CITY 3

YOGI: CONG CAN'T DIGEST

RISE OF POOR MAN'S SON

OPINION 6

MYANMAR NIGHTMARE

CONTINUES UNABATED

WORLD 10

US CARRIES OUT

AIRSTRIKES IN SYRIA

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'HARDIK SIMILAR TO DHONI AS CAPTAIN'

12 SPORT

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Rahul disqualified from LS

Cong to launch nationwide strike, Opp rallies around Rahul, accuses BJP of doing 'vindictive politics'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was on Friday disqualified from the Lok Sabha, nearly 24 hours after a Surat court convicted him in a 2019 criminal defamation case over his "all thieves have Modi as the common surname" remark.

The disqualification will bar the 52-year-old former Congress president, a four-time MP, from contesting elections for eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction or lowers the sentence to below two years.

Soon after Rahul's disqualification, the Congress leadership got into a huddle at the party headquarters and deliberated on the way forward. Late on Friday evening, the

Congress announced a nation-wide agitation against Rahul's disqualification, alleging that the Government has acted at lightning speed to "gag" him, and called for taking forward the efforts for the Opposition unity in a systematic manner.

Announcing Rahul's dis-qualification, the Lok Sabha

existing quota of two dominant

communities of the poll-bound

HC SETS ASIDE DELHI BJP MLA'S HOUSE BAN

New Delhi: The Delhi High

ourt on Friday set aside th

MLA Vijender Gupta from the

Delhi Legislative Assembly and

one-year suspension of BJP

permitted him to attend the

remaining Budget Session of the Assembly while directing

him to maintain the dignity of

COVID RELIEF OVER, NOW SURRENDER, ORDERS SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court

prisoners, who were released

during the Covid-19 pandemic

in a move to decongest jails, to

OVER ₹7L TO GET RELIEF

taxpayers opting for new tax

marginally higher income than

no-tax ceiling of ₹7 lakh will pay

regime, individuals earning

tax only on the differential

Lok Sabha on Friday, has

proposed a marginal relief to

income after the Government

amended the Finance Bill. The

Finance Bill 2023, passed by the

taxpayers under new tax regime.

on Friday directed that all

surrender within 15 days.

New Delhi: In a relief to

convicts and undertrial

the House.

Secretariat in a notification said following his conviction by the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Surat, Rahul, Member of the Lok Sabha representing the Wayanad con-stituency of Kerala stands disqualified from the membership of the House from the date of his conviction i.e. March 23,

The Congress said it will fight the matter politically and legally. Hitting out at the Government, the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress and it is "a black day for Indian the Congress and it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it will be congressed in the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it is "a black day for Indian the Congress said it will be congressed in the Congressed in the Congressed in the Congressed in the Congressed in t democracy" and alleged that the action was driven by "political vendetta".

Hours before the notification was issued, Rahul attended the Lok Sabha proceedings

in the morning session.

Before the proceedings commenced, he also participated in a meeting of party MPs in Parliament complex. Rahul said he is fighting for the voice of India and is ready to pay any price, hours after he was disqualified from the Lok

Later, Rahul tweeted, "I am fighting for the voice of



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi leaves Parliament House complex in New Delhi on PTI

However, the disqualifica-However, the disqualifica-tion ostensibly has come as a blessing in disguise for the ragtag unity in Opposition, including TMC, AAP, SP, BRS which have been toeing a dif-ferent line. On Friday, they echoed concern over the vin-

echoed concern over the vindictive kind of politics and alleged that the Rahul was not given 30 days appeal space.

Some of them who had quit the Congress and are now part of other outfits too expressed their solidarity with

Rahul is the second member of the Lok Sabha, after Lakshadweep MP PP Lakshadweep MP PP Mohammed Faisal of the NCP, to have been disqualified in the recent past following convic-

The Kavaratti sessions court in Lakshadweep had sentenced four persons, including Mohammed Faizal, to 10 years in jail after they were found guilty in an attempt-to-murder case. Following the conviction, Faizal was disqualified.

However, the Kerala High

Court later suspended his conviction and sentence. According to the MP, the Lok Sabha Secretariat is yet to issue a notification revoking his disqualification.

Continued on Page 9

Lies, slander part of Rahul's politics: Nadda

BBYJU'S

PNS NEW DELHI

BIP president JP Nadda on Friday claimed Rahul Gandhi has a habit of levelling fabricated allegations having no connection with facts while alleging the Congress leader has a "huge arrogance but little understanding".

In a series of tweets amid

a political fight between the BJP and the Congress following Rahul's conviction in a defamation case, Nadda alleged that "lies, personal slander and negative politics is integral" to his politics.

People's "punishment" to him will be more covers in the

him will be more severe in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls than in 2019 when he lost in Amethi and the Congress was routed

nationally, the BJP leader said.

He said, "By comparing
OBC communities to thieves, Rahul has shown a pathetic and casteist mindset. However, his latest tirade is not surprising. For the last many years, he has always reduced levels of political discourse."

Continued on Page 9

India's first ropeway transport: Modi sets project in motion

'UP rising from hopelessness and moving towards hope, aspirations?

e Prime Minister



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 'One World TB Summit' at Rudrakash Convention Centre, in Varanasi, on Friday. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is also seen

PNS VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday gifted his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, 28 projects — including the first of its kind 3.75kilometre ropeway transport that will ease traffic congestion

He laid the foundation of Rs 645-crore ropeway project adding a new chapter in the history of public transport in India.

"The ropeway project will take the city's internal connectivity to a new level. It will further increase the economic opportunities as well as the stay of visitors and their spending here," Modi said while addressing a public meeting after laying the foundation stone of nine projects and inaugurating

19 development projects. The ropeway will covering the distance between Varanasi Cantt Railway station and Kashi Vishwanath Dham in a few minutes. The ropeway system will have five stations and facilitate the ease of movement for tourists, pilgrims and

The Prime Minister praised the the Yogi Adityanath Government for turning Uttar Pradesh from hopelessness towards a state of hope and aspiration. "Uttar Pradesh is rising from hopelessness and moving towards hope and aspirations. Where security and facilities are made available, prosperity is certain," Modi said, appreciating the efforts of Yogi who completes the first year in office in his second term on Saturday.

During a programme at the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University ground here, Modi termed himself a "sewak (servant)" and said, "The develop-ment of Kashi is being discussed all over the country and

"Whoever is coming to shi is taking new from here. Nine years ago, people had apprehensions that there would be no change in Banaras, nothing would happen in Kashi. But the people of Kashi proved every apprehension wrong with their hard work," he said.

Continued on Page 9 Also see Page 5, 8

<u>CAPSULE</u> Mere membership of K'TAKA ABOLISHES 4% QUOTA FOR MINORITIES banned outfit makes Bengaluru: The Karnataka Government on Friday announced its decision to scrap the four per cent quota for persons criminal: SC minorities and added it to the



 $I^{\text{n a significant verdict having}}$ wider ramifications, the Supreme Court on Friday reversed its 12-year-old verdict of two-judge bench and said that mere membership of a banned organisation will make a person criminal and liable to be prosecuted under provisions of UAPA.

The top court said its three verdicts of 2011 pronounced by two-judge benches, which held that mere membership of a banned organisation will not incriminate a person unless he resorts to violence or incites people to violence and does an act intended to create disorder or disturbance of public peace by resorting to violence, "is not a good law".

It restored Section 3(5) of the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act,

1987 and Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA, 1967, which made the membership of a banned outfit an offence, liable to be punshed with two years onment along with fine.

A bench of Justice MR Shah, Justice CT Ravikumar and Justice Sanjay Karol allowed the petitions filed by the Centre and the Assam Government seeking a review of the three 2011 verdicts of the apex court on the ground that it will impact the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

"We hold that the view

taken by this court in the cases of State of Kerala versus Raneef, Arup Bhuvan versus Union of India and Indra Das versus State of Assam (all 2011 verdicts) taking the view that under Section 3(5) of Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 and Section 10(a)(i) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967... and reading down the said provisions to mean that over and above the membership of a banned organisation there must be an overt act and/or further criminal activities and adding the element of mens rea are held to be not a

good law", it said. Continued on Page 9

Pak hecklers shown door at Kashmir event in US



PNS/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/

Scores of Pakistanis tried to disrupt a discussion on Kashmir in prestigious Washington DC National Press Club and some of them were later forcibly removed from the venue. The incident took place late on Thursday. The same day India slammed Pakistan for raising the issue of Kashmir in the United Human Rights Council (UNHCR).

Six separatist loyalists were forcibly removed from the National Press Club in Washington as Pakistanis tried to heckle and repeatedly interrupt the discussion in the Press

The panel discussion titled "Kashmir: From Turmoil to Transformation" was held on Thursday. It was moderated by columnist Se Hoon Kim and addressed by president of the Jammu & Kashmir Workers Party Mir Junaid, and Touseef Raina, president of the Municipal Council of

Baramulla. The whole audience has seen your real face today. What we have seen in Kashmir, we saw in Washington today, and thank you for showing the world how cruel, and indecent these people are. You have seen it all," Junaid said as the separatist sympathisers were taken out of the room.

They tried to disrupt the discussion while Iunaid was responding to a question on the reasons why the Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders were in jail.

They (Hurriyat leaders) are in jail because of their mistakes. They misled the people of Jammu & Kashmir for their vested interests and gains. They spoiled our ecosystem of education. They were the spoil-

glorifying terrorism. They are in jail for their hate speech. They are in jail for their war crimes," Junaid said. Referring to the disruption

caused by the protesters, Raina said all these years this is what the separatists sponsored by Pakistan have been doing in Iammu & Kashmir. 'What these g

did, the same thing they did in Kashmir. Whosoever was speaking, right, or for the people, was silenced by the gun," he said. "I wish I get a chance to visit Pakistan. I want to meet the policymakers to stop funding terrorism," said the Baramulla Municipal Council

45 Defence JVs with foreign firms OK'd for faster weapons production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

With the objective of faster development and production of weapons to maintain operational readiness of the armed forces, the Government has given approval to "45 companies/joint ventures" operating in the defence sector with foreign OEMs (original equipers of our economy. They were | ment manufacturers).

Defence Ajay Bhatt informed this to the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The Centre has taken several policy initiatives in the past few years and brought reforms to encourage indigenous design, development and manufacture of defence equipment in the country, thereby reducing dependency on imports in

coming years, he said.
"These initiatives, inter

Minister of State for alia, include according priority to procurement of capital items from domestic sources under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)-2020; notification of three Positive Indigenisation Lists (PILs) by the Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence, with a timeline beyond which they will only be procured from the domestic industry," the Minister said.

UK's security obligations not met: Jaishankar

We want action, not assurance: **EAM; UK MPs** slam Khalistanis for vandalism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW DELHI/LONDON

In the first high-level strong reaction by India to the attack on its High Commission in London by alleged Khalistan supporters, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said it is the responsibility of that country to provide security and "these obligations were



A day after UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly condemned vandalism AT the Indian High Commission in London, the issue was raised in UK Parliament with MPs demanding action against "Khalistani hooligans". They also called for safety of India's

diplomatic staff. Taking exception to the attack on the Indian High Commission, Jaishankar when asked about the security of Indian Missions following vandalism in the UK said, "It is the obligation of the receiving country to provide security for a diplomat to do their work, to ensure embassy or High Commissions's premises are respected. These obligations were not met. We have had conversations with the British Government on this."

Jaishankar also said, "Many countries have a different view of their own security and a different view of other people's security. We will not accept this differential status." He made these observations at an event in Bengaluru.

Echoing similar views, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here on Friday, "We hope host Governments provide full and adequate protection to

our Missions and to the per-sonnel working there...We are not interested in just assurances, I think we would like to see action." He also said "at least in

London and San Francisco, we have strongly taken up the matter of vandalisation. You would have also seen the statements that we have put out in this regard. We expect that host Governments will take action to identify and prosecute all those involved and also take necessary actions to prevent the recurrence of such incidents." As regards the ongoing

action to nab Amritpal Singh, Bagchi said "authorities in Punjab are undertaking operations to nab a fugitive. Information regarding that operation is being shared by authorities concerned in Punjab on a regular basis. We would urge people abroad not to be taken in by inaccurate and motivated narratives that are being circulated by some elements on social media."

Meanwhile, the Indian High Commission in London has been working to counter disinformation being spread on social media alleging that the objects hurled during Wednesday's planned pro-Khalistan demonstration came from India House.

"Fact check: the truth is, a small minority of protesters threw water bottles, ink balloons, eggs and flares at the High Commission in London, some of which hit other protestors and the police.

"Nothing was thrown by mission staff at our own brethren. We have proof," the

High Commission tweeted. "Do not believe disinformation aimed to disrupt harmony. Indians will always respect the religious beliefs of all," it said, alongside videos showing water bottles and coloured flares being hurled by Khalistan flagbearing protesters towards India House.

In the House of Commons, while Conservative Party MP Bob Blackman late Thursday called for a debate in Parliament to discuss steps to ban groups behind the vio-lence, Opposition Labour Party MP Gareth Thomas asked the Leader of the House of Commons about the steps being taken to ensure there is

"no repeat of such behaviour". The Cabinet Minister addressing the Business of the House, Penny Mordaunt, responded by reiterating Foreign Secretary James Cleverly earlier statement announcing a review of the protection measures around the Indian mission here.

"We strongly condemn the vandalism and violent acts that took place outside the Indian High Commission in London. It was a completely unacceptable action against the High Commission and its staff,"

Mordaunt told MPs. "There is ongoing work with the Metropolitan Police to review the protection measures around the High Commission, and any changes will be made to ensure the safety and security of its staff so that they can go about their business, serving both this country and India," she said.

Continued on Page 9

J&K lithium to make India top in EV making, says Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that if India can use recently discovered reserve of lithium in Jammu & Kashmir, it can become world's number one automobile manufacturer in electric vehicle segment.

The road, transport and highway minister said there is a need to encourage public transport, and electric buses are the future. "Every year, we import 1,200 tonnes of lithium. Now, in J&K, we got lithium. (If) we can use this lithium ion, we will be the number one automobile manufacturing country in the world," he said.

Yogi completes 6 yrs in office, becomes longest serving CM of UP

Yogi most favourite CM of people

BISWAJEET BANERJEE LUCKNOW

March 2017, when In March 2017, when Bharatiya Janata Party won the elections in Uttar Pradesh with a landslide margin, Yogi Adityanath was picked as the new chief minister of the state. Eyebrows were raised as to how the Mahant of a temple with no administrative experience could effectively perform as the chief minister of this politically crucial state. Almost six years later, the same Mahant, clad in a saffron robe, created a record and became the longest-serving chief minister of Uttar Pradesh.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath completed five years and 347 days in the office on March 1 this year, and outlasted Dr Sampurnanand of the Congress, who had served the office for five years and 345 days from 1954 to 1960. Besides, Dr Sampurnanand, national president of Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav, too had completed a full term of five years and four days. Even Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati had

However, Govind Ballabh Pant, the first chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, held the post for the longest period of time without any interruption -seven years and nine months. But in his first term from April 1, 1946, to January 23, 1950, he served as the chief minister of the United Provinces. When UP came into existence on January 24, 1950, he became the chief minister again and continued from January 24, 1950 to December 28, 1954 -- a tenure of four years and 336

In terms of cumulative tenure, Mayawati, who held the office of chief minister of Uttar Pradesh four times, is in the lead with a total run of more than seven years. During his three terms as chief minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav held office for little under

Yogi Adityanath completes six years in office on March 25 and if he completes the full second tenure, which will last till March 2027, he will become the longest-serving

completed a full tenure as her regime lasted for four years and 307 days from 2007 to

> As Yogi Adityanath completes the first year of his second term as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, he has emerged as the most favourite chief minister of people across the

Chief Minister Yogi is popular not only within India but also has immense craze among Indians overseas. It became evident on Thursday when #IndiaKeFavouriteCM trended on the social networking site Twitter, with Chief Minister Yogi Addityanath described as the "favorite chief minister of the

Yogi Adityanath was hailed as the best chief minister not just in Uttar Pradesh but also in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Delhi Bengal,

chief minister of Uttar Pradesh

This achievement of Yogi

as he has the image (construed by his rivals) of being as a Muslim hater. When the BJP

questions were raised and Muslims reacted sharply. They feared that Yogi had been named him as chief minister,

Yogi has received praise for being the best chief minister from people in Spain and

Germany.
Millions of users frequently discuss Chief Minister Yogi and the changing Uttar Pradesh under his leadership on social media.

In addition to the elimination of mafia and gunda raj from UP, the performance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on the front of women's safety, education, crime, infrastructure, expressway, investment of Rs 35 lakh crore and employment have gained him immense popular-

In addition, people are appreciating how Uttar Pradesh, under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has defied decades of perception to reach new heights in the rating of Ease of Doing Business.

party's Hindutva Raj in Uttar

"The mantra of this government is sabka saath, sabka

no differentiation between Hindus and Muslims. The government is working for the welfare of all sections of society. When rations were distributed among people during the pandemic, was there any partiality? Did you receive a complaint that Hindus got ration and Muslims were denied it," Yogi Adityanath

we are sticking to it. There is

told this reporter recently.

In the last six years, Yogi Adityanath has been able to win the hearts of the people because of improvements in law and order and infrastructure facilities with the result that the state has become number one in programme implementation and is now the most sought-after destination of investors. This is evident when memorandums of understanding of projects worth Rs 33 lakh crore were signed during the recently held Global Investors' Summit.

"Today we have managed to create an atmosphere of development, trust and good governance in the state. We have set new standards of development in every field. This has helped us to change

vikas aur sabka vishwas and the perception of people towards UP," the chief minis-

In his speeches now, the chief minister talks about the change in perception. This is justified because his government has implemented infrastructure development projects and has taken strict action against criminals to remove fear from the minds of the masses.

Doors of employment opportunities have been opened despite the novel coronavirus pandemic that has delayed many projects.

People talk about a changed UP because the government, with its zero tolerance policy towards crime and criminals, has realised the dream of 'apradh mukt Uttar Pradesh' in the last six

"Our government gives priority to development while there are others who delve in divisive politics and try to obstruct the development of the country. But we are committed to moving ahead so that we may fulfill the dreams of the youth," the chief minister said addressing a public meeting in Mahoba recently.

मेरा नाम गुप्ता पूनम के स्थान पर विवाहोपरान्त पूनम केसरवानी हो गया है अब मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाय। पूनम केसरवानी सी, 384 से0 बी0 महानगर, लखनऊ

सूचना

मेरा नाम पूनम गुप्ता के स्थान पर विवाहोपरान्त पूनम केसरवानी हो गया है अब मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाय। पूनम केसरवानी सी, 384 से0 बी0 महानगर, लखनऊ।

NOTICE

I Sipahi Lal alias Sanjay Kumar S/o Udaynarayan R/o B-1633 Awas Vikas Hansapuram Kanpur Nagar inform that both Sipahi Lal and Sanjay Kumar are my names. Which would be justified to bring on record.

Be it known to all that earlier my name was Lal Mani Dwivedi which is now changed to Lal Mani Dubey. In future I shall be known as Lal Mani Dubey. Lal Mani Dubey S/o-Rudra Pratap Dubey 191D/19, Rajruppur, Prayagraj.

NOTICE

My name is Sabeeha Afzal whereas earlier my name was Sabeeha, my name is Sabeeha Afzal across all my documents. Let me be known as Sabeeha Afzal. Sabeeha Afzal wife Afzal Ahmad Village Karmaini Post Raunapar Azamgarh.

NOTICE

I Army No- 14647626W Hav. Dileep Kumar Unit-463 (FRI) Jalandhar Cantt declare that by mistake name of my son Bhanu Partap Singh Yadav is registered in my service records which is wrong his correct name is Bhanu Pratap Singh Yadav. He will be known as Bhanu Pratap Singh Yadav for all future purpose.

NOTICE

I hereby declare that in High School Certificate of my daughter Amarjot Kaur father's name is wrongly registered as JASVINDER SINGH which is incorrect while in Aadhar Card and other documents father's name is registered as JASVINDAR SINGH which is correct. Hence, from now the father's name of my daughter in all documents should be written and known as JASVINDAR SINGH only. JASVINDAR SINGH S/o SUKHWANT SINGH R/o Village Rauna, Post-Akhtiyarpur, Tehseel and District-Sitapur.

Four heritage properties to | CII North Region be converted into hotels

properties of the city are likely to be converted into heritage hotels. The Tourism department has even engaged a consultant for the same.

The process is on and we will like this project to come up on PPP model. A consultant has been engaged for this purpose," DG Tourism Mukesh Meshram said.

"Four monuments have been selected in Lucknow, including Chattar Manzil, Roshan-ud-Daullah Kothi, Darshan Vilas and Kothi Gulistan-e-Eram," he added. It may be noted that Chattar

Manzil is one of the most imposing buildings of the city and a few years back it housed the premier science institute CDRI. It was vacated by the CDRI at the behest of the State Arachaeology

Standing on the banks of river Gomti, the building was built by Nawab Saadat Ali Khan and named

after the umbrella at its dome. It had a role to play in the First

Lucknow (PNS): Four Heritage several rooms in Chattar Manzil, and the building itself carries the feel of old world charm. It has a mix of Indo-European and Nawabi architecture.

Just adjacent to the Chattar Manzil is the Kothi Farhat Baksh or the Martin Villa, which was the residence of Claude Martin.

It is said that the lower portion of the monument would be filled with water of the Gomti river, keeping it cool. Roshan-ud-Daullah Kothi is

perhaps the most beautiful kothi,

which once served as the residence of the minister of Nawab Nazeerud Din Haider- Roshan-ud The kothi has massive bal-

conies, archways, verandas, basements. Till recently it served as the office of the State Arachaeology Department. Both Darshan Vilas Kothi and

Gulistan-e-Eram stand opposite to the Chattar Manzil. Once formidable area of Nawabs called war of Independence and after 1857 was used as a club. There are of the Health Directorate. Kaiserbagh, now they form a part

gets new chairman

Deepak Jain, Chairman and Managing Director of Lumax Industries Ltd., and Madhav Singhania, Deputy Managing Director and CEO of JK Cement Ltd have been elected as chairman and deputy chairman respectively of the Confederation of Indian Industry, Northern Region, for 2023-24. They were elected during the first meeting of the newly-elected regional council members.

Jain will head CII Northern Region which comprises seven States - Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and three Union Territories -Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir,

Elaborating on the priorities for 2023-24, Jain said, "The CII, through its programmes and interventions, will aim to foster the digital transformation of businesses that impact social and economic development by adopting innovative and sustainable practices. For this, the strategy for the year would be to build domestic competitiveness through a range of measures along with focused policy advocacy while working with different countries and regions to facilitate Indian business engage-

Amar Chitra Katha spreads its magic at book fair

PNS LUCKNOW

mar Chitra Katha, which used and 1990s kids is creating its magic at the Lucknow Book Fair currently running at Charbagh.

Binay Gupta, who is selling Amar Chitra Katha at his stall, says the parents of the 1980s and 1990s are now asking their children to buy the famed comic in this digital era.

Talking to 'The Pioneer', Gupta said that they were selling jumbo packs of the Amar Chitra Kathas having 600 titles with mythological, Panchtantra, Mahabharta and Ramayana and these were being picked up by several for their

"We have sold Rs 50,000 worth Amar Chitra Kathas till now. The publication has already completed a hundred years," he said.

When asked how in the age of digital cartoons, Amar Chitra Katha was still popular, Gupta said that after seeing the cartoons, the children want to look at the books and "There are also the series on

Akbar Birbal and on freedom fighters. The format is the same but the paper quality has improved to a large extent," he added. He said that the response was phenomenal in the book fairs where they took the Amar Chitra Katha.

were expecting Rs 10 lakh turnover but we had a Rs 20-lakh turnover,' Gupta said that at the Lucknow

packs at Rs 15,000 against a cost of

time they had brought Amar Chitra athas to the fair.

who were picking up Amar Chitra Kathas were from classes 4 to 8. He said that the Amar Chitra Kathas were available in the market earlier but now a focused approach was being made to sell the comics which was spreading awareness amongst the people.

minor dispute and later com-

24-year-old Rammilan Raidas

of Banthari village had gone to

his in-laws' place in Musiva vil-

lage to meet his 22-year-old

wife Poonam and children on

Thursday morning where he

had an argument with his wife

over some issue. After this, the

man first strangled his wife

with a rope and then hanged

himself with the same rope to

According to the police,

mitted suicide.

reading is the best habit.

"In the World Book Fair we

He said that this was the first

Book Fair they were selling jumbo

Gupta said that the children

31 LU students get placements

Lucknow (PNS): Thirtyone students of Lucknow University got placements in three companies -- IBM, Skillvertex and Learning Roots Pvt. Ltd. Dr Himanshu Pandey, placement incharge of the FoET, said that Chiranjeev Srivastava, a student of BTech (ECE) was selected in IBM as associate system engineer on a package of Rs 4.5 lakh per annum and Divyanshi, a student of BTech (CSE) got placement in learning routes as sales associate at a package of Rs 5.7 lakh per

On the other hand 29 BTech students namely, Abhinav Aditya, Aditya Pandey, Amaan Ali, Ankit Singh, Jatin Kashyap, Kartikeya Kumar, Krishnakant Jha, Kshama Dubey, Neha Maurya, Nikhil Soni, Rajneesh Kumar, Shivangi Seth, Shivani Singh, Utkarsh Mehra, Ananya Yadav, Komal, Nisha Yadav, Pratiksha Bajpai, Priyanka Kushwaha, Sakshi Verma, Soumya, Varun Kumar, Mohd Saad, Raghuvansh Sharma, Shankar Kumar, Sonali Sharma, Zeba, Adarsh Kumar and Nitin Verma got placement in ness development associate at a package of Rs 6.0 lakh per annum. LU Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai and Dean of Engineering Faculty, Prof AK Singh and Dr Himanshu Pandey congratulated the selected stu-

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY e-TENDER CALL NOTICE TD/TM/GEN-235(Vol-VII)/23/647, dtd. 24.03.2023 Name of the work: "Allotment of 03 (Three) nos. of Mechanical Iron Ore/ Iron Ore Pellet plots at IOHP." License Fees: Rs. 2,89,51,890/- Wharfage Fees Rs. 16,93,300/- Last date & time of submission of bid: 13.04.2023 up to 15:00 hrs Date and time of opening (technical bid): 13.04.2023 up to 15:00 hrs Refer our website for details https:/ eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app & http:// paradipport.gov.in/

> Sd/-Traffic Manager **Paradip Port Authority** dtd.24.03.2023 R/236/2022-23

2 extortionists held | 8-year-old boy found murdered in Bahraich

Lucknow (PNS): Two persons were arrested for demanding Rs 30 lakh as extortion from the owner of a prestigious ewellery showroom in Chowk.

The extortionists were identified as Vivek Yadav (19) and Amit Yadav (21), both natives of Sultanpur district and presently living at Ghaziabad.

The police claimed that the case was worked out within 48 hours and the arrested extortionists had confessed to their crime. The police said that Vivek Yadav and Amit Yadav were members of a notorious gang operating across the country and demanding heavy extortion from rich men, especially big jewellers.

An anonymous call was received on the mobile phone of the jewellery showroom

owner Utarsh Agrawal in the afternoon on March 21, demanding Rs 30 lakh as extortion, The caller had also warned Agrawal of dire consequences if he informed the police about the extortion call and the demand.

However, Agrawal informed the Chowk police about the extortion call and the cops swung into action. The police took the help of electronic surveillance, informers and CB-CID and located the location of the caller at Charbagh railway station. The cops then laid a trap to nab the extortion-

The police nabbed Vivek and Amit as they were about to board a Varanasi-bond train. During interrogation, they confessed to their crime.

PNS LUCKNOW

An eight-year-old boy was found brutally murdered in Bahraich. The motive behind the killing is yet to be confirmed by the family mem-

The body was sent for post-mortem and further investigations are on. Reports said that the

blood-soaked body of a boy was recovered in the fields outside Nanpara Parsa on Thursday night. On getting information about the body, Superintendent of Police Prashant Verma reached the spot and carried out an inves-

The assailant had slit the throat of the boy with a sharpedged weapon and had also hit

tigation.

him on the head with some blunt object.

With the help of the villagers, the cops identify the victim as Vivek of Nanpara Parsa area in Bahraich. His father Kishun, who identified the victim as his son Vivek, claimed that he too was searching for him after he disappeared under mysterious cir-

cumstances in the evening. He also claimed that he had no dispute with anyone which could lead to the brutal killing of his son. The cops registered a case and claimed to be making efforts to identify the killers and arrest them.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Pavitra Mohan Tripathi said that a police force had been deployed in the village as a precautionary measure as tension prevailed after the killing. Meanwhile in Kotra Bahadurganj area of Unchahar

in Rae Bareli, a farmer, who

was guarding his vegetable crop in Ganga Katri area, was shot dead. According to reports, the victim, identified as Shambhu Maurya, takes care of his family by growing vegetables. On Thursday, he went to the fields

Local residents who found him lying in a pool of blood rushed him to the district hospital where the doctors pro-

at midnight when some shot

nounced him dead.

paediatric bronchoscopy would be

the UP Chapter of CSI at SGPGIMS,

Lucknow on March 25 and 26, 2023.

The Heart Failure Society is set to host

its annual meeting on March 25 and 26,

2023, bringing together leading experts

done every Thursday, she added.

A case was registered and further investigations were on. Meanwhile in Banda, a

end his life. According to the family members, a settlement was reached between the two through the court a few days ago but still the incident took

A case was registered and the bodies were sent for postman killed his wife over a mortem.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform General Public that Ram Kewal Gupta S/o Ori La Gupta, Smt. Asha Gupta W/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Harish Chandra Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Sanjay Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Dinesh Chandra Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Smt. Suneeta Gupta W/o Harish Chandra Gupta, Smt. Shashi Gupta W/o Sanjay Gupta, Smt. Deepa Gupta W/o Dinesh Chandra Gupta, are joint owners of Part of Arazi no. 697 (Admeasuring Area- 334.44 Sq. Meter) and Part of Arazi No. 698 (Admeasuring Area- 148.64 Sq. Meter) total area483.08 Sq. Meter, situated at Gram-Vinayakpur, Kanpur Nagar.

It has been informed to us that this property was purchased from Narendra Kumar Singh S/o Late Surya Kumar Singh, Sudeep Singh & Jaideep Singh both S/o Late Raj Kumar Singh as Self vide registered sale deed dated 30.07.2012 duly registered in the office of SubRegistrar Kanpur Nagar vide book No. 1, Volume no. 6939, Page No. 325 to 412 at serial No. 6272. And thereafter Smt. Asha Gupta on expired leaving behind Ram Kewal Gupta S/o Ori Lal Gupta, Harish Chandra Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Sanjay Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Dinesh Chandra Gupta S/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Smt. Suneeta Gupta W/o Harish Chandra Gupta, Smt. Shashi Gupta W/o Sanjay Gupta, Smt. Deepa Gupta W/o Dinesh Chandra Gupta, Anju Gupta D/o Ram Kewal Gupta, Manju Girjashankar D/o Ram Kewal Gupta as her only legal heirs.

IDFCFÍRST BANK LTD. 16/80 D-2, Khemka House, Civil Lines, Kanpur Nagar, intend to grant loan. If any person have any objection or claim on the said property then please communicate within a period of 7 days from the date of publication to Shiva Kant Dixit (Advocate),

Shiva Kant Dixit (Advocate) Ph.: 09415403399

CITYBRIEFS

UNVEILED

The logo and poster of 12th International Children's Film Festival (ICFF-2023) organised by City Montessori School was unveiled on Friday at CMS Kanpur Road auditorium by Lucknow District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar, who was the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, Gangwar, said that the Children's Film Festival was a golden opportunity for students, teachers, parents and all the citizens of Lucknow as they could enjoy the best children's films of the world free of charge and understand the varied culture and customs of the world. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi said that this film festival was an integral part of education and not a mere means of entertainment.

FOUNDATION DAY

The Pediatric Gastroenterology Department of Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences is successfully completing 15 years on March 26, 2023. The department was formally inaugurated on March 26, 2008



by TB Rejeswar, the then Governor of for the conference. Uttar Pradesh. The department is celebrating its Foundation Day on March 26, 2023. On this occasion, the department will organise a conference "1st SGPGI Paediatric Gastro Clinics-2023" from March 25 to 26 in Telemedicine auditorium of SGPGIMS .Various experts and scholars in the field of paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology are participating in this conference. More than 100 paediatric gastroenterologists from across the country as well as from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal have registered

PAEDIATRIC BRONCHOSCOPY

in a government hospital at Lucknow. and when it enters the pathway the view can be taken on the monitor. As of now

The Cardiological Society of India is hosting the 4th National Heart Failure conference in association with

CONFERENCE

in heart failure research and treatment from around the world. The event will

the latest advances in heart failure man-Paediatric bronchoscopy has now been started in the Pediatrics agement. Over 500 cardiovascular spe-Department of King George's Medical cialists, including physicians, are expect-University. This will be first of its kind ed to participate. Dr Sarika Gupta, professor in KGMU Paediatrics Department said the facility was essential in diagnosis of chronic respiratory problems. The bronchoscope consists of a tube and a camera

be held at the SGPGIMS and will feature presentations and discussions on

is organising the workshop on 'Suicide - Prevention as a part of the 18th annual day celebrations at IMA Hall on Saturday. Deputy chief minister Brajesh

The Richmond Fellowship Society Pathak will inaugurate the event.

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Yogi: Cong can't digest rise of poor man's son

ongress and its leaders canonot digest the son of poor, Dalit, deprived, backward class reaching the highest position in the country, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting at Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Grounds here on Friday.

At the function, the prime minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 28 projects worth Rs 1,780 crore.

"Congress has always done the politics of dividing the country and has promoted Naxalism and terrorism for its political gains," the chief minister alleged.

Continuing his blistering attack, Yogi said that the nation had been witness to how former Congress president and MP Rahul Gandhi gave a statement against Dalits, poor, backward and underprivileged, throwing parliamentary decorum to the winds and stooped to the level of being in con-

tempt of court. must apologise to the country for insulting the poor, Dalits and backward people.

Yogi Adityanath said that India was presiding over the G-20, a group of 20 most powerful countries of the world, in the year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which was a proof of India's growing influence in the

"Whether it is to establish new paradigms of material development or to restore spiritual development, not only the country but the world is seeing the new power of India. Under the leadership of the prime minister, India has set a new example in front of the world. While on one hand the world is feeling proud of India's progress and is eager to adopt this model, on the other, there are some people who criticise UP outside despite having ruled the state for generations and even have no qualms in Prime Minister Narendra Modi



putting India in the dock itself when they go abroad," Yogi

Targeting the Congress further, the chief minister said that the Congress today was even questioning the electronic voting machine (EVM) with which they got the privilege of forming the government in 2004 and 2009

He said that the party was upset that India was develop-

"It is their habit to put bar-He added that Congress riers at every level in every campaign of the prime minister. Congress never thought about the development of the country. These people always tried to divide the country in the name of caste, religion and language. They compartmentalised development and set new records of corruption during their tenure. Today, when India is going to shine at the global level, these people are obstructing the progress of the country by defaming it," Yogi Adityanath pointed out.

The chief minister said that in contrast to the Congress, which was increasing disharmony among castes, the government of today was moving forward with the motto 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka prayas' for the last nine years and was working for the progress of all sections of society without any discrimination.

"The government led by

PNS LUCKNOW

is providing welfare, housing,

toilets, ration, cooking gas,

electricity connections to the

poor. Whether it is the

Ayushman Bharat scheme or

other facilities of development,

all these are reaching everyone

equally without any discrimi-

nation," the chief minister said.

minister had come to Kashi on

Friday to give it a new and

grand look through projects.

He said that the prime minis-

ter, who was a member of

Parliament from Kashi, had

special association with the

place and every time he visit-

ed the city he brought some gift

inauguration/stone laying of projects worth Rs 1,780 crore,

Kashi has already become new

and grand. Under the inspira-

tion and guidance of the prime

minister, not only Kashi, UP

and the whole country has achieved new heights of development," Yogi said, adding

that Kashi has got global recog-

nition in the last nine years not

only for its rich spiritual and

cultural heritage, but also for

the level of development taking

last nine years, projects worth

Rs 35,000 crore have either

been completed or are about to

be inaugurated in Kashi alone,

which will be dedicated to the

people of Kashi in the next visit

of the prime minister.

He pointed out that in the

to the city

"With

He added that the prime

Several hundred Congress leaders, including Uttar Pradesh Congress president Brij Lal Khabri, were arrested by police on Friday as they marched towards Raj Bhawan to protest the disqualification of former party president Rahul Gandhi from Parliament.

RAHUL'S DISQUALIFICATION AS MP

Congressmen also torched effigies of the Prime Minister and raised slogans accusing the government of misusing the machinery to silence its oppo-

Wearing black armbands, hundreds of Congress leaders marched towards Raj Bhawan from the state office.

As the leaders approached Raj Bhawan, they were forcibly stopped by the police, leading to clashes and the arrest of several leaders, including Khabri. After about an hour of

political demonstration, Congress leaders were sent to Eco Garden. In the meantime, dozens of

Party leaders managed to reach GPÓ Park and sat on a dharna, raising slogans against the government before heavy police forces used batons to chase them away. Several leaders were also arrested from

Talking to mediapersons, Brijlal Khabri termed the decision to revoke Rahul Gandhi's





Lok Sabha membership wrong and said that they were on road to express their anger.

He claimed that the party leaders would not tolerate the

wrongdoings of the Modi-Yogi government and would continue to raise their voice for the

"Democracy is in danger in men.

LIP Congress leaders and workers protesting in Lucknow on Friday against disqualification of former party

oresident Rahul Gandhi from

the hands of the BJP government and the Congress will not allow it at any cost and is ready to face any action," Khabri

Khabri also claimed that many of the party leaders were injured in the police action against them. In other areas of Lucknow as well, Congress leaders attempted to protest, but were sent back by police-

tion were conducted, a lot of BIP leaders would also lose their legislative membership on the basis of the language used by them and the remarks made by them Taking potshots at the BJP, Akhilesh Yadav said it was not

right to go against the court but disappointing to see Congress leader Rahul Gandhi being disqualified as a Lok Sabha member post his conviction in a defamation case.

chief minister said that the BJP leaders "should remember their own statements".

All citizens are equal before law: Maurya "If Rahul Gandhi and Congress lead-

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was punished for his derogatory statement against the backward community and this verdict showed that the law of the country is supreme and all citizens are equal as far as law is concerned. The court order proves that no mat-

ter how big a person is, if he has committed a crime he will be punished," Maurya said while talking to reporters here on

'We had condemned the statement of Rahul Gandhi then and even today condemn his utterances against the members of the Backward community. This is



despicable that despite being sentenced by the court, Rahul Gandhi and Congress leaders are justifying those derogatory statements. This shows the mentality of Congress towards backwards," Deputy

ers believe that they can abuse the citizens of their own country, then the constitution of the country has given the OBC community the right to approach the court against them," he said "Rahul goes abroad and sows the seeds

of hatred. He insulted the army, and made fun of the martyrs of the country. Even in the Rafale case, Rahul Gandhi questioned the court's decision and then offered apologies when he was grilled," he added.

Maurya said with a aim to continuously humiliate Modi ji, the Congress, including the Gandhi family, called Modi ji

'neech', a 'thief', and a 'merchant of death'. "Today the Court has shown these leaders the place to which they belong to," he concluded.

BJP's tactics to divert attention: Akhilesh Yadav

PNS LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday claimed that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha was BJP's tactic to divert people's attention from issues like inflation, unemployment and mismanagement of India's finances by an 'industrialist friend'.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister also alleged that since the BJP came to power in UP in 2017, it had used the government and administration to lodge false cases against Samajwadi Party MLAs, including Azam Khan, and got them disqualified from the state assembly.

He alleged that the BJP was strangulating the Constitution. "Azam Khan's son

Abdullah Azam was also disqualified from the membership of the state assembly following his conviction. BJP has targeted one more SP MLA Irfan Solanki by implicating him in false cases," he alleged. Yadav, who was on a day-

long visit to Noida and Greater Noida, said if a fair investiga-

The former Uttar Pradesh

"When someone in a fake tweet had said that 'netaji' (Mulayam Singh Yadav) and I had a fight and instead of condemning it, the BJP said that our workers are doing the right thing and should keep taking it ahead," he said.

Woman immolates self along with daughter

PNS LUCKNOW

woman burnt herself along Awith her 12-year-old daugh-Gorakhpur district while in Meerut, a woman killed her two children with the help of her para-

In Gorakhpur, the woman also tried to kill her two other children but they managed to escape out of the house to save their lives.

According to reports, Shrikant Singh, a resident of Mohiuddinpur in Gulriha area of Gorakhpur, was doing pipe fitting work in Saudi Arabia. He came home on January 8, 2023. Apart from Shrikant, the family included his wife Nirmala Devi (40), mother Phoolmati (70), elder daughter Arpita (17), younger daughter Saloni (12) and son Vivek Singh (8).

Shrikant Singh said that his wife Nirmala had breakfast with the whole family on Thursday morning. He said that his brother was looking for a suitable

Pipraich so he went there on ursday afternoon. He claimed that his wife also wanted to accompany him but he asked her to remain at home with children which annoyed her.

Shrikant said that in the night, his wife poured petrol over her body and on all the three children and told them to get ready to die. He claimed that before Nirmala could bring a matchstick, his elder daughter Arpita and son Vivek rushed out of home screaming for help. In the meantime, Nirmala closed the door and set herself on fire and the fire caught Saloni as she tried to save her mother. Before the neighbours could break open the door, both mother-daughter were burnt alive. Shrikant said that his old age mother failed to do any-

The local police registered a case and sent the bodies for

a youth was coming to see her at two kids to continue their illicit Moteshwar Shiva temple in relations without any hindrance. Reports said that one Nisha

aig a resident of Sycamore Street in Khairnagar located in Delhi Gate police station area of Meerut was having an affair with a former corporator identified as Saud Faizi. Nisha's husband Shahid Baig works in a shoe shop in Lalkurti Baith area of Meerut.

They had two children -- 10year-old son Merab and 6-yearold daughter Konen Baig. As Nisha was in relation with Faizi she faced a problem to go ahead with her affair as her two kids also remained in the house when her husband went for work.

On Wednesday night, Nisha informed her husband that both the children were missing from home since the evening. Shahid subsequently searched for the two and later informed the police. The cops also took help of CCTV footage but failed to find the chilautopsy. dren going anywhere. When the In Meerut, a woman, along cops learnt of the affair of Nisha,

match for his niece Sumitra and with her lover, murdered her they went through her call details record and found that she had a long chat with Faizi. The cops also learnt through Shahid that when he called Nisha at 7:30 pm on the fateful day, both the children were present at home.

Suspecting some foul play, the cops grilled Nisha but she did not reveal anything. The cops also looked for Faizi but found him absconding.
On Thursday night, Faizi

reached the police station and after being grilled, he confessed

to killing both the kids. Faizi revealed that before the murder, he had tied the hands and feet of both the children and put them in the box of the bed. After this, both were injected with drugs and then strangled to death. After committing the murder, Faizi put the dead bodies of both the children in his car and threw them in the canal located in Bhola Ki Jhal. The cops subsequently took both Faizi and Nisha in custody and efforts were made to trace out the bodies of the missing children.

UPERC hearing for hike in power tariff from April

mence the public hearing for a hike in The hearing will commence from

Varanasi on April 10. UP Power Corporation Limited, along with its five wholly owned subsidiaries, have filed ARR (annual revenue requirement) with the power regulator seeking hike in power tariff ranging from 18 per cent to 23 per cent for the next fiscal 2023-24 commencing from April 1.

The power regulator, during the public hearing, will record the views of the power consumers on the UPPCL seeking hike in power tariff.

The hearing for the ARR filed by the Purvanchal Power Distribution Corporation will begin from Varanasi on April 10. The hearing for Madhyanchal Power Distribution Corporation will be held at Lucknow on April 21. The hearing for Dakshinanchal Power Distribution Corporation and Kanpur Electricity Supply Company will be held at Agra on April 27 and for Paschimanchal Power Distribution Corporation at

Power employees' protest on Mar 28 PNS LUCKNOW

 $E_{\text{Regulatory Commission will com-}}^{\text{lectricity regulatory Commission Will com-}}$

The power employees have given L call for statewide protest on March

The power employees are demanding that the government honour the promise of withdrawal of penal action like criminal cases lodged against the employees during the three-day token strike.

The power employees have threatened to intensify the agitation if their demands were not conceded.

The power employees' leaders said that 18 lakh employees of the state government, urban local bodies and public sector undertakings would also join the day-long statewide protest demonstrations.

The power employees went on a

Noida on April 28. Meanwhile, Avadesh Verma, president of UP Power Consumer Forum which is opposing the proposal for the hike in power tariff, said the UPPCL should first refund the arrears to the power consumers. He said the propos-

72-hour token strike on March 17. The strike was withdrawn several hours March 20 following the agreement reached with Energy Minister AK Sharma.

The power employees are demanding withdrawal of penal action against the employees and their leaders. The state government had declared the strike illegal under provisions of the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and criminal cases were lodged against the employees and their leaders. Services of around 1,500 contractual employees were also terminated.

Energy Minister AK Sharma on March 20 had thanked the power

employees joint action committee for calling off the strike.

al for the hike in power tariff filed before the power regulator by the UPCL was unconstitutional. He said before seeking a hike in the power tariff, the UPCL should either return Rs 25.133 crore to the consumers or adjust it in power bills.

Yakub's properties worth Rs 9 cr attached

PNS LUCKNOW

The Meerut police attached properties worth Rs 9 crore belonging to Bahujan Samaj Party leader and meat mafia Haji Yakub Qureshi and iden-

tified his properties worth over Rs 31 crore. The action, which is part of the state government's ongoing action against meat mafias in Uttar Pradesh, was initiated on Thursday. Qureshi's other unlawful assets totalling over Rs 31 crore have also been identified.

On the other hand, on the third day of the Income Tax Department's raid on the residence of Aligarh meat businessman Haji Zaheer, property worth crores of rupees was found. Speaking about the police action on the prop-

erties of Yakub Qureshi, Circle Officer of Kithore, Rupali Roy, said, "Two plots of lands of Haji Yakub Qureshi which have been attached today are in the name of Haji Yakub Qureshi's wife Sanjeeda Begum. These properties were purchased with money obtained through criminal activities."

Roy added that Yakub Qureshi's other illegal assets worth Rs 31 crore 77 lakh had also been marked and action would be initiated on these prop-

A total of 26 properties, including both land and buildings, have been identified as belonging to Yakub Oureshi. There are 32 cars in all. There are more than

24 premium four-wheelers and some two-wheelers. Haji Yakub Qureshi, a former minister in the BSP and Samajwadi Party governments, is currently held in Sonbhadra prison under the Gangsters Act

and the Anti-social Activities (Prevention) Act. Imran and Firoz, two of his sons, are presently out

Seven luxurious houses are among the 26 sites that have been designated as land and buildings. These mansions are located at various locations in Meerut. Yakub Qureshi's school, hospital, meat factory, land, two homes in Sarai Bahlim, and other unlawful properties have been identified by the police on Hapur Road.

Yakub Qureshi owns properties in 10 villages. Some construction work has also been done at these places. Two bungalows in Sarai Bahlim Kotwali area were bought in the name of Sanjeeda Begum. In Zahidpur, a bungalow and six buildings have been identified. Registered in the names of Yakub Qureshi and his sons Imran and Firoz, luxury and expensive vehicles such as Mercedes, Jaguar, and Range Rover have also been found. There are 23 vehicles registered in the name of Al Faheem Meatex Company, including Innova, Pajero, Balero, and five

Former minister Haji Yaqoob Qureshi owned and ran Al Fahim Meatex Private Limited. This meat factory is situated in village Allipur Jijmana Dhikauli under Kharkhoda police station area. Illegal business of meat packaging and processing was going on in the factory. Police charged 18 people, including Yakub Qureshi, his wife Sanjeeda and sons Firoz and Imran, after recovering meat from the spot. Meat

worth Rs 5 crore was caught in the factory. Meanwhile, Youtubers associated with the 'Bhojpuri Disco' channel have been arrested on

charges of robbing people in Gorakhpur. The police have recovered a motorcycle that was allegedy used during the robbery, a 32-bore revolver and empty cartridges. However, the mastermind behind the crime has yet to be apprehended.

As per the reports, the popularity of social media lured some young individuals into illegal activity. The 'Bhojpuri Disco' channel, which featured Bhojpuri songs and dance performances, gained significant traction, attracting over 8,00,000 followers. As a monetised channel, revenue started to flow in. But after the channel's creators failed to comply with YouTube's policies, the channel was penalised and its earnings stopped. After the channel failed to earn decent revenue, a group of young men associated with it started robbing people. They would book camera operators online and then target them.

In the first incident, they targeted a camera operator in Deoria, while the second victim was from Varanasi. The incident took place on March 21. The accused stole cameras and lenses worth Rs 6-7 lakh after threatening him.

On the basis of the complaint registered by the victims, a case was registered against the people running the YouTube channel, said Gorakhpur's Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Grover. "With the help of Khorabar police surveillance,

termind is still out of reach," he said. Grover said, "The police have recovered all the looted items. Along with the motorcycle used during the robbery, a 32 bore revolver and empty car-

tridges have also been recovered."

five people have been arrested. However, their mas-

Bahraich (PTI): The Sashastra Seema Bal has issued an alert and put up posters bearing pictures of Amritpal Singh and his aides along the border with Nepal to avert the possibility of the radical preacher fleeing the country via Uttar

The Punjab Police launched a crackdown against Amritpal and elements of his "Waris Punjab De" outfit last week.

Amritpal, however, gave the police a slip and escaped their dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in the Jalandhar district. Following his escape, Amritpal changed his appearance, wore sunglasses and western attire and has been using different modes of travel.

"Based on inputs from intelligence agencies that Amritpal can enter Nepal, we have issued an alert on the border. Posters with their pictures have also been put up on the border in Rupaidiha. We are closely monitoring the movement of people along the border," SSB commandant Tapan Das, said on Friday.

SSB steps up **PUBLIC NOTICE** G.A. No. 554 of 2020 vigil along E.C. NO. 636 OF 2015 IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA Nepal border ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION

Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited Devendra Kumar & Anr.

Respondents/Judgement Debtors

Petitioner/Award Holder

1.Devendra Kumar S/o, Om Prakash Gunja, Kaitha, Kanpur, Pin code- 209 206. .Menaka Singh W/o Devendra Kumar Gunja, Kaitha, Kanpur, Pin code-209 206.

This is to put to your notice that an Execution application has been filed against the above named Addressees, wherein the award holder has sought for execution of the arbitral award dated 25th February 2015. By an order dated 9th July, 2015, the Hon'ble Justice Soumen Sen has directed the judgement-debtors to file their Affidavits of Assets, the said affidavit of assets have not been filed till date . In view of the same an application has been filed for the issuance of warrant against you which s made returnable on 12th May 2023.

You should be present in Court or be duly represented by your respective advocates.

SINHA AND COMPANY **ADVOCATES**

5, KIRAN SHANKAR ROY ROAD KOLKATA - 700001 Contact: +9133-2210-1617/1625 LUCKNOW | SATURDAY | MARCH 25, 2023

Legal Cell
Nikhlesh Palace, 17/4 A Ashok Marg, Lucknow, 226001

POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]
dersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 22.12.2022 calling upon the borrower(s) (Emorcement) Number 2002, Issued defination to the date of 22.12.2022 canning upon the borrowers.

I. Mr. Mritunjay Dubey S/o Late Mr. Shrikrishna Dubey (Borrower & Mortgagor) 2. Mr. Jageshwar Prasad Dubey S/o Mr. Late Mr. Shrikrishna Dubey (Co Borrower & Mortgagor) to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 8,82,099/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Eighty two Thousand and ninety nine only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herei below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read wit rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 23-03-2023. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for a ramount of notice Rs. 8,82,099/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Eighty two Thousand and ninety nine only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any,

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY Plot No 216 & 217 Measuring 348.13 Sq Mtr Situated At Mauza Natwa , Tappa 84 , Pargana Kantil , Tehsil & District Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh-231001. Bounded As Under: - East : Geeta Swam Ashram, North: Rest Part Of Land, West: Govt. Road, South: Rasta

AUTHORISED OFFICER HDFC BANK LTD. DATE :- 23-MARCH-2023

APPENDIX IV-A

[See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 17.04.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 63,38,668/-(Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Eight only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLBRL00424314, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 21.03.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 22.03.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Ronak Jolly and Simple Jolly.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 66,00,000/- (Rupees Sixty Six Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 6,60,000/- (Rupees Six Lakh Sixty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

HOUSE/PLOT NO. 107-H ADMEASURING 110.38 SQUARE METER, BEARING KHASRA NO. 139 MIN. SITUATED IN BHRAMPURA PURVI MAROOF RESIDENCY GARDEN, BAREILLY - 243001, UTTAR PRADESH.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to

Date: 22.03.2023 Place: BAREILLY

AUTHORISED OFFICER INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.

APPENDIX IV-A

[See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 17.04.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 1,46,97,952/-(Rupees One Crore Forty Six Lakh Ninety Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Two only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLAPBRL00372197, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 21.03.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 22.03.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Neha Rastogi (Proprietor, M/S Shree Golds), Vivek Rastogi and

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 2,50,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore Fifty Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 25,00,000/-(Rupees Twenty Five Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

RESIDENTIAL PLOT BEARING NUMBER 12A, PART OF BUNGALOW NUMBER 13A, ADMEASURING 201.50 SQUARE METERS, SITUATED AT CIVIL LINES, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT BAREILLY, BAREILLY-243001, UTTAR PRADESH, WHICH IS BOUNDED

EAST: ROAD 16 FEET 9 INCH WIDE. THEREAFTER HOUSE OF

WEST: LAND OF FOREST DEPARTMENT.

NORTH: HOUSE OF SANJAY GUPTA & OTHERS SOUTH: ROAD 17 FEET 6 INCH WIDE, THEREAFTER HOUSE OF

ASHOK JI AND HOUSE OF GANDHI.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to

Date: 22.03.2023 Place: BAREILLY

AUTHORISED OFFICER INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.

APPENDIX IV-A

[See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Properties mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 29.04.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 2.41.69,784/-(Rupees Two Crore Forty One Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Four only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLAPNOI00392431, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 21.03.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 22.03.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from AGRANTE DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD. (THROUGH ITS DIRECTORS), AGRANTE REALTY LIMITED (THROUGH ITS DIRECTORS), GURNAM SINGH, BEST & BRIGHT PROPERTY PVT. LTD. (THROUGH ITS DIRECTORS). ARVINDER SINGH, YUVRAJ SINGH, MAHENDER KAUR BAGGA, RAVINDER KAUR and SATBEER SINGH, with SINGH INFRAZONE PVT. LTD. (CORPORATE **GUARANTOR, THROUGH ITS DIRECTORS)**

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Properties will be Rs. 13,60,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen Crore Sixty Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,36,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Six Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price

> DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES PROPERTY NO. 1

KHASRA NO.- 511 LAND ADMEASURING 1986.93 SQ. MTRS. (INCLUDING A BUILDING STRUCTURE IN THE FORM OF BUILDING COVERED AREA OF 125.54 SQ. MTRS.) VILLAGE DHORERA MAFI, MAHANAGAR COLONY TEHSIL AND DISTT. BAREILLY-243123 UTTAR PRADESH. THE SAID LAND BOUNDED AS UNDER

EAST: RASTA 12 MTRS WEST: LAND URBAN DEVELOPERS KHASRA NO. 695, 696

NORTH: HOUSE NO. 107 TYPE A AND HOUSE NO. 152 SOUTH: ROAD 30 MTR

KHASRA NO.- 695 AND 696 LAND ADMEASURING 1890.78 SQ. MTRS., VILLAGE BIHARMAN NAGLA, MAHANAGAR COLONY TEHSIL AND DISTT. BAREILLY-243123 **UTTAR PRADESH**

EAST: LAND URBAN DEVELOPERS KHASRA NO. 511 WEST: RASTA PILIBHIT BI-PASS

NORTH: KHASRA NO. 695, 696

SOUTH: ROAD 30 MTR

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Date: 22.03.2023 AUTHORISED OFFICER INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD. Place: BAREILLY

Shaista Parveen's new video surfaces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

month after the Umesh Amonth after the Pal murder case a new video of Shaista Parveen, wife of mafia don, Atiq Ahmad, has surfaced. In it she is seen engaged in door to door campaign. During it she is accompanied by Armaan, carrying a reward of ₹5 lakh and named in the Umesh murder case.

Armaan is giving security cover to Shaista. He is wearing a half jacket and S is written on his T-shirt. This video is being told just a few days before the Umesh Pal murder case. Shaista Parveen accused of conspiring in the Umesh Pal murder case is absconding. The police are continuously conducting raids in search of her. Umesh Pal was shot dead along with two of his

security guards on February 24. After extracting the call details of Shaista, the police got proof that she was involved in the planning of the murder along with the shooters. Shaista has been in direct contact with the shooters. In the murder of Umesh Pal and two security personnel, the police have arrested Balli Pandit, another close aide of mafia Atiq Ahmed. Five days before the murder, Shaista Parveen went

meet Balli at his house along with Mohammad Sabir. A total of 22 teams have been deployed to nab the shooters.

Meanwhile after the Umesh Pal murder case the police is looking for IS-227 gang members and shooters of Atiq Ahmed. The name of Abid Pradhan, who was called Atiq's right hand just 15 days before the incident, is missing from the gang list. Abid Pradhan's name topped the list of Atiq gang members released by the police in 2020. After Shaista's involvement in the plot of Umesh Pal shootout and the firing by her son Asad, both are set to be named in the Atiq gang. Police have decided to update this list again.

Abid is the prime sharpshooter and considered the right hand of Atiq. BSP MLA Raju Pal was murdered in broad daylight in 2005 in Dhoomanganj area. In this murder case, a report was filed against about a dozen people, including mafia Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf. Along with Atiq Ahmed, Abid Pradhan was also the main accused in this murder case.

Abid Pradhan has 35 serious criminal cases registered

against him. These include the Surjit Altma double murder case and the 2006 Umesh Pal kidnapping case. Abid Pradhan's name is not there in the gang list of 121 members of Atiq Ahmed, released by incharge DCRB on February 9, 2023, 15 days before the Umesh Pal murder case. Additional Police Commissioner Akash Kulhari says that the list keeps on getting updated. When some people start working against the gang, then they are in the list of criminals but their name gets dropped from the gang. He will get this investigated as to how Abid's name was removed from the list. Abid Pradhan is the most hardcore criminal of the Atiq Ahmed gang and more than 34 cases, including murder, dacoity, loot, gangrape, etc were registered against him. He is also named as an accused in the case of abducting Umesh Pal and getting him to change his statement. Police has removed the name of Abid Pradhan from the list of 121 members of the Atiq Ahmed gang and put it in the list of 58 associates, sources said. After Umesh's murder, now the gang chart of Atiq

Ahmed is set to be renewed

once again. Shaista Parveen will

also be inducted as a member of Atiq's gang after her connection with the plot of Umesh Pal murder case and attending meetings with the shooters was exposed. Apart from this, Asad, son of Atiq Ahmed, will also be included. Many other names will also be added to the Atiq gang. Atiq is the leader of the IS-227 gang. This is an interstate gang, which till last year had a total of 179 members, including his brother Ashraf, shooter Abid, Zulfikar alias Tota. Currently there are only 129 gang members as per the new list. Investigation has revealed that 17 members of the gang have died. Meanwhile the government has transferred inspector Junaid Alam from Prayagraj to Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Police Academy Moradabad.

KILLED IN ACCIDENT: A container truck overturned into a 10-feet deep ditch after breaking the divider near the national highway in Phulpur. As a result as many as 17 head of cattle died in the accident which took place near Lakharawan village under Tharavai police station area. The driver who was also injured was sent to the hospital by the police.

Rally taken out on World Tuberculosis Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of nurses took out a rally on World Tuberculosis Day on Friday from the College of Nursing, GSVM Medical College to raise awareness about tuberculosis and to end the social stigma attached to it. Hundreds of nurses carrying posters, banners and placards marched on the medical college campus raising slogans for a united and sustained effort that was needed to make India TB free by 2025. Addressing the gathering principal of the Medical College, Prof Sanjay Kala said TB was now curable. He said however there was a myth that it was incurable and that it spreads through personal items, such as clothing, bedding, drinking and eating utensils, a handshake, a toilet, or other items that a person with TB had touched. He said the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination was launched to achieve the target of ending TB by 2025 in a mission mode. He said it was a multi-pronged approach which aimed to detect all TB patients with an emphasis on reaching TB patients seeking care from private providers and undiagnosed TB in highrisk populations. Prof Kala said the most important development in the private sector had been the initiative for promoting affordable and quality TB tests and this unique initiative was more affordable and accessible to patients in India, through a network of over 90 accredited private laboratories and hospitals. He said these laboratories and hospitals were offering TB tests at prices that are 30-50 per cent less than the market price. He said in addition, they were notifying confirmed TB cases to the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) and were actively educating private doc-

Principal Sunita Tiwari, addressing the gathering said some people did not understand how TB was spread or how it was treated and they may be afraid of getting TB from sharing dishes or drinking containers with someone who has TB. She said it may be helpful to share the facts one had learned about TB with family and others.

Prize distribution day held

IIT-K, University at Buffalo sign agreement to enrich research in biomedicine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) and the University at Buffalo, USA (UB) have signed a cooperation agreement at IIT Kanpur to enrich research in Biomedicine Bioengineering. The agreement was signed by Prof Abhay

Karandikar, Director, IIT Kanpur, and Prof A Scott Weber, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Buffalo. By signing this cooperation agreement, IIT-K and UB have

agreed to establish the IITK-UB Joint Centre of Excellence in Biomedicine and Bioengineering at IIT Kanpur premises. The centre is being established with the objective to facilitate long-term collaborations in education and research between IIT Kanpur and University at Buffalo, as well as other institutions. The research focus of this centre will be on developing materials and technologies for both in vitro (studies performed with cells) and in (studies performed with



today with University at Buffalo is in continuation to an existing MoU between the two institutes. Both the institutes have strategic objectives to collaborate for research that would help us build a robust ecosystem in Biomedicine and Bioengineering. The Centre aims to develop materials and technologies for bioscience applications and facilitate long-term joint research collaborations. We're confident that this Center would provide several opportunities to our researchers, faculty and students in taking forward research in these core areas." From University at Buffalo, Prof Venu Govindaraju, Vice President Venu agreement, Prof Karandikar, Lewis, Dean, School of and Prof. Yogesh Joshi, management.

Chair, Chemical and Biological Engineering, Prof Supriya Mahajan, Professor, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Prof Luis Velarde, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Prof John Tomaszewski, Distinguished Professor, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and Prof Jonathan Bird, Professor, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences were also present at the ceremony. From IIT Kanpur, Prof. Dhirendra Katti, Dean of International Relations, Prof Dean of Academic

Department of Chemical Engineering, were also present at the ceremony. The formation of the centre under the agreement would facilitate The university of

exchange of students and researchers between IIT Kanpur and University at Buffalo; along with facilitating collaborative research and training programs, joint conferences, thematic workshops and exchange of scholarly material. The cooperation agreement comes after a Joint Degree Programme agreement that was signed between IITK and UB eaarlier in 2017, to provide selected doctoral students at either institutes the opportunity to conduct research at the partner institute and earn two degrees, one each from IITK and UB. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a public research university in the USA consistently ranked as one of the world's leading universities. UB has three campuses with over 7,000 students across its 13 schools and colleges that offer over 450 degree programmes. animals) applications in bio- for Research and Economic Affairs, Prof Kantesh Balani, the areas of law, engineering, sciences. Upon signing the Development, Prof Kemper Dean of Resources & Alumni arts, sciences, medicine and

DPS meritorious students being felicitated PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

Headmistress of DPS Kidwai Nagar Alka Joshi while extending a warm welcome to the parents on the annual prize distribution day on Friday said the school has always focused on academic growth of the children and thus it had always struck a perfect balance between academic and co-curricular activities. She said the school took pride in its strong emphasis on academic excellence and its energetic and driven faculty who strived hard to raise the benchmark of

student achievement each vear. She said at every stage of school life, DPS was committed to providing its students a learning environment that will widen their horizons, encourage critical and creative thinking, and foster a lifelong love for learning. She said beginning with the pre-primary level, children were offered educational experiences that were based on internationally accepted best practices, an eclectic and adaptive approach that recognises that each learner was unique and learnt differently. A child centric and technology rich environment fostererd a spirit of enquiry,

encouraged higher order thinking skills and equipped children with 21st century skills.

Pro-Vice-Chairperson Bandana Misra and Director of DPS Kidwai Nagar, Barra, Servodaya Nagar and Azaad Nagar Rachna Mohotra graced the occasion.

Yuvam Pandey and Chhavi Singh welcomed the gathering and emphasised the mission and vision of the school to empower students with an education which would enable them to reach their full potential The programme with Saraswati Vandana. Later prizes and certificates for both academic and co-curricular activities were awarded to the meritorious students for their commendable performance during the academic year 2022-23. The awards and certificates were presented to the students by Bandana Misra and Rachna Mohotra. The various categories in which prizes were awarded were Award for Application, All Rounder, Consistency, Improvement, Full Attendance and Subject Toppers. The students were also felicitated for their achievement in co-curricular activities like sports, art music and dance.

'Mahila Samman & Samwad Samaroh' held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

UP Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Pratibha Shukla, while addressing the 'Mahila Samman and Samwad Samaroh' organised under the banner 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' at HBTU Western Campus at Shatabdi Bhawan on Friday said that the Uttar

Pradesh government was committed to the uplift of the girl child and thus it had introduced umpteen schemes for them, especially to save and educate them. She said Navratra were highly auspicious nine days where the blessings of Maa Durga were sought, especially for the girls. She said in India girls had a special status and dur-

ing these days the girls were worshipped. She said umpteen girls had proved their mettle in education and to motivate them further for higher studies this special function had been arranged by the Uttar Pradesh govern-

She said the Uttar Pradesh government will make every effort so that girls

of the state did not lag behind in higher studies and served the state and the country as well. Shukla then felicitated the girls who had stood on the merit list. She then also distributed laptop to the outstanding girls. The minister then took part in the 'Godh Bharai' of pregnant women followed 'annaprasan' and provided aid to malnourished children.

Tiny tots set stage on fire



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

ir Padampat Singhania SEducation Centre (SPSEC) fosters its students with values and virtues and as a part of the persistent endeavour to achieve ĥolistic development, build self-confidence and develop the speaking skills of students, 'Showboat' a stage activity was organised at the school for pre-primary Class- Bud (Jr KG) students on the campus. The programme com-

menced with the welcome song by the school choir. Principal, Ms Bhawna Gupta, extended a warm welcome to the parents. This was followed by a presentation of a special foot-tapping dance in green costumes which represented the colour of nature and exhibited renewal,

life and energy. The tiny tots set the stage on fire with their impressive moves while presenting Hip Hop dance and dressed in blue attires which exemplified inspiration that one got from the sky. The performers looked both vibrant and graceful while performing their quick steps. The talented young orators of Bud (Jr. K.G.) stole the hearts of the audience by exhibiting their oratorical The 100 per cent partici-

pation of the students was appreciated by every parent. Parents admired the decor and complimented the efforts that went into making the event a grand success. The event was also graced by Vice-Principal, Kavita Chadha and Headmistress Vandana Trivedi.

Police station inspected

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

SP (Operation) OP Singh A SP (Operation) C. I Sinspected the Halia police station on Thursday. During the inspection the ASP directed the office staff to keep the records updated and in a proper way. He checked different records, registers and became aware with action taken to control crime. He directed to keep close vigil on historysheeters, anti-social elements and habitual offenders. The cops were directed to conduct night patrolling properly and to dispose of matters related to the aggrieved on priority basis. During the inspection Station Officer Vishnu Prabha Singh, official staff and others were

REMEMBERED: Socialist thinker Dr Ram Manohar Lohia was remembered on his birth anniversary on Thursday. A programme was organised to mark the day at the office of Samajwadi Party in which speakers threw light over thoughts of socialist leader.

Speaking on the occasion district president of the party Devi Prasad Chaudhary said that Dr Lohia struggled for the weaker section.

GM inaugurates exhibition joint replacement was mainly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With the aim of ensuring multi-dimensional progress in the use of official language, an attractive exhibition was organised in the office of General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR) of the work being done by the Stores department for the use and dissemination of official language Hindi. In it an elegant presentation of the work being done by the Stores department in Hindi was done. General Manager Satish Kumar inaugurated the exhibition by lighting the lamp. The GM said that our railway is completely in Hindi speaking area and Hindi is the mother tongue of all of us, so we should use it more and more in our official work with full sense of duty and commitment. The GM appreciated the excellent work being done by the Stores department in official language Hindi and announced a reward of ₹15,000 for the officers and employees who performed this work. In this sequence, according to the items related to the inspection of the Parliamentary

Official Language Committee,

the work done in Hindi by the

Stores department was

reviewed. At the beginning of the programme GM Satish Kumar was welcomed by Principal Chief Material Manager (PCMM) Pratap Singh Shami and he was informed about the work being done by the department in offi-

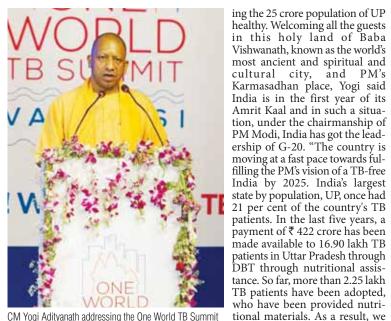
cial language Hindi. ARTHROPLASTY: Shoulder pain is a very common problem encountered with patients, especially middle aged and old patients particularly suffering from ailment like diabetes. In such circumstances, majority of patients rely on physiotherapy and medications and sometimes patients go for arthroscopy (keyhole surgery) which also has its restrictions. However, city based orthopaedic surgeons have now come up with Reverse shoulder replacement", popularly known as arthroplasty to find a permanent solution. In arthroplasty shoulder joint replacement surgery can effectively ease pain from shoulder arthritis. Most people experience improved shoulder function after this surgery. Noted orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Pranay Bhushan Pandey said earlier there was general conception among masses that

confined to hip and knee and later it evolved for other painful joints like shoulder, ankle, elbow etc. However, with the advancement in medical science, reverse shoulder replacement has proved to be a boon for patients. Reverse shoulder replacement has emerged as the preferred technique for dealing with long-standing cases of arthritis/ tendon damage/ fractures or complications arising out of previous treatments or neglect or tumours. Reverse shoulder replacement can be used in patients who have weak or paralysed muscles around the shoulder too. One such shoulder replacement surgery benefited patient in the city was Sukhjinder Singh who suffered a major injury to his right shoulder in a road accident. His shoulder bone was broken into multiple pieces that it was difficult to repair and the shoulder joint was dislocated. After getting initial first aid, he was advised for reverse shoulder replacement. This surgery was painless and fast with rapid recovery protocol being followed. He is now able to do all his daily activities including lifting weights and driving a two-wheeler.

India has become capable in every field under Modi's leadership: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

hief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Cthat India has emerged strong and become capable in every field under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "In the last six years, under the guidance of Modi, all the schemes have been implemented with priority in UP," he said while speaking at the inaugural function of three-day international seminar 'One World TB Summit' organised at Rudraksh Convention Centre on the occasion of World TB Day in the presence of PM Narendra Modi, Governor Anandi Ben Patel and Union Health Minister Mansukh Bhai Mandaviya. The function was also attended by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, Executive Director of Stop TB Partnership Dr Lucica Ditiu apart from the health delegates from the country and the world. "In UP, the work of adoption of 2.7 lakh TB patients at the government level has been done, out of which 70 per cent patients are living a healthy life today after being diseasefree. Besides, Rs 422 crore has so far been paid through DBT by the state government for nutritional assistance to



the TB patients of the state," he said, attention is being given to TB investigation at PM Ayushman Wellness adding that we are committed to keep-

ing the 25 crore population of UP process of distributing more than 80,000 kits on a war footing is going on in different districts across the state. He said under the leadership and guidance of PM Modi, every scheme has been implemented with full commitment in UP in the last six years which has been done with the aim of keeping the 25 crore population of UP healthy. "Success has been achieved in eradicating communicable diseases, Japanese and acute encephalitis syndrome up to 96 percent in UP," he said, adding that India has presented a model of management to the world in the Covid era apart from inventing and making indigenous vaccines. "This is proof of India's susceptibility to diseases. In UP, 40 crore doses of Covid were given through free vaccines. In UP, where earlier the maternal mortality rate was 285 per lakh, today it has been brought down to 167 per lakh. Apart from this, earlier the infant mortality rate was 57 per thousand, which we have succeeded in bringing down to the level of 38 per thousand. UP is working with full commitment against TB and I am sure TB will be defeated and India

Modi urged to inspire world leaders in fight against TB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Executive Director of Stop TB Partnership Campaign Dr Lucica Ditiu urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lead and inspire other world leaders in this fight against TB. She was addressing the inaugural function of One World TB Summit which was inaugurated at Rudraksh Convention Centre here by the PM Narendra Modi on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day here on Friday. This threeday summit is being organised by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Stop TB Partnership. Founded in 2001, the Stop TB Partnership is an organisation hosted by the United Nations that amplifies the voices of the people, communities, and countries affected by TB. Speaking on the occasion in presence of Modi, she also informed about the UN high-level meeting on TB on September 22 during the



ED of Stop TB Partnership Dr Lucica Ditiu addressing a function on World TB Day at Rudraksh in Varanasi on Friday

UN General Assembly in New York and also requested the prime minister's presence in it. The summit is taking place in one of the oldest cities in the world, Varanasi to discuss a thousand-year-old disease in the world that is Tuberculosis or TB," she said, adding that India has a very high burden of TB but with the best plan, ambition and great implementation of activities. She also underlined the global welfare embrace of India's G-20 Presidency and explained the importance of the

theme - One World One Health. "India is on the road to ending TB by 2025 under the leadership of the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)," she said, adding that due to the efforts of countries like India, the number of people who are not getting diagnosis and treatment for TB has gone below three million for the first time in history. She praised India's scale in tackling TB and the TB Free India initiative and expressed the belief that India will end TB by 2025

Dept of Posts playing important role in TB eradication

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The Department of Posts is also playing an important role in the eradication of TB disease along with the Health department. "The sputum samples of TB patients are rapidly reaching the Health department's lab through the postman which has also accelerated the identification of patients and their quick treatment. Apart from this, ₹500

tified and treated tuberculosis patients through DBT in their India Post Payments Bank accounts," said Postmaster General (PMG), Varanasi Region, Krishna Kumar Yadav, while speaking on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day here on Friday.

He said that under the joint initiative of the departments of Posts and Medical and Health (UP) for eliminat-

ing TB from the root, the sputum and other samples of TB patients packed from the Designated Microscopy Centre (DMC) is being sent to the respective CBNAAT (Cartridge Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) Lab / Culture and DST (Drug Sensitivity Testing) Lab of the district through the post offices. "Samples from remote community and primary health centres are collected and delivered to the labo-

healthy. Welcoming all the guests

in this holy land of Baba

Vishwanath, known as the world's

most ancient and spiritual and

Amrit Kaal and in such a situa-

tion, under the chairmanship of

patients. In the last five years, a

payment of ₹ 422 crore has been

made available to 16.90 lakh TB

patients in Uttar Pradesh through

DBT through nutritional assis-

tance. So far, more than 2.25 lakh

TB patients have been adopted,

who have been provided nutri-

tional materials. As a result, we

have been able to cure 70 per cent

of these TB patients. Special

ratory by postmen within 24 to 48 hours, so that their purity is maintained," said the PMG, adding that 13,390 samples have been collected and sent to testing lab by the Postmen in Varanasi Region so far. Under Varanasi Region, there are 21 post offices in Varanasi, two in Bhadohi, eight in Chandauli, 25 in Jaunpur, 24 in Ghazipur and 24 in Ballia district have been authorised for booking.

Nikshay Diwas organised

The Department of Political Science, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) on Friday organised Nikshay Diwas under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme. Prof Suryabhan Prasad, Head of Department of Political Science emphasised on gen-

erating consciousness among people about tuberculosis and said that this disease is now not incurable and can be cured. The UNO has set a target to eliminate the tuberculosis hy 2030 but India has set a target to eliminate this disease by 2025, he added. Dr Vijay Kumar, Dr Ravi Prakash Singh, Dr Piyush Mani Tripathi, Dr Jaidev Pandey, Dr Jyoti Singh and others were present on the the university also organised an awareness programme on tuberculosis. The head of department Prof Rajiv Kumar said tuberculosis is a serious disease which should be eradicated. The transmission of tuberculosis could be stopped only by generating awareness among people, he added. Dr Paras Nath Maurya said tuberculosis is such a disease which affects the social, economical and mental status of the society and so the people should be made aware about it. This disease could be stopped from spreading by creating a clean atmosphere, having a healthy diet and following a normal lifestyle, he said and appealed to people to remain away from all addictions. Dr Rakesh Kumar Tiwari conducted the awareness programme. Prof Hansa Jain outlined the objective of the programme while Dr Gangadhar proposed the vote of thanks.

SEMESTER EXAMINATION

The examination of first and third semester of post graduation of the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith will com-

mence from March 27 and will be conducted in two shifts. A total of 67,968 students will appear in the examination. As per the schedule, the MGKV will conduct the examination of first and third semester of the post graduation from March 27 to April 15 in two shifts from 8.30 to 11.30 am and from 1.30 to 4.30 pm. The examination duration will be of three hours. A total of 67,968 stuexaminations and to ensure its smooth conuct as many as 52 examination centres have been made in five districts, including Varanasi. To monitor the examination, the control room will be opened in the psychology department situated in the varsity premises. The varsity administration has sought IP address from all the affiliated colleges. The examination will be conducted under the vigil of CCTV cameras to ensure its free and fair conduct. The annual examination of the final year of graduation is scheduled to be conducted from April 13. This will be the last batch of annual examination and thereafter the semester examination will also be conducted at graduate level under the new National Education Policy (NEP).

Three unique genus of fungi discovered

Tn a major breakthrough, the Lresearchers at the (CAS) Botany, Banaras Hindu University (Botany, BHU), have discovered three unique genus of fungi named as Neoacervuloseptoria, Cercosporella and Neoramulariopsis that can be very important from a taxonomic point of view. This research work was published on March 16, 2023, in Mycological Progress, a very prestigious journal of the German Mycological Society, Germany. The research team led by Senior Assistant Professor Dr Raghvendra Singh of Department of Botany BHI prising Sanjeet Kumar Verma, Sanjay Yadav and Gargi Singh of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University and Assistant Professor Dr Prakash Kushwaha of Madhav Rao Sapre Government College, Patharia, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh, has got this

These fungi were obtained as parasites from the forests of Madhya Pradesh in December 2019 from a plant named Peristrophe bicalyculata. These fungi have been identified as a new genus. After a thorough study of this fungus in the laboratory, complete information about this new genus was gathered. This discovery has been done by using modern molecular biology and electron micro-

scopic techniques, which are considered to be the most suitable and important criteria for identifying microorganisms. According to researchers, the whole world is currently battling climate change and as per the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) Living Planet Report (LPR) 2022, between 1970 and 2018, 69 per cent of the monitored wildlife population around the world has been a steep decline. This discovery of BHU is considered helpful in the conservation of diverse species. This discovery is important for the whole world because hyaline fungi of this group have been found to have the (a drug for heart disease) on which research work is going on which indicates that this research work can play a very important role for scientists working in the field of biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

According to Dr Raghvendra Singh, "It is time to include fungi in global conservation goals." Global climate change is seriously affecting biodiversity around the world. According to scientific research, if dedicated efforts are not made for the identification and protection of biodiversity, then such a situation may also arise in front of mankind, where all types of species and species of organisms may become anonymous and extinct forever, he added.

Guv launches nutritional programme for children



Governor Anandiben Patel launching a nutritional programme in Varanasi on Thursday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

overnor Anandiben Patel launched a big Unutritional programme for children with multi-millet nutri-bar distribution at the modernised aanganwadi centre 'Nand Ghar' in Kashi Vidyapith block here on Thursday. Chairperson of Hindustan Zinc Ltd and Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Ltd, Priya Agarwal Hebbar, District Magistrate S Rajalingam and Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal were also present. Under this pilot launch, Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF) will distribute the nutri-bar targeting almost 50,000 children daily Anganwadi centres Nand Ghars across three focus blocks of Varanasi-Sewapuri, Arajiline and Kashi Vidyapith. With this, AAF aims to bring a positive nutrition impact by addressing malnutrition concerns among children aged three-six years in UP. As a part of its thematic intervention on right nourishment, Nand Ghar, the flagship social impact project of AAF working towards child and women development, collaborated with Indian Institute of Millet Research (Nutri-hub, IIMR) through Troo Good. Speaking about this unique initiative, the Governor said, "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared 2023 as International Year of Millets, our government's efforts have been to signify the importance of millet in developing nutritional healthy diet for every growing child and women. Such initiatives will not only address the importance of millet, but also help to cure several malnutrition related diseases, thus

creating a positive impact on the community. It's good to see cause-oriented organisations such as Vedanta and AAF aid holistic nourishment of children by including millets. I also appreciate the efforts of Varanasi administration for smooth execution of this intervention." Priya Agarwal Hebbar said, "Vedanta's vision to achieve zero hunger aligns with Government's Poshan Abhiyan towards eliminating hunger and malnutrition from our country. Through this unique initiative, we aim to address the nutritional concerns among children, especially in the rural parts of India. These protein-dense millet bars are thoughtfully curated for children keeping in mind their ritional needs, palate and thankful to IIMR and Government of Uttar Pradesh in helping us commence this initiative as a small step towards creating a national move-

The recent Union Budget designated IIMR as a Centre of Excellence for sharing millet-related best practices and technologies globally and the nutrition intervention has been supported by the premier institute. Dr B Dayakar Rao, Principal cientist, Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) commented, "It gives me immense pride to be on board for community initiatives like this that makes a difference at the grassroots levels. Millet as a smart food must be introduced to the rural landscape about its nutritional value and health benefits, including information on calorific content. I believe, millets are an important solution in the collective march towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Devotees throng Saubhagya Gauri temple

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Hundreds of devotees thronged Saubhagya Gauri temple at Satyanarayan temple near Gyanvapi mosque on the third day of Vasantik Navratri here on Friday. Besides, a rush of devotees was also seen at Chandraghanta Devi temple in Chowk. Besides, a rush of devotees was seen at Durga Mandir Saubhagya Gauri temple but Varanasi on Friday.



tradition, the rush should be at Devi on the third day of Vasantik Navratri in

thousands of devotees also reached Chandraghanta and Durgakund temples to offer prayers. Meanwhile, a good num-

ber of people also went to Vindhyachal in Mirzapur district, about 65 kilometres from here, to offer prayers at Maa Vindhyavasini Devi, using Roadways buses and rush was also seen at the old Durga Mandir at Ramnagar and Sheetla Mata temple at

Diseases related to eyes discussed

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The Varanasi optometry conference was organised at Jeevandeep Paramedical College in Bada Lalpur here by the Centre for Sight in association with the Optometry Department of the college on the occasion of World Optometry Day on Thursday.

The chief guest and senior eye surgeon Dr Anil Tiwari threw light on the role of optometrists in the society and appealed to the people to immediately consult the eye specialist if they face any problem in eyes and do not avoid it otherwise it could be serious.

An eye specialist in Pt Paramedical College, Dr Ashok



Deen Daval Upadhyay Government Hospital, Pandeypur, Dr Sunil Pandey discussed the diseases related to eyes and preventive measurements to avoid them. The manager of Jeevandeep

occasion. The organising secretary of

Kumar Singh, also spoke on the

Varanasi Optometry Conference Dr Nitesh Upadhyay discussed the objective of the conference and rising role of optometrists in the society. Ex-Additional Director, Health, Dr Anshu Singh, talked about the role of optometrists in hospitals of both public and private sectors. Principal of the college Dr OP Singh proposed the vote of thanks and distributed certificates to the participants. Anurag Pandey of Centre for Sight, Abhishek Kumar, Dr (Major) Santosh Verma, Dr Sameer Kumar and others were present on the occasion.

Seminar on diversity, pluralism & education in India PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

 $T_{
m year,\ the\ Education}^{
m o\ mark\ its\ golden\ jubilee}$ Department of Vasanta College for Women (VCW), affiliated to the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), in association with Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) organising a two-day national seminar on "Diversity, Pluralism and Education in India: Continuity, Challenges and the Road Ahead" under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav which was inaugurated on Friday. Prof AK Singh of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) while speaking as chief guest said that it is education which has kept

the humanity living. Prof PN Singh of BHU while speaking as the guest of honor, drew attention towards the high values of Indian culture and emphasised on their inclusion in education for strengthening the unity in Indian society. In his presidential speech, Dr Banwari Lal Natia from Northern Regional Committee of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) outlined the actual nature of education and said that education could unite the diversified Indian



Guests releasing souvenir of the national seminar being organised by Education Department of VCW.

society by awakening the selfrespect of teachers.

Principal of VCW Prof Alka Singh welcomed the guests and threw light on the educational and social relevance of the subject of the seminar. The seminar convener Dr Amrita Katvavani outlined the subject of the seminar.

The souvenir of the seminar was also released by the guests on the occasion. Organising secretary Prof Meenakshi Biswal conducted the inaugural session and head of the host department Prof Sujata Saha proposed the vote of thanks. Among those pre-

sent on the occasion were Prof SC Rai, Prof Arti Srivastava, Prof Ashish Srivastava and Prof Sunil Kumar Singh.

REPORT SUBMITTED

Varanasi suffered approximately 33 per cent crop loss due to heavy rainfall and hailstorm as per a report submitted by teams of SDMs constituted by District Magistrate S Rajalingam. The maximum loss was reported in Pindra Tehsil of the district. Meanwhile, the former state minister and president of Prayagraj Kshetra of Congress per cent crop losses in all three

Party Ajay Rai said that the party will oppose the assessment of the loss if it was made without visiting the fields and demanded adequate compensation to the affected farmers.

District Magistrate Rajalingam had constituted three teams under the leadership of sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) to make assessment of crop losses in their respective tehsil due to untimely heavy rainfall and hailstorm. The teams submitted their report to the DM.

As per report, the teams made assessment of about 33

tehsils but the heavy rainfall and hailstorm which had struck the district on March 19, affected the most in Pindra tehsil where the crop loss was assessed in 4697.72 hectare lands and a total of 23,372 farmers were affected.

Similarly, the teams reported the crop loss in 4235.20 hectare land in Rajatalab tehsil where a total of 21,176 farmers were affected while a total of 13,845 farmers were affected in Sadar tehsil under which the crop loss was assessed in 4179.11 hectare land due to untimely heavy rainfall and hailstorm. The district administration will forward the report to the state government so that the compensation could be given to the affected farmers for their crop losses. Meanwhile president of Prayagraj Kshetra of Congress Ajay Rai claimed that he along with party men visited the fields of farmers in Pindra tehsil where farmers had suffered huge loss and demanded an adequate compensation to the farmers for their crop loss due to heavy rainfall and hailstorm. If it came to knowledge that the assessment of crop losses was made without visiting the fields and holding talks to the affected farmers, it will be opposed, he threatened.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Inconsistent

ONDC is making a foray into the city transport sector but its very existence is problematic

pen Network Digital Commerce (ONDC) has entered the city transport sector by tying up with a Bengaluru-based ride-hailing company. The objective is to check the market dominance of aggregators like Uber and Ola. ONDC, a Governmentrun protocol on the lines of UPI, is also reportedly negotiating with more companies in the sector in several other cities. While well-intended, there are fundamental flaws in the idea of ONDC. When it was launched in September last year, it was claimed that it would check the monopoly of global e-commerce giants like Amazon and Walmart. "After UPI, another game changing idea to democratise commerce - ONDC soft launch today to select consumers, sellers and logistics providers. Get ready for a world of choice, convenience and transparency," Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal tweeted the day ONDC was launched. But isn't checking monopolistic practices the duty of the Competition



Commission of India (CCI)? The Competition Act, 2002, was passed by Parliament in 2002, to which the President accorded assent in January 2003. It was subsequently amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007. In accordance with the provisions of the Amendment Act, the Competition Commission of India and the Competition Appellate Tribunal were established. The CCI is now fully functional with a Chairperson and six members, according to the CCI's website. The provisions of the Competition Act relating to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position were notified on May 20, 2009.

"It is the statutory duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition,

promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants, in markets in India as provided in the Preamble as well as Section 18 of the Act," says the CCI website. The commission is also mandated to give its opinion on competition issues to government or statutory authority and to undertake competition advocacy for creating awareness of competition law, it adds. Against this backdrop, the very idea of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry setting up a body for the same purpose is duplication of work. Besides, it also militates against the principle Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated more than once: the government has no business to be in business. It is in pursuance of this principle that the Government has been privatising public sector undertakings. But, by launching ONDC, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry will be ensuring government interference in the economy — something that is not in tune with the Modi Government reformist agenda. On the face of it, ONDC's new forays may seem impressive but in reality these don't appear to be consistent with the newly emerging policy framework. Instead of zealously promoting ONDC, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry should focus on boosting manufacturing.



n in traditional dresses celebrate Zangtri as part of three-day Navreh (Kashmiri New Year) festival

Myanmar nightmare continues unabated



It's been more than two years since the coup, yet the low-intensity civil war raging on in our neighbouring country is set to last for a long time

have passed since the coup in Myanmar on February 1, 2021, which prevented the elected members of the National League for Democracy, which had won 396 seats out of 476 in the Lower House of Parliament in the country's November 2020 elections, from assuming office. The junta that perpetrated the coup arrested Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, NLDleader and iconic symbol of the country's struggle for democracy, and leaders of her party. It unleashed a vicious repression campaign.
The Government continues

to face growing countrywide resistance with murderous violence. Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 6, 2023, that, overall, the military's airstrikes against civilian locations increased by 141 per cent in the second year of its takeover, and its shelling of communities, including hospitals schools and places of worship, by over 100 per cent. During the same period, incidents in which homes and neighbourhoods were set on fire rose by 380 per percent. This led to an estimated 1,200 per cent increase in the number of homes destroyed. He further stated that reports continued to be received daily, particularly from the Sagaing region, north-west of Mandalay, of ongoing incidents, with soldiers reportedly moving from village to village, looting and setting fire to homes and farms.

Türk cited his UN colleagues as saying 39,000 structures had been burned in villages and towns by the military since the coup. Overall, credible sources verified that at least 2,947 civilians, including 244 children, had been massacred by the military and its affiliates during this period. More than one third of these confirmed deaths occurred in ilitary custody. The actual number of civilians killed is far higher. He further said that, besides those killed in military or police action, detainees across Myanmar had reported severe beatings; not effectively control the mock executions; suspension from ceilings without food or

water; electrocution; and acts of sexual violence as well as squalid detention conditions.

The question is, how long will Myanmar groan under the Tatmadaw's—as Myanmar's army is called-iron heel? Despite the savagery of the generals' repression, the country, to all appearances, is slipping out of their control.
Ranged against them is the
National Unity Government
(NUG) formed by some NLD leaders, activists and representatives of several insurgent ethnic organisations and minor parties, on April 16, 2021. Its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), was established on May 5, 2021. According to a report by Richard R Paddock in *The* New York Times of 6 June, 2022, it had a total strength of 60,000. As indicated by the latest reports, it now comprises 300 battalions with over 250,000 soldiers.

A report in Mizzima (A rmese multi-media news organization) on September 9, 2022, cites a brief by SAC-M, released on September 5, 2022, as saying that the military does country, and is incapable of governing it. According to



THE QUESTION IS, HOW LONG WILL MYANMAR GROAN UNDER THE TATMADAW'S MYANMAR'S ARMY IS CALLED — IRON HEEL?

the report, the National Unity Government (NUG) is the legitimate government of Myanmar and is at the centre of a democratic revolution shaped by organisations opposed to Myanmar's military junta. These organisations are the de facto authorities over more of Myanmar's population and territory than the junta, which has stable control over only 72 out of the country's 330 townships, which comes to only 17 per cent of Myanmar's land area, because many are small urban townships. In an article published on September 29, 2022, in The Interpreter, brought out daily by the Lowy Institute, an Australia-based independent think tank, Adam Simpson cites a report by the SAC-M, saying that the NUG and ethnic resistance organisations effectively controlled over 52 per cent of Myanmar's territoinated 17 per cent

The Tatmadaw suffered from low morale and desertion. The latter rate has fallen recently because of tough action to curb it. Tatmadaw's other weaknesses remain. Its weaponry is more suitable for

THE EDITOR

conventional warfare than anti-guerrilla operations; its younger generation lacks combat experience. On the other hand, the People's Defence Force lacks numerical strength besides heavy artillery, tanks, and aircraft. This is essential for winning large battles in the

What seems likely in the foreseeable future is a stalemate, with the Junta controlling the capital Nay Pyi Taw and some other towns and strips of territory and the NUG and the armed forces of the ethnic minorities controlling the rest. The Junta is being attacked even in townships where the Tatmadaw is present, and may lose control over them. That it is apprehensive and struggling to hold on to these is clear from the imposition of martial law in 37 newly formed towns on February 2 and three more on ry. Twenty-three per cent were February 22, bringing the total contested and the junta dom- number of townships under martial law to 50 out of 330. Even these moves may not help. It is difficult to reverse the flow when the tide turns against you.

> (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

Are you contributing to electronic waste?



E-waste is a growing concern not only in India but also globally. With the launch of newer devices, our greed leads us to buy the latest ones

hristian Lous Lange says "technology is an ✓effective servant but a dangerous master". There is no denying everyone is addicted to technology in some way or another. Everyone has seen the transition from a wired telephone to the first cell phones followed by the latest, lighter and better version of cell phones. However, have we ever thought that today's technology will be obsolete someday? Today, technology has affected almost every aspect from advancements in education, medicine or transport to easy access to socialization, food, healthcare and productivity.

Every year, big tech companies come up with new versions of their devices. This leads to the market to shift to its updated version. As a result, many individuals replace their phones or gadgets with new ones, causing a lot of E-waste. Today, almost 10 billion people have smartphones, and in 3-4 years without access to repair these devices will add to an enormous amount of e-waste that already exists.

Though buying latest gadgets keeps an individual



updated, in the long run their constant use will affect our planet's health severely. According to a research, India is the 3rd largest E-waste producer after China and the USA. E-waste or electronic waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the world. It includes discarded electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, notepads, computers, radios and televisions. Computer devices account for nearly 70% of ewaste, followed by the telecom sector, medical equipment and electrical equipment.

Unfortunately, these devices end up in landfills, where they release hazardous gases into the atmosphere. The toxic components so released affect human health in terms of skin irritation, lung infections, kidney problems, nausea and others. They also contribute to soil contamination, polluting the envi-

ronment and most impor- with the objective of conservwildlife. According to a recent study, E-waste has reached alarming levels with 5.3 billion phones thrown away every year. Since the last 5 years, waste has grown by 21% and is expected to reach 74.2 MT by 2030. If not recycled or disposed of properly, heavy metals in e-waste emit toxic substances causing seri-

ous environmental concern. At the individual level, there are several solutions that can help reduce e-waste such as considering repairing a smartphone instead of buying a new one or preferring to donate old devices such as laptops, computers or notepads to schools or charitable organisations that can find a use for the product. Educating high-school students about e-waste's harmful effects has a greater impact on stopping its spread. Adopting changes in technology such as cloud computing and the internet of things can even help with dematerialization. In India, many e-waste

recycling startups such as

Cashify, Attero recycling,

Namo E-waste, Binbag and

many more have come up

tantly harm and threat to ing resources by adopting economical and responsible disposal techniques of ewaste.

> These startups are working day and night to create opportunities to transfer waste into socially and industrially beneficial raw materials such as valuable metals, plastics and glass. They are using simple, cost-efficient and environmentally friendly technologies suitable for Indian conditions. As climate change effects grow, it becomes the responsibility of its citizens to help the planet and prevent e-waste issues. Also, with the 5G revolution, it is imperative to recycle old smartphones. It is important to understand that a difference can only be made at the individual level.

E-waste is a growing concern not only in India but also globally, as the moment electronic devices get introduced, an individual's greed leads them to buy the latest one while the old ones take space in the cupboard drawers. We need a safe channel for recycling obsolete equipment.

(The writer is a teacher at a reputed school in Delhi)

KANGAROOS HAVE A STRONG TAIL

Sir — Australians have come through a difficult phase and defeated Team India in their own den. This is a very rare occasion as we count on home wins in series after series. Team India struggled to tackle pace in the first two outings and succumbed to spin in the decider and won the series. The writing is on the wall in the ODI world cup this year. This is the second time India has lost a bilateral ODI series against Australia. And what's in common between their 3-2 loss in 2019 and the 2-1 defeat in this series is the fact that the Men in Blue were ahead on both occasions.

They led the 2019 series 2-0 before losing three in a row. Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid have a lot of work to do as they aim to regain the trophy later this year. For now, the Aussies will relish regaining the top spot in the ODI rankings. They will also fly back home with the ODI series trophy as a consolation after losing out on the Border-Gavaskar Trophy earlier in the trip. For Australia, the tail wagged, the spin did the trick and Aussie batsmen pulled up their socks to make a match of it.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

LEAST PAINFUL DEATH PENALTY? Sir — What is the most efficient method of death penalty enforcement? The Supreme Court sparked such a debate by asking the government to hold a discussion on the issue on Tuesday. However, this is a complicated issue because determining the method of capital punishment is considered the responsibility of the legislature rather than the judiciary. Perhaps therefore the Supreme Court has stated unequivocally that it will not issue an order addressing the method of applying the death penalty. However, this question is necessary to determine whether the current method of imposing a death sentence meets legal and constitutional requirements. The current hanging method was last upheld by the Supreme Court in 1983, but the issue must be revisited considering scientific and technological advances after evidence of human rights violations,

Blessing in disguise



Rease can prove blessings in Gaga-strengthen democracy. Rahul Gandhi was convicted in a defamation case by the Surat court and sentenced to two years' punishment. Bail was also granted to appeal in the upper court. Rahul Gandhi's conviction can strengthen Indian democracy. Just a few days ago Congress spokesperson also uttered unwanted words against Modi and had to approach the supreme court for bail. With Rahul Gandhi's conviction in the 2024 Parliament elections no unhealthy

we look at the situation in other countries around the world.

Whether the current hanging process is considered the least painful or any other method after considering all aspects—the principle of dignity of death is bound to be vindicated. If another method is found to be superior, the current method will be ruled unconstitutional. The revised method can then be ratified by the legislature. In today's era, when the discussion of direct encounters with criminals appears to be gaining traction in our country for a variety of reasons, it is expected that the apex court's initiative will make us more aware of justice criteria

Abhijit Roy | *Jamshedpur*

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

Sir — The US State Department releases its annual Human Rights Report every year. In those countries, human rights are violated indiscriminately. If the names of those countries are mentioned in this report even since then. This need is confirmed when will those countries accept those strong

language will be used and electioneering will be pleasant without filthy language. This will automatically strengthen the democratic struc-

ture of the country At present, there is pandemonium in both houses of the parliament due to undesirable utterances by Rahul on foreign land. The ruling party demands an apology from Rahul. It is expected that Rahul Gandhi will learn a lesson from this conviction. This is the first time that Rahul has been convicted for the first time, but he is habitual of using undesirable and unwanted language. In the last election, his slogan "Chowkidar chor hai" became very famous and was directed at Modi. In the last Parliament elections, he had to apologise before the supreme court for misinterpretation of supreme court orders. Let us hope that Rahul Gandhi's conviction may prove a blessing in disguise to strengthen democracy in India.

Yash Pal Ralhan I Jalandhar

allegations? They will reject outright and say that America has no right to interfere in our internal affairs. As India will now bluntly tell the US State Department. Because in the just-released report, it has been said for India that there are 'cases of human rights abuses and people from minority communities, critics of the government and journalists are targeted.

In Monday's report, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was closely monitoring developments in India "including increasing human rights abuses in the country" in the presence of Foreign Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. There is no need to look for distant events. A day after the publication of this report, Kannada actor Chetan Kumar was arrested for a tweet criticising a Hindu nationalist ideology. Therefore, the US State Department's allegation has some substance

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

NOW THE GOVT DECIDES WHAT WE EAT

Unlike the days of yore, Govts need to incentivise crops which suit modern life



n the early human civilisations, it was geography and weather that decided what crops were to be grown in any region. The same crop was consumed by the people of that area. Exports were tough and risky. But, in modern civilisation, Governments directly or indirectly control the food consumed.

Government subsidies are offered in various ways. It can be direct transfers to farmers by cash transfer (DBT) or by providing them with subsidized electricity, water, diesel, pesticides, fertilizer etc. Subsidies have also been provided in the form of MSP (minimum selling price) for certain agricultural products. Subsidies given to small and big enterprises are to set up export-oriented units or food processing units, cold storages, warehouses, or to set up SEZs or food parks to enhance the production of a particular cereal crop, fruit, vegetable, fish, meat products or certain packed products/processed food (dairy, apiculture) etc. By giving subsidies to farmers, the government incentivizes farmers to grow a particular crop, which can become a mass consumption item as government subsidies make it really cheap to produce and reduce the price of the products, and these crops when subsidized can change the dietary habits of not only millions but billions of people. A remarkable example of such action is the USA subsidizing corn and corn-related products which have flooded not only



the American market but also the world market with products like corn flour, cornstarch, corn syrup etc. Another remarkable example is from India. Government subsidy on rice and sugarcane has made India one of the largest producers of this agricultural produce. It has also made India one of the biggest exporters of these both commodities and flooding not only the Indian market but also the world market with it. Also, the Indian government gives rice and sugar subsidised to public distribution centres.

Well, there is nothing wrong in giving incentives to farmers to produce more to get good rates for their produce, but in the case of India, the biggest problem that we are facing is, that both these crops are highly water-intensive crops and a country of 1.4 billion is already facing a lot of trouble with its groundwater and water irrigation. Exporting these crops is like exporting water from the country. Rice cultivation also produces a large amount of methane, which is a harmful greenhouse gas (GHG). Another problem is that both these crops are high in carbohydrates and combined with an unhealthy lifestyle can lead to diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and other heart-related issues. Governments across the world should, before incentivising a certain crop, consider that incentivizing one crop can really impact the consumption patterns of the masses. It can have a detrimental effect on the health of millions of people.

Another remarkable example is from the industrialization period in Europe and America. Potatoes were made a mass-consumed vegetable as the labour working in the factories needed high calories and carbohydrates to function in the long shifts of the factories. This dietary habit continued even after the industrialization era ended. For the generations after that, potatoes still remained the go-to vegetable as it was a cheap vegetable and people ate it in the past, hence the generations copied the same eating habits even after changes in working and lifestyle.

Today's lifestyle requires less physical work and more mental effort, which requires crops and dietary habit changes. This change can benefit generations to come. For example, eyesight weakness and malnutrition are common problems children face these days. To curtail these problems vital vitamins like vitamin A and C-rich fruits and vegetables can be incentivized by the government. Less water-intensive cereals like Bajra, Jau, and Ragi can be incentivized to become part of the daily meal plan. The year 2023 has been declared the millet international year by the United Nations. This is "as it consumes 70% less water than rice and needs 40% less energy in processing and is climate-friendly and environmentally friendly."

Empower 'Divyangs' with skills, inclusion



There is no dearth of opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, provided they are equipped with the right set of skills. The Govt is working in this direction



ivyangjan or persons with disabilities (PwDs) are a sig-nificant social group but are rarely provided with the right kind of opportunities, skills and platforms to showcase their talent and productive potential. It is unfortunately presumed that PwDs cannot make any meaningful contributions to our economy's growth, which is wrong. People with disabilities have immense potential to contribute significantly to the economy but they need skills that are best suited to them. It is an irony that PwDs, who account for more than 2 per cent of our total population, have not been allowed to be a part of mainstream discourse and pursuits aimed at empowerment through

Unfortunately, the employability rate for PwDs is very low. It is estimated that only 36 per cent of India's 26 million PWDs are working. As per a report by the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on PWDs, nearly 64 per cent of persons with disabilities in India don't have jobs. More disabled men than women have jobs. As per an assessment of market intelligence, Unearth Insight, only 34 lakh out of almost 3 crore PwDs are employed but 1.3 crores are employable. Most of them are employed in organised and unorganised sectors, government entities or selfemployed. It is therefore necessary to ensure that most PwDs get gainful jobs but

In order to ensure that persons with disabilities lead a dignified life independently, they must be provided with highquality education. This is so that they have the freedom to choose their careers and have equal employment opportunities. There are several examples where Divyang people have achieved impressive feats in many fields thanks to their indomitable courage, talent and determination. If provided with the right environment, opportunities and skills, they can excel in every field. Education, in particular skillbased education, is the key to empower-



AS PER A REPORT BY THE UNION MINISTRY OF **STATISTICS PROGRAMME** IMPLEMENTATION ON PwDs, **NEARLY 64** PER CENT OF THEM DON'T HAVE JOBS. MORE DISABLED MEN THAN WOMEN HAVE JOBS

(The writer is a co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner with the National Skill Development

ment for everyone, including those with disabilities.

There is no dearth of jobs for PwDs, provided they are equipped with the right soft and practical skills. Some of the most valuable soft job skills for adults with disabilities that employers look for: attention to detail; communication skills; conflict management skills; problem-solving skills; teamwork skills; time management skills; and enrichment and life skills. Similarly, some hard job skills for PwDs include accounting, engineering, technical writing, computer-related jobs, healthcare, career counseling, customer service, insurance agent, massage therapist, telemarketer, photographer in a wheelchair, desktop publisher, graphic designer, web bank teller, receptionleveloper. ist, financial analyst, landscaper or groundskeeper.

National Education Policy 2020 also underlines the importance of enabling arrangements in providing equal opportunities for quality education for children with disabilities. The conversion of NCERT textbooks for Classes I to VI into Indian Sign Language for hearing-impaired children is complete. It is a crucial initiative to nclude hearing-impaired students in mainstream education. It is heartening indeed to note that the Government is taking several steps to empower Divyangjan. Inculcating self-confidence among Divyangjan is very important to empower them for which they need skills. There are talents and abilities in people with disabilities; in some cases, these are greater than those found in normal people. Inclusive growth, development and confidence must encompass PwD aspirations.

It is worth noting that the

Government enacted the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, employable or gainful skills. The 2016, which came into effect on April 19, 2017. It provides for 4 per cent reservation in government jobs for disabilities. The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, Accessible India Campaign, was launched by the Central Government on December 3, 2015. It provides universal accessibility for persons with disabilities so that they can live a mean-ingful life with dignity. Public buildings, transport systems and information and communication technology are included in this campaign. Keeping in view the problems related to accessibility faced by the masses, a mobile app has been developed to address accessibility problems in a quick and systematic manner.

The Government has also set up the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) to promote hearingimpaired persons' empowerment and to create sign language in the country. The institute, among other things, is continuously preparing sign language dictionaries that have so far included more than 10,000 words. The Government is also implementing a Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID) project to create a National Database for Persons with Disabilities. So far, over 84 lakh UDID cards have been prepared in 713 districts of all states and Union Territories.

The Disability Sports Centre is being established at Gwalior and the National Institute of Mental Health and Rehabilitation at Sehore, both Madhya Pradesh. Divya Kala Shakti is organised to showcase Divyang youngsters and children's talent and skills. However, they need a dedicated

process of skilling and creating job opportunities for crores of youth through Skill India Mission and Kaushal Rozgar Kendra cannot exclude PwDs. Their needs require a specific and targeted approach.

We have the Skill Council for Persons with Disability (SCPwD) as a national body to fulfill the mission of mainstreaming PwDs through skill training to enable them to earn a livelihood and lead a life of dignity in the mainstream society and in turn contribute to the growing economy of the country. Skill training is also imparted at accredited training centres through trained and certified trainers. Trainers are trained on NSOC-approved job roles aligned to a specific disability. Trainers are also certified in disability orientation and sensitisation.

As of now, we haven't been inclusive in our approach to skilling people in any way. A few sectors' artisans received some attention, while many classes of artisans such as carpenters, iron smiths, sculptors, masons and others that are an integral part of society have been adapting to the changing times to fulfil; the needs of society that were ignored.

PwDs were rarely discussed in relation to their skill set. Empowering every section of society is essential to our country's development journey. I totally agree with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's argument that they should get easy loans, skilling, technical support, digital empowerment, brand promotion, marketing and raw material. Development of traditional artisans and craftsmen while preserving their rich tradition must include PWDs.

Innovative approaches are galvanising livestock economy

A conclave in Hyderabad recently brought more than 100 startups, 50 CII members and the fast-growing livestock sector together

The livestock sector, besides contributing to the national economy, plays a key role in providing livelihood to 80 million rural households and is growing at a high and consistent rate in the country, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.93 per cent between 2014-15 to 2020-21 (at constant prices), which is much higher than the

general agriculture sector. India currently ranks third in unicorns and has a thriving startup ecosystem. It is estimated that 15 per cent of the world's agri-tech startups are based here. Modern technical breakthroughs have impacted almost every component of India's dairy and livestock value chain. This is due to Government initiatives to encourage investments, ease of



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Husbandry & Dairying)

(The writer is the Director of Rathi Public Schools)

Animal husbandry and dairying have more than 700 startups registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. This proves that there is more room for technology deployment and monetisation of interventions in the related sectors. Startup conclave A recent startup conclave

doing business and innovation.

in Hyderabad on February 28 included showcasing of a 100 select startups, a pitch fest, a buyer-seller meet, and a workshop for startups to train the early-stage startups operating in the animal husbandry and dairying sector in pitching, building the main business pillars, and their story of impact. Beside more than 100 startups, 50 members from the Confederation of Indian Industry also participated in the event, searching for creative solutions to the key issues facing the livestock sector. Startups' exhibition

Startups showcased their goods and innovations, including cosmetics made of camel milk and donkey milk (they offer a mind-boggling rate of Rs 1,200 per kg of donkey milk to the owners of donkey farms), building products and panels made of cow dung, innovations in animal feed and insect feed, platforms for online livestock trade, platforms that connect farmers with embedded digital finance options, new yoghurt flavours, breed improvement technology for cattle, intelligent dairy automation solutions, and cold chain solutions. Startups benefited greatly from the expo as

it gave them access to investors, dairy cooperatives, and government partners.

Pitch fest & shoring capacity A special pitching event with a panel of investors, including venture capitalists and angel investors, was organised for 10 startups. With innovative products and services, the startups represent the animal husbandry and dairy industries. These products and services include artificial insemination equipment, cattle reproduction solutions, traceability, heat detection, frozen semen thawing, veterinary care, nanotechnology, polymer chemistry, vaccines, and diagnostics, among others.

A concurrent workshop was held for early-stage startups to guide them in the art of pitching and developing

primary business pillars/story of impact, problem-solving, and government-e-marketplace. The speakers delved into investor psychology and expectations to help the audience understand what is required to have the highest chance of acquiring investment from a venture capital fund and PE and angel investors.

On the finer elements of pitching, term sheet preparation, legal rights, value, etc., the experts gave enlightening advice. The buyer-seller meeting was a fascinating session of the conclave that drew enthusiastic involvement from both sides. Of the prominent dairy cooperatives and enterprises participating in the event, ten start-ups delivered a sales pitch to market their

Technological advancements will lead to significant improvements in day-to-day operations and lower business costs. The Government employs numerous cutting-edge breeding techniques in the animal husbandry industry to maximise local bovine herd production. Startups are crucial for making such a system self-

sustaining. The growth of startups has improved this ecosystem's development, organisation, and resilience, mostly to the benefit of its most significant stakeholder—the Indian farmers-who make up the agriculture sector, which includes the livestock industry and forms the backbone of the

nation's economy. Innovative approaches to

the problems of animal health, online marketplaces, improved supply chains, products with value-added, mobile apps, drones, and other investments are not only empowering producers or entrepreneurs but also improving the market, making resources more available, preventing waste, maximising profits, creating scalable businesses, and removing bottlenecks. The support that the

Government gives to startups shows the importance and impact of startups in the Indian economy. The livestock industry in India is poised to grow and will continue to be crucial in advancing our Hon'ble Prime Minister's goal of building an Aatmanirbhar (self-sufficient) India.

Rahul's case echoes in UN



SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW **DELHI/UNITED NATIONS**

Averdict sentencing Congress Aleader Rahul Gandhi to jail for two years echoed in the United Nations (UN) and it said the international body was aware

When asked whether UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres was "worried about democracy" in India, Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for Secretary General, said late on Thursday, "I can say we're aware of the reports regarding the case of Rahul Gandhi. We understand that his party does plan to appeal the decision. That's as much as I can say on that at this stage.

Rahul was sentenced to two years in jail on Thursday by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case over his

'Modi surname" remark. He took to Twitter to give his initial reaction by quoting Mahatma Gandhi in Hindi "My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God, non-violence, the means to get it. - Mahatma Gandhi,"

String of initiatives launched to | Houses adjourned eliminate TB by 2025 in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW

Asserting that "it's difficult to accomplish new outcomes with old approaches," Prime Minister Narendra Modi on World TB Day on Friday launched a string of innovative initiatives like TB-Mukt Panchayat, official pan-India rollout of a shorter TB Preventive sserting that "it's difficult to rollout of a shorter TB Preventive Treatment and Family-centric care model for TB.

He said this would help India achieve TB elimination target by 2025, five years ahead of the global stipulated time. The Prime Minister said

the new initiatives to fight against the bacterial infection is in addition to a multi-pronged approach being already followed, including measures to enhance nutrition, increase people's participation, treatment innovation, integration of technologies and disease prevention through programmes like Fit India, Yoga and Khelo

"These could become the



he said.

Under 'TB Mukt Panchayat Abhiyan' members of the local bodies are sensitised and trained about the disease, with them aiding the government's implementation of the programme and achieving TB free status while the nation-wide rollout of a 3-month preventive treatment for those at risk of developing TB aims to reduce the course of treatment from the previous six months and replace the daily pills with a once-aweek medicine regimen.

Stating that 80 per cent of TB medicines are made in India, Modi lauded the role the country by people, including children of 10 to 12 years of age. Financial help to a TB patient under the programme has reached up to one thousand crore rupees. 'This addresses the chal-

lenge of nutrition for TB patients along with the gov-ernment's direct benefit transfer scheme started for TB patients in 2018. Approximately Rs 2,000 crore have been directly transferred into their bank accounts for their treatment, with 75 lakh TB patients benefiting from this. "Ni-kshay Mitras have now become a new source of energy for all TB patients," he said.

The Prime Minister also drew the world's attention to the integration of technology in the programme, with the Ni-kshay portal that can track all those with an active infection. He also said that ICMR has developed a new method for sub-national disease surveillance that has made India, apart from the WHO, the only country to have this kind of model.

again amid uproar



The deadlock to the Parliament's second-leg of the Budget session is unlikely to be found before the end of the second-leg of the Budget session on April 6 as both the Houses were again adjourned for the day amidst heavy uproar even while the Lok Sabha managed to pass the Finance Bill with the Opposition members trooping into the well and shouting slogans "Modi-Adani Bhai Bhai".

The battle-lines have turned sharper as the Congress member from Waynad, Kerala, Rahul Gandhi has been disqualified from his Lok Sabha membership following his conviction by a Surat court.

Slogans like "Modi-Adani Bhai Bhai" and "We want JPC" raised by the opposition when the house resumed its proceedings at 1200 after being

adjourned in the morning.
The Finance Bill, 2023 tabled by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Lok Sabha saw its passage amid heavy noise by Opposition MPs demanding a JPC inquiry into the Adani Group issue. The ruling party members too sought apology from Rahul for his comments against the Indian democracy

Delhi Police registers case in violence at Indian High Commission in London

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Taking note of the incidents of violence targeting the Indian High Commission in London on Sunday last, the Dollar Police has a visit of the police of the incidents of the police of the incidents of the police of the incidents of the police of th Delhi Police has registered a case in connection with the

The case was registered by the special cell under the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act as it involves unlawful activities carried out by certain people holding Indian nationality abroad, a senior police officer said here on Friday.

It was done after the

Ministry of Home Affairs directed the Delhi Police to take appropriate legal action on the receipt of a report from the Ministry of External Affairs over the incident at the Indian High Commission March 19.



Last Sunday, the tricolour flying atop the Indian High Commission in London was grabbed at by a group of protesters waving separatist Khalistani flags and chanting pro-Khalistani slogans, leading to an arrest related to the violent disorder.

Officials from the mission said "attempted but failed" attack had been foiled and that the tricolour was now flying "grander". The Metropolitan Police said two members of security staff sustained minor injuries which did not require hospital treatment. An investigation has been launched.

India on last Sunday night summoned the British deputy high commissioner and demanded an explanation over the complete "absence of security". In a strongly-worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said India finds "unacceptable" the indifference of the UK govern-ment to the security of Indian diplomatic premises and personnel in the UK.

'Financial help being provided to States, UTs for promotion of film tourism

The Ministry of Tourism issued guidelines in 2012 for extending financial support to state governments and Union territory administrations for promotion of film tourism, and a financial assistance of up to Rs 2 lakh per film is provided under it, the government has informed a parliamentary panel.

This was mentioned in a report on "Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observatio ns of the Committee contained in its Three Hundred Twenty Sixth Report on the subject 'Role of Indian Missions Globally for the growth of Tourism in India" tabled in Lok Sabha on Friday.

The committee in its report has also said that it had observed that many of the tourist spots and places of religious importance are located near the national highways

yet the state of the last-mile connectivity from the national highways to the tourist spot "leaves much to be desired". "The Committee feels that

and said it is a big strength to the world's fight against TB. "I

wish that fruits of each and

every endeavour of India, cam-

paign of India, innovation of

India reach to the whole

world...as we are committed

towards the Global Good!," he

said at an event organised by the Union Health Ministry along

with the Stop TB Partnership

ed people's participation for

the great work that India has

done in the fight against

Tuberculosis. After the gov-

ernment's appeal, about 10 lakh

TB patients were adopted across

The Prime Minister credit-

organisation..

good quality last-mile connectivity is important to ensure a positive experience for tourists visiting a tourist destination in the country, which in turn, helps attract more tourists through word-ofmouth publicity.

"The Committee therefore recommends that the ministry may examine the state/quality of last mile connectivity roads at all such tourist spots near the National Highways at the earliest and ensure their construction and maintenance with the concerned Ministries/agencies to make the tourist places more accessible to tourists, both domestic and international, which will invariably increase the number of tourists visiting such places," the panel had

Rahul may have to vacate bungalow unless higher court stays conviction, say experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday stood disqualified from contesting Lok Sabha and Assembly elections for eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction, an expert on electoral laws said.

Now following his disqualification as an MP, Rahul Gandhi may have to vacate his official bungalow in Lutyens' Delhi within a month if he does not get relief from a higher court in the criminal defamation case, an official said on Friday. Rahul Gandhi was allotted the 12, Tughlaq Lane bungalow after his election as a Lok Sabha MP in

"As he has been disquali-fied from Lok Sabha, he is not entitled to a government accommodation. According to rules, he will have to vacate his official bungalow within a month since the date of dis-

qualification order," an official of the Union Housing and rban Affairs Ministry said. Congress general secre-

tary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had to vacate her official Lodhi Estate bungalow in July 2020 as she was no longer eligible for it after her security cover had been downgraded.

This was Rahul Gandhi's fourth Lok Sabha term. First elected to Lok Sabha in 2004 from Amethi, he represented that constituency for two more terms. In 2019, he lost the Amethi seat to Smriti Irani but managed to win

Incidentally, the Congress-led UPA government, in 2013, had attempted to circumvent a Supreme Court ruling to set aside an RP Act provision under which a person sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more shall be disqualified "from the date of such conviction" and remain disqualified for another six years after serving time. Rahul Gandhi himself had opposed the ordinance at that time and tore the ordinance in a press conference as a token

Rahul Gandhi is the second member of Lok Sabha, after Lakshadweep MP P P Mohammed Faisal of the Nationalist Congress Party, to have been disqualified in the recent past following conviction. The Kavaratti sessions court in Lakshadweep had sentenced four persons, including Mohammed Faizal to 10 years in jail after they were found guilty in an attempt-to-murder case.

Def Min signs contract with BEL for 'Project Himshakti' PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Manufactured)} cat

In a boost to indigenous production of weapon systems, Ministry of Defence on Friday signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Hyderabad for procurement of two Integrated Electronic Warfare Systems 'Project Himshakti' at an overall cost of approximately Rs 3,000 crore.

tract, officials said here the project is under the Buy {Indian -(Indigenously Designed Developed and tive of the government.

Giving details of the con-

Manufactured)} category comprising contemporary and

'Project Himshakti' will encourage participation of Indian electronics and associated industries, including MSMEs, which are sub vendors of the BEL. It will generate employment of approximately three lakh man-days over a period of two years. The project is a significant leap forward in developing indigenous capabilities making the country 'Aatmanirbhar', in consonance with the Make-in-India initia-

niche technologies.

released during

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on ☐ Friday directed that all convicts and undertrial prisoners, who were released during the COVID-19 pandemic in a move to decongest jails, to surrender within 15 days. A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar said undertrial prisoners, who were released on emergency bail during the pandemic, can move for regular bail before competent courts after their surrender.

SC directs convicts | US pick for WB, Banga, cancels India meetings after Covid+ test Covid emergency to surrender in 15 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW

Indian origin US nominee for World Bank president Ajay Banga, scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here has tested positive for Covid-19. Hence, his meetings to take place on March 23 and 24 were cancelled.

According to a Finance Ministry statement, Banga's meeting with Nirmala Sitharaman would not happen as he is in quarantine.

During routine testing, Ajay Banga tested positive for COVID-19 but remains asymp-



guidelines, he is quarantining in isolation," the statement said.

Besides meeting with the Union finance minister, Banga was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and top officials during his two-day

Banga's New Delhi visit is the final stop on his three-week global tour that began in Africa before progressing to Europe, Latin America, and Asia to drum up support for his candidature for the World Bank's top

statement on Wednesday, the US Treasury Department had said, "While in India, Banga will meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman and the Minister of External Affairs S

Jaishankar. These discussions will focus on India's development priorities, the World Bank, and global economic development challenges," it said.

Banga's New Delhi visit was the final stop on his three-week global tour that began in Africa before progressing to Europe, Latin America, and Asia to drum up support for his candidature for the World Bank's top

India endorsed Banga's candidacy soon after his nomination was announced in February. Since then, a diverse coalition of governments has expressed their support for Banga, including Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom.

During his global listening tour, Banga met with senior government officials, stakeholders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and civil society.

Along the way, he built continuous momentum for his can-

didacy, gaining the support of advocates, academics, development experts, executives, Nobel Laureates, and former government officials.

If elected to serve, Banga will draw from his experience living and working in emerging markets and his expertise in forging public-private partnerships to mobilise investments and action to confront long standing chal-

That includes his efforts at Mastercard to successfully bring 500 million previously unbanked people into the digital economy, as well as its support for 50 million small businesses.

NIA chargesheets gangsters, criminals linked with pro-Khalistani terror outfits

PNS NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday filed a chargesheet against notorious gangsters/criminals, Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar, along with 12 others having links with the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and several other pro-Khalistani terrorist outfits, in the second of the three terror-gangster nexus cases it is investigating. The latest action takes the total number of accused chargesheeted by the NIA so far in these cases to 26.

The chargesheet has exposed the linkages between members of criminal syndicates and drug smugglers with BKI and pro-khalistani outfits.

Lawrence Bishnoi, in custody since 2015, has been operating his terror-crime syndicate from jails in different States, along with Canada-based Goldy Brar, who is an accused in the killing of Pradeep Kumar, a Dera Sacha Sauda follower, in Faridkot in November 2022.



The Lawrence Bishnoi terror-crime-extortion syndicate was also responsible for providing killers for the RPG attack case on Punjab State Intelligence HQs (headquarters) at Mohali, which was carried out on directions of Harwinder Singh alia Rinda, a Pakistan-based BKI terrorist, NIA investigations

have revealed, the NIA alleged. Goldy Brar was found to have direct links with Lakhbir Singh alias Landa, another BKI operative working closely with Rinda, as revealed in NIA inves-

tigations so far, it said. Lakhbir Singh is also an accused in the Mohali RPG attack, as well as the December 2022 RPG (rocket propelled grenade) attack on Police Station Sirhali in Tarn Taran

Investigations against Landa and three others are continuing. "All the 14 accused have been charged with criminal conspiracy to unleash a wave of terror and carry out targeted killings of well-known social and religious leaders, movie stars, singers and businessmen,"

the NIA said in a statement. Besides having links with conspirators in Pakistan, the accused were also in contact with pro-Khalistani elements based in Canada, Nepal and other countries, NIA investigations have further revealed.

NIA has seized a huge cache of nine illegal and sophisticated weapons, 14 magazines, 298 rounds of ammunition and 183 digital devices and other incriminating material in raids across 74 locations in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Chandigarh and Delhi in the case.

ED attaches ₹252.17 cr property in PMLA case

The Entorcement Directorate (ED) has Enforcement attached immovable property in the form of commercial asset Ambience Tower at Shalimar Bagh locality here worth Rs 252.17 crore belonging to Ambience Towers Pvt. Ltd, a company of Ambience Group, promoted by Raj Singh Gehlot in connection with a money laundering investigation.

The ED initiated Investigation on the basis of an FIR and subsequent chargesheet filed by Anti-Corruption Bureau, Jammu and Kashmir under the Provisions of Ranbir Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Samvat Act.

PMLA investigation revealed that Aman Hospitality Pvt. Ltd through its promoter director Raj Singh Gehlot was sanctioned a term loan facility of Rs 810



crore by a consortium of Banks led by J&K Bank to part finance its hotel project in Shahdara, Delhi.

The loan amount later turned into a non-performing asset (NPA).

"During investigation, it was revealed that Raj Singh Gehlot had diverted loan funds and layered the same through a web of bank accounts belonging to his relatives and Ambience Group dated September 27, 2021 companies. In addition to and November 30, 2022.

diversion of funds, it was also found that Raj Singh Gehlot had diverted materials to the other project sites of Ambience Group," the ED said in a statement.

In line with the probe findings, Gehlot was arrested on July 28, 2021. His wife, Sheela Gehlot and other directors of Ambience Group Companies, Amit Gehlot, Shamsher Singh and Pawan Singh were arraigned as accused in the Prosecution Complaints (chargesheets in police parlance) filed by the

The ED has already filed Prosecution Complaints dated September 24, 2021 and November 17, 2022 in the present case before the PMLA Court, Patiala House Courts here for commission of

money laundering offences.
The PMLA court took cognizance through its order

Ayush Min, Def Min ink pact to integrate Ayurveda in ECHS Polyclinics



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Union Ministry of Ayush and Department of exservicemen Welfare/ECHS under Union Ministry of Defence on Friday inked a pact to integrate Ayurveda in ECHS Polyclinics as an OPD service for five years period. These will be established at 10 polyclinics based at Ambala, Mysore, Ranchi, Nagpur, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar, Chennai, Meerut, Danapur,

and Allepey (Alappuzha).

Ayurveda centres are already in place in 37 cantonment Hospitals, 12 military hospitals of AFMC and Ayurveda OPD in AH R&R, respective polyclinics.

AF Hospital Hindan and five ECHS polyclinics. The MoU was signed by Dr Manoj Nesari, Adviser (Ayurveda) on behalf of the Ayush Ministry and Maj Gen NR Indurkar, Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme on behalf of the Defence Ministry. According to this MoU, Ayush Ministry will provide

technical guidance from time to time and will empanel Ayurveda doctors and pharmacists for their engagement and provide list of essential Ayurveda medicines and any other technical support as may be required while the Defence Ministry will provide logistic and locations in the

AFSPA extended in parts of Arunachal, Nagaland

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Friday extended for six months the "disturbed area" status in parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.

According to two separate notifications, the decisions have been taken after review of the law-and-order situation in both the states. The AFSPA gives armed forces personnel, operating in disturbed areas, sweeping powers to search, arrest, and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "maintenance of public order".

The home ministry said the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the AFSPA 1958 (28 of 1958) had declared the Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai and Mahadevpur police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering the state of Assam as 'disturbed area' on September 30, 2022.

One more police station of the notifications said.



area has been brought under the ambit of the AFSPA through the fresh notification.

"And whereas a further review of the law and order situation in the state of Arunachal Pradesh has been undertaken. Now, therefore, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chowkham police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering the state of Assam, are declared as 'disturbed area under Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 for a period of six months with effect from April 1, 2023, unless withdrawn earlier," one

the home ministry said the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the AFSPA, 1958 (28 of 1958) had declared nine districts and 16 police stations in four other districts of Nagaland as 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from October 1, 2022. It said, now, the disturbed area status will be applicable in eight districts and 21 police stations areas falling under five other districts.

"And whereas a further review of the law and order situation in the state of Nagaland has been undertaken. Now, therefore, Dimapur, Niuland, Chumoukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek and Peren districts in Nagaland and the areas in Nagaland falling within the jurisdiction of i) Khuzama, Kohima North, Kohima South, Zubza and Kezocha police stations in Kohima District; ii) Mangkolemba, Mokokchung-I, Longtho, Tuli, Longchem and Anaki 'C' police stations in Mokokchung District... are declared as 'disturbed area," the

RAHUL'S DISQUALIFICATION FROM LS Opp leaders main target in Modi's new India: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Days after calling Rahul Gandhi the "biggest asset" and "biggest TRP" of the BJP, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday took a uturn this time slamming the Narendra Modi Government for getting the tallest Congress leader disqualified from the Lok Sabha in a defamation

Moments after Gandhi's disqualification from the House, Banerjee said the Opposition leaders were the main target of in the new India led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While Bengal Opposition parties—save the BJP — would not exhibit much of enthusiasm over Banerjee's statement saying she was more concerned about the rising popularity of "Under PM Modi's New

India, Opposition leaders have become the prime target of BJP," Banerjee who is also the president of Trinamool Congress wrote in her Twitter post. Condemning the kind of treatment meted out to the Congress leader she said



Banerjee speaks during a meeting, in

"Today, we have witnessed a new low for our constitutional democracy." Attacking the BJP government for pursuing double standards she said while on one side saffron leaders with criminal records were made ministers and on the other leaders of the opposition parties were made victims of political speeches. She said, "While BJP leaders with criminal antecedents are inducted into the cabinet, Opposition leaders are disqualified for their

Her nephew and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee wrote that "Democracy" in today's India sounded oxymoronic. Though

Gandhi issue he wrote, "Democratic India is an oxymoron now." TMC MP Shantanu Sen called it a "black day" wondering whether BR Ambedkar would have relished such a huge drop in Indian democratic standards

today.

"This is a Black day for the Indian democracy. Had the father of our Constitution BR Ambedkar been alive he would have literally cried," Sen said wondering "how a ruling party with such a brute majority in with such a brute majority in Parliament can stoop such low to script such a dirty game." Gandhi was disqualified from being a Member of Lok Sabha hours after he was sentenced to two years of imprisonment by a Surat court in a caste defama-

The Left too, hit out at BJP government for its "vindictive attitude" saying "plot to disqualify Gandhi was hatched divert attention from burning issues like corruption, unemployment" etc. Reacting sharply on issue senior counsel and CPI(M) MP Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said.

Cambodia mountain to be home to Indian tigers

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A technical committee comprising officials from the National Tiger Conservation of Authority (NTCA) and Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is on the job to advise their counterparts in Cambodia to help them execute dreams of bringing Indian big cats in their land under the world's first ambitious translational tiger programme conceived

last year.
On its part, Cambodia has already identified 90 acres of forest land at its Tatai wildlife sanctuary in the Cardamom Mountain to be the home to the Indian tigers whenever they

SP Yadav, Head of the NTCA told The Pioneer, "We have constituted a technical support group which is advising Cambodia to achieve certain levels of standards with respect to staffing, prey base, habitat and protection. Once these are achieved, further action will be taken."

He said hence it is too early to talk about the numbers of big cats proposed to be shifted to Cambodia. No tiger has been spotted in Cambodian forests for the last 15 years. The



last picture of a tiger was taken in the eastern highlands of Cambodia in 2007. The country is now committed to have the tigers, which is included in the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species, back to its

Though Yadav was non-committal when the translocation will happen, Cambodia is pinning hopes that the tigers may arrive by the year-end, as has also been stated by Suwanna Gauntlett, founder and CEO of Wildlife Alliance, as per reports.

Officials in the Union Environment Ministry said that before the Indian big cats lands on the foreign land, it is necessary that ground and field works be done to ensure they are safe and get the conducive environment to settle down properly to make the translocation successful in the long

4 yrs ordeal of 5 Indian sailors jailed in Iran ends

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

Tn an emotional homecoming, I five Indian sailors — who had been arrested, jailed, acquitted and grounded after they were stranded in Iran in June 2019, returned home on Friday after suffering four years of ordeal.

The five sailors — Aniket S. Yenpure (31), Mandar M. Worlikar (28), both of whom are from Mumbai, Pranav A. Tiwari (23) from Patna, Naveen M. Singh (30) from New Delhi and Thamizh R. Selvan (33) from Chennai — appeared over-whelmed as they bowed and touched the Indian soil after they arrived at the city airport from Iran by an Iran Air Tehran-Mumbai flight this afternoon.

The sailors were accorded a moving reception by their relatives and friends, who cheered vociferously, hugged and lifted them in the air and celebrated the quintet who shed tears of happiness."We have never been so happy as we are today. Nearly 45 months of nightmare has

ended today. We underwent lots of hardships like being arrested, thrown into jails there, fighting legal battles, getting acquitted and obtaining necessary permissions to fly back to India.

Finally we are back in a country to which we belong," Aniket Yenpure said. "For the next one month, we will rest and be with our families," Yenpure said. Naveen (New Delhi), Tiwari (Bihar) and Selvan (Tamil Nadu) will stay with Mumbai-based Yenpure and Worikar for the next few days, before returning to their home cities. Aniket thanked the Indian Embassy in Tehran which arranged for the emergency travel papers and air tickets for him and his fellow sailors and also a few Iranian lawyers who fought their case for more than six months and got them released from the jail and ensured their return to India. "The authorities in Iran

seized our passports and

Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC)-cum-

Seafarer's Identity document.

Water warriors to be honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

t least 50 water warriors At least 50 water waters and from across the States and various walks of life will be felicitated on March 29 at an event here for their works in water conservation, harvesting, rejuvenation, restoration of water bodies and water crisis management among others aimed to save the precious item.

At the Jal Prahar Samman Samaroh 2023, one water saviour each from states like Delhi, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Gujrat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Jharkhand, Punjab, Tripura, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana etc. and two water saviour each from Haryana, Karnataka, Uttarakhand have been selected for the honour, said a statement here.

Union Jal Shakti Minister, Gajendra Singh, Union Minister of state for Jal Shakti, Prahlad Patel and MPs Manoj Tiwari and Unmesh Patil will be present as chief guests on the

Along with them ambassadors of many countries including Netherland, Finland, Malta, Üzbekistan, Tajikistan will be present to grace the

Convenor of the ceremony, Anil Singh said that the National Water Mission, UNOPS, CWC are the participants of the programme and Jal Praharis include many schools, colleges, universities, district officials, non govt organisations The ceremony is being held under the joint aegis of Jal Shakti Ministry, Jal Jeevan Mission, Chief Operating officer of the programme, Ameya Sathe said, adding that that 11 water conservationist from Uttar Pradesh, 8 from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and 10 water conservationist from Maharashtra will be honoured.

India has 18 per cent of the world's population, but only 4 percent of its water resources, making it among the most

FROM PAGE 1

RAHUL DISQUALIFIED FROM LS

Priyanka Gandhi said her brother, the son of a martyred Prime Minister, was called "Mir Jafar" and insults were hurled at his family but he would not bow down as he belongs to a family whose members have nurtured democracy by its blood.

"Insulting the whole family and the shmiri Pandit community voi Parliament why we don't keep the name Nehru. But no judge gave you a sentence of two years. Did not disqualify you from the Parliament," she said.

Congress' top brass, including party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and former AICC chief Sonia Gandhi, met late evening to delib erate on the party's strategy going forward after their former chief's disqualification from

Congress general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, KC Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Rajiv Shukla and Tariq Anwar, senior leaders P Chidambaram, Anand Sharma, Ambika Soni, Mukul Wasnik, Salman Khurshid and Pawan Kumar Bansal, among others, were also present at the meeting. Sources said agitations were top of the agenda at the meeting.

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chairperson Mamata Banerjee said Opposition leaders have become the "prime target of BJP" and Delhi CM and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal described Rahul's disqualification as shocking.
"The expulsion of Rahul from the Lok

Sabha is shocking. The country is passing through very difficult times. They have kept the whole country scared. 130 crore people will have to unite against their arrogant power," Kejriwal said.

BRS party National president and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said the disqualification of Rahul was a "black day" in the history of Indian democracy and shows the height of Modi's "arrogance and dictatorship."

'It's time all the opposition parties, keeping aside their differences, condemn this undemocratic and un-parliamentary measure," Rao who has been talking for a non-BJP, non-Congress political front for 2024 Lok Sabha elections said.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said the disqualification of Rahul is a "vendetta battle" and exposed how opposition leaders are living in a state of Emergency while BJP leaders are living in "Amrit Kaal".

Besides Congress leaders and their Chief Ministers, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed Rahul's disqualification as a "violent attack on democracy" by the Sangh Parivar. Vijayan said the "hasty" disqualification of Gandhi was the "latest chapter" of the Sangh Parivar assault on democracy. "Suppressing dissent by force is a fascist method," Vijayan said in a statement.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray questioned the state of democracy in the country while CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said, "It's condemnable that the BJP is now using the criminal defamation route to target opposition leaders and disqualify them as done with Rahul now."

Alleging that Rahul's disqualification is

the official announcement of the "death of democracy", RJD leader and a Rajya Sabha member Manoj Jha said there is no bigger blot on parliamentary democracy in history than

Samajwadi Party and BSP too termed Rahul's disqualification unfortunate, and said if MPs were to lose their membership on such matters of defamation, then 70 per cent of parliamentarians will lose their member-

Congress leaders and Minist in the UPA, Kapil Sibal and Ashwani Kumar, said action against Rahul raises the larger question of whether the right to represent people can be taken away upon first conviction without even a single appeal in a high-

MERE MEMBERSHIP OF BANNED OUTFIT MAKES PERSON CRIMINAL: SC

The bench held that "when an association is declared unlawful by notification issued under Section 3 which has become effective of sub-section 3 of that Section, a person who is and continues to be a member of such association is liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, and shall also be liable to fine under Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA, 1967".

The top court said any other decisions of the High Court taking a contrary view are held to be "not a good law" and are specifically overruled by this judgment. 'Consequently, the review applications filed by the Union of India and the State of Assam are hereby allowed," it said, and directed that the main appeals be placed before the concerned bench for taking of such matters after obtaining the appropriate order from the Chief Justice.

The three-judge bench answered the reference made to it on August 26, 2014 by a two-judge bench while noting the submissions of the Centre that in the Arup Bhuyan case, this court has read down the provision to the detriment of the interest of the Union

of India, when it was not party before it. The top court on February 3, 2011, had acquitted suspected ULFA member Bhuyan, who was held guilty by a TADA court on the basis of his alleged confessional statement before the superintendent of police, and said mere membership of a banned organisation will not make a person a criminal unless he resorts to violence or incites people to violence or creates public disorder by violence or incitement to violence.

Similar views were taken by the apex court in two other verdicts of 2011 in Indra Das versus State of Assam and state of Kerala versus Raneef, where the bench relied upon the three US Supreme Court decisions which rejected the doctrine of 'guilt by association'.

The bench said as far as the reading down of Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA by this Court in the case of Arup Bhuyan is concerned, at the outset it is required to be noted that such reading down of the provision of a statute could not have been made without hearing or giving an opportunity to the Centre.

"When any provision of Parliamentary legislation is read down in the absence of the Union of India, it is likely to cause enormous

harm to the interest of the State. If the opportunity would have been given to the Union of India to put forward its case on the provisions of Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA, 1967, the Union of India would have made submissions in favour of Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA, including the object and purpose for enactment of such a provision and even the object and purpose of UAPA," it said. The bench said it is true that it is ultimately for the court to interpret the law and/or particular statute but the question is wheth be done without hearing the Union of India. Referring to the 2011 verdicts, the bench said the court was only dealing with bail applications and the court should not have ventured to read down provisions under law, which was not challenged.

UK'S SECURITY OBLIGATIONS NOT MET: JAISHANKAR

Blackman pointed out that the attack on Sunday was the sixth time in as many years that the Indian High Commission has been attacked in a similar way. "The hooliganism of Khalistani hooligans outside the Indian High Commission on Sunday is a disgrace to this country," he said.

"Khalistani militants are operating across the world; Canada, the US and Australia saw similar attacks over the weekend. We are harbouring Khalistani terrorists in this country right now. Can we have a debate in Government time on what action we can take to ensure that these terrorists are held to account and banned in this country," he said.

Earlier on Thursday, Blackman - as chair of the India (Trade and Investment) All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) - raised the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the Commons and sought an update from the Business and Trade Minister Nigel Huddleston, who confirmed that the eighth round of FTA negotiations are currently

"Both nations have committed to and are working together for a mutually ambitious deal. We are working through substantive issues such as goods, market access, services and investment," said Huddleston.

Asked if the FTA is likely to be concluded by Diwali this year, having missed the Diwali 2022 deadline, the Minister stressed that "it is about the deal, not the date". "We will not tie our hands by setting an arbitrary deadline," he said.

The UK Government has condemned the attacks as "unacceptable" and committed to "robustly respond" to such incidents of vio-

LIES, SLANDER PART OF RAHUL'S POLITICS: NADDA

Nadda said he repeatedly ignored suggestions from the court and the community to tender an apology for his comments. The entire Other Backward Classes will avenge this insult in a democratic manner, the BJP president said. "He repeatedly hurt the sentiments of the OBCs. The Surat court has convicted him for his objectionable comments against by 2025 against the global target of 2030.

the community. But Rahul Gandhi and the Congress stuck to those remarks due to their arrogance," Nadda said. As the "newly minted" Congress president, Rahul's core issue for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls was the "cookedup Rafale scam", he said.

"His negative politics and cooked-up Rafale scam faced a setback in the court of law. Our highest court of the land, the Honourable Supreme Court gave a very clear verdict on the Rafale issue and did not believe he corruption bogey Rahul raised, added.

Targeting the Congress leader, he said Rahul was also pulled up by the Supreme Court for his misleading claims on the Rafale issue and had to tender an unconditional apology for his fabricated allegations. Rahul also resorted to raising the "chowkidar chor hai" slogan despite objections from senior leaders within his party, the BJP president said citing media reports. He went on ranting against PM Narendra Modi even if it meant he was defeated in his own seat (Amethi) and his party got wiped out nationally, the BJP president said.

'Now, Rahul calls the entire OBC community thieves. He gets flak in the courts but he refuses to apologise thus showing how deep-rooted his hatred for OBCs is. The people of India did not forgive him in 2019. In 2024 the punishment will be more severe," he

INDIA'S FIRST ROPEWAY TRANSPORT: MODI SETS PROJECT IN MOTION

"Today, in Kashi, both the old and the new forms are simultaneously seen," he said. Modi added that people in India and abroad appreciated the development of the Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor and the Ganga ghat.

In the past one year, over seven crore tourists visited Varanasi and brought employment opportunities for the local residents, Modi said.

He also announced that a big campaign to promote natural farming would start on both sides of the Ganga. "A big campaign is going to start on both sides of the Ganga river. Natural farming will be encouraged on 5km on both sides. Arrangements have been made in the Budget for this," he said.

Modi also laid the foundation stone of a 55 MLD (million litres per day) sewage treatment plant at Bhagwanpur under the Namami Gange scheme. The project will be built at an estimated cost of ₹300 crore. Under the Khelo India scheme, Modi laid

the foundation stone of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 redevelopment work of Sigra Stadium. He also dedicated 19 drinking water schemes that will benefit over three lakh peo-

Mission. Earlier, while addressing the "One World TB Summit' on World TB Day, Modi said India's ideology of "Vasudev Kutumbakam" is giving the modern world an integrated

ple in 63 panchayats under the Jal Jeevan

vision and solutions. Launching a series of initiatives to eliminate tuberculosis in India, Modi said the country is working to eliminate the disease

Corrupt Cong wants to make K'taka its ATM, fill coffers: Shah

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Congress is degenerating across the country, and has now set its eyes on Karnataka to make the state its ATM and fill its coffers at the national level.

Speaking in the poll-bound State, he appealed to people of Karnataka not to give a "half and incomplete government", and to form a BJP government with full majority and thereby strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Basavaraj

"Congress party is degenerating across the country, the Congress people don't have any state with them that can fill the Congress' central treasury, they want an ATM.... They want Karnataka to become Congress' ATM, and the corrupt Congress' eyes are now set on Karnataka," Shah said. Addressing a beneficiaries' meet organised by Karnataka Cooperative department and other departments, he asked people whether they will form a BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership in Karnataka or a Congress govern-

ment with Rahul Gandhi at the formed the government, their history is corruption, humiliation of Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis, and strengthening anti-national forces," he alleged. Bommai, veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa, Karnataka Co-Operation Minister S T Somashekar among others were present at the event.

Highlighting that the Modi vernment banned Popular Font of Ĭndia (PFI), Shah said, "Siddaramaiah's Congress government (earlier), used to withdraw cases against PFI, but Narendra Modi government by banning PFI has secured the entire South India, and also the entire country." Claiming credit for the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, he said, the Congress party was "delaying, obstructing and misleading" for 70 years, but Modi has laid the foundation for the temple and it will be

ready very soon. He also said that PM Modi, by abrogating Article 370, has put a bridle on terrorism in the entire country. "Modi's mission is to make the entire country prosperous, take forward every state including

SC to hear Opp parties plea over misuse of CBI, ED

Karnataka."

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday ■ agreed to list for hearing on April 5 a plea by 14 opposition parties, led by the Congress, alleging arbitrary use of central probe agencies against political opponents.

A bench headed by Chief

Justice DY Chandrachud took note of the submissions of senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Opposition parties, and said the plea would be taken up for hearing on April 5.

"I am asking for the guidelines for the future. This is a remarkable convergence of 14 parties against the misuse of the agencies, both CBI and ED," Singhvi said, and claimed that 95 per cent cases of the Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate(ED) are against the leaders of opposition.

The senior lawyer referred to the rise in the number of cases filed by the CBI and ED after the NDA gov ernment came to power in 2014. 'Second statistics, pre-2014 and post-2014. There is a humongous jump in cases. The rate of conviction is four to five per cent. We are asking for pre-arrest guidelines and post-arrest bail guidelines," Singhvi said. Sources close to the deliberations which led to the filing of the common plea by 14 political parties said Delhi Chief Minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal played an important role in persuading other opposition leaders for moving the top court jointly.

The plea alleged there is an

alarming rise in the use of coercive criminal processes against opposition political leaders and other citizens exercising their fundamental right to dissent.

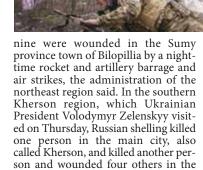
Russian strikes in Ukraine kill 10 civilians N Korea tests radioactive

 $R^{ussian\ long\text{-}range\ strikes\ killed\ at}$ $R^{least\ 10\ civilians\ and\ wounded\ 20}$ others in several areas of Ukraine on Friday, Ukraine's presidential office said, as a senior Moscow official warned that the Kremlin's forces were prepared for an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive in the coming weeks.

Five people died in Kostiantynivka, a town in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk province, when a Russian missile hit an aid station. Ukrainian authorities last year established hundreds of so-called "points of invincibility", where residents hard-pressed by the war could warm up, charge their cellphones and get

Local prosecutors said the Russians attacked Kostyantynivka with S-300 anti-aircraft missiles. The civilians who died were refugees, according to Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko. As the mostly artillery war of the recent winter months stretched into its second spring, Russian forces also used airlaunched missiles, exploding drones and gliding bombs in their attacks on several regions early on Friday, Ukrainian air force spokesman Yurii

Two civilians were killed and



town of Bilozerka. On Wednesday, a Russian drone attack struck a high school and dormitories south of Kyiv, killing at least nine people. Kyiv's forces are poised to use the improved spring weather and the arrival of modern weapons supplied by

its Western allies, including tanks, to launch a counteroffensive aimed at dislodging Russian troops from occupied areas of Ukraine.

But Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's former president and now the deputy head of Russia's Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, said the Russian military was ready to repel a counterattack. "Our General Staff is assessing all that," Medvedev said. He also said that a Ukrainian attempt to seize Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, could trigger a nuclear response from Moscow. "An attempt to split part of the state away means an encroachment at the very existence of the state," he said.

of Russian POWs and Ukrainians

Kyiv (AP): UN human rights monitors have documented dozens of summary killings of Ukrainian and Russian prisoners of war, as well as the use of torture, human shields and other abuses against POWs since Russia invaded its neighbour that could amount to war crimes, according to a report released Friday.

The first full look by the U.N. human rights office's mission in Ukraine at the treatment of POWs was released along with an update of human rights violations overall from a six-month period that ran through January. The report was based on interviews with about 400 POWs, half of them Ukrainians who were released and the other half Russians held captive in Ukraine.

The team said it had no access to POWs held in Russia or Russia-occupied parts of Ukraine where it identified 48 internment sites.

UN decries killing of Russian POW/s AP SEOUL Weapon at sea

North Korea claimed on Friday to have tested a nuclear-capable underwater drone designed to generate a gigantic "radioactive tsunami" that would destroy naval strike groups and ports. Analysts were skeptical that the device presents a major new threat, but the test underlines the North's commitment to raising nuclear threats. The test this week came as the United States reportedly planned to deploy aircraft carrier strike groups and other advanced assets to waters off the Korean Peninsula.

Military tensions are at a high point as the pace of both North Korean weapons tests and US-South Korea joint military exercises has accelerated in the past year in a cycle of tit-fortat responses.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said the new weapon, which can be deployed from the coast



or towed by surface ships, is built to "stealthily infiltrate into operational waters and make a super-scale radioactive tsunami through an underwater explosion" to destroy enemy naval

strike groups and ports. The report came hours before South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol pledged to make North Korea pay for its "reckless provocations" as he attended a remembrance service honouring 55 South Korean troops

killed during major clashes with the North near their western sea border in past years.

The testing of the purported "nuclear underwater attack drone" was part of a three-day exercise that simulated nuclear attacks on unspecified South Korean targets, which also included cruise missile launches on Wednesday.

KCNA said the North's latest tests were aimed at alerting the United States and South Korea of a brewing "nuclear crisis" as they continue with their "intentional, persistent and provocative war drills." It said the tests were supervised by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who vowed to make his rivals "plunge into despair." The US and South Korea completed an 11-day exercise on Thursday that included their biggest field training in years, and are preparing another round of joint naval drills that will reportedly involve a US air-

carries out airstrikes in Syria

AP ■ BEIRUT

strike on Thursday by a Asuspected Iranian-made drone killed a US contractor and wounded five American troops and another contractor in northeast Syria, the Pentagon said. American forces said they retaliated soon after with "precision airstrikes" in Syria targeting facilities used by groups affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard, with activist groups saying the US bombing killed at least four people. The attack and the US response threaten to upend recent efforts to deescalate tensions across the wider Middle East, whose rival powers have made steps toward détente in recent days after years of tur-

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement

that the American intelligence community had determined the drone was of Iranian origin, but offered no other immediate evidence to support the claim. "The airstrikes were conducted in response to today's attack as well as a series of recent attacks against coalition forces in Syria" by groups affiliated with the Revolutionary Guard, Austin said. Iran relies on a network of proxy forces through the Mideast to counter the US and Israel, its arch regional enemy.

The Pentagon said two of the wounded service members were treated on-site, while three others and the injured contractor were transported to medical facilities in Iraq.

Overnight, videos on social media purported to show explosions in Syria's Deir elborders Iraq and contains oil fields. Iran-backed militia groups and Syrian forces control the area, which also has seen suspected airstrikes by Israel in recent months allegedly targeting Iranian supply routes. Iran and Syria did not immediately acknowledge the strikes, nor did their officials at the United Nations in New York respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press. The activist group Deir Ezzor 24 put the death toll from the American strikes at four people. Deir Ezzor 24, which covers news in Deir el-Zour province, said the strikes hit the city of Deir el-Zour as well as militiamen posts near Mayadeen and Boukamal. It said the strikes also wounded people, including Iraqis.

The Syrian Observatory Zour, a strategic province that for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, reported that the American strikes killed six Iranian-backed fighters at an arms depot in the Harabesh neighbourhood in the city of Deir el-Zour. The Observatory, which relies on a network of local contacts in Syria, said US bombing at a post near the town of Mayadeen killed two

A separate American strike hit a military post near the town of Boukamal along the border with Iraq, killing another three fighters, the Observatory said. The AP could not immediately independently confirm the activist reports. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard which answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been suspected of carrying out attacks with bomb-carrying drones across the wider Middle East. In recent months, Russia

Demonstrators protest Netanyahu's visit to UK

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak welcomed Benjamin Netanyahu at his official residence in London on Friday as protesters shouting "Shame!" In Hebrew demonstrated against the Israeli leader's right-wing policies and his plans to over-

haul the country's judiciary.

Netanyahu had to pass by hundreds of protesters waving Israeli flags and waving signs calling for the defense of Israeli democracy as he arrived for talks that are expected to focus on concerns about Iran's nuclear programme.

'We are Israelis and Jews living in the UK demonstrating against Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is leading a judicial coup turning Israel into a dictatorship," one plac-

Netanyahu arrived in London as protesters in Israel blocked roads and clashed with police over his right-wing govern-ment's plans to overhaul the judicial sys-

The proposals have ignited the biggest protests in the country's history amid rare

Israel PM broke law on conflict of interest'

Jerusalem (AP): Israel's attorney general on Friday warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he has violated the Supreme Court's conflict of interest ruling, which barred him from direct involvement in his government's divisive plans for a judicial overhaul. Netanyahu's far-right government has barrelled ahead with plans to weaken the Supreme Court and grant politicians less judicial oversight in their policymaking despite massive protests from across Israeli society including an uproar among business leaders, top legal officials and military

dissent from people throughout Israeli society, including military reservists, navy veterans, high-tech businesspeople and for mer officials. Netanyahu's proposals would give his government more control over udicial appointments, weaken the Supreme Court by limiting judicial review of legislation and allow Parliament to over- their right to self-determination.

ruption trial and claims of a conflict of interest, Netanyahu defiantly pledged to proceed with the overhaul. Netanyahu contended that stripping the attorney general of the power to remove him from office was necessary to clear the way for him to participate in the negotiations on the judicial overhaul in spite of her instructions, and try to "mend the rift' in the polarised nation.

reservists. On Thursday, just hours

after his coalition passed a law that would

protect the Israeli leader from being

deemed unfit to rule because of his cor-

turn court decisions with a simple major-The Israeli government has also been criticised for its hard-line policy toward Palestinians, including recent comments by a government minister who denied the

existence of the Palestinian people and

Large asteroid coming close, but zero chance of hitting earth

Cape Canaveral: An asteroid big enough to wipe out a city will zip harmlessly between Earth and the moon's orbit this bodies. Saturday's close encounter will offer astronomers the chance to study a space rock from just over 100,000 miles (168,000 kilometers) away. That's less than half the distance from here to the moon, making it visible through binoculars and small telescopes.

While asteroid flybys are common, NASA said it's rare for one so big to come so close about once a decade. Scientists estimate its size somewhere between 130 feet and 300 feet (40 meters and 90 meters).

Discovered a month ago, the asteroid known as 2023 DZ2 will pass within 320,000 miles (515,000 kilometers) of the moon on Saturday and, several hours later, buzz the Indian Ocean at about 17,500 mph (28,000 kph).

China warns of consequences over US warship's actions

AP ■ BANGKOK

Thina threatened "serious Consequences" Friday after the US Navy sailed a destroyer around the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea a move Beijing claimed was a violation of its sovereignty and security. The warning comes amid growing tensions between China and the United States in the region, as Washington pushes back at Beijing's growingly assertive posture in the South China Sea, a strategic waterway it claims virtually in its entirety. On Thursday, after the U.S. sailed the USS Milius guided-missile destroyer near the Paracel Islands, China said its navy and air force had forced the American vessel away, a claim the U.S. military denied. The U.S. on Friday sailed the ship again in the vicinity of the islands, which are occupied by China but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam, as part of what it called a "freedom of navigation operation" challenging requirements from all three nations

requiring either advance notification or permission before a military vessel sails by.

"Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims in the South China Sea pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas, luding the freedoms of nav igation and overflight, free trade and unimpeded commerce, and freedom of economic opportunity for South China Sea littoral nations," said U.S. 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. j.g. Luka Bakic in an emailed statement. "The United States challenges excessive maritime claims around the world regardless of the identity of the claimant," Bakic added. China's Ministry of National Defense responded by accusing the U.S. of "undermining the peace and stability of the South China Sea" with its actions. The act of the U.S. mili-

tary seriously violated China's sovereignty and security, severely breached international laws, and is more ironclad evidence of the U.S. pursuing navigation hegemony and militarising the South China Sea," ministry spokesman Tan Kefei said.

Protests continue as Paris reels under violence

Protesters angry at French President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms continued with scattered actions on Friday amid slowed train traffic, rows of trucks blocking access to Marseille's commercial port and debris still littering the Paris streets f the previous day's mass demonstrations. Over 450 protesters were arrested in Paris and beyond on Thursday as some 300 demonstrations drew more than a million people nationwide to protest against unpopular pension reforms.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Friday that some 441 police and gendarmes were injured as violence marred some marches. He added that 1,000 trash bins were set on fire in the French capital during the previous day's action. Amid a weekslong refuse collectors strike, trash bins have become a symbol of the protest.

Polls say most French oppose Macron's bill to increase the retirement age from 62 to 64, which he says is necessary to keep the system afloat. The supply of fuel to Paris by the



large Gonfreville-L'Orcher refinery in Normandy resumed on Friday after police intervened, according to Energy Transition Minister Agnès Pannier-Runacher. At the Fossur-mer oil terminal near Marseille, however, protesters were meeting to plan future oil refinery blockades.

Fearing disruptions in coming days as actions contin-

ue, France's Civil Aviation Authority has requested that a third of flights be cancelled on Sunday at Paris' second airport, Orly, with 20 per cent to be cancelled on Monday. Unions have called for new protests and strikes on Tuesday, when Britain's King Charles III is scheduled to visit Bordeaux on the second day of his trip to

British King's visit postponed

continued with scattered actions on Friday, as the unrest ular pension reforms. across the country led officials visit by Britain's King Charles

Although no major protests were planned on Friday, train traffic was slowed, rows of trucks blocked access to Marseille's commercial port and debris still littered the Paris streets following the previous day's mass demonstra-

Over 450 protesters were arrested in Paris and beyond

The heavy wooden door of the elegant Bordeaux City Hall was destroyed by fire Thursday night by people taking part in an unauthorised demonstra-

The mayor of Bordeaux, Pierre Hurmic, said Friday he had "difficulty understanding the interest of such acts of vandalism." Hurmic said that he hopes Charles' visit to his city

Paris (AP): Protesters angry at on Thursday as some 300 French President Emmanuel demonstrations drew more demonstrations drew more Macron's pension reforms than a million people nationwide to protest against unpop-

Interior Minister Gerald some 441 police and gendarmes were injured as violence marred some marches.

He added that 1,000 trash bins were set on fire in the French capital during the previous day's action. Amid a weeks-long refuse collectors strike, trash bins have become a symbol of the protest. Macron's office announced that a state visit by the British king was postponed.

next week will not be cancelled. "I hope that we do not give this gift to the thugs," he said, although he acknowledged that a tram ride with the king may now be off the cards.

The protests have drawn support from beyond France's borders. In Greece, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the French Embassy in Athens on Thursday to show solidarity.

Anticipatory bail to Imran Khan in terror cases

LAHORE: A top Pakistani court on Friday extended till March 27 the protective bail granted to former prime minister Imran Khan in five cases related to terrorism after he appeared before a two-member bench here. The Lahore High Court (LHC) granted the extension of anticipatory bail to Khan after the 70-year-old chief of the Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) appeared before it amidst tight security. Last week, Khan was granted anticipatory bail in these five cases till March 24.

Of the five cases, one is related to the alleged attack on the judicial complex in Islamabad in which the government law officer objected that Khan should secure protective bail from Islamabad court. Khan told the LHC that last week on his appearance before a court in Islamabad police and FC personnel fired teargas shells at his car and a clash took place between the PTI workers and **PTI** that led to the Leicester vio-

Report on Leicester clashes warns of ethnic enclaves

AP ■ LONDON

A fact-finding report into the violent clashes between groups of men on the streets of Leicester following an India-Pakistan Asia Cup cricket match in Dubai last year has warned of ethnic enclaves or ghettos of migrants in the eastern England city as a key factor behind communal tension.

The Delhi-based Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights (CDPHR) think tank, which launched its report at a Committee Room in the House of Commons on Thursday, sheds light on the events that took place in August-September last year and their human rights implications. In its 'Fact-finding report on Leicester Violence 2022 – The rise of territorial majoritarianism Hinduphobia, the think tank calls for immediate action to address the underlying issues lence such as the rise of extremism and hate speech.

There were two kinds of stories circulating around the violence that occurred, which is the motivation behind this fact-finding report," explained Rashmi Samant of the ATMAH non-profit organisation and one of the co-authors of the report."What we found was that different religious groups in east Leicester, ground zero of the unrest, are living in ethnic enclaves - with some ethnicities clubbed up in some spaces more than others. This phenomenon is not common in the United Kingdom but we found it continues to happen in Leicester because of the spillover effect involving migrants from countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh," she

The report claims that the presence of these ethnic enclaves gave rise to territorial tensions and localised majoritarianism.

Jamaican cleric gets 18-year sentence in NY terrorism case

New York: A cleric arrested in his native Jamaica and extradited to New York to face state terrorism charges on accusations of recruiting support for the Islamic State group was sentenced on Thursday to 18 years

Abdullah el-Faisal was convicted in January in state Supreme Court in Manhattan on counts including soliciting or providing support for an act of terrorism. The state law he was prosecuted under was put in place after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and prosecutors said his case was the first state-level trial on terrorism charges.

El-Faisal was extradited to New York City in 2020 after being arrested in Jamaica in 2017. Beginning in 2016, authorities said an undercover officer in New York City posed as a would-be jihadist and started communicating with the cleric.

The cleric was accused of giving out information to help the officer ultimately connect with the Islamic State group, as well as trying to do things like act as a conduit for a marriage between the officer and a member of the militant group.

Prosecutors said el-Faisal had supported the Islamic State organization for several

Saudi Arabia, Syria may restore ties

AP ■ BEIRUT

Saudi Arabia is in talks with Syria to reopen its embassy in the war-torn nation for the first time in a decade, state television in the kingdom reported late Thursday, the latest diplomatic reshuffling in the region. The announcement on state TV comes after Chinesemediated talks in Beijing saw Saudi Arabia and Iran agree to reopen embassies in each others' nations after years of tensions. Syrian President Bashar Assad has maintained his grip on power in the Mediterranean nation rocked by the 2011 Arab Spring only with the help of Iran and Russia, which made a historic call earlier in the day to Oman.

Saudi Arabian state television aired a report late Thursday, quoting an anonymous official in the country's Foreign Ministry, acknowledging the talks between the kingdom and Damascus.

"A source in the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs revealed to Al-Ekhbariyah that ongoing discussions have begun with the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commenting on what was circulated by some international media," an anchor said on

"Discussions are underway between officials in the kingdom and their counterparts in Syria about resuming the provision of consular services." Arabic-language media had been reporting the possible detente in recent days ahead of the Saudi state TV announcement. The Wall Street Journal, quoting anonymous Saudi and Syrian officials, attributed the talks to reopen the countries' embassies to Russian mediation.

Syrian state media did not immediately acknowledge the talks. Officials in both Saudi Arabia and Syria did not | ities. immediately respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press early

Bolsonaro hands undeclared jewels to authorities

representative of Brazil's former President Jair A Bolsonaro on Friday handed a set of diamond jewellery he had received from Saudi Arabia to a state bank, as he was ordered to do by a government

The state bank Caixa Economica Federal received the box of precious stones at one of its branches in the capital Brasilia, the bank's press office told The Associated Press. A federal watchdog on Wednesday gave Bolsonaro five days to hand over the precious stones that he had received while pres1ident.

Authorities are investigating whether the goods were a public gift that Bolsonaro improperly tried to prevent from being incorporated into the presidency's public collection, or a private gift that Bolsonaro tried sneak into Brazil without paying

Brazilian media started reporting on the jewels earlier this month, along with another set that was seized at the international airport in Sao Paulo. The seized set is estimated to be worth several million dollars. Neither set was declared to tax author-

Bolsonaro, who denies any wrongdoing with the jewellery, has been in the United States since late-December, just days before the end of his presiden-

LUCKNOW | SATURDAY | MARCH 25, 2023

Sindhu exits, Satwik-Chirag duo enters quarters of Swiss Open



PTI ■ BASEL

Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu failed to defend her Swiss Open Super 300 badminton title as she was shocked by unseeded Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonesia in a thrilling three-game women's singles second round match here.

World no.9 Sindhu, seeded fourth here, was stunned 15-21 21-12 18-21 by the 38th ranked Wardani in their first-ever faceoff at the international level on Thursday night.

But second-seeded men's pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty kept India's flag flying by entering the quarterfinals with a hard-fought 12-21 21-17 28-26 win over Taiwanese pair of Fang-Chih Lee and Fang-Jen Lee.

The world No. 6 Indian duo will next face Danish pair of Jeppe Bay and Lasse Molhede later on Friday.

Earlier on Thursday, world No. 9 and fifth seed H S Prannoy

made a shock second-round exit after losing in straight games against unseeded Christo Popov France.

Prannoy, favourite coming into the contest, looked a pale shadow of himself in front of world No. 40 Popov as he failed to give any fight, losing 8-21 8-21 to bow out of the men's singles event.

But it was Kidambi Srikanth, who was the first to crash out on Thursday, losing to Hong Kong's Cheuk Yiu Lee.

Going by rankings, there was hardly anything to separate the two as Srikanth is placed 20th in the world as against his rival's 19th position.

It was a hard-fought match, but Lee kept his composure to emerge 22-20 21-17 winner in the singles pre-quarterfinal con-

National champion Mithun Manjunath also bowed out in the second round, losing 19-21 10-21 to Chia Hao Lee of

Aman Raj stays at third, Aryan Roopa Anand is 7th at Challenge Tour event

Tndia's Aman Raj shot a solid four-under 68 to lie tied third after the second round of the Duncan Taylor Black Bull Challenge golf here on Friday. At 9-under for 36 holes,

Aman was two shots behind the leader, Manuel Elvira of Spain (63-70), who is 11-under and two shots ahead of the field.

Sweden's Rikard Karlberg (68-66), who has two wins in India, was lying second at 10-under, while Aman shared the third place alongside three others — Oliver Farr (64-71), Ashley Chesters (67-68) and Stefano Mazzoli (67-68), who were all at 9-under.

Just one shot behind them in tied seventh was local lad, Aryan Roopa Anand, a rookie pro. Aryan (68-68) is now 8under and shares the seventh place with five others.

Two more Indians, Om Prakash Chouhan (70-67) and Mari Muthu (68-69) were tied 13th at 7-under. Chouhan made a fine move up by 30 places as he added 67 to his first 70.

The tournament has so far looked good for Indians, who are getting to play a European Challenge Tour event in India after a gap of 10 years. A win here could open the doors to the Challenge Tour, from where they can aspire for the main DP World Tour.

As many as 14 Indians made the cut, which fell at 3under with 69 players making it through to the weekend, including amateurs Arron Edwards-Hill and Robert Moran who received invitations through Sir Nick Faldo's Elite Tour.

Aman, who is on a come-



back trail following a fine win on the domestic Tata Steel PGTI Tour, had a fine start with birdies on second and fourth, but back-to-back bogeys on sixth and seventh meant he was back to even par. The 27-year-old Patna

golfer, fought back superbly around the turn with four birdies in a span of five holes. He birdied ninth, 10th, 11th and 13th and then closed with five pars to stay at tied third, where he began the second day.

Aman will go out in the lead

group with Elvira and Karlberg at 9:30am. Aryan, starting from the back nine, birdied 10th and 11th and dropped a shot on 12th. He got back that shot with a birdie on 17th and turned in 2-under. On the front nine of the KGA Course, Aryan birdied four times on first, second, fifth and eighth but also dropped a double bogey on Par-3 fourth for

Chouhan had six birdies gainst one bogey in his 67 and Muthu had five birdies and a

a second straight 68.

Chikka tied sixth in Hong Kong as debutant Kho takes lead

PTI ■ HONG KONG

Tndia's S Chikkarangappa card-Led a fine one-under 69 but slipped from tied fourth place to tied sixth place at the halfway stage of the USD 1 million World City Championship here on Friday.

As many as eight of the nine

Indians made the cut. Chikka, who had a Top-10 finish last week at the DGC open, shot a second straight under par round at the par-70 Hong Kong Golf Club to move

to 5-under for 36 holes. Overnight leader Miguel Tabuena, winner in India last week, shot three-under 67 to get to 10-under, but he was overtaken by Hong Kong's debutant Taichi Kho, who is playing on his home course.

Kho took the second round lead with 64 and he is now 12under and two shots ahead.

Among other Indians, veteran Jeev Milkha Singh (71-66) and SSP Chawrasia (70-67) were both three-under and tied 23rd. Shiv Kapur (71-67) was twounder and tied 36th, as were Veer Ahlawat (71-67) and Honey Baisoya (69-69).

Karandeep Kochhar (69-70) was 1-under and tied 48th, as Gaganjeet Bhullar (73-67) made the cut on the line.

Viraj Madappa (73-71) was the lone Indian to miss the cut.

Kho, 22, fired his secondsuccessive six-under-par 64 to lead by two from Tabuena, the first-round leader. New Zealand's Michael Hendry is in third place, four behind Kho, after returning a 64. Kho, a member of the HKGC since January who was unveiled this week as their ambassador, is 12under and now has an outstanding opportunity to become the first player from Hong Kong to

win on the Asian Tour. This is the first international golf tournament in Hong Kong, China for 38 months.

Tabuena, who led with a 63 on Thursday, impressively recovered from a double boxey on his opening hole.

Korean Yoseop Seo returned a 64 and is solo fourth, five back from Kho. Thailand's Jazz Janewattananond (67) and Suradit

Rudrankksh wins bronze as China extend golden run

 $R^{\text{eigning world champion Rudrankksh}}_{\text{Patil won bronze in the men's }10\text{m}$ air rifle, his second of the tournament, even as China extended their golden run at the ISSF World Cup by winning both gold medals on offer for the second consecutive day here. Tokyo Olympics silver medallist

Sheng Lihao of China won gold in the men's 10m air rifle while compatriot Huang Yuting, a double gold medallist at the Cairo World Championships last year, won the women's event. China maintained their top position

on the medal tally at the end of competition day three with five gold, one silver and two bronze in their kitty. India lay with three bronze me with a gold and silver each. Playing back-to-back matches can

never be easy, especially in a home World Cup, but the champion shooter that he is, Rudrankksh delivered yet again, clinching bronze from what at one point seemed a lost cause.

He shot a solid 631.0 in qualification to finish fourth after leading in the ini-



tial stages. In the 25-shot top eight $\,$ 20th shot. Rudrankksh went into the fifth medal positions till the third five-shot series, before a fantastic fourth series, where he shot the highest score of 53.5, brought him back into contention.

Meanwhile the three Chinese qualifiers — Sheng (who led throughout the ranking round), silver medallist Du Linshu and Yu Haonan -- were on course to make it a Chinese 1-2-3 till the series 0.8 behind VII He tl strong 52.6 in the series as Yu faltered, posting 51.5 to finish fourth, as the Indian confirmed his second medal in two days and his fourth ISSF World Cup podium

He finished with a score of 262.3 as Sheng and Du moved into the gold medal $\,$ match with scores of 264.2 and 263.3 The all-China gold medal contest was also a close one with Sheng prevailing 17-

RAMITA FINISHES FOURTH

India had only one top eight finisher in Ramita in the women's 10m air rifle as she shot 632.3 to finish second among the medal contenders in the 52-strong field. The top eight had two Chinese, two Americans and one shooter each from Romania, Israel and Kazakhstan, besides

China's Huang Yuting was in ominous form, topping the qualifications with a score of 632.8, while Tokyo Olympics silver medallist in the mixed team air rifle, Mary Tucker of the USA, also made it through in seventh place.

he ton eigh above the rest, finishing on top again with a score of 265.7 as Mary shot 261.2 for a shot at gold.

Kazakhstan's Alexandra Le pipped India's Ramita to bronze, shooting 261.2 to the Indian's 260.5. Huang then maintained her form on the day to defeat Mary 16-4 for China's fifth gold of the compe-

Olympian Bhavani Devi in action on first day of fencing nationals

The 33rd Senior National Fencing Championship, which include the likes of Olympian Bhavani Devi, will start here from Saturday with participants from 30 teams vying for top honours. The Fencing Association of India along with Maharashtra Fencing Association and DY Patil International University is hosting the championship, which will conclude on March 28, at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Mhalunge-Balewadi.

hampionshi played in three disciplines foil, epee and sabre — for both men and women — in two categories — individual and team.

On Saturday, all eyes will be on Bhavani, who is the first Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics. She will take part in



women's individual sabre event. Apart from Bhavani, the other noted players include Karan Gujiar (Rajasthan), Girish Iakate, Dnyanwshwari Shinde, Kashish Bharat (all Maharashtra). Maharashtra Fencing Association secretary Uday Dongre said around 600 fencers from across the country of which 100 fencers have taken part in international events, will participate in the championship.

"Players representing 30 teams including one from the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) will participate in the

Yongcharoenchai (68) are a further stroke back along with Zimbabwe's Kieran Vincent

Sasikumar enters semis



Lucknow (PNS): India number two Sasikumar Mukund defeated second seed Oliver Crawford to book a berth in the semifinals of the ITF \$25K Men's International Tournament. Mukund is the lone Indian to make it to the last four at the Ekana International Stadium.

Mukund got past Crawford 7-6, 6-2 in the quarterfinals. He will now face third seed Evgeny Sie Donskoy of Russia, who dis- 3.

played his experience and constency to edge past 19-yearold Karan Singh 7-5, 6-2.

Meanwhile, 21-year-old Eric Vanshelboim of Ukraine beat his countrymate Vladyslav Orlov in an intense battle 6-4, 6-2. Eric will now play top-seed and former Wimbledon Junior Doubles Champion Nam Hoang Ly of Vietnam, who beat Siddharth Vishwakarma 7-6, 6-

NCA has shared workload monitoring report of India players: DC CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he BCCI}} \ \ \text{and the Indian} \\ \text{team management are keeping a tab on workload manage-}$ ment of national team players but there has been no specific directive for the IPL franchises as yet, said Delhi Capitals CEO Dheeraj Malhotra on Friday.

Malhotra, who has worked as a general manager with the BCCI, said that the National Cricket Academy (NCA) has players.

shared a detailed workload monitoring report of all the Indian players associated with respective franchises, which obviously helps the IPL team's medical unit to work in cohesion with the parent body. Asked if there is a specific

directive on workload management of World Cup prospects, Malhotra told PTI: "Not yet. What NCA has done is, it sent a report on all the contracted

Scotland extends coach Clarke's contract to 2026 World Cup

AP ■ GLASGOW

Cteve Clarke extended his contract Friday With Scotland's national soccer team through the 2026 World Cup, which would make him the Tartan Army's longest-serving coach in more than 20 years. The Scottish Football Association

announced the deal ahead of European

Championship qualifying games against Cyprus and Spain.
Clarke led Scotland to Euro 2020 for its first major tournament since the 1998

After Scotland lost to Ukraine in the playoffs for last year's World Cup, the team won a Nations League group to advance to



the top tier for the first time.

Clarke, a former Chelsea defender, was hired in 2019 and is set to have the longest spell in the Scotland job since Craig Brown left in 2002 after nine years.

"Steve has united the nation behind a successful men's national team," SFA chief executive Ian Maxwell said in a statement. Scotland's Euro 2024 qualifying group also includes Norway and Georgia.

The top two teams in the group will advance to Euro 2024 in Germany. Scotland also has a guaranteed second path through the playoffs because of its Nations League group win. The 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico will be the first 48-team edition.

Euro 2024 host Germany looks to rebuild after World Cup

AP ■ DUSSELDORF (GERMANY)

Another World Cup failure, another rebuild for Germany. This time there's even more at stake. Germany will host next year's European Championship and is desperate to avoid another debacle at home.

The Germans once took pride in having a "tournament team," one that could put distractions aside to perform when it mattered. Following groupstage exits at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups and a round-of-16 loss at the last European Championship, however, Germany has not won a knockout game since the now-defunct Confederations Cup in 2017.

The current rebuild — with Germany able to skip qualifying as Euro 2024 host — starts with friendlies against Peru on Saturday and Belgium on Tuesday. Germany coach Hansi

Flick's squad is a mix of regulars like Emre Can, Timo Werner and Joshua Kimmich, and some more experimental picks. The six players getting their first call-ups include two right backs, Josha Vagnoman and Marius Wolf. There is also AC Milan defender Malick Thiaw and 21year-old winger Kevin Schade, who is a bench player for Brentford in the Premier League.

Just like predecessor Joa-

chim Löw after the 2018 World

Cup, Flick has left out Bayern

Munich forward Thomas Müller. The 33-year-old Müller signaled his international career might be over in an emotional interview at the World Cup in Qatar, but then changed tack to say he was still available for selec-

Müller has been here before. After Löw dropped him in 2018,

he ended up being recalled in 2021 in the aftermath of a 6-0 loss to Spain. 'We appreciate each other and will continue to be in good

contact," Müller posted on Instagram last week after it was confirmed Flick would not select him. Some other big names are out of the squad temporarily, whether because of injury (goal-keeper Manuel Neuer broke his leg while skiing) or personal reasons (midfielder Ilkay Gündogan became a father last week). The reasons for dropping Real Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger and Bayern forward Leroy Sané are less clear-cut, but seem to be part of Flick's experiments in the rebuild.



MATCHDAY: Spain hosts Norway; Wales at Croatia in qualifiers

AP ■ WASHINGTON

look at what's happening in A European Championship qualifying on Saturday:

Luis de la Fuente takes charge of his first game as Spain coach in a potentially tricky match against Norway but he won't have to worry about Erling Haaland. The record-breaking Manchester City striker is out of the Norwegian squad after feeling pain from a groin injury.

Scotland plays Cyprus in the other game in the group after extending coach Steve Clarke's contract through to the 2026 World Cup.

With long-time star Gareth Bale having recently retired, Wales will start a new era in its match at Croatia. Bale was Wales' most-capped men's player with 111 appearances and carried the team in recent years, including to the nation's first appearance at a World Cup in 64 vears. However, Croatia star Luka Modric is still going. The 37-year-old Modric has said he will continue playing for his national team at least until the Nations League finals in June so should add to his record 162 appearances for Croatia against Wales in Split. Turkey visits Armenia in the other game. **GROUP I**

Switzerland's previous game was a 6-1 loss to Portugal in front of a crowd of 83,000 at the World Cup in Qatar. The Swiss return in an empty stadium facing Belarus in neutral Serbia.

Though Russia was kicked out of Euro 2024 by UEFA, its military ally Belarus was allowed to keep playing on condition of hosting its games in neutral countries with no fans allowed. Belarus chose Novi Sad in Serbia, which won't be an option when it "hosts" Kosovo in June. Kosovo starts at Israel on

Saturday and Romania is at Andorra. Switzerland is the only Group I team in the top 50 of FIFA's rankings, at No. 12. Romania is next best at No. 52. **FRIENDLIES**

Germany is starting a rebuild after its second World Cup group-stage exit in a row. Midfielder Joshua Kimmich takes the captain's armband instead of the injured Manuel Neuer in a much-changed squad to face Peru.

Germany isn't playing qualifiers because it's the host of the European Championship.

WPL GAME EQUILISER: BARCLAY

There is no reason for men and women's game to be viewed as different, says ICC chairman

PTI ■ MUMBAI

omen's cricket has distinguished itself with the introduction of the WPL and it should not be viewed differently from the men's game anymore, says ICC chairman Greg Barclay.

He said the league will help uplift the women's game, thanks to the professionalism and money involved.

The first edition of the tour-nament will conclude here on Sunday.

... As I say, I think it will be a great uplift for the women's game and I am looking forward to see how this tournament plays out," Barcley told the

"Now, there is no reason for the two parts of the game, men and women, to be viewed as different. This is people playing cricket and they should be treat-

Secondly, the professionalism and the remuneration that is afforded the players I think that's something that's going to be really important, again, for the women's game," he added.



The Women's Premier League, which was a long time coming, finally began on March 4 this year amid much fanfare.

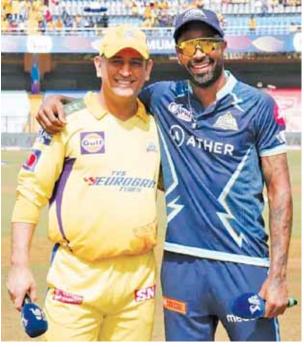
"I think if you recognise the powerhouse that India is in terms of cricket, it's appropriate that they have launched the Women's Premier League. I know that Jay Shah (BCCI president) and his board and his team are really committed to making this one one of the biggest and best tournaments that it can possibly be.

"I am sure that they will be successful in that respect. I am surelly placed and you represent the surelly placed and you

really pleased and very appreciate that this has happened," Barclay said.

"I take my hat off to Jay and his team at the BCCI for the way they have approached this. That is exactly what I would have expected out of an Indian run competition, it's absolutely amazing. "Jay and his team are doing a wonderful job in leading the way in terms of getting the women's game to where it needs to be," he signed off.

Barclay is serving his second term as the chair of the game's



'Hardik similar to Dhoni as captain'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Having watched both of them from close quarters, Gujarat Titans spinner R Sai Kishore feels that his franchise skipper Hardik Pandya is very similar to legendary MŚ Dhoni in terms of

leadership traits.
Sai Kishore, before joining
Gujarat Titans, was with CSK for a couple of years.
"Hardik and Mahi bhai (MS

Dhoni) are pretty similar in the way they handle things, they both are pretty calm," Sai Kishore told the media during a virtual interaction session on

"One thing that I really admire about Hardik is his ability to handle success and failure equally - that is something very unique about him. He is a levelheaded guy and that works (for him)," he added.

The 28-year-old said Gujarat Titans, who won the IPL last year in their debut season, will have to replicate their performances from last season in order to be successful.

"The tag of being defending champions is up to us whether to take it or not. We played well last year and that is why we won. I think if we can do that (then) the tag won't matter much," he said. Sai Kishore said the new rule of having an 'Impact Player' in IPL will make it more manageable than what it was in domestic circuit.

"It is more like the super-sub

bowler or a batsman. It is basically like playing with 12 people. We have already played with this (rule) in domestic (cricket). The only change is that we can use it till the 20th over, in domestic it was restricted to the 14th over. In 20 overs, it should be a lot easier to handle," he said.

The Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner said he is eyeing a place in the Indian side via strong performances in the IPL.

"Yes, there are a lot of leftarm spinners in India and this (IPL) is a very good opportunity but I would like to be here now in the present and play well for Gujarat. In the last five years, my skill-set has gone up and I want to keep improving. If it happens that I do very well in the IPL, I am going to play for India," he said.

However, Sai Kishore admitted that he has to improve his batting to come into national reckoning.

"It is a work in progress. I have done well in domestic (cricket) also. I know the areas where I am good at and areas where I need to work on. I am trying to put in hours into my batting and fielding," he said.
"In the IPL and higher you

go, you want to bat at the top. In Tamil Nadu, I have had the luxury of batting at the top in a few games. The death overs batting needs more work and attention. Finding a pattern or formula to score quick runs is what I am working on," Sai Kishore con-

Wong hat-trick fires Mumbai **Indians into final**

PTI NAVI MUMBAI

Isabelle Wong (4/15) recorded the first hat-trick of the Women's Premier League after Nat Sciver-Brunt's brutal 38ball 72 as Mumbai Indians stormed into the final with a 72-run drubbing of UP Warriorz in the Eliminator here on Friday.

The final of the inaugural WPL will be played between the two best sides that occupied the top two spots of the points table with 12 points each, Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians, on Sunday at the Brabourne Stadium.

Having set a daunting 183run target, Mumbai Indians blew away what had been a resolute top and middle-order of the UP Warriorz, with Wong producing a superb hat-trick in the 13th over to seal the outcome in favour of her side.

ous Alyssa Healy (11) early and getting rid of an on-song Kiran Navgire (43), Wong cleaned up Simran Sheikh (0) and Sophie Ecclestone (0) to take a wicket each on the second, third and the fourth deliveries of her third over to produce a matchwinning spell.

UP Warriorz were shot out

for a mere 110 in 17.4 overs. Navgire waged a lone battle for UP Warrioz with an entertaining 27-ball 43 with four fours and three sixes, but none of the other batters troubled the scorers in what turned out to be a one-sided contest.

UP Warriorz were off to a disastrous start, losing openers Healy and Shweta Sehrawat (1) inside the first three overs.

While Saika Ishaque (2.4-1-24-2) produced a wicketmaiden second over that included the scalp of Sehrawat, Wong got Healy caught by her counterpart Harmanpreet Kaur at mid-off in the third.

Mumbai dealt another severe blow on the UP Warriorz when batting mainstay Tahlia McGrath (7) was run out in the fifth over while trying to steal a single from a packed off-side field.

With their backs pressed firmly against the wall, Navgire took the attack to Mumbai with two fours and a six off Ishaque and Grace Harris also

got a four. The sixth over yielded 20 runs for UP Warriorz, who were 46/3 at the end of the

Navgire also got a lifeline when she tried to clear the ropes again, off Amelia Kerr, with Hayley Matthews (1/13) spilling a regulation chance.

Navgire and Harris' fourthwicket stand for 35 runs was eventually broken in the eighth over when Sciver-Brunt claimed her first wicket, getting the latter caught by Wong for 14. At the halfway stage, UP Warriorz were 63/4.

Navgire then smacked two sixes off Kerr and Deepti Sharma (16) got a four to collect 19 runs from the 12th over, but Mumbai Indians broke their stand soon.

Navgire perished after playing one straight to deep midwicket, after a quickfire 43, off Wong. The English bowler clean up Sheikh and had Ecclestone chop one on to her wickets to complete her hat-

Earlier in the first innings, Sciver-Brunt's blistering unbeaten 72 powered Mumbai Indians to a daunting total.

Sciver-Brunt was at her brutal best with the bat, clobbering nine fours and two sixes to make an unbeaten 72 and certainly made the most of an early lifeline when she was on six, with Sophie Ecclestone (2/39) dropping a regulation catch off Rajeshwari Gayakwad

UP Warriorz controlled the first half of the knockout clash largely through their spin bowlers, not allowing Mumbai batters to get away or notch up any big individual totals, barring Sciver-Brunt, who seemed unstoppable. The right-handed Sciver-Brunt provided much-needed impetus late for Mumbai Indians in the company of Kerr (29 off 19 balls, 5x4s), adding 60 runs for the fourth wicket. Having added 78 runs from overs 5-15, Mumbai Indians smashed 66 runs in the last five overs to put up a stiff total. The likes of Yastika Bhatia (21), Matthews (26) and Kaur (14) got starts but UP Warriorz kept control for the large part of the game after an erratic

ue to display relatively low numbers of suspicious matches, 13 suspicious cricket matches is still the highest annual figure recorded by Sportradar Integrity Services, and handball and futsal also recorded their highest ever number of suspicious matches," the report stated.

13 suspicious cricket matches were played

across globe last year: Sportradar report

The PTI had sent a questionnaire to Sportradar to understand which format has been corrupted the most and whether it is international games or matches in the T20 leagues. However, a look at the report states that the company is not referring to any matches played in India as per the graphics depicted in the report. Therefore, one could ascertain that none

of the 13 corrupt matches mentioned in the report has been played in India. Sportradar, in fact, had partnered with

the BCCI's anti-corruption unit in 2020 to

detect betting irregularities during IPL rule where we can either use a

Kimmich praises Nagelsmann amid reports Bayern coach out



 $B^{
m ayern}$ Munich midfielder Joshua Kimmich praised Julian Nagelsmann as an "outstanding" coach Friday amid reports that the 35-yearold manager is set to be fired and replaced by Thomas Tuchel.

Both Kicker magazine and German tabloid Bild reported Thursday that Bayern was ending Nagelsmann's spell in charge following the team's 2-1 loss at Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga on

'I can only say that Julian Nagelsmann is an outstanding coach. Really, I've had a lot of coaches and a lot of top coaches and despite that

I'd say he's easily in the top three of my best coaches," Kimmich told reporters Friday as he prepares to captain Germany in a friendly against Peru on

ly understand that I can't say anything" about the Germany coach Hansi Flick, who was Nagelsmann's predecessor at Bayern, said he was

"As things stand at the moment, you can sure-

'very surprised" to see reports saying Nagelsmann would be removed. Bayern's defeat to Leverkusen dropped

Bayern to second place in the Bundesliga, one point behind Borussia Dortmund before the teams clash in Munich in the "Klassker" on April 1.

The Associated Press has asked Bayern for comment but the club has yet to make a statement about the situation.

Kicker reported that Bayern is in touch with Tuchel and that the German coach is expected to join Friday or Saturday. Tuchel led Chelsea to the Champions League title in 2021 and previously coached Paris Saint-Germain — losing the 2020 Champions League final to Bayern - and

Bayern faces Manchester City in the Champions League quarterfinals on April 11.

Dortmund.

Warner will have point to prove in IPL'

PTI MUMBAI

 ${f F}$ ormer Australia all-rounder and assistant coach of Delhi Capitals Shane Watson says the team's new captain David Warner will have a "point to prove" in the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League,

starting on March 31. Warner, who joined Delhi Capitals ahead of the 2022 season, has been named captain for IPL 2023 due to Rishabh Pant being ruled out following a horrific car accident in December son.

. Warner has captained Delhi franchise in the past, the then Delhi Daredevils, and has had a successful run as a skipper in IPL with the Sunrisers Hvderabad, leading them to their only title win in the 2016 edition.

Warner had an overall successful stint with SRH, but his poor form with the bat and his subsequent fallout with the team management was followed by an undignified exit in the 2021 sea-

"Although a number of sports contin-Myanmar face stiff challenge against Kyrgyz in Tri-Nation football trophy

PTI ■ IMPHAL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ruption in sports.

There were 13 competitive cricket match-Les that came under the cloud of suspi-

cion in 2022, according to a review report

published by Sportradar Integrity Services.

international team of qualified integrity

experts who deliver analysis on irregular bet-ting, match-fixing and other forms of cor-

Corruption and Match-Fixing' states that in

calender year 2022, an unprecedented

"1212 suspicious matches" were detected

across 12 sporting disciplines in 92 coun-

Universal Fraud Detection System (UFDS)

to detect suspicious activity during matches.

es, which possibly could have been corrupt-

ed, basketball is second in the list with 220

such games, and lawn tennis is third with

Interestingly, among 12 sports, cricket only has 13 allegedly corrupt games and is sixth in the list. The report claims that 13

corrupt games could still be the highest for

75 questionable games.

the sport in a single year.

Sportradar Integrity Services unit is an

The 28-page report titled 'Betting,

The company uses an application

While football accounted for 775 match-

 $M_{\text{against the Kyrgyz Repub-}}^{\text{yanmar will square off}}$ lic in their second match of the Tri-Nation International Football Tournament at the Khuman Lampak Stadium here on Satur-

The tournament sees international football being featured in the football-crazy state for the first time, as India play host to Myanmar and Kyrgyz Republic. The two outstation teams

have already been in Imphal over the past week, where they have been training in preparation for the tournament. Myanmar had faced India in the opening match, which the hosts

Myanmar head coach Michael Feichtenbeiner looked to ease the pressure off from his players' shoulders, as he chose to



focus on performance, rather than results.

"Our target is to improve our performance first, and then to improve as a team. Only then can we reach something in terms of results. Of course, we want to get better results, that's the main target overall," said Feichtenbeiner in a release.

Feichtenbeiner showed a lot of respect for the opposition team when asked about the

Kyrgyz Republic.
"They have a strong line-up that will come to their advantage tomorrow. The last few matches were not as successful for us, but we want to change that and try our best," he said.

Sharath Kamal pulls out of Nationals due to back spasms

Back and calf issues have forced defending champion Achanta Sharath Kamal to pull out of the men's singles event of the 84th UTT Inter-State Senior National Table Tennis Championships beginning here on Saturday.

The last-minute pullout because of the recurring back and calf spasms that Sharath has suffered in the past two months have dealt a blow to the organisers and the local spectators.

But his absence would help former national champion G. Sathiyan's cause as he eyes his second title. Sharath, a 10-time national champion, said he has to be cautious and continue the rehab programmes devised before the World Championships in Durban in May.

"The Worlds in May last

week is my focus, and I want to prepare well for the big event. Most importantly, I don't want to aggravate the situation. I am going straight to rehab and concentrate just on the Durban Worlds," he said in a release.

The PSPB paddler indulged in extra stretching before the quarters and semi-finals of the team championships to keep fit. He was in discomfort, but his commitment to the team's cause kept him going as he competed and won the matches without letting the cat out of the bag.
As for the matches on the

fifth day of the championships, the top 16 seeded players in the men's section and eight in the women's category will get into action from Saturday when the second stage draw, the knockout, begins. The women will play three rounds, while the men will play two. With the group topper



emerging as the qualifier for the knockout round, there will be a tough fight among the players in 78 groups (women) and 96 in men's singles, respectively.

Meanwhile, the 16 men and eight women players will have a good day's rest before the battle for the title and the prize purse of Rs. 16 lakh gets hot.

The top-ranked players in both sections are:

Men: G. Sathiyan, Manush Shah, Harmeet Desai, Manav Thakkar, Sanil Shetty, Anirban Ghosh, Sudhanshu Grover, Jeet Chandra, SFR Snehit, Soumyajit Ghosh, Anthony Amalrai, Ronit Bhanja, Payas Jain, Deepit R. Patil, Yashansh Malik and Subh

Women: Manika Batra, Sreeja Akula, Reeth Rishya, Diya Chitale, Sutirtha Mukherjee, Anusha Kutumbale, Swastika Ghosh and Pra