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Crash toll 288 & counting...

803 hurt in India's worst trains pile-up in Balasore

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The death toll from the triple train accident at Bahanaga Bazar in Balasore, Odisha, on Friday has now risen to 288. Preliminary investigations suggest that a signal was initially given for the Coromandel Express to enter the main line but was later taken off, causing the train to enter the loop line where it collided with a parked goods train.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, efforts to remove the mangled coaches and repair the tracks at the site have begun in full swing, according to a railway official. The accident involved three trains: The 12841 Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express, the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, and a goods train. It stands as one of the worst railway disasters in the country's history.

As per reports available until late Saturday afternoon, the accident claimed the lives of 288 people, while 803 individuals sustained injuries, including 56 with severe injuries. The two express trains were carrying over 2,200 passengers with reserved tickets, along with many others traveling in unreserved coaches.

The railways revealed that



Passengers wait at the site where Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train derailed, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

the Coromandel Express, while passing through the up main line, collided with a stationary goods train in the loop line at Bahanaga Bazar station, located approximately 280 kilometres from Howrah and 171 kilometres from Bhubaneswar.

A loop line is a railway track connected at both ends to a main line, allowing trains to be diverted to accommodate passing trains.

The impact of the collision caused 21 coaches of the Coromandel Express to derail, with three coaches falling onto a neighbouring track where the Bengaluru-Howrah Express was simultaneously passing in the opposite direction.

Consequently, the Bengaluru-Howrah train collided with the fallen coaches, causing its rear two coaches to derail. The number of passen-

gers with reserved tickets on the Coromandel Express was around 1,257, while the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express had 1,039 passengers with reservations.

The railways has announced an ex-gratia relief of ₹10 lakh to the next of kin of those who died, ₹2 lakh to the seriously injured, and ₹50,000 for passengers with minor injuries.

Investigations are currently underway to determine any human error, signal failure, or other potential causes behind the tragic accident.

A preliminary inquiry report has been submitted, and a high-level probe, led by the commissioner of railway safety, South Eastern Circle, has been initiated by the national transporter.

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Kavach could have saved lives, anti-collision system missing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The tragic collision of three trains in Balasore on Friday night, resulting in the loss of over 288 lives and injuring 803 people, has raised questions about the absence of the Kavach system developed by the Indian Railways to prevent such accidents caused by driver error or other factors.

According to Indian Railways spokesperson Amitabh Sharma, the rescue operation has been completed, and restoration work is now commencing.

However, he acknowledged that the Kavach system was not available on the tracks in Balasore where the collision occurred.

Kavach is an automatic train protection (ATP) system developed by the Research Design and Standards Organisation in collaboration with three Indian firms.

Its purpose is to assist locomotive drivers in avoiding missing danger signals and controlling speeding, ensuring safe train operations even in low-visibility conditions.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw personally tested the "Kavach" system and had previously expressed its success.

In a tweet from March last year, he mentioned the system's ability to automatically stop a locomotive before reaching another locomotive at a dis-



Rescue work underway after an accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

tance of 380 metres during rear-end collision testing.

Kavach functions by controlling train speed and automatically applying the brakes if the driver fails to do so in a timely manner. However, the absence of this crucial safety system on the tracks in Balasore raises concerns about the potential impact on acci-

dent prevention and mitigation.

As investigations into the tragic incident continue, the Indian Railways and relevant authorities will likely examine the reasons behind the unavailability of the Kavach system in Balasore and take necessary measures to ensure the safety of train operations in the future.

Guilty won't be spared: Modi at accident site

PNS ■ BALASORE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday expressed his deep anguish over the train crash in Odisha that claimed the lives of 288 people and assured that strong action would be taken against those responsible.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the accident site and meeting the injured at a hospital in Balasore district, Modi conveyed his heartfelt sorrow and emphasized that the government is taking the incident very seriously.

"The government is deeply saddened by the incident. We will not spare anyone found guilty, and they will face strong consequences for this tragedy," he stated. He further assured that instructions have been issued to ensure a thorough and swift investigation into the mishap.

Modi acknowledged that



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with rescuers as he takes stock of the situation at the site of the accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

while it is impossible to bring back the lives lost, the Government stands firmly with the affected families, offering unwavering support.

"We will leave no stone unturned in providing all necessary medical assistance to the injured," he added.

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300 NDRF rescuers on job with cutters, canine squads

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Director General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Atul Karwal, said on Saturday that over 300 NDRF rescuers equipped with large metal cutters, canine squads, and heavy-lift equipment are working at the train accident site in Odisha.

Karwal stated that the NDRF is expected to conclude the search operation by Saturday evening.

Since the first NDRF team arrived at the accident site around 8.30 pm on Friday, the force has rescued 44 survivors and recovered 71 bodies from the wrecked railway coaches in Balasore district.

The NDRF is a federal contingency force operating under the Union Home Ministry.

"We have more than 300 rescuers divided into nine



NDRF personnel carry out rescue work after an accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

teams working at the accident site. Our goal is to complete the search operation by this evening," Karwal said at the NDRF headquarters in New Delhi.

The initial NDRF team reached the site from its regional response center in Balasore

approximately one hour and fifteen minutes after the accident, which occurred around 7-7.10 pm on Friday. The remaining NDRF teams were deployed from Mundali in Cuttack district and Kolkata, according to Karwal.

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Screams of help still ring in survivors' ears

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Train passengers, who survived the triple train crash on Friday, recounted horror. Recalling the incident, Anubhav Das, a passenger of the Coromandel Express which rammed into a goods train in Odisha's Balasore, said there was the sound of screeching brakes and then a loud crashing of metal.

Though he came out of the accident unhurt, the screams of help of those stuck in derailed mangled coaches still ring in his ears. "It was a horrific sight. There were people injured, some crawling from under the train's debris," he posted on Twitter. Later, he said, he came to know that not just his train but another express train was involved in the accident.

Initially, in a series of

tweets, Das described how he thought the accident unfolded.

Later, speaking with PTI, Das recalled in shock how he stepped out of his coach unaware that he had survived an accident involving three trains. At least 288 people were killed and more than 1,100 injured in the accident.

"I was at the very end of my train. Around 6.30 pm, we heard a very loud thud and then jerks which seemed like the emergency brakes. At that moment, we realised some accident had occurred and we had to disembark from the coach to be safe.

So when we were about to disembark from our coach and opened the doors, we saw that there were three other coaches that had derailed opposite our train on the other line," he said.

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CAPSULE

'INDIA INFRA ALONG LAC MATCHES UP WITH CHINA'

Pahalagam: India is matching up its infrastructure to China's projects at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and there is no need for concern, Border Roads Organisation (BRO) chief Lieutenant General Rajiv Chaudhry said on Saturday.

GOVT BANS 14 FIXED DOSE COMBO DRUGS

New Delhi: The Government has banned 14 fixed dose combination drugs including Nimesulide and Paracetamol dispersible tablets and Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Codeine syrup.

PUNJAB: OVER 14 KG HEROIN SEIZED, 2 HELD

Chandigarh: Security forces on Saturday recovered more than 14 kilograms of heroin in two separate operations in Amritsar and Fazilka districts of Punjab.

SC stays HC order to decide if rape victim is 'manglik'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court intervened on Saturday, issuing a stay order on a peculiar ruling by the Allahabad High Court which had instructed the head of the astrology department at Lucknow University to determine whether an alleged rape victim woman was 'manglik' (an astrological condition) or not.

Conducting a special session on Saturday, the apex court took suo motu cognisance of the matter and expressed its confusion regarding the need for an "astrology



report" during a bail application hearing.

The order by the High Court was issued on May 23 while considering the bail plea of the accused individual, who was alleged to have raped the woman after falsely promising to marry her.

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59 MPs write to German envoy for early return of baby Ariha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fifty-nine Members of Parliament from nineteen political parties have collectively written a letter to the German Ambassador, urging the early repatriation of baby Ariha Shah, who has been placed in forced foster care in Germany for over twenty months.

The German authorities took custody of Ariha Shah on September 23, 2021, when she was just seven months old, citing alleged harassment by her parents. Among the signatories of the letter are MPs Jaya Bachchan (SP), Hema Malini (BJP), Shashi Tharoor (Congress), Mahua Moitra (TMC), Dr. Farooq Abdullah (NC), Priyanka Chaturvedi (SS-Udhav), and others.

The letter, addressed to the German Ambassador Dr Phillip Ackerman, emphasises that while they respect German laws, as no criminal cases have

been filed against the parents, the child should be repatriated to India.

"Baby Ariha was taken away from her parents in September 2021 when she was seven months old. The German Child Services took custody of the baby after she had suffered an accident and was hospitalised," the letter states.

"An initial investigation was conducted into allegations of child sexual abuse, but it was found to be baseless, and no charges were filed against the parents. Following this, the child was placed in special child care and then moved to foster care.

"As Members of Parliament, we have a special responsibility for the welfare of our citizens. We request you to take all necessary steps to bring the child back to India," the letter, signed by Rajya Sabha MP Dr John Brittas on behalf of the other 58 MPs, asserts.

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India lost 1 tiger every alternate day this year

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

On an average, every alternate day one big cat has died in the country since January till May end. In the first five months, India has already lost 76 tigers against 56 last year during the same period.

These included 11 cubs and 25 female big cats. Besides natural deaths and territorial fights between the felines, officials in the Union Environment Ministry have attributed some mortalities to the harsh heat waves as well that the country is witnessing this time, stating that some felines could not cope with the dehydration.

An analysis of the data available from the website of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) shows that almost half of the deaths of the total tigers occurred inside the tiger habitat with as many being reported from the fringes or outside the tiger reserves.



Madhya Pradesh which is presently grappling with the death of imported Cheetahs and their cubs at the Kuno Palpur Sanctuary has topped the list of tiger mortalities at 22 big cats in the last five months.

Maharashtra reported 16 deaths while Uttarakhand has witnessed ten tiger deaths. Karnataka reported five deaths.

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Safe, comfortable journey right of every citizen: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Emphasising that every citizen has the right to a safe and comfortable journey, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said here on Saturday that it becomes the responsibility of the government to fulfil this right with utmost sincerity and honesty.

Yogi was speaking on the UPSRTC Foundation Day after flagging off 93 buses from various district headquarters to New Delhi along with seven BAS-6 buses from his official residence.

“Just a few months before India’s independence, Rajkiya Parivahan Sewa was started in Uttar Pradesh. On June 1, 1972, it became UPSRTC, the biggest unit serving in the transport sector of the state with the biggest population. It has completed its 50-year journey and it is continuously making strides,” Yogi said.

He also expressed grief on the tragic train crash in Balasore (Odisha) in which nearly 350 passengers died and over 900 injured.

“On behalf of the people of Uttar Pradesh, I offer my deepest condolences to people who have lost their near and dear ones in the unfortunate accident,” Yogi said. The CM also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured.

“Safe and comfortable journey is the right of every passenger and this is the responsibility of the government. Deaths due to accidents are very disturbing. If the figures deaths



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagging off new buses on UPSRTC Foundation Day on Saturday

Pioneer

caused in mishaps in UP in a year are collated, it will present a disturbing scene before us. The number of people who died in UP in the past one year will be more than the Covid death toll in the state in three years,” he pointed out.

He further stated that they fought a battle against the biggest pandemic under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“The world was overwhelmed and disorganised, but we still managed to bring down the casualties and save lives of people. It was because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership,” he said.

“In Uttar Pradesh, all the

programmes of the Central government were carried out in an effective manner. Free Covid tests, free treatment, door-to-door screening, and employment were provided to people,” he added.

Talking about road accidents, he said deaths are caused due to overspeeding, engineering faults in roads, and when traffic rules are not followed. “It is not only a warning for us but also a matter of concern. Awareness about the importance of following traffic rules should be spread to save lives,” the CM said, adding that the Central government and the Supreme Court have also expressed concern on the issue.

“UPSRTC needs to take forward its services and if required, private operators can also be roped in to extend the services to all the villages in the state,” he said.

“When the electric bus service was started in ten cities, it generated a great demand. Time has come for bus stations to be state of the art, and safe. Bus services should be in accordance with the demand of people. Private operators should also be incorporated so that every village gets a superior bus service. In this manner, we can also bring down deaths caused in bus accidents,” he added.

Bizman accused of fraud with connivance of bank manager

Lucknow (PNS): A city businessman accused a Ghaziabad-based businessman and a bank manager of committing fraud and criminal breach of trust in Ashiyana on Saturday.

As per the complainant, Akash Srivastava of Ashiyana (Sector M), he had supplied air conditioners to Sanjeev Kumar of Ghaziabad some time back, but did not get the payment of Rs 5.49 lakh. After several reminders through e-mails and phone calls, Sanjeev Kumar transferred Rs 5 lakh in the bank account of Akash but got the latter’s bank account restricted so that he could not withdraw the money.

“He later withdrew Rs 3 lakh from my savings account and Rs 2 lakh from my current bank account with the connivance of Central Bank of India’s manager Huma Shams as I did not get any message or notice from the bank,” he alleged.

The complainant further alleged that when he went to the bank, he was shooed away by the manager. “The bank manager shouted at me and behaved in a very impolite way,” he alleged. Police registered a case in this connection. “The complaint was given on May 26, and the police are working on the case,” a spokesman said.

MINOR GIRL RAPED

A 14-year-old girl was allegedly abducted and raped in a village in Ballia, police said on Saturday. The girl was allegedly abducted by 22-year-old Javed Khan alias Raja on May 25, they said. After he could not find her, the girl’s father on Friday filed a complaint against Khan, accusing him of kidnapping, SHO Rajesh Mishra said.

The same day police traced the girl, who in her testimony said Khan raped her and threatened to kill her, Mishra said. Javed Khan was arrested from Ghorhara village on Saturday morning and booked under several sections of IPC as well as under the POCSO Act, the SHO added.

Man falls in ‘sextortion trap’, loses ₹3 lakh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a case of cyberbullying and ‘sextortion’, a man was blackmailed by using an obscene video clip featuring him with a girl, who allegedly committed suicide later. He ended up losing about Rs 3 lakh in Mahanagar on Friday.

Police registered a case in this connection under Section 66 of IT Act and under Section 420 of the IPC.

As per reports, the victim got a video call on May 19 when he was in the toilet. As soon as he received the call, he found a naked girl on the other end and disconnected the call. After a while, he got a call from a man who introduced himself as the inspector of cyber crime cell in Dwarka, Delhi. “He told me that one Sanjay Singh, who runs a YouTube channel, had uploaded the video of me with the same girl,” the complainant said. He said when he talked to Sanjay, he was told that the latter had three videos of him with the girl and they would

THE VICTIM WAS TOLD THAT A YOUTUBER HAD UPLOADED AN OBSCENE VIDEO OF HIM WITH A GIRL. WHEN HE TALKED TO THE SAID YOUTUBER, HE WAS TOLD THAT THE LATTER HAD THREE MORE VIDEOS OF HIM WITH THE SAME GIRL BUT WOULD NOT BE UPLOADED IF HE DEPOSITED Rs 71,500 FOR EACH

not be uploaded if he deposited Rs 71,500 for each, as per a “government policy”.

“I was told that Rs 70,000 would be refunded and only Rs 1,500 as processing fee would be deducted,” the complainant said. He added he made the payment to avoid humiliation.

“Sanjay sent me a message stating that he has deleted all the videos. He also asked me to talk to the Dwarka cyber cell inspector and inform about the same. I talked to the inspector and was told that an officer of IG rank would put his signature on a file to close the case,” the complainant explained. However, he got a call from the said cyber cell inspector on May 22 and was

told that the girl seen in the video had committed suicide due to social disgrace and that the situation had changed all of a sudden.

“The inspector told me that the family members of the girl staged a demonstration. He sent me pictures showing people sitting around the corpse of the girl,” he added.

He was later told that the IG rank officer would not be handling the case any longer.

“The family of the girl is very poor and they are demanding Rs 5 lakh as compensation. They later agreed on Rs 2.5 lakh and I gave them Rs 1.5 lakh to settle the case,” he said. Police said they were hunting for the accused.



Prasad being distributed at a bhandara organised in Hazratganj on Saturday

Pioneer

Tigress found dead in Dudhwa buffer zone

PTI ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

The carcass of a two-year-old tigress was recovered from the buffer zone of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve here on Saturday, officials said.

Field director of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve B Prabhakar and deputy director of Dudhwa buffer zone Sundaresh along with veteri-

nary doctors visited the spot where the tigress was found dead.

Prabhakar told PTI that after the physical examination of the carcass, apprehensions of poisoning or poaching have been ruled out.

He said the big cat’s canines and claws were damaged and it also had some puncture wounds on the body

and near a paw. The tigress was unable to hunt or move properly which subsequently led to its death, the officer said.

Prabhakar said the tigress, around two years old, had barged into a hutment in Rampur Dhakeriya village in Mailani range in a very weak condition. When the rescue teams of the forest depart-

ment, in the presence of the villagers, attempted to drive it back into the forests, the big cat attacked their vehicle and took shelter in nearby bushes, where it was later found dead, he added. The carcass is being sent to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly for a postmortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of its death, the official said.

LU selects three ‘NEP Saarthis’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Dean of Students’ Welfare (DSW) office, Lucknow University, conducted a drive to select ‘NEP Saarthis’. Nomination were invited from all the HoDs and directors of departments and institutes.

‘NEP Saarthis’ are the student ambassadors for academic reforms in transforming higher education in India. With their help, the University Grants Commission (UGC) aims to foster an environment where students can engage meaningfully and are brought together as active participants to make effective use of NEP provisions. More than 40 students’ nominations were received and 33 of them participated in the interview and group discussion. The three selected and nominated NEP Saarthis for the session 2023-24 included Divyanshi Gupta (BSc, Sem IV), Priyanshi Rai (BTech CSE) and Ashutosh Bajpai (MA, Political Science).

It may be noted that being the first university in the country to implement NEP at

UG and PG levels, LU has implemented NEP in all its academic curriculum.

“It is a crucial reform that aims to transform the education system in India focusing on qualities, equity and access because the UGC recognises the central role that students can play in this transformation process, as they are a pivotal part of the education system. Transforming the higher education system requires a collective participation and commitment from all key stakeholders such as vice-chancellors/directors, principals of universities, institutions and colleges, faculties, staff, and students,” the LU spokesperson said.

He added that LU, under guidance of Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai, took the first initiative to look into the matter and nominate ‘NEP Saarthis’, with the goal of enhancing students’ participation and creating awareness around various reforms in the higher education system as outlined in NEP, in coherence with the UGC’s announcement of a new initiative.

‘India self-reliant in vax development’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

National Botanical Research Institute and Manju Seth Foundation for Advanced Research & Training jointly organised a lecture on Saturday. The programme was organised to commemorate 14th Foundation Day of Manju Seth Foundation.

Former Director-General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi, and current chief of Cardiothoracic Centre (AIIMS, New Delhi) Prof Balram Bhargava was the chief guest on the occasion. He

delivered a lecture on ‘India’s fight against Covid19’. CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) director Dr AK Shasany and BCIL (New Delhi) & former director of CSIR-CDRI Dr VP Kamboj were the guests of honour.

Prof Bhargava recalled that during the Covid pandemic, India developed self-reliance in almost every field. “We had established approximately 3,000 Covid testing centres within three months. Outstanding research works of our scientists and doctors during the pandemic made us self-dependent in vaccine development. India is a lead-

ing market for pharmacy in the world. Indigenous vaccines developed by Indian Scientist are now being exported to more than 100 countries,” he added.

Prof Bhargava also highlighted the genesis of coronavirus in his lecture.

Earlier, trustee of the Foundation and senior scientist at National Brain Research Centre (Manesar) Dr Pankaj Seth said that Manu Seth Foundation organises an invited lecture from an eminent personality of science and technology on its foundation day every year. He also remembered the contribution

of late Prof PK Singh in research and development.

Trustee Dr Ranjana Seth highlighted the objectives of Manju Seth Foundation for Advanced Research & Training. She said it is also providing assistance to young talents in higher education. “We felicitate the topper of MSc (Biotechnology) at Lucknow University with a gold medal and a cash prize every year. This year, Anugya Rajput has been awarded the medal,” she said.

In his presidential address, Dr VP Kamboj appreciated the efforts of general public in fighting Covid-19.

Chance for AKTU students to learn ‘Python’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) has brought a golden opportunity for students of BTech, MBA and MCA. The technical university will teach them computer programming language ‘Python’ in collaboration with an organisation.

During this one-month certificate course, experts will prepare the students as per the demand of multinational companies. This online course will be free for the students. Registration is required to participate in this. Students from more than 750

institutions affiliated to the university will participate in it. Under the directions of Vice-Chancellor Prof JP Pandey, this certificate course is being conducted by the department of training and placement for the students. The four-week course, under the leadership of Prof Arunima Verma, dean of the department, will begin online from June 6. The department is sending mails to the students to join the training programme on ‘Python programming with structures and algorithms’.

“Apart from BTech (CSE, IT, EE, EEE, EC, Mechanical, Civil and Chemical) engineering branch, MBA and MCA students

can participate in this online course. For this, the students have to register from June 2 to 6. The students can visit the university website,” the spokesperson said.

The students will be imparted training by industry and technical experts during the course of one month, so that the students can be prepared directly according to the demand of the industry.

During this, there will also be a session for the students in which they will be able to ask questions to the experts to clear their doubts. Preparation will also be done for placements in big companies like Meta, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google, etc.

ly introduced himself as Anand, established intimate relations with her on the promise of marrying her. SP (Rural) Rajkumar Aggarwal said the accused married the student in a temple and when she became pregnant he allegedly got her abortion done. The student then filed a case in Devarnari police station in which she alleged that a young man initiated a love affair with her by hiding his identity. He then pressured her to convert.

Principal secretary asks CMOs to monitor health, wellness centres

Lucknow (PNS): Principal Secretary, Health, Partha Sarthi Sensharma has written to all the CMOs across the state to carry out monitoring of those health and wellness centres in their respective districts whose performance is not up to the mark.

In a letter to the CMOs, the principal secretary has stated that since Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre is the priority of the government,

the CMOs should list these centres in their respective districts.

“To achieve the aims and carry out intense supervision, it is important that all the programmes being carried out at these centres are reviewed and those centres are selected where the performance is below par. Regular supervision should be carried out, talks be held with community health officers and

solutions to problems be provided quickly,” he said.

The principal secretary also said that within a week after receiving the checklist, it should be filled and then a scanned copy forwarded through e-mail. The checklist puts forth questions on the availability of CHOs, ANMs, running water, functional toilets, OPD services, and diagnostic services.

1 held for hiding identity to befriend woman

Bareilly (PTI): A man has been arrested for allegedly hiding his identity to befriend woman, police said.

According to a complaint filed by a 24-year-old woman, a man named Abid, who had initially introduced himself as Ankit, befriended her and established physical relations on the promise of marriage. Later, he started blackmailing her for marrying him by threatening to upload her private videos on the Internet, she claimed, adding that in the following days, she

was forcibly converted, forced meat and compelled to establish illicit relations with the man’s father. The complainant further alleged to have been beaten up and imprisoned by the youth’s family members. City SP Rahul Bhati said a case has been registered under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act along with other sections.

In another case, a 20-year-old student alleged that a man named Aalim, who had initial-

ly introduced himself as Anand, established intimate relations with her on the promise of marrying her. SP (Rural) Rajkumar Aggarwal said the accused married the student in a temple and when she became pregnant he allegedly got her abortion done. The student then filed a case in Devarnari police station in which she alleged that a young man initiated a love affair with her by hiding his identity. He then pressured her to convert.

Govt to beautify and develop temples before Mahakumbh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an attempt to make Mahakumbh-2025 a memorable event, the Yogi Adityanath government has proposed to beautify and develop various temples by completing 47 permanent and temporary works in Prayagraj region. “Before the Mahakumbh-2025, Prayagraj will also see the development of many tourist attractions. With Rs. 1,542.71 lakh, the Bhardwaj Ashram’s entrance gate, corridor development and beautification will be completed,” a government spokesman said.

In view of tourism development, it is proposed to spend Rs 1,356.81 lakh for Dwadash Madhav temple, Rs. 523.53 lakh for Naag Vasuki temple, Rs. 283.08 lakh for Dashashwamedh temple, Rs. 667.57 lakh for Mankameshwar temple, Rs. 700 lakh for Alop Sankari temple, Rs. 1,000 lakh for Padila Mahadev temple, Rs. 500 lakh for temples coming under Panchkosi Parikrama Path, Rs 150 lakh for Koteswar Mahadev, Rs 100 lakh for development of Kalyani Devi temple.

Additionally, temples coming under Karchhana area will also be developed with Rs. 460.17 lakh. Many works,



including corridor development in Akshayavat/Saraswati Koop/Patalpuri temple will be done with Rs 1,850 lakh.

Prior to Mahakumbh-2025, there will be more than 10 facade-related works which are likely to cost more than Rs. 18 crore. Several temples, educational institutions, and other places of worship will also undergo renovations while respecting their significance.

The facade lighting works are proposed at various locations, including the Bade Hanuman Ji temple located at Sangam, costing Rs 1.04 crore, at the Vimana Mandapam temple costing Rs 2 crore, at the

Nagvasuki temple, the Shaktipeeth Alop Devi temple, and the Hanuman temple located at Civil Lines, costing Rs 1.5-1.5 crore each.

The hanging light work from the old Naini bridge to the DPS School in the Arail area is estimated to cost Rs. 5 crore. Additionally, there is a proposed facade lighting work costing Rs. 1.5 crore at the science faculty tower of Allahabad University, at the public library situated in the Chandra Shekhar Azad Garden, and at the Mohall Sports Complex and Shringi Rishi Ashram in Shringaverapur Dham, each costing one crore rupees.

Gharaunis for more than 90K villages to be prepared by Dec

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government of Uttar Pradesh has set a target of preparing gharaunis for more than 90,000 villages by December this year. For this, the goal is to get an error-free map from the Survey of India by July 31 and complete on-the-spot testing by August 31.

A detailed description of its action plan and the target has been placed before the chief secretary. The Yogi government has finished survey of 90,894 villages with drones so far, and the Survey of India has maps of about 73,000 villages. About 57 lakh gharaunis have been prepared.

It is a significant accomplishment that, of these, approximately 55.15 lakh gharaunis have been distributed as

of April 24, 2023.

The districts of Bundelkhand are at the top of the list of the top 10 districts under the SVAMITVA Yojana’s overall work. Lalitpur (99.944 per cent), Jalaun (99.657 per cent), and Jhansi (99.056 per cent) are in the top three, while Mahoba (98.701 per cent) is in the fifth position. Moradabad (99.037 per cent) is in fourth place. Baghpat (98.375 per cent), Sambhal (97.474 per cent), Hamirpur (97.328 per cent), Shamli (97.044 per cent) and Kasganj (97.008 per cent) are ranked sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, respectively.

On April 24, Prime Minister Narendra Modi digitally distributed 20,98,926 gharaunis of Uttar Pradesh on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day.

5 districts get new DMs

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government has changed the district magistrates of five districts – Pratapgarh, Deoria, Baghpat, Shravasti and Auraiya. Special Secretary (Home) Akhand Pratap Singh will be the new DM of Deoria in place of Jitendra Pratap Singh, who goes as the DM of Baghpat in place of Rajkamal Yadav, who goes to Kanpur as Additional Director, Industries. DM of Shravasti, Neha Prakash, has been shifted as DM of Auraiya in place of Prakash Chandra Srivastava, who goes as DM of Pratapgarh. Kritika has been posted as DM of Shravasti.

UP all set to be flag-bearer of ‘White Revolution’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh aims to become an exemplary model in the context of White Revolution, whose foundation will be the Mission Million Sexed Artificial Insemination – a technique in which the offspring from artificial insemination will predominantly be female calves, with a probability of up to 90 per cent.

“The technique will lead to an increase in milk production and provide a permanent solution to the issue of unproduc-

tive cattle,” a government spokesman said here on Saturday.

He said there would be several benefits of this technique in the future as it would involve the selection of healthy animals only for artificial insemination, and the complete genealogy of the bull whose semen is used for artificial insemination will also be known.

According to Dr Rakesh Kumar Shukla, state president of Uttar Pradesh Veterinary Service Association, the dairy sector is an area of great poten-

tial in terms of employment at the local level and development of the country.

He said, “The current value of this sector is approximately \$124.93 billion, and it is estimated to reach \$227.53 billion by 2030. Thus, the dairy sector is a vast field with extensive possibilities in terms of employment and economic contributions.”

According to Dr BK Singh of Uttar Pradesh Animal Husbandry Development Council in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh is the highest milk-

producing state with the largest population. Increasing awareness about health and improved economic conditions will further enhance these opportunities, he added.

He believes that through quality healthcare and breeding practices, Uttar Pradesh can become a flag-bearer of the White Revolution not only in the country but also globally. Consequently, this sector has the potential to generate more employment opportunities and contribute significantly to the state and national economy.

According to Dr Sanjeev Srivastava of the Central Animal Breeding Institute, the weight of sperm in male animals varies based on their activity level.

Some active sperms are heavier than others. Through the spermatozoa technique, active spermatozoa are separated based on their weight. Afterwards, when they are placed on a special machine, the active sperms for X and Y chromosomes become separated. They are preserved separately using the frozen semen

technique. With the help of this technique, it is possible to selectively produce offspring through artificial insemination.

In traditional artificial insemination or natural reproduction, the ratio of male to female offspring is 50:50. With this new technique, only female offspring will be produced, and the likelihood of this exceeds 90 per cent. By using this technique, it will be possible to increase the number of females and double the milk production in a few years.

Maya condoles loss of lives in Odisha train accident, seeks high-level inquiry

Lucknow (PTI): BSP chief Mayawati on Saturday expressed sorrow at the loss of life in the train accident in Odisha and sought a time-bound high-level inquiry into the cause.

Three trains derailed one on top of another in a horrific sequence, killing at least 238 people and injuring more than 900 in Odisha’s Balasore district on Friday.

In a tweet in Hindi, Mayawati expressed sadness at the loss of lives and hoped that the victims’ kin would find the strength to overcome the sorrow.

“The Centre should take this horrific accident very seriously and conduct an immediate, high-level, time-bound inquiry into it and provide appropriate financial assistance to the families of all the deceased and arrange better treatment for the injured persons. This is the demand of the BSP,” she said in another tweet. Officials in Bhubaneswar said 200



ambulances, 50 buses and 45 mobile health units, besides 1,200 personnel, are working at the accident site. The bodies are being taken to the hospitals in all kinds of vehicles, including tractors.

“The death toll in the Balasore train accident has risen to 238,” Odisha Chief Secretary PK Jena told reporters at the state secretariat in Bhubaneswar.

A failure of Rly mgmt system: RLD

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rashtriya Lok Dal state president Ramashish Rai expressed his condolences to the kin of the people who died in the train accident in Balasore, Odisha, and said the train accident was a great failure of the railway management system of the Central government.

“The collision of Coromandel Express, Yesvantpur- Howrah Express and goods train is the biggest evidence of railway mismanagement. The National Disaster Response Force team had to carry out the rescue operation in the dark of night with mobile

torches, which shows that the Railways showed negligence/lacked resources in arranging lights from anywhere in the vicinity,” he pointed out.

Rai said that in the country where the prime minister had shown the dream of bullet trains to the people, the low standard of the railway system was a matter of grave concern.

The RLD state president said that the Railway minister should resign taking moral responsibility of the accident which claimed at least 233 lives and left more than 900 injured. He said the Central government should announce a compensation of Rs 50 lakh each

to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 5 lakh each to the injured.

“Along with this, special attention should be paid to railway safety cover so that such incidents can be stopped in future,” he said.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) also expressed condolences to the families of those killed in the train accident.

The party said the train accident in Odisha had exposed the claims of Railways on passenger safety.

“The priority of the government is Vande Bharat and Bullet Train, not the safety of the passengers,” the party said.

Home dept issues comprehensive guidelines to improve investigation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Home department has recently issued a comprehensive set of guidelines to improve the investigation process, ensure timely disposal of cases, and enhance supervision.

These guidelines, outlined by Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad, emphasise the importance of gathering crucial evidence, maintaining detailed records, and utilising modern technology to strengthen the prosecution’s case.

One of the key instructions outlined in the 15-point guideline is the compulsory collection of DNA and fingerprint samples during post-mortem examinations. “This step aims to bolster the accuracy of forensic analysis and facilitate the identification of perpetrators,” a government spokesman said.

Furthermore, the Home department has mandated the inclusion of colour photographs highlighting the injuries sustained by the deceased in the case diary. This measure seeks to provide irrefutable evidence that can significantly contribute to the conviction of the accused. To improve efficiency and legitimacy, the Home department has also directed that autopsy reports should be

typed instead of handwritten. “This change is expected to enhance clarity and minimise the chances of misinterpretation or errors in understanding critical forensic findings,” the official said.

In cases involving gunshot wounds, a significant modification has been introduced to the investigation process. Instead of taking X-ray of the entire body of the deceased, the guidelines stipulate that X-ray should be taken exclusively of the specific organ affected by the bullet. This targeted approach will streamline the examination process and ensure that crucial details are not overlooked.

Recognising the importance of witness’ statements, the Home department has emphasised the need for capturing testimonies using modern audio, video, and electronic recording methods. These recordings are to be included in the case diary, providing a comprehensive record of the witness’ account. Additionally, this evidence must be submitted to the court during the filing of the charge sheet or final report, strengthening the prosecution’s case and establishing credibility.

“Respecting the privacy and well-being of victims, the guidelines state that the identification of the victims in cases involving sexual and child crimes should not be made public. This measure aligns with the directions given by the Supreme Court, which aims to safeguard the dignity and security of the victims,” the spokesman said.

The Home department’s guidelines also underscore the need for timely and high-quality investigation of criminal cases at the district level. To achieve this objective, each district will establish a legal cell headed by the joint director of prosecution. These cells will be responsible for providing specialised training to investigators and prosecutors, enabling them to enhance their skills and stay updated with the latest developments in the field of law enforcement.

“These new guidelines from the Home department reflect a commitment to improving the investigation process, ensuring justice for victims, and strengthening the overall criminal justice system. By emphasising the collection of essential evidence, maintaining detailed records, and employing modern technologies, law enforcement agencies aim to enhance their ability to prosecute offenders and deliver timely justice to the citizens,” the official said.

Power supply set to improve

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The power supply position is set to improve in Uttar Pradesh as the refurbished 660 MW thermal unit of Obra thermal power station is likely to be commissioned by the end of this month.

The Yogi Adityanath government has drawn a timeline to operationalise key coal-fired thermal power projects to augment the power supply in the state.

Power cuts are common problems in many states in India, and Uttar Pradesh faces huge power cuts during summer. To ensure that power supply is not interrupted during the summer, the Uttar Pradesh government has directed the UP Power Corporation Limited to ensure supply as per schedule to all categories of consumers during summers.

The Obra refurbishment project was initiated during the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party regime in 2011. The work on other thermal power projects –the Jawaharpur and Ghatampur – started during the previous Akhilesh Yadav regime between 2015 and 2016. Jawaharpur super thermal power stations are set to be made operational by the end of June to augment the power supply in UP.

Sources in UPPCL said the 660 MW unit in Ghatampur was likely to be commissioned

by the end of September this year. The 1,980 MW project, situated in Kanpur, is a joint venture of Neyveli Lignite Corporation (51 per cent) and UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL) (49 per cent).

The sources said plans were underway to commission the 660 MW units in Panki (Kanpur) by March next year. Significantly, this would also be the time when the Lok Sabha elections would be around the corner.

The 1,320 MW Jawaharpur thermal power stations are situated in Malawan village of Etah. The plant is wholly owned by UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL). Likewise, the 1,320 MW Obra power plant, situated in Sonbhadra around 125 km from Varanasi, is wholly owned by UPRVUNL.

The upcoming projects could help the UPPCL to tide over the steep rise in power demand during the peak of summer. The state government’s move to get more and more villages electrified has further raised the demand for power.

Officials said that the demand for power in the summer was expected to touch the 28,000 MW mark, a rise of around 3,000 MW over the previous year. At present, the demand for power has already touched a figure of over 27,000 MW.

Book Subrat Pathak under NSA: AKY



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has demanded the arrest of Bharatiya Janata Party parliamentarian from Kannauj, Subrat Pathak, and invocation of National Security Act against him for manhandling the police personnel of a police outpost in the district.

Akhilesh Yadav alleged that there was no let-up in crime in the state and the criminals had a free run in UP.

Akhilesh Yadav said here on Saturday that the BJP MP from Kannauj, Subrat Pathak, along with his supporters raided a police outpost and assaulted the policemen.

Yadav said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had so far not responded to the incident in Kannauj.

He said the government appeared to be helpless and

reluctant to act against criminals.

Condemning the incident, the SP chief said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath owed an explanation to the people as to when the BJP MP would be detained under NSA.

He said the chief minister should also tell the people when the bulldozer would be deployed to demolish the buildings owned by the BJP MP in Kannauj.

The SP chief said that law and order had collapsed in the state and the BJP leaders were flouting rules and laws with impunity.

He said the BJP leaders were openly flouting the rule of law and indulging in anti-social and criminal activities.

The SP chief charged that the BJP leaders indulging in unlawful activities were being patronised by the top leaders of the ruling party.

‘Was under ‘pressure’ not to deliver Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case verdict’

Meerut (PTI): Justice (retired) Sudhir Agarwal, who was part of an Allahabad High Court bench which delivered a key judgment in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit in 2010, said he was under “pressure” not to give the ruling and added that had they not done so, there would not have been any verdict in the matter for the next 200 years.

Justice Agarwal retired from the high court on April 23, 2020.

Talking to reporters after an event in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, he said, “After delivering the judgment..., I felt

blessed.... There was pressure on me to postpone the judgment in the case. There was pressure from within home and also from outside.”

“Family members and relatives used to suggest to somehow pass time and not deliver the judgment,” he added.

“Had the judgment not been delivered on September 30, 2010 in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, there would not have been any judgement in this matter for the next 200 years,” he said. On September 30, 2010, the Allahabad High Court pronounced its judge-

ment with majority decision of 2:1 and held that the 2.77 acres land located in Ayodhya would be divided equally among three parties – Sunni Waqf Board, Nirmohi Akhara and ‘Ram Lalla’ or infant Ram represented by the Hindu Mahasabha.

The bench comprised Justices S U Khan, Sudhir Agarwal and D V Sharma.

In a landmark judgment in November 2019, the Supreme Court said a temple would be built at the disputed land in Ayodhya and ordered the government to give Muslim parties an alternative five-acre plot.

90-yr-old UP man gets life term

Firozabad (PTI): A local court here has sentenced a 90-year-old man to life imprisonment in a murder case of 10 Dalits that had taken place 42 years ago, the district government counsel said on Saturday.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 55,000 on Ganga Dayal, who is the only surviving accused in the case. The incident took place in 1981 in Shikohabad in the then Mainpuri district. It now comes under the Makhanpur area of Firozabad district, established in 1989.

District government counsel Rajeev Upadhyay said, in December 1981, 10 Dalits were shot dead in Sadhupur village under Shikohabad.

“Police had registered a case in this regard, and a charge sheet was filed against the 10 accused persons in a court in Mainpuri,” he said.

“On October 1, 2021, the matter was transferred to the court of district judge of Firozabad Harveer Singh (since Sadhupur came under the

Makhanpur police station area),” Upadhyay said. Of the 10 accused, nine died during the trial, he said.

“Only 90-year-old Ganga Dayal is alive, who was held guilty by the court of District Judge Harveer Singh on Thursday, and sentenced to life imprisonment. A fine of Rs 55,000 was also imposed on him. In case of non-payment of the fine amount, he would have to spend an additional 13 months in jail,” Upadhyay said.

MAN, PARENTS AWARDED JAIL TERM

BALLIA: A court here on Saturday sentenced a man to five-year imprisonment for harassing his wife for dowry and marrying her by claiming to be a doctor.

Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Shambhavi Yadav also sentenced Sunil Kumar Verma’s parents — Shankar Verma and Radhika — to three years in jail in the case, the petitioner’s counsel Tribhuvan Nath Yadav said.

बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया
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POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorized Officer of **BANK OF INDIA** under the Securitization 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 3 of the security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 Issued calling upon the borrower to repay the amount as mentioned in the notice below within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the borrower/ Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security interest Enforcement Rules, 2002

The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of **BANK OF INDIA**, for an amount mentioned below along with interest and other charges incurred thereon.

The borrower's attentions is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr.No.	Name of Borrower & Legal Heirs & Branch	Description of Mortgaged Property	Outstanding Amount	Details of Previous Notices
1.	Name of Account : M/S Ajay Garment, Proprietor: Mr. Ankur Kapoor S/o Mr. Ajay Kapoor (Borrowers), Guarantor: Mr. Abhinav Kapoor S/o Mr. Ajay Kapoor. BRANCH: ALLAHABAD CITY	Residential property situated at House no. 35/40, Rani Mandi, Sadar, Allahabad. Area- 25.92 sq.mts. Name of the Mortgagor - Mr. Ankur Kapoor S/o Mr. Ajay Kapoor and Mr. Abhinav Kapoor S/o Mr. Ajay Kapoor. Boundaries : NORTH- House of Kailash Nath Tandon, SOUTH- Govt. Lane, EAST- House of Roop Rani Kapoor, WEST- House of Dilip Purwar	Rs. 15,21,490.65 +interest & others Misc/Legal Expenses	Date of Demand Notice: 13/10/2021 Date of Possession Notice: 01/06/2023 Type of Possession: Symbolic
2.	Name of Account : M/S Amita Kesharwani, Proprietor: Mrs. Amita Kesharwani W/o Mr. Shiv Raj Kesharwani (Borrowers), Guarantor: Mr. Shivraj Kesharwani S/o Mr. Panna Lal Kesharwani BRANCH: ALLAHABAD CITY	Shop No. 6 (Basement), Part of House No. 14/18 (Old) & 18/14/B-4 (New), Meeraganj, Allahabad, Area- 7.53 sq.mtr. Name of the Mortgagor - Mrs. Amita Kesharwani w/o Mr. Shivraj Kesharwani Boundaries : NORTH- Shop in name of Farukh Readymade Garments, SOUTH- Common Passage, EAST-Shop of Amit Collection, WEST-Shop of Krishna Tulsi Garments	Rs. 8,24,953.51 +interest & others Misc/Legal Expenses	Date of Demand Notice: 19/07/2022 Date of Possession Notice: 01/06/2023 Type of Possession: Symbolic
3.	Name of Account : M/S Saroj Graphics, Proprietor: Mr. Indrajeet Singh S/o Mr. Kishan Singh (Borrowers), Guarantor: Mrs. Saroj Jaiswal W/o Mr. Indrajeet Singh BRANCH: ALLAHABAD CITY	Land and Building situated at Part Portion House No. 332/7 New (521), New Nagar Nigam House No. 521/332/7 Muthiganj, Allahabad, Area- 16.90 sq.mtr., Name of the Mortgagor - Mrs. Saroj Jaiswal W/o Mr. Indrajeet Singh Boundaries : EAST- House of Urmila Devi Kesarwani, WEST- House of Ram Dulare Jaiswal, NORTH- House of Urmila Devi Kesarwani, SOUTH- Road	Rs. 29,75,866.28 +interest & others Misc/Legal Expenses	Date of Demand Notice: 02/12/2022 Date of Possession Notice: 01/06/2023 Type of Possession: Symbolic
4.	Name of Account : Mr. Suresh Kumar Kesarwani S/o Mr. Munna Lal and Mrs. Sweta Kesharwani W/o Mr. Suresh Kumar Kesarwani (Borrowers) Guarantor: Mr. Arvind Kumar Kesarwani S/o Mr. Ashok Kumar Kesarwani BRANCH: ALLAHABAD CITY	Residential property situated at House No. 252/22A, Nai Basti, Handa Puram Colony, Kydganj, Allahabad, Area- 30.21 sq.mtr., Name of the Mortgagor - Mrs. Sweta Kesarwani w/o Mr. Suresh Kumar Kesarwani Boundaries : NORTH- Apartment, SOUTH- Road, EAST- Plot of Baccha Yadav, WEST- House of Vijay Jaiswal	Rs. 10,04,235.81 +interest & others Misc/Legal Expenses	Date of Demand Notice: 19/07/2022 Date of Possession Notice: 01/06/2023 Type of Possession: Symbolic
DATE : 04.06.2023		Place : Varanasi	Authorised Officer, Bank of India	

Give Ganga ghats works to experienced agencies: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday expressed annoyance over the decision to give the works on Ganga ghats to the UPPCL and directed the concerned authority to give the works only to such implementing agencies which have such jobs and could endure the supply of manpower. The CM also expressed displeasure over the poor quality of ITI constructed in Pindra and directed the DM S Rajalingam to ascertain action against the guilty person by conducting an inquiry into the matter. He also emphasised on paying special attention to urban naxalites. He also had a darshan and performed pujaan at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir and Kal Bhairav Mandir.

Reviewing the ongoing development works in the city and law & order situation, the CM Adityanath expressed annoyance over the works on ghats given to the UPPCL and directed the concerned authority to assign the works only to such agencies which have such jobs and could also ensure the



CM Yogi Adityanath reviewing the development works and law & order situation at Circuit House here on Saturday.

supply of manpower. He directed the Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, who was present in the meeting, to take action immediately to address the problem of overloading.

On the complaint of poor quality of ITI constructed in Pindra lodged by the local MLA Dr Awadhesh Singh, the CM directed the DM to ascertain action against the guilty person by conducting an inquiry into the matter. He directed to ensure a smooth traffic flow in the city in view of the meeting of the G-20. The CM directed the concerned officers to give compensation to the farmers affected with Transport City Yojana at the

current rate.

Special attention should be paid to the urban naxalites by the district administration, the CM directed and added that the administration should also ensure that no mafia could succeed in taking contracts of any work.

The CM directed for installing more CCTV cameras in the city by holding talks with the business establishments and also linked them with the control room to check the illegal taxi stand and illegal realisation.

Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma informed that a total of 61 projects are being run in the city which cost

about Rs 10,305 crore. The CM took a stock of the preparations for the proposed meeting of G-20 and the DM gave detailed information about the preparation of the delegates of the countries of G-20. The Commissioner of Police Mutha Ashok Jain gave detailed information to maintain the law & order situation. The Minister Ravindra Jaiswal and local public representatives were also present in the meeting besides the administrative and police officers and the officers of various departments.

After the meeting the CM busted the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir and Kal Bhairav Mandir to worship.

Wholesale fish market being developed in Chandauli

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of Fisheries Dr Sanjay Kumar Nishad on Saturday informed that a state-of-art wholesale fish market (New Mandi Parishad) is being developed in Chandauli district which would promote the export of fish and also generate employment in this eastern belt of the state.

Talking to the newsmen at Circuit House here, the Minister Dr Nishad informed that with an aim to promote the export and import of fish, increase the income of fishermen, generate employment, etc, the wholesale fish market (New Mandi Parishad) is being developed in Chandauli district

under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana with a cost of Rs 61.87 crore and added that modern 111 shops of various categories, administrative building and multipurpose infrastructures are being constructed under wholesale building, retail building, experience centre, etc in the market. Everything relating to fish such as wholesale/ retail trade of fish, outlet for fish seed, establishment of processing unit, availability of necessary inputs for the production of fish, etc will be available under one roof, he informed, adding that the fishermen would get reasonable price of fish products, the employment would be generated and fish export would be

prompted to other states after the completion of the market. The construction work of the market will be completed by July 18 next year, he informed and added that about 1500 persons would get direct and undirected employment from the market. There will be trade of about 75000 metric ton fish annually after the market starts functioning in its full capacity, he informed further.

The fishery has a 22 per cent contribution to GDP growth of the country whereas agriculture contributed only 3.1 per cent, the Minister informed, adding that the employment is being provided besides enhancing the revenue

in the field of fisheries through various schemes, he said and added that India stands second in the world in the field of fish production.

The central government as well as state government are regularly taking initiatives in the interest of fishermen and a demand of Rs 1,000 crore has been demanded from the government at Centre for the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.

He blamed the previous Non-BJP governments in the state for using the fishermen as vote banks and did nothing for their progress and interest. Dr Nishad paid his tribute to those who lost their lives in rail mishap in Odisha.

New DC spells out his priorities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

New Divisional Commissioner Dr Lokesh M, after assuming charge late Friday night, described his priorities. Talking to mediapersons, he said quality and quick treatment would be provided to poor people at the CHCs, PHCs and health centres. He

said children hesitating in going to school would be provided quality education. Among others, his priorities included the clean and beautiful city while encroachments on the banks of Ganga would also be removed on priority. He said the ongoing work under the Smart City project would be geared up. For launching any

new project, survey would be conducted among the people and based on their suggestions, the work would be completed. New projects for the development of the city would be approved on the basis of the sanctioned budget and the works done under the Smart City project. He said strict penal action would be initiated against people involved in illegal digging of the road. All the departments will have to work in coordination with each other and laxity on this part would not be tolerated. Prior to construction of road, all the departments would be asked to submit details of proposed projects to be carried out by them. He said the ongoing developmental works in the division would be reviewed periodically. Monthly monitoring would be carried out to ensure timely completion of the project. All the big projects of the central and state government would be inspected and completed before the parlia-

ment elections.

Dr Lokesh M is an IAS of 2005 batch, a native of Karnataka. After completing training in Aligarh, he started work as joint magistrate in Saharanpur.

Thereafter, he had been the chief development officer of Prayagraj and district magistrate in Kaushambi, Amroha, Ghazipur, Etah, Kushinagar and Mainpuri. On the interstate deputation, he served in Karnataka for five years. Presently, he was the commissioner of Saharanpur.

On the increasing incidents of road mishap in all the districts of the Kanpur division, he said these would be reviewed monthly. Black spots would be identified and removed in consultation with the officials of police, RTO, NHAI and PWD. Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar proceeded for Lucknow to assume charge of Secretary (Agriculture) on Monday.

PRIEST HELD FOR MOLESTING GIRL: An 80-year old temple priest was caught red-handed molesting a seven-year old girl under Barra police station on Saturday afternoon. He was caught red-handed by the father of the victim girl who, after brutally beating him up, handedover to police.

Meanwhile, a car suddenly caught fire on Jainmaw Ganga bridge under Gangaghat police station of Unnao late Friday night. All the four persons, riding on the car, saved themselves from jumping off the burning vehicle.

All were going to Gonda from Gujarat. Israr of Gonda said his brother-in-law Ishtiyag had a unit of sofa manufacturing in Godhra (Gujarat).

He along with Ishtiyag, Shadab and Salman was going to his ancestral village Babhan, Kodhare, Distt. Gonda on car. On the Ganga bridge, the car suddenly caught fire. Police got the damaged car removed from the spot with the help of a crane.

Tourism dept announces dates of opening of Mahakumbh-2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Tourism department in Prayagraj has announced the dates of opening of Mahakumbh-2025 and 'shahi snans' (royal baths) through hoardings although around two years are still left for the commencement of the mega religious event, organised every 12 years. This is in sharp departure from the past practice when the dates of commencement of Kumbh and 'shahi snans' were announced after a meeting of the Mela Authority, top seers of Akhara Parishad and Vidhwat Parishad comprising prominent Mahamandleshwars and seers apart from the district administration.

The announcement has created a buzz among seers and Akhara Parishad alike and left the stakeholders uncomfortable.

As per the information mentioned on the hoarding, Mahakumbh-2025 will be of 45 days, while all the three royal

baths will be held in 21 days only. Mahakumbh will start with Paush Purnima on January 13. The dates of the three 'shahi snans' are Makar Sankranti (January 14), Mauni Amavasya (January 29) and Basant Panchami (February 3). Other major bathing days are also announced, including Achala Saptami on February 4, Maghi Purnima on February 12 and the last bath of the festival, i.e., Mahashivratri on February 26.

However, the mela authorities maintain that the dates have been displayed after consultation with the seers and Akhara Parishad. Kumbh Mela Adhikari, Vijay Kiran Anand, said, "These dates have been announced in our publicity material after due consultation with the Parishad and prominent seers."

However, the saints' community is 'unhappy' with such 'one-sided' decisions of deciding the dates of Shahi Snan.

Talking to mediapersons, president of one of the factions

of Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), Mahant Ravindra Puri said, "This is against the set practices where representatives of all the 13 Akharas were called along with prominent seers by the mela authorities and then the dates were finalised and announced in their presence. This is unacceptable as many times there is confusion on the auspicious timing of the 'shahi snan' on a given festival and it is our community which has the right to decide the dates of shahi snan."

Likewise, chief patron of Juna Akhada and senior member of the ABAP, Mahant Hari Giri, said, "If the dates are to be announced only on the basis of 'Panchang' (Hindu astronomical booklet), then even a common man can decide and announce the dates of Shahi Snan for the next 1,200 years, what is the need for us. Let the mela authorities and the Tourism department announce what they wish, we saints are not accepting their dates

because it is 'one-sided' decision."

Head of Baghambari Gaddi Math, Mahant Balveer Giri, said, "This is disrespectful for the entire saints' community because when a religious event is planned, all the stakeholders should have been consulted."

"What was the hurry? Why were the saints not consulted by those who have done this?" said the head of the Math, who also heads the Lete Hanuman temple of the Sangam.

Head of TikarMafi Ashram, Jhunsli, Hari Chaitanya Bhramchari, said, "Deciding the dates of shahi snans for Mahakumbh is very important decision and is always announced with much fanfare by the Mela Authority in the presence of prominent seers after consulting the ABAP, the Vidhwat Parishad (comprising of prominent Mahamandleshwars and seers), representatives of Dandi Swami and Prayagwal Sabha, etc. This is against the religious practices and was uncalled for."

Woman accuses man of sexually assaulting her

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A woman living in Shahganj Aarea of Prayagraj has accused a young man of sexually assaulting her on the pretext of marriage. The victim alleged that man not only had a physical relationship with her on the pretext of marriage but on talking about marriage, her video was also made viral.

In this regard, the victim and her family lodged a complaint at the Shahganj police station. The relatives accused the police of not registering the case. After this, the victim has pleaded for justice from Police Commissioner Prayagraj, IG Prayagraj, DGP Uttar Pradesh and CM.

This case pertains to a village in Shahganj police station area. The victim alleged that the young man, a resident of Shahnoor Aliganj of Shahganj police station area, has ruined her life. The accused was misleading her for 6 consecutive

years on the pretext of marriage. He allegedly made physical relations with her for 6 years, now refusing to marry. The girl said that her family members went to the boy's house to talk about marriage then they started fighting.

The boy's family is also accused of demanding money. After this the marriage of the girl was fixed at another place. It is being told that the young man got angry on this. After this, he made the obscene photos and videos of the girl viral on social media. When the relatives went to the police station to complain about this, the police were accused of not taking action.

The victim has given a named written complaint against Irshad Ali alias Nate. At the same time, by sending a complaint letter to the Chief Minister and other officials, she has pleaded for justice.

ACP Kotwali Satyendra Tiwari said that the matter of

giving complaint letter of a victim has come to the notice. The SHO has been asked to investigate and take action by registering an FIR under relevant sections.

BOY WEIGHING 90 KG CROSSES YAMUNA IN JUST 10 MINUTES: A 15-year-old boy weighing 90 Kg successfully crossed Yamuna in just over 10 minutes making his mother and trainers proud.

When Vinayak Kapoor started swimming to cross 600m width to cross Yamuna, onlookers were uncertain whether the teenager with his enormous weight would be able to cross the river without any support. But, Vinayak proved all wrong by completing the task successfully.

A student of class 10 at Jawala Devi Inter college, Prayagraj under the guidance of his trainers, started swimming from Meerapur Sindu Sagar ghat (Kakraha ghat) at 6:20 am and crossed the river

(reached another side river bank) Vidhyapeeth Maheva ghat at 6:30: 20 am.

Master trainer Tribhuwan Nishad said that the since the first day, the high school boy despite being over-weight was determined to cross the river through his hard work. He started learning swimming about 12 days back. Nishad added that this was the first time when any over-weight teenager learned swimming and achieved his goal in just 12 days. Vinayak's mother Sheetal Kapoor was initially anxious and kept her fingers crossed but was elated when her son finished the task with an elan.

"I have no words to express my feeling. I thank God for the incredible achievement of my son," Sheetal said.

There are currently 150 children in all age groups undergoing training under the banner of Navjeevan Swimming Club.

Five people were involved in killing of retired soldier

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Five people were involved in the murder of retired soldier Dharmendra Kumar Singh (46) by hitting his head with a brick and stone in front of a friend in Dhoomanganj. This has been revealed in the investigation of the cameras installed on the routes leading to the spot. However, the youth could not be identified. However, doubts are being raised on the drug addict youths of Tadbagh, Garhwa.

However, even after 48 hours have passed, the killers are away from the grip of the police. On Friday, the police was engaged in identifying the accused through footage from morning till evening. SOG has also been pressed in the case. It may be noted that in the complaint given by Sushila, the wife of the deceased in this case, the number of murderers was mentioned as six. It was also told that the killers came on three bikes.

However, after examining the footage of CCTV cameras, it was found that five miscreants were involved in the incident. Out of these, two each were on two bikes while one was riding on one bike. Dhoomanganj police station in-charge Rajesh Kumar Maurya said that efforts are being made to identify the accused.

The friend of the deceased, Sohan Pal, who was present at the spot at the time of the incident, is also in police custody. Sohan, a resident of Neeva, is an eyewitness to the incident. The police continued to interrogate him on Saturday as well.

It may be pointed out here that he was taken into custody only after the incident. Police sources said that Sohan was drunk at the time of the incident.

Retired Army resident of Sikandra, Bahria, lived near Umarkot Neeva, Madhuban Bihar Colony, Dhoomanganj. On the night of May 31, he was

returning from Sulemasarai market after shopping. Friend Sohan Pal was also with him. Only then, after a dispute over touching the bike, five youths surrounded him at Abubakarpur intersection of Dhoomanganj and killed him by hitting his head with bricks and stones. Relative alleged that his cash-filled purse and gold chain were also looted.

YOUTH DIES IN MISHAP: In an incident, the son who was going to get the injured mother treated died in a road accident. When the news of this came to the hospitalised mother, she too died before the son's funeral could be held. A pall of gloom descended in the village due to the death of mother and son. The condition of the other person injured along with the son remains critical in the hospital.

Sitara Begum, a resident of Baraut town under Handia police station, had gone on a bike with her relative to see a

relative admitted in Handia hospital. While returning home from the hospital, she suffered serious injuries in an accident at Basupur crossing near Handia market. Along with this, the hand also got fractured. She was taken to Gopiganj in Bhadohi for treatment. Son Sajid (25) was going to Gopiganj with his friend Aftab to get his mother treated on a bike after receiving information about his mother's injury. He collided with the truck while trying to save the person who came in front of the vehicle near Rajput Dhaba near Gopiganj. In a hurry, he was being taken to SRN Hospital for treatment that he died on the way. His partner Aftab is seriously injured. When mother Sitara Begum, admitted to the hospital, got the news of her son's death, she also died of shock. Within a few hours, mourning has engulfed the entire village including the family due to the death of mother and son.

Two killed in road mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two bike-borne brothers were killed in a road mishap in Auraiya on Friday. In a bid to save a bull, their uncontrolled bike hit the road-side electricity pole and caused them serious injury. Villagers informed the police which, after identifying the youths, informed their kin. Pawan (20) son of late Rakesh of Ayana Road, Muradganj, along with cousin Harsh Deep (18) son of Shambhu Nath of Siholi Ayana was pursuing studies in Auraiya. As the date of hearing of Pawan's uncle was fixed for

Friday in Allahabad High Court, he along with Harsh Deep had gone to drop his uncle at the Phaphund railway station on bike to make him catch the Sangam Express.

After departure of the uncle, when both were returning to Auraiya, a bull suddenly appeared before them on the road near Kanchausi turn. They immediately lost control over the bike which hit the electricity pole and caused them serious injury. After some time, both succumbed to their injury. Dibiyaapur SHO Rakesh Sharma confirmed the killing of two youths in the road mishap. It may be recalled that

Pawan's father had also died in the road mishap three years ago. Harsh Deep was the eldest among his two brothers.

KATIYAR INSPECTS DISTRICT JAIL: The joint committee of Woman and Child Development of UP Vidhan Mandal carried out a surprise inspection at the Kanpur District Jail here on Friday. Members found that there were inmates more than the double of the capacity lodged in the jail. During the scorching heat, they were facing a tough time. Committee members directed the officials to pay special attention on the food and other eatables served

to women and children. Headed by the MLA Neelima Katiyar, the committee members visited the jail around 10.30 am and questioned on the excess number of inmates in the barrack than the capacity. They informed to raise the issue at the state administration level to provide additional barracks for the women inmates. During one-and-a-half hours inspection, members talked to women inmates and adored their children lodged in the jail with them. The collected information about the situation of women barracks, care of their children, medical treatment, education and employment

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भिलाई (छ.ग.)

क्रमांक / परि.शा. / न.नि. / 2023 / 826 / 128

भिलाई, दिनांक 02 / 06 / 2023

E-Procurement Tender Notice

Main Portal : <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

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क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	सिस्टम नं.	निविदा लागत राशि	निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि
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निविदा हेतु आवश्यक दस्तावेज आनलाईन जमा की जाये। उक्त कार्य हेतु दी जाने वाली दरें आनलाईन (Online) दी जाये। उपरोक्त कार्य हेतु निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, चरोंहर शर्तें, विस्तृत निविदा विवरण, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी <https://cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

हस्ता / -
कार्यपालन अधिकारी

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(ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE LEGISLATURE ACT NO. 21 OF 1969)

Accredited "A++" with CGPA of 3.85 on four point scale (highest level) by NAAC and Conferred "University with Potential for Excellence" status by UGC

B.ED COMMON ENTRANCE TEST AND CENTRALISED COUNSELLING-2023 (STATE OF PUNJAB)

Joint B.Ed. Admissions - 2023 for Colleges of Education (Government, Government Aided, Private Self-Financed Colleges) affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala and situated in the State of Punjab will be done through Common Entrance Test to be conducted by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Those who aspire to take admission in these colleges may apply/ register online w.e.f **9th June, 2023** at <https://punjabbedadmissions.gndu.ac.in>. Registration on the admission portal is mandatory for all the students including Management Quota Seats.

The Notification in this regard has been issued by the Department of Higher Education, Government of Punjab which is uploaded on the website. The Colleges of Education which are notified by the Government are requested to submit duly filled and signed Mandatory proforma as pdf on email: pbbedadmissions2023gndu.ac.in and hard copy signed by Dean, College Development Council of the affiliating university to the Coordinator, B.Ed. Common Entrance Test & Centralized Counselling (2023-24), Room No. 1, Department of Education (Near UIT Building), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar latest by **19th June, 2023**. The students are requested to visit the admission portal regularly for updates on Prospectus, Subject Combinations availability in colleges, Counselling schedule etc.

Prof. (Dr.) Amit Kauts
Head Coordinator
Department of Education
Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar

NA/12/16829/2023/24678 Dated CHD :- 6/2/2023

ODISHA TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH

Express entered loop line, hit goods train: Probe

Signal goof-up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the Coromandel Express train involved in a horrific rail tragedy in Odisha on Friday entered the loop line and crashed into a goods train parked there instead of the main line just ahead of the Bahanagar Bazar station, a source said.

The coaches of Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express capsized after crashing into the coaches of Coromandel Express that had scattered on the adjacent track.

While Coromandel Express was at a speed of 128 kmph, Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express was running at a speed of 116 kmph. The report has been submitted to the Railway Board, sources said.

The loop lines of the Indian Railways are constructed in a station area -- in this case, the Bahanagar Bazar station -- to accommodate more trains to ease out the operations. The loop lines are generally 750 metres in length to accommodate full-length goods train with multiple engines.

The two trains were carrying around 2,000 passengers. At least 288 people have been killed in the accident and near-



ly 1,000 injured.

An eyewitness to the incident, Anubhav Das, also told PTI that local authorities and railway officials had initially indicated that the train he was travelling on -- Coromandel Express -- had rammed into the goods train.

However, none of these accounts was officially confirmed by the railways.

While a thorough probe is underway, none of the authorities has so far talked about any possibility of a sabotage.

The national transporter has initiated a high-level probe into the train crash in Odisha's Balasore, which will be headed by the commissioner of railway safety, South Eastern Circle, officials said.

The commissioner of rail-

way safety works under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and investigates all such accidents.

"A M Chowdhary, CRS, SE Circle, will inquire into the accident," a spokesperson of the Indian Railways said.

The national transporter has also said anti-train collision system "Kavach" was not available on the route.

The crash involved Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train.

"The rescue operation has been completed. Now, we are starting the restoration work. Kavach was not available on this route," Indian Railways Spokesperson Amitabh Sharma said.

The railways is in the

process of installing "Kavach", an anti-train collision system, across its network.

Kavach alerts when a loco pilot jumps a signal (Signal Passed at Danger -- SPAD), which is the leading cause of train collisions. The system can alert the loco pilot, take control of the brakes and bring the train to a halt automatically when it notices another train on the same line within a prescribed distance.

While sources had earlier said a signalling failure could be the reason behind the crash, railway officials said it is not yet clear if Coromandel Express entered the loop line and hit the stationary goods train or it first derailed and then hit the parked train after entering the loop line.

Survivors recount tales of horror

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Returning home to their families after several months of working in south India, passengers aboard the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express suddenly heard a loud thud, following which they fell off their berths and lights went off. They were just five hours away from their destination in Howrah when the train they were travelling got involved in a triple train accident at Bahanaga Bazar station in Odisha's Balasore district.

The train, which was running a little over three hours late from its schedule, was moving towards its next stop Balasore, some 20 km away, when the accident took place around 7 pm on Friday.

Mizan Ul Haq, a resident of Bardhaman, was in one of the coaches at the rear of the train. "The train was running at a high speed. Around 7 pm, a loud sound was heard and everything started moving in all directions and I fell down on the floor from the upper berth as the lights went off inside the compartment," Haq, who was returning home from work in



Karnataka on a holiday, said.

He said that somehow, he managed to come out of the damaged coach and then to safety.

"It was ghastly, many people with grave injuries were lying around beside mangled coaches," Haq, who was lucky to have escaped with minor injuries, told PTI at Howrah station, where medical aid, food and other assistance were provided by the railway authorities to the surviving passengers.

The unaffected 17 coaches of the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express reached Howrah at 1 pm on Saturday with 635 passengers, of whom 40 to 50 people were administered medical treatment on arrival, North Howrah

Deputy Commissioner of Police Anupam Singh said.

He said that five of them were sent to hospital for further treatment, while others left for their destinations.

Rekha, a Bengaluru resident coming to Kolkata for a visit, said that she was in a coach ahead of the wagons that got derailed.

"It was total chaos initially. We got off our compartment out of fear and sat in the nearby fields in the darkness till our train finally started for Howrah in the wee hours," she said.

Another Bardhaman resident, a carpenter who works in Bengaluru, said he was injured in the chest, feet and head when the coach in which he was travelling turned turtle.

Efforts on to identify victims says TN Govt



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Three survivors of the train accident in Balasore in Odisha have returned to Chennai, even as the Tamil Nadu government is engaged in efforts to identify victims of the mishap but no official report on the injuries or toll pertaining to the state has been received from the Odisha government, Additional chief secretary of the revenue department Kumar Jayant said on Saturday.

Chief Minister M K Stalin reviewed the state of preparedness of the official machinery, especially the medical team, in coping with the situation in providing treatment to the injured when they arrive on June 4.

"About 250 people have moved from Bhadrak towards the south, particularly Chennai, through a special train today. So anybody who is able to travel has moved. We have not got any report on the death of passengers from Tamil Nadu," Jayant said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with injured passengers of the triple train accident, at a hospital in Balasore on Saturday. At least 288 people were killed and over 900 others suffered injuries in the accident that involved the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express, and a goods train

PTI

Envoys of several countries offer condolences

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Envoys and missions of several countries condole the loss of lives in the tragic train accident in Odisha and expressed solidarity with India. The accident involving three trains in Odisha's Balasore district killed at least 288 people and injured 803, in one of the worst railway tragedies in the country.

In a tweet, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said, "On behalf of the US Mission in India, I extend our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic train accident in Balasore."

"We stand with India and the people of Odisha in this time of grief," he said.

Many questions to ask of PM, Railway Minister, says Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said the "horrendous" train accident in Odisha reinforces why safety should always be the foremost priority and asserted that there are many questions to ask of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw but "those can wait" as the immediate task is of rescue and relief.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has deputised the party's leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and AICC Odisha in-charge A Chella Kumar to immediately visit the accident site to take stock of the situation and oversee the relief efforts being undertaken by its workers and frontal organisations, AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal



said.

In a statement, Kharge said, "At this moment of grave national tragedy on account of the terrible train disaster in Odisha, I have instructed the entire Congress party organisation to extend all possible help."

A number of Congress leaders from different states have either already reached or will soon reach Balasore, he said, and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. "We have many questions to ask of the prime minister and the railway min-

ister but those can wait since the immediate task is of rescue and relief," Kharge said.

In a video statement, Kharge said it was the time to stay united and pointed out that several state governments have come forward to help out with the rescue efforts in Odisha, including the Siddaramaiah-led Karnataka government.

"I want to ask the PM and the Railway Minister that it should be found out how did this happen and who is responsible. We always talk about safety but still such an incident happened which had not happened in the history of railways. But all this can be discussed later as now it is the time to be united and support the central government and for all leaders to come together to help the people and share their grief," he said.

Saw my brother lying in pool of blood, mother shielding him from mob: Manipur violence survivor



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Soon after ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur last month, 20-year-old Jamgaikhim Gangte and six of her family members left their home in Imphal to get to a nearby CRPF relief camp. However, only four of them made it after hours of dodging murderous mobs and being cooped up in a car boot.

While two of them were killed by a mob, one of them was separated from the family and found days later.

The family managed to reach Delhi and is among more than 60 living in two relief camps set up in Dwarka for those affected by the Manipur violence, which claimed at least 98 lives.

As violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, Gangte and her family moved to a relative's house in Imphal and returned home the next morning.

"When we returned home, we found out that there was a CRPF relief camp nearby. So,

we packed some essentials and important documents and decided to go there," Gangte told PTI.

She and her family members -- her mother, brother, sister-in-law, cousin and aunt with her one-year-old baby -- left in a car. Some of her cousins were travelling in another car.

"We left around 10 am and the roads were empty for some time. Around half-a-kilometre from the camp, our car was surrounded by a mob. Some people opened the doors and pulled us out of the car. They poured kerosene on the car and set it on fire," Gangte said. "The mob started beating my brother and we were trying to protect him. Then a man made us sit on a bench and started questioning us about our ethnicity. We told them that we were Mizo and they almost let us go but some of them doubted us and stopped us," she said.

Gangte's relatives who were travelling in the other car managed to flee.

Brij Bhushan seems to be quite valuable to BJP: Moily

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader M Veerappa Moily took a dig at the government over the alleged "inaction" against Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, saying he seems to be quite valuable in the BJP's scheme of things.

The former Union minister said it is quite disturbing to note that the wrestlers are protesting and losing patience after having put up a fight for justice for a long time.

The criminal investigation particularly on the chief of the WFI is "brazenly partisan and biased," Moily said.

"The law of the land is quite clear that there should be zero tolerance on sexual harassment. As the author of the world's best and ideal law of POCSO, after the Nirbhaya tragedy, I do not understand how the accused, including BJP MP Brij Bhushan Singh, were not arrested even after registration of a second FIR," he said in a statement.

"The president of the WFI seems to be quite valuable in the BJP's scheme of things. While it is proved that no one can be punished without due process of investigation and trial but the question involved is of probity which should have the highest standard," he said.

PC slams law commission backing sedition law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the law commission backing the sedition law, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday said the panel's recommendation is a case of the "doctor prescribing a cure that is worse than the disease".

The former home minister said a draconian law in the statute book is an invitation to the rulers to misuse it and this hypothesis has been proved many times over.

Chidambaram's assertion comes after the law commission backed the penal provision for the offence of sedition, saying repealing it altogether can have serious adverse ramifications for the country's security and integrity.

The commission has recommended enhancing the jail term in sedition cases from a minimum of three years to seven years, contending that it would allow the courts greater room to award punishment in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed.

In a tweet, Chidambaram said the recommendation of the Law Commission that examined the validity and relevance of section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is a "case of the doctor prescribing a cure that is worse than the disease".

Conference on connectivity investments to NE States held



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A two-day conference to explore connectivity investments and identify concrete projects in north-eastern states was held in Meghalaya from Thursday. The meet included the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the European Union (EU) Delegation to India.

Giving details here on Saturday, the MEA said the conference also explored possibilities for projects with India's neighbours (Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh), for implementation under the India -- EU Connectivity Partnership, which was launched during the India -- EU leaders Meet in May 2021. The Conference was inaugurated by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma and Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh.

He stressed the importance placed by the central government on Connectivity initiatives, both within the country, and as part of India's Development Partnership abroad. He also highlighted the tremendous opportunities for India -- EU Triangular Development Cooperation in South Asia and the Indo --

Pacific.

Chief Minister Sangma emphasized the importance of interstate and cross border connectivity for the North East region as a whole, and for Meghalaya in particular. In that regard, Sangma referred to India's 'Act East' Policy, within which Meghalaya has an 'Act South' Policy focussing on the need to improve connectivity between Meghalaya and Bangladesh. He suggested a 'Zonal Approach' to connectivity, involving neighbouring states that caters to the needs of each state.

The second day of the Conference saw technical sessions on the themes: Digital Connectivity, Energy Connectivity, Transport Connectivity and Connectivity and Beyond focusing on projects linking the Northeast with India's neighbourhood, as part of the 'Act East' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies.

The sessions saw participation from senior officials of the central government, the EU Commission, Government(s) of the North Eastern States of India, North Eastern Council, stakeholders from Nepal, Bangladesh and executives from private sector with presence in the region.

14 common FDC drugs banned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Commonly available over-the-counter (OTC) drugs Nimesulide, Chlopheniramine Maleate and Codeine syrup besides Paracetamol used for treatment of common infections, cough, and fever are among the 14 fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs that have been banned by the Government. It said that there is "no therapeutic justification" for these medicines and that they may involve "risk" to individuals. The Union Health Ministry issued a notification in this regard recently.

The banned drugs included those used for treating common infections, cough and fever -- combinations such as Nimesulide + Paracetamol dispersible tablets, Chlopheniramine Maleate + Codeine Syrup, Pholcodine + Promethazine, Amoxicillin + Bromhexine and Bromhexine + Dextromethorphan + Ammonium Chloride + Menthol, Paracetamol + Bromhexine + Phenylephrine + Chlorpheniramine + Guaiphenesin and Salbutamol + Bromhexine.

The move comes following recommendations by an expert committee.

The expert committee said that there is "no therapeutic justification for this FDC (fixed dose combination) and the FDC may involve risk to human beings. Hence, in the



larger public interest, it is necessary to prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of this FDC under section 26 A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. In view of the above, any kind of regulation or restriction to allow for any use in patients is not justifiable."

"And whereas, on the basis of the recommendations of the Expert Committee and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board, the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary and expedient in public interest to regulate by way of prohibition the manufacture for sale, sale and distribution for human use of the said drug in the country," the notification stated.

FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a fixed ratio.

In 2016, the government had announced the ban on the manufacture, sale and distribution of 344 drug combinations after an expert panel, set up at the behest of the Supreme Court had stated they were being sold to patients without scientific data and the order was challenged by the manufacturers in court.

Turkiye’s Erdogan takes oath of office, ushering in his third term

AP ■ ANKARA

Turkiye’s longtime leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, took the oath of office on Saturday, ushering in his third presidential term that followed three stints as prime minister. Erdogan, 69, won a new five-year term in a runoff presidential race last week that could stretch his 20-year rule in the key NATO country that straddles Europe and Asia into a quarter-century. The country of 85 million controls NATO’s second-largest army, hosts millions of refugees and played a crucial role in brokering a deal that allowed the shipment of Ukraine grain, averting a global food crisis.

Erdogan was sworn in during a session in parliament before an inauguration ceremony at his sprawling palace complex. Supporters waited outside parliament despite the heavy rain, covering his car with red carnations as he arrived.

All eyes are on the announcement of his new Cabinet later on Saturday. Its lineup should indicate whether there will be a continuation of unorthodox economic policies

or a return to more conventional ones amid a cost-of-living crisis.

Dozens of foreign dignitaries are travelling to attend the ceremony, including NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Carl Bildt, a high-profile former Swedish prime minister. They are expected to press Erdogan to lift his country’s objections to Sweden’s membership in the military alliance — which requires unanimous approval by all allies.

Turkiye accuses Sweden of being too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups that Turkiye considers to be terrorists.

NATO wants to bring Sweden into the alliance by the time allied leaders meet in Lithuania on July 11-12, but Turkiye and Hungary have yet to endorse the bid. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban will also be attending the ceremony.

According to state-run Anadolu Agency, other leaders in attendance include Azerbaijan’s Ilham Aliyev, Venezuela’s Nicolas Maduro, South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa, Armenia’s Nikol



Pashinyan, Pakistan’s Shahbaz Sharif, and Libya’s Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

Erdogan was sworn in amid a host of domestic challenges ahead, including a battered economy, 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 levelled entire cities in the south of the country.

Turkiye is grappling with a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by inflation that peaked at a staggering 85 per cent in October before easing to 44 per cent last month. The Turkish currency has lost more than 10 per cent

of its value against the dollar since the start of the year.

Critics blame the turmoil on Erdogan’s policy of lowering interest rates to promote growth, which runs contrary to conventional economic thinking that calls for raising rates to combat inflation.

Unconfirmed media reports say Erdogan plans to reappoint Mehmet Simsek, a respected former finance minister and deputy prime minister, to the helm of the economy. The move would signify a return by the country — which is the world’s 19th largest economy according to the World Bank — to more orthodox economic policies.

In power as prime minister and then as president since 2003, Erdogan is already Turkiye’s longest-serving leader.

He has solidified his rule through constitutional changes that transformed Turkiye’s presidency from a largely ceremonial role to a powerful office. Critics say his second decade in office was marred by sharp democratic backsliding including the erosion of institutions such as the media and judiciary and the jailing of opponents and critics.

Key step toward landmark treaty to end plastic waste

AP ■ PARIS

Global negotiators have agreed to craft an initial draft treaty to end plastic pollution, a preliminary but crucial step toward tackling one of the most lasting sources of human waste.

Environmental advocates cautiously welcomed the outcome of five days of UN talks in Paris on plastic pollution, but expressed concern that the petroleum industry and some governments would water down the eventual treaty. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels.

Delegates at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Plastics agreed on Friday evening to produce an initial draft before their next meeting in Kenya in November, participants said.

The committee is charged with developing the first international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, on land and at sea.

A coalition of “high-ambition” governments led by Norway and Rwanda, along with environmental groups, want to end plastic pollution altogether by 2040 by slashing



production and limiting some chemicals used in making plastics.

“Projections suggest that a child born today will see plastic production double by the time they turn 18, but we know that the consequences of increasing plastic production will be disastrous for our health, the planet, and the climate,” said Dr Tadesse Amara, who led the International Pollutants Elimination Network’s delegation at the talks.

“The stakes are high, but

we are optimistic by the growing awareness among delegates of the need for global controls.”

Countries with big petroleum industries like the US, China and Saudi Arabia are focusing instead on plastic recycling, and want country-by-country rules instead of across-the-board limits.

Stew Harris, senior director for global plastics policy at the American Chemistry Council, argued for allowing each government to “use the right tools based on their

unique circumstances.”

In a statement to The Associated Press as the talks wrapped up, he said that circularity — or reusing plastics — was “at the forefront of the negotiations as a means to tackle pollution and be more sustainable in producing and consuming plastics. We agree that’s the best path.”

Humanity produces more than 430 million tons of plastic annually, two-thirds of which are short-lived products that soon become waste, filling the ocean and, often, working their way into the human food chain, the UN.

Environment Program said in an April report. Plastic waste produced globally is set to almost triple by 2060, with about half ending up in land-fill and under a fifth recycled, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Over 2,000 participants from nearly 200 countries, including governments and observers, took part in this week’s talks.

Waste pickers and some advocacy groups said they were initially denied access to the talks.

Debt deal frustrates many Democrats

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Democrats are deeply conflicted about the food aid requirements that President Joe Biden negotiated as part of the debt ceiling deal, fearing damage has been done to safety net programmes that will be difficult to unravel in the years ahead as Republicans demand further cuts.

Bargaining over toughening work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme, commonly known as food stamps, became the focal point for the White House and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., up until the end.

Negotiators from both sides made clear, publicly and privately, that it was the biggest area of disagreement and almost led to the talks breaking down several times.

In the end, Democrats warily accepted new requirements for some able-bodied recipients in exchange for food aid.

Republicans agreed to drop some work requirements for veterans, homeless people and

others.

The result of the tense back-and-forth was a deal that played to both sides, but one that many Democrats agonised over as they weighed whether to vote for the package this past week.

Many struggled to square cutting access to food for marginalised communities with an outcome that allowed the United States to avoid defaulting on its debt.

“In order for this country to not default on its bills, we then turned and made our most vulnerable communities default,” said Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo. Years before she came to Congress, Bush lived in a car with her then-husband and two young children after the family had been evicted from their rental home.

The federal aid programme provides monthly funds — sometimes as little as \$6 a day — to allow low-income individuals and families to buy groceries.

It is the largest programme in the country focused on fighting hunger, with 41 million

people using benefits last year alone to purchase food, according to the Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the program.

By 2025, new requirements will apply to able-bodied adults from age 49 to 54 without dependents — an increase of five years. Those individuals will be required to work or attend training programs for at least 80 hours a month if they want to receive more than three months of SNAP benefits within a three-year period.

Republicans have tried for decades to expand work requirements for these government assistance programmes, arguing they result in more people returning to the workforce, despite several studies that have found they have little impact on employment.

“We’re going to return these programs to being a life vest, not a lifestyle. A hand up, not a handout and that has always been the American way,” Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the vice chair of the

House Republican conference, told reporters.

The White House countered that Republican proposition by getting GOP lawmakers to waive the work requirements for new groups — veterans, individuals who are homeless or facing housing instability and youth aging out of foster care — to balance out the number of people who would now be facing these new restrictions.

The end result could be more people receiving SNAP benefits overall. An estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released Tuesday said that the changes in the debt ceiling package would add almost 80,000 people to the rolls of SNAP in an average month.

But the trade-off of seemingly helping some groups while hurting others still left the left flank of the Democratic Party — lawmakers who have supported Biden and helped pass his agenda for the first two years of his term — frustrated by the outcome.

That was especially the

case as advocates, including the nonpartisan National Alliance to End Homelessness, warned of a disturbing trend across the country of an increase in the number of older adults who are becoming homeless, some for the first time.

“What we should not be playing is oppression Olympics,” Bush said. “Like which one gets to hurt today? Which one gets to get to that finish line to hurt today? That’s not where we should be as a society.”

Bush, a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, voted “no” on the debt limit deal on Wednesday night after she spent days hearing from advocate groups and constituents on the issue.

“I think it’s important that (Biden) understands that it’s good for us to have a strong, no vote because this isn’t a deal that he would have made if he hadn’t been held hostage,” Democratic Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, chair of the Progressive Caucus, told The Associated Press this past week.

‘US won’t stand for coercion and bullying from China’

AP ■ SINGAPORE

American Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin vowed Saturday that Washington would not stand for any “coercion and bullying” of its allies and partners by China, while assuring Beijing that the United States remains committed to maintaining the status quo on Taiwan and would prefer dialogue over conflict.

Speaking at the so-called Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual forum bringing together top defense officials, diplomats and leaders, Austin lobbied for support for Washington’s vision of a “free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific within a world of rules and rights” as the best course to counter increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

The US has been expanding its own activities around the Indo-Pacific to counter sweeping territorial claims from China, including regularly sailing through and flying over the Taiwan Strait and in the South

China Sea.

“We are committed to ensuring that every country can fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows,” he said. “And every country, large or small, must remain free to conduct lawful maritime activities.”

Austin noted that the US had provided millions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine during the height of the pandemic and is regularly involved in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance efforts in the region. He said it is working to combat climate change, illegal fishing and ensure that supply chains do not suffer disruptions — ticking off many issues of importance to Asian-Pacific nations. “We’re doubling down on our alliances and partnerships,” he said.

He said the US is also committed to deterring North Korea’s missile threat and China’s claims on Taiwan, a self-governing island democracy that Beijing says is its territory, and said Washington has been step-

ping up defense planning, coordination and training with partner nations in the region.

“To be clear, we do not seek conflict or confrontation,” he said. “But we will not flinch in the face of bullying or coercion.”

Austin assured that the US remained “deeply committed” to the longstanding one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing as the government of China but allows informal relations with Taiwan, and continues to “categorically oppose unilateral changes to the status quo from either side.”

He added that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had served to underline how dangerous the world would be if big countries were able to “just invade their peaceful neighbors with impunity.”

“Conflict is neither imminent nor inevitable,” Austin said. “Deterrence is strong today — and it’s our job to keep it that way. The whole world has a stake in maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

FROM PAGE 1

CRASH TOLL 288 & COUNTING...

While initial reports indicated a possible signaling failure, railway officials have stated that it is not yet clear whether the Coromandel Express entered the loop line and struck the stationary goods train or if it derailed first before colliding with the parked train upon entering the loop line.

The report has been submitted to the Railway Board, and the loop lines at the BAHANAGAR Bazar station, with a length of approximately 750 meters, are designed to accommodate full-length goods trains with multiple engines.

The Coromandel Express was traveling at a speed of 128 kmph, while the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express was running at 116 kmph. The Railway Board’s spokesperson announced that A.M. Chowdhary, CRS, SE Circle, will conduct an inquiry into the accident. Thus far, there have been no indications of sabotage in relation to the incident.

SCREAMS OF HELP STILL RING IN SURVIVORS’ EARS

“We realised that was the Yesvantpur-Howrah Express... those were the three last coaches of the Yesvantpur Express which were general coaches and had about 250-300 people in them. We saw bloodied people.... We gave them water and bedsheets from our coaches....” he said.

Das, a PhD scholar, was on the Coromandel Express on his way back home to Cuttack from a field trip when he witnessed the most horrific sight of his life. He survived as he was in the last AC coach of the train, Number H1, and helped the injured people and called the police and railway helpline. He said the emergency services took an hour to reach the site but as they took over, they took good care of those in need.

“When the ambulances came, they were going away from us. This track was on a road intersection so that was a good part. The ambulances were going away from us to the front of the Coromandel Express. So to find out why the ambulances were going ahead, we walked there to figure out what had happened,” he said. It is

then that he realised that the train had hit a stationary goods train. “There were scenes of extreme chaos. Blood was everywhere, on the tracks on the ground. People were all bloodied and some were walking out without arms. Bodies were lying everywhere,” he said. Das also pointed out that the mangled coaches had piled on top of the other at a height comparable to that of a “three-four storey building.”

In a series of tweets, Das had earlier described how lucky he thought he was to escape unhurt. “Three trains were involved in the accident — Coromandel Express 12841, Yesvantpur-Howrah SF and a goods train. Initial impressions are that the Coromandel Express derailed and collided with the goods train (parked on the loop track on the side),” he had tweeted earlier. “Not to exaggerate but I have myself witnessed more than 200-250 deaths. Families crushed away, limbless bodies and a bloodbath on the train tracks. It was a sight that I will never forget. God help the families. My condolences,” he said in another tweet.

GUILTY WON'T BE SPARED: MODI AT ACCIDENT SITE

The prime minister emphasised that this tragic accident would serve as a lesson for the entire nation, prompting the government to place even greater emphasis on passenger safety.

Modi commended the efforts of the Odisha Government, as well as the locals who demonstrated great compassion by donating blood and providing assistance to the injured. Accompanied by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the prime minister visited the accident site at BAHANAGA, where he assessed the relief and restoration operations.

He was briefed on the situation by Vaishnaw and disaster management officers who had been tirelessly working to rescue individuals throughout the night. Modi also interacted with Pramila Mallik, the state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister, and local police officers. From the accident site, he spoke with Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba and

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, instructing them to provide all necessary assistance to the injured and their families.

Modi emphasised the importance of ensuring that the bereaved families do not face any inconvenience and that those affected continue to receive support. He also inquired about the progress of the restoration work at the site, which is part of the Howrah-Chennai Main Line connecting the eastern and southern regions of India.

“Took stock of the situation at the site of the tragedy in Odisha. Words can’t capture my deep sorrow. We stand committed to providing all possible assistance to those affected. I laud all those working round the clock, on the ground and helping out in relief work,” he later tweeted.

The PM also visited the Balasore district hospital, where he interacted with the injured individuals. He inquired about their condition and whether they were facing any issues with their treatment. Modi assured them that every necessary step was being taken to alleviate their suffering. He also engaged with the doctors and healthcare personnel at the hospital.

Before his visit to Odisha, Modi chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi to assess the situation following the train accident, which occurred on Friday evening. His office tweeted, “PM Narendra Modi chaired a meeting to take stock of the situation in the wake of the train mishap in Odisha. Aspects relating to rescue, relief, and medical attention to those affected were discussed in the review meeting.”

300 NDRF RESCUERS EQUIPPED WITH CANINE SQUADS AT SPOT

Karwal explained that the primary task of the NDRF is to search for and rescue survivors by cutting through the wreckage of the train coaches.

The NDRF has deployed sniffer dog squads, female rescuers, and medical teams with stretchers and first-aid kits at the site, as per officials. Karwal stated that they are conducting the rescue operation in coordination with the state and railway authorities. “In the past year, we have conducted 55 mock exercises with the railways

to prepare for such rail disasters,” added the NDRF chief. Reports indicate that at least 261 people have lost their lives and over 650 have been injured in this devastating accident involving three trains.

INDIA LOST 1 TIGER EVERY ALTERNATE DAY THIS YEAR

Officials in the Union Environment Ministry said that the deaths were not alarming given that the number of tigers have increased in the last four years as per the latest census which put the number to 3,167 tigers. This is around 6.7 per cent higher than the estimate as per the last tiger census in 2018, which pegged tiger numbers at 2,967.

However, wildlife experts in the Census report released by the Prime Minister on April 9, 2023 have noted that the growing number of tigers in the country will inevitably lead to more man-animal conflicts as the predators venture out for prey as well due to fighting for territory among them. So far this year, the country has already lost 52 big cats. Last year the mortality figure was 121.

The report itself rings alarm bells as it says that no doubt big cats have occupied new areas in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, “the local tiger population has become extinct in several areas, Sri Venkateswara National Park, including Tiger Reserves like Kawal, Satkosia and Sahyadri.

“While the expansion of tiger habitats is a positive development, there is a need to pay attention and act quickly in these areas to reverse the trend of extinction of small populations and avoid negative human-tiger interactions,” says the report.

It has called for serious conservation efforts to help tiger population recovery in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. The small and genetically unique population of tigers in Simlipal is a priority for conservation. “Wildlife habitats in the region face various threats, including habitat encroachment, illegal hunting, conflicts with humans, unregulated cattle grazing, excessive harvesting of non-timber forest products, forest fires, mining, and expanding infrastructure,” as per the report.

In comparison, last year i.e. in 2022, a total 121 felines had died due to various reasons against 127 deaths the previous year, as per the NTCA website.

SC STAYS HC ORDER TO DECIDE WHETHER WOMAN IS ‘MANGLIK’

During the hearing, the counsel for the accused argued that the marriage between the two individuals could not take place since the woman was believed to be ‘manglik’. However, the woman’s counsel insisted that she was not ‘manglik’.

In Hindu astrology, a person born under the influence of the planet Mars (mangal) is considered to have ‘mangal dosha’ (affliction) and is referred to as ‘manglik’. Many superstitious Hindus believe that a marriage between a ‘manglik’ and a non-‘manglik’ can bring about inauspiciousness and disastrous consequences.

As Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appeared in the matter, a bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Pankaj Mithal asked him, “Mehta, you have seen this?”

“I have seen this. It is disturbing. I would request your lordships to kindly stay this order,” Mehta responded. An advocate representing the complainant informed the bench that the High Court had issued the order with the consent of both parties. The bench expressed dissatisfaction with the order, stating that it was completely unrelated to the subject. It also noted that the order involved several other aspects, such as the right to privacy, which had been disturbed.

Arguing that astrology is a science, Mehta stated, “The question is, while entertaining an application by a judicial forum, can this be a consideration?” The bench acknowledged that astrology is indeed a science, but it emphasised that there are various aspects to be considered.

The bench clarified that it was not delving into the merits of the case and decided to take suo motu cognisance of the matter. It stayed the operation and effect of the High Court order and directed the registry to issue notices to all concerned parties, including the State. The next hearing was scheduled for the week commencing July 10.

“We have stayed the order and have permitted the court to decide the bail application on its own merits,” the bench remarked, adding, “We don’t understand why this astrology report is called for.” Expressing gratitude as a law officer,

Mehta thanked the apex court for taking cognisance of the matter. In the High Court’s May 23 order, it stated, “Let the Head of the Department (Astrology Department), Lucknow University, decide whether the girl is manglik or not, and the parties shall submit their horoscopes (kundalini) to the Head of the Department (Astrology Department), Lucknow University, within ten days from today. The Head of the Department (Astrology Department), Lucknow University, is directed to submit a report in a sealed cover to this Court within three weeks.” The High Court scheduled the case for a resumed hearing on June 26.

59 MPS WRITE TO GERMAN ENVOY FOR EARLY RETURN OF BABY ARIHA

“We do not cast aspersions on any agency in your country and assume that whatever actions were taken were considered to be in the best interests of the baby. We respect the legal procedures in your country, but given that no criminal cases are pending against any member of the family, it is high time to send the baby back home,” the parliamentarians wrote. The parents, who are practicing Jains, have raised objections to the food provided to the child in foster care, as it contradicts their cultural and religious beliefs.

The letter has also received endorsements from MPs Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Congress), Supriya Sule (NCP), Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (DMK), Agatha Sangma (NPP), Harsimrat Kaur Badal (SAD), Maneka Gandhi (BJP), and Pranet Kaur (Congress).

According to the MPs, Ariha’s parents, Dhara and Bhavesh Shah, were in Berlin as the baby’s father was employed there. The family should have returned to India by now if not for unfortunate circumstances. The Ministry of External Affairs stated that they have been consistently advocating for Ariha’s return. “Our efforts have been guided by the best interests of the child, which we believe can only be fully realised when she is in her home country,” the ministry said.

The child was accidentally injured by her grandmother in September 2021, after which the German authorities took her into their custody

Ruud rallies to beat Zhang

AP ■ PARIS

Last year's finalist Casper Ruud rallied to beat Zhang Zhizhen in the third round of the French Open on Saturday, ending a strong run by the Chinese player.

The fourth-seeded Ruud, who lost to Rafael Nadal in last year's final, won 4-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-4.

Zhang was the first Chinese man to reach the third round at Roland Garros since Kho Sin-Khie in 1937. Kho also reached the fourth round in 1936 but that proved a step too far for Zhang, despite a lightning start on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

Meanwhile, American Coco Gauff rallied from a tough opening set to beat Mirra Andreeva of Russia in an all-teen showdown in the third round.

Experience eventually told as the 19-year-old Gauff, who was the runner-up at Roland Garros last year, prevailed 6-7(5), 6-1, 6-1, sealing the result with a cross-court backhand winner.

That ended an impressive Grand Slam debut for the 16-year-old Andreeva, who earlier this week became the youngest player to win a match in the women's main draw at the French Open since 2005.

Zhang broke Ruud in the opening game and went on to take the set as the Norwegian



player grew more and more frustrated.

Matters grew worse for Ruud as he found himself 0-40 down on his serve early in the second set but he collected his emotions and — after a topsy-turvy set — went on to level the match at his first opportunity.

Ruud then improved in the last two sets and sealed the match with a forehand down

the line on the first of two match points.

The match will be followed by an intriguing third-round encounter involving two teenagers: American Coco Gauff, who is 19, and Russian Mirra Andreeva, who is 16.

However, reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out of the French Open before her third-

round match on Saturday because she is sick.

RYBAKINA PULLS OUT

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out of the French Open before her third-round match on Saturday because she is sick.

"I just wanted to give 100%, and obviously I'm far from being 100%," Rybakina said. "If

I cannot breathe, there is no chance I can even run and try to compete."

The No 4-seeded Rybakina was supposed to face 132nd-ranked Sara Sorribes Tormo in the day's opening contest on Court Philippe Chatrier.

They were scheduled to begin playing at 11:45 a.m. local time, but instead, at that very moment, Rybakina sat down

behind the microphone at a news conference to explain why she was withdrawing from the year's second Grand Slam tournament.

Sounding stuffed up, Rybakina explained that she has been running a fever, didn't sleep well the past two nights and had difficulty breathing during a warmup session Saturday ahead of her match. She said a doctor told her there is a virus going around "here in Paris."

Rybakina, who won each of her first two matches this week in straight sets, was considered among the top contenders for the championship at Roland Garros. She has won her past 10 matches, including a tuneup title on red clay at the Italian Open last month.

She plays a power-built game based in part on one of the best serves on the WTA Tour, which she leads in aces this season.

Last July, Rybakina won her first major trophy, defeating Ons Jabeur in the final at Wimbledon.

Rybakina is a 23-year-old who was born in Moscow and has represented Kazakhstan since 2018, when that country offered her funding to support her tennis career. The switch was a topic of conversation during Wimbledon, because the All England Club barred athletes who represent Russia or Belarus from entering the tournament in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine.



Djokovic laments fans for booing

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic makes no secret of the way he loves to feed off negativity during a tennis match. Doesn't really matter whether he's ahead or behind on the scoreboard. The guy simply finds motivation and inspiration from all manner of slights, real and perceived.

Maybe it's how a chair umpire is officiating that particular day ... or the way Djokovic's entourage is sitting in place in the stands instead of rising to encourage him ... or the criticism he receives for wading into a political issue — all of which already have happened during this French Open.

Or maybe it's how he's treated by the spectators who, as they did on Friday during Djokovic's 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-2 victory over 29th-seeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the third round at Roland Garros, get on his case and jeer

him for seemingly no good reason at all.

Which is what happened at Court Philippe Chatrier during the longest three-set Grand Slam match of the 22-time major champion Djokovic's long and distinguished career, clocking in at 3 hours, 36 minutes. He wasn't thrilled at how difficult things had been in the match, didn't love double-faulting three times in a single game, and really didn't like the feedback coming from a portion of the fans.

"A majority of the people comes to enjoy tennis or support one or the other player. But they are individuals. There are people — there are groups or whatever — that love to boo every single thing you do. That's something that I find disrespectful and I frankly don't understand that," Djokovic said later at his news conference. "But it's their right. They paid the ticket. They can do whatever they want."

Nadal undergoes hip surgery

AP ■ PARIS

Rafael Nadal had arthroscopic surgery on Friday night for the injured left hip flexor that forced him to sit out the French Open for the first time since he won the first of his record 14 titles there in his 2005 tournament debut.

Nadal's spokesman, Benito Perez-Barbadillo, said three doctors were involved in the procedure, which was taking place in Barcelona.

Perez-Barbadillo said he expected to be able to pass along information about the operation on Saturday, which is Nadal's 37th birthday.

The Spaniard hasn't competed anywhere since he lost to Mackenzie McDonald in the second round of the Australian Open on Jan. 18. Nadal's movement clearly was restricted for much of that match and he ended up with his earliest exit at any Grand Slam tournament since 2016.

An MRI exam the next day revealed the extent of the injury, and Perez-Barbadillo said at the time that Nadal was expected to need up to two months to fully recover. He initially aimed



to enter the Monte Carlo Masters in March on his beloved red clay, but he wasn't able to play there, then subsequently sat out tournament after tournament, decreasing the likelihood that he would be ready for the French Open.

Nadal announced during a news conference at his tennis academy in Manacor, Spain, on May 18 that he would need to miss this year's trip to compete in Paris. He said he would need to take an indefinite break from tennis — no matches and not even any practices.

And he added that he was not sure when — or, truly, if — he'll be able to return to the tour, but figures that next season will be his last before retirement.

Indian pole vaulters' participation in doubt as poles stuck at airport

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The participation of two Indian pole vaulters in the Asian U-20 Athletics Championship in Yecheon, South Korea, beginning on Sunday was rendered doubtful after their equipment was not permitted in a South Korean as well as an Air India aircraft due to "technical issues" related to length of the poles.

Dev Kumar Meena (men's pole vault) and Sunil Kumar (decathlon, of which pole vault is one of the 10 events) were to compete in their respective events on Sunday but they left for Seoul in a South Korean flight on Friday, which is in alliance with Air India, without their poles.

Even Air India refused to carry the poles in its 12:05am flight on Friday, according to an official of the Athletics Federation of India.

The AFI official said that Air India refused to carry three poles measuring 5m each to be used by the two athletes, on the ground of some "technical issues" concerning prescribed length of the items.



"The two athletes have already reached South Korea but their poles are stuck here in Delhi airport. Air India said they cannot allow the 5m-long poles under the current rules. It is strange that our athletes had gone to Busan (South Korea) with the same kind of poles only last year," the AFI official told PTI.

"We have been running here and there since yesterday afternoon but Air India is not relenting. We are now trying,

through our travel agent, to send the poles to Korea by FedEx Express Cargo flight later today. Let's see," the official said.

In fact, all the 55-member Indian contingent was to leave for South Korea from the Indira Gandhi International Airport here at 6:30pm Friday on Seoul-based Asiana Airlines flight, but the Indian coaches were told that they would not be allowed to take the three poles as well as the javelins.

The AFI had booked the tickets through Air India with the help of a travel agency.

"All the paperwork relating to bookings and luggage were done by Air India as they have a tie-up with Asiana Airlines. On May 26, a mail was sent to Air India informing about the number of poles and javelins we will be taking to Korea, along with their size specification.

"But when the contingent reached IGI yesterday to board the flight, Asiana Airlines said Air India has not informed them about it and so the poles and javelins could not be allowed inside the aircraft," the AFI official said.

All the members of the contingent save for two coaches left for South Korea boarding the Asiana Airlines. The two coaches were held back to accompany the poles and javelins in an Air India flight to Seoul at 12:05am Friday.

"What was surprising was that Air India itself refused to carry the poles because of its length and some technical issues. We even went to the Air India cargo office at the IGI to

let in the poles and javelins as cargo, but to no avail.

"The javelins were finally allowed and the two coaches, initially held back, also boarded the Air India flight," the AFI official said.

"The two athletes had brought the poles in a domestic flight from Bengaluru and there was no problem then, don't know why it is different in this case."

Even if the three poles do not reach South Korea on time, the two athletes may still compete on Sunday by using equipment of other competitors or those provided by the organisers but that will affect their performance.

"They may still participate even if the poles do not reach on time. But normally the length of the pole depends on the height of the pole vaulter, so they may compete if they get poles of their size, otherwise they may not do their best."

The 55-member Indian contingent for the June 4-7 championships has 45 athletes, including 19 women, and 10 coaches.



India maul Uzbekistan in women's junior Asia

PTI ■ KAKAMIGHARA

Annu slammed a double hat-trick as India started their campaign in the women's Junior Asia Cup on an emphatic note with a 22-0 thrashing of a lowly Uzbekistan, here on Saturday.

Annu (13th, 29th, 30th, 38th, 43th, 51st) was the star performer for India, while Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke (3rd, 56th); Mumtaz Khan (6th, 44th, 47th, 60th); Sunelita Toppo (17th, 17th); Manju Chorsiya (26th), Deepika Soreng (18th, 25th), Deepika (32nd, 44th, 46th, 57th), and Neelam (47th) were the others on target.

India began attacking the Uzbekistan citadel from the onset and took an early lead when as Vaishnavi (3rd) converted a penalty corner.

Mumtaz doubled India's lead three minutes later with a field strike.

Annu added to the team's tally by netting a goal as the opening quarter ended with India enjoying a 3-0 lead.

The second quarter was no different as India continued to dominate the proceedings and scored goals at will through Sunelita, Manju, Deepika and Anu, thus enjoying a commanding 10-0 lead at the half-time.

The script was the same after the change of ends as Deepika netted one through penalty corner while Annu struck two more to help India take 13-0 lead.

Panjab regain Khelo India University Games champions crown

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Panjab University, Chandigarh (PUC), regained their overall champions crown after a gap of one edition as despite a clean sweep in fencing, Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, fell short on the final day of competitions at the Khelo India University Games (KIUG).

National Games champion Yash Ghangas was the other star attraction on the final day, thrilling all at the BBD University grounds in Lucknow, to pick up the gold for Chaudhary Banshi Lal University (CBLU) in the men's 100+kg category in judo.

The other four golds on the final day went to Mumbai University (judo women's 78+kg), Savitribai



Phule Pune University (SPPU) who won the men's group traditional yogasana gold at the SAC hall of the Indian Institute of Technology-

Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) campus in Varanasi and Chandigarh University (CU) and

Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak, who picked up the two golds in weightlifting at the G.B. University in Greater Noida. PUC, therefore finished with an overall tally of 69 medals including 26 gold, 17 silver and 26 bronze medals.

GNDU amassed 24 gold, 27 silver and 17 bronze medals to finish second and in the top three for the first time. Jain University, Karnataka, last time's champions, were third with 16 gold, 10 silver and six bronze medals. Jain, however, will have the solace of having the most successful male and female athletes of the KIUG 2022 UP. Both of them belong to swimming where Siva Sridhar topped the men's section with a total of 11 medals including eight golds while Shrungi Bandekar won nine medals in the women's section including five golds. As many as 131 of the 203 universities who finally participated, medalled at the Games, where at least 11 new records were created over 12 competition days. Later in the day, a solemn and dignified ceremony marked the conclusion of the 3rd Khelo India University Games at the Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) campus in Varanasi.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports and Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Singh Thakur, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, joined by all present, observed a two-minute silence to honor the lives lost in the train accident in Odisha on Friday.

Speaking at the event, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "Over the past two weeks, we had the privilege of hosting more than 4,000 athletes from across India, who displayed exceptional sportsmanship. In our nation, sports is reaching new heights under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We have achieved more medals in the past nine years than ever before, and the remarkable development of sports infrastructure is a matter of pride." Addressing the audience, Anurag Thakur praised Uttar Pradesh for hosting the most successful Khelo India University Games.

Among the distinguished guests present were Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Nisith Pramanik, Uttar Pradesh Sports Minister, Girish Chandra Yadav, UP Fisheries Minister, Sanjay Nishad, UP Chief Secretary, DS Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary (Sports), Navneet Sehgal, and DG (Sports Authority of India), Sandip Pradhan.

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Cannot speak about Asian Cup target before Dec: Stimac

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

At 38, Sunil Chhetri remains a prized asset in the final third and among the fittest in the Indian football team, but his much younger colleagues in defence "dancing around balls" is a cause for concern for head coach, Igor Stimac.

Alongside brain, Stimac indicated he would do with a slice of brawn in his defenders. Four weeks of preparation time was on Saturday

described as ideal by Stimac for the Asian Cup, for which the Croat said he will not be able to set a realistic target before December.

The continental showpiece is scheduled to be held in January-February next year in Qatar, where India has been clubbed alongside heavyweights Australia, Syria and Uzbekistan.

"There is no realistic target. It's more about real chances for us. We can speak in December when we find out

how much time we're going to get for the operation, then I can be more realistic from this point of view.

"I cannot tell you about stages... For the Asian Cup, India never was placed better than the bottom of the group. So whatever we achieved, that we will be achievement, I would say," Stimac said during a virtual press conference.

India were knocked out in the group stage in their last two appearances in the tournament in 2011 and 2019 respectively.

Aman shines on opening day of Aquatic meet

Lucknow (PNS): Aman Srivastava showcased dominated the pool on the first day of the Lucknow District Aquatic Meet held at the SAI Centre on Saturday. With impressive victories in multiple events, Srivastava left his competitors trailing behind, proving his mettle as a formidable force in the world of swimming. In the highly anticipated 1,500-meter freestyle event, Aman Srivastava displayed an exceptional level of endurance and skill. Continuing his winning streak, Srivastava excelled in the 200-meter freestyle and 200m freestyle event as well.

RESULTS: (1,500m freestyle) Men's: 1-Aman Srivastava; **Boy's-I:** 1-Aditya Tripathi, 2-Alok Singh, 3-Aditya Shukla; **Boy's-II:** 1-Soumitra Acharya, 2-Krishna Kapoor; **Women's:** 1-Avidha Pandit; **Girl's-I:** 1-Vatsala Dubey; **Women's (200m breaststroke) Men's:** 1-Aman Srivastava; **Boy's-I:** 1-Prince Mishra, 2-Anchit Sinha; **Boy's-II:** 1-Ayan Yadav, 2-Suryansh Singh, 3-Aryavansh; **Girl's-I:** 1-Riti Tiwari, 2-Khalida Usmani;

Girl's-II: 1-Kavya Khanna, 2-Kashvi Verma, 3-Pratishtha Dubey; **(100m Backstroke) Boy's-I:** 1-Ishan Rastogi, 2-Jonathan Lal, 3-Sheersh Shah; **Boy's-II:** 1-Yathartha Singh, 2-Aradhya Amit, 3-Ekansh Singh; **Women's:** 1-Avidha Pandit; **Girl's-I:** 1-Vatsala Dubey, 2-Swarnima Agarwal, 3-Gayatri Gurjar; **Girl's-II:** 1-Riddhima Bhalla, 2-Shreya Derric, 3-Anushka Kapoor; **Boy's-III:** 1-Anshika Verma; **(100m Butterfly) Boy's-I:** 1-Ishan Rastogi, 2-Aditya Tripathi; **Boy's-II:** 1-Yathartha Srivastava, 2-Shreyas Singh, 3-Soumitra Acharya; **Boy's-III:** Reyansh Mehrotra, 2-Haider Zaheer; **Women's:** Avidha Pandit; **Girl's-I:** 1-Shubhangi Dhakrey, 2-Vatsala Dubey, 3-Riti Tiwari; **Girl's-II:** 1-Lavana Dhakrey, 2-Oriana Aniket; **(200m individual medley) Boy's-I:** 1-Sanskar Shukla; **Boy's-II:** 1-Aryan Mishra, 2-Nityansh Sahai; **Boy's-IV:** 1-Aalekh Patel, 2-Agastya Shukla; **Girl's-I:** 1-Nusayabh Rizvi, 2-Vatsala Dubey, 3-Riti Tiwari; **Girl's-II:** 1-Vanshika Rai, 2-Anushka Kapoor, 3-Ummul Zehra; **Girl's-III:** 1-Parisha Jain, 2-Spriha Singh, 3-Anshika Verma; **Girl's-IV:** 1-Adardhya Singh, 2-Aishwarya Rastogi, 3-Kashvi Pandey; **(200m Freestyle) Men's:** 1-Aman Srivastava; **Boy's-I:** 1-Vidyansh Singh, 2-Adardhya Shukla; **Boy's-II:** 1-Shreyas Singh, 2-Devansh Singh, 3-Shivendra Singh; **Boy's-III:** 1-Nirvan Singh, 2-Arjun Tiwari, 3-Aarav Shukla; **Women's:** Avidha Pandit; 200; **Girl's-I:** 1-Shubhangi, 2-Swarnima, 3-Naisaybah; **Girl's-II:** 1-Vanshika, 2-Riddhima, 3-Lavanya; **Girl's-III:** 1-Parisha, 2-Spriha; **(50m Breaststroke) Men's:** 1-Aditya Pratap, 2-Shresh Shah; **Boy's-I:** 1-Vidyansh Singhal, 2-Saksham Maurya, 3-Udit Mishra; **Boy's-II:** 1-Ayan Yadav, 2-Suryansh Singh, 3-Archdeep Biswas; **Boy's-III:** 1-Shreshth Sinha, 2-Haider Zaheer, 3-Reyansh; **Boy's-IV:** 1-Rudraksh, 2-Aalekh, 3-Agastya; **Girl's-I:** 1-Nusaubah, 2-Vaishnavi, 3-Khalida; **Girl's-II:** 1-Ali Zehra, 2-Kavya, 3-Kashvi

I want to bat with same intent that I showed in IPL and Ranji Trophy: Rahane

PTI ■ ARUNDEL

Back in India colours after nearly 18 months, senior batter Ajinkya Rahane doesn't want to have any "regrets" for the time lost and would like to bat in the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia with the same "intent" like he did in the just-concluded IPL.

"Coming back after 18-19 months, whatever has happened, good or bad, I don't want to think about my past. I just want to start afresh and keep doing whatever I have been doing," Rahane told BCCLTV on the sidelines of India's training session.

"Personally enjoyed playing for CSK as I have been batting well throughout the season, even before IPL. I had a very good domestic season and I felt good. So this comeback was a bit emotional for me."

Rahane, who was a part of CSK's fifth IPL title-winning side, has already received a lot of praise for his attacking batting and improved strike-rate in T20 cricket, and especially the 27-ball 61 against Mumbai Indians showed a shift in his intent.

"I want to bat with the same mindset and show same intent that I showed before coming here in IPL and Ranji



Trophy. I would not like to think about format whether it is T20 or Tests. The way I am batting now, I don't want to complicate things and the more I keep it simple, better it is for me," the veteran of 82 Tests and

4,931 runs said. The man, who led India to the most talked-about series triumph in Australia, back in 2021, also praised Rohit Sharma for leading the team admirably for the better part of this WTC cycle.

"I thought culture in team now is really good. Rohit is handling the team really well and I am sure Rahul bhai is also handling the team really well. That helps as well and atmosphere is really good. Whatever I am see-

ing right now is that everyone is enjoying each other's company," he said. Rahane thanked his family and friends for the support he got during his time away from the national team.

"It was (an) emotional

moment for me. When I got dropped, the support I got from my family was massive and dream was to play for India and that was massive. Playing for India matters a lot for me and I worked hard on my fitness and went back to domestic cricket."

"Thanks to BCCI and selectors and when I went back to domestic cricket, the goal was to play for India — be it Ranji Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy or practice session, for me, every day that I was waking up, it was all about thinking that I can play for India again.

"What made my comeback possible was enjoying each and every moment, be it success or failure, and having no regrets. Learning from every individual in Mumbai Ranji team. You have to grow as a cricketer every single day, learning process should not stop," he said.

Playing in England is challenging, feels Rahane, who had scored a match-winning hundred in a Test match at Lord's back in 2014.

"It's all about mindset and reading the situation well, staying in (the) moment and playing it session by session. In England, you just don't look at the pitch but also keep an eye on the weather. In England, you never feel that you are in even if you are batting on 70," he said.

Team India using multi-coloured balls in fielding drills

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

The Indian team's training sessions over the years have had their share of innovations and it is now using multi-coloured rubber balls for catching practice in order to adjust to last-minute deviations which could cost the side dear.

One of the Indian team's fielding drills at the Arundel ground here saw rising star Shubman Gill taking catches with the colour of the ball being green.

There were also yellow coloured balls but not the lawn tennis balls one usually gets to see when keepers and close-in fielders take powerfully hit reflex catches.

"These are specially made rubber balls, not the ones we are used to seeing in gully cricket. This is made for fielding drills. These balls are named 'reaction balls' and it is used for fielding drills only in some specific countries, mainly England or New Zealand where breeze and colder conditions become a factor," a renowned fielding coach, who has worked at NCA and at national camps, told PTI.

Asked if there was any significance for the green coloured balls that was used to give catching practice to Gill,

he said: "I don't think there is any specific scientific or crick-eting reason for any specific colour. But certainly there is a reason for using that kind of rubber balls for catching practice — especially for slip fielders and keepers."

"In England, due to under-lying moisture and the lush green outer area (beyond 22 yards) means that the ball will wobble a lot more than usual.

"England is the only country and to some extent in New Zealand, you will find that deliveries that beat the batter's outside edge is deviating wickedly, making it difficult to gather or catch the ball. The Dukes in England in fact wobbles even more," the coach added.

He then explained why these rubber "reaction balls" are being used for training.

"These balls are lighter in weight and hence it would wobble and also swing or deviate more. The idea is to get adjusted to this changing trajectory or line of the ball.

"Now coming to the colour the various colours are used because it is a human tendency to lose the sight of ball at last second. Various colours help you to judge the line of deviation till the last moment while catching the ball," he added.

Warner is looking good for WTC final: Khawaja

PTI ■ LONDON

Australian batting stalwart Usman Khawaja believes fellow opener David Warner is probably at his best as he prepares for the tough English summer, which includes the World Test Championship final against India and the Ashes.

Warner, 36, had endured a difficult tour of India earlier this year, and even though the Delhi Capitals skipper showed attacking intent while amassing 516 runs from 14 matches in the IPL, he will have his task cut out in the seaming English conditions.

However, Warner, likely on his final tour of England, received a big endorsement from Khawaja, who said the stalwart was "looking good" for the challenges ahead.

"I have seen him (Warner) bat in the last couple of days and, I don't want to jinx him, but he is looking good," Khawaja was quoted as saying by ICC.

While Warner was included in Australia's squad for the WTC final and the first two Ashes Tests, the selectors have also picked Marcus Harris and Matt Renshaw as options, but Khawaja believes if the veteran cricketer is in the playing XI, he will give it his best shot.

"This is probably the best I have seen him look in the nets for a while. That doesn't always correlate to runs, but if we are any chance of Davey Warner scoring runs this could be it. He always plays his best when his back is against the wall too," added Khawaja.



Warner aims to end Test career on a high

PTI ■ BECKENHAM

Star Australian opener David Warner on Saturday revealed his desire to end his red-ball career with a swansong Test at his home ground at the SCG against Pakistan in January.

Talking ahead of Australia's training session here, Warner, who is preparing for next week's World Test Championship (WTC) final against India, said he hopes the Sydney Test against Pakistan would be his last.

However, given his recent struggle in the longest format of the game, the southpaw isn't guaranteed a spot in the Australian Test side and he is well aware of it.

"You've got to score runs. I've always said the (2024) T20

World Cup would probably be my final game," Warner said.

"I probably owe it to myself and my family - if I can score runs here and continue to play back in Australia - I can definitely say I won't be playing that West Indies series.

"If I can get through this (WTC final and ensuing Ashes campaign) and make the Pakistan series I will definitely finish up then," he added.

After the WTC final, Australia are scheduled to play a five-match Ashes series against England.

Warner is a part of Australia's squad for the WTC final as well as the first two Ashes Tests. But the selectors have also picked Marcus Harris and Matt Renshaw as options.

Warner, apart from a magnificent double hundred against South Africa last December, has struggled for runs in recent assignments, managing a mere 26 runs in three Test innings in the recent tour of India before returning home injured.

He had also endured a forgettable campaign during the last Ashes, returning with an average of 9.50, the worst ever by an opener playing in 10 innings with England quick Broad dominating the 36-year-old.

"We saw when he scored a double century in his 100th game when everyone was writing him off and telling him he was done and it was his last game and he went out and gets 200. "You never write off a great player, so I am expecting runs," said Khawaja.

Warner indicated he would likely stick to his task during the Tests than get involved in any pre-Ashes banter with England cricketers, especially Broad who restricted the Australian to just 95 runs at an average less than 10 during the last Ashes in England.

"It (banter) just sells papers and clickbait, so I won't be getting involved in any of that stuff. I will leave it to themselves," said Warner of the Ashes series which will commence in Edgbaston on June 16. "Today, there is no real banter in the field. It is just about playing quality cricket and trying to get the upper edge on each other. It is a lot more connected these days than before which I think is great for the game," he added.

Long county stint will help me in WTC final: Labuschagne

PTI ■ LONDON

Leading Australian Test batter Marnus Labuschagne feels his long stint with English county side Glamorgan has helped him get fully prepared for the challenges in the run-up to the World Test Championship final against India, starting June 7.

Even as leading Australian cricketers, who are a part of the squad for the two assignments, including Ashes, were busy playing in the Indian Premier League, Labuschagne, the No.1-ranked Test batter in the world, was gearing up for the WTC final and the Ashes for the last to months playing county cricket.

The 28-year-old scored two centuries and a total of 504 runs in eight innings, and is confident of a good showing in the one-off game for Test supremacy against India, scheduled to begin at The Oval on June 7.

"I have been coming back (to country cricket) for five years now," Labuschagne was quoted as saying by ICC. "It is just part of



my normal routine of coming here. I love coming here, I love playing county cricket, I love the team at Glamorgan, I enjoy it so much otherwise I wouldn't be coming back," said Labuschagne.

The No.3 batter's decision to spend more than two months in England could have been driven by the fact that he scored only one half-century during the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which India won 2-1 at home.

"It just helps that this year is a Test Championship Final and Ashes year so it is

very helpful for leading into the series," he said.

Labuschagne added that batting at No.3 brought with it the responsibility of giving solidity to the innings by playing responsible innings.

"Naturally, anyone that is batting No.3 for Australia is going to have responsibility," Labuschagne said.

"Even in 2019 (the last time in England for Ashes) it was my responsibility, it was my job to score runs and if I didn't score runs they (Australia team management) would find someone else to do my job and I don't think that changes," he said.

"It is about finding ways to score runs and contribute to the side in as many games as I can."

During the 2019 Ashes series, a lot of focus was on Labuschagne as David Warner, Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft were returning for their first Test tour since the ban imposed on them following the 2018 'Sandpaper-gate' scandal in Cape Town.

PCB refuses to play ODI series in Lanka

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is upset at Sri Lankan board expressing its desire to host the entire Asia Cup and has declined the latter's offer to play an ODI bilateral series in the island nation.

According to sources in the PCB, relations between the PCB and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have turned sour after its offer of hosting the entire Asia Cup

instead of four games being held in Pakistan as per the 'Hybrid Model' proposed by Najam Sethi.

"An example of the increasingly strained relations between the two boards emerged after the PCB turned down a proposal by the Lankans to play a few One-Day International matches next month in Sri Lanka," PCB source stated.

Pakistan is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka in July to play two

Tests of the next ICC World Test Championship cycle and apparently the SLC had suggested that Pakistan also play a few ODIs as they are optimistic their team will book a spot from the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe and would need more exposure before the main event in October.

But a reliable source confirmed that the PCB after initially saying they would consider the proposal had turned it down

now.

"It is a clear indication that the PCB is not happy with the Sri Lankan board stepping in to offer to host the Asia Cup in September when it is Pakistan's turn to host the regional event at home," the source said.

He said in fact PCB chairman Sethi is also not happy with the response of the Bangladesh and Afghanistan boards over the Asia Cup issue.

Athletes left heartbroken by deadly train mishap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Virat Kohli and Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, among several other sportspersons, expressed their anguish over the devastating train accident in Odisha's Balasore district, that has killed at least 238 people and injured more than 900.

The train crash on Friday, involving the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train, is one of the deadliest such accidents since independence.

Officials in Bhubaneswar said 200 ambulances, 50 buses and 45 mobile health units were working at the accident site, besides 1,200 personnel. The bodies were being taken to the hospitals in all kinds of vehicles, including tractors.

Kohli, who is in England with the India team for the World Test Championship final against Australia at The Oval from June 7, wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"Saddened to hear about the tragic train accident in Odisha. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families who lost their loved ones and wishing a speedy recovery to the injured," tweeted Kohli.

India's first individual Olympic gold medalist, rifle shooter Abhinav Bindra, he had been left heartbroken by the news of the accident.

"Heartbreaking news from Odisha about the devastating train accident. My heart goes out to all those affected and their loved ones during this incredibly difficult time. Please, let's all extend our support and prayers to them. May the injured recover swiftly," tweeted Bindra, the 2008 Beijing Olympics gold medalist in 10m air rifle.

The train crash, the fourth deadliest in India according to available records, happened near the Bahananaga Bazaar station in Balasore district, about 250km south of Kolkata and 170km north of Bhubaneswar, around 7 pm on Friday, prompting the Railway Ministry to order a probe.

Pandya best allrounder in world cricket: Klusener

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Rating Hardik Pandya as one of the best fast-bowling all-rounders, former South African great Lance Klusener on Saturday believes the Indian possibly gave up on Test cricket a bit too easily to manage his workload.

Plagued by injuries, Pandya, who last played Tests for India in September 2018, has limited himself to only playing white-ball cricket and ruled himself out of the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia.

"He (Pandya) is a fantastic cricketer, and if he can stay fit and continues to bowl 135+ kmph, he will always be challenging... as one of the best all-rounders in the world," Klusener told reporters in a media interaction at the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club.

Pandya had ruled himself out saying it would not be "ethical" to take someone's place without even contributing one per cent in India's journey to the WTC final.

Asked if Pandya gave up on Test cricket a bit too easily, Klusener said, "Yes, possibly. Test cricket (is) always the pinnacle



of testing where you are as a cricketer, and testing yourselves. "Test cricket hasn't really changed much from way back but I also understand that times have moved on as well."

Klusener further said a fast-bowling allrounder is not a "dibbly-dobbler" but someone who can clock 135kph consistently. "Fast bowling allrounders need to be bowling 135+. I don't think there would be some dibbly-dobblers that we used to see in England, I don't think all that (is) effective anymore."

"I honestly believe that a guy like Ben Stokes who bowls 135+, those people are still gold in any form of the game," said Klusener, a member of the 1999 ODI World Cup team that had a heartbreak loss to Australia in the semi-final. But managing the

three formats in today's era has contributed to the decline of fast-bowling allrounder. However, Klusener believes their time will come again.

"I always think it goes in cycles. When I played, there were a lot of fast-bowling all-rounders... then we kind of saw the allrounders bowling spin."

"Certainly at this point in time, I don't see as many fast-bowling allrounders, I just think it's a cycle. We might just see in the next five years those kinds of cricketers coming through again. If we manage the workloads correctly there is a lot of cricket, there's still a place for them in any team."

Klusener believes India are well equipped to field a pace or spin-heavy lineup and it will be horses for courses for them in

the WTC final against Australia beginning at The Oval from June 7.

"Spin has been India's strength traditionally. They have the attack that can play on any surface," he said, when asked whether India should go for two spinners or one pace-bowling allrounder in Shardul Thakur.

"The way the Indian seamers have developed in the last couple of years - a reason why they play in successive WTC finals, that's why they are one of the best Test sides in the world. "Teams in the past would prepare green tops so India won't be able to compete, but that's not the case anymore. I think they are now well equipped, whatever the conditions, they will be able to pick the team that will be competitive."

Asked about his favourite team to win the WTC final, he said, "It's a tough call. The battle will be between Australia's bowlers and India's batters, the team that wins that battle will come out on top," he said.

Klusener was also all praise for countryman Faf du Plessis, who had another fruitful IPL season finishing second on the run-getters' list behind Shubman Gill.

Rohit, Surya among probables for Mumbai's off-season camp

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The newly-formed Mumbai selection committee, led by former India cricketer Raju Kulkarni, on Friday named 35 probable players, including big names like Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav for an off-season training camp scheduled to be held here next week.

Besides, India captain Rohit and Suryakumar, the list also includes Ajinkya Rahane and Shardul Thakur.

But their participation in the camp is unlikely as they are currently in England for the World Test Championship final against Australia starting June 7 at The Oval.

Shreyas Iyer, who missed the entire IPL due to a lower back injury and is currently recovering after undergoing a surgery in mid April, has also been named for the camp.

The BCCI had informed in a release that Iyer, who will also miss the WTC final, was slated to report to the National Cricket Academy for rehabilitation in

two weeks' time post his surgery.

The list released by the Mumbai selection committee include senior fast bowler Dhawal Kulkarni, all-rounder Shivan Dube, who had a terrific IPL for champions Chennai Super Kings, batting mainstay Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw.

Right-arm fast bowler Siddharth Raut, who played a couple of matches for the 41-time champions in the Ranji Trophy last season, has been dropped.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) president Amol Kale, vice-president Sanjay Naik, secretary Ajinkya Naik, joint-secretary Deepak Patil and members of the apex council on Thursday night hosted the advisory for cricketing matters, which was also attended by former player Milind Rege, Cricket Improvement Committee (CIC) chairman Lalchand Rajput among others at the Wankhede Stadium.

The upcoming cricket season was discussed during the gathering here.

"I love having every right to be as outspoken as I am, as any man would be"
— Chrissy Teigen



THE WORLD AT HER FEET

Sheetal, born without hands, is being feted as the world’s first para female archer who shoots using her feet. She has been labelled as a perfect role model for youngsters as she displayed raw courage and faced all her challenges in life with a determined resolve to succeed, writes MOHIT KANDHARI

At first sight it is very difficult to spot Sheetal Devi in a gathering of fellow players assembled at an archery range for regular practice sessions. A girl with less than five feet, Sheetal may come across as a small town girl, but in reality, she is not an ordinary athlete.

Hailing from a remote village of Lohi Dhar in Mughal Maidan area of Kishtwar district in Jammu & Kashmir, this 16-year-old girl has come a long way and is already making waves in the sporting world. At present she is being looked upon as India’s next big medal hope in the upcoming para-archery world championships and 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

Born without hands (phocomelia), a condition where both her hands were underdeveloped, Sheetal is being feted as the world’s first para female archer who shoots using her feet. Before winning her place of honour in the world of sports, Sheetal had left everyone spell bound with her ace performances and firm resolve to succeed.

Last week, when I visited the Archery range located in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine board sports complex in Katra, several players greeted me with a big cheer.

While I acknowledged their greetings one by one, I shook hands with one of the seniors and paralympian Rakesh Kumar. Before meeting others, I asked him whether Sheetal was also around. It was then she also greeted me from an adjacent bench in a feeble voice.

After registering her presence, I too heaved a sigh of relief as I had travelled all the way from Jammu to meet her. I congratulated her for winning three medals --- one Gold, Silver and Bronze in the Para Archery World Ranking Tournament held in the Czech Republic between May 13 and May 21. She acknowledged with her sparkling eyes and mesmerising smile.

The Indian team secured nine medals out of which five medals were contributed by the archers from the Shrine board training academy.

Rakesh, a paralympian, and Sheetal won gold in Compound open mixed team and Compound men open doubles. Besides, Sheetal and Jyoti clinched silver in compound women open and bronze in compound women doubles. The Shrine archers contributed five medals for India in the total tally by which the country secured 2nd position in the event.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, congratulated both the sports persons for their performances. He tweeted that “the entire nation is proud of their achievement and their feat will inspire millions of our youth.”

Chief Executive Officer of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Anshul Garg said the archers being trained at the Shrine Board’s Sports Complex will also

win medals in the forthcoming events of the archery at the international levels, thereby bringing laurels to the country, the UT of Jammu & Kashmir and the Shrine Board.

TRAINING HARD FOR 2024 PARA-OLYMPICS BERTH

A day after returning from the Czech Republic, Sheetal was back in the training academy without taking a single day break. Speaking to The Sunday Pioneer, Sheetal said, “I feel very happy after winning three medals in a recent event. I am upbeat and very optimistic. My josh is very high. My coaching and hardwork is showing positive results and now I am determined to secure my berth in the 2024 Paralympics and win a medal for my country.”

Referring to her training schedule, Sheetal said, “Each day we come to the academy and practice for about four hours between 8 and 12 pm before breaking for a two hour lunch break.”

During the training session Sheetal is assisted by her fellow players as and when required. The players also crack jokes and play mischief with each other. The second session starts at 2pm and the players call it a day after attending an hour long physical training session between 5pm and 6 pm.”

Her coach Kuldeep Vedwan told The Sunday Pioneer we have already started training for the next big event lined up in the month of July and September 2023.

Sheetal, along with other players, are focusing her energies on World Archery Para Championship scheduled in Pilsen, Czech Republic in the month of July and Para Asian Games in China between September 23 and October 8 to reserve their berth for the 2024 Paralympics scheduled to take place in Paris.

Talking about Sheetal’s journey, Kuldeep Vedwan told The Sunday Pioneer, “11 months ago Sheetal first arrived here at the Archery range. She was introduced to me by one of the volunteers working for a famous NGO. Before inducting her in the academy I interacted with her and tried my best to motivate her over a ZOOM meeting. Initially, I spent two long months carefully trying to understand her needs and how I could make her play archery and hit a bull’s eye. Before starting her training schedule, I again counselled her. Since then, she has not looked back.” Vedwan said, feeling elated over her recent performance.

Vedwan said it’s amazing that in such a short span of time she has really proved her mettle. By winning three medals in the recently concluded Para Archery World Ranking Tournament she has already secured her place in the upcoming Para Archery world championship scheduled to be organised in Pilsen, Czech Republic and para Asian Games. I am hopeful Sheetal will secure her berth in the Paralympics and win us a medal in the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.



“**RAKESH, A PARALYMPIAN, AND SHEETAL WON GOLD IN COMPOUND OPEN MIXED TEAM AND COMPOUND MEN OPEN DOUBLES. BESIDES, SHEETAL AND JYOTI CLINCHED SILVER IN COMPOUND WOMEN OPEN AND BRONZE IN COMPOUND WOMEN DOUBLES**”

SHEETAL’S JOURNEY

A native of Lohi Dhar village of Mughal Maidan area in Kishtwar, Sheetal’s initial phase of life was full of struggle. She was born without hands and it is with great difficulty that her parents, Man Singh, a farmer by profession and mother Shakti Devi, a home maker looked after her basic needs.

Tucked in the hills she received no other medical help in her formative years. As she grew up, she started using her feet to feed herself. As Sheetal was keen on pursuing her normal school studies so she gradually started using her feet for writing as well. She has passed her class 10th examination and is studying in class XI.

No one in the family discouraged her. Remembering her school days, Sheetal said, “I used to attend regular classes with other children in my village. I was never discouraged by any one. My teachers and my friends helped me a lot and supported me. I used to play with them like a normal child.”

Life took a sudden turn when she was spotted by a senior army officer at a local fair in Kishtwar district. The local army authorities approached her family and volunteered to support her. At that time Sheetal was nurturing her childhood dream of becoming a school teacher.

Fulfilling her desire Sheetal has been adopted by the Indian Army for her education since September 2019. Later with the help of reputed NGOs, the Indian Army had facilitated her travel and arranged other

logistics to explore the possibility of providing her with a prosthetic arm.

Sheetal’s parents accompanied her to Bangalore where she was first treated and later provided with the prosthetic arm. At present she is not using the same while undergoing training. After she won three medals she received lots of good wishes and blessings from netizens who rallied behind her and wished her luck for all her future championships.

She was labeled as a perfect role model for youngsters as she displayed raw courage and faced all her challenges in life with a determined resolve to succeed.

A BIG MOTIVATION

Practicing in the company of other players Sheetal feels motivated. To attend her regular practice sessions Sheetal reaches archery academy, wearing sleepers. During her day long training she prefers staying barefoot in the archery range in order to hit a bull’s eye.

On an average she is spending 6-7 hours under the guidance of her coach Kuldeep Vedwan at the archery range.

Before focusing on her target, she gently picks an arrow and adjusts it on the bow string. Using her feet, she adjusts the arrow against her shoulder and then triggers the shot with jaw and back muscles before hitting a bullseye.

“During training we interact with each other and discuss our performances. Fellow players in the academy are very helpful. They walk with me in the archery range and pull out the arrows after checking my score.”

“Our coach sir also evaluates our performance and wherever we need his guidance he chips in and does course correction.”

In Katra, Sheetal is staying with her mother and younger sister Shivani. Her mother Shakti sometimes visits the academy and spends time with her. Sheetal says, “When she was home her sister Shivani used to look after her basic needs. She is my dear friend.”

Commenting on the quality of training facilities Sheetal said we have been provided with excellent training facilities by

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board authorities to ensure better performance in the field.

Apart from routine training sessions we attend physical training modules, perform yoga and meditation to maintain our calm and enhance our abilities to focus on our goals.

A former Olympian from Katra Rakesh Kumar, who participated in the Tokyo Olympics, said Sheetal is a very promising athlete and is training hard in the academy to realise her goal of winning a gold medal in the world championships and paralympics.

Rakesh Kumar is the senior most player in the academy. He is also working hard and setting high benchmarks for younger players to achieve their goals.

Rakesh told The Sunday Pioneer, “I started my journey six years ago after coming in contact with the coach Kuldeep Vedwan in 2017. He said, I met with a deadly accident in 2009. I was in a very bad condition but then I decided to keep myself busy and opened a mobile recharge shop in Katra. In 2017 I met my coach Kuldeep Vedwan.”

“When I met Rakesh, I motivated him and asked him to try archery at the academy.” He made a sincere effort and went on to become a para-Olympian

Kuldeep Vedwan also highlighted the role of Sports Authority of India, and the Archery Association of India for their support, and stressed the importance of psychologists and dietitians in sports.

Para Archer Rakesh said, “Archery is a mind-game. When we are participating in a championship we are bound to feel pressure. Our training gives us an edge. So, just like the coach is essential for us, psychologists are equally important.”

Highlighting another important aspect Rakesh said para-athletes face difficulties while moving from one place to another. “They spend maximum time in a wheelchair, we may not eat much, but digestion becomes a problem and so a good dietitian is very important.”

At present over two dozen budding archers from Tamil Nadu, Haryana, New Delhi and from different districts of Jammu & Kashmir are receiving training at the academy.

Manisha Bhadana, from Faridabad in Haryana has recently joined the training academy and is witnessing improvement in her game. She told The Sunday Pioneer that the atmosphere at the academy is very very competitive. “I feel motivated while receiving training in the presence of International players such as Para-Olympian Rakesh Kumar and young archer Sheetal.”

Pravin, an upcoming archer from Tamil Nadu said, he is training at the academy for more than six years and aiming to perform better in the coming championships. Amit Thakur from Reasi said, “We are focusing on Khelo India games and National Championships to perform better and earn medals.”

(The writer is Senior Correspondent of The Pioneer)

China creating another Xinjiang

President Xi Jinping is all out to prevent the Islamic radicals across China. The first was the western-most province of Xinjiang wherein he has been undertaking full-scale measures to shield the Uyghur Muslims to stay away from Muslim extremists. Even global governance institutions like the UN had complained against the Xi regime that the ethnic Uyghurs and other minorities are being targeted simply in the name of preventing Islamic terror in the country.

A report published by the UN accused China of serious violations of human rights against the Uyghur Muslims that may be termed as “crime against humanity”. The reality is that as per various international media sources and leaked videos from Uyghur detainees, Beijing is creating large concentration camps in the guise of training camps. And Chinese authorities are calling these camps as “Re-education Camps” or “vocational training centres”. The Human Rights Watch and other global rights agencies say that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang which the Communists completely deny.

Currently, the Hui Muslims in Yunnan are under threat from Beijing. To them, China is trying to create “Another Xinjiang” in Yunnan which they say they won’t allow it to happen. It’s a province that borders Burma, Laos and Vietnam. It’s again clamping down on religious freedoms of the Muslims and demolition of the mosques in these areas by the local authorities.

This month, thousands of ethnic Muslims came out in this Southwestern Province defying public orders to stop police from removing its dome and minarets. It took place in Najaiyang Village of the province where the locals fought with the authorities in a last-ditch attempt to save their sanctum sanctorum.

It is widely believed that all these measures are an integral part of what President Xi calls as an attempt to “sinicize” religion.

The Huis have a rich historical background. History says they are distant descendants of Arab and Persian traders who had come to Imperial China in the past. They are a group of nearly 11 million strong Muslim com-



munity living in scattered pockets from northwest to coastal belts of China. But Ningxia is an officially designated Autonomous Region for the Hui ethnic minority where they live.

Unlike the other ethnic minorities in China, they are widely assimilated with the majority Han community and their rich cultural traditions. Most of them speak Mandarin and live side by side with the powerful Hans. In recent years, they also have acquired more freedoms to practise their religious ceremonies than any other ethnic groups in China.

This is not the first time Beijing is trying to restrict Huis in Yunnan. Five years back, in 2018, the Hui community engaged in a tense standoff with the authorities when the latter came to demolish a newly constructed mosque. Thousands of Huis came out to stop government officials to safeguard the mosque in Ningxia, in the northwest part of the country.

But later, the Government

had replaced the domes and minarets of the mosque with indigenous Chinese style pagodas. So, the Hui Muslims are now quite familiar with the evil designs of the Communists of Beijing who have been making sustained efforts to pushing their long held religious and cultural traditions and symbols all these years.

Interestingly, a court order in 2020 ruled that recent additions to the mosque that includes a domed roof and minaret are not legal. So these could be removed or demolished as per law. It is believed that the administration is rightly acting under the directions of the court. Last week, the local security agencies warned the protesters to maintain law and order.

Sadly, the mosque that the local officials wanted to dismantle belonged to 14th century. It’s an ancient place of worship and largely revered by the Hui Muslims. Indeed, the town of Nagu wherein the incident sparked violence this week is considered as a historic

home and a rich cultural hub of the Hui people in Yunnan Province.

The “sinicization policy” aims to purge external or foreign religious beliefs. It strongly urges the ethnic minorities to align more closely with Chinese culture and more specifically with the standard codes of the official and the most powerful Communist Party of China (CPC), which follows an atheist line of thinking. So, the problem originates from here itself for the largely devoted and faithful Hui Muslims in this part of China.

Now, how have the Chinese people and officials reacted to this saga of violence against the ethnic Hui Muslims? Normally, officials stay tight-lipped in China. Whereas China has a huge social media called Weibo like the Twitter through which people express their views and at times criticise the Government and even the most powerful CPC. But this time, the government quickly removed all the anti-govern-

ment comments and views in regard to the mosque demolition in Nagu.

And in fact, one message supporting the Govt said national policy to handle such unrest is fine. The State should not allow any “wolfish extremists” to impact the law-and-order situation in the country.

It’s loud and clear that the majority of the Chinese people are either forced to live under the diktats of the Communists, especially under its authoritarian rule and rulers or they long for stability rather than unrest of any kind.

Xi’s new China is typically what he wants to be. The President forever is highly ambitious. With the falling western liberal order and rising global clout of China, Xi is fast mobilising the CPC, the Army, diplomacy, economy and finally his people into one central point that China will rise and rise. Xi is a combination of both power and paranoia. His is a regime conspiring to create imbalance in global governance, as many believe. For Xi,

he is working hard and fast to spread the message to his people, making China strong demands uniting under the Party.

And joining the Party is precisely a gateway into the vanguard of the Chinese elite forever. For him, the Party is the only future. And thus, once he echoed: “The Party-Government, the Armed Forces, society and academia; east, west, south, north and centre; the Party leads everything.” If this is what he foresees and expects compatriots to do, he will not allow Hui Muslims to preserve their age-old traditions and unique lifestyle strongly imbued with religiosity.

Today, Islamophobia in the West is abetting, but in China it is on the rise. But punching down the ethnic Huis and Uyghurs will not offer any readymade solution to the Communists. When the country is aspiring to be rich, resourceful and powerful in the global stage, it needs to be patient with cultural, regional,

ethnic and especially, religious differences.

The Party must accept assimilation of various cultural and religious strands as the world is fast encircled by multiple waves of globalisation and post-globalisation. But then continued atrocities and persecution of Hui and Uyghurs will certainly damage China’s reputation on the global stage. Xi is completely an anti-thesis of Mao as the latter desired for continuous revolution. Whereas Xi called for peaceful China meaning total stability? And for managing this stability, he will not mind “re-educating” the Hui’s the same way he and the Chinese statecraft has been doing for the Uyghurs so far in Xinjiang.

Finally, the liberal democracies and their leaders must be serious about China’s massive “sinicisation” of Uyghurs and now a fresh attempt at Hui Muslims. Truly, this “sinicisation” is nothing but the curtailment of one of the edifices of basic freedoms that is the right to freedom of religion available in most of the modern nations.

Innocuous as it may seem, but this is the beginning of a new trend of religious persecution of minorities with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of President Xi.

It must be stopped, and the world leaders should voice their concerns in global governance institutions. China must behave responsibly and like a law-abiding nation. Before venturing out to capture the global stage and records, Beijing must set its own house in order. Huis and Uyghurs have the same basic rights the way it is enjoyed by the majority Hans in China.

By targeting the ethnic Muslims, China is simply inviting the wrath of the global jihadists. It would be prudent on China’s part to stop atrocities on the Hui Muslims. Making Yunnan another Xinjiang would be fatal for China’s stability in the long run.

Denying the freedom to practice and enjoy ethnic religious rights goes against all basic universal tenets of human rights. It’s completely unfair to keep the Hui Muslims under a state of constant fear.

(The writer is currently the Head of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Geeta University, Panipat)

Beijing must set its own house in order. Huis and Uyghurs have the same basic rights as those enjoyed by the majority Hans in China. By targeting the ethnic Muslims, China is simply inviting the wrath of the global jihadists. It would be prudent on China’s part to stop atrocities on the Hui Muslims. Making Yunnan another Xinjiang would be fatal for China’s stability in the long run



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Climate change not a myth

The saddest part of the climate menace is that the poorest countries and island communities are the worst sufferers of climate change. Whereas they have not played any role in altering the environment



CHITRANGADA

Climate change is real. Not a myth. Anthropogenic elements are central to environmental disturbances. The fear is that humanity is in great danger. The situation today is escalating. We are advancing towards a catastrophe.

Climate change is one of the most emerging problems and we humans are the main predators to such things. Now the question arises: how are we going to stop it? We may have many motives and initiatives in our mind but are we able to implement them in a useful way? We can’t just see that we are the ones who have brought such destruction for the past 200 years. Fossil fuels and greenhouse gases are the uprising problems. The most astonishing part is that the earth is a system where everything is connected. If an area is affected, then the change is seen everywhere.

In 2021, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres unveiled the UN Report on Climate Change called ‘State of the Global Climate 2020’. It is a report prepared by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a key agency of the UN. The State of the Global Climate 2022 released by the

WMO indicates the continued rise of greenhouse gas emissions in the last year. It focuses on primary climate indicators like greenhouse gases, temperatures, sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification, sea ice and glaciers. The report seriously highlights climate change and extreme weather conditions. The Report states that drought, floods, and heat-waves are major parts of the globe, and the costs are rising for all. It is also reported that global mean temperature for the last 8 years has been recorded as the highest. Further, sea levels and ocean heat are at their record high. It is predicted that this trend will continue for centuries. The Report also says that sea ice in Antarctica falls to the lowest level. The continent of Europe has witnessed the breaking of glacier melts.

The Climate Change Synthesis Report 2023 released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the state of the knowledge of climate change, its widespread impact, and risks. It says that human activities principally through emission of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface



temperature reaching 1.1 degree Celsius above 1850-1900 in 2011-2020. It’s alarming.

Another UN Report in the year 2021 highlighted that time is running out to tackle the climate crisis now. It was clearly said that even the deadly Covid-19 has failed to put a brake on relentless environmental change. Again, this WMO Report mentioned that because of the severe Covid-19 restrictions, the rich and advanced nations barely could help in assisting the climate-affected nations of the world. This pandemic has seriously delayed the delivery of climate finance and other protective

measures to extremely vulnerable nations, especially the small island developing countries like Tuvalu, Madagascar, Seychelles, Maldives, Fiji, Haiti, etc. The UN stressed that the year 2021 is the year of action for the protection of the people from the disastrous effects of climate disasters.

Besides other negative impacts of climate change, it is also preventing people from enjoying basic rights or human rights in many parts of the world. Last year, a group of young people filed a petition at the European Court of Human Rights. They complained to the Court that climate inaction is

a human rights violation. They all highlight a 1990s era treaty named ‘Energy Charter Treaty’ according to which governments are required to compensate energy companies and investors if public policies cut into their profits. And this refers to public policies that are made to fight environmental change.

We all must know that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2021 for the first time tried to connect human rights and climate change to the table of the Conference of the Parties (COP). The aim of this move was to promote rights-based

climate actions and the integration of human rights in the historic Paris Agreement. Since then, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has expanded its work on human rights and climate change all around the globe.

Under the existing international human rights law and the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, all the states have the responsibility to protect its people from any foreseeable danger. These laws and conventions have the mandate to protect, respect and create conditions for fulfilling our human rights. The dangers heralded by climate disasters are ever present in our life today. It’s largely hampering us from enjoying the basic rights of the people. Under the existing international human rights law, the states and the world bodies have the responsibility to take immediate steps to mitigate the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. And it must ensure that all of us have the necessary means to adapt to rapid climate changes.

The saddest part of the climate menace is that the poorest countries and island communities are the worst sufferers of climate change. Whereas

they have not played any role in altering the environment. But it is also true that these countries are directly or indirectly enjoying the benefits of the massive industrialization and post industrialization era. The products of all polluting and extractive industries produced by advanced nations are used by all of us including the poor and vulnerable nations. In that way, we all are part of the damages done to the Planet Earth today. So we need to refrain from all such practices that may harm or destroy this planet not only today but also in future also.

I, being a youngster, am still confused about what will happen to Planet Earth. Like me, millions are in a state of shock. But no one has the right to steal our future. No one has the divine will to bring back our planet to the pre-industrial level. What we can do is to prevent further disasters. We can plan for active mitigation efforts. It’s our home. Let’s preserve it together. But do remember that ‘Climate Abyss’ is one of the starkest realities of the 21st century.

(The writer is a young climate thinker based in Delhi-NCR)



Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Parrot Green
Lucky day Saturday

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Wednesday

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Wednesday

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BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Each mind is unique

The next higher level is one-pointed state, which again is gained through

Beyond the one-pointed state is the 'concentrated mind'. This is a stage when mind literally becomes free from unwanted thoughts. One is then in full control of mind, whereby one is able to use it as an instrument to one's asking rather than being carried away by its habit tendencies. Having arrived at this state of mind, one comes out with one's optimum best, as it gets tuned up well to the all-powerful and all-knowing, all-pervading consciousness element – the cosmic mind.

Next in line comes individual-specific limitations of mind. They exemplify uniqueness of each being characterised by their varying mental-traits. It may not be out of place to mention here that Energy-Trinity – Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa – the primal forces driving our lives – give rise to three types of attributes in psychological terms, with one or the other prominently displayed in each being. What particular element plays heavy in our mind defines our individual character, and that is reflection of our Karmic carryover from the past. This sets the premise for individualised

Mind engaged in its likes and dislikes, prejudices and obsessions, wanton desires and temptations of life, pleasures and pains, continuously keep breeding

Now you can write to us at agendapioneer@gmail.com