

CITY 3
RAJNATH SINGH LAUNCHES
352 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

WORLD 6
RUSSIAN ATTACKS CONTINUE
AFTER ICC'S ARREST WARRANT

SPORT 8
INDIA TO FACE AUS IN
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Some hurt by success of India's democracy: Modi

'That's why they are criticising'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the success of India's democracy and its institutions is hurting some people and that is why they are attacking it, in an apparent swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his criticism of the state of democracy in the country.

When the country is full of confidence and resolve, and intellectuals of the world are optimistic about India, talk of pessimism, showing the country in poor light and hurting the morale of the country also takes place, he said at the India Today Conclave.

"When something auspicious is happening, there is a tradition to apply 'kaala tika', so when so many auspicious things are happening, some people have taken the responsibility to apply this 'kaala tika', Modi said, without naming anyone.

His remarks come amid a political slugfest over Gandhi's



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a gift from an exhibitor while visiting an exhibition during the 'Global Millets (Shree Anna) Conference' in Pusa, in New Delhi on Saturday (Report on Page 4)

PTI

remarks during his recent visit to the UK, with the BJP accusing him of maligning India on foreign soil and seeking foreign intervention. Modi said India has shown the world democ-

racy can deliver.

He said, "The success of India's democracy and its institutions is hurting some people and that is why they are attacking it."

Modi said he is confident that despite such attacks, the country will move forward to meet its objectives.

Targeting the Opposition, Modi said scams used to make the headlines earlier but now the "corrupt" joining hands over action against them is making news.

The world is stating that this is India's moment and this has been made possible because of the change of promise and performance in the country, Modi said.

The PM said all Governments worked according to their abilities and got results according, but his Government wanted new results and worked on a different speed and scale.

"Today India is the fastest growing economy in the world, it is the number one in smart-phone data consumers, it is the second biggest mobile manufacturer and has the third biggest startup ecosystem," he said.

Leading economists, analysts and thinkers of the world are saying in one voice that it is India's moment, the prime minister said.

Talks fail, powermen's agitation continues

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The confrontation between the state government and power employees intensified on Saturday with both sides refusing to budge. Talks held between the Energy minister AK Sharma and employees' unions failed on late Saturday night, although another round of parleys are expected on Sunday.

The government cracked the whip on the striking power employees as services of 1,332 contractual employees was been terminated and thousands of others faced dismissal from service.

On its part, the Power Employees' Joint Action Committee threatened to proceed on indefinite strike if the power employees were dismissed from service and the employees' leaders arrested under the provisions of the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA).

"The power employees would return to duty on Sunday evening only after the services of the dismissed contractual employs are restored. We will not be deterred by draconian laws like NSA (National



Energy Minister AK Sharma and power employees' union leaders holding talks in Lucknow on Saturday night.

Security Act) and ESMA. We will not backtrack and are ready to face the repression by the state," said Shailendra Dubey, convener of the power employees' Joint Action Committee.

The government invoked the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) against 22 power employees' leaders and ordered their arrest.

However, Energy Minister AK Sharma, claiming that the power supply was normal and situation under control, said

the strike had affected revenue collection and was causing huge inconvenience to the students appearing in annual examinations and had disturbed the normal life of the common citizens. He said the strike had also adversely impacted the execution of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) for improving and strengthening the power distribution network across the state.

Terming the power employees' strike as "total fail-

ure", the minister said "it is our duty to persuade and convince the power employees of the futility of the strike; consequences will follow if they refuse to relent and remain adamant".

He added that the outsourcing companies had been told to recruit new people to replace the dismissed employees.

The power employees are on a token 72-hour strike from 10 pm on Thursday.

"We are ready for talks with the government without any precondition. The government is forcing confrontation by dismissing contractual employees and threatening to arrest the employees' leaders under the provisions of ESMA. The repression of the power employees and their leaders can turn the situation ugly and the 72-hour-strike can turn into an indefinite strike," Dubey said.

Referring to the measures taken by the government for addressing the demands of the power employees, the minister said "bonus was paid to the employees even as the balance sheet of the UP Power Corporation Limited is in deep

Continued on Page 5

CAPSULE

TRUMP EXPECTS TO BE ARRESTED ON TUESDAY

New York: Donald Trump said in a social media post that he expects to be arrested on Tuesday as a New York prosecutor is eyeing charges in a case examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president.

DON'T START SESSION BEFORE APRIL: CBSE

New Delhi: The CBSE has warned schools against starting the academic session before April 1, saying it poses the risk of causing anxiety and burnout among students. The warning by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) comes after several schools commenced their academic session, especially for Classes 10 and 12.

HASINA HAILS INDIA FOR OIL PIPELINE

Dhaka: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Saturday that her country's first cross-border oil pipeline with India will play a vital role in ensuring fuel security in Bangladesh at a time when the world was facing a serious energy crisis due to the Ukraine war.

4 FROM BIHAR KILLED AS BUS OVERTURNS IN J&K

Srinagar: Four people hailing from Bihar were killed and 28 injured when their bus overturned in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Saturday, officials said.

No compromise on JPC demand, Rahul won't say sorry: Jairam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said he does not see a "middle path" to end the logjam in Parliament as the Opposition's demand for a JPC probe into the Adani issue was "non-negotiable" and the question of an apology over Rahul Gandhi's remarks in the UK does not arise.

In an interview with PTI, Ramesh said the Government is rattled by 16 Opposition parties coming together to demand a joint parliamentary probe into the Adani issue and is resorting to a "3D orchestrated campaign — distort, defame and divert".

The former Union Minister also hit out at BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's efforts to seek termination of Rahul's membership of the Lok Sabha over his remarks in the UK, saying all this was "intimidation" and part of efforts to distract from the real issues.

The remarks by the Congress general secretary in-charge communications comes amid the logjam in Parliament over Rahul's remarks during his recent trip to the UK, with both houses failing to transact any significant business on the first five days of the Budget Session's second half.

Continued on Page 5

LAC situation fragile, but a few drool over China: Jaishankar

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of caution regarding the tense border in Ladakh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday termed the situation there "fragile" and "dangerous" as per military assessment.

He also took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and quipped when "panda lovers try to be China hawks, it does not fly." Both of them are engaged in a war of words regarding ties with China in the last few weeks.

Incidentally, Jaishankar on Saturday tweeted a picture with Rahul Gandhi and some other Opposition MPs. They were briefed in the Parliament consultative committee meeting by the Minister on India's G-20 presidency.

Some other MPs including Shatrughan Sinha (TMC), Shashi Tharoor (Congress) and Priyanka Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena) attended the meeting here.

On the situation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Jaishankar said in the India Today conclave, though India and China have made substantial progress in disengaging from friction points, situation remains "fragile" and "danger-



ous" as per military assessment.

He categorically stated that India's relationship with China cannot return to normal unless all outstanding issues at the LAC are resolved.

Bilateral ties had entered a "challenging and abnormal phase" due to the heightened tensions at the Himalayan border and along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, the external affairs minister said.

Recalling his recent meetings with his Chinese counterparts, Jaishankar said, "When I met Wang Yi, we came to an understanding on how to resolve the border crisis. Now I've met with the new foreign minister Qin Gang. I have made it clear that we cannot have a breach of peace then continue the rest of the relationship like nothing happened."

Continued on Page 5



Police detain supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan during a search operation in the Khan's resident, in Lahore on Saturday

AP

Police storm Imran house

Court cancels arrest warrant

PTI ■ LAHORE

Over 10,000 armed Punjab police personnel stormed Imran Khan's residence here on Saturday and arrested dozens of his party workers after the former Pakistan prime minister left for Islamabad to attend a court hearing in a corruption case against him.

Meanwhile a Pakistani judge on Saturday cancelled Imran's arrest warrants in the Toshakhana corruption case and allowed him to go home without indicting him. "The situation as it is, the hearing

and appearance cannot proceed that is why all those who have gathered here should disperse after marking attendance. There is no need for shelling or pelting, the hearing cannot be held today," the judge was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper.

The police personnel, using a power shovel, removed the barricades and tents at the entrance of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief's Zaman Park residence and evicted hundreds of his supporters camping there to prevent Khan's arrest in the Toshakhana case.

They conducted a search at the house after demolishing its main gate and walls.

Continued on Page 5

Amritpal gives Punjab cops the slip after chase

PNS/PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Government on Saturday launched a major crackdown against radical Sikh preacher and Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh, with police arresting 78 members of an outfit headed by him, officials said.

The elusive preacher himself, however, gave the police a slip after an hour-long chase when his cavalcade was intercepted in Jalandhar district, even as authorities stepped up security at several places and suspended internet services in the state till Sunday noon.

The police said it has launched a "massive State-wide cordon and search operations (CASO)" in the State against elements of "Waris Punjab De" (WPD), headed by Singh, against whom several criminal cases had been registered.

During the operation, a total of 78 persons have been arrested so far, while, several others have been detained for questioning, it said.

Amritpal Singh and others are on the run and a massive manhunt has been launched to nab them, a police spokesperson said.

Some supporters of the



Waris Punjab De chief shared some videos on social media claiming that policemen were chasing them. A video also showed Amritpal sitting in a vehicle and one of his aides could be heard saying policemen were after "Bhai saab" (Amritpal).

During the state-wide operation, nine weapons, including one .315 bore rifle, seven rifles of 12 bore, one revolver and 373 live cartridges of different caliber have been recovered so far, the police said.

The police spokesperson informed that the WPD elements are involved in four criminal cases relating to spreading disharmony among classes, attempt to murder, attack on police personnel and creating obstructions in the lawful discharge of duties of public servants.

Continued on Page 5

Unseasonal rain casts shadow over harvesting season

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As unseasonal rain and hail are expected in the next few days due to western disturbances, India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday advised farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh to postpone harvesting of wheat and other rabi crops.

Also, rain and hailstorm lashed parts of Delhi on Saturday, bringing some respite from the warm weather.

Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 18.2 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal.

The relative humidity at 8:30 am was 89 per cent. Strong winds and hail might damage plantations, horticulture and standing crops.

Hail may injure people and cattle in open places, strong



A man rides his bike on a road near Akshardham amid rainfall, in New Delhi, on Saturday

PTI

winds may damage vulnerable structures and kuccha houses, walls and huts, the IMD warned.

It advised people to stay indoors, close windows and doors and avoid travel if pos-

sible.

In case of matured crops, the IMD has advised farmers to harvest crops like mustard and chickpea in some States at the earliest and store them at safe places. Farmers have also been

asked to withhold irrigation to wheat crop to avoid lodging.

In the last 24 hours, IMD said light/moderate rainfall and thundershowers were observed over most parts of the country.

Even hailstorm was observed over Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, West Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh and North Interior Karnataka in the last 24 hours.

In its latest forecast, the IMD said isolated thunderstorm, lighting, squall and hailstorm is expected over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh on March 19; over West Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and East Rajasthan on March 20; and over Uttarakhand on March 21. The likely strong wind/hail

may damage standing crops, injure people and cattle at open places, and partial damage to vulnerable structures due to strong winds, it said.

In this likely scenario, the IMD advised farmers to "postpone harvesting of crops in Punjab, Haryana and West Madhya Pradesh; if already harvested, store at safe places to avoid losses."

Farmers have also been asked to withhold irrigation to wheat crop to avoid lodging. Rajasthan farmers have been advised to carry out harvesting of matured mustard and chickpea at the earliest store them in safe place.

Similarly, east Madhya Pradesh farmers have been asked to harvest mustard, chickpea and wheat immediately and store them in a safe place. In Maharashtra, farmers

have been asked to harvest wheat, pulses and grapes immediately.

"Postpone harvesting of crops in Marathwada. Use the skirting bags or aluminium-coated paper for grape bunches to protect from rains. Use hail nets to protect orchards," the IMD added.

Speaking to PTI, Rajbir Yadav, wheat breeder at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), said the current unseasonal rains, hailstorms and gusty wind are not good for the standing wheat crop and could impact its yields.

Wheat is a main rabi (winter) crop and harvesting has already started in some parts of the country.

The Government has projected a record wheat output at 112.2 million tonne for the 2022-23 crop year (July-June).

828 students awarded degrees, medals

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

This is a time when India is becoming a force to reckon with and you are fortunate to be experiencing the multi-trajectory growth of the country, State Bank of India chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara told the graduating students of Indian Institute of Management (Lucknow) at the 37th convocation held here on Saturday.

A total 828 students were awarded degrees this year and the institute maintained an impressive placement record, she pointed out. As many as 511 students from the 37th batch of Master of Business Administration, 54 from the 18th batch of Masters in Business Administration in Agri Business Management, 108 students from the 16th batch of Master of Business Administration (IPMX), 34 students from Master of Business Administration in Sustainable Management, 108 students from the PG Programme for Working Executives, 13 students from Fellow Programme in Management (PhD) and six students from Executive Fellow Programme in Management received degrees at the IIM-L convocation.

"We have commenced our journey into 'Amrit Kal', we have the biggest talent pool and an accelerated pace of reforms. The digital transformation makes our long-term trajectory clearly positive," said Khara who was the keynote speaker at the programme.

ACHIEVERS

Master of Business Administration

- Chairman's Gold Medal: Aayush Prasun
- Director's Medal: Madhur Sanjay Surve
- PGP Chairman's Medal: Malaviya Milan Hashmukhbhai
- Harishankar Singhania Medal for Best All-rounder: Malla Srikanta
- MBA in Sustainable Management**
- Chairman's Gold Medal: Yash Sharma
- International Programme in Management for Executives**
- Chairman's Gold Medal: Nalin Sharma
- Director's Medal: Arjun Anil Sharma
- PG Programme in Management for Working Executives**
- Chairman's Gold Medal: Abhishek Banerjee

"I am confident that India will be a USD 5-trillion economy in 2027, and all of us must be proud that we have moved from tenth largest economy to fifth in the shortest possible time," he said, adding: "In the year 2027-2028, India will be amongst the top three economies of the world."

Chairman, Board of Governors, N Chandrasekaran said the geo politics of the country is changing. "An alternate sup-

37TH CONVOCAION OF IIM-L



Medal winners pose for a group photograph at the 37th IIM-L convocation on Saturday

Pioneer

ply chain is being created for which India has the talent and scale, but India cannot do it alone. India has probably been the most active in the adoption of digital technology in public services delivery. The energy transitions will be through growth. You are present at an important time where you have the opportunity to dream and be successful," he said while addressing the students. IIM-L director Archana Shukla said they have nurtured values of sustainability, exclusivity and societal impact in terms of creating exceptional management professionals.

MEDAL WINNERS OVERJOYED

The joy of medal winners knew no bounds at the IIM-L convocation even they were seen clicking selfies, hugging each other, or shaking hands.

Aayush Prasun, who received the Chairman's gold medal, candidly admitted that he was not sure which success mantra worked. "However, I think it could be consistency in efforts," he said. Belonging to Patna, he said he really enjoys the cuisine of Lucknow and the warmth of locals. On whether he would like to foray into

politics, he said he was not interested and that he planned to do something in the education sector. Malla Srikanta from Odisha, who won the gold medal for being an all-rounder, said he comes from a place where nobody understands the importance of IIMs. "People back home asked me why I was going to a management institute when there was a management college in my own city," he recalled. Son of a school teacher, Srikanta said it was a great achievement. "I always wanted to go to an IIM and my family gave me the freedom to choose my own career," he said.

Elderly businessman duped of ₹40 lakh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 73-year-old businessman was duped of Rs 40 lakh allegedly by a gang of thugs in a deal for a house in Thakurganj. The mastermind, who is no more now, was said to be a close friend of the victim.

As per reports, Ghanshyam Sahu of Naka Hindola owns a shop selling cotton bales, quilts, cushions and plastic items in Chowk. The alleged mastermind, Syed Tahaffuz Raza aka Aun Zaidi of Thakurganj, used to frequent Sahu's shop. Both became close friends in the due course of time.

Recently, Sahu sold one of his shops in Thakurganj and got a huge sum. As Aun Zaidi was aware of the deal, he lured Sahu into purchasing a house. He assured Sahu that the latter would earn a huge profit.

Sahu agreed for the investment and the deal was finalised for Rs 55 lakh. Sahu was introduced to house owner Shakil Haider, his son Raza Haider, and nephew Ali Abbas aka Tinku (all of Begaeria in Dubagga). On July 2, 2017, Sahu was asked to pay Rs 4.15 lakh for stamps, required at the time of registration, when he visited

the house owner. Aun Zaidi reached Sahu's house and took him to Shakil's house where the latter made a payment of Rs 40 lakh in cash and Rs 15 lakh through a cheque. He was given the stamp papers while the seller, buyers and witnesses signed the documents.

"However, at the time of sale deed registration in the registry, they started making excuses. Initially, they said they would go for online registration and then pretended that they would get it done the next day. Later, all of them went incommunicado. Aun switched off his mobile phone," Sahu alleged.

He said when he went to the houses of the accused, they gave him a Rs 15-lakh cheque and also promised to return the remaining sum.

He said he later came to know that Shakil and others were members of a gang of thugs, and Shakil had been named in several such cases. "Shakil died during his stay in jail in September. His son and nephew promised to return the money, but they failed to keep their word," Sahu said. Police registered a case against the above-named accused and their aides.

Contractor killed in road mishap

Lucknow (PNS): A 51-year-old contractor was killed in a road mishap in Gosainganj on Friday evening. Reports said Ashok Singh of Sai Residency in BBD police station area was returning home from Mohanlalganj when he was hit by a speeding vehicle in Sinauna village (Gosainganj) around 6 pm. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

In another incident, a 30-year-old man, identified as Santosh Chaurasia of Hardoi, died after his tractor overturned in Kathingara village in Kakori on Friday night. His brother said Santosh was driving the tractor alongside the bankment road of a canal and it overturned when he tried to take the main road.

NOTICE

I inform the general public that I, Rekha Sharma W/o Sri Kamlesh Chandra Sharma, Residence House No. 117/N/76, Uday Plaza, 1Ind Floor, Kakadev, Navin Nagar, Kanpur. I have purchased a Flat No. 9, 1Ind Floor, 'Aradhana', Kakadev, Kanpur, whose house No. is 117/N/M/50 Kakadev, Kanpur. I am owner that Flat. Whose registry I did in Kanpur registrar office on dated 28.1.22. Whose Book No. 1, Volume Number 13732 Serial No. 959 Page No. 71 to 96 have been registered. Me and my Husband Mr. Kamlesh Chandra Sharma are going to Mortgage this Flat to ICICI Home Finance.

If anyone has any objection then within 7 days my mobile No. Contact on 9935030303 or ICICI Home Finance Rambagh Branch, Kanpur.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Farzana to farzana Begum W/o Mohammad Javed Khan for future purpose. Add-79/D Rasoolpur Allahabad.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Raju to Anwar Husain S/o Mohd Ishaad R/o 89/9-A Dalel Purwa Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Farhat Jahan to Farhat for all future purpose, Farhat W/o Abdul Shaheed R/o Gulmohar Garden Face 1 Shastri Nagar Kanpur

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Prashant Awasthi to Prashant Kumar S/o Umakant Awasthi for all future purpose, R/o B 502-5th Floor Imperial height, Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar 208017

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Ishrat Fathima Jameel to Ishrat Saeed and shall be known by this name henceforth. Ishrat Saeed W/o Nasir Saeed 474/7 Neet to Shia PG. College, Sitapur Road, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I, Subedar Dalu Oraon, S/o Vishnu Oraon, resident of Vill-Loyo Uper Toli, Post-Sakara, Thana-Mander, Distt-Ranchi (Jharkhand-835301). In my service record, Loyo is mentioned as name of my Village but actual Village name is Loyo Uper Toli and this is real and recognized.

NOTICE

Original sale deed regd as Book-I Vol. 977 pages 307 to 340 at SN- 3590 on 10.11.2009 SR-Bhognipur Kanpur Dehat in respect of property Gata 751Mi Manwar Distt-Kanpur, Pargana Bhognipur Distt-Kanpur Dehat lost. Smt Priya Dixit W/o Monsiz Dixit R/o -127/396-A Juhi Baradevi, Kanpur Nagar.

सूचना

सूचना
सूचना हो कि नगर पालिका परिषद, फतेहपुर से दिनांक : 26/11/2022 को जारी मेरे बेटे Atharva Gupta के जन्म प्रमाण पत्र एवं मेरे पति के Passport में गलती से मेरा नाम Shimona Kaushal दर्ज हो गया है, जबकि मेरा वास्तविक नाम Shimona Gupta है, जिसे सुधारकर पढ़ा एवं दर्ज किया जाए। Shimona Gupta W/o Shaswat Gupta R/o Lailu Miya Ki Kothi, Amarjaj Chawk Station Road Fatehpur (U.P.) 212601

Stress on screening of people vulnerable to kidney diseases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A present, more than 850 million people across the world are suffering from kidney diseases. The causes may be myoglobinuria, use of painkillers, bleeding, and dehydration. The requirement for resources, including trained manpower and dialysis equipment, go up in the system which is already limited. A similar situation can be observed in war areas like Ukraine where people requiring dialysis and drugs were affected as the supply got interrupted, said a senior faculty member at SGPGI where World Kidney Day was observed on Saturday (March 18) instead of second Thursday of March due to Holi.

As a councilor of the International Society of Nephrology, Asia Pacific Society of Nephrology, and former secretary of Indian Society of Nephrology, Dr Narayan Prasad advocates support to the cause and prevention of kidney diseases.

The government should set up a medical disaster cell in each district, which can move to support the vulner-

able at the time of disaster. "During COVID-19, the nephrology community came forward to support the public and government, made guidelines to manage the patients who developed AKI, setting up dialysis for patients. The department of nephrology, SGPGIMS, set up a separate dialysis unit for needy patients, and also ensured the continuous supply of drugs for transplant patients," he said.

"Since the regular treatment of CKD is costly and lifelong, prevention is better. We believe in preventing the diseases, screening the vulnerable like hypertensive patients, diabetics, elderly, obese, genetic, recurrent stone formers, etc. These patients should be screened for evidence of proteinuria and RBC in the urine and serum creatinine every 6-12 months. People with any abnormalities should visit a nephrologist," he added.

The department of nephrology organised an awareness programme, which was inaugurated by director RK Dhiman. More than 600 people attended the programme.

CITYBRIEFS

ALUMNI MEET

Under the aegis of City Montessori School, the alumni meet (Middle East/Gulf countries chapter) was held online on Saturday. CMS alumni, now occupying prestigious positions in the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman etc, reminisced about their school days. They said CMS made immense contribution in their growth. The alumni meet was chaired by CMS president and MD Geeta Gandhi Kingdon. CMS founders Jagdish Gandhi and Bharti Gandhi, along with principals of various campuses and senior members of the school administration, interacted with the former students.

TAX COLLECTION

The tax collection counters in all zonal offices of Lucknow Municipal Corporation will remain open on

Sunday. Officials expect a big turnout due to this being the last fiscal month. After March 31, there would be 12% interest on pending house tax amounts.

SCHOLARSHIP

Aastha Yadav, a student of City Montessori School, Kanpur Road Campus, has been offered a USD 1,05,000 scholarship by Merrimack College of England for her undergraduate studies. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated Aastha on her achievement.

HEMOPHILIA UPDATE

The department of hematology, Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate

Institute of Medical Sciences, is the state nodal centre for hemophilia care. To train healthcare workers in hemophilia care and to impart current knowledge and recent advances in hemophilia care, head of the department Prof Rajesh Kashyap, who is also the state nodal officer for hemophilia care, organised the 'Hemophilia Update-2023' under the guidance of director Prof RK Dhiman. It was inaugurated by Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak. Physicians and healthcare workers from 26 hemophilia treatment centres in the state participated in the programme. The highlight was the launch of a website for hemophilia care by the deputy chief minister. This digital platform has been developed by National Informatics Centre, Government of India. The web application will help strengthen the hemophilia care meeting in the state.



‘Embracing diversity key to inclusion’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Jaipuria Institute of Management (Lucknow) on Saturday organised its 17th Annual IIC Conference. The theme this year was 'Diversity and inclusion as drivers of business growth'.

The conference was a platform where industry leaders and D&I experts shared their views, innovative ideas, and practices for progress towards a more diversity-enriched and inclusive future in the context of organisations, businesses, and communities. The chief guest on the occasion was CEO of ICICI Foundation Anuj K Agarwal while COO of

Ajio Business, Reliance Retail Ltd, BurlI Phaneendra was the guest of honour.

"As socially responsible citizens, we know the importance of inclusion. The key to inclusion is embracing diversity. It's about having diversity in all aspects, be it religion, region, caste, culture, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, etc. When people from different backgrounds come together, they bring different perspectives, thoughts, and innovative ways to solve problems. The diversity in our country gives us the opportunity to have a diverse workforce and create an inclusive environment within the organisation, respecting reli-

gions and cultures and celebrating different festivals," Agarwal said. Director of GooglePay Pulkrit Trivedi said diversity is not just a moral thing to do, it is also about getting the right creativity in the business making sure that the business is growing at the expected rate.

Director of Jaipuria Institute of Management Kavita Pathak said, "Our workplace, families, and community were never more varied. Young minds question everything, whereas the old ones are set in their own ways. The contours of diversity as a construct are emerging, converging, and re-emerging in society and at workplace."

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail: ceroads.bbssr@gmail.com

RFP Identification No. CE-DPI & R - 09/2022-23

- The Chief Engineer, D.P.I. & Roads, Odisha (Authority) on behalf of the Works Department, Govt. of Odisha is engaged in the Development of State Roads and Highways in Odisha, and, as part of this endeavour, Govt. of Odisha has decided to undertake the following "Projects" under **EPC Contract** (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) basis, and has decided to carry out the bid process for selection of the parties/ Joint Ventures to whom the Project may be awarded eventually.
- Nature of project : Road work
- No. of project : 1No.
- Tender Paper cost : Rs.10,000.00
- Class of Contractor : Super Class
- Available of bid document : From 10.00 A.M. of 21.03.2023 to 11.00 A.M of 10.04.2023
- Date of Pre-Application conference : 31.03.2023 at 12.30 P.M.
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt.10.04.2023 at 11.30 A.M.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in> . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. **Chief Engineer (DPI & Roads), Odisha**

OIPR-3411/11/10/00/2223

Rajnath Singh launches 352 development projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Recalling a letter that he had written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in 2019, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he was happy that his words had been heeded to and Lucknow was being developed as the State Capital Region (SCR) on the lines of the National Capital Region (NCR).

Singh was speaking at the launch of 352 development projects worth over Rs 1,400 crore during a function organised at Colvin Taluqdars' College.

"I had written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in this regard in 2019 and he agreed to it. Since so many development projects are going on in the state capital, Lucknow can now be developed as the State Capital Region," Rajnath said.

The defence minister further said that the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport, which is being developed, would increase its capacity from 55 lakh to 1 crore passengers.

"In the Global Investors' Summit held recently, MoUs worth over Rs 35 lakh crore will bring in employment. Moreover, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a Textile Park between Lucknow and Hardoi which will cover 1,300 acres of land and cost Rs 10,000 crore. It will also generate employment opportunities," he added.

The defence minister credited Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the development works.

"If the chief minister had not shown so much interest, the development works would not have been completed in time," he said, adding: "What



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launching 352 development projects in Lucknow on Saturday

Pioneer

'Problems of country should not be discussed on foreign soil'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a veiled attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Defence Minister and Lucknow MP Rajnath Singh said that the problems of a country should be discussed in the country's parliament and not on foreign soil.

"Some leaders are maligning the image of the country by questioning the ethics of democracy on foreign soil. These are the leaders of that party which imposed Emergency across India to gag

the voice of the people," Singh said while addressing a swearing-in ceremony and Holi Milan function of Lucknow Vypar Mandal held here on Saturday.

Rajnath Singh described the election results of the north eastern states as the success of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre and said that the North East used to consider itself separate earlier but today it was not only physically but emotionally connected with the country.

"The credit for this goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Today, everyone is enjoying the fruits of development without any discrimination," he said.

Singh said that the success of the UP Global Investors' Summit had filled his heart with joy.

"India used to be at number 11 in terms of the size of the economy, today it has reached the top five and will soon be in the top three. Uttar Pradesh is also moving forward on the path of develop-

ment," the local parliamentarian said.

He said that the first condition of development was to ensure good law and order. "I praise Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for making Uttar Pradesh crime-free. What Uttar Pradesh has done under the leadership of Yogi is a lesson for other states," he said.

Singh admitted that some problems of traders exist and assured them to solve them after the end of the Parliament session.

may not be far," he said.

Asserting that Uttar Pradesh was on a development spree with a target of USD 1-trillion economy, he said that the slogan of 'Clean and Green Lucknow' was becoming a reality.

When govt, public work together, results are far-reaching: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, said that when the government and the public worked together, the results were far-reaching.

Inaugurating and laying foundation stones of 352 development projects worth Rs 1,450 crore along with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at a ceremony held at Colvin Taluqdars' College here, Yogi appealed to people to be part of the continuous developmental process to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a developed India by 2047 and establishing India as a superpower.

He stressed the importance of good governance and security and said that India had got a new global stature under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi with the country getting opportunities to lead organisations like the G-20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The chief minister said that Atal Bihari Vajpayee dreamt of Lucknow's development and even brought some projects to the ground as a

member of Parliament from the city. He said: "Shaheed Path has become the lifeline of Lucknow's life today because of the combined efforts of Atalji, when he was the prime minister of the country, and Rajnath Singh who was the then Road Transport and Highways Minister. Lalji Tandon also started efforts to bring Atalji's dreams on the ground. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has continued towards making Lucknow a smart city with smart facilities."

The chief minister said that just a day before the Global Investors' Summit, many projects, including three bridges, were gifted and today again 1,500 projects were being gifted.

LDA is finding a solution to the biggest traffic problem. The foundation stone was laid for the launch of the first phase of the Green Corridor project. This will solve the traffic problem of Lucknow. There will be a road connecting Kisan Path with IIM. Along with this the beautification is also being done by connecting both the banks of the river Gomti. When Ashutosh Tandon was working as the

urban development minister, he got the DPR prepared. Today the project is getting off the ground," he pointed out.

The chief minister said that the National Inspiration Site (Rashtra Prerna Sthal) was going to be constructed. He said under the Smart City Mission, the municipal corporation had made programmes to provide new parks based on state-of-the-art technologies. "The poor of Lucknow are going to get the gift of 4,512 housing units. Under Operation Kayakalp, schemes related to strengthening and providing facilities to primary schools were launched. During the G-20 and GIS, the administration got many intersections beautified. Their remodeling programme is just beginning," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak welcomed the guests. Union Minister of State Kaushal Kishore, Rajya Sabha member Ashok Vajpayee, outgoing Mayor Samyukta Bhatia, MLA Ashutosh Tandon 'Gopal', Dr Neeraj Bora, Yogesh Shukla, Amresh Kumar, Manish Rawat, MLCs Dr Mahendra Singh, Mohsin Raza, Mukesh Sharma, Bukkal Nawab were present.

Retail chemists demand protection of business from e-pharmacies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Retail chemists led by state president of Uttar Pradesh Adarsh Vypar Mandal, Sanjay Gupta, met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and demanded protection to the business of retail chemists who are being threatened by e-pharmacy. Gupta told the defence minister that the drugs and cosmetic laws were being violated by the online pharmacies being run by big foreign and domestic corporate companies in the name of e-pharmacy.

"This has not only affected the business of crores of wholesale and retail chemists in the country but is also putting the safety and health of Indian consumers at risk," the traders' leader said.

He said the manufacture, import, sale and distribution of drugs in the country was governed by the Drugs and Cosmetics Act which said it was mandatory for the importer, manufacturer, seller or distributor of drugs to have a valid licence. "The e-pharmacy are mis-using the loopholes in the law and playing with the lives of consumers by selling medicines without a prescription and dispensing medicines without registered pharmacists," he said and added that e-pharmacy like Tata 1mg, Netmeds and Amazon Pharmacy were at the forefront of committing these violations.

Gupta said the government should allow only those e-pharmacies that had medicines that were allowed to be sold on e-pharmacies.

Drive to check H3N2, meningitis from April 1

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Besides its Dastak campaign, the Uttar Pradesh government will also run a drive to prevent the spread of diseases like meningitis and the H3N2 virus across the state from April 1.

"In addition to communicable diseases, the Health department has issued guidelines for effective and time-bound action against the spread of meningitis and the H3N2 virus," a government spokesman said here on Saturday.

"The government will launch a special campaign against infectious diseases like encephalitis, dengue, chikungunya, malaria and kala-azar in all 75 districts of the state from April 1. The Communicable Disease Control Campaign is run in three phases every year. This year, the campaign's first phase will end on April 30," Neha Sharma, Director at the Directorate of Urban Bodies said. Sharma said the guidelines specified that the elected public representatives of the urban bodies and mohalla monitoring committees should be informed about meningitis and other vector-borne and water-borne diseases.

"Apart from this, fogging will be done in urban areas whereas intensive vector control and sensitisation activities will be conducted at the places mentioned in the list of high risk areas provided by the Health department," she said. Additionally, it has been suggested that a thorough awareness campaign be run in urban areas to promote environmental and personal hygiene measures. Shallow hand pumps

Fogging will be done in urban areas while vector control and sensitisation activities will be held in high-risk areas

should be marked with red colour. Instructions have also been given to seal the pipes of hand pumps with concrete, she said. Besides, instructions have also been given to regularly check OT tests, bacteriological and viral tests, chemical tests, and H25 tests, to judge the quality of drinking water. "Along with this, the mini public water supply (MPWS), and tank type stand post (TTSP) will have to be established and maintained as per the norms in the population. It also includes the construction of roads and pavements and the regular removal of vegetation growing on the sides of roads to prevent water-logging and vegetation growth," the director said. Door-to-door campaigns will be conducted in the urban areas through mohalla monitoring committees to keep people continuously aware of meningitis and other vector-borne diseases, water-borne diseases and diseases related to hot weather (heat-related illnesses). "Along with this, instructions have been given to take necessary action to ensure compliance with the H3N2 virus and COVID-19 protocol with the help of the Health department and to run a public awareness campaign under this," the director said.

UP ATS busts gang of arms smugglers, two arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of two members of the gang, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorists Squad busted a pan-India gun running racket in Azamgarh on Saturday.

Those arrested were identified as Ramshabd Yadav and Sanjay Yadav, both of Azamgarh district. They were arrested from the Mubarakpur area of the district.

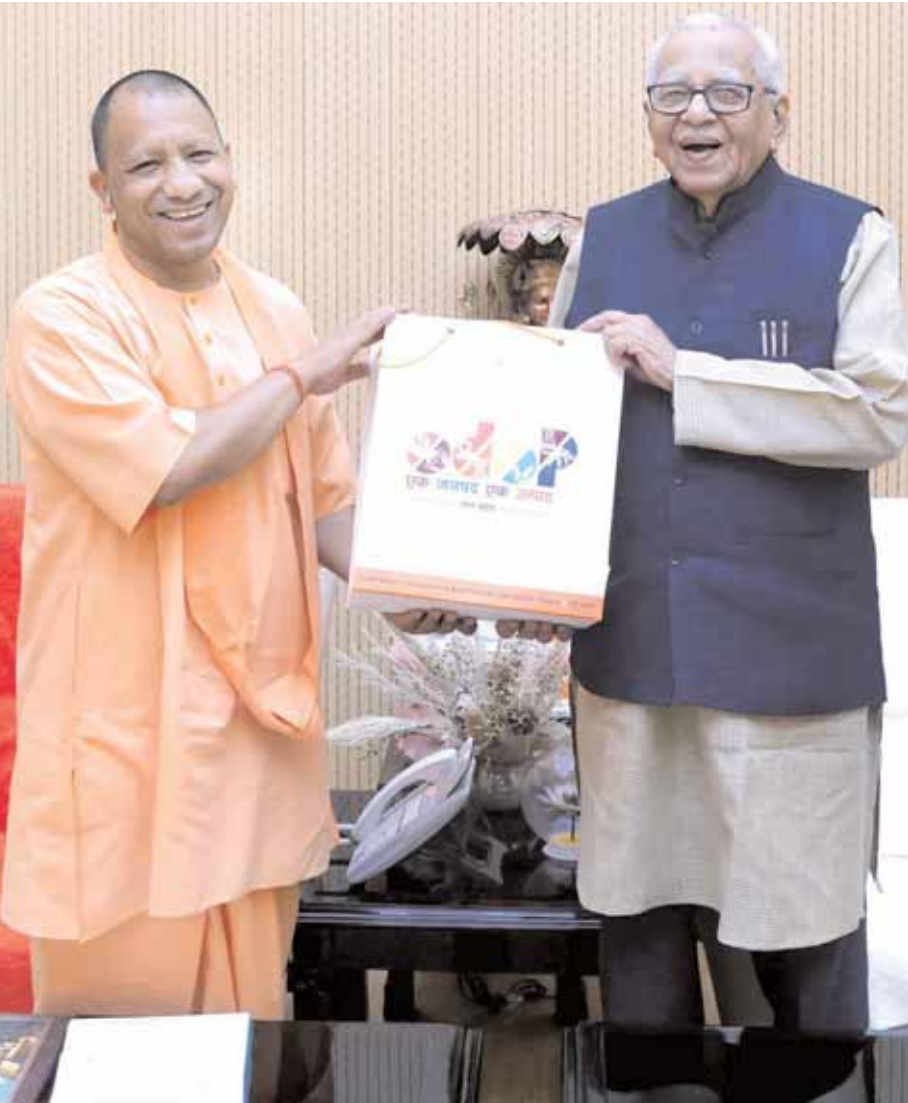
The ATS sleuths recovered 10 pistols of .32 bore along with ammunition and a car from the arrested arms smugglers.

The gang was operating for the last 10 years and Ramshabad was its kingpin. He has 31 FIRs registered in his name in Azamgarh since 1985. One case is registered against Sanjay.

Six members of the gang, including the son of Ramshabd, are still on the run," said an ATS official.

The official said the gang used to purchase pistols at cheaper rates from Madhya Pradesh and Bihar and supplied them to gangs in Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh and its neighbouring districts.

A case has been registered against the arrested accused under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Arms Act and they are being interrogated.



Former Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik pays a courtesy call on Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday

Sambhal cold storage owners arrested

PTI ■ SAMBHAL

Police have arrested the two owners of a cold storage here where 14 people were killed and several injured after the building's roof collapsed, a senior official said on Saturday.

The two were arrested from Haldwani district in Uttarakhand, he said.

Twenty-four people were pulled out of the rubble of the collapsed structure on Indira Road under Chandausi police station limits and 14 of them died, according to officials.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has set up a committee to probe the reasons behind the collapse, which took place on Thursday.

"The owners of the cold storage, Ankur Agarwal and Rohit Agarwal, have been arrested from Haldwani," Sambhal District Magistrate Manish Samal told PTI on Saturday.

"Taking cognizance of the incident, the chief minister had announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased. But, now, this has been merged with the Mukhyamantri Krishak Yojana, and they will get Rs 5 lakh each," he said.

The DM further said a magisterial probe has been ordered into the incident.

A three-member team has been constituted, which will probe whether any cold storage has been built in the district violating the norms, Bansal said.

Police had registered a case under section 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code against Ankur and Rohit on Thursday.

According to police, the collapsed roof was built only three months ago without the necessary permission from the administration and the quantity of potatoes stored at the cold storage was beyond its prescribed capacity.

The state government had announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased, Rs 50,000 for those critically injured and free treatment for all those who suffered injuries in the incident.

The government has asked the probe committee, led by the divisional commissioner and comprising the DIG of Moradabad, to submit its report at the earliest.

Sambhal is around 158 km from Delhi and 350 km from the state capital Lucknow.

Textile sector to provide jobs to 5 lakh youths

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has created a big platform for the employment of the state's youths in the textile sector as this sector is expected to provide jobs to five lakh youths of the state.

The state government received 1,092 proposals in the textile sector through the Global Investors' Summit, and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed for investment of Rs 54,710 crore in Uttar Pradesh.

"With an investment of Rs 54,710 crore, more than 2.46 lakh youths from all 75 districts will get employment in this sector. This will lead to a large increase in employment opportunities in the spinning, weaving and clothing industry, and packaging, a government spokesman said here on Saturday. He said once the projects get off the ground, more than two lakh youths would benefit from them in their own villages. The Aditya Birla Group has also expressed interest in investing in this area.

Just a day ago, the Narendra Modi government approved setting up of a textile park in Lucknow. It is anti-ci-

pated that three lakh new job opportunities will result from this. With this, the Central and the state governments' combined efforts in the textile industry will result in the creation of up to five lakh new jobs in UP.

The textile park, which will come up on 1,000 acres, is likely to generate nearly one lakh direct jobs and indirect employment for two lakh people. A sum of Rs 1,200 crore will be spent on the project.

The textiles sector is among the top 10, along with higher education, electronics manufacturing, industrial parks, logistics, real estate and tourism, in employment generation.

"Leading textile companies like the Aditya Birla Group are eager to invest in UP in this sector," the spokesman said.

With UP being home to 25 crore people, it offers investors a sizable market. While having such a sizable market in one location helps entrepreneurs do more business, it also reduces the cost of transportation and labour. For investors, this is going to be very helpful. "Investors are eager to come to UP, which has the most youth," the official said.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI		Zonal Office : "Star House" Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010, Ph.: 0522-2721512		DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT - 2002				
In exercise of the power conferred upon under section 13 (2) for SARFAESI ACT, 2002 being the authorized officer of Bank of India issued Demand Notice to the following borrowers/guarantors and the demand notice were sent through regd. Post in the respective residential address. Again by virtue of this publication following borrowers/guarantors of are informed to pay all their debts mention below within 60 days of this notice. Further the borrowers/guarantors in particular and public in general are cautioned not to deal with Sale-purchase of the following properties which are kept us as security.				
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers & Guarantors	Description of Immovable property mortgaged/ Owner of the property	Amount u/s (as mentioned in the Notice u/s 13(2) Date of Demand Notice	
BRANCH : Malhore				
1.	Borrower: Shri Priyakant Singh S/o Sri Shesh Kumar Singh R/o 1/428, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow- 226010 Guarantor: Priya Vant Singh S/o Sri Shesh Kumar Singh R/o 1/428, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow- 226010	Land & Building Situated at plot No. B-03/04, Type B, Vikalp Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, UP- 226010, Near CID Head Quarter Area : 288 SQM Owner : Priyakant Singh s/o Sri Shesh Kumar Singh, Boundaries : North- 24 meter wider road, South - Part of Plot No. 03/08 and 03/09 East - Plot No. 03/03, West - Plot No. 03/06	1,04,55,992.56 + interest and other charges compounded with monthly rests from 27.02.2023	
			03.03.2023	
2.	Borrower: Maa Gayatri Traders (Prop : Shri. Priyakant Singh) 1/428, Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010	Hypothecation of Plant & Machinery i.e Reversible Concrete Mixer Model No VI 1050E, HSN/SAC no . 84743110, Putzmeister Make Stationer Concrete pump model BSA 140AHD machine serial No. 214306008, HSN/SAC no. 84134000	23,64,473.08 + interest and other charges compound with monthly rests from 27.02.2023	
			03.03.2023	
Further with reasons, we believe that you are avoiding the service of said Demand Notice issued under the Act, as stated above hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, as required U/S 13(2) of said Act and Rule 3 of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay us, Bank of India, within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Demand Notice with the aforesaid amount along with the further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc, failing which, we Bank of India will take necessary action under the provisions of Sec. 13(4) of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured Assets including taking possession of this secured assets of the borrowers and sale thereof. Further you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease etc, and encumber in any other way, the aforesaid secured assets, Please note than no further Demand Notice will be issued.				
Date: 19.03.2023, Place: Lucknow			Authorised Officer, Bank of India	

Yogi becomes first CM to visit KV temple for 100th time in 6 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple and with this; he became the first CM of the state to visit the temple for the 100th time in the last six years (72 months).

On the last day of his two-day visit to the city, the CM Adityanath worshipped at Kashi Vishwanath temple in the morning on Saturday and prayed Baba Vishwanath for the welfare of the people of the state and the country and directed the officers to ensure the devotees coming to the temple face no inconvenience and make such an arrangement that they could worship in the temple peacefully. And with this, he became the first CM of UP to visit the temple for the 100th time in the last six years. The CM came on a two-day visit to the city for the 113th time on Friday.

He has been coming to the temple every 21 days on an average since assuming power in 2017, to worship Baba Vishwanath and pray for the welfare of the people of the state and the country at large through Shodashopachara method. After taking charge of the UP for the first time, Yogi Adityanath visited Lord



CM Yogi Adityanath worshipping at Kashi Vishwanath temple.

Pioneer

Visheshwar 74 times from 2017 to March 2022 to seek blessings. Dr Neeraj Kumar Pandey,

a priest at Kashi Vishwanath temple, says that the visits of CM Yogi are ample proof of his immense devotion towards Sanatan Dharma and Baba Vishwanath. It is worth mentioning here that on September 9 last year, when the Chief Minister visited Varanasi for the 100th time, he had visited Shrikashi Vishwanath Dham for the 88th time. From then till March 18, the Chief Minister visited the temple 12 times. The CM also offered prayers at Kaal Bhairav temple for the 100th time and performed 'aarti'. He also interacted with a boy who played 'Damru' outside the temple and inquired about his studies.

In addition, the CM also inspected the newly constructed building of the Circuit House and directed the engineers of PWD to ensure the completion of the works with quality and within stipulated time.

Earlier on the first day of his visit, the CM attended the dinner with the tourism ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at a hotel in Nadesar here at night on Friday and thereafter, inspected the 34th Vahini PAC in Bhullanpur and under construction building for the barrack in Rohania police station premises.

Umesh Pal's niece in deep shock ever since she saw her uncle being shot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Umesh Pal's 13-year-old niece was in a deep shock ever since she saw her uncle being shot by the shooters on the fateful day on February 24 at Dhoomanganj area.

It may be pointed out here that Umesh Pal had just reached his residence after testifying from the Prayagraj district court. The car door opened. Gunmen Raghavendra and Umesh Pal both got down together. That was when Usman Chaudhary, who was ambushed, shot the first bullet at Umesh Pal from very close range resulted in he being collapsed. After this Umesh Pal somehow managed to get up and ran inside his house in the street.

In the meantime, Umesh Pal's 13-year-old niece comes out of the house after hearing the sound of gunshots. Then whatever happens in the next 32 seconds, the child's mind has been so deeply traumatised that she is still in shock. She neither speaks, nor eats or drinks. When her condition

did not improve, the family sent her to a relative's house. Now she is under the supervision of doctors.

The new video of Umesh Pal murder case which came out two days back it was of 32 seconds. This video was of the street in which Umesh's house is located. It is seen that there was a scuffle between Umesh and a shooter Ghulam. Ghulam had caught hold of Umesh. Seeing himself surrounded, Ghulam shot the second bullet in Umesh's stomach. The niece was watching all this very closely and was pleading to save her uncle. She was just a metre away from the shooters.

That's why Umesh Pal shouts her to run away but she was stunned to see this shootout. Amidst the crackle of bullets and the threat of bombs, the dismayed niece reaches home running towards the house weeping and wailing.

On seeing Umesh Pal fighting with the shooter Ghulam, Asad, the third son of Mafia Atiq Ahmed, takes out a pistol from his pants pocket and attacks Umesh Pal. His grip

loosens when Ghulam shoots Umesh Pal. Ghulam quickly runs to the road side. It has also been shown in the CCTV that in this rush Ghulam collides with Asad.

Meanwhile, Asad reaches near Umesh and shoots the third bullet in his neck. The bullet goes through. Even after this, Umesh runs from there towards his old house located in the street where his mother Shanti Pal lives. Shanti Pal is also able to reach the meeting place only after hearing the voice that Umesh Pal reaches her.

By then Umesh Pal's wife Jaya Pal and nephew Divyansh Pal also reach. Umesh Pal rolls down from his mother's chest and falls on the ground. The family rushes to the hospital with him. By then it is too late.

Umesh Pal's mother Shanti Pal started crying while narrating the horrific scene of 32 seconds. Her heart beats fast and tears start flowing from her eyes. Shanti Pal said that "Our granddaughter and Umesh's elder brother Ashok Pal's daughter is in shock ever since

she saw her uncle getting shot.

This incident has had such a deep impact on her heart and mind that she has stopped speaking. The child who used to talk like a parrot on every thing, being 'silenced' in this way is scaring us a lot, she added. Neither she speaks nor eats or drinks anything. On the advice of people, we have sent her away from this environment to her relative's house. She had become more uncomfortable hearing people coming and going here, crying and wailing. It's like her conscience has become zero. We are very worried about her too.

Regarding the action taken so far, mother Shanti Pal said that Atiq and Ashraf are Ravan of Kalyug. We cannot revenge for what we have lost.

She further said that "Now we only have faith in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He has got us justice. We demand from the Chief Minister that Atiq and Ashraf should be put to death. Only then it would be the proper justice to us, she added with tears rolling down her cheeks.

STF raids suspected hideouts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Teams of Commissionerate Prayagraj and Special Task Force (STF) on Saturday carried out raids at the suspected hideouts of those who allegedly offered shelter to the accused involved in the Umesh Pal murder case in semi urban pockets of city, trans-Yamuna and neighbouring Kaushambi.

A senior cop said that "Raids were being conducted on certain tip-off and cops have been probing the roles of those persons who had allegedly offered a safe escape route to the absconders. Police have also been checking the call detail records of those who allegedly helped the assailants directly or indirectly."

However, no concrete evidences have been found so far about the exact whereabouts of five key assailants carrying Rs 5 lakh cash reward on their arrest.

POLICE UPDATING DOSSIER ON ATIQ'S GANG : The Prayagraj police are updating the dossier on 227 inter-state Atiq Ahmed gang and likely to include names of Atiq's wife Shaista Parveen and their sons as members of the syndicate.

The action comes after the February 24 Dhoomanganj

shootout that claimed the lives of three persons, including Umesh Pal, the prime witness in 2005 BSP MLA Raju Pal murder case, and two of his police gunners.

Subsequently, FIR was lodged against jailed mafioso-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed, his wife, brother Khalid Azim alias Ashraf and sons.

Cops have also announced Rs 25,000 and Rs 5 lakh cash rewards on the heads of Atiq's wife Shaista and son Mohd Asad respectively.

Currently, Atiq's gang has 132 members including Atiq (kingpin) and his younger brother Khalid Azim alias Ashraf. While Atiq has over 100 criminal cases registered against him in different police stations of the state over three dozen cases were also lodged against Ashraf.

A senior cop preferring anonymity said that senior police authorities will review the status of the members of 227 inter-state Atiq Ahmed gang and a dedicated team will compile records of all members whether they are in jail or out on bail.

He further said: "Cops are collecting criminal sketches of family members of Atiq and required steps would be taken accordingly after reviewing the

status of cases pending against them."

Sources claimed that cops have already collected details about the cases registered against Atiq's elder sons, including Mohd Umar and Ali Ahmad, who are currently lodged at Lucknow and Naini jails respectively on the charges of extortion, abduction and threatening.

The third son Mohd Asad who was captured on CCTV for allegedly being involved in Dhoomanganj shootout incident- was wanted by police and carries a reward of Rs 5 lakh cash on his head.

Cops are also reviewing the status of other gang members carrying cash rewards varying from Rs 20,000 to Rs 50,000 on their arrest. Also, officials of Special Task Force are compiling the data of members of Atiq's gang operating in other states like Odisha, MP, Bihar and Delhi etc. Special police teams are compiling data of those who are assisting gang members directly or indirectly.

SEARCH OPERATION IN NAINI JAIL: ADM City Madan Kumar, DSP Yamuna Nagar Santosh Kumar Meena, ACP Karchana Ajit Singh Chauhan carried out a search operation in the Naini Central

Jail. Officers inspected the barracks of Ali Ahmed, son of mafia Atiq Ahmed. Apart from this, the barrack of notorious criminal Anil Dhanpat of Baghat was also inspected. Two days ago, a person was caught while carrying a mobile in a box of ghee. It was told that he was going to give the mobile to Anil Dhanpat.

During the search, Ali was questioned by officers alone for about 15 minutes. The officials inspected the kitchen, hospital, high security cell, solitary barrack, women's jail. Talks were also held with the prisoners. They were also asked about the facilities being provided to them. There was a stir in the jail administration during the search operation which lasted for about two hours.

Police engaged in investigation in Umesh Pal murder case have taken a suspicious woman into custody from Naini. On Friday, the police caught the woman. She is suspected to be involved in the Umesh Pal murder case. Based on the mobile call details of a shooter, she has been taken into custody. It is being told that before the murder, the woman was in constant contact with the shooter. The police had been keeping an eye on her activities for a long time.

Power employees' strike continues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The strike of the power employees and engineers hit the power distribution on Saturday and it also caused the worst situation of the supply of drinking water in many areas of the city. Though, the management of the Power department and the district administration tried to minimise the inconveniences faced by the people due to the strike.

It is learnt that on the call of the UP Power Employees Joint Action Committee (UPPEJAC), the power employees and engineers went on 72 hours strike on March 16 demanding the implementation of the agreement reached on December 3, 2022 between

the office-bearers of the Committee and management of UPPCL.

The strike of the power employees continued on the third day on Saturday and it virtually hit the power distribution in the district which also caused the problem in the supply of drinking water in many areas of the city.

The agitated employees held a meeting at the MD office in Bhikharipur and also demonstrated in protest against the rigid attitude of the management of the UPPCL. Their main protest was against the bid of the government to privatise several services in the Utpadan Nigam and the Transmission Corporation and reiterated blaming the man-

agement of power corporations for being rigid to their demands and blamed that the management took action against the officers and employees of the Power department even on trivial issues.

The main demands include the selection of chairman and managing director of energy corporations by a committee, order for time-bound pay scale of three posts of promotion as earlier, stoppage of the outsourcing for the operation and maintenance of power substations of distribution, implementation of power sector employees protection act, equal stipend for contractual basis employees by removing irregularities in the stipend in different corporation, construc-

tion of power substations by distribution corporation, solution of the irregularities in pay scale and revision of allowances, etc, the agitated power employees and engineers informed, adding that the power generation corporation should be provided two units of 800-800 mega watt each in Obra and Anpara.

The management of the Power department and the district administration made efforts to normalise the situation but it yielded no positive results and the woes of the people continued with the disruption in the power supply for more than 24 hours in some localities leading to the problem of the supply of drinking water too.

₹77.45 crore subsidy distributed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is organising a 10-day state level exhibition in the premises of its divisional office here in which the Chairman of Commission Manoj Kumar distributed margin money (subsidy) of ₹ 77.45 crore to as many as 2,215 beneficiaries of central and eastern zones under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Srijan Karyakram Yojana.

Inaugurating the exhibition on Friday, Kumar distributed

an amount of ₹77.45 crore as margin money (subsidy) to a total of 2,215 beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Srijan Karyakram Yojana. This subsidy will generate an opportunity of employment for about 17,720 people, he said. The Khadi organisations of UP and other states have displayed their khadi and village products in the exhibition.

Earlier, Kumar distributed as many as 180 electric potter wheels to the beneficiaries in Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Samiti, Marui, Sindhora and

also distributed footwear repairing toolkits to 75 tanners besides establishing an unit with an estimated cost of ₹5 lakh for 10 artisans trained from Kendriya Paduka Prashikshan Sansthan, Agra under Charm Shilp Yojana.

The KVIC has raised the remuneration of Katin Bunkars by 33 per cent from April 1, 2023 and informed that the remuneration of these weavers has been increased by 150 per cent since 2014. Varanasi has become a new centre of Atma-Nirbhar Bharat and the selling

and production of Khadi production in Varanasi Region has broken all the records with the initiatives of the PM Narendra Modi who represents it in the Parliament, he said. The Commission is making efforts to set up maximum units of MSME and also get the benefit of its schemes reach the hills, borders and remote areas, Kumar said and added that the distribution of electric potter wheels will save the labour of artisans and they could produce the more qualitative and attractive products.

KDA VC inaugurates exhibition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Vice Chairman of Kanpur Development Authority, Arvind Singh while inaugurating the exhibition "Rising Up 2023" at Unnati Villa and Lawn and organised by Women Entrepreneur Committee of Merchants' Chamber of Uttar Pradesh, said it was an excellent effort of women entrepreneurs for setting up a wonderfu exhibition. He said women entrepreneurs had immense talent only they need a little push of confidence to ensure they matched the excellence of their male counterparts. He said there was a general perception that women cannot perform at par with what men can do and social expectations. He said women entrepreneurs know that securing funding for ones venture was one of the biggest challenges to new businesses. He said however this had been proved wrong and this can be substantiated with this exhibition 'Rising UP 2023'. He said it was shocking to find the quality of the products put up by the women entrepreneurs was exceptional and good.

Advisor to the Women Entrepreneur Committee, Arti Gupta said this exhibition proved that women were in no



Vice Chairperson of Kanpur Development Authority, Arvind Singh inaugurating the exhibition 'Rising Up 2023' on Saturday.

Pioneer

way less talented and possessed some of the finest entrepreneurial mind as well. She said this exhibition comprised over 70 stalls and each were exclusive. He said this exhibition provides a platform for women entrepreneurs to showcase their talents and products. She said WEC had provided various incentives to the participants.

Event Chairperson, Priya Raheja, said women entrepreneurs could use more structured learning support in the form of financial literacy and comfort managing money, business development, building profitability and innovation in their business models and finally information, knowledge and application of business and technology tools that

would enable them to scale much higher. She said the exhibition will remain open on Sunday also well.

INDIA ACCOUNTS FOR 12 PC OF GLOBAL ASTHMA CASES: India accounts for approximately 12 per cent of global asthma cases yet an alarming 42 per cent of asthma-related deaths. This disparity can be attributed to two major barriers: lack of awareness and stigma. Due to a lack of understanding of the disease, patients often fail to recognise symptoms and delay seeking medical treatment. Additionally, negative perceptions and stigmas surrounding inhalers, from potential side effects to social embarrassment, further impede proper treatment. To combat this,

there needs to be a significant shift in how India views asthma and inhalers through widespread awareness campaigns across the country. Speaking at a seminar on 'importance of inhalers' here on Saturday, noted Pulmonologist of the city Dr Arvind Kumar Verma said the latest phase of Cipla's patient awareness campaign received more than 20+ crore views across digital platforms and activities. This latest chapter focuses on increasing awareness about inhalers as a safe and effective mode of treatment for people with asthma. The study was conducted with a sample size of 2400+ asthmatics and caregivers covering current inhaler user, lapsers and rejectors. He said the study was to measure the level of awareness about asthma as well as an understanding of the barriers to the acceptance of inhalation therapy. Key findings from the study included that 36 per cent of individuals still do not accept inhalers as an effective way to manage asthma with 40 per cent parents still believing that inhalers are not suitable for children. He said while some positive movement had been made, a lot more work needs to be done to improve disease and treatment awareness.

Youth commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Upset from the humiliation by his in-laws, a youth committed suicide by jumping before a speeding train in Sujatganj under Rail Bazar police station area late Friday night. Prior to committing suicide, he also uploaded a suicide note on the facebook and levelled serious charges on his in-laws. According to police, Saddam Ansari (32) lived with wife and two children in Chandari, Sujatganj. In the suicide note, he described his pains and problems. It mentioned that after the marriage, he was mentally tortured by his in-laws to such an extreme which forced him to commit suicide. Police sent the body for autopsy.

INJURED: Around 35 pilgrims were injured when a private bus returning from Haridwar suddenly overturned near Gujarpur Pamaran village under Amritpur police station area of Farrukhabad district on Saturday morning. At the time of incident, 65 pilgrims were present in the bus. All the passengers were residents of Tirwa (Kannauj). Immediately, local police rushed to spot and sent injured to the Rajepur Community Health Centre. SDM Amritpur Padam Singh also reached the spot and took stock of the situation. ADM Subhash Chandra Prajapati reached CHC and gathered information about the treatment of injured. CMO also alerted everyone at the district headquarters.

WOMAN KILLED: A woman was killed and her daughter sustained serious burns when lightning struck on them in Puranpur village



Private bus carrying pilgrims overturned in Amritpur police station area of Farrukhabad, on Saturday morning.

Pioneer

under Narval police station area of Maharajpur on Saturday morning. Nisha (45) wife of a farmer Ajay Kumar Kushwaha was working in the field with daughter Kiran (19). Suddenly, lightning struck on them which led to killing of Nisha on the spot and serious burns to Kiran. With the help of villagers, police took Kiran to CHC Sausaul wherefrom, after the first aid, she was referred for the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur.

In another incident, Ramdevi (52) with her son Ravi (25) had gone to collect potato from the field of Chandra Bhan Singh in Mahuva village in Maharajpur Kotwali police swtation area on Saturday morning. Suddenly, lightning struck on them. They were also taken to the Sarsaul CHC wherefrom doctors referred them for the LLR (Hallet) Hospital, Kanpur. SDM Naval Gulab Agrahari said a woman was killed after lightning struck on her.

KDA TO CONTINUE TO BE IN POSSESSION OF PLOT: Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) will contin-

ue to be in possession of the 6.56 acre (26547 sq metre) land of Plot No. 196, E Block, Kidwai Nagar, after the Allahabad High Court has restrained the operation of order passed by the Additional District Judge (III) Kanpur Nagar against it. The said land was allotted to an Ayurvedic School by the Kanpur Development Board (KDA's former body) on November 3, 1980 and when the former failed to carry out the construction work within five years, KDA had cancelled the lease deed. The estimated value of this land is Rs 450 crore. In its orders, Allahabad High Court also mentioned that KDA had already secured possession on this dispute plot No. 196, Block E, Kidwai Nagar, Babupurwa, Kanpur Nagar, which was lying vacant surrounded by a boundary wall. The High Court, after hearing the arguments and perusing the record on file stayed the operation of ADJ's order of December 14, 2022 and ordered that the possession of Plot No.196 will remain with the KDA.

Law Officer & PRO SB Rai said the High Court, in its order, observed that the lower court did not take cognizance of the facts enumerated in the lease deed which had to be cancelled by KDA when the allottee failed to carry out construction work on the land within the prescribed time limit. Therefore, KDA had secured physical possession of the land on May 25, 2022 and raised a boundary wall there, he said.

DEVANSHIKA WINS GOLD MEDAL: Devanshika Dubey of the city won gold medal in U-20 category of Discus Throw of the 'Dus Ka Dum' Women Empower Athletics Championship organised at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Regional Centre, Lucknow.

The championship was jointly organised by the SAI and UP Athletics Association. Rashi Singh of Kanpur won the bronze medal in 100 metre race event, while Sheetal did so in U-16 400 metre body event. Over 300 women athletes from all over the state took part in the championship.

Modi, Hasina launch first cross-border oil pipeline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to their bilateral ties, India and Bangladesh on Saturday commenced operations of a pipeline carrying oil from Siliguri in West Bengal to the Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the first cross-border pipeline virtually.

The friendship pipeline has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 377 crore, of which the Bangladesh portion of the pipeline built at a cost of approximately Rs 285 crore, has been borne by the government of India under grant assistance. With a capacity to transport one million metric



tonne per annum (MMTPA) of high-speed diesel, the pipeline will supply high speed diesel initially to seven districts in northern Bangladesh.

Addressing the event, Prime Minister Modi said the inauguration of friendship

pipeline has started a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relations.

"In last few years, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress. Every Indian is

proud of that and we are delighted that we've been able to contribute to this development journey of Bangladesh," he said.

Highlighting that the inauguration was taking place a day after the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founding leader of Bangladesh and father of Sheikh Hasina, Modi said the joint project is a perfect example of his 'Sonar Bangla' vision.

The operation of India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline will put in place a sustainable, reliable, cost-effective and environment friendly mode of transporting HSD from India to Bangladesh and will further enhance cooperation in energy security between the two countries," the ministry of external affair said in a statement.

'Pyaar se samjha denge': Jaishankar on new US envoy's criticism of human rights in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Newly appointed US Ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti's critical views on human rights issues in India and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) notwithstanding, External Affairs S Jaishankar said here on Saturday "Pyaar se samjha denge."

Garcetti, a close aide of President Joe Biden was confirmed at the next US envoy to India earlier this week. The US did not have an ambassador to New Delhi nearly two years.

Given the incoming envoy's critical views on human rights issues in India and the CAA, Jaishankar was asked in the India Today conclave what happens when Garcetti arrives here. This is what Jaishankar said. "Let



him come here. Pyaar se samjha denge," replied the minister with a smile.

The envoy is reportedly an outspoken critic of human rights in India.

He had said the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was discriminatory towards Muslims and that the law would be a core piece

of the Lautenberg amendment and Specter amendment which are targeted at fast-tracking the US citizenship process for specific religious minorities. Such policies are not just limited to the US, but are in practice in European nations as well.

The Senate voted 52-42 to confirm former Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti's nomination on Wednesday. His nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Joe Biden.

During Garcetti's confirmation hearings in 2021, he said he would "actively raise" human rights issues in New Delhi, in response to a question about the CAA, which Parliament passed in 2019.

The law grants immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh a shot at applying for Indian citizenship.

Who will resign for lapse, Cong asks Govt over PMO conman official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday expressed concern over the case of a PMO official and getting requisite perks, saying if the Government is serious about the country's security then it must make it clear who will resign for the lapse.

Kiran Bhai Patel from Gujarat has been arrested by police from a five-star hotel in Srinagar for posing as an 'additional secretary' in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and enjoying security cover besides other hospitality. He had three cases registered against him in his home State, police said on Friday.

Congress media and publicity department head Pawan



Khera said it was a very serious matter pertaining to the country's security and the government probably was not focussed on such matters as it was "busy protecting the Prime Minister's best friend".

"If anyone asks questions to the Modi government, he is anti-national. Which national interest are you serving? If you are at least a little serious about the security of the nation, then tell me that at the political

level who will resign in this matter?" Khera said at AICC Press conference.

"Our three essential questions are — can a PMO officer get Z+ security, should Z+ security be given and is Z+

security availed so easily. It is very important to know from which level the instructions to give security to a thug came?" he said.

In a sensitive area like Jammu and Kashmir, a person has been cheating the security forces for five months and is roaming in those areas with Z+ security by making a PMO card, where common citizens cannot go, he said and raised questions over the government's intelligence mechanism.

Khera said the government must answer whose resignation will be taken for this lapse. "The ruling party has such a toolkit that the one who asks questions of them is an anti-national while one person takes Z+ security by printing fake cards of the PMO," Khera alleged.

US Prez to host state dinner for Modi in next few weeks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Underlining growing strategic and overall ties between the two countries, US President Joe Biden may host a state dinner for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next few weeks.

Incidentally, the two leaders will meet at the Quad summit in Australia in May. Biden will visit New Delhi in September for the G-20 summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is also likely to attend the high-profile event.

As regards the proposed dinner meet this summer,



reports indicated the formal state visit is a sign of the deepening US-India relationship as the administration advances policies and initiatives for a free and open Indo-Pacific to counter what it sees as a growing threat posed by China.

The White House aims for the state dinner to take place in June but the timing could slip, reports said.

India is hosting the Group

of 20 leaders' summit in New Delhi in September, where Russia's invasion of Ukraine will be among the chief topics of discussion.

The dinner with Modi will be Biden's third formal state visit and dinner, following one he hosted for French President Emmanuel Macron in December and one for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol scheduled for April 26.

FROM PAGE 1

TALKS FAIL, POWERMENS' AGITATION CONTINUES

red."

The minister said those detained under ESMA would be imprisoned for one year. He said the employees' leaders were indulging in acts of sabotage and were damaging the electricity distribution network and also preventing employees from reporting on duty.

The energy minister said the power employees' strike was against public and national interest and also a contempt of the Allahabad High Court's order.

He said the High Court had directed the state government to take action against the striking power employees and had also directed the chief judicial magistrate to issue warrants against the power employees' leaders.

Sharma said the doors for a negotiated settlement with the power employees were open. The minister charged that the power employees' leaders were not responding to the voice of reason.

The minister appreciated the hard work of the district magistrates and district police chiefs in helping the power staff to maintain power supply.

The strike has adversely impacted the thermal power generation in the state. As many as 12 thermal units with a total installed capacity of 2,950 megawatt have stopped power generation. One 500 MW unit of Anpara thermal power station had to be shut down as none of the employees turned up for duty. Three units with a capacity of 210 MW each were closed down on Friday. Five units at Obrha thermal power station with installed capacity of 1,000 MW had to be shut down for similar reasons.

Power distribution network is under severe strain and has collapsed in several districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh as 33/11 kV secondary power distribution sub-stations are not getting supply due to tripping of transmission lines. The power employees' leader said 100 per cent of the staff in Lucknow had stayed away from work since 10 pm of Thursday.

AMRITPAL GIVES PUNJAB COPS THE SLIP AFTER CHASE

An FIR dated February 24 stands registered against WPD elements for the attack on Ajnala Police Station, he added. Last month, Amritpal and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into the Ajnala Police Station on the outskirts of the Amritsar city, and clashed with police for the release of one of Amritpal's

aide. After the incident, in which six policemen, including a Superintendent of Police rank officer had suffered injuries, the AAP Government in the State had faced severe flak and was accused of kow-towing to extremists.

A heavy deployment of security forces had been made near village Jallupur Khera in Amritsar, the native place of Amritpal Singh, for the operation.

Dubai-returned Amritpal Singh was last year anointed the head of 'Waris Punjab De', which was founded by actor and activist Deep Sidhu who died in a road accident in February last year.

Officials said Amritpal Singh has been maintaining close links with Pakistani intelligence agency ISI and terrorist groups based in foreign countries.

Amitpal Singh, who had even issued a veiled threat to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has been trying to destabilise the situation in Punjab by indoctrinating and attracting Sikh youths into the fold of his outfit "Waris Punjab De", sources said.

LAC SITUATION FRAGILE, BUT A FEW DROOL OVER CHINA: JAISHANKAR

He went on to state, "China has to deliver. China will have to resolve the border situation to move forward."

As regards the war of words with Rahul Gandhi, Jaishankar said he felt "troubled" to see a political leader of Rahul Gandhi's stature "running down national morale" by admiring China and unfavourably comparing India to it.

"When I see someone drooling over China and being dismissive about India... His one-word description of China is 'harmony'. His one-word description of India is 'discord'. He speaks admirably of China. China has done well but when he speaks of manufacturing in India, he runs it down in every possible way," he said.

In this context, Rahul Gandhi's attacks on the Indian government over purported Chinese incursions at the LAC are not credible, the external affairs minister said. The very people who neglected the border are making noise now, he remarked. Issuing a sharp rejoinder to the Congress MP, Jaishankar said, "when Panda lovers try to be China hawks, it does not fly." Meanwhile, he chaired the consultative committee on India's G20 presidency which was attended by several opposition leaders including Congress's Rahul Gandhi. Jaishankar later shared a photograph of him standing alongside committee members, thanking them for their active participation.

NO COMPROMISE ON JPC DEMAND, RAHUL WON'T SAY SORRY: JAIRAM

Also on Friday, Home Minister Amit Shah said the current logjam in Parliament can be resolved if the Opposition comes forward for talks and that the Government will go "two steps ahead" if the Opposition takes "two steps forward".

Asked if there is any chance of finding a middle path to break the current logjam in Parliament with the BJP sticking to its demand of Rahul's apology and Congress seeking a JPC probe into the Adani issue, Ramesh said, "I don't see any middle path because our demand for a JPC is non-negotiable and the question of an apology does not arise."

"In order to divert attention from this legitimate and reasonable demand for a JPC, the BJP is insisting on an apology. An apology for what, the current prime minister (Narendra Modi) has repeatedly in China, Germany, South Korea and in various parts of the world used forums to raise domestic political issues and to criticise his political opponents. He should be making an apology why should Rahul be making any apology for highlighting what the state of democracy is in our country today," he said.

There is an "undeclared emergency" prevailing in the country, Ramesh alleged.

Asked about the BJP's charge that Rahul sought intervention of foreign countries, the Congress leader dismissed the charge, calling it "absolute bunkum and nonsense". He argued that whatever Rahul said in the UK is a matter of record with his videos and transcripts available.

"He (Rahul) is very clear, he said 'India's problems have to be solved internally through the electoral process, these are internal issues'. But he also said democracy in India is a public good and if India is democratic, not only India benefits but the world also benefits," Ramesh said.

"This is a canard, an absolute lie that is being propagated by the BJP," he said of the BJP's foreign intervention charge.

Whatever remarks are being attributed to the former Congress chief, he never said it, Ramesh said.

"What the BJP has been doing in the past couple of days is that it is distorting Rahul's remarks in order to divert. This is the 3D orchestrated strategy of Modi -- distort, defame and divert. Why divert, because there is growing evidence daily of the complicity of the establishment, the PM himself, in this massive scam of Adani in which crores and crores of rupees of public institutions LIC, SBI and other financial institutions are

involved and crores of crores of Indians are suffering because of this cronyism," Ramesh alleged.

Asked about BJP MP Dubey's demand that Rahul be expelled from the House for his remarks in the UK, Ramesh said, "This is intimidation. If they want to give a motion to the Speaker, they are welcome to do so. Rahul will reply."

According to rule 357, Rahul is allowed a personal explanation in Parliament, Ramesh said, citing that in 2015, BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad was allowed a personal explanation in response to some remarks made against him by Jyotiraditya Scindia, who was in the Congress back then. "Yesterday, for almost 15 minutes the microphones went off, it was collective mute," he alleged.

On disruption rather than debate becoming the norm, Ramesh said the Opposition does not have a say as it is also not allowed to discuss issues such as Adani, China as well as economic matters. "One of the fundamental rules of a parliamentary democracy is that the Opposition must have its say and the government will have its way. We know we don't have the numbers in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha but we are not even allowed to have our say and now efforts are being made to tarnish the Opposition's (image), saying that Opposition is responsible (for the adjournments)," he said.

SOME FORMER JUDGES WANT JUDICIARY TO PLAY OPP ROLE: RIJJIU

Whatever Rahul Gandhi says is publicised with a "louder voice" by the same ecosystem," he said.

The same ecosystem is working in India and outside India. We will not allow this 'tukde-tukde gang' to destroy our integrity, our sovereignty," Rijjiu asserted. The Minister said at a recent seminar in Delhi, where some retired Supreme Court judges and some senior lawyers were present, the topic was accountability in judges' appointment.

"But the discussion the whole day was how the Government is taking over the judiciary," he said. The Minister said he shares an excellent relationship with the Chief Justice of India, the present one, the last one and all the judges of the Supreme Court.

"It is a few of the retired judges — maybe three or four — a few of those activists, part of the anti-India gang — these people are trying to make Indian judiciary play the role of the Opposition party. "Some people also go to the court and say please rein in the Government, please change the policy of the Government. These people want

the judiciary to play the role of the Opposition party, which cannot happen," Rijjiu said. The judiciary, he asserted, is neutral. "Judges are not part of any group or political affiliation. How can these people openly say that the Indian judiciary must take head-on with the Government. What kind of propaganda is this," he wondered.

Asked whether any action was being taken against just elements, he said, "Actions will be taken, actions are being taken as per law. Nobody will escape." On the issue of the appointment of judges, Rijjiu said there is no role of the judiciary as such to initiate and to give finalisation to the appointment of judges. "It was only later due to the misadventure of the Congress party, the Supreme Court started acting, which some people describe as judicial overreach. Then the collegium system came into existence". But right now, the position of the Government is very clear that the collegium system is in place. "As long as a new system is not introduced, we will follow the Collegium system but the appointment of judges cannot be done by a judicial order. It is purely administrative," he said.

POLICE STORM IMRAN HOUSE

Punjab police, whose action ended later, were reportedly met with resistance from PTI workers from inside, resulting in violence. Dozens of PTI workers were taken into custody as the police claimed shots were fired upon them from inside the premises, Geo News reported.

Some 10 workers reportedly were injured in the operation after Khan left Lahore for Islamabad to attend the hearing in the Toshakhana case.

Speaking at a press conference here on Saturday, senior PTI leaders Shireen Mazari, Fawad Chaudhry and Shahbaz Gill condemned the major operation at Khan's house and brutal police torture of PTI workers.

They blamed ruling PMLN's chief organiser Maryam Nawaz and "her patron" in the military establishment for the "attack" and gave a country-wide protest call to the party workers.

"Police operation at Imran Khan's house was launched on the direction of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz. This episode should be seen as part of the 'London Plan' made by Nawaz and a powerful man in the establishment," Mazari said.

"Promises were made to Nawaz on top level appointment (a reference to appointment of new army chief Gen Asim Munir) that Imran Khan would be ousted from politics," she said. She said the police action at Khan's house exposed the "fascist face" of the ruling party and its handlers.

Millet Mission blessing for 2.5 cr farmers: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India's 'Millet Mission' will become a blessing for 2.5 crore marginal farmers in the country.

Inaugurating the Global Millets ('Shree Anna') Conference here Modi said "India's Millet Mission will become a blessing for 2.5 crore marginal farmers and this was the first time since Independence that a government was paying attention to the needs of millet-producing farmers."

The two-day global conference will have sessions on issues related to 'Shree Anna millet' like promotion and awareness of millets among producers, consumers and development of value chain, market linkages and deliberate on health and nutritional aspects of millets which are increasingly back on the food table, given their gluten-free

nutritional value.

"To make Shree Anna a global movement, we have worked relentlessly. In 2018, we declared millets as nutri-cereals. To achieve this, we made farmers aware and generated interest in the market," said Modi.

He further said that being climate resilient is the strength of millet

"Millets can be easily produced even in very adverse climatic conditions. Its production also requires relatively less water, due to which it becomes a favourite crop for places with a water crisis," the Prime Minister said.

He said in India, millets are primarily grown in 12-13 states. However, in these states, the domestic consumption per person was not more than 2-3 kgs per month. "Today, it has increased to 14 kg per month", he sought to say.

2023 is being observed as the International Year of Millets.

India's daily Covid tally crosses 800

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's single-day tally of Covid-19 cases crossed 800 after 126 days on Saturday, while the number of active cases climbed to 5,389, according to Union Health Ministry data. With 843 fresh infections, the country's caseload increased to 4.46 crore (4,46,94,349). The death toll rose to 5,30,799 with four fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. Experts have attributed the recent rise in Covid cases to XBB.1.16 variant.

A total of 76 samples of XBB.1.16 variant have been found, according to INSACOG data.

The variant has been found across Karnataka (30), Maharashtra (29), Puducherry (7) Delhi (5), Telangana (2), Gujarat (1), Himachal Pradesh (1) and Odisha (1), the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) data showed.

The XBB 1.16 variant was first found in January when two

samples tested positive for the variant while in February a total of 59 samples were found. In March, till now 15 samples of the XBB 1.16 variant have been found, the INSACOG said.

Former AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria, who had led the national Covid task force, said the rise in Covid cases seems to be driven by the XBB 1.16 variant while the influenza cases are because of H3N2.

"For both of these, following Covid-appropriate behaviour can help to contain the spread of infection. And also most of the cases are not severe; so there is no need to panic as of now," the chairman, Institute of Internal Medicine, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Director-Medical Education at Medanta and former AIIMS director said recently.

In India, there is a 281 per cent increase in cases and 17 per cent increase in deaths over the past 14 days, he tweeted.

Russian attacks continue after ICC’s warrant against Putin

AP ■ KYIV

Widespread Russian attacks continued in Ukraine following the International Criminal Court’s decision to issue an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights.

Meanwhile, Putin has travelled to Crimea to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula’s annexation from Ukraine.

Putin visited an art school and a children’s centre on Saturday.

Ukraine was attacked by 16 Russian drones on Friday night, the Ukrainian Air Force said in the early hours of Saturday.

Writing on Telegram, the air force command said that 11 out of 16 drones were shot down “in the central, western and eastern regions.” Among areas targeted were the capital, Kyiv, and the western Lviv province.

The head of the Kyiv city administration, Serhii Popko, said Ukrainian air defences shot down all drones heading for the Ukrainian capital, while Lviv regional Gov Maksym Koztytskyi said on Saturday that three of six drones were shot down, with the other three hitting a district bordering Poland. According to the Ukrainian Air Force, the



People inspect a damaged restaurant after Russian shelling hit in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine on Saturday

attacks were carried out from the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov and Russia’s Bryansk province, which borders Ukraine.

The Ukrainian military additionally said in its regular update on Saturday morning that Russian forces over the previous 24 hours launched 34 airstrikes, one missile strike and 57 rounds of anti-aircraft fire.

The Facebook update said that falling debris hit the southern Kherson province, damaging seven houses and a kindergarten.

According to the Ukrainian statement, Russia is

continuing to concentrate its efforts on offensive operations in Ukraine’s industrial east, focusing attacks on Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Marinka and Shakhtarsk in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk province.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, regional Gov of the Donetsk province, said one person was killed and three wounded when 11 towns and villages in the province were shelled on Friday.

Further west, Russian rockets hit a residential area overnight Friday in the city of Zaporizhzhia, the regional capital of the partially occupied province of the same name.

No casualties were reported, but houses were damaged and a catering establishment destroyed, Anatoliy Kurtev of the Zaporizhzhia City Council said. It is the first time the global court has issued a warrant against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The move was immediately dismissed by Moscow — and welcomed by Ukraine as a major breakthrough.

Its practical implications, however, could be limited as the chances of Putin facing trial at the ICC are highly unlikely because Moscow does not recognise the court’s jurisdiction or extradite its nationals.

UK military officials said Saturday that Russia is likely to widen conscription. In its latest intelligence update, the UK defense ministry said that deputies in the Russian Duma, the lower house of Russia’s parliament, introduced a bill on Monday to change the conscription age for men to 21-30, from the current 18-27.

The ministry said that, at the moment, many men aged 18-21 claim exemption from military service because they are in higher education. The change would mean that they would eventually still have to serve. It said the law will likely be passed and come into force in January 2024.

Russia, Ukraine extend grain deal to aid poor

AP ■ KYIV

An unprecedented wartime deal that allows grain to flow from Ukraine to countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where hunger is a growing threat and high food prices are pushing more people into poverty has been extended, officials said Saturday.

The extension was announced by the United Nations and by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but neither confirmed the length of the extension.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov tweeted that the deal had been extended for 120 days — the length that Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations had wanted.

There was no immediate comment from Russia, which had wanted to renew for 60 days.

This is the second renewal of separate agreements that Ukraine and Russia signed with the United Nations and Turkey to allow food to leave the Black Sea region after Russia invaded its neighbour more than a year ago.

The warring nations are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products that developing nations depend on.

Trump anticipates arrest

AP ■ NEW YORK

Donald Trump said in a social media post that he expects to be arrested on Tuesday as a New York prosecutor is eyeing charges in a case examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president.

Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network early on Saturday that “illegal leaks” from the Manhattan district attorney’s office indicate that “The far & away leading republican candidate & former president of the United States of America, will be arrested on Tuesday of next week.”

Messages left on Saturday with the district attorney’s office were not immediately returned. Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to calls for comment.

Trump did not provide any details on social media about how he knew about the expected arrest. In his postings, he repeated his lies that the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden was stolen and he urged his followers to “Protest, take our nation back!” That language evoked the message from the then-president that preceded the riot at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Law enforcement officials in New York have been making security preparations for the possibility that Trump could be indicted.



Foreign gifts to Trump remain unreported

Washington (AP): Donald Trump’s White House has failed to report more than 100 gifts from foreign nations worth more than a quarter-million dollars, and federal officials have been unable to find a life-size painting of Trump given by the president of El Salvador as well as golf clubs from the prime minister of Japan, according to a report Friday from House Democrats.

Among the unreported items are 16 gifts from Saudi Arabia worth more than USD 45,000 in all, including a dagger valued at up to USD 24,000, and 17 presents from India that include expensive cufflinks, a vase and a USD 4,600 model of the Taj Mahal, says the report from Democrats on the House Oversight Committee.

There has been no public announcement of any time

frame for the grand jury’s secret work in the case, including any potential vote on whether to indict the ex-president.

Trump’s posting echoes one made last summer when he broke the news on Truth Socia that the FBI was searching his home as part of an investigation into the possible mishandling of classified documents.

The grand jury in Manhattan has been hearing from witnesses, including former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen, who says he orchestrated payments in 2016 to two women to silence them about sexual encounters they said they had with Trump a decade earlier.

Trump denies the encounters occurred, says he did nothing wrong and has cast the investigation as a “witch hunt” by a Democratic prosecutor bent on sabotaging the Republican’s 2024 presidential campaign.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg’s office has apparently been examining whether any state laws were broken in connection with the payments or the way Trump’s company compensated Cohen for his work to keep the women’s allegations quiet.

Daniels and at least two former Trump aides — one-time political adviser Kellyanne Conway and former spokesperson Hope Hicks — are among witnesses who have met with prosecutors in recent weeks.

FIIDS: Time running out for laid off H-1B workers

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Time is running out for laid off H-1B professionals as under the existing laws they need to leave the country within 60 days of losing their employment status, giving sleepless nights to the thousands of Indian tech workers and their family members.

“This has a humanitarian impact on them as their families, including their US-born children are uprooted abruptly, and those who were laid off in the earlier

months are now running out of time,” the Foundation For India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS), which took up their cases with lawmakers and federal administration said in a statement on Friday.

While the US Citizenship and Immigration Services is considering their request to extend the existing time window to 180 days, the process is likely to take up some time, leaving no other option for these professionals other than to leave the country.

“FIIDS appeals to the USCIS, and

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to consider a request to expedite the extension of grace period. FIIDS also appeals to the elected officials, tech executives, and community leaders to emphasise the need and urgency to increase the grace period,” the foundation said in a media statement.

Since last year, more than 2,50,000 such professionals have been laid off in the United States. This number continues to grow with companies like Meta announcing another set of tens of thousands of layoffs, FIIDS said.

Ex-Air Force officer sentenced for Capitol attack

Washington (AP): A retired Air Force officer who stormed the US Capitol dressed in combat gear and carried zip-tie handcuffs into the Senate gallery was sentenced on Friday to two years in prison.

Larry Brock, 55, of Grapevine, Texas, joined other rioters on the Senate floor only minutes after then-Vice President Mike Pence, senators and their staff evacuated the

chamber to escape the mob attacking the building on January 6, 2021.

US District Judge John Bates also sentenced Brock to two years of supervised release after his prison term and ordered him to perform 100 hours of community service. Brock, who declined to speak in court before the judge imposed his sentence, remains free until he must report to prison at a

date to be determined. Prosecutors had recommended a sentence of five years in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Bates convicted Brock in November after a trial without a jury. Brock waived his right to a jury trial. The judge said Brock expressed “very troubling” and violent rhetoric before the January 6 riot. The judge read aloud several of Brock’s social media postings

calling it “really pretty astounding” that a former high-ranking military officer expressed those words. “That’s chilling stuff, and it does reflect a purpose to stop the certification of the election,” Bates said.

Brock believed baseless conspiracy theories that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Republican incumbent Donald Trump, prosecutors said.

GLOBE TROTTING

1 KILLED BY ISRAELI ARMY IN WEST BANK

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military said troops shot a Palestinian who approached soldiers on Friday and pulled a knife near the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. Palestinian authorities said the man died of his wounds a short while later. The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the man as Yazan Khaseeb, 23. The military said the man refused to identify himself and drew a knife, prompting the soldiers to open fire. It published a photo of the alleged knife on the ground.

THREE DEAD IN STABBINGS IN CANADA

MONTREAL: Three people were found stabbed to death Friday inside an apartment in the eastern Canadian city of Montreal, and police have a suspect in custody. Police found the three bodies with wounds from a sharp object after responding to an emergency call Friday morning, Montreal police Const. Julien Lévesque said. He said it was too early to release details about the link between the victims and the suspect. The suspect was arrested outside the apartment building and will be questioned by investigators, police said. Authorities barricaded the street, in a neighbourhood consisting of low-rise apartment buildings.

TURKIYE’S DIPLOMAT IN CAIRO TO MEND TIES

CAIRO: Turkiye’s chief diplomat was in Cairo on Saturday for talks with Egyptian officials as the regional powers seek to mend their frayed ties after years of tensions. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkiye’s foreign minister, landed in the Egyptian capital early Saturday. He was the highest ranking Turkish official to visit the Arab World’s most populous nation in over a decade.

TWO DEAD IN OHIO NIGHTCLUB SHOOTING

COLUMBUS: A pre-dawn shooting at a Columbus night club left two people dead and four wounded, Ohio authorities said. Officers responded shortly after 5 am Saturday to an after-hours club called Tha Plug on the city’s south side, emergency dispatchers said. One person died at the scene and another was dropped off at Hospital and was later pronounced dead.

Violence in France over retirement age push

AP ■ PARIS

Angry protesters took to the streets in Paris and other cities for a second day on Friday, trying to pressure lawmakers to bring down French President Emmanuel Macron’s government and doom the unpopular retirement age increase he’s trying to impose without a vote in the National Assembly.

A day after Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne invoked a special constitutional power to skirt a vote in the chaotic lower chamber, lawmakers on the right and left filed no-confidence motions to be voted on Monday.

At the elegant Place de Concorde, a festive protest by several thousand, with chants, dancing and a huge bonfire,



Demonstrator ran through the tear gas during a protest in Paris on Friday

degenerated into a scene echoing the night before. Riot police charged and threw tear gas to empty the huge square across from the National Assembly after troublemakers climbed scaffolding on a renovation site, arming themselves with wood.

They lobbed fireworks and paving stones at police in a standoff.

On Thursday night, security forces charged and used water cannons to evacuate the area, and small groups then set street fires in chic neighbourhoods nearby. French Interior

Minister Gérald Darmanin told radio station RTL that 310 people were arrested overnight, most of them in Paris.

Mostly small, scattered protests were held in cities around France, from a march in Bordeaux to a rally in Toulouse. Port officers in Calais temporarily stopped ferries from crossing the English Channel to Dover. Some university campuses in Paris were blocked and protesters occupied a high-traffic ring road around the French capital.

Paris garbage collectors extended their strike for a 12th day, with piles of foul-smelling rubbish growing daily in the French capital. Striking sanitation workers continued to block Europe’s largest incineration site and two other sites that treat Paris garbage.

Nigeria elects new governors

AP ■ ABUJA

Millions of Nigerians voted on Saturday to elect state governors but faced intimidation and violence in some cities amid heightened tensions following a disputed presidential election in Africa’s most populous nation last month.

New governors were being chosen for 28 of Nigeria’s 36 states as the political opposition continues to reject the victory of President-elect Bola Tinubu, who belongs to the ruling All Progressives Congress party.

The performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission “has improved considerably compared to the February 25 elections, but violence has been much more intense across the country,” said Idayat Hassan, head of the Center for Democracy and Development, Nigeria’s largest democracy-focused group.

Local observer group YIAGA Africa said it found several instances in which voters were intimidated and prevented from voting unless they agreed to cast their ballots for certain political parties.

Among the places it listed was Lagos state, where the president-elect’s party is seeking to retain the governor’s office. The All Progressives Congress lost the state in last month’s presidential and legislative elections.

Braverman in Rwanda to assess illegal migration

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain’s Indian-origin Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, arrived in Rwanda on Saturday on a tour of facilities being built as part of a bilateral migration pact that will see hundreds of illegal migrants deported from the UK to the central African nation.

The UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership, which was signed by Braverman’s predecessor Priti Patel in April last year, is designed to house migrants in Rwanda while their asylum claims are assessed.

The controversial plan remains caught up in legal wrangles, but Braverman said her visit is an effort to reinforce the government’s commitment to the partnership.

“Our partnership is a ground-breaking approach that will act as

a powerful deterrent against dangerous and illegal journeys, such as small boat crossings,” said Braverman in a statement on the eve of her visit to Rwanda.

“While in Rwanda we will discuss all the aspects of the partnership and I will be visiting some of the initiatives that we have supported,” she said.

According to the UK Home Office, the minister is scheduled to meet refugees who have rebuilt their lives in Kigali, people leading on accommodation projects and a range of entrepreneurs who have helped build employment opportunities for people in Rwanda.

She will also meet with Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Vincent Biruta during the two-day official visit this weekend.

British Muslim guilty of terror

PTI ■ LONDON

A British Muslim financial analyst influenced by extremist Islamist ideology has been found guilty of multiple terrorism related offences by a UK court after his laptop led police to dangerous bomb-making plans.

Asad Bhatti, from Redhill in Surrey, south-east England, was arrested and charged in January 2021, following which a search was carried out at an address in the area which revealed a makeshift bomb-making facility.

Surrey Police said the 49-year-old, of South Asian origin, was found guilty of two counts of possessing an article for the purpose of terrorism, contrary to Section 57 of the UK’s Terrorism Act 2000.

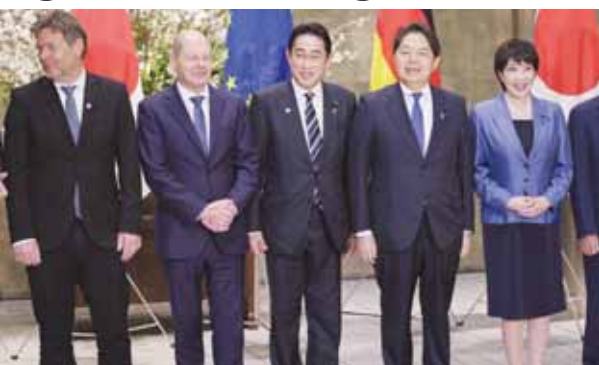
He was also found guilty of three counts of making or possessing an explosive substance under suspicious circumstances contrary to Section 4 of the UK’s Explosive Substance Act at the Old Bailey court in London on Friday.

Bhatti remains in custody and will be sentenced for the crimes at the same court on April 25.

“The case against Bhatti was strong, I am glad the jury found him guilty today,” said Detective Chief Superintendent Olly Wright, Head of Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) in Surrey.

“There was clear evidence of his extreme Islamist ideology and the danger he posed. He clearly hated those whom he considers do not follow his version of Islam, and he made a range of derogatory comments towards those he considers to be ‘unbelievers,’ he said.

Japan, German leaders agree to strengthen ties



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, second left, and Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, centre, pose for a family pictures at prime minister’s official residence in Tokyo on Saturday

AP ■ TOKYO

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday held the first round of government consultations in Tokyo and agreed to strengthen economic and defense ties to better cope with China’s growing influence and global security concerns.

Kishida told a joint news conference after the talks that the sides agreed to strengthen supply chains in minerals, semiconductors, batteries and other strategic areas, in order to “counter economic coercion, state-led attempts to illegally acquire technology and non-market practices,” apparently referring to China.

“Japan and Germany, both industrial nations that share fundamental values, need to take global leadership to strengthen resilience of our societies,” Kishida said.

Scholz brought six of the 17 Cabinet members for talks with Japanese counterparts, including economy, finance, foreign, interior, transport and defense ministers.

They discussed deepening economic and national security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as China’s assertiveness in pressing its maritime territorial claims and its closer ties with Russia.

Germany has similar “government consultations” framework with several countries.

In Tokyo, the two leaders again condemned Russia’s war on Ukraine and agreed to continue tough sanctions against Moscow and strong support for Ukraine, Kishida said.

Russia’s nuclear threat has made atomic weapons disarmament even more difficult and divided the international community, Kishida said, adding that it’s crucial to get China, Russia and other nuclear states to resume discussing nuclear disarmament.

Scholz said the government consultations will “further advance our strategic cooperation, and they’re a very important part of giving a new drive to this close cooperation we want to achieve together,” German news agency dpa reported.

Be transparent in sharing Covid data for origin study, WHO tells China

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA

The WHO has criticised China for withholding data related to samples taken at a market in Wuhan in 2020 that could have provided vital information about the Covid-19 pandemic’s origins, calling on Beijing to be transparent and to share results of investigations it conducts.

The Huanan market in central China’s Wuhan city was the epicentre of the pandemic. From its origin there, the SARS-CoV-2 virus rapidly spread to other locations in Wuhan

in late 2019 and then to the rest of the world.

“Every piece of data relating to studying the origins of COVID-19 needs to be shared with the international community immediately. These data could have – and should have – been shared three years ago,” World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in Geneva on Friday.

“We continue to call on China to be transparent in sharing data and to conduct the necessary investiga-

tions and share the results. Understanding how the pandemic began remains both a moral and scientific imperative,” he said.

Ghebreyesus said that last Sunday, the global health agency was made aware of data published on the GISAID database in late January, and taken down again recently.

“The data, from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, relates to samples taken at the Huanan market in Wuhan, in 2020,” he said.

Ghebreyesus said while the data was online, scientists from a number of countries downloaded the data and analysed it.

“As soon as we became aware of this data, we contacted the Chinese CDC and urged them to share it with WHO and the international scientific community so it can be analysed,” he said, adding that WHO also convened the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens, or SAGO, which met on Tuesday.

“We asked researchers from the

Chinese CDC and the international group of scientists to present their analyses of the data to SAGO. These data do not provide a definitive answer to the question of how the pandemic began, but every piece of data is important in moving us closer to that answer,” he said.

In a report Thursday, the New York Times said that an international team of virus experts said they had “found genetic data from a market in Wuhan, China, linking the coronavirus with raccoon dogs for sale there.”

The NYT report said that the genetic data was drawn from swabs taken from in and around the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market starting in January 2020, “shortly after the Chinese authorities had shut down the market because of suspicions that it was linked to the outbreak of a new virus.”

While the animals had been cleared out from the market, researchers took swabs from the walls, floors, metal cages and carts used for transporting animal cages.

TREESA-GAYATRI LOSE IN SEMIS

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's sensational run came to an end as the Indian pair signed off with a second successive semifinal finish at the All England Championships here on Saturday.

The two young shuttlers found the going tough against Korean world number 20 duo of Baek Na Ha and Lee So Hee, losing 10-21 10-21 in a 46-minute women's doubles contest at the Utilita arena.

"We learnt a lot from this match. The difference was they didn't leave a shuttle and we did panic a little bit," Gayatri said after the match.

Treesa added: "When we played against them, their defence was good, it was better than yesterday. We were just panicking and didn't play well, we just kept attacking."

Gayatri's father Pullela Gopichand, the chief national coach, was the last Indian to win the All England crown, in 2001, the first being the legendary Prakash Padukone in 1980.

Gayatri, 20, and Treesa, 19, had a big opportunity to reach the finals but it ended in anticlimax as they played into the hands of the Koreans.

"I was nervous. There was pressure," said Gayatri.

The world number 17 pair was pitted against Baek and Lee, the latter being an experienced player with two world championships medals with former partner Shin Seung-chan.

In fact, Lee and Shin had faced defeat against the Indian pair in the last edition but the



fresh combination of Lee and Baek have been relentless this week with wins over second and eighth seeds, and looked in supreme touch as they came up with a tactical masterclass.

The Koreans turned into a retrieving machine as they defended seamlessly and extend-

ed the rallies with their high tosses and lifts to not allow the Indians to play their short flat rally game.

As a result, Gayatri and Treesa failed to make a good start like they did earlier this week, falling behind 0-4 early on.

Lee and Baek frustrated the

Indians with longer rallies, waiting patiently for their opponents to make errors. It worked perfectly as the Koreans grabbed a 11-5 lead.

Briefly the Indians made it 9-13 but it was a one-way traffic from 14-10, with the Koreans drawing the first blood with

seven straight points, including the last which went long from Gayatri.

The Koreans didn't kill the shots at the nets and kept playing more high lifts, with the Indians sticking with their smashes from the back court.

Gayatri and Treesa couldn't

change their tactics and went wide and long too many times as Lee and Baek zoomed to a massive 11-2 lead at the mid-game interval of the second game.

Gayatri had her moment of brilliance, when she mixed body shots with a drop to grab a point to move to 5-11 after resumption, but such instances were too few.

The Indians managed just five more points before Treesa hit the net to hand 10 match points to the Koreans, who sealed their place in the final after another long rally.

Despite the loss, it was a good week for the young Indians, who started playing together only in 2021 and had surprised all by reaching the semifinals in the last edition after being promoted to the main draw from the reserve list.

This time, Gayatri and Treesa had come into the tournament with a Commonwealth Games bronze medal and wins over higher-ranked pairs such as world No. 7 Tan Pearly and Thinnah Muralitharan at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship in February.

Gayatri and Treesa accounted for some big scalps such as the seventh seeded Thai pair of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Ravindra Prajongjai and Japan's former world number ones Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in the early rounds this week.

"We played against some good players, the confidence was there. So we are looking to the next tournaments. We have a lot more to learn. We will come back stronger," Treesa signed off.

LOCAL EVENTS

UP SETTLE FOR BRONZE



The Uttar Pradesh team won the bronze medal in the 51st National Senior Women's Handball Championship, held in Varanasi from March 15 to 19. Uttar Pradesh shared the joint third-place with Haryana in the championship held at Varanasi Public School in Varanasi. Uttar Pradesh Handball Association general secretary Anandeshwar Pandey said that the UP team defeated Tripura 26-13 in the pre-quarterfinals and Punjab 30-18 in the quarterfinals to make it to the semifinals, where they lost to strong Railway team 17-14.

FELICITATED



Taekwondo Welfare Society and the Lucknow District Taekwondo Association on Saturday felicitated officials from Lucknow for being elected in Uttar Pradesh Olympic Association. Among those felicitated were Abhijeet Sarkar, Arvind Sharma, Syed Rafat Zubair Rizvi, Sudhir Halvasia, and Sudha Bajpai.

ITF QUALIFIER FROM TODAY

The qualifying round of the ITF \$25,000 World Tour international tennis tournament will start on Sunday at the Ekana Sports City. The main draw will begin from March 21. Deputy chief minister Brajesh Pathak will inaugurate the tournament.

In the qualifying matches, 32 players, including Tommy Japalinsky (USA), Stijn Pel (The Netherlands), and Patrick Opplustil (Czech Republic will compete for their place in the main draw.

DUS KA DUM



As a part of Khelo India's Dus ka Dum initiative, friendly matches of basketball, volleyball and tug-of-war were organised at SAI National Centre of Excellence on Saturday. Around 100 women athletes participated on the second day of the event.

MC Mary team won the basketball and tug-of-war events while Karnam Malleshari team emerged victorious in volleyball. Former international hockey player Ranjana Srivastava gave away the prizes.

Atalanta beat Empoli 2-1 to boost CL hopes

AP ■ MILAN

Substitute Rasmus Hojlund Scored late to help Atalanta fight back to beat Empoli 2-1 in Serie A and boost its chances of qualifying for the Champions League. Hojlund scored the winner just seven minutes after coming off the bench. Marten de Roon had cancelled out Tyrone Ebuehi's opener for Empoli.

The victory snapped Atalanta's winless run and lifted it to within three points of fourth-placed AC Milan, which visits Udinese on Saturday.

Empoli remained nine points above the relegation zone.

Atalanta had lost three of its past four matches, drawing the other, and lost ground in a tight race for the Champions League spots.

Ancelotti backs Vinicius to escape Araujo shackles

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti backed winger Vinicius Junior to escape Ronald Araujo's shackles when Los Blancos face Barcelona on Sunday in the Clasico in La Liga.

The Brazilian winger, key for Madrid this season, has been shut down by Barca defender Araujo in recent clashes with the Catalans, with coach Xavi Hernandez deploying the centre-back on the right to directly confront him.

Vinicius has scored twice in 12 games against Barcelona, both times before Araujo started at right-back.

No player has scored from open play against leaders Barca at Camp Nou in La Liga this season, giving champions Madrid a formidable task as they try to eat into their nine-point deficit.

"He's had more difficulties than in other games, but Vini is always Vini, his mobility can help him get the best (from himself) in tomorrow's game," Ancelotti told a news conference Saturday.

"I'm thinking of putting him on the right, let's see. He can play on the right,



Vinicius."

Ancelotti later said he was joking about using Vinicius on the right flank, but reiterated that the forward could be given more liberty to drift from the left.

"Obviously that wasn't serious, but mobility could be important, not having a fixed reference point. Speaking generally, against a forward that's another problem for a defence.

"Vini will play on the left, with more mobility."

Xavi also looked forward to the battle between Araujo and Vinicius.

"Araujo is very physically strong, he's quick, fast, and understands the movements of his opponents," Xavi told reporters Saturday.

"He's responsible, and a leader. He's a world class defender, one of the best in the world. Having Ronald in the team, is a guarantee, an advantage.

"Usually when he takes on Vinicius, he comes out as the winner of the battle, but Vinicius can make a big difference.

"It's not just Ronald, it's (everyone) looking out, and collectively, we've been very good against Madrid."

RYBAKINA TO FACE SABALENKA IN INDIAN WELLS FINAL

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Elena Rybakina again proved too much for world number one Iga Swiatek, denying the defending champion a return to the Indian Wells final with an emphatic 6-2, 6-2 semi-final victory on Friday.

Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina, the reigning Wimbledon champion who stunned top-seeded Swiatek in the fourth round of the Australian Open on the way to the final, will now get a chance to turn the tables on Aryna Sabalenka, who beat her in Melbourne to capture a first Grand Slam title.

World number two Sabalenka advanced with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over seventh-seeded Maria Sakkari of Greece.

Rybakina, ranked 10th in the world, was all over Swiatek from the opening game, painting the lines with her punishing ground strokes and serving with pinpoint precision.

Swiatek, winner of the French and US Opens last year in a campaign that included eight titles in all, simply had no answer and surrendered the first set with a double-fault on the first set point.

It was more of the same in the second as Rybakina raced to a 5-0 lead. Swiatek, who revealed after the match she was dealing with "discomfort" in her ribcage, finally managed a hold for 5-1, and pounced to break as Rybakina suddenly struggled with her first serve in the next game.

Rybakina still managed to muster two match points at 40-15, but Swiatek saved one with an overhead and another with a blistering return of a second serve, winning two more points to complete the break for 5-2.



But there would be no comeback. A mis-hit as Swiatek appeared to trip chasing a ball back to the baseline gave Rybakina another match point and she converted it with confidence.

"I didn't expect that I was going to play that good today," admitted Rybakina, who battled through three sets to beat Czech Karolina Muchova in the quarter-finals.

"Hopefully I'm going to play like this on Sunday," she added after denying Swiatek's bid to become the first woman since Martina Navratilova in 1990-91 to win back-to-back titles in the California desert.

Rib injury threatens Iga's Miami Open defense

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Iga Swiatek's Indian Wells title defense ground to a halt in a straight sets semi-final loss to Elena Rybakina on Friday, the world number one later revealing she is battling a rib injury.

"For sure, Elena played great tennis today, and I feel like against her I have to play better," Swiatek said after falling 6-2, 6-2 to the Wimbledon champion — who also shocked her in the Australian Open fourth round.

"Honestly, I feel like it's more me and kind of my mistakes," she said. "I'm also not feeling 100% physically. I have a little discomfort in my rib, and we're going to consult with medical team."

Swiatek said she still planned to defend her title at the Miami Open that starts next week.

"For now I'm preparing to play, but we'll see what (the) next days are going to tell us," she said. "I don't know yet."

She said she hadn't had

Sabalenka 'feels bad' for Ukrainian players

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to stir tension in the tennis world, and Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka on Friday said that it's not only Ukrainian players who are feeling the strain.

"Of course it's a lot of tension between us," Australian Open champion Sabalenka said after beating Maria Sakkari to reach the final of the combined WTA and ATP Masters 1000 in the California desert.

But, she added, "I still have this belief that I did nothing bad to Ukrainians — not me, not Russian athletes."

The WTA and ATP tours have barred players from Russia and its ally Belarus from competing under their national flags, but insist that individual athletes have a right to compete.

much experience of playing through injury, the only example she recalled coming at the 2019 French Open.

"It's a new situation for me, for sure," the 21-year-old said. "For sure now it's a totally different level. So I feel like going on (for) matches you have to be 100% fit."

"I have been playing, so there has been some fatigue all the time," she said. "I would say it's kind of constant, but I'm pretty sure that tomorrow or day after will help in recovery."



Boxing World C'ships: Nitu, Preeti, Manju enter pre-quarters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers continued to shine at home as three of them entered the pre-quarters with contrasting wins at the Women's World Championships here on Saturday.

Commonwealth Games gold medallist Nitu Ganghas (48kg) began her campaign with a RSC (referee stopped contest) win over Doyeon Kang of Korea, while Preeti (54kg) eked out a 4-3 split decision victory against Romania's Lacramioara Perijoc.

Manju Bamboriya (66kg), on the other hand, defeated Cara Wharerau of New Zealand by a 5-0 unanimous verdict.

Nitu, who lost in the quarter-final during the last edition, opened her campaign in the best possible way, winning the bout in the first round itself.

In the opening minute, she used her hook and left cross but

wasn't able to connect her jabs.

The boxers then went into a frenzy as they punched each other with both hands. Soon, Kang got the first standing count. With Nitu continuing her onslaught, the Korean got her second standing count 20 seconds later with referee Luca Vadilonga of Italy ruling in the Indian's favour, much to the joy of the partisan crowd at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall.

Having won her opening bout by an RSC verdict, Preeti had to work hard for her second win in the tournament.

"I had prepared a lot for this bout, she had won a silver last time. I want to prove to myself that I'm less than no one," said Preeti.

"I was trying to understand her game in the beginning. In the last round I changed my strategy. She was attacking and getting unbalanced."

Both boxers looked to keep a distance in the first few seconds. Preeti was caught unawares by a Perijoc straight jab but the Haryana pugilist recovered soon.

The 2022 Asian Championships bronze medallist then landed two punches on her Romanian opponent and led 3-2 at the end of the first round.

In the second round, both boxers tried to sidestep each other as Perijoc resorted to body blows.

Preeti danced around the ring, using her nimble feet, as she tried to avoid the Romanian. She landed some accurate punches but lost the round 2-3.

In the final three minutes, Preeti resorted to counter attacking which she did effectively. The round was a draw with the bout going into a review. The evaluator and observer ruled in favour of the Indian.

INDIA AIM TO SEAL SERIES

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The spotlight will once again be on KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja when India take on Australia in the second ODI here on Sunday, with regular captain Rohit Sharma returning to lead the side after missing the opening game in Mumbai.

India defeated Australia by five wickets in a low-scoring game at the Wankhede Stadium, with Rahul, who struggled to find form during the Border-Gavaskar series leading to him being dropped for the third and fourth Tests, scoring a patient unbeaten 75 as the hosts cantered home.

Jadeja, playing ODI cricket after nearly eight months due to a knee injury and subsequent surgery, scored an unbeaten 45 in the chase of 188 on Friday. He also bowled a tight spell and returned figures of 2/46 to be declared 'Player of the Match'.

With the ODI World Cup being hosted by India later this year, an in-form Rahul and a fully-fit Jadeja will be an asset, and the three-match series will help the selectors assess the duo's progress. India would look to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series and also try to make amends with the bat, after they were in a spot of bother at 4/39, and later 5/83, before Rahul and Jadeja came together at the crease to guide the hosts to victory with 61 balls to spare.

Rohit Sharma's return to captaincy duties will certainly give solidity to the top order, which crumbled to the pace and variations of Australian quick Mitchell Starc.

The lanky left-arm pacer's



three-wicket burst at the start put India under tremendous pressure, with Virat Kohli (4), Suryakumar Yadav (0) and Shubman Gill (20) departing in quick succession after Marcus Stoinis had made an early dent by dismissing Ishan Kishan for three runs. Indian batters have occasionally looked tentative against quality left-arm pacers, and facing Starc in the remaining two games should give them

good practice in home conditions, with efforts focused towards making preparations for the World Cup in October-November.

With Sharma set to open, Kishan will likely make way for the regular captain. While not much should be read into Kohli and Gill's below-par scores in the first ODI, Suryakumar Yadav not being able to find his mojo in the 50-over format is a reason

for concern.

A marauder with the bat in T20Is, Suryakumar is evidently still finding his feet in ODIs. He has gone without a fifty in all five ODIs this year. Surya has now played 15 ODIs (13 innings) without a score exceeding 50.

However, with no timeline set for Shreyas Iyer's return, India will keep auditioning Suryakumar for the role at No. 4. India's bowling did a tremen-

dous job in Mumbai with pacers Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj flourishing on a pace-friendly Wankhede pitch. But wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav could not make a strong impression.

However, the team management is not expected to tinker with the bowling line-up, with Pandya playing the role of a third seamer to perfection in Mumbai. The weather forecast for

Important we recover properly to perform better: Shami

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ace pacer Mohammed Shami has stressed on the importance of recovery after bowling India to a five-wicket win against Australia in the first ODI at the Wankhede stadium here.

The right-arm quick returned with figures of 6-2-17-3 on Friday as India restricted Australia to 188 in 35.4 overs and then returned to overhaul the target in 39.5 overs.

"The plan was to keep it simple. We had discussed in team meeting as well to make a good start, to keep the ball in good areas and stick to our line and length," he said in conversation with fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj in a video posted on BCCI.TV.

"The heat was also an issue. When we bowled the first spell it was hot but later it got a bit better to bowl when the wind started blowing." The 32-year-old had missed the training for the first ODI to recover from the fourth and final Test against Australia in Ahmedabad.

"After 40 overs of the Ahmedabad Test, I needed 1-2 days to recover. I completed that recovery and came here for the match," he said.

"The management accepted that I needed recovery. We have played so many matches that we know our skills and ability. So it is impor-



tant that we recover properly to perform better."

Siraj also claimed three wickets for 29 runs to play a huge role in India's win.

"When I get the new ball, I try to bowl inswing. Like when there is a left-hander, I try to bowl inswing. I wanted to take as many wickets in the powerplay. I got one wicket," he said.

"But when I went to fine leg when you were bowling, I was thinking 'what is happening'. I was wondering if the umpire has given you the new ball or what?"

"Then when I came to bowl, the ball was moving off the wicket nicely. So, I also looked to bowl consistently in one area. I also got tips from you and we enjoyed the bowling in Wankhade."

which would be a concern for captain Steve Smith.

As a makeshift opener in the absence of Warner, Marsh provided a rapid start with a 65-ball 81 but Australia lost the way in the middle overs, crashing from 129/2 to 188 all out against quality pace in Mumbai. Smith and Labuschagne may have encountered 'difficult' pitches in the Test series but the wickets for ODIs in India are usually batter-

friendly, and both the Aussie mainstays will be expected to do more. Smith has not crossed the 50-run mark so far on this India tour. For someone who has a mountain of runs against India, the Australian stand-in skipper will look to end the drought. Australia's fast bowling looked terrific in Mumbai, with Abbott keeping a lid on the Indians with tight lines and Green, Stoinis also chipping in.



India can bolster their batting if Rahul keeps wickets in WTC final vs Aus: Shastri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India coach Ravi Shastri has backed KL Rahul to seal his place as a wicketkeeper-batter for the World Test Championship final at The Oval in June, saying his presence will strengthen the team's batting lineup. Rahul has a good record in England but he was dropped from the playing XI after the first two Tests against Australia at home due to poor form.

The 30-year-old from Karnataka, however, made an impressive return, slamming a match-winning 75 not out in the first ODI against Australia in Mumbai on Friday night.

Shastri feels Rahul can play as a wicket-keeper in the WTC final, especially after KS Bharat couldn't produce the goods in the absence of an indisposed Rishabh Pant.

"He (KL) has really done

well to keep the selectors interested ahead of the WTC final," Shastri told Star Sports.

"Two things, one for the ODI series when Rohit Sharma returns and the other for the WTC final... India can bolster their batting if Rahul can keep wickets. "Rahul can bat in the middle-order — No. 5 or 6. In England, you have to generally keep wickets from far behind. You don't have to keep up to the spinners a lot. He (KL) has two more ODIs to go before the IPL. He can cement his place in that Indian team."

Rahul has amassed 614 runs at 34.11 with two centuries — one at The Oval —, and one fifty in nine Tests in English conditions. India qualified for the WTC final to be held in June at The Oval against Australia. It will be India's second appearance in the final. They had lost to New Zealand in the 2021 final.

CSK eyeing stake in MLC's Texas team

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) could be eyeing a stake in the Texas team, one of Major League Cricket's (MLC) six sides.

The four-time IPL winners on Saturday revealed that they will soon make a "major announcement" with regard to their association with the new T20 tournament in the US.

San Francisco Unicorns, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle Orcas, Texas and Washington DC are the six teams competing in the tournament, scheduled to be begin on July 13 this year.

MLC had announced on Friday that another IPL franchise Delhi Capitals, co-owned by GMR Group, will partner with Seattle Orcas to "help build and operate a world-class cricket team".

The Seattle Orcas' lead investor group includes Satya Nadella, chairman and CEO of Microsoft and Soma Somasegar, managing director of Madrona Ventures, among others.

In their cryptic message on social media on Saturday, CSK said, "Major announcement soon. Howdy Texas! Show some yellow to our NRI cousin, @TeamTexasMLC!"

The development comes a day before the MLC Domestic Player Draft scheduled to take place in Houston with more than 100 players eligible to represent the "USA cricket community" in the tournament.

UPW end Mumbai Indians' winning run in WPL

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

UP Warriorz snapped formidable Mumbai Indians' winning run in the Women's Premier League with a five-wicket victory, after the Uttar Pradesh side extracted more out of a tricky pitch here on Saturday.

On a surface where the ball turned a lot and was also holding-up, England's star left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (3/15) led the way with her excellent bowling as UP Warriorz bundled out Mumbai Indians for 127.

When MI batted, as many as 18 of the 20 overs were bowled by spinners, a WPL record.

In reply, UPW faced some obstacles before competing the task with three balls to spare. Grace Harris (39) and Tahlia McGrath (38) were the main contributors with the bat for UPW, while Deepti Sharma (13 not out) and player of the match Ecclestone (16 not out) also played vital knocks.

UPW lost Devika Vaidya with just one run on the board at the start of the second over. While the successful bowler was Hayley Matthews, most of the credit for the dismissal must go to Harmanpreet Kaur, who pulled off a sensational catch at first slip after the batter got a thick outside edge.

Issy Wong picked up the big wicket of UPW captain Alyssa Healy (8), trapping her in front of the wicket. The on-field umpire was not convinced despite the huge appeal and MI's move to go for a referral proved to be the right call, leav-



Devine show in Mumbai as RCB crush GG

MUMBAI: Sophie Devine lit up the Mumbai skyline with an astonishing 36-ball 99 as Royal Challengers Bangalore made short work of a 189-run target for an eight-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League here on Saturday.

It rained sixes from the broad willow of Devine as RCB breezed past the target with as many as 27 balls to spare and keep their slim play-off hopes alive with a second

successive victory.

Devine, who has also represented New Zealand in hockey before starting out in cricket as a bowler often batting at number 11, played an innings that will go down as one of the finest in the history of the T20 format.

During her stay in the middle, Devine struck eight towering sixes and nine fours.

Earlier, South Africa's star batter Laura Wolvaardt top-scored with a scintillating 42-

ing the Australian star with no option but to walk back into the dugout.

Defending a small but tricky total on this surface, MI found another reason to celebrate when Yastika Bhatia completed a fantastic one-handed diving catch behind the wicket off the bowling of Nat Sciver-Brunt to send back Kiran Navgire for 12, for which she consumed 16 balls.

UPW were in a spot of bother at 27 for 3 in the beginning of seventh over, when Grace Harris got off the mark with a boundary.

Even as MI picked up three wickets quickly but they were also guilty of dropping three catches, which proved to be crucial in the end.

In the company of Harris, Tahlia McGrath stroked her way to a 25-ball 38 before Amelia Kerr had her caught and bowled. But Harris hit two successive fours on three occasions, after McGrath's dismissal, to reduce the gap.

There was another twist after Kerr dismissed Harris at a crucial juncture, but UPW held their nerves to emerge winners.

Earlier, had it not been for Issy Wong's 19-ball 32, MI would have ended with much less than what they eventually got.

After their skipper Alyssa Healy opted to field first, the UP Warriorz bowlers did a commendable job to keep things tight and take wickets at regular intervals against the strong Mumbai batting line-up.

MI were 56 for two at the end of the 10th over with Hayley Matthews (35) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (25) looking to build a partnership after the departure of Yastika Bhatia (5) and Nat Sciver-Brunt (7).

However, both Hayley and Kaur got out after getting starts, the India captain falling to compatriot Deepti Sharma after the former was done in by the seasoned Ecclestone.

Williamson, Nicholls double tons put NZ on top

AP ■ WELLINGTON

Aggressive double centuries for Kane Williamson and Henry Nicholls powered New Zealand's dominance in the second Test against Sri Lanka in Wellington on Saturday.

The Black Caps declared their first innings at an imposing 580-4 before reducing Sri Lanka to 26-2 at stumps on day two, leaving the tourists with a very slim prospect of squaring the two-match series.

The in-form Williamson scored 215 and Nicholls posted a career-best 200 not out, with the pair's third-wicket stand of 363 virtually batting Sri Lanka out of the contest.

Their partnership was the fifth-highest by any New Zealand combination and they became the country's first batters to reach 200 in the same innings.

Sri Lankan captain Dimuth Karunaratne will resume on 16 on Sunday and nightwatchman Prabath Jayasuriya remains on four, with the deficit a daunting

554 runs.

Sri Lanka's bowlers struggled to generate life on a flat Basin Reserve pitch, forcing Karunaratne to set defensive fields during much of the mammoth partnership.

Williamson and Nicholls batted at a lively clip from the outset, advancing quickly from a 155-2 overnight score and barely looking troubled as they unleashed an array of attacking strokes through the first two sessions.

Williamson was impenetrable as he reached three figures for the third time in successive Tests, becoming the first New Zealander to pass 8,000 runs in the process.

It was a sixth double-century for the 32-year-old — whose unbeaten 121 was pivotal in a final-ball first Test in Christchurch earlier this week.

Having resumed on 26, Williamson struck 23 fours and two sixes before holing out in the deep off spinner Jayasuriya as he tried to escalate the scoring



rate. Nicholls marched on from his overnight 18 to reach three figures before pushing past his previous-best score of 174.

His aggressive 240-ball knock, which featured four sixes, represented a remarkable return

to form for the left-hander, whose place in the team was under pressure after failing to reach 40 in his 15 previous innings.

Nicholls said he was aware of criticism of his ongoing selection but said he was made to feel

comfortable by support from his teammates and coach Gary Stead.

"Everyone in the group's been great and you really feel that support," he said.

"For me, it was just about trusting that I had done it

before. It hasn't happened as much as I'd like in the last period.

"Now the challenge is doing it again knowing that the blueprint is there."

Nicholls compared the partnership with a 369-run stand with Williamson against Pakistan in Christchurch two years ago.

"The way Kane's playing, he's in a real zone out there. It was nice to make that partnership into another really big one."

Kasun Rajitha, who was off the field for a period nursing a shoulder injury, lodged the best bowling figures of 2-126.

Matt Henry removed opener Oshada Fernando for six before fellow-seamer Doug Bracewell dismissed Kusal Mendis without scoring via a spectacular catch at point from Devon Conway.

It came from Bracewell's third ball of the match in what is his first Test appearance for more than six years.

Bracewell joins RCB as Jacks replacement

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand allrounder Michael Bracewell will replace injured England batter Will Jacks in the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) squad for the upcoming edition of the IPL.

Jacks, who was bought by RCB for Rs 3.2 crore at the player auction in December last year, suffered a muscle injury while fielding during England's second ODI against Bangladesh in Mirpur earlier this month.

Jacks made his England debuts in all three formats this year, winning his T20I and Test caps in Pakistan before playing his first ODI in Bangladesh. The injury may also affect his chances of earning selection in England's ODI squad for the World Cup in India later this year.

"RCB have signed New Zealand's Michael Bracewell

as a replacement for England batter Will Jacks for the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023," said an IPL statement on Saturday. "Jacks, who was ruled out of the tournament due to an injury, was bought by the franchise for Rs 3.2 crore. His replacement, Bracewell, has played 16 T20Is, scored 113 runs and picked up 21 wickets. He will join RCB at his base price of Rs 1 crore," the statement added.

Bracewell didn't find any takers in the IPL auction after entering with a base price of Rs 1 crore. He has never played in the IPL. RCB will open their IPL campaign against Mumbai Indians on April 2.

Meanwhile, Bracewell has been released from New Zealand's white-ball squad for the series against Sri Lanka so that he can join RCB's preparatory camp. Allrounder Rachin Ravindra has replaced him.

‘There was not one true thing said in this video’
— Bella Hadid denies anonymous TikTok claims about drug use



FEAR AND RISKS

More and more countries are banning TikTok citing data security risks. Should users be worried that the app will be wiped off their phones, writes HALELUYA HADERO

TikTok is once again fending off claims that its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, would share user data from its popular video-sharing app with the Chinese government, or push propaganda and misinformation on its behalf.

China’s Foreign Ministry on Wednesday accused the United States itself of spreading disinformation about TikTok’s potential security risks following a report in the Wall Street Journal that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US — part of the Treasury Department — was threatening a US ban on the app unless its Chinese owners divest their stake.

So are the data security risks real? And should users be worried that the TikTok app will be wiped off their phones?

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS ABOUT TIKTOK?

Both the FBI and the Federal Communications Commission have warned that ByteDance could share TikTok user data — such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers — with China’s authoritarian government.

A law implemented by China in 2017 requires companies to give the government any personal data relevant to the country’s national security. There’s no evidence that TikTok has turned over such data, but fears abound due to the vast amount of user data it, like other social media companies, collects.

Concerns around TikTok were heightened in December when ByteDance said it fired four employees who accessed data on two journalists from BuzzFeed News and The Financial Times while attempting to track down the source of a leaked report about the company.

HOW IS THE US RESPONDING?

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby declined to comment when asked Thursday to address the Chinese foreign ministry’s comments about

TikTok, citing the review being conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment.

Kirby also could not confirm that the administration sent TikTok a letter warning that the US government may ban the application if its Chinese owners don’t sell its stake but added, “we have legitimate national security concerns with respect to data integrity that we need to observe.”

In 2020, then-President Donald Trump and his administration sought to force ByteDance to sell off its US assets and ban TikTok from app stores. Courts blocked the effort, and President Joe Biden rescinded Trump’s orders but ordered an in-depth study of the issue. A planned sale of TikTok’s US assets was also shelved as the Biden administration negotiated a deal with TikTok that would address some of the national security concerns.

In Congress, US Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Jerry Moran, a Democrat and a Republican, wrote a letter in February to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen urging the Committee on Foreign Investment panel, which she chairs, to “swiftly conclude its investigation and impose strict structural restrictions” between TikTok’s American operations and ByteDance, including potentially separating the companies.

At the same time, lawmakers have introduced measures that would expand the Biden administration’s authority to enact a national ban on TikTok. The White House has already backed a Senate proposal that has bipartisan support.

HOW HAS TIKTOK ALREADY BEEN RESTRICTED?

On Thursday, British authorities said they are banning TikTok on government-issued phones on security grounds, following similar moves by the European Union’s executive branch, which temporarily banned TikTok from employee phones. Denmark and Canada have also announced efforts to block it on government-issued phones.

Last month, the White House said



THERE’S NO EVIDENCE THAT TIKTOK HAS TURNED OVER SUCH DATA, BUT FEARS ABOUND DUE TO THE VAST AMOUNT OF USER DATA IT, LIKE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES, COLLECTS.

it would give US federal agencies 30 days to delete TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices. Congress, the US armed forces and more than half of US states had already banned the app.

WHAT DOES TIKTOK SAY?

TikTok spokesperson Maureen Shanahan said the company was already answering security concerns through “transparent, US-based protection of US user data and systems, with robust third-party monitoring, vetting, and verification.”

In June, TikTok said it would route all data from US users to servers controlled by Oracle, the Silicon Valley company it chose as its US tech partner in 2020 in an effort to avoid a nationwide ban. But it is storing backups of the data in its own servers in the US and Singapore. The company said it expects to delete US user data from its own servers, but it has not provided a timeline as to when that would occur.

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew is set to testify next week before the House Energy and Commerce Committee about the company’s privacy and data-security practices, as well as its relationship with the Chinese government.

Meanwhile, TikTok’s parent company ByteDance has been trying to position itself as more of an international company — and less of a Chinese company that was founded in Beijing in 2012 by its current chief executive Liang Rubo and others.

Theo Bertram, TikTok’s vice president of policy in Europe, said in a Tweet Thursday that ByteDance “is not a Chinese company.” Bertram said its ownership consists of 60% by global investors, 20% employees and 20% founders. Its leaders are based in cities like Singapore, New York, Beijing and other metropolitan areas.

ARE THE SECURITY RISKS LEGITIMATE?

It depends on who you ask. Some tech privacy advocates say

while the potential abuse of privacy by the Chinese government is concerning, other tech companies have data-harvesting business practices that also exploit user information.

“If policy makers want to protect Americans from surveillance, they should advocate for a basic privacy law that bans all companies from collecting so much sensitive data about us in the first place, rather than engaging in what amounts to xenophobic showboating that does exactly nothing to protect anyone,” said Evan Greer, director of the nonprofit advocacy group Fight for the Future.

Karim Farhat, a researcher with the Internet Governance Project at Georgia Tech, said a TikTok sale would be “completely irrelevant to any of the alleged ‘national security’ threats” and go against “every free market principle and norm” of the state department’s internet freedom principles.

Others say there is legitimate reason for concern.

People who use TikTok might think they’re not doing anything that would be of interest to a foreign government, but that’s not always the case, said Anton Dahbura, executive director of the Johns Hopkins University Information Security Institute. Important information about the United States is not strictly limited to nuclear power plants or military facilities; it extends to other sectors, such as food processing, the finance industry and universities, Dahbura said.

IS THERE PRECEDENCE FOR BANNING TECH COMPANIES?

Last year, the US banned the sale of communications equipment made by Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE, citing risks to national security. But banning the sale of items could be more easily done than banning an app, which is accessed through the web.

Such a move might also go to the courts on grounds that it might violate the First Amendment as some civil liberties groups have argued.

Associated Press

China appeals for fair treatment

China appealed Friday to other governments to treat its companies fairly after Britain and New Zealand joined the United States in restricting use of TikTok due to fears the Chinese-owned short video service might be a security risk.

Governments are worried TikTok’s owner, ByteDance, might give browsing history or other data about users to China’s government or promote propaganda and disinformation.

“We call on the countries concerned to recognize the objective facts, effectively respect the market economy” and provide “a non-discriminatory environment” for all companies, said foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin.

TikTok is one focus of conflicts between China and other governments over technology and security that are disrupting processor chip, smartphone and other industries.

Legislators and employees in New Zealand’s Parliament will be prohibited from having TikTok’s app on phones, the government said Friday. Britain announced a ban Thursday on TikTok on all government phones.

India has banned TikTok and dozens of other Chinese apps, including the WeChat message service, on security and privacy grounds.

The United States also has imposed restrictions on access by Chinese companies to processor chip and other technology on security and human rights grounds.

The Chinese government accused Washington of spreading false information about TikTok following a report by The Wall Street Journal that US authorities were considering a ban if ByteDance doesn’t sell the company.

The ruling Communist Party blocks most internet users in China from seeing TikTok and thousands of social media and other websites. ByteDance operates a sister short-video service, Douyin, that can be seen in China.

H3N2: PRECAUTION IS THE KEY

Amid a spurt in cases of the H3N2 virus in the country, one more death has been reported, this time from Gurugram in Haryana. This takes the total number of fatalities to three. Adequate rest, simple home-cooked fresh food, and proper hydration are advised for recuperation at home, doctors tell **THE HEALTH PIONEER**

GOING AYURVEDA WAY



DR RP PARASHER
CMO (Ayurveda), MCD

As per Ayurveda, a state of equilibrium of Vata, Kafa and Pitta in the body denotes health. When any of the three increases or decreases, we may fall ill. Kafa is deposited all over the body during the winter season. The warmth of spring melts the kafa which is the cause of diseases like cough, cold, asthma and other ailments of the respiratory tract. That's why the level of immunity is lowered during change of season and people, especially the children & the elders fall ill easily. People, whose lungs have become weak due to corona infection, are more prone to catch the viral infection. Such types of patients are also facing problems like breathlessness and low levels of oxygen. Since it is a droplet infection, it spreads very fast. If a kid suffering from H3N2 infection attends school, he may spread the infection to a large number of students. Similarly if one member of a family gets infected, the whole family is likely to fall ill.

How to avert the infection: Keeping a vigil on feeding and living habits will definitely avert the infection. Observing covid appropriate behaviour is necessary which includes wearing of masks, regular cleaning of hands, avoid hands shake, etc. Cold drinks, ice creams and refrigerated items must be avoided. Do not consume items of cool temperament like rice, kadhi, curd, cauliflower peanuts, arhar daal, etc.

Never use cold water just after consuming fried foods. In case of viral infection, alum or saline gargles in warm water will help to reduce inflammation of the throat and the respiratory tract. Tulsi, Ginger, clove, pippali, cinnamon bark and kali mirch boiled in water, milk or tea will also give relief. Hot soups of tomato and other seasonal vegetables will increase immunity on one hand and reduce inflammation as well as itching on the other hand. Fruits like Amla, Giloy, Anjir, resins, grapes and oranges will provide immunity and strength to the body.

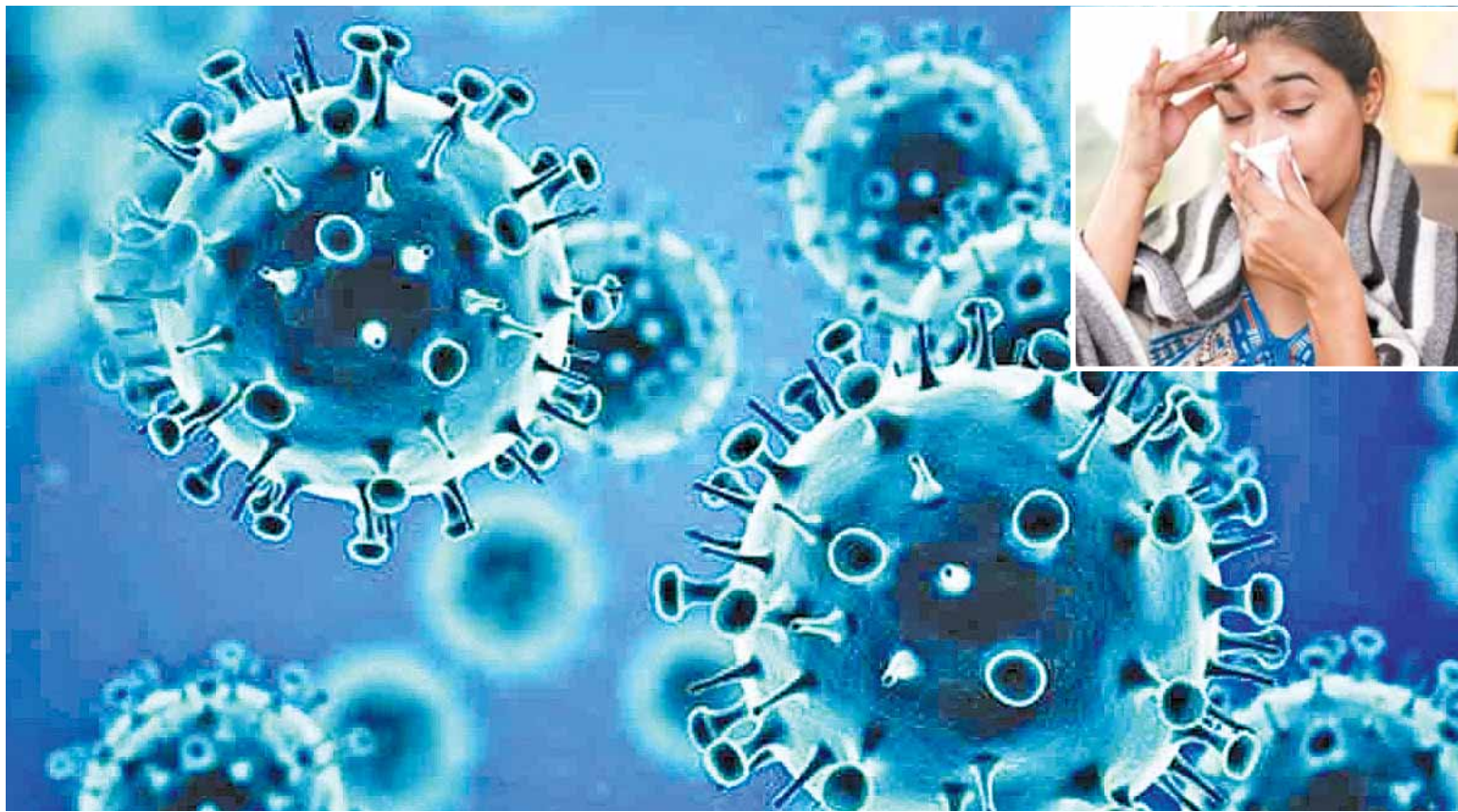
Ayurvedic treatment: Ayurvedic drugs are capable of treating the infection within three to five days. Medicines like Sitopaladi churan, Talishadi churan, Laxnivilas Ras, Kafketu Ras, Sanjeevani Vati, Sudarshan ghan vati, Trilokyachintamani ras, Sameerpannag ras are quite effective to treat the infection. Chyavanprash, Vasa Avleha, Agastya Haritiki provide relief in cough and cold within a few days.

If chewed, Aladi Vati, Lavangadi vati and Vyoshadi vati provide instant relief in cough. Ayurvedic cough syrups containing Tulsi, vasa, jufa, pippali, mulethi, somlata, kantkari are quite effective and safe even in children and elders.

Some people with co-morbidities are getting hospitalised as they are in the high-risk zone. People need to wear masks and take precaution," Dr Rajiva Gupta, a consultant at the internal medicine department of CK Birla Hospital said.

The World Health Organisation, too, recommends that the most effective way to prevent infection with any virus is to get vaccinated and follow prevention measures: "Maintaining at least a 1-metre distance from others, wearing a well-fitted mask when keeping your distance is not possible, avoiding crowded and poorly ventilated places and settings, opening windows and doors to keep rooms well ventilated and cleaning your hands frequently." It also advises that people should follow the advice "of your local authorities on getting influenza and Covid-19 vaccines".

Dr. Raman Kumar, physician from Noida said that H3N2 influenza is a respiratory virus which transmits in the same fashion as the Covid virus. The precautions are also the same and should be diligently followed.



The health experts said that the first sign of influenza virus is usually a high fever, which begins about four to five days after exposure to the virus and lasts 10 to 15 days. A runny nose, a cough, red and watery eyes, and facial swelling can develop in the initial stage. They added that people at higher risk of developing complications include children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant people, and people with certain long-term health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neuro-developmental problems.

Dr Jugal Kishore Director Professor and Head of Department of Community at Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi said that precaution is a key word. It is crucial to avoid crowded places, travel only if necessary, practice good hand and respiratory hygiene, and seek medical advice if symptoms persist for more than two days.

"There is a surge of H3N2 cases in the region now, but the severity of such cases is less.

What is the H3N2 virus? According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. There are 4 types of seasonal influenza viruses, types A, B, C and D. Influenza A and B viruses circulate and cause seasonal epidemics of disease. Influenza A viruses are further classified into subtypes according to the combinations of the hemagglutinin (HA) and the neuraminidase (NA), the proteins on the surface of the virus.

How Does The Virus Transmit? H3N2 Influenza virus transmitted mainly through infected droplets created when infected pigs

WHAT/HOW/CAUSES/SYMPTOMS/MANAGEMENT OF H3N2

cough or sneeze. If these droplets land in your nose or mouth, or you inhale them, you can be infected. After this when an infected person sneezes or coughs, the respiratory droplets can travel in the air and reach the nose, and mouth of another individual, making him/her catch the virus and fall sick.

Common Symptoms of H3N2 virus: Cough and runny nose/ Body aches/Coughing/Fever/ Vomiting/Nausea/Diarrhea and Chills among few others.

Tips for Patients infected with H3N2: In

symptomatic cases, patients should wash hands with soap and water, wear masks and avoid crowded places, cover mouth and nose while sneezing and coughing, avoid touching eyes and nose, take plenty of fluids and take paracetamol for fever and bodyache.

Who is More at Risk? Following is a list of all the health and age factors that are known to increase a person's risk of getting serious flu complications, according to US body Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

or CDC

■ Although all children younger than 5 years old are considered at higher risk of serious flu complications, the highest risk is for those younger than 2 years old, with the highest hospitalization and death rates among infants younger than 6 months old.

■ Adults 65 years and older/Asthma/ Neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions/ Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)/Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and

cystic fibrosis)/Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)/Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)/Kidney diseases/Liver disorders/Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)/Obese people with a body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher/ People younger than 19 years old on long-term aspirin- or salicylate-containing medications/ People with a weakened immune system/ People who have had a stroke/ Pregnant women and those up to 2 weeks after the end of pregnancy/ People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

HEALTH BRIEFS



GURU NANAK EYE CENTRE CELEBRATES FOUNDATION DAY: Delhi-based Guru Nanak Eye Centre celebrated its 37th Foundation Day on On the occasion, it released a souvenir, "The glorious history and journey of Guru Nanak Eye Centre", compiled by the staff of GNEC team. It was released by Lt Gen Dr Daljit Singh, Dir. Gen. Medical Services (Army), Prof Poonam Narang (Dir. Prof. Radiology, Dean.

Dr.Kirti Singh, Director of the hospital said, the surgical expertise and clinical acumen of the doctors meets the best among their peers, a fact that is reflected in the annual footfall of 3-4 lakh patients requiring eye care.

AIIMS, DELHI MOOTS 5G ROUTE: AIIMS, Delhi is embarking on an installation of a smart fifth-generation cellular network in its premises by June 30, capitalizing on 5G's fast speeds to enhance access to care and improve efficiency.

A five-member panel headed by Prof Vivek Tandon, Department of Neurosurgery has been set up to expedite the process. An office memorandum issued by AIIMS director M Srinivas stated, "To enable maximum utilisation of modern communication technology for patient care, teaching, research, good governance, and for optimal deployment of integrated medical university information system (IMUIS), it is desirable that the entire campus has good strength of 5G mobile network to enable a robust mobile and data connectivity inside the buildings."

He also said that strong 5G connectivity will help the institute stay in touch with its main and outreach campuses like NCI Jhajjar, which will enable senior faculty members to provide their expert advice during off-duty hours.

The other members of committee include Dr Vivek Gupta (computer facility) and superin-

tending engineer Jitendra Saxena. Dr Vikas from telecommunications will be member secretary of the committee and Sunita Cherodath, senior deputy director general, department of telecommunications, will be a special invitee.



BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS BHUMI UNDP'S SDGs AMBASSADOR: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has announced Bollywood actor Bhumi Pednekar as their first national advocate for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recently.

As a national advocate, Bhumi will support UNDP India's efforts to raise awareness and mobilize support for the SDGs, a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Taking on the new role, Bhumi said, "I believe it is our collective responsibility to ensure we leave behind a better world for future generations. The SDGs provide a roadmap for building a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all..."

Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India said that Bhumi's talent and dedication to gender equality and sustainability make her an ideal advocate for the SDGs.

Cancer Prevention Strategies for Women



DR ADITI AGGARWAL
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As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer is the second most common cause of death globally with cases increasing every year in India as in the world.

Looking at cancers occurring in females, globally breast cancer tops the list followed by colorectal and lung cancers whereas in India, breast cancer is the leading and cervical cancer is the second most common cancer followed by ovary, head neck and colorectal cancers.

When it comes to cancer prevention, it is important to understand the risk factors for these diseases. Breast cancer

occurs more commonly in urban population than rural, pointing towards the westernization and changes in lifestyle that is contributory. Also the reproductive habits have changed over decades, amongst women in India. The older a woman is when she has her first full-term pregnancy, the higher her risk of breast cancer, no/fewer children, no breastfeeding. Poor genital hygiene, multiple births, multiple sexual partners are causative for cervical cancers. Consumption of saturated fats, processed foods, red meat, sedentary lifestyle being risk factors for breast and colorectal, as well as ovarian cancers to some extent. Smoking, tobacco chewing, alcohol are leading causes for head, neck and lung cancers. Family history is another important factor in breast, colorectal and ovarian cancers in few cases.

Amongst risk reduction/cancer prevention strategies that need to be followed, the first and foremost is leading a healthy lifestyle which means, no addictions, healthy diet with adequate



fibers, fruits and vegetables, minimal processed food, low red meat, avoiding constipation. Also moderate amount of exercise in our daily routine for around 30 minutes is recommended to maintain a healthy weight and keep many diseases away, not just cancer. Healthy reproductive habits and good genital hygiene, having children timely, limiting the number of births, avoiding high risk sexual behavior is equally important.

Following a routine of getting yourself tested regularly, termed as screening for breast and cervical cancers should be done by all females. Mammo-

graphy for breast cancer should be undertaken at the age of 45 years, thereafter done once in two years, till the age of 74 years as per USPSTF. Also PAP Smear for cervical cancer should be done for all sexually active females once in 3 years till the age of 65 years. These are simple tests which can detect very early lesions, sometimes even before they become cancerous. Screening for colorectal cancers using a test called colonoscopy is recommended for all those touching 45 to 50 years, done once in 5 to 10 years till the age of 75 years. In case of a positive family history, these tests should start 10 years earlier than the

index case.

Another very effective preventive tool available for cervical cancers is HPV vaccine for all girls, starting at the age of 9 years and given as two doses till the age of 15 years, or three doses till the age of 26 years. We need to educate our daughters to be aware of their bodies and start breast self-examination once a month to understand what is normal for their body and to consult a doctor in case they notice or feel any abnormality. Breast self-examination should be done by all females on a regularly basis once a month after their periods starts.

Head neck cancers would most of the times present with a non-healing ulcer, pain or difficulty in swallowing. These complaints should be addressed by an expert at the earliest. With increasing pollution and smoking in females, lung cancer in females is also on increase.

To summarise, cancer in women is largely preventable by following a healthy lifestyle, regular screening tests, timely vaccination and self-examination.

Down Syndrome: Untapped Sky-high Potential



ALOK KUMAR 'BHUVAN'

Down Syndrome (DS) is a condition in which extra genetic material causes delays in the mental and physical development of a child. One of the most common genetic disorders, the condition is characterised by the presence of an extra 21st chromosome. It is not a disease and there is no way to prevent it. In India, around 32,000 cases are observed.

Individuals with Down syndrome demonstrate more similarities than differences compared to other typically developing peers.

Demystifying the myths that such children have a bleak future, each day, many new kids on the block are beating the

odds, showing extraordinary achievements, the ability to possess hopes and dreams for the future, and a solid determination to meet their goals.

Though individuals with Down syndrome experience learning difficulties that give rise to developmental delays, not all areas are impacted with an equivalent effect.

Here, I would like to talk about Nagpur's **Devanshi Joshi**, a recipient of 'Role Model' award which was conferred on her by the then President Ram Nath



Kovind in 2021. She has been breaking many stereotypes and misconceptions around intellectual disability through her path-breaking achievements.

Ditto is the case with 24-year-old **Adya Verma**. An advocate by profession, Adya is with our organization, aiding in the creation of Easy Road Documents as well as taking part in numerous lectures and workshops to communicate her vision.

Similarly, **Rashmi Rekha Sahu** with Down Syndrome is charting her own path under the guidance of her parents, both

school teachers. An Odissi dancer, she leaves everybody in awe with her excellent dance expressions and movements. Recently, she successfully accomplished Sangeet Visharad Pratham Khand (IV year) organized by well-known organization, Pracheen Kala.

These are just among a few examples even for many of us who are pursuing with relentless passion to accomplish their potential as well as passion.

On our part, on World Down Syndrome Day 2023 our organization in collaboration with SNAC & CBSM, organiz-

ing a programme where over 500 participants comprising those diagnosed with disabilities will attempt to exhibit their talents.

Such events are an attempt made at creating awareness related to communication skills, primary sign language and easy-read training for intellectual



and developmental disabilities, guidance on career options after school along with education and skill training opportunities, plus ensuring good oral hygiene and healthcare among others – all coming together to promote inclusive living within our society.

Therefore, let us set sails towards reaching success by enabling each child with Down syndrome to gain access to schooling and college environments which come equipped with platforms that allow for auditory/visual modifications, accommodating physical exercises (occupational/speech therapies). Efforts should be made on giving them the extra time required for classwork – all so that we can better comprehend each individual affected by this condition including his/her abilities & special needs.

After all, it is our responsibility as a society to provide opportunities and nurture diversity at every step going forward.

(The writer is Managing Secretary of Manovikas Charitable Society, Delhi)

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