with Soheb Pal as well. When Dharmendra protested, the miscreants attacked him. The miscreants first beat him with kicks and irons. An attempt was made to shoot him with a pistol also.

Meanwhile, two of them picked up a brick and hit him several times on his head. Due to which his head ruptured and he collapsed the ground. Soheb

Pal intervened and dialed 112 and informed the police. The police reached the spot and took him to Swaroopnani Nehru Hospital where the doctors declared him dead. Police sent the body for the post-mortem examination.

Inspector Dhoomanganj Rajesh Kumar Maurya said a written complaint has been and efforts are being made to identify and arrest the miscreants through CCTV footage installed nearby.

THEFT: Thieves made off with valuables and cash from two shops in Balipur market of Utrav police station area at night. On getting information the police reached the spot and carried out investigation.

Umashankar Soni of Arakala village under Utrav police station here runs a shop in the name of Anmol Jewellers in Balipur Bazar.

Umashankar locked the shutter of the shop in the evening as usual and went

home. In the night a neighbour informed that the shutter of the shop was open. At this the shop owner reached there and saw five lockets etc missing.

Meanwhile an unknown thief broke the lock of the shutter of Vishwakarma Electronic shop next to the jeweller's shop and made off with valuables.

Manish Kumar Vishwakarma of Sarai Alam village under Madaripur police station here runs a shop in the name of Vishwakarma Electronic in Balipur market. In the electronic shop, the thieves took away battery, inverter, cash etc from there. Both the shop operators reached Utrav police station and demanded action by giving a written complaint against the thieves. The police is looking for the thieves. The SHO said the matter is being investigated by taking written complaint and the theft will be worked out soon.

Admission process for PhD courses in UPRTOU starts

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): The admission process for PhD courses in regular mode at Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (UPRTOU), Prayagraj for the 2023-24 session started from June 1. For the first time the lone open university of the state is starting PhD in mathematics and zoology, said coordinator of PhD Entrance Examination Committee Prof PK Pandey. "The process has started from June 1. All information related to PhD entrance test is available on the university website www.uprtou.ac.in. The last date for submission of online registration application and entrance examination fee is June 25 and applications for

entrance examination including late fee will be accepted till July 3. The applicants will be given time from July 4 to 9 to make corrections in case of errors in the online application," he said. The admit cards for entrance examination will be available online by July 18 and the proposed date exam is July 25, Pandey said. Pandey said the admission process will start for 59 seats in 15 subjects. "The university has started PhD in computer science, nutrition food and dietetics, journalism and mass communication, medieval and modern history, political science, commerce, business administration and business management, education, Sanskrit and

Prakrit language, statistics, Hindi and modern Indian languages," said Pandey. Applications are invited for PhD in geography, ancient Indian history and archaeology, mathematics and zoology..

Media incharge said Vice-Chancellor Prof Seema Singh has appointed Prof PK Pandey as the coordinator, Prof JP Yadav as co-coordinator, Dinesh Singh and Satish Chandra Jaiswal as members and controller of examinations of the open university, DP Singh as member secretary of the PhD entrance examination committee 2023. The committee will provide solutions to the queries of the candidates.

CLEANLINESS CAM-

PAIGN: The leaders and workers of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by city mayor Ganesh Kesarwani undertook cleanliness campaign on the ghats of Ganga and Sangam. The BJP leaders said the cleanliness campaign was being taken up on the lines of Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Mission and party is committed to take up cleanliness of the city. BJP spokesman Rajesh Kesarwani said, "It's our moral duty to keep river ghats clean and green. When devotees and pilgrims coming from far-flung areas arrive at ghats of Ganga and Sangam and witness clean environment, they will be praising city after return to their native towns and states".

DC reviews construction works

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Muthukumarasamy B while reviewing the progress in 37 priority points on Wednesday warned the officials to achieve the target or remain prepared to face action. During the review of construction works, he instructed the work agencies that action should be taken against contractors if quality of work is not found to be up to the standard and the firm should be blacklisted along with issuing a chargesheet. He directed the CDO to check quality of roads by visiting the area. In relation to street solar lights he instruct-

ed the officers to send district-wise proposals by June 15. Along with Jal Jeevan Mission plan, the DC reviewed construction works being done at the dams. The Irrigation department was directed to ensure filling of water in ponds and officials were instructed to ensure supply of potable water to problem areas through tankers. He directed the Industries department to encourage industrialists to adopt blocks without industries and set up industrial projects. During the review show cause notice was issued to divisional dairy officer for not achieving the target under different schemes. As the progress in the

registration of labourers was not as expected the deputy labour commissioner was warned.

The DC reviewed all 37 points and issued necessary instructions. Revenue and law and order situation was also reviewed. Joint Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mishra, DM, SP, CDO, ADM, all circle officers and other officers attended it.

SEMINAR: ADJ and Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Lal Babu Yadav at an awareness seminar organised jointly by DLSA and the Health department on 'No-Tobacco Day' at GD Memorial Paramedical

College, Saripur, on Wednesday said intoxication was injurious to health so it is the need of the hour that we make people aware.

He said addiction was causing not only several diseases but untimely death too. Deputy CMO Dr Ashok Rai gave tips to get rid of addiction. He said that we should think on the issue not only on one day in a year but throughout the year because it is a menace and must be eradicated at any cost. After the seminar an awareness rally was taken out by students of paramedical school and youth which was flagged off by secretary, DLSA, deputy CMO and others.

Too bullish to be true

Morgan Stanley has painted a rosy picture of the economy, but it omits some key indicators

Government and Bharatiya Janata Party supporters must be happy over the recent report by Morgan Stanley, the global financial services firm. "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." This is surely a vote of confidence for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his economic policies. The report has highlighted 10 big changes that have taken place since 2014. Bringing down the corporate tax rate at par with the same in other major economies and heavy infrastructure investment are among the top supply-side policy reforms, Morgan Stanley said. The soaring collection of goods and services tax (GST) and the growing share of digital transactions as a percentage of GDP indicate the formalisation of the economy, it added. Other pluses, according to Morgan Stanley, are direct transfer of subsidies to accounts of beneficiaries, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, flexible inflation targeting, focus on foreign direct investment (FDI), Government support for corporate profits, a new law for the realty sector, and MNC sentiment at multi-year high. 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.



Much of what Morgan Stanley has said is correct, but at places optimism seems a bit excessive. It seems to have overlooked a few facts. For instance, FDI inflows into the country fell by 16 per cent to \$71 billion on a gross basis in the last fiscal, though

the decline has been attributed to weak global factors. Similarly, manufacturing remains a laggard; its share continues to languish at 16-17 per cent of the country's GDP. The Government has made big claims about the potential of industrial growth; it launched ambitious programmes like Make in India and the production-linked incentive or PLI scheme for several sectors. And yet, manufacturing's share in GDP is no different than it was in 2011, the year in which the National Manufacturing Policy was announced with the target to make the share go up by 2022. Then there is the issue of jobs; the economy is not able to generate quality employment. This reflects in consumption patterns. The sales of luxury products are zooming, whereas the items used by common people like kitchen appliances are not doing as well. Growth accelerated to 6.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2022-23, and for the entire fiscal it was upwardly revised to 7.2 per cent. For 2023-24 too, India is likely to grow by over 6 per cent, and will be the fastest growing big economy. The Government must persist with reforms and ensure the more supply-side bottlenecks are removed so that the fruits of growth and development are equitably distributed.

PICTALK



Burqa-clad students play cricket in the J J Hospital premises at Byculla in Mumbai

PTI

The nuisance that is convocation ceremony

Ceremonies get value only if they are conducted appropriately. Mimicking an auspicious ceremony only demeans its value

Does education have any value in life? Does a degree guarantee a job? These questions always rhyme in our society.

Of course, these questions need detailed discussion. But the root cause of these questions is the declining value of education in today's society, due to the mockeries shown by education institutions. Even from kindergarten onwards, many private educational institutions conduct graduation ceremonies, making a mockery of our education system. We are demeaning the value of actual degree certificates through these ceremonies.

According to UGC, "Convocation" means a ceremonial assembly of a university, normally held for conferring Degrees and other awards to its eligible candidates. Usually, it is the universities that conduct convocation ceremonies in India. But in recent times, many colleges conduct convocation ceremonies or graduation ceremonies. The programme is conducted in a grand manner inviting eminent personalities; in some cases, even the vice-chancellors of universities



attend the function. The funny thing is that even students who failed university examinations also get a certificate at these graduation ceremonies. Some college authorities make poor students and parents believe that these certificates have more value than the ones issued by the universities. The ceremony itself is a huge business involving many event managers. A photo in graduation attire can convince the public that the particular person is a degree holder. This can fetch them status and demand in the marriage market. It's like what we see in the movie "Three Idiots".

After attending the graduation ceremony conducted by their colleges, students post on social media stating that they have officially become graduates. During earlier times, the convocation

ceremonies are performed only by universities where the university authority hand over graduation certificates. Every student dreams of wearing the ceremonial convocation dress and taking a photo with the degree certificate. There was a time, before the 1990s, when every household used to hang pictures of their graduating family members. During that time, students from every stream and every level, undergraduate to higher degrees, had the privilege to attend convocation ceremonies conducted at universities. Society viewed a university graduate with awe and much respect. With the increase in the number of graduates passing out from our universities, the convocation ceremonies are limited to professional courses and higher degrees like PhD.

The value given to original degree certificates issued by good universities is slowly diminishing because of ceremonies conducted by these private institutions. The students and society at large are finding it challenging to understand which is genuine and which is fake. There are many people with "Dr." affil-

iation in our community, whose degree is awarded by private institutions. These institutions, which are mostly registered societies, provide honorary doctoral degrees by charging hefty fees. They even give professional awards after taking huge fees from the nominees. Ceremonies get value only if it is conducted appropriately by the appropriate agency concerned. Mimicking an auspicious ceremony will demean its value. Can we mimic our marriage ceremony to show it to someone? All educational institutions should respect the value associated with various ceremonies and show the correct path to the students and society. Otherwise, our students shall carry certificates that have only a paper's value and have value only on social media platforms. We need to build quality graduates in every domain of knowledge in nation-building. For this, educational institutions should stay away from such gimmicks that make a mockery of our education system and should show the true path to our youngsters.

(The writer is a columnist)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

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Syncretism: A vision for India's future

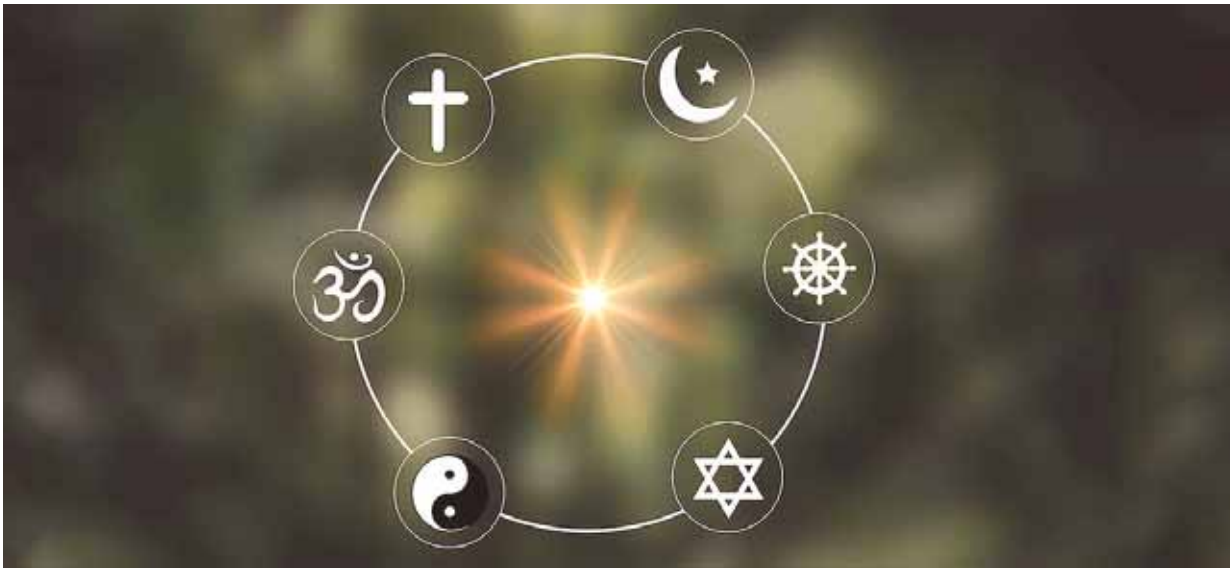
As India moves forward, it must consciously embrace its rich diversity, essential for nurturing a harmonious society that grows together



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The inauguration of the New Parliament Building has heralded a new history of India in its 75th year of Independence. Leaving apart the controversies wrangling in different corridors, we must realize that the value of democracy lies in upholding the essence and spirit of this new development and with it the whole idea of multiculturalism and the syncretic tradition that binds this nation of 140 crore Indians together. 'Sarva Dharma Prarthana' or Inter-Faith Prayer is one of the great steps in this direction which happened at the inaugural programme on May 28.

India, known for its rich cultural tapestry and religious diversity, has long embraced the idea of syncretism and multiculturalism. This inherent acceptance of diverse beliefs and traditions is exemplified through inter-faith prayers, which hold great significance in various ceremonies across the country. These prayers serve as a unifying force, promoting harmony, tolerance, and cultural integration. Inter-faith prayers at the inaugural ceremony, symbolize the nation's commitment to embracing and maintaining its cultural syncretism. By incorporating inter-faith prayers into the ceremony, the diversity that India stands for was celebrated. This inclusive approach not only strengthens the social fabric but also sends a strong message to the world about India's commitment to secularism and pluralism. Inter-faith prayers hold immense significance in India, as they bring together people from different religious backgrounds/faith, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. India's cultural tapestry is intricately woven with the threads of various religions, each contributing to the vibrant fabric of society. From Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism to Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, the Baha'i, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and others, India has been a melting pot of diverse religious beliefs, rituals, and practices. 'Sarva Dharma Prarthana' acts as the glue that holds this mosaic together, fostering an environment of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. These prayers serve as a powerful



reminder of our shared humanity and transcend religious boundaries, emphasizing the common values and aspirations that bind us as a nation. As the seat or Temple of democracy, the Parliament represents the voice of the people and their diverse aspirations, symbolizing the inclusive spirit of India, for India's syncretic traditions are deeply embedded in its cultural fabric. The country's history is replete with instances where different religious beliefs and practices have intermingled and influenced each other. This syncretism is evident in various aspects of Indian life, including festivals, rituals, and philosophical ideologies. Festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas, and Guru Nanak Jayanti to name a few, are celebrated with equal enthusiasm by people of different faiths. These celebrations not only showcase cultural diversity but also provide an opportunity for individuals to learn about and appreciate different religious traditions.

It is undeniable that India's artistic heritage spans millennia, with influences from various cultures and civilizations. The intricate carvings of the ancient temples in Khajuraho, the Mughal architecture of the Taj Mahal, and the vibrant frescoes of Rajasthan are just a few examples of how differ-

ent artistic styles have merged to create a distinct Indian aesthetic. By appreciating and preserving these art forms, India not only showcases its multicultural heritage but also encourages dialogue and understanding among diverse communities. India's rich spiritual heritage and its embrace of diverse philosophies have given rise to a syncretic tapestry, interwoven with the teachings of renowned saints and philosophers throughout history. Kabir, the 15th-century poet and mystic, whose teachings emphasized the unity of all religions, says, "Dheere dheere re mana, dheere sab kuch hoi. Mali seenche sau ghada, ritu aaye phal hoye", embodies the essence of cultural syncretism by emphasizing the gradual evolution of spiritual growth and the universality of divine wisdom.

Swami Vivekananda also stressed the importance of embracing diversity and unity among religions. He famously said, "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true." Conceptualized by Swami Vivekananda himself and designed and developed by his engineer brother-monk Swami Vijnanananda, the Ramakrishna Mission in

Belur Math is a clear example of an architectural marvel that beautifully embodies syncretic traditions, blending elements from various Indian architectural styles, with its ornate carvings, domes, and spires, along with Islamic arches and intricate floral motifs and further incorporating elements reminiscent of Gothic architecture, such as stained-glass windows.

Mahatma Gandhi too emphasized the importance of embracing diverse cultures and traditions without losing one's own identity. He envisioned a society where different cultures coexist and enrich one another, fostering understanding and unity. As India embarked on a new chapter with the inauguration of its New Parliament Building, it is essential for all of us to value such wisdom and teachings that have inspired individuals and Nations alike. By promoting interfaith dialogue, preserving linguistic diversity, celebrating artistic expressions, and embracing such vast and versatile traditions, India can continue to be a shining example of unity in diversity in her global endeavour to become a global power under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

(The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'DRESS CODE' FOR TEMPLES

Sir — As per the report, the temple worshippers from across Maharashtra's villages have pushed back against the imposition of a 'dress code' for visiting temples for both male and female devotees. A "vastra samhita" or dress code was imposed mid-May at four temples of Nagpur, these include the Gopalkrishna temple in Dhantoli (a middle-class settlement within the city), Sankatmochan Panchmukhi Hanuman temple in Saoner (a farmers town near Nagpur), the Brihaspati temple, in Hingna (an industrial township bordering the Wardha district), and the Durgamata temple at Koradi (the thermal power township located north of Nagpur). Religious bodies should refrain from issuing such diktats that would create new problems within society. "Parents in rural areas do not buy full pants for young boys until they go to junior college. When we were in school, we did not get to wear full pants until Class 10. We had to wear shorts to school. Our parents used to tell us that they would give us full pants only after we entered Class 11. This is prevalent in rural areas across Maharashtra. Then why are little boys being stopped from entering temples? Has any God said, 'Don't allow kids wearing shorts to come for my darshan?' While several other popular shrines in the state are exercising caution and not rushing to impose the dress code, the issue has the potential of blowing up into a full-scale political confrontation

N Mateeni | Mumbai

MANIPUR UNREST

Sir — Amid the ongoing tensi in Manipur, Olympic medallist Mirabai Chanu and weightlifter kunjarani devi signed a memorandum to Home Minister Amit Shah, along with 11 other athletes demanding to restore peace in Manipur and sought rigid action against the extremist groups behind the violence as soon as possible that if peace

Telangana suicides



Recently, eight students committed suicide in Telangana after the announcement of the intermediate examination results as they failed or failed poorly. Perhaps, this was one of those cases where exam-related suicide was reported in a newspaper. There are many instances where these deaths go unreported. Society is by and large mum to the increasing number of suicides by students close on the heels of the declaration of results of important examinations that decide entry into professional courses because taking one's own life after the dec-

laration of exam results is not considered a social evil by most stakeholders in India even though every year history repeats.

Plenty of them eye careers that suit them but are forced to look elsewhere due to parental pressure. It is indisputable that parental pressure is the biggest contributor to augmented anxiety and depression among students paving the way for suicides. For a long time, it is not what the child wants but it is almost like what the "father and mother want" that has pushed children to the brink. Of course, obtaining excellent marks is a sure shot highway to a reasonable job in later life. But it's doubtful as to whether an individual, having painstakingly defeated a mind-boggling rat race at a young age against his/her wishes and aspirations, would live with peace and harmony rest of his/her life despite bagging ranks and marks. Self-employment is never considered a great option in the country, and the results are there to see.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

is not restored, they will return their medals. It is concerning that Manipur BJP rules the state but the BJP doesn't bother those who lost their loved ones rather busy conducting expensive election campaigns for Prime minister in states across the country due to which the government is still unable to normalize the unrest and restore the peace.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

BATTLE OF NARRATIVES

Sir — The battle of narratives between the Congress and the BJP is once again at a peak. PM Modi and Rahul Gandhi are attacking each other. Whenever the election is about to come, the ruling and the opposition start taking voters under their guise by opening their bags of populist promises. If we look at the election manifestos of the last decade, it is known that all the parties have run the same agenda of distributing freebies. After getting the power, even if the election promises

become a jumla, the leaders will not mind. The poor people would have sold their vote by getting trapped in the promises of freebies, while the upper class has no worries about voting and inflation. The middle class has to bear the brunt. Unfortunately the voters are too gullible and fall for such gimmicks election after election. The politicians know that public memory is short and there are a number of ways to distract them and harness their votes. But this is not what the maker of the constitution Baba Saheb Ambedkar had contemplated. Over the period of 75 years the standards of public life have gone down drastically and speaking lies and even spreading hate has become a new normal. This is not what makes India great it only is a surefire recipe to take the country down. Hope politicians are listening.

Jahangir Ali | Maharashtra

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

IMPORTANCE OF PM MODI'S US STATE VISIT

Domestic politics aside, there is much at stake for PM Modi's upcoming state visit to the US



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be on a high-profile visit to the United States later this month. The state visit would be the first for the PM, and for the president of the USA and the second during his current tenure, as a host. This visit is happening against the backdrop of many high-profile visits by Indian and American diplomats, secretaries and ministers setting the ground, plank by plank, in what could be one of the most significant milestones in the India US bilateral relationship. The last such fillip to the relationship came in the period from 2005 to 2009 when India went nuclear and, US keeping aside its domestic political reservations and ally concerns (read Pakistan), eased India into the nuclear club, finally culminating in, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's state visit to the US. A state visit is the highest level of honour and prestige accorded bilaterally, and is considered to be the top-notch level in diplomatic relationships.

Prime Minister Modi's scheduled state visit was supposed to have been preceded, by his meeting with US President Joe Biden, at least thrice in less than a month. These included bilateral meetings during G7, to which India was invited, a meeting in Papua New Guinea and a QUAD leaders' summit before culminating in a state visit. However, President Biden had to cut short his trip to the Pacific Ocean Island nation and Australia, due to domestic issues, leading to a few hurried meetings on the sidelines of the G7 in Japan.

The domestic environment for both India and the US is just warming up, to what would be an extremely hot and noisy space for the world's oldest and largest democracy. India and the US face general elections next year and the domestic political climate, if not decibels, are already exceeding tolerable limits. Moving forward it would be unbearable and rough. This casts the dice for these leaders, both of whom are seeking re-election (PM Modi for the third term and President Biden second term), to make it worthwhile for their respective constituencies, which will send them back to the top posts. The US president would have to ensure that his voters, if not the congress and some of his colleagues, see the value of upgrading the India-US bilateral relationship, despite, India's conspicuous silence on Ukraine (except for It is not a time for War statement), close relations and dependencies on Russia and some uncomfortable questions regarding human rights, religious freedom etc.

Indian Prime Minister on his part would like to take the spectacle quotient a tad higher than the Howdy Modi, grand concerts event, when



PM Mod and then President Donald Trump, jointly addressed thousands of Indian Americans in Houston. The PM would expect a significant outcome from the state visit, albeit the cheering crowds, public events would definitely be a part of the package. The PM who was recently on a visit to Australia and Pacific island countries, where he got a rock stars welcome, addressed large cheering crowds in packed arenas and was even called "the boss" by the Australian PM. The Indian American groups are also prepping up for PM Modi's visit, as many of them are expected to participate in some key official ceremonies at the white house, including witnessing the 21-gun salute and perhaps yoga sessions led by Indian PM on International World yoga day on June 21st.

It would be worth remembering that PM Modi's visit would also follow opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's ten days trip to the US, where he interacted with a wide array of stakeholders, civil society, think tanks etc on questions surrounding Indian democracy. The larger questions regarding shrinking space for democratic manoeuvre and political opposition in India, which have been brought out by the opposition leader during his earlier visits to UK etc and which have led to some influencer groups doubting Indian democratic credentials, could have been contained, by the time PM Modi lands in the US. Domestic politics aside there is much at stake for PM Modis' upcoming state visit to the US.

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

Judgement, education and effective action



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Whether one is the top man or the so-called bottom man, there is always an element of decision-making vested in the role



One of the critical components of decision-making is the ability to decipher decision spaces. Consider the example of a doorkeeper. By any standards, it is a lowly rank and humble in many ways. Yet, in times of knocking at the door, that position becomes more important than that of the Chairman himself. It is the doorkeeper's decision to let somebody in or keep him out. It is a power loaded with security concerns and at times with grave implications of time, life and death. Consider a situation where somebody is ill, and a doctor has been summoned in the late hours of the evening to the building to take care of the ailing person.

The doctor does not get a security clearance, but his entry into the building is critical. Like anything else, there is a risk involved, and somebody may be impersonating the doctor; there may be a rogue doctor or the doctor himself may be very impatient—the possibilities are several. The judgement of the gatekeeper and the judgement to be exercised on the spot make him the kingpin, not only for the moment of the act but indeed for much else, besides.

The derivation is obvious: everyone needs to have effective decision-making skills. The story goes that King Shivaji approached his Rajgad Fort near Pune, in the early hours of the morning after



THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TO NOT ONLY LEAD BUT ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KEY DECISIONS. HIS ABILITY TO JUDGE AND DECIDE WHO TO CONSENT TO, AND TO WHAT EXTENT IS CRUCIAL.

(The writer is a policy analyst)

a long long ride and wanted to enter the Rajgad Fort. He had enemies at his heels. The head of security of the fort had it from the king (Maharaj) himself (in this case, Shivaji Maharaj) that no exceptions would be allowed for entry into the fort before dawn.

Shivaji Maharaj had some enemies in his hot pursuit, which he had evaded. The Head of Security took the call that the order of the Maharaj was sacred and Shivaji would not be let into the fort. Shivaji tried to explain to him that his life may be at risk and that he had been exercising his supreme powers by ordering a gate to be opened. The Head of Security refused to comply. When Shivaji asked him who would be responsible for his security, the Head of Security responded, "I am the head of security, and I shall be responsible. We shall make preparations for your comfort outside the fort, and you will be absolutely safe. Our full force will protect you and protect you successfully." The story concludes that Shivaji was finally allowed entry into the fort only at dawn. One of his first acts after his entry was to elevate the rank to the Head of Security.

The narrative, as it is, needs no comment. The larger part of the story is that it makes a point. In the ultimate analysis of the making of the human being: health and judgement are the two most important things. Judgement cannot be taught; it cannot be 'given.' It has to grow from within. It is a judgement that makes a person.

Judgement is both subtle and growing. In a parliamentary system, the Prime Minister is the head of the Executive. He has to not only lead but also be responsible for the key decisions. His ability to judge and decide who to consent to, and to what extent is crucial. He has also to assess to what extent amalgamate the various strands of advice received.

This brings us to the essence of training of the mind and education. The current rollout of the National Education Policy raises these questions in many ways. With increasing frequency, it is being asked many, how so many people, who do not even finish their school education become such original thinkers and make such brilliant contributions. Rabindra Nath Thakur is a common reference.

Indeed, many formally educated people do not get very far and flounder in the race of life in a worse-than-mediocre pattern. This appears as an enigma when it is actually it is not so. The truth is that creativity and judgement propelled even those who had not completed their formal education to higher levels of achievement. Higher levels of achievement do not necessarily follow high degrees. In the case of the educated, the natural achievements which would have followed creativity were sharpened and results were better than if they had not been educated at all.

It is soulful to remember this and use it as a compass to navigate one's own career and those dependent on one. The meaning, the content, the delivery, and the keeping alive of the educational processes are important phenomena. The whys and wherefores of this process need to be understood and developed more fruitfully as a part of any project related to the educational process. Hopefully, as the National Education Policy makes its rollout, these questions will not only surface but get addressed.

Caribbean medical degree can lead to a career in the West

Pursuing medical education in a Caribbean university is a viable route to a career in medicine in the West, although it is not without its challenges

In recent years, there has been a significant surge in the demand for doctors and the aspirations to pursue a medical career. However, the available resources and facilities have struggled to match the pace of this demand, resulting in a considerable gap. Consequently, numerous students have opted to relocate to different countries in search of admission to medical courses, as the distribution of requirements and available facilities remains imbalanced.

To pursue a medical career in the USA or Canada, students typically follow a structured path. Upon finishing their undergraduate degree, students are required to clear the MCAT exam as a prerequisite for admission to medical school. Once a student enters



MAMTA PURBEY

(The writer is Associate Vice President, Student Acquisition - International, American University of Antigua College of Medicine)

medical school, they spend another 4-5 years in a medical school which would include their pre-clinical and clinical. Once the student is done with clinical rotations and graduates from medical school, s/he applies for residency. Students submit applications through the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP). Depending on the specialisation they opt for, many doctors complete their residency programs in 3 to 7 years.

To become a doctor in the US/Canada, students have the option to pursue a Caribbean medical college route. This involves selecting a reputable and accredited medical school in the Caribbean and completing a 2-year pre-med program, followed by 2 years of pre-clinical studies. The stu-

dents then continue their clinical rotations in the USA/Canada. Studying medicine in the Caribbean region offers a multitude of benefits for aspiring medical students aiming to become practising doctors in the USA, UK, and Canada.

These advantages make Caribbean medical schools an appealing choice for those seeking a top-tier education, practical exposure, and a unique cultural experience. Additionally, these medical schools hold recognition from esteemed international organizations like the World Health Organization and the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, ensuring that graduates can practice medicine across all 50 states in the US or in the UK,

and Canada, among other various countries worldwide.

Lower Financial Burden: Studying MBBS at leading Caribbean medical colleges generally comes at a lower cost compared to US medical colleges, including both public and private institutions. While certain Caribbean colleges may have costs that approach those of US medical colleges, the overall expenses remain significantly more affordable.

Hassle-free Admission: Unlike other foreign medical universities, getting admission to top Caribbean medical colleges is less complex. Apart from decent credentials at the school level, you need to clear the country-specific medical entrance exam such as NEET in India. Most Caribbean colleges have rolling admissions

with three intakes- January, May and September.

Diverse Learning: Caribbean medical universities attract a diverse student population from various countries and cultural backgrounds. This multicultural environment fosters a rich learning experience, promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

Gateway to the US: The Caribbean region is globally recognized for its esteemed medical schools. These institutions hold accreditation from prominent international organizations including the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Educational

Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). Such recognition empowers graduates to pursue medical practice in diverse countries across the globe. International medical graduates (IMGs) have a vital role in the American healthcare system, making up 25 per cent of the existing U.S. physician workforce. Among these IMGs, 18 per cent are graduates of Caribbean medical schools, indicating that approximately 4.5 per cent of licensed doctors in the U.S. obtained their MD degrees from Caribbean institutions.

Accredited Medical Schools: While choosing a Caribbean medical school, it's very important to check the recognitions and accreditations to ensure quality edu-

cation. Only schools that are recognized by CAAM-HP and accredited by the US Dept of Education, New York State Education Department and other US & Canadian medical education-related departments/bodies should be chosen to ensure a smooth transition into USA / Canada.

Pursuing a medical education at a Caribbean medical school offers a viable route to a rewarding career in medicine, although it is not without its challenges. While the entry requirements may be less stringent compared to those in the US, achieving exceptional grades and excelling in USMLE exams are still essential for securing a position in an American residency program.

Centre's panel refuses to keep Cheetahs fenced in

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajesh Gopal, the head of the Centre's high-level committee set up to monitor the cheetah reintroduction project and country's top tiger expert on Thursday dismissed the South Africa and Namibia suggestions that the imported predators should be kept in a fenced habitat to save them from poaching and minimize human-animal conflict. He said that it is against India's basic tenets of wildlife conservation.

"India does not want fenced habitats for cheetahs like the ones in South Africa and Namibia as it is against the basic tenets of wildlife conservation," he said amid flak the Government has been drawing following death of three predators that were brought to India from Africa for Project Cheetah in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno Palpur Sanctuary over the past couple of months.

Over the last week, three cubs too have died.

He echoed views of many wildlife experts in the country that fences can disrupt natural animal movements and impede genetic exchange between populations.

"We have our own socio-cultural issues. We have been handling tigers for the last 50 years and we know what the human-wildlife interface is. We can handle cheetahs too," Gopal said, adding that seven more cheetahs, including two females, will be released into the wild by the third week of June.

The Union Ministry has already made clear that the cheetahs will be allowed to move out of KNP and will not necessarily be "recaptured unless they venture into areas where they are in significant danger". All the predators are fitted with satellite collars.

Experts from South Africa and Namibia, who are helping reintroduce cheetahs in India, have recommended fencing their habitats to prevent poaching, habitat fragmentation and minimise human-animal conflict. However, experts in India say fences can disrupt natural animal movements and impede genetic exchange between populations.

"It's absolutely bogus to think of fencing the habitats. It goes against the basic tenets of wildlife conservation. What happened in a fenced park there (in Africa) will not happen here. Our understanding is that regional networks of protected areas should merge into a national network of protected areas so that there is porosity for wildlife gene flow," said Gopal, chairman of the 11-member cheetah steering committee.

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the last 50 years and we know what the human-wildlife interface is. We can han-

dle cheetahs too," he said, adding that seven more cheetahs, including two females, will be released into the wild by the third week of June.

South African wildlife expert Vincent van der Merwe, who is closely involved with the project, had earlier said, "There has never been a successful reintroduction (of cheetahs) into an unfenced reserve in recorded history. It has been attempted 15 times in Africa and it failed every time.

"We are not advocating that India must fence all of its cheetah reserves, we are saying that just fence two or three and create source reserves to top up sink reserves."

Source reserves are habitats that provide optimal conditions for reproduction of a particular species. These areas have abundant resources and favourable environmental conditions. They can support self-sustaining populations that produce a surplus of individuals, which can then dis-

perse to other areas.

Sink reserves, on the other hand, are habitats that have limited resources or environmental conditions that are less favourable for the survival or reproduction of a species. Sink reserves rely on dispersing individuals from source reserves to maintain their population numbers.

Officials said the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, is being prepared as an alternative habitat for cheetahs by November.

To address the issue of cheetah-people interface, Gopal said a GIS-based landscape fragmentation analysis will be conducted to help the state authorities identify vulnerable areas.

"We cannot say the cheetahs will spend their entire lives in Kuno. They will enter human settlements and there will be some issues. We have to foresee and be ready for it," he said.



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar greets Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' during a meeting, in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

ED grills J'khand Cong MLA Pradeep Yadav in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday interrogated Jharkhand Congress MLA Pradeep Yadav as part of its investigation into a money laundering case.

On Tuesday, the agency had conducted searches at a dozen locations in Jharkhand linked to Yadav, a five-time legislator from the Poraiyahat seat and deputy leader of the Congress in the Assembly, officials said.

After the questioning on Wednesday, the MLA said he will soon approach the court over the ED action. He claimed the ED found nothing objectionable in its raids so far.

Yadav alleged that the BJP was using Central agencies to target the Opposition leaders.

Fifty-seven-year-old Yadav and another MLA's premises were searched by the Income Tax Department last year as part of a tax evasion probe against some business groups engaged in coal trading and transportation, extraction of iron ore and production of sponge iron in Jharkhand.

The money laundering investigation is based on this tax evasion case as the violation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is a predicate offence.

PM SVANidhi seeing fastest rollout, says Hardeep Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said the PM SVANidhi scheme, launched to help street vendors get easy loans, is witnessing one of the fastest roll-outs among all Government schemes.

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister was speaking at an event on the completion of three years of the Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi, also known as PM SVANidhi.

According to a statement, the minister at the event said the PM SVANidhi has led to an unparalleled wave of financial inclusion and digital literacy in the countries cities and small towns. The scheme, launched on June 1, 2020, with an aim to instil 'Swarozgar, Svalamban, Swabhimaan' (Self Employment, Self-Sustenance, and Self-Confidence) in street vendors has become one of the fastest growing microcredit schemes of the central government and has given people access to credit and social security schemes, the statement said.

Puri on Thursday also launched a PM SVANidhi mobile app to ease the loan application process for street vendors. He also interacted with the beneficiaries of the scheme.

NCPCR launches drug, tobacco-free India drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Welcoming the Centre's move of bringing tobacco regulation on OTT (over-the-top) platforms which have seen nearly 100% increase in viewership on kids' content during the pandemic, health experts and child rights activists led by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) feel that proposed amendments to the COTPA Act is an urgent necessity in creating a tobacco-free environment for impressionable minds.

On its part, the NCPCR launched a nationwide campaign "Addiction Free Amrit Kaal", an initiative aimed at promoting a tobacco and drug-free India with the help of children. The children rights body Chairperson Priyank Kanoongo said that under this unique drive, children, who are the most affected by indirect tobacco use, have been made members of 'Praharis Clubs' established in schools. They will serve as the government's eyes and ears, sharing information if any tobacco-selling shops exist near their schools,



he said. Highlighting the link between tobacco products and drug addiction, Kanoongo noted that the entertainment industry plays a significant role in enticing children into tobacco use. While there are rules requiring warnings on tobacco product scenes in films, there was a pressing need for regulations regarding OTT platforms which have gained popularity in recent times and were being misused, he said, informing that the NCPCR had been seeking regulation of tobacco use on OTT platforms.

At the same time, he battled for a robust Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), which, he said, can serve as an important tool in curbing tobacco use, especially among children. "This legislation encompasses stringent

measures to restrict all forms of tobacco advertising at the point of sale and put an end to the practice of designated smoking zones in public places. These smoking zones pose significant harm to children who are exposed to tobacco smoke in these areas," Kanoongo said during the event organised in technical partnership with Tobacco Free India, a citizens' group..

Dr Uma Kumar, Head of Rheumatology at AIIMS, Delhi, highlighted the health risks associated with drug and tobacco addiction as over 13 lakh people succumb to the toxic product. "The COTPA Amendment Bill will not only save lives but also reduce the burden on the healthcare system, she added. Dr Jagdish Kaur, regional advisor, Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO echoed the same views as she gave insight into the global perspective on addiction prevention and control. She warned that as people are becoming more aware about the tobacco menace, the industry is adopting innovative ways to trap the youth. "We are glad that a move has been initiated to regulate OTT contents," she said.

Doesn't sound real: Sibal on WFI chief's 'will hang self if allegation proved' remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Thursday took a swipe at Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's remarks that he will hang himself even if a single allegation is proved against him, saying it does not sound real. The swipe by Sibal, a senior advocate who represented the protesting wrestlers in the Supreme Court, came a day after Singh, who is facing sexual harassment charges levelled by female wrestlers, said all wrestlers are like his children and he will not blame them as his blood and sweat have also gone into their success.

"I am once again saying that even if a single allegation is proven against me, I will hang myself," Singh had said while addressing a programme in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki. In a tweet, Sibal said, "Brij Bhushan: 'Ready to hang myself if single allegation proved: Suicide? Doesn't sound real!'"

"Sounds familiar: PM on notebook said wait...for just 50 days,...if shortcomings ready to accept any punishment...After 50 days nothing



happened then, nothing will happen now!" Sibal said. The wrestlers, including Olympic medallists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia and Asian Games gold medallist Vinesh Phogat, who were protesting at Delhi's Jantar Mantar since April 23 demanding Singh's arrest, were removed from the site by police on Sunday after

they tried to march towards the new Parliament building following its inauguration. They were detained and were released later.

The Delhi Police has registered two FIRs against Singh. The first FIR pertains to the allegations levelled by a minor and it has been lodged under the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act along with the sections of the Indian Penal Code concerning outraging modesty. The other FIR has been registered over complaints from women wrestlers pertaining to outraging modesty.

India, Russia review ties, discuss issues of global interest



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Cape Town

PTI

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/CAPETOWN

India and Russia on Thursday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties and issues of global interest during talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Capetown. Both the ministers are there to participate in the foreign ministers' conclave of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Jaishankar is also likely to hold bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang.

After holding talks with the Russian Foreign Minister on the sidelines of the conclave, Jaishankar said in a tweet "Good to meet FM Sergey Lavrov of Russia in Cape Town

this morning on BRICS FMM sidelines. Our discussions covered bilateral matters, BRICS, G20 and SCO."

India will hold the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and G-20 summits in July and September respectively.

In the last few months, India has become a leading importer of discounted crude oil from Russia notwithstanding increasing disquiet in the West over the procurement in view of Russian invasion of Ukraine. India's economic engagement with Russia has been on a major upswing in the last one year, largely due to its procurement of discounted Russian oil.

India has, so far, refrained from voting against Russia in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) regarding its military action in Ukraine. New Delhi has all along called for resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

On Wednesday, Jaishankar said these are still "early days" for conflict resolution between Ukraine and Russia as presently, the focus is on problems such as a grain corridor, nuclear issues and matters related to the exchange of prisoners of war.

In an interview to DD India, Jaishankar noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) 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. Jaishankar is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with his other BRICS counterparts including Chinese foreign Qin Gang.

NIA Special Court declares SFJ's Multani proclaimed offender

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA Special Court, Chandigarh, on Wednesday declared accused Jaswinder Singh alias Multani a Proclaimed Offender (PO) in the Model Jail Tiffin Bomb case of April 2022. Multani, a member of the banned 'unlawful association' Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), is currently based in Germany and has a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against him. The NIA Court had issued the NBW against him on January 5, 2023.

The NIA had also declared a reward of Rs 10 lakh and opened an LOC (Look Out Circular) against Multani.

"Multani has been identified as the mastermind behind planting of the IED bomb outside the wall of Model Jail, Burail, Chandigarh with the intention of spreading terror and causing violence. The tiffin bomb, along with a detonator, was found in a black bag outside the jail on April

22, last year," the NIA said in a statement. The case was originally registered against unknown persons by Chandigarh Police as FIR Number 33 under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908. The NIA subsequently took over the case in May 2022, and re-registered it with additional provisions under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The NIA probe revealed that Multani had masterminded the crime from Germany. "He was in touch with pro-Khalistan operatives based in India, Pakistan and other countries, and was using them to promote violence and terror.

He was identifying, recruiting, motivating and radicalising youth of Punjab through social media, as per the investigations. He was also sending/raising funds and coordinating the movement of arms and ammunition, as well as explosives from Pakistan into India," the agency said.

ICG, DRI seize ₹20 cr gold from fishing boats in Gulf of Mannar in TN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in a joint with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and Customs seized 32.689 Kgs of gold valued at approximately ₹20.2 Crores from two fishing boats at Gulf of Mannar area in Tamil Nadu. The consignment was being smuggled into India from Sri Lanka.

Giving details here, Coast Guard officials said on Thursday based on a specific input from the DRI regarding illegal smuggling of contraband from Sri Lanka to India, a joint operation was launched by Indian Coast Guard and DRI on May 30.

The joint teams deployed by both agencies kept a close surveillance on fishing vessels



operating in the Gulf of Mannar, especially near Indo-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).

On the morning of May 30, the joint team from Indian Coast Guard and

DRI, detected a suspicious boat approaching Mandapam fishing harbour. When challenged, the boat tried to evade apprehension but was finally apprehended in north Gulf of Mannar.

While being chased, the suspects threw the consignment into water prior interception.

62 DT plants may be solution to food security worries

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns that frequent Aand extreme weather conditions are all set to threaten global food security, Indian researchers have stumbled upon at least 62 Desiccation-Tolerant (DT) Vascular Plant Species in the biodiversity hotspot, the Western Ghats which, they said, could have applications in agriculture, particularly in areas with scarcity of water. These plants can become so dry they crumble in the hand, but, if remoistened, will begin making proteins within minutes.

In other words, said the researchers that the DT plants are able to withstand extreme dehydration, losing up to 95 per cent of their water content, and they revive themselves once water is available again,

said the research published in the Nordic Journal of Botany.

In the inventory of 62 species, 16 are Indian endemic, and 12 are exclusive to the Western Ghats outcrops, highlighting the biodiversity region's importance as a global DT hotspot. In addition to rock outcrops, tree trunks in the partially shaded forests were found to be crucial habitats for DT species, the study said.

"This unique ability allows them to survive in harsh, arid environments that would be uninhabitable for most other plants. DT plants have been studied for their possible applications in agriculture, particularly in areas with limited water resources. In tropical regions, they are the predominant occupants of rock outcrops," said the study by scientists from ARI, Pune.

UPSC comes to aid of Manipur candidates

Offers alternative centres to people from strife-hit State to appear for recruitment tests for Govt jobs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has offered alternative centres to candidates from Imphal, Manipur to appear for Enforcement Officer/Accounts Officer and Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner examination, scheduled to be held on July 2, an official statement issued on Thursday said.

Manipur, which has been hit by ethnic conflict for nearly a month, witnessed a sudden spurt in clashes and firing between militants and security forces on Sunday, after a relative lull for over a fortnight. The death toll from the clashes since the ethnic violence began on May 3 has gone up to 80, officials said.

For the prevalent situation in the State of Manipur, the Commission has decided to offer alternative centres to the candidates of Imphal (Manipur) centre of the Enforcement Officer/Accounts Officer and Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner Examination, 2023, which is to be held on July 2, 2023, said the statement issued by the personnel ministry.

These candidates will be offered Aizawl (Mizoram), Kohima (Nagaland), Shillong



(Meghalaya), Dispur (Assam), Jorhat (Assam), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Delhi, it said.

The centre change option will be available to the candidates of Imphal centre through the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) facility, the statement said.

A message in this regard will be sent to each candidate on his/her registered mobile number with the Commission. The candidates must use their said registered mobile number to avail this facility through IVRS.

Alternatively, a candidate may also contact the UPSC through telephone numbers 011-23070641, 23381073, 23384508 and 23387876 from 12 noon of June 2 till 5 pm of June 12.

Moreover, the option of

change of centres for such candidates will also be available on the website of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) from 12 noon of June 2, 2023 to 5 pm of June 12, 2023 on round-the-clock basis, the statement said.

On receipt of centre change options from the willing candidates through any of the above modes, they will be allocated to the venues of their chosen centres and accordingly, their e-admit cards will be released, it said.

A message confirming the change of centres shall be sent to each such candidate on his/her registered mobile number, the statement said, adding that the e-admit cards will be available for downloading from the UPSC's website.

Pawar calls on Shinde; sparks speculation

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a development that sparked fierce speculation in the State's political circles, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Thursday called on Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde at the latter's official residence 'Varsha' at Malabar Hills in south Mumbai.

Though the purpose of the meeting was not immediately known, 82-year-old Pawar spent more than half an hour with Shinde.

Incidentally, this was the first meeting between the two leaders after the transfer of power that took place under most dramatic circumstances in June last year.

Shinde, then a senior Shiv Sena leader, had rebelled against the then Chief Minister



and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, walked out of the party along with 40-odd MLAs leading to the collapse of the Government Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), a grand alliance comprising Shiv Sena, the

NCP and the Congress. Shinde later teamed up the then Opposition BJP to form a new Government in the State.

Pawar's meeting with Shinde came at a time when Uddhav Thackeray was out of the country.

Informed sources said that Pawar had gone to meet Shinde to invite the latter for the 75th anniversary function of the Maratha Mandir group.

Later in the night, Shinde - speaking to a leading Marathi television channel - said that his meeting with Pawar he and the NCP supremo did not discuss any political matters. He said that the NCP chief had come to meet him for a function. "Don't read too much into this meeting," the Chief Minister told the TV channel.

BJP insensitive to women wrestlers' cause: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

For the second-consecutive day on Thursday, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee led a protest on Kolkata's streets in support of Indian wrestlers slamming the BJP Government for doing nothing to punish one of its MPs "accused of playing with the modesty of our international players."

Banerjee who led a candle light walk expressing solidarity with the Olympic medal winners, said, "it is strange that when these players win international titles the Government misses no opportunity to claim the credit... But when they are insulted and molested by one of their MPs who were in charge of their well-being this Government keeps mum." Banerjee had walked in support



of the wrestlers on Wednesday, too.

Saying that the wrestlers like most other players had toiled hard to reach the position where they were today, Banerjee iterated, "The action of this Government only proves that they have no respect for the players and their struggle ... they don't want the players to flour-

ish." Asking why no police action was not taken against Brij Bhushan the alleged accused and BJP MP, Banerjee said, "They should have arrested him ... But they did not do so... Even after the Supreme Court order they did not take any action ... as a citizen of this country I feel ashamed of whatever is going on in Delhi ... But I can assure the

entire sporting community that one day the law will definitely take its own course and the guilty will be punished."

Elsewhere, BJP national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, too, attacked the BJP Government saying its arrogance and misuse would lead to its downfall. "The beginning of the end of the BJP has started," Banerjee who is also the nephew of the Chief Minister, said adding, "The BJP will lose in the coming Assembly elections in all the five States."

The junior Banerjee on Thursday walked almost 20 km from Math Chandipur to Nandigram as a part of his Jan Sanyog Yatra (public outreach rally).

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari later said that he too would lead a similar 20-km walk at Nandigram.

FROM PAGE 1

TIES WITH NEPAL 'SUPER HIT': MODI

In his comments, Prachanda said he and Modi carried out an "extensive review" of the progress in the ties and renewed their commitment to further strengthen relations and cooperation.

"The relations between Nepal and India are age-old and multi-faceted. This relationship stands on the solid foundation built on one hand by the rich tradition of civilisational, cultural and socio-economic linkage and on the other by the firm commitment of the two countries to the time-tested principle of sovereign equality, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation," he said.

He said the two sides discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas, including trade, transit, investment, hydro-power, power trade, irrigation, power transmission line, expansion of petroleum pipeline, construction of integrated check post and land and air connectivity.

"We are happy to see the remarkable transformation of India's economic and development landscape under the able leadership of Prime Minister Modi. I congratulate Prime Minister Modi on the completion this week of nine years in government with far-reaching achievement in many fronts," Prachanda said.

Modi and Prachanda jointly inaugurated the integrated check posts at Rupaiddha in India and Nepalgunj in Nepal, built with India's assistance. The two leaders also unveiled the integrated check posts at Sanauli in India and Bhairahawa in Nepal.

The two Prime Ministers jointly set into motion the Gorakhpur-New Butwal substation 400 KV cross-border transmission line. The two leaders laid the foundation stone of Phase II of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj Oil Pipeline between India and Nepal.

The exchange of seven agreements took place between India and Nepal in the presence of the two Prime Ministers regarding infrastructure development, connectivity and people-to-people ties.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti-Beti" relationship, which refers to cross-border marriages between people of the two countries.

The country shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian States - Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Land-locked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services.

Nepal's access to the sea is through India, and it imports a predominant proportion of its requirements from and through India. The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations between the two countries.

KHAP TO TAKE UP WITH PREZ WRESTLERS' FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

With participation from khap leaders representing Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Delhi, the mahapan-chayat underscored the urgency of the situation and outlined future plans, including a forthcoming meeting in Kurukshetra.

Tikait emphasised the determination of the khaps to continue their fight until justice is served, affirming their intent to engage with both the president and the Government on this critical matter.

Despite not providing specific details on the next steps, Tikait expressed the resolve to take further action if necessary.

Notably, Tikait addressed concerns over the outgoing WFI chief making statements in the media, highlighting the discrepancy between allowing him the freedom to speak while the Government remains silent, despite the serious charges filed against him under the Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Earlier, Olympic medalists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia, along with Asian Games gold medalist Vinesh Phogat and their supporters, had planned to dispose of their medals in the Ganga as a symbolic gesture of protest. However, they temporarily halted their action following the assurance from khap and farmer leaders, who requested five days to address their grievances. The Delhi Police has lodged two FIRs against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, one under the POCSO Act based on allegations made by a minor wrestler, and another related to outraging modesty. Despite the accusations, Singh vehemently denied all charges and even went on record stating that he would take his own life if any of the allegations were proven true.

IAF AIRCRAFT CRASHES IN K'TAKA FIELD, PILOTS HURT

"A Kiran trainer aircraft of the IAF crashed near Chamrajnagar, Karnataka today, while on a routine training sortie. Both air crew ejected safely. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF tweeted. Senior district officials and an IAF team reached the spot, along with the fire and emergency services personnel. As soon as the plane crashed with a loud noise, villagers rushed to the spot and found the mangled aircraft engulfed in flames and billowing smoke.

Besides alerting the local police and the fire brigade, they also rushed to the spot where the two pilots were seen ejecting and coming down with the help of parachute. Villagers noticed the two pilots lying on the ground. Quickly, they created a temporary shed for them.

Police officials rushed to the spot, cordoned off the area and put up a makeshift tent for the injured pilots. The district officials in turn informed the IAF authorities in Bengaluru who then rushed to the spot in a special helicopter and airlifted the two injured pilots.

Last month, three people died after a MiG-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh.

The fighter jet was doing a routine training sortie when it crashed. The pilot escaped unhurt and suffered minor injuries. An inquiry was launched to probe the cause of the crash.

Two weeks after the crash, the Indian Air Force decided to ground the aging fleet of Soviet-origin aircraft which have been involved in over 400 accidents since their induction.

ALL MUST RESOLVE TO FIGHT TERROR, ITS FINANCING: EAM AT BRICS MEET

Noting that the international situation is challenging, Jaishankar said the global environment today demands that the BRICS nations should approach key contemporary issues seriously, con-

structively and collectively. "Our gathering must send out a strong message that the world is multipolar, that it is rebalancing and that old ways cannot address new situations. We are a symbol of change and must act accordingly," he added.

"This responsibility is even greater as we contemplate the devastating aftereffects of the Covid pandemic, the stresses arising from conflict and the economic distress of the Global South," the minister said, without mentioning the Ukraine conflict.

They underline the deep shortcomings of the current international architecture which does not reflect today's politics, economics, demographics or aspirations, he said. The minister also called for much-awaited reform of the UN Security Council.

"For two decades, we have heard calls for reform of multilateral institutions, only to be continuously disappointed. It is, therefore, imperative that BRICS members demonstrate sincerity in regard to reforming global decision making, including that of the UN Security Council," he said.

Jaishankar said that at the heart of the problems the countries face is economic concentration that leaves too many nations at the mercy of too few. "This may be in regard to production, resources, services or connectivity," he said, adding that the recent experiences impacting health, energy and food security, only highlight this fragility.

He said India, the current chair of the G20, undertook the voice of the Global South exercise to place these issues before the grouping. "We urge that BRICS give it particular consideration and promote the economic decentralisation that is so essential to political democratisation," he said.

He said the UN has declared 2023 as the International Year of millets. Encouraging climate resilient and nutritious grain production will surely enhance global food security, he added. "The lifestyle for environmental initiatives tabled by India is another important step towards sustainability that the BRICS should support. Our meeting will also be considering the comprehensive institutional development of this," he said. "We approached that exercise in a positive spirit and with an open mind. The level of interest in this grouping is a matter of satisfaction, and a testimony of our growing influence. For that very reason decisions we take have far reaching consequences. They will also enhance our mutually beneficial cooperation in the times to come," he added. He said the bloc has many crucial issues to deliberate upon and "we will do so in the spirit of equality, mutual respect, and complete consensus. That is the hallmark of BRICS."

The five-nation grouping BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) 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.

DELHI EXCISE: TRADER TURNS APPROVER, GETS PARDONED BY COURT

The ED had earlier told the court it was amply evident that Reddy had actively planned and conspired with various business owners and politicians involved in the alleged scam, and indulged in unfair market practices to

gain undue advantage from the Delhi excise policy. Reddy was alleged to have led a nexus that controlled a huge market share of the liquor business in the national capital by way of cartelization in clear contravention of the objectives of the excise policy. A Delhi-based businessman Dinesh Arora had earlier turned approver in the corruption case arising from the alleged scam, also being probed by the CBI.

AAP GETS DMK'S SUPPORT ON ORDINANCE ROW

"I am facing similar problems in my State. I had to move the Supreme Court to call a Budget session because the Governor wasn't allowing it," Mann said and added, "We seek the DMK's support to save democracy."

Kejriwal has been reaching out to leaders of non-BJP parties to garner support against the ordinance so that the Centre's bid to replace it through a bill is defeated when it is brought in Parliament. The Centre had on May 19 promulgated the ordinance to create an authority for the transfer and posting of Group-A officers in Delhi, which the AAP Government had called a deception with the Supreme Court verdict on control of services. The ordinance came a week after the apex court handed over the control of services in Delhi, excluding police, public order and land, to the elected Government.

It seeks to set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against Group-A officers from the DANICS cadre. The Centre will have to bring a bill in Parliament to replace the ordinance within six months of its promulgation.

DEMOCRACY NO MORE IN NCERT CLASS X BOOK

The NCERT took into consideration the learning outcomes developed across classes while making these revisions. In addition to the removal of the Periodic Table chapter, other deletions were made in the Class 10 Science textbook, including passages on "Evolution". The Science textbooks for Classes 6, 7, and 8 no longer include chapters on Fibre and Fabrics. Notably, the "Why do we fall ill" chapter has been dropped from the Class 9 Science textbook. The reasons provided by the NCERT for these deletions include overlapping content, lack of relevance or outdated information, difficulty, and the accessibility of the topics through self-learning or peer-learning.

The removal of several topics from NCERT textbooks sparked controversy, with the Opposition accusing the Government of attempting to erase certain portions. The NCERT initially described the omissions as a possible oversight but later stated that minor changes need not be notified. The textbooks are set for revision in 2024 with the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework. The Class 12 history textbook has undergone revisions as well, with references to Mahatma Gandhi and his pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity being deleted. Portions discussing the ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the impact of Gandhi's death on the communal situation in the country were also removed. Similarly, the Class 11 Sociology textbook no longer includes references to the Gujarat riots, following the removal of those references from two Class 12 textbooks earlier.

Mekedatu project: Be generous, says Shivakumar to TN Govt

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday raised a pitch for the contentious Mekedatu balancing reservoir across Cauvery river near Kanakapura and appealed to the Tamil Nadu Government to be generous.

Shivakumar, who hails from Kanakapura and is an MLA from there, said the Karnataka Government will have to make preparations required for the project. He also insisted that it will benefit not only Bengaluru but also the farmers of Tamil Nadu.

"With regard to Mekedatu, we had marched for water (in 2021). Tamil Nadu will not have any problem. After our march, (the then) Chief Minister (Basavaraj Bommai) had earmarked Rs 1,000 crore for the project. It has been proposed but has not been spent yet. We have to make the requisite preparations," Shivakumar told reporters here.

He said, "It's not that we have any hatred for Tamil Nadu or wage a war against it. Those residing there are our brethren and their brethren are here as well. So, there is no scope for hatred or jealousy. It is our project. It will benefit them as well. We have to help all the farmers in the Cauvery basin."

Stating that the key to unlock the Mekedatu issue is with the Centre, Shivakumar said there were orders on how much water Karnataka has to release. He wondered how Tamil Nadu will be at loss if Karnataka sets up a power plant there.

"We will store water and supply it to Bengaluru. It has been approved in the Cauvery Tribunal award. So there is no need to panic," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

He appealed to the Tamil Nadu Government to consider the project as it will not affect their interest.

"I request you (Tamil Nadu Government) that we will not trouble you. Be generous. We



too are generous. We are neighbouring States. We have fought enough and seen enough legal battles. It never helps. May we deal with it harmoniously. It will help in providing drinking water and benefit your farmers as well," Shivakumar said.

The Mekedatu multi-purpose (drinking and power) project involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district. The estimated Rs 9,000-crore project, once completed, is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighbouring areas (4.75 TMC) and it can also generate 400 MW of power.

Karnataka has maintained that the project within its territory will benefit both States as the surplus water stored can be managed between the two during a distress year, and its implementation will in no way affect the interests of Tamil Nadu's farming communities, as there will be no impact on its share of water.

However, the neighbouring state is of the view that the project would "impound and divert" the uncontrolled water flow due to Tamil Nadu from Kabini sub-basin, the catchment area below Krishnarajasagara, and also from Simsha, Arkavathy and Suvarnavathi sub-basins besides other small streams.

Major blaze averted by alert Rly staff

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A major tragedy was averted by alert Railway staff who stopped a blaze in the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express compartment from spreading to BP fuel depot close by

Fire in Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express compartment stopped from spreading to BP fuel depot close by



The recurrence of the mishap has shocked police officers as well as the people of the State despite the fact that no untoward incidents took place. But what is intriguing is the fact that a Bharat Petroleum fuel depot was hardly a few meters away from the ill-fated compartment and had it not been for the alertness of the Railway staff, the fire would have led to an inferno.

While police officers remained tight-lipped, Dr Jacob Thomas, former Director

General, Kerala Police told The Pioneer that it was a matter of concern. "The Inspector-General of Police, P Vijayan, who led the investigation into the April 1 fire was unceremoniously removed as the head of the anti-terrorism squad. It was his expertise and quick actions that led to the arrest of the Delhi youth within days of the incident from Maharashtra. But what he got in return was brickbats, and that does not augur well for the Service," said Dr Thomas.

NATO presses Turkiye to approve Sweden’s membership

AP ■ OSLO/NORWAY

NATO on Thursday ramped up pressure on member nation Turkiye to drop its objections to Sweden’s membership as the military organisation seeks to deal with the issue by the time US President Joe Biden and his counterparts meet next month. The 31-member alliance is also looking at boosting Ukraine’s non-member status in NATO and preparing a framework for security commitments that it can offer once the war with Russia is over.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said NATO wants to bring Sweden into the fold by the time allied leaders meet in Lithuania on July 11-12. The allies also hope to make progress on long-term funding and the security plan for Ukraine at the same event, Stoltenberg said.

He said the allies continue to agree that Ukraine will become a NATO member but that in the meantime the

alliance should provide it with security commitments and substantial new funding.

“Our focus today was on how we can bring Ukraine closer to NATO where it belongs,” he said. “No one knows when the war will end, but we must ensure that when it does we have credible arrangements in place to guarantee Ukraine’s security in the future and break Russia’s cycle of aggression,” Stoltenberg said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the allies were “focused on helping Ukraine to build up its medium- and long-term security capacity so that if and when the current aggression settles, Ukraine has the full capacity to deter future aggression”.

“NATO has a role in that in terms of the work it can do to bring Ukraine up to NATO standards,” he said. He did not elaborate.

Fearing they might be targeted by Moscow after Russia invaded Ukraine last year,



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, listens as he gives a statement to the media, at Oslo City Hall, during a meeting of NATO's foreign ministers in Oslo on Thursday. AP/PTI

Sweden and Finland abandoned their traditional positions of military nonalignment to seek protection under NATO’s security umbrella. Finland became NATO’s 31st member country in April.

NATO must agree unanimously for countries to join. Turkiye’s government accuses Sweden of being too lenient on terrorist organisations and security threats, including militant Kurdish groups and people associated with a 2016 coup attempt.

Hungary has also delayed its approval, but the reasons why have not been made publicly clear.

Stoltenberg said that he would travel to Ankara “in the near future to continue to address how we can ensure the fastest possible accession of Sweden.” He said his and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s staffs were working on dates for the trip.

“My message is that Sweden has delivered, and the time has come to ratify Sweden,” he told reporters at the conclusion of two days of informal talks between alliance foreign ministers to prepare for the summit in Lithuania. Others echoed his comments.

Its time for Sweden to join now,” Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt told reporters.

“I’m confident that also Hungary will ratify the accession protocol,” Stoltenberg said.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that “it is essential that we can finally welcome Sweden as the 32nd member.” She stressed that the Swedish government has Berlin’s “full support”. Sweden’s foreign minister, Tobias Billström, said that “it is time for Turkey and Hungary to start the ratification of the Swedish membership to NATO”. He said that “everything (that) bars Sweden joining NATO will be seen as wine for (Russian president Vladimir) Putin”. For months, Sweden, Finland and Turkiye held talks to try to address Ankara’s concerns. Billstrom said he expected things to be made clear at a new meeting of this “permanent joint mechanism” in coming weeks.

He noted that as of Thursday, Sweden had tightened its anti-terrorism laws. It is now it illegal to finance, recruit for or publicly encourage “a terrorist organisation”, or to travel abroad with the inten-

tion of joining such groups.

The time may be ripe for movement. Sweden’s membership became embroiled in campaigning for elections in Turkiye, which Erdogan won on Sunday. Erdogan has also been seeking upgraded US fighter jets, and Washington signalled this week that they might be delivered. “I spoke to Erdogan and he still wants to work on something on the F-16s. I told him we wanted a deal with Sweden. So let’s get that done,” Biden said on Monday. On Tuesday, Blinken insisted that the issues of Sweden’s membership and the fighter jets were distinct. However, he stressed that the completion of both would dramatically strengthen European security. “Both of these are vital, in our judgement, to European security,” Blinken told reporters. “We believe that both should go forward as quickly as possible; that is to say Sweden’s accession and moving forward on the F-16 package more broadly.”

China accuses US of interfering in training exercise

Beijing (AP): China’s Defence Ministry accused the US of “interference and surveillance” of a naval exercise in the South China Sea ahead of an incident in which a Chinese fighter pilot flew at high speed in front of a US Air Force reconnaissance plane, underscoring the rupture in contacts between their militaries.

A statement issued late Wednesday by the Chinese military’s Southern Theater Command said it had “organized air forces to track and monitor the whole process, dealt with it according to laws and regulations, and operated professionally.”

The US Indo-Pacific Command said the pilot of a Chinese J-16 fighter had “performed an unnecessarily aggressive maneuver” while intercepting a US Air Force RC-135 aircraft on May 26, flying directly in front of the plane’s nose.

“The RC-135 was conducting safe and routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace, in accordance with international law,” the US side said. “We expect all countries in the Indo-Pacific region to use international airspace safely and in accordance with international law.”

Southern Theater Command spokesperson Senior Col. Zhang Nandong was quoted in the statement accusing the U.S. of “mixing up black and white and making false accusations in an attempt to confuse the international audience.”

“We solemnly urge the U.S. to conscientiously restrain the actions of front-line naval and air forces, strictly abide by relevant international laws and relevant agreements, and prevent accidents at sea and in the air,” Zhang said. “If not, the US will bear all consequences,” he said.

Zhang did not say what international laws he was referring to. China’s claim to virtually the entire South China Sea is not recognized by the US and strongly contested by other countries bordering on the strategic waterway, through which an estimated \$5 trillion of international trade passes each year.

N Korean leader’s sister slams US for criticizing failed satellite launch

AP ■ SEOUL

The powerful sister of North Korean Kim Jong Un on Thursday accused the United States of “gangster-like” hypocrisy for criticizing her country’s failed launch of a military spy satellite and insisted a successful launch will be made soon.

Kim Yo Jong said North Korea’s efforts to acquire space-based reconnaissance capabilities were a legitimate exercise of its sovereign right and restated the country’s rejection of UN Security Council resolutions that ban it from conducting any launch involving ballistic missile technology.

Her comments on state media came a day after the rocket carrying the satellite failed. North Korea said the rocket lost thrust after a stage separation and crashed in waters off the Korean Peninsula’s western coast. Washington, South Korea and Japan had quickly criticized the launch. Adam Hodge, a



spokesperson at the US National Security Council, said 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.

In her statement, Kim Yo Jong briefly mentioned Hodge’s comments before saying the United States “is letting loose a hackneyed gibberish prompted by its brigandish and abnormal thinking.” If the DPRK’s satellite launch should be particularly censured, the US and all other

countries, which have already launched thousands of satellites, should be denounced. This is nothing but sophism of self-contradiction,” she said, using the initials of North Korea’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

She noted how the United States closely monitors the North through its own reconnaissance satellites and other aerial assets, calling the Americans a “group of gangsters” who would deem it as “illegal and threatening” had North Korea attempted to send a satellite into space by balloon.

“The far-fetched logic that only the DPRK should not be allowed to do so according to the (UN Security Council’s) resolution” which bans the use of ballistic rocket technology irrespective of its purpose, though other countries are doing so, is clearly a gangster-like and wrong one of seriously violating the DPRK’s right to use space and illegally oppressing it,” she said.

Bombing kills 3 in Kyiv

AP ■ KYIV

Russia launched a pre-dawn missile barrage on Ukraine’s capital Thursday, killing 3 people including a 9-year-old and her mother, officials said, and damaging apartment buildings, schools and a children’s hospital. It was the highest casualty toll from a single attack on Kyiv over the past month.

A 33-year-old woman died as she and others waited to enter a locked Kyiv air raid shelter, leaving her and others at the mercy of falling missile fragments, according to her husband. Officials ordered an investigation into what happened. The latest Russian attack, using what Ukrainian officials said were short-range Iskander ground-launched missiles, coincided with events scheduled in Kyiv to celebrate International Children’s Day. Those events were cancelled.

Ukrainian air defences shot down all 10 cruise and ballistic missiles launched by the Kremlin’s forces, but falling debris caused damage and casualties on the ground, wounding 16 people, according to author-



Police inspect a building damaged by a Russian night attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Thursday. AP/PTI

ities.

Russia has kept up a steady barrage on the Ukrainian capital and other parts of the country in recent weeks as Kyiv readies what it says is a counteroffensive to push back Moscow’s troops, 15 months after their full-scale invasion. Kyiv was the target of drone and missile attacks on 17 days last month. Ukraine’s first lady, Olena Zelenska, said one child was in hospital after the attack. “Children’s Day has to be about

safe childhood, summer, life,” she tweeted. “But today it is about new crimes of (Russia) against children.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba tweeted that the dead included a 9-year-old girl, her mother and another woman. At the Kyiv air raid shelter that was locked, Yaroslav Riabchuk said he and his wife of 17 years, Natalia, were outside with others when he ran around the back of the building to summon the guard in charge.

Russian court prepares way for new trial against jailed Kremlin foe

Moscow (AP): A Moscow court on Wednesday set a new date for a hearing paving the way for another trial of imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny that could keep him in prison for decades.

The Moscow City Court initially scheduled for Wednesday a preliminary hearing to discuss technical issues related to the trial of the Kremlin’s arch foe but moved it to June 6 without giving a reason. The court rejected a request by Navalny’s lawyers for more time to examine voluminous case materials. Navalny has said that the new extremism charges which he rejected as “absurd” could keep him in prison for another 30 years. He said an investigator told him that he would also face a separate military court trial on terrorism charges that could potentially carry a life sentence.

Court charges 5 men for Irish peacekeeper’s killing

Beirut (AP): Lebanon’s military tribunal on Thursday charged five men with the killing of an Irish UN peacekeeper in December, a senior judicial official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, alleged all five are linked with Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. The indictment followed a half-year probe after an attack on a UN peacekeeping convoy near the town of Al-Aqbiya in Lebanon’s south, a stronghold of Hezbollah. The shooting resulted in the death of Pvt. Sean Rooney, 24, of Newtown Cunningham, Ireland, and seriously wounded Pvt. Shane Kearney, 22.

The wounded peacekeeper was medically evacuated to Ireland. Two other Irish soldiers sustained light injuries. The indictment includes evidence from bystanders’ testimonies, as well as audio recordings and video footage from surveillance cameras, the Lebanese official said.

Turkish election body confirms Erdogan’s victory in runoff vote

AP ■ ANKARA

Turkiye’s election board certified the results of the May 28 presidential runoff election on Thursday, confirming that Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been a dominant force in Turkish politics for the past two decades, has won a third term as president.

Ahmet Yener, the head of the Supreme Electoral Council said Erdogan won 52.18 per cent of the votes, while main opposition party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu garnered 47.82 per cent.

According to these results, it is understood that Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been elected president and the results were sent to the Official Gazette for publication,” Yener announced.

He said turnout was 85.72 per cent. Already Turkiye’s longest serving leader, Erdogan, 69, can now govern until 2028.

Unconfirmed reports say he is scheduled to take the oath of office on Saturday, after which he is expected to announce the lineup of his new



Cabinet. Erdogan faces a host of domestic challenges, from a battered economy to pressure for the repatriation of millions of Syrian refugees and the need to rebuild after a devastating earthquake in February that killed 50,000 and leveled cities.

Investors will be watching closely to see if Mehmet Simsek, a respected former finance minister and deputy prime minister, is reappointed to head the economy portfolio, for signs of a return by Erdogan to more conventional economic

politics.

Inflation in Turkiye hit a staggering 85 per cent in October before easing to 44 per cent last month, according to official figures, although independent experts say the true rate is much higher.

Critics blame the turmoil on Erdogan’s policy of keeping interest rates low to promote growth. Economists generally recommend raising rates to combat inflation. The Turkish lira has lost around 10 per cent of its value since the start of the year.

Imran’s party president arrested

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party president Chaudhry Perviz Elahi, a close aide to former prime minister Imran Khan, was arrested outside his residence here on Thursday, the party said. “Shameful how the regime doesn’t stop their fascism. The inflation has skyrocketed to 38%, and their response is arresting former CM Punjab Parvez Elahi. Absolutely ridiculous!” the party tweeted along with a video in which the 77-year-old leader was seen being dragged by security personnel from his residence, Zahoor Elahi. The former Punjab chief minister was arrested as he was leaving his house, the Dawn newspaper reported, quoting Elahi’s spokesperson Iqbal Chaudhry. The spokesperson alleged that authorities also “misbehaved” with women accompanying Elahi, who had been evading arrest since May 9.

On May 26, a district court in Lahore issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Elahi.

“The pre-arrest bail of the accused was dismissed due to non-prosecution vide order dated May 25 and he is not appearing before the court and also not joining the investigation. In view of the request of the IO, let non-bailable arrest warrants of accused Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi be issued for June 2, 2023,” the court order read.

Elahi, who was a close aide to military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, was appointed as the president of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party in March

‘Pakistan interested in another loan from IMF to revive economy’

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed interest in securing a new loan from the IMF during his talks with its chief Kristalina Georgieva though there are slim chances for the revival of the ongoing bailout package from the global lender, a media report said on Thursday.

Sharif on last Saturday held a telephone conversation with the fund’s managing director and urged her to revive the USD 6.5 billion deal which was initially signed in 2019 and was set to expire by the end of this month.

However, the chances of revival are thin due to the limited time available to implement the tough conditions of the IMF, forcing Pakistan to look for a new deal to meet multiple economic challenges.

Prime Minister Sharif had revealed Pakistan’s intentions to sign a follow-up bailout package during his telephonic conversation with the IMF head, The Express Tribune newspaper quoted sources as saying. The sources said the IMF chief reciprocated the premier’s views about the need for another package.

this year after quitting his former party - the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q).

On May 9, violent protests erupted after the arrest of Khan, Chairman of PTI, by paramilitary Rangers in Islamabad. His party workers vandalised over 20 military installations and government buildings, including the Lahore Corps Commander House, Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad. The Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi was also attacked by the mob for the first time. Khan was later released on bail.

The violence elicited a strong reaction from the government and military with vows of taking action against the culprits, leading to an ongoing crackdown against those involved. Law enforcement agencies have arrested over 10,000 workers of Khan’s Pakistan party across Pakistan, 4,000 of them from Punjab province.

Following the May 9 incidents, several senior leaders of Khan’s party were taken into custody. The leaders included Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Fawad Chaudhry, Asad Umar, Dr Yasmeen Rashid, Shireen Mazari, Maleeka Bukhari, and Fayyazul Hassan Chauhan. A few days later, many prominent leaders including Fawad, Imran Ismail, Shireen Mazari, Fayyazul Hassan Chauhan, Firdaus Ashiq Awan and others quit Khan’s party.

Khan, 70, who is facing more than 100 cases ranging from corruption to terrorism, said he sympathises with everyone who were forced to leave the party.

Amazon workers protest return-to-office mandate

Seattle (AP): Telling executives to “strive harder,” hundreds of corporate Amazon workers protested what they decried as the company’s lack of progress on climate goals and an inequitable return-to-office mandate during a lunchtime demonstration at its Seattle headquarters Wednesday.

The protest came a week after Amazon’s annual shareholder meeting and a month after a policy took effect returning workers to the office three days per week. Previously, team leaders were allowed to determine how their charges worked. The employees chanted their disappointment with the pace of



the company’s efforts to reduce its carbon footprint — “Emissions climbing, time to act” — and urged Amazon to return authority to team leaders when it comes to work location. Wearing a black pirate hat and red coat, Church Hindley, a quality assurance engineer, said

working from home allowed him to live a better, healthier life.

“I’m out here because I refuse to just sit idly by while mandates are dictated from above down that don’t make sense and hurt the planet, hurt families and individual lives,” Hindley said.

Jordan’s crown prince weds scion of Saudi family

AP ■ AMMAN

Jordan’s crown prince married the scion of a prominent Saudi family on Thursday in a palace celebration attended by royals and other VIPs from around the world as massive crowds gathered in a mood of excitement across the kingdom.

The marriage of Crown Prince Hussein, 28, and Saudi architect Rajwa Alseif, 29, drew a star-studded guest list headlined by Britain’s Prince William and his wife Kate and which also included U.S. First Lady Jill Biden.

The celebrations hold deep significance for the region, emphasizing continuity in an Arab state prized for its longstanding stability and refresh-

ing the monarchy’s image after a palace feud. It even could help resource-poor Jordan forge a strategic bond with its oil-rich neighbor, Saudi Arabia.

The bride, wearing an elegant white dress, arrived at Zahran Palace in a 1968 Rolls-Royce Phantom V custom-made for the crown prince’s late great grandmother. The crown prince arrived earlier in full ceremonial military uniform with a gold-hilted saber.

The families and their guests gathered in an open-air gazebo surrounded by landscaped gardens for a traditional Muslim wedding ceremony known as “kath al-ketab.” The crowd erupted in applause after the signing of the marriage contract.

Several miles away, a jolt

went through a crowd gathered at a an ancient Roman amphitheater as they watched the couple seal their vows and exchange rings on a wide screen set up for the occasion. After several minutes of stillness, thousands were on their feet, waving flags and shrieking with excitement at one of several view parties held across the nation. Samara Aqrabawi, a 55-year-old mother watching the livestream with her young daughter, said the ceremony was more impressive than she imagined. “I wish for all mothers and fathers in Jordan and in the world to feel like they’re surely feeling,” she said of the king and queen.

“This is an important day because he is our future king,” said Ahmad al-Masri, an 18-

year-old attending with his family. “All of Jordan is watching.”

On Thursday morning, Saudi wedding guests and tourists — the men wearing white dishdasha robes and the women in brightly colored abayas — filtered through the sleek marbled lobby of the Four Seasons Hotel in Amman. Noura Al Sudairi, an aunt of the bride, was wearing sweatpants and sneakers on her way to breakfast.

“We are all so excited, so happy about this union,” she said. “Of course it’s a beautiful thing for our families, and for the relationship between Jordan and Saudi Arabia.”

Excitement over the nuptials — Jordan’s biggest royal event in years — has been

building in the capital of Amman, where congratulatory banners of Hussein and his beaming bride adorn buses and hang over winding hillside streets. Shops had competing displays of royal regalia. Royal watchers speculated about which dress designer Alseif would select— still an official secret.

“She looks like such a princess that I think she deserves him,” Suhair Afaneh, a 37-year-old businesswoman, said of the bride, lingering in front of a portrait of Hussein in a dark suit. “But so what, I’ll still be in love with him.”

She contemplated buying Hussein’s portrait to hang in her bedroom but her nieces persuaded her that her husband might not approve.

SEVILLA END SEASON WITH EUROPA LEAGUE TITLE

AP ■ MADRID

It was the usual ending for Sevilla in an unusual season for the Spanish soccer club. Sevilla won the Europa League trophy yet again on Thursday after a season in which it went through coaching changes and had to fight just to avoid relegation in the Spanish league.

The team's struggles were quickly forgotten with its victory on penalties over Roma in the Europa League final on Wednesday in Budapest, which gave the club a record seventh title in the second-tier European competition.

What looked like a season to forget turned into triumph after another impressive campaign by the Spanish club in the competition where it has been dominant in recent years. Five of its titles came within the last 10



years — 2014-16, 2020 and 2023.

This time, Sevilla eliminated European powerhouses Manchester United in the quarterfinals and Juventus in the

semifinals. It had gotten past Fenerbahce and PSV Eindhoven in previous rounds.

On Wednesday, the team beat José Mourinho-coached Roma 4-1 in a penalty shootout

after a 1-1 draw.

Sevilla's turnaround this season came after the club decided to replace Jorge Sampaoli with José Luis Mendilibar in March. Before Mendilibar arrived, the

team had won only twice in eight games in all competitions, with five losses. Since he took over, Sevilla lost only twice in 16 games.

"I'm happy to be here, to have won for the club, which was having a hard time when we got here," Mendilibar said. "We have done something good that can have repercussions for the good of the club."

The coach who had spent a large part of his career with Eibar came on a contract until the end of the season but was expected to stay with Sevilla following his successful stint.

"He transformed us," said Sevilla defender Jesús Navas, the only player from the current squad who was with the club when it won the Europa League title for the first time in 2006. "He got the best out of us and the result is there. He deserves to be with this club for a long time."

Sampaoli had taken over for Julen Lopetegui after the team's unusually poor start to the season. Sevilla had finished fourth in the league the last three seasons, only behind powerhouses Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid.

This time it is sitting in 11th place entering its final match at Real Sociedad on Sunday, and will only make it to the Champions League again next season thanks to its Europa League title.

Sevilla made it to the Champions League quarterfinals in 2018, but since then had only once advanced past the group stage.

Having to play in the second-tier Europa League has certainly turned out OK for Sevilla, though, and on Thursday it will be parading to celebrate yet another European title with its fans.



Neville backs City

AP ■ MANCHESTER

As a part of Manchester United's treble-winning team of 1999, Gary Neville admits he is in fear ahead of Saturday's FA Cup final.

United is the only team to win the three major trophies in a single English soccer season — the Premier League title, Champions League and FA Cup.

Now Manchester City is in contention to replicate that feat, having already secured the league title.

City has the chance to win its second trophy this season when it faces United in the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium, which would set up a possible treble when the team coached by Pep Guardiola meets Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Istanbul on June 10.

"I do fear it is on the cards," Neville told The Associated Press. "City have not got there yet, but they look like they are on the way, on the path. They've got a great manager, they've got great players, but they've still got to get over the line. Anything can happen and we just pray and (have our) fingers crossed. It doesn't bear thinking about."

City has overtaken United as English soccer's dominant team over the past decade and has just won its fifth league title in six years. But the club has yet to match United's greatest ever achievement, and has yet to ever win the European title.

And now United has the chance to end its rivals' trophy pursuit at Wembley on Saturday.

United manager Erik ten Hag has enjoyed an impressive first season in charge, having led United to success in the League Cup in February, as well securing a return to the Champions League next season. But Neville still considers City the favorite in the final.

"I think they will almost be disappointed now if they don't win it (the treble)," Neville said. "They'll be expected to win every game. The Cup final might present an issue or two, it is Manchester United, but they are far better than the teams they've got left to play."

City put together an unstoppable run to win the title and has blown away some of the best teams at home and abroad in its charge toward the treble. Liverpool and Arsenal were beaten 4-1 and Real Madrid lost 4-0 at Etihad Stadium in the Champions League semifinals.

Former City women's player Jill Scott believes City will be too strong for United.

"I went to the Arsenal game and it could have been 7-0," she told the AP. "The football they played was incredible."

"I can't see City not coming away with that FA Cup win. Sometimes in a one-off game anything can happen, but I just think they will be far superior."

United looking to stop treble-chasing City

AP ■ LONDON

The roars grew louder inside Old Trafford as Erik ten Hag addressed Manchester United fans from the middle of the field, reminding them of the role they have in protecting the club's greatest ever achievement.

There was one game to go this season, the United manager told the baying crowd, and his players standing right in front of him were ready to give their all to beat Manchester City in the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium.

"We count on you as well," he said, pointing to the supporters, who by now were punching the air in defiance. "They will give everything when you are at our backs, and I'm sure we've a really good chance to take the cup back to Old Trafford."

As rallying cries go, it was pretty much pitch perfect from Ten Hag, who knows exactly what's at stake on Saturday in a local derby with widespread repercussions.

For United, this is about much more than capturing a second trophy of the season — after the English League Cup in February that ended the club's six-year title drought — to cap an encouraging first season under Ten Hag. It's also about preserving United's proud status as the only English team to have won the league-FA Cup-European Cup treble in the same season.

City, after all, is two wins from emulating that feat, having already clinched the Premier League title and booked its place in the Champions League final against Inter Milan in Istanbul on June 10.

That United can ruin City's treble bid adds more spice to the first cup final between the rivals, which is taking place about 170 miles (270 kilometers) south of Manchester.

City starts as the undoubted favorite on the back of its stunning form since February that reeled in long-time leader Arsenal in the Premier League race and saw Bayern Munich



and Real Madrid swept aside in the Champions League knockout stage.

Before a much-weakened team — featuring a bunch of youth players — lost at Brentford 1-0 in a league match with little riding on it last Sunday, City went on a 25-match unbeaten run in all competitions and won 20 of them. Along the way, Madrid was beaten 4-0, Bayern 3-0 and Arsenal 4-1. Back in October, City thrashed United 6-3.

All those games were at home, though, and City hasn't been quite so machine-like on the road. And that's not the only source of hope for United, which is seeking its 13th FA Cup title — with only Arsenal (14) having more.

City manager Pep Guardiola talks often of his players having "rhythm" but that might have been lost after he chose to rotate his lineups for the final two league games, with the title wrapped up. Before the loss at Brentford, City was possibly fortunate to come away from Brighton with a 1-1 draw.

Erling Haaland has 52 goals in all competitions in a stunning first season at City but it's just one goal in his last six games for the Norway striker.

Meanwhile, United won its final four matches in the league, conceding just two goals in that period. And in the last meeting between the teams, United won at Old Trafford 2-1 in January — albeit after a debatable equalizing goal from Marcus Rashford.

Sabalenka refuses to take questions on Ukraine war

AP ■ PARIS

Aryna Sabalenka, a Belarusian tennis player seeded No. 2 at the French Open, declined to answer questions about Russia's invasion of Ukraine after she won a match on Wednesday.

After her first-round win Sunday, Sabalenka had said no Russian or Belarusian athletes support the war, but she was asked Wednesday to personally condemn Belarus' role in supporting Russia's invasion.

"I've got no comments to you," the Australian Open champion said in a press conference after her 7-5, 6-2 victory over



Iryna Shymanovich in the second round at the Grand Slam tournament.

Sabalenka's first-round opponent, Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine, had urged reporters to ask the 25-year-old Sabalenka if she personally supports or

opposes the war.

Sabalenka was asked — in the context of potentially becoming the world's No. 1 player — about whether she supports Belarus' authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko. "I have no comments to

French Open hopes AI can help players block death threats, hate

AP ■ PARIS

Frances Tiafoe says he receives death threats via social media after he loses professional tennis matches. Jessica Pegula says the same. So does Donna Vekic — directed at just her or her family, too.

"Everybody gets them after a loss," said Tiafoe, a 25-year-old from Maryland who was scheduled to play in the French Open's second round on Thursday and was a semifinalist at last year's US Open.

"It's just how society is today. I know how that affects people's mental health. That's very real."

Sloane Stephens, the 2017 champion at Flushing Meadows and 2018 runner-up at Roland Garros, says she often deals with racist messages directed at her online, and said some prompted the FBI to investigate.

"It's obviously been a problem my entire career. It has never stopped," said Stephens, who is Black. "If anything, it's only gotten worse."

In a bid to try to protect athletes from that sort of abuse at Roland Garros during the 15-day Grand Slam tournament that ends June 11, the French Tennis Federation (FFT) is paying a company to provide play-



ers with software that uses artificial intelligence to block these sorts of negative comments.

Every contestant in every category — singles, doubles, juniors, wheelchair competitors and so on, for a total of around 700 to 800 — is allowed free access to Bodyguard.ai for use on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. A few dozen players had signed up for the service as of the start of this week, according to Bodyguard.

"This is really important for us: for the players to be very comfortable and be able to focus on the competition. Tennis is mental. It's really what you have in your mind that counts; you're making 1,000 decisions during a match," said FFT CEO

Caroline Flaisissier, who put the cost to the federation at somewhere between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

"We know that there is a lot of cyberbullying," she said. "We have to address that major issue, so we thought let's do a test."

That includes monitoring social media used by the FFT and the French Open itself. An FFT spokeswoman said Wednesday that 4,500 messages had been deleted out of the 79,000 received on those accounts since May 21.

Yann Guerin, head of sports for Nice-based Bodyguard, said the company's software — which is constantly updated by employees who might notice new words or emojis that should be part of

the screening — needs less than 100 milliseconds to analyze a comment and delete it if it's "hateful or undesirable." He cited the example of one player who participated in qualifying rounds last week, before the start of the tournament proper.

"He lost ... so he was disappointed. Then he checked his phone and was like, 'Whoa,'" Guerin said, estimating that more than 70% of the comments that athlete received would fall under the heading of "toxicity."

"Very bad," Guerin said. "Not bad. VERY bad."

That's nothing out of the ordinary, according to players.

"It's a big issue in tennis. We get these stupid and abusive comments all the time. And to be honest, we are tired of it," said Daria Kasatkina, a 26-year-old from Russia who was a 2022 semifinalist in Paris. "People just do that and they don't get punished. Nothing. Only we suffer from reading all of this (expletive)."

Several players, from various countries, described distasteful messages arriving via apps.

Usually accounts are flooded after a defeat — often, they say, from gamblers disappointed to lose money wagering on a match.



Noval Djokovic moves on from Kosovo comments

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic sure seemed like someone ready to move on from the latest non-tennis issue he's been involved in during a Grand Slam tournament. Criticised after his previous match for comments about clashes in northern Kosovo between ethnic Serbs and NATO-led peacekeepers, the 22-time major champion stayed away from political matters on Wednesday night.

When his 7-6 (2), 6-0, 6-3 victory over Marton Fucsovics in the second round of the French Open ended, Djokovic, a 36-year-old from Serbia, wrote on the lens of a TV camera — a custom at more and more tennis tournaments — and kept it simple, with an autograph and a smiley face.

It was quite different from what happened after his win Monday, when Djokovic drew attention for writing in Serbian, "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia. Stop the violence," and then speaking out about the matter at a news conference with reporters from his home country.

That drew rebukes from a member of France's government, French Open tournament director Amelie Mauresmo and the Kosovo tennis federation.

Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera warned Djokovic on Wednesday morning not to wade into such international issues again at Roland Garros, saying his comments were "not appropriate." Speaking on TV station France 2, Oudea-Castera said Mauresmo encouraged Djokovic and his entourage to maintain "neutrality" on the field of play.

Asked about Oudea-Castera and Mauresmo, Djokovic responded: "I have no more comment on that. I said what I needed to say."

Russian Olympic cycling medalists barred from races

AP ■ AIGLE (SWITZERLAND)

Two Russian track cyclists who won medals at the Tokyo Olympics were ruled ineligible to race Wednesday for breaching rules monitoring their neutrality during the war on Ukraine.

Anastasiiia Voinova and Mariya Novolodskaya cannot race in International Cycling Union (UCI) events from Thursday, the governing body said in a document posted on its website. The world championships are held in August in Glasgow, Scotland.

"This ineligibility will apply for as long as the ad hoc rules' regarding Russia and Belarus remain in force," the UCI said in the document without detailing the breaches.

A rules update published May 3 takes effect Thursday and specifies "the strictest neutrality



towards the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus at any time since the beginning of the war in Ukraine is required" to race in UCI events.

The UCI can deny neutral status to riders or officials "who are or have been contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military" or who have shown support for the war in interviews or social media posts. Taking part

in pro-war demonstrations or displaying the "Z" symbol that is associated with the invasion of Ukraine also should be disqualifying.

At the Olympics held in 2021, Voinova took bronze in women's team sprint on the track after getting silver in the event at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. The 30-year-old racer is also a multiple world champion.

Harjai Milkha leads, Nihal second

PTI ■ EDINBURGH

Harjai Milkha Singh proved he is a chip of the old block as he finished strongly with three birdies in the last five holes to card 2-under 70 and take sole lead in Boys 13 category of the US Kids Golf European Championship here.

Playing in extremely cold and freezing conditions, Harjai, son of Indian golf legend Jeev Milkha Singh, and grandson of the Olympic icon the late Milkha Singh, leads at 2-under 142.

With rounds of 72-70, he is two ahead of three others at tied second.

The Indians, who gained an entry into the event after solid showings on local Tours, had another fine day at the highly competitive European Championship.

While Harjai is in sole lead in Boy's 13, Nihal Cheema, the youngest member of the 16-strong Indian squad, is tied-second in Boys under-7. Bengaluru's Adit

Veeramachaneni is sole third in Boy's 9 section, and Vihaan Jain is tied-fifth in the Boy's 13 competition.

All three Indian girls figured in top-seven. First day co-leader Mahreen Bhatia slipped to tied third with a 75 in Girls 13-14 category at the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club.

Naina Kapoor (81-85) rose to tied-fifth in the Girls 11 section but Ananyaa Sood (77-75) slipped from tied-sixth to seventh in Girls 12.

In Boy's 13, one of the most competitive sections, Harjai was 2-over after seven holes with one birdie and three bogeys, but a birdie on eighth saw him turn in one-over.

On the back nine, Harjai was in full flow as he birdied three times in last five holes. The birdies came on 14th, 15th and 17th holes. With one more round to go Chandigarh golfer is two ahead of American Colin McAskin (73-71), South Africa's Jordan Botha (75-69) and England's Kodi Dean of (77-67).

Thailand Open: Kiran moves to QFs, Ashmita bows out

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's Kiran George continued his good run as he cruised into the quarterfinals of the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament, beating world number 26 China's Weng Hong Yang in straight games here on Thursday.

Kiran, the world number 59, took 39 minutes to beat his higher-ranked Chinese opponent 21-11, 21-19 in the men's singles round of 16 clash.

It is the first time that Kiran has reached the quarterfinal at a BWF World Tour Super 500 event.

The 2022 Odisha Open winner will face the winner of the match between Ng Ka Long Angus of Hong Kong and Toma Junior Popov of France in last eight clash on Friday.

However, it was the end of the road for 23-year-old Ashmita Chaliha, who went down 18-21



13-21 to former Olympic and three-time World Champion Carolina Marin of Spain.

Later in the day, Saina Nehwal, Lakshya Sen and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will play their respective pre-quarterfinals.

The BWF World Tour is divided into six levels, namely World Tour Finals, four Super 1000, six Super 750, seven Super 500, and 11 Super 300 in order. One other category of tournament, the BWF Tour Super 100 level, also offers ranking points.

WE ARE USED TO DUKES BALL: AXAR



PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

Switching from playing T20s to the longest format of the game is difficult but practising with the red ball through the IPL will help in the tough transition at the World Test Championship final against Australia, feels India all-rounder Axar Patel.

Most members of the Indian team head to the marquee event after playing T20 cricket in the IPL for over two months.

Additionally, while the SG balls are used to play the red-ball format in India, the Dukes ball will be used for the WTC final.

However, India are well prepared for the twin challenges. To familiarise themselves with the Dukes ball, which is used in English conditions, the 'Men in Blue' have been working with it. "We knew about this before the start of the IPL. So even dur-

ing the IPL, it was discussed that we will bowl with the red ball," Axar told ICC.

"We had red balls, so we were using them. You know when and how to play, how much time you have. This mental switch from white ball to red ball is obviously tough, but we have enough time," Axar added. The left-arm spinner, however, said that the focus is on hitting the right spot irrespective of the ball used.

"We switch from white ball to red ball. It is a similar switch to go from SG to Dukes, you have to use your talent and skill. You have to execute your plan, your bowling rhythm. Irrespective of the ball, if you bowl a good ball at a good spot, it works.

"So, that's what we're doing. Since the match is in England, which is different from India, we are planning what lines and

lengths will work here. The same thing in practice, we are good to go."

The first batch of Indian players, including the likes of Virat Kohli and Axar, landed in London early last week and have been preparing for the final, scheduled to be held at The Oval from June 7 to 11.

"Those who did not qualify (for IPL Playoffs) got more time. So I don't think there will be many problems because we have had a good time to prepare."

"The difference is the Dukes ball remains shinier for longer. But during the IPL, we had ordered the ball, so were practising with it and have gotten used to it," Axar said.

The Indian team will also have to quickly adapt to the relatively cooler conditions in England, having played the IPL in sweltering heat.

"We came after playing IPL,

where it was 40-45 degrees in India. After that it feels great here. We have taken out our winter clothes and are roaming around wearing jumpers. It's also a bit windy. Whenever we come to the UK, we enjoy the weather. It remains a little cool, there is no heat."

In stark contrast to India's spin-friendly pitches, the conditions in England are more suited to swing bowling.

"Obviously, the conditions in India and England are different. The fast bowlers have more of a role here. In India, spinners play a more important role," Axar said. "The conditions are the same for both teams. In England, the wind assists swing bowling and offers good bounce if you bowl at the right spots.

"The team is getting together slowly, so the planning will go on. We'll leave the planning to our bowling coach."

Oz need to be wary of Pujara, Kohli: Ponting

PTI ■ LONDON

Australia will have to guard against the "thorn in their side" Cheteshwar Pujara and a "back at his best" Virat Kohli if they are to counter India in the World Test Championship final at The Oval next week, feels legendary cricketer Ricky Ponting.

India's Test batting mainstay Pujara could provide valuable insights to his teammates, having played extensively at Sussex in the English County Championship, while Kohli is at his absolute best having cracked two centuries and six half-tons for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the recently-concluded Indian Premier League.

"The Australian team will be talking about Virat, no doubt about it, and they'll be talking about Pujara. They're the two," Ponting said on "The ICC Review."

Pujara is known to relish the challenges thrown at him by Australian bowlers, having scored more Test runs and centuries against them than any other side, and his contribution would be crucial to India's chances of lifting the WTC trophy in their second attempt.

"Pujara has been a thorn in their side a lot in the past, and in Australia, and this wicket will potentially be a lot more like an Australian pitch. They know that they'll have to get him early," opined the former Australian captain.

Pujara, who bats at No. 3, has 2,033 runs and five centuries in 24 Tests against Australia, and skipper Rohit Sharma will hope he makes a couple of more vital contributions for the side in the



WTC final.

Kohli, apart from his sparkling form in the IPL, had smashed 186 in the fourth Test against Australia in March during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and would be itching to have a go at the Pat Cummins-led side.

"They also know that Virat over the last few weeks is probably just about back to his absolute best, albeit in T20 cricket. He told me that the feeling he's getting right now is that he's almost back to his best, and that's an ominous warning for the Australians going into a one-off game," said Ponting.

Ponting is also mightily impressed with young Shubman Gill's performance in the IPL and the 23-year-old's exploits in the last two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar series.

Gill hit three centuries for Gujarat Titans in IPL. "He looks like a terrific young guy. He's got that bit of attitude about him as

well. He's got a bit of swagger. He has some serious class. That sort of front-foot pull shot that he plays against the fast bowlers will be a shot that he'll probably need against this Australian attack," said Ponting.

With the pace bowlers likely to do a lot of heavy lifting during the one-off Test, Ponting believes veteran Mohammed Shami will have to be at his absolute best against the strong Australian batting lineup, given that Jasprit Bumrah is not in the frame owing to injury.

"I think he has to step up or try and take his game to another level if India are going to win this game. When you talk to the Australian batters as well, they understand how good Shami is whether it's new ball or old ball, whether it's in Australia or India.

"They know the skillset he's got and how dangerous he can be. It's going to have to be him," added Ponting.



Australia head into the WTC final against India wary of their dismal Oval record

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

As Australia begin preparations for the World Test Championship final against India, the men from Down Under would be eager to put their past struggles at The Oval behind them.

In over 140 years of Test cricket in England, Australia have had one of the worst records at The Oval, which will host the final from June 7 to 11 between the top two Test sides.

Australia, who played at The Oval in 1880 in what was the first-ever Test in England, have managed a mere seven wins from 38 Tests at the famous South London venue, putting their success rate at the venue at 18.42 per cent, their poorest across England.

Australia have won just twice in the past 50 years at The Oval. On the other hand, they have 17 wins from 29 matches at The Lord's at a success rate of 43.59 per cent, which is better than hosts England's 39.72 per cent from 141 games and South Africa's 33.33 per cent at the same venue.

Australia have a success rate of 34.62 per cent at Headingley, 30.43 per cent at Trent Bridge, and 29.03 per cent and 26.67 per cent at Old Trafford and Edgbaston respectively.

India, on the other hand, haven't fared too well at the venue either having won two, drawn seven and lost five games. But the Rohit Sharma-led side will be boosted by the 157-run win over England here in 2021, which was its first victory at the venue in a Test match in 40 years.

According to cricket.com.au, Australia will have their first full training session in the UK on Thursday in Beckenham, which is 20km from central London.

Pat Cummins and his men will train at Kent's out-ground across the weekend as both sides will be granted access to facilities at The Oval only two days prior to the fixture.

And while The Oval is likely to favour the pacers, Beckenham is known to have a batter-friendly track.

Australia finished the 2021-23 WTC cycle on top of the table, their only loss being the 2-1 away defeat to India earlier this year.

They haven't beaten the Men in Blue, both home and away, in eight years — four successive series defeats.

Key for both teams will be to dismiss Smith and Kohli early: Finch



PTI ■ LONDON

Former captain Aaron Finch believes that he will put his money on Steve Smith even though Australia will also need to get rid of star India batter Virat Kohli as early as possible in what promises to be an enticing World Test Championship final, starting June 7 at the Oval here. "Both (Kohli and Smith) will be batting at number four, so the key is to try and get them as early as possible. Early wickets to expose them to the brand new ball will be absolutely key. I will always side with Steve Smith, I think his record is outstanding, but it will be a very good contest," Finch told Star Sports.

India vs Australia rivalry brings out the best in both teams, he said.

"I think the rivalry is held in such high regard in both countries, that I think it brings out the best in both teams," he added.

"Obviously, India has had the better of Australia in the last three series I think, so both teams will rise to the occasion no matter where it's played, at home or away or this time at neutral territory. It's just a must watch thing."

'Conway has caught Williamson bug to keep learning'

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Former New Zealand spinner John Bracewell believes charismatic batter Devon Conway has caught the "Kane Williamson bug" to keep learning from past mistakes and making rapid improvements in his batting technique.

Conway, a late entrant into the New Zealand setup at 29, took the cricketing world by storm by smashing a double hundred on Test debut against England in 2021 to become only the seventh batter to do so in the longest format.

Conway, now 31, also played a vital role for Chennai Super Kings in only his second IPL season, scoring six half-centuries and aggregating 672 runs with a highest of an unbeaten 92 and an average touching 52.

His opening partnerships with Ruturaj Gaikwad formed the cornerstone of CSK's record-equalling fifth title. The all-format New Zealand cricketer was third on the IPL's Orange Cap list behind Shubman Gill and RCB's South African skipper Faf du Plessis.

"I think he's been an absolute magician in terms of his adaptability to all three formats, his skillset and his (growth)," Bracewell, who played 41 Tests garnering 102 wickets and 1000-plus runs, told Sen Radio.

"I like the way he's becoming a better cricketer all the

time, so he's obviously caught the Kane Williamson bug of being a learner, not a guy that actually just sits there and relies on being talented," said the 65-year-old. Conway has so far amassed 1212 Test, 508 ODI and 632 T20I runs, and Bracewell believes the cricketer can rival the best in the business.

"His game is just continuing to progress and that's something that Kane Williamson had introduced into the New Zealand side along with (former wicketkeeper) BJ Watling.

"That's something that Devon Conway's picked up and moved forward with him taking it to another dimension."

Bracewell believes Conway will play a huge role during the ODI World Cup, scheduled to be held in India in October-November this year, given that Williamson would unlikely have recovered completely from an ACL injury he suffered in the IPL.

"He's one of a series of components, but he's certainly an important one," said Bracewell.

"One, that he knows those (Indian) conditions (and) two, that he's extremely adaptable in terms of now he's opening the batting in T20. So he has that adaptability to be able to move up and down the order and fit in, so that makes him a good replacement for somebody like Kane."

Dhoni undergoes knee surgery: CSK CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni successfully underwent a left knee surgery in a Mumbai hospital on Thursday, raising hopes of playing in the 17th edition of Indian Premier League next year.

Dhoni, who led Chennai Super Kings to their fifth IPL title, had flown to Mumbai from Ahmedabad after the final on Monday and consulted renowned sports orthopaedic surgeon Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala, who is also on the BCCI medical panel and had performed surgeries on a number of top Indian cricketers, including Rishabh Pant.

"Yes, Dhoni has had a successful knee surgery at the Kokilaben Hospital in Mumbai on Thursday. He is doing fine and the surgery happened in the morning. I don't have details. I am yet to get all the details about



the nature of surgery and other things." CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan confirmed to PTI. "He will be discharged in a day or two. He would be resting for a few days before his extensive rehabilitation starts. It is now expected that he would have enough time to get fit to play in the next IPL," another source close to CSK management told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

LOCAL EVENTS

BAREILLY GIRL GETS CRICKET SCHOLARSHIP

Shubhi Sharma, a 19-year-old opening batsman from Bareilly, bagged the inaugural 'Anjum Chopra Scholarship' along with three other young women cricketers. Push Sports started the scholarship under the patronage former Indian skipper Anjum Chopra, in order to empower and encourage the budding athletes to pursue their passion for cricket while receiving training and mentorship from experienced professionals.

YOUTH CRICKET CLUB WIN

Youth Cricket Club defeated JK Sports Cricket Club by 94 runs in a league match of the 1st Rajesh Singh Memorial Cricket tournament at RR ground on Thursday. Batting first, YCC piled up 260 runs for the loss of six wickets in the stipulated 40 overs. In reply, JK Sports Club were bundled out for 166 runs in 34.5 overs.

BRIEF SCORES:

YCC: 260 (Vinayak 67, Farhan 60, Yashvardhan 42; Zainul 2/53; Athraw 1/27) JKSCC: 166 (Athraw 58, Ishan 34, Harsh 28; Apurv 4/27, Sachin 2/43)

Pathirana set to make ODI debut ahead of WC qualifiers



AP ■ HAMBANTOTA

Sri Lanka has unleashed some special bowling talents ahead of big events over the years.

In the case of Lasith Malinga, he was thrown into the deep end during a so-called Top End tour of Australia in 2004. In the case of Ajantha Mendis, he was introduced just before the Asia Cup and he starred with six wickets against India in the final as Sri Lanka clinched the trophy in 2008.

The same blueprint is to be followed with 20-year-old Matheesha Pathirana, who will make his ODI debut in the three-match series against Afghanistan that gets underway on Friday.

Although Pathirana has played just one Twenty20 International, he is already a star after performing a key role for Chennai in the Super Kings' run to a record fifth Indian Premier League title.

Pathirana bowls with a unique round-arm action and Sri Lankans hope that he'll be quite a handful for batters during the World Cup qualifiers later this month in Zimbabwe. Sri Lanka, which won the 1996 World Cup title and has twice been runner-up, needs to go through qualifying because of its slide down the International Cricket Council rankings in the one-day format.

Afghanistan has no such issues after qualifying automatically for the showpiece event later this year in India.

Bowling is Afghanistan's strength, with three Afghan players featuring in the list of top 10 bowlers in official ICC rankings. Leg-spinner Rashid Khan will miss the first two games because

of a lower-back injury, but off-spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi will find the conditions in Hambantota to their liking.

Afghanistan also has left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmed, who was quite a handful for Gujarat Titans during the IPL.

Although bowling is the team's strong point, Afghanistan also some solid batting.

Ibrahim Zadran showcased that he is a star in the making during the ICC Under-19 World Cup and since graduating to the senior side, he has smashed three centuries in just eight one-dayers. That includes a career-best 162, the highest score by an Afghan in ODIs.

Friday's series-opener will be the first international to be staged at Hambantota in more than three years.

The series was hastily arranged after Sri Lanka failed to automatically qualify for the World Cup, and will provide an opportunity for the selectors to take a final look at some of the players before they submit the squad to the ICC before the June 10 deadline.

Sri Lanka has recalled test captain Dimuth Karunaratne to the squad. Karunaratne was fired as ODI captain and dropped from the squad in 2021. However, with the batting unit not able to utilize the full quota of 50 overs often enough, the need for Karunaratne's stable presence has been felt.

The hosts also have recalled fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera, who is returning after seven months following ankle surgery.

SQUADS:

SRI LANKA: Dasun Shanaka (captain), Kusal Mendis (vice-captain) Pathum Nissanka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva, Charith Asalanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Dushan Hemantha, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Matheesha Pathirana, Lahiru Kumara, Kasun Rajitha.

AFGHANISTAN: Hashmatullah Shahidi (captain), Rahmat Shah (vice-captain), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Ikram Alikhail, Azmatullah Omarzai, Rashid Khan, Mujib ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Abdul Rahman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Farid Ahmad Malik.

Punjabi, Maharshi Dayanand Universities clinch hockey titles

Lucknow (PNS): Punjabi University, Patiala clinched the 3rd Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2022 hockey men's title, in a tight encounter defeating Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, on penalties (3-2). Both teams were tied at three goals apiece after regulation time. In the Women's category Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak, denied ITM, Gwalior, a hat-trick of KIUG titles, defeating them 2-0 in the final played here at the Guru Gobind Singh Sports College in Lucknow on Thursday.

Sambalpur University clinched the bronze medal in the men's category defeating Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, while Punjabi University beat University of Mysore to secure the bronze in the women's category.

In the archery event, Pragati of Guru Kashi University hogged the limelight, bagging a double gold in compound archery. She first secured the compound women's individual title and later joined hands with Simranjot Singh to win the gold in the mixed team



category. Rishabh Yadav won the ywlow metal in the men's individual category while Punjabi University secured both the gold medals in the team categories.

In the badminton underway at the BBD Academy, Jain University, Karnataka will face University of Delhi in the women's category final while Savitribai Phule Pune University will meet Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak in the men's finals.

RESULTS:

(Archery) Final: Compound Men's: Rishabh Yadav bt Aman Saini 145-141; **Compound Women's:** Pragati bt Muskan Kirar 144-143; **Compound Mixed Team:** Pragati/Simranjot Singh, Guru Kashi University bt Somanshi Medatwal/Hritik Sharma, GNDU, Amritsar 150-144; **Compound Women's Team:** Punjabi University, Patiala bt Amravati University 228-216; **Compound Men's Team:** Punjabi University, Patiala bt GNDU, Amritsar 225-222

(Badminton) Semis - Girl's: Jain University, Bangalore bt Savitribai Phule Pune University 2-0; University of Delhi bt Adamas University, Kolkata 2-0; **(Judo) -73Kg Men's:** 1-Monty, 2-Pardeep Rawat, 3-Aryan Drall and Amal V Dileep; **-81 Kg Men's:** 1-Harshpreet Singh, 2-Mohit Sehrawat, 3-Deepak Mishra and Mukesh Shrivastava; **-57 Kg Women's:** 1-Ankita, 2-Sneha Chauhan, 3-Snehal Ramesh Khavare; **-63 Kg Women's:** 1-Reva Rawat, 2-Bharti, 3-Gautami Hemant Kanchan and SR Sahana;

(Weightlifting) 81Kg Men's: 1-Anshul 293kg (Snatch-132kg+Clean & Jerk 161kg), 2-Naitik Jangid 293kg (131+162), 3-G Ravi Shankar 291kg (133+158) bronze; **64kg Women's:** 1-Sanapathi Pallavi 192kg (Snatch-84kg+Clean & Jerk 108kg), 2-Ditimoni Sonowal 190kg (83+107) silver (GKU), 3-Navita A 158kg (69+89); **89kg Men's:** 1-Shaik Lal Basheer 301kg (Snatch-140kg+Clean & Jerk-161kg), 2-Dhairiyashil Shahaji Salunkhe 286kg (130+156) silver (SPPU), 3-Moida Manikanta 284kg (130+154); **71kg Women's:** 1-Bellana Nani 181kg (Snatch-78kg+Clean & Jerk-103kg), 2-Navdeep Karj 179kg (77+102), 3-Trupti Sanjay Mane 168kg (73+95); **Women's 76kg:** 1-Harmanpreet Kaur Snatch: 82kgClean and Jerk: 106kg), 2-Ritu Snatch: 81kg Clean and Jerk: 105kg; 3-Lekha Maalyam Snatch: 79kg Clean and Jerk: 98kg; **Men's 89kg:** 1-Shaik Lal Basheer, Snatch: 140kg Clean and Jerk, 2-Dhairiyashil Shahaji Salunkhe Snatch: 130kg Clean and Jerk: 156kg, Moida Manikanta Snatch: 130kg Clean and Jerk: 154kg.