

CITY 3
UP NOW A STATE OF
MAHOTSAVAS: CM**WORLD 6**
4 KILLED WHILE COLLECTING
FREE FLOUR IN PAK**SPORT 8**
I HAVE PLANNED SPL
DELIVERY FOR IPL: SHIVAM

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Even if jailed, will fight on: Rahul

‘I am not scared of threats, disqualifications, allegations, prison sentences’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Addressing his first Press conference after his disqualification from the Lok Sabha, a combative Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said he would continue to defend democracy in the country even if he is disqualified from Parliament for life or jailed and claimed that a “panic-stricken” Government has handed the Opposition a “big weapon” by disqualifying him.

Rahul claimed that the action against him was taken because Prime Minister Narendra Modi was “scared” of his next speech in Parliament on the Adani issue and alleged that the “whole game” is to distract people from the issue and the panic the Government is feeling over the matter.

Rahul was disqualified from the Lok Sabha on Friday, a day after a court in Gujarat’s Surat convicted him in a 2019 defamation case.

The disqualification will bar Rahul (52), a four-time MP, from contesting polls for eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction.

He said he would continue to ask questions on the Adani issue, adding the moot questions remain that who invested ₹20,000 crore in Adani shell firms and what is the businessman’s relationship with the prime minister. He vowed he will keep raising these questions.

Asserting that “democracy has finished in this country”, the former Congress chief claimed that he never sought foreign intervention in his remarks made in the UK and accused Union Ministers of “lying” against him in Parliament to which he said he wanted to respond but was not allowed.

He also said the BJP is trying to divert the issue by alleging that he had insulted OBCs and he would continue to ask what is Modi’s relationship with businessman Gautam Adani.

“I am here defending the democratic voice of the Indian people, I will continue to do that. I am not scared of these



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a press conference at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

threats, of these disqualifications, allegations, prison sentences. I am not scared of them. These people don’t understand me yet, I am not scared of them,” he said, attacking the BJP.

“Disqualify me for life, put me inside jail, I will keep going. I will not stop,” he said, noting that it makes no difference to him. “I have been disqualified because the Prime Minister is scared of my next speech. I have seen it in his eyes. So he is terrified of the next speech that is going to come and does not want that speech to be in Parliament,” the former Congress chief alleged at the 30-minute Press conference, flanked by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel and party general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal.

He claimed that his attack on Adani was the reason for distraction through allegations and now disqualification. Rahul, when asked if he was worried, quipped, “Do I look worried. I am excited, I am happy that they have given me the best gift that they could give me.”

Continued on Page 6

Legal recourse or paint Rahul as martyr? Cong mulls cash-in-on plan

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Several theories within the Congress are doing the rounds on how to “encash” the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi as Lok Sabha member in elections. While a section of the party think tank is of the opinion that let “Rahul be allowed to become a ‘political martyr’ and lead the 2024 Lok Sabha” another group has been contemplating to field Priyanka Gandhi from Wayanad which Rahul represented till Friday morning.

“Another theory working is to fight back legally and retain the Lok Sabha berth as it is, and simultaneously dig out similar statements or speech by BJP leaders and get cases registered at least in the Congress and its alliance State Governments,”

said senior party leader and a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Congress legal luminaries led by team like Abhishek Manu Singhvi, P Chidambaram, Vivek Tankha, Pramod Tiwari, have done a few round of deliberations in the last 48 hours over the prospect to deal with the conviction ruling in Surat court in Gujarat. Sources said the Congress is also working to rope in their former party colleague and a legal eagle Kapil Sibal now in the Rajya Sabha backed by the Samajwadi Party.

Sibal took a swipe at two BJP Ministers for accusing Rahul of insulting OBCs with his “Modi surname” remark in 2019, saying they were “insulting” people’s intelligence by making such an “absurd allegation.”

Continued on Page 6

Rahul lies, defames PM: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP spokesperson Ravishankar Prasad on Saturday alleged that the Congress did not press into service its battery of lawyers to immediately obtain a stay on Rahul Gandhi’s conviction by a court in Surat with a view to portray the Congress leader as “martyr” and “encashing” the issue in the upcoming Assembly polls in Karnataka.

Talking to reporters here soon after Rahul’s Press conference alleging that he has been targeted by the BJP to divert attention from the “Modi-Adani” row, Prasad accused the former Congress president of “lying” and “defaming” Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The BJP leader gave a list of projects which the business tycoon Gautam Adani had signed in many countries, including in Australia and Indonesia, “when the Congress under Manohan Singh was in power at the Centre”.

Reminding Rahul that he and his mother are on bail in the National Herald case, Prasad alleged that Rahul is trying to tarnish the fair name of the Prime Minister.

“Doesn’t he feels ashamed?”, the BJP said.

Prasad said Rahul has been accusing businessman Adani “without any proof”. He was, though, also quick to add “we are not defending Adani”.

He said Adani “has bagged Rs 65,000 crore projects in the Congress-ruled Rajasthan and that of Rs 15,000 crore in West Bengal.”

Prasad said Rahul has become “frustrated” as “people are not voting for his party”. “He is not respecting peoples mandate,” said Prasad.

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Yogi: Govt has worked tirelessly to deliver

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated on Saturday that his government worked tirelessly to deliver the schemes of the Central and state governments and that their goal was to complete the work on the Ganga Expressway before the Prayagraj Kumbh in 2025. Addressing the media on completion of six years in office on Saturday, Yogi Adityanath said: “Eastern UP is today connected with Purvanchal Expressway and Bundelkhand Expressway. The work of Ganga Expressway is going on at a fast pace to connect western UP with central UP and eastern UP. Our effort is to complete the work of Ganga Expressway before Prayagraj Kumbh in 2025. Devotees will be welcomed by the Ganga Expressway.”

The chief minister went on to say that the process of connecting every district headquarters with four-lane roads had either been completed or was progressing fast. He said continuous work was going on to connect the district headquarters with the ring road.

“UP has the most extensive metro service in the country.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing media persons on completing six years in office in Lucknow on Saturday

The metro is currently operational in five cities, and in the sixth, Agra, it is set to open in November-December. The prime minister will also inaugurate rapid rail service next month,” he said.

The chief minister stated that when the government took over in 2017, two airports were fully operational and two were partially operational and today there were nine fully operational airports in the state. “We are currently working on 12 airports, and the Airport Authority of India has given its consent for providing air connectivity,” he

added. “Within the next two years, Uttar Pradesh will be the first state to have five international airports. Three international airports are currently operational. By next year, Ayodhya and the Jewar international airport will be operational. The country’s first waterway has been started from Varanasi to Haldia. UP, which never had a port, has today the eastern port with a waterway from Varanasi to Haldia. We are constantly making efforts to take the products of the farmers to the global market,” Yogi said.

Related reports on P2, 3

Nitu, Saweety world champs



Saweety Boora celebrates her win over China’s Wang Lina during the final match in 81 kg category at the 2023 IBA Women’s Boxing World Championships, in New Delhi on Saturday. (Right) India’s Nitu Ghanghas poses with Gold medal during award ceremony, after winning the final match over Mongolia’s Lutsaikhhan Altansetseg in 48 kg category at the 2023 IBA Women’s Boxing World Championships, in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) and the seasoned Saweety Boora (81kg) etched their names in Indian boxing history as they were crowned world champions after notching contrasting wins at the marquee tournament here on Saturday.

Commonwealth Games gold medalist Nitu put up a stupendous performance to see off Mongolia’s Lutsaikhhan Altansetseg 5-0 and claim the title in the minimum weight category in front of a packed crowd, with Beijing Olympics bronze medalist and Nitu’s idol Vijender Singh also present.

Saweety made it two out of two for the hosts as she ward-

ed off a challenge from two-time medalist China’s Wang Lina. In the first bout, Nitu started off aggressively and used her combination of punches to land jabs and hooks effectively.

The 22-year-old Bhiwani boxer was able to take the first round 5-0. She began the second round with a series of straight jabs.

When Altansetseg attacked, the Indian southpaw countered with right hooks. The two boxers played from a close range and indulged in a lot of holding in a fast-paced bout with Nitu being given a penalty deduction for clinching towards the end of the second round.

Despite Altansetseg’s

strong comeback in the round, Nitu managed to take it 3-2. In the final three minutes, Nitu started from afar but soon ditched the strategy and reverted to playing from a close range, as Altansetseg was also given a point deduction for clinching.

Nitu has been in indomitable form in the tournament, winning her first three bouts by RSC (referee stops contest).

Against Alua Balkibekova, who knocked her out in the last edition in the quarterfinal stage, she skillfully adapted to negate the Kazakh’s strong suit.

“I had decided to play aggressively today before the bout and I feel very happy (after

Continued on Page 6

Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes metro ride in Bengaluru on Saturday

PTI

Cong sees K’taka as ATM to fill its leaders coffers: Modi

PTI ■ CHIKKABALLAPURA/
DAVANGERE/BENGALURU

In poll-bound Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday made a strong pitch for the return of the ruling BJP, and lashed out at politics of manipulation and addressed a public rally at Davangere after getting yet another rousing reception in his seventh visit to the State.

The PM wrapped up a busy day of public engagements that also included a tribute to the legendary Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya and a Metro rail ride on a new route that Modi inaugurated.

In yet another stinging attack on the Congress, he said it looks at Karnataka as an

“ATM” to fill the coffers of its leaders.

Seeking a resounding mandate for a successive stint for the BJP in Karnataka, Modi said a stable government led by the saffron party was the need of the hour for the State’s fast paced development.

Stressing that Karnataka should be brought out of the “politics of manipulation”, he said BJP wants to make the State a driving force of developed India, while the Congress looks at it as “an ATM that fills the treasury of its leaders”.

This visit of the Prime Minister — his seventh to Karnataka this year — gains significance as the Election Commission is expected to announce the poll schedule

for Assembly elections, due by May, in the next few days.

On Saturday, the PM also inaugurated Sri Madhusudan Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research in Chikaballapura district, and Whitefield (Kadugodi) to Krishnarajapura Metro Line of Bangalore Metro in Bengaluru. He took a Metro ride after buying a ticket.

“Karnataka has seen a long period of opportunistic and selfish coalition governments, Karnataka has faced losses due to such governments So, for the fast paced development of Karnataka, BJP’s full majority, stable government is needed,” Modi tol a mega rally in Davangere headquarters.

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Land-for-jobs: CBI quizzes Tejashwi, ED grills Misa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investigation agencies on Saturday questioned Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav and his MP sister Misa Bharti in connection with the railways land-for-jobs case here, officials said.

While Tejashwi was quizzed by the CBI for more than eight hours, the ED questioned Bharti for over six hours, they said.

Slamming the BJP over the questioning of the two RJD leaders, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged the ruling party wants to finish off the

Opposition and expressed solidarity saying, “We are all united against the attack on democracy.”

See P4

RJD leader Misa Bharti arrives at the ED office for questioning in connection with the land-for-jobs case, in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

FM reviews PSBs’ financial health amid US banking failure

Asks bankers to be vigilant of rate risks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday reviewed the performance of public sector banks (PSBs) on various financial health parameters and their resilience in the wake of the current global financial scenario emanating from the failure of some international banks in the US and Europe.



She urged the banks to remain vigilant about the interest rate risks and regularly undertake stress tests.

During the two hours meeting with MDs and CEOs of PSBs, an open discussion was held on the global scenario amid the failure of the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank (SB), along with the issues leading to the

crisis in Credit Suisse.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi and other senior officials, an official statement said. She also discussed the developing and immediate external global financial stress from both short and long-term perspectives. During the PSB review meeting, she emphasised that the banks should undertake due diligence and adhere to the regulatory framework by focusing on risk management and diversification of deposits and assets base.

Continued on Page 6

Usha, Mithali, Rawat's daughter to witness Agniveers' passout

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Queen of Indian track and field PT Usha, former Indian women team captain Mithali Raj and daughters of late General Bipin Rawat, the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) will be present on the historic day on March 28 when the first ever batch of Agniveers pass out from Navy’s training institute INS Chilka.

As first reported in *The Pioneer* on Friday, the Passing Out Parade (POP) of the first batch of Agniveers is scheduled at INS Chilka on March 28.

The POP marks the successful completion of training of close to 2,600 Agniveers

including 273 women. In another first, the parade will take place post sunset unlike in the morning as done earlier.

Navy chief Admiral Hari Kumar will be the chief guest and the Reviewing Officer of the Passing out Parade, navy officials said here on Saturday. The successful trainees would be deployed on frontline warships for their sea training.

The Agnipath recruitment scheme to transform the armed forces to fight modern day war was launched on June 14 last year. The Navy selected 2,600 Agniveers and their training commenced in November last year.

Continued on Page 6

Minister boasts of dev works under Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh minister Suresh Khanna, who is also the incharge of Lucknow, gave an account of the development works carried out in the district in the last six years. While addressing mediapersons on Saturday on the completion of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's six years in office, he said: "Selfie points and wall murals have been created at major crossings of the city. Wall paintings have been made and a lot of publicity is being given to the Lucknow Municipal Corporation's residential scheme Ahana Greens. To streamline traffic, 'no parking' boards have been kept at key points while online tax provisions and schemes for nomina-

tion have been made."

He pointed out that LMC has repaired and constructed 415-km roads at the cost of Rs 210 crore while repair work of drains (85.50 km) has been at the expense of Rs 40 crore for the year 2022-2023.

Highlighting the works by Lucknow Development Authority, he said that from IIM to Kisan Path, a four-lane road (26 km) is being constructed while the construction of a bridge is in first phase at the Gau Ghat. Bandha is being broadened from IIM to Pucca Pul and a four-lane road is being constructed over it which will cost approximately Rs 71 crore. He further pointed out that various projects under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana were successfully and qualita-



tively completed before being dedicated to the public.

He said that in Lohia Park, work was carried out on CCTV cameras, speakers and lights. He said that a 'Master Plan 2031' has been made for Lucknow by LDA for which objections and suggestions

have been sought, and the final draft will be finished soon.

"Under ease of doing business, various online systems have been created such as online mutation, refund and duplicate order as well as freehold facilities. An online approval system for building maps and first-come-first-served system for residential schemes have been initiated.

Regarding the infrastructure projects, he said 256 projects have been dedicated to the public while 55 new roads are being constructed, widened and strengthened. Eighteen bridges, flyovers have been constructed and 96 projects launched. He said work has been carried out at Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Sansthan while five primary health cen-

tres have been constructed.

"Modular theatres have been created at SGPGI at the cost of Rs 7.74 crore while a 200-bed Covid ward (Rs 4.28 crore) at KGMU, a 100-bed MCH wing (Rs 20.43 crore) created at Queen Mary's hospital and establishment of a transplant unit (Rs 1.57 crore) in the second phase of Shatabdi Hospital have been set up," he said.

He said that 269 houses under the CM housing schemes have been completed and 14,562 houses in rural areas completed under Prime Minister Awas Scheme. "Irrigation facilities have been provided through 163 canals and 19,535 residences completed under the urban housing scheme," he added.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paid a courtesy call to Governor Anandiben Patel at Raj Bhawan on Saturday



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Firdaus to Firdaush Jahan W/o Abul Kalam R/o 139/132 Gajipurwa, Jajmau, Kanpur-10. In future I would be known by this name only.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from GURSHARAN SINGH BHATIA to GURSHARAN SINGH. Hereinafter, I shall be known and identified with new name. Gursharan Singh, 122/444, Shastri Nagar, Kanpur Nagar.

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I have changed my name from Vanika Kapoor to Vanika Tuli W/o Karan Tuli R/o 127/1048, W-1, Saket Nagar, Juh, P.S. Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur-14. In future I would be known by this name only.

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I have to changed my name from Kakhasha Khanam to Kaikasha Salman Khan W/o Mohammad Salman Khan for future purpose. Add- 116/85 Adarsh Nagar Rawatpur Gaon Kanpur Nagar.

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I have changed my name from Dileep Kumar to Dileep Kumar Sharma S/o Suresh Prasad Sharma R/o - 20 Mangla Vihar-2, Sanigawan Road, P.S. Chakeri, Kanpur-21. In future I would be known by this name only.

NOTICE

I Sati Devi Mother of No 2805256 A LNK Ravi Karan resident of at Vill Kandhiya PO Kandhiya Teh Fatehpur Dist Fatehpur State Uttar Pradesh Pin 212620 have changed my name from Sati Devi to pachiniyan vide Affidavit dated 24/03/2023 before 1st class Magistrate IN-UP 67825981003929 V

NOTICE

I, SHUBHAM RAJ BANERJEE son of VIPALOV BANRJI residing at 8/68, Arya Nagar, Kanpur, UP-208002, declare vide Aff. No. IN-UP69026992100908V, Dtd: 25/03/23 that name of mine & my mother has been wrongly written as SHUBHAM RAJ BANRJI & MANSI BANRJI in my educational documents. The actual name of mine & my mother is SHUBHAM RAJ BANERJEE & MANSI BANERJEE.

NOTICE

I Sushmita Yashwardhan D/o Satish Chandra Mahaur resident of Bharat Nagar, Sitapur Road, Lucknow, wants to declare that I've completed my 10th in 2016 and the mentioned names in marksheet are Sushmita Yashwardhan, Father's name-Satish Yashwardhan and Mother's name- Radha Yashwardhan are incorrect. The correct names are Sushmita Yashwardhan D/o Satish Chandra Mahaur and Radha Rani Devi.

Double-engine govt has worked to promote industry: Khanna

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ambassadors and diplomats from 19 countries participated in the 'International MSME Business Conclave 2023', organised at a city hotel on Saturday.

UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said the perception of the country and the state has changed in the last eight years. "The double-engine government has done a lot of work to promote the industry. In Uttar Pradesh, the government has implemented the new industrial policy. Right from the beginning, it has been our intention that entrepreneurs should not face any problem in setting up industries. As a result, the state is at the second position in ease of doing business. He said that due to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'zero tolerance' policy against corruption, UP has become the first choice of investors. "To promote industries, we have made many provisions in the budget. Soon, we are going to start Jhansi-Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority. Today 96 lakh MSMEs are working in UP. Our government believes that the development of the



state and the country cannot happen without the development of the industry," he said.

ACS, MSME, Amit Mohan Prasad said that small, medium and micro industries are the backbone of the economy besides being the biggest means of employment. "Recently, the Global Investors' Summit was organised in the state capital and 20,652 MoUs worth Rs 35 lakh crore were signed. It goes to show that UP has become the first choice of investors and the state is not far from the USD 1-trillion economy goal," he said. IIA national president Ashok Agarwal said the main objectives of the conclave were to explore export possibilities for the products of MSMEs of the country, increase the exchange of technology, increase bilateral investment and exchange of business delegations.

Cong should support regional parties: AKY

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the Congress should keep the regional party forward and then fight in the elections as only then they could win against the Bharatiya Janata Party.

"National parties have always insulted regional parties. First, this was done by Congress and now the BJP is doing it. This is a chance for the Congress to redefine its role in national politics and support regional parties fighting the BJP. Congress should keep the regional party forward and then fight in the elections as then only they can win against the BJP. This is the responsibility of Congress," Akhilesh Yadav said on Saturday.

"In many states, the Congress does not exist in

comparison to the BJP, but regional parties are fighting tooth and nail against the saffron camp on the ground, and I am hopeful that they will succeed," he said.

The SP chief said regional parties in several states were fighting the BJP and all parties fighting the BJP should join hands. He said none of the promises made by the BJP in 2014 and 2019 were fulfilled.

"It is time for the Congress to support the regional parties. Samajwadi Party is challenging the BJP in Uttar Pradesh and will defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections," Akhilesh Yadav said and added, "All non-BJP political parties should support the Samajwadi Party in 2024 Lok Sabha elections."

Exuding confidence that an opposition alliance would take shape in the days to come,



Akhilesh Yadav said regional parties would play a key role in putting up a fight against the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. However, on the role of the Congress in this proposed opposition front, Yadav said it was for the grand old party to decide.

"Efforts are on to forge an opposition alliance or front. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao are making efforts. I am confident that in the days to come, an opposition alliance will take shape, which will fight against the BJP," the SP chief said.

When told that regional parties such as the Janata Dal (United), Rashtriya Janata Dal and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) were keen on having the Congress in the opposition alliance, Yadav said they were already in a coalition with the grand old party.

"It is a question of a big fight, and the Congress itself will decide its role in this fight," he said. Asked who would be the face of the opposition camp in the next Lok

Sabha elections, Yadav said it would be decided after the polls and it was "not a pertinent question" right now.

"You are talking about face. What about the (BJP's) face in 2014 and 2019, who made false promises to win the election?" he said without naming Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

When asked whether his party would contest from Rae Bareilly and Amethi Lok Sabha constituencies in UP as they were considered pocket boroughs of the Congress, Yadav said that SP workers were being killed in Amethi.

"In Amethi, our cadres are being killed. The Samajwadi Party workers are questioning who will fight for them. It is the samajwadi workers there who are supporting each other; the Congress workers are not coming out in our support," he said.

12 booked for violence, bid to grab govt land

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 12 people were arrested on Saturday for installing a statue of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar allegedly in a bid to grab the gram samaj land in Kakori.

As per reports, the group of men had installed the statue of the Dalit icon at the government land in Kakori's Behta village on March 21 night.

Villagers lodged a complaint with the SDM, who sent officials to the scene for confirmation. A spokesman said the Kakori police and revenue officials were asked to remove the statue as per the rule. "However, the villagers flew into rage and pelted the cops and revenue officials with bricks, and also attacked them with sticks. The villagers also damaged government vehicles," the

spokesman said.

Sub-inspector Haridas Chaurasia lodged a complaint and the police arrested the accused whose names surfaced in the investigation. "The accused have been booked for rioting, attempt to murder and for stopping government officials discharging their duty," the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a Banthara police team arrested three

accused involved in a road hold-up incident on Saturday. Those arrested were identified as Asif & Shiv Shanker Shukla (both of Meerut) and Mehtab aka Kaluwa of Hapur district. The police said the accused were named in 29 cases in west UP districts, including Bareilly, Hapur and Meerut. The police recovered 61 cartons of mustard oil, Rs 1.02 lakh in cash, two cartons of toilet cleaner and two

cartons of a cleaning solution.

Abhishek Kumar of Kanpur Road had lodged a complaint stating that four people looted the goods after tying the driver and cleaner with a rope and then dumping them in Junab Ganj locality.

Meanwhile, a flower vendor, Govind Maurya aka Golu of LDA Colony (Sector F), was hit by a train in the area on Saturday morning.

STF nabs slain gangster Brijesh Yadav's shooter

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team of the Special Task Force (STF) claimed to have nabbed a dreaded shooter of slain gangster Brijesh Yadav from Barhalganj in Gorakhpur on Saturday.

The accused, identified as Raju Ansari aka Aftab of Sitamarhi in Bihar, was carrying a cash reward of Rs 50,000 announced by Gorakhpur police and was absconding since 2010. He was arrested on a tip-off from near a bus stand.

In his confession, Raju Ansari said he did stitchery in Ludhiana (Punjab) and visited Gorakhpur for the marriage of his colleague Raju's sister. He said he met one Deepak Mishra, who introduced him to Brijesh Yadav, who was killed in a police encounter in 2008.

On the instance of his mentor Brijesh Yadav, Ansari and others launched a bomb attack on Markandey Singh in 2006 but the latter had a narrow escape. Ansari was sent to jail where he met several criminals and he formed a gang.

In 2010, Asnari and his men shot dead jeweller Jasveer Singh, who was a native of Punjab, in Barhalganj and looted ornaments worth Rs 5.50 lakh. He looted Rs 2 lakh after shooting Pankaj Kumar in Chiluwatal police station area of Gorakhpur.

The police said Ansari and his men freed their aide Ran Vijay Singh from police custody by launching an attack on a team that was escorting him to a court in Gorakhpur. A constable, Manager Singh, was killed in the attack. The police said Ansari was involved in as many as seven heinous crime cases. Sources said the police were rummaging through Ansari's criminal past and his links with criminals/ gangs active in Siwan, and other districts of Bihar. The police recovered a mobile phone, Rs 110 in cash and Rs 1,130 in Nepali currency from the possession of the accused.

PROBE ORDERED

Meanwhile, a day after a man died of shock following

the arrest of his son in an Arms Act case in Rae Bareilly, a probe was ordered into it on Saturday.

Police said Amresh Raidas, 22, was found in possession of country-made pistols and he was arrested on March 22. A day later, his father, Ramdev, died due to cardiac arrest as the detention of his son came as a big shock to him, as per the family members.

Superintendent of Police, Rae Bareilly, Alok Priyadarshi, has been asked to conduct the probe and submit a report in three days.

Rajdev's wife Soni has alleged that her son was arrested in a fake case and though her husband kept pleading, the SHO of Bhadokhar booked their son in a false case.

The family staged a protest demanding suspension of the local cops, including the SHO of Bhadokhar, and registration of case against them. It also held the cops responsible for Rajdev's death.

The post-mortem report revealed cardiac arrest as the cause of Rajdev's death.

Businessman duped of over ₹24 lakh

Lucknow (PNS): A businessman was duped of over Rs 4 lakh, which he paid as an advance sum, for bulk purchase of refrigerators, in Aliganj. The incident took place on March 13 but a case was registered in this regard on March 21.

Prakhar Chaudhary of Mehndi Tola got a call from an unknown number and the caller introduced himself as the representative of a company selling refrigerators. The caller convinced him to purchase 84

refrigerators from the company. Prakhar was asked to pay some advance amount to place the order and he transferred over Rs 4 lakh into a bank account mentioned by the accused. However, as Prakhar did not get the refrigerators, he dialled the same number but it was switched off. "I first called him on March 18 to know about the status of my order but he beat around the bush. I tried calling him again but found the phone switched off," he stated in his

complaint on this basis of which police registered a case in this connection.

Meanwhile, a woman was deprived of Rs 95,651 in Mahanagar. As per reports, Geetika Gupta of Gyan Ganga Apartment in the area got a call from an unknown number. The caller asked her to update her KYC and later sent her a link on February 24. When the woman clicked on link, her bank account was debited with the above-mentioned amount.

CITYBRIEFS



Meritorious students honoured at the Divine Education Conference of CMS, Kanpur Road campus, on Saturday

GRADUATION CEREMONY

A graduation ceremony was held at the Air Force Station, Memaura, on Saturday to mark the culmination of No. 167 Fighter Controllers' Course. The course comprising 13 Indian Air Force (IAF) officers had commenced at the Air Defence College on January 2. The function marked the culmination of the course and donning of the coveted fighter controllers' badge for the graduating officers. Air Vice Marshal JS Mann, Air Defence Commander, Central Air Command (CAC), was present on the occasion as the reviewing officer. The ceremony was attended by Group Captain Kamal Chadha, station commander and other important functionaries. Meritorious Officers were awarded with trophies and medallions by the reviewing officer. Mridul Dubey was adjudged the best in overall performance and was awarded the AOC-in-C, CAC, IAF Rolling Trophy.

LECTURE

The department of chemistry, Lucknow University, organised its 11th lecture in the 'Alumni Lecture Series'. The lecture was delivered by Vinay

Pande, an alumnus of MSc (Chemistry), 1984 batch. He was the headmaster of The Lawrence School (Sanwar, Himachal Pradesh) and is currently a freelance educational motivator in Dehradun. Pande shared his experiences during his stints at The Lawrence School. He said that a good teacher should be a good actor as well. Only subject knowledge is not enough to make teaching and learning effective and enjoyable," he said. He also gave a wide overview about the role of theatre in education and broadly divided the impact of theatre on teaching into ten broad categories.

SUMMIT

President of City Montessori School Geeta Gandhi Kingdon delivered a talk on 'The myth and reality of teacher shortage of India' at the 3rd Colombia Summit on the Indian Economy on Saturday. The summit was organised by the Colombia University in partnership with the Consulate General of India in New York. She addressed the widespread perception in India that the country has an acute shortage of teachers in public elementary schools, analysing the current status of teachers in

India vis-à-vis student enrolment data. She also called upon the students and teachers to develop global thinking along with their academic advancement. She said that the need of the hour is to produce world citizens who are imbued with character-building human values.

DIVINE EDUCATION CONFERENCES

The Anand Nagar, Gomti Nagar (II) and Kanpur Road campuses of City Montessori School organised divine education conferences on Saturday, disseminating the message of world unity and world peace through colourful educational-cultural programmes. The meritorious students, who had won prizes in various competitive examinations, cultural programmes, sports competitions and performed excellently in the annual examinations, were awarded and honoured.

WORKSHOP

The Richmond Fellowship Society on Saturday celebrated its 18th Annual Day function in Lucknow. The theme of the conference was 'Suicide Prevention'. According to experts, suicide is a preventable cause of loss of life. It is estimated that world over, every 40 second one person attempts suicide and eight lakh people end their lives annually. In India, 1,68,000 people committed suicide in 2021. RFS president Dr AK Agarwal welcomed the guest while organisation's secretary Dr Shashi Rai presented the annual report. A souvenir was released on the occasion. The vote of thanks was proposed by treasurer RFI (I) Lucknow Alok Saxena and Dr LK Maheshwari, vice-president Manorogi Kalyan Sansthan.

NOTICE

I Prem Shankar Goswami S/o Late Mata Prasad Goswami is informed that the property House No. 63/3 Area 35.981 sqm, Harbansh Mohal, Kanpur Nagar, UP on 29.11.1999 from Governor UP, District Magistrate Kanpur Nagar Prem Shankar Goswami has purchased whose registry is registered on dated 30.11.1999 in book number 1, section 2044, page number 1 to 24, serial number 3515, in the office of Deputy Registrar, Sadar, Kanpur Nagar, whose original deed has been lost, whose boundaries are as follows:- Est : 35 feet 9 inch road, West : Plot No.2 (Part) Block 63, North : Plot No.2 (Part) Block 63, South : Plot No.2 (Part) Block 63 In this regard, the applicant has registered a First Information Report No. 20230000169712 dated 23-03-2023 in Khoya-Paya. Therefore, if there is any objection in favour of the said property or in relation to the purchase, sale or mortgage to any other person or any financial institution or bank, please do so within 07 days from the date of publication of the notice at the following address. No claim or consideration of any kind will be considered after the above time period. Prem Shankar Goswami Son Late Mata Prasad 63/3 Harbansh Mohal, Kanpur Nagar, Mo.- 7459038263

PUBLIC NOTICE

Under the instruction of **AXIS Bank**, Lucknow, I hereby informed the general public that **Smt. Nikhat Malik** wife of Dr. Anwar Ali Malik is the absolute owner of House constructed on Part Plot No. 14, Khasra No. 20/1 Mini, measuring area 77.230 sq.mtr./831 sq. ft, having its municipal corporation no. 544D/341/003, situated at Village: Baraura Hussainbadi, Ward: Kantaiya Madawapur, Tehsil: District: Lucknow and regarding the ownership the previous **Original** chain deed dated 21/04/2011 executed by **Sri Santosh Singh** son of Sri Chandrika Prasad Singh in favour of **Sri Vijay Kumar Yadav** son of Sri Rajendra Yadav the absolute owner of **Sri Shyam Kumar Shukla**, registered as vide Book No. 1, Zild No. 6632, Pages on 243 to 274 at Sl. No. 4454 duly registered at the office of Sub-Registrar- V, Lucknow has been lost somewhere. Whereas **Sri Syed Khalid Mahmood** son of Mahmood Ahmad is intended to purchase the aforesaid property and is subjected to finance by **AXIS Bank**, Lucknow. An NCR has also been registered in this respect having details: **LAR No. 20230000170902**, dated 23.03.2023, Police Unit- State Crime Record Bureau, Lucknow. Anybody having claim or claiming any prior rights or interest in any manner in this property or has raised loan by depositing the aforesaid sale deed to any person/ bank/ corporate/ financial institution may submit objections within 7 days in writings from the date of public notice. After the expiry of the period of this notice, no claim shall be entertained and such claim shall have no value in the eyes of law. It shall also be deemed that nobody has any objection for mortgaging the aforesaid property with **AXIS Bank**, Lucknow. **Vivek Srivastava** (Advocate) Office/Resi-3/40, Vastu Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010 Ph: 9839485155

UP now a state of mahotsavas: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As chief minister, Yogi Adityanath completed six years in office on Saturday, saying that Uttar Pradesh was no longer known as a state of mafia, but now it was a state of mahotsava (festival) where words like jungle raj and goonda raj had become passé.

“UP has come a long way in the last six years, giving stability. The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) government has achieved this through mutually coordinated dialogue in UP. In six years, our government has made efforts at every level to implement the action plan for the overall development of UP with the inspiration of the prime minister. The result is in front of everyone. In order to increase the identity of UP as a state with limitless possibilities, we have identified 10 sectors, on which the entire team worked,” Yogi said while addressing a function here.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath released a book, ‘Chhah Saal-UP Khushhal’, based on the achievements of six years and also unveiled a poster.

The chief minister expressed his gratitude to the prime minister and said that under his inspiration and guidance, UP had carved out a distinct identity for itself in the country and the world. The chief minister also expressed his gratitude to the Union home minister, defence minister, road transport highways minister and members of the Union cabinet, office-bearers of central and state organisations of the party.

He said that the mutual coordination between the government and the party organisation contributed in taking the works of the double-engine government to the masses, adding they worked with diligence even in odd circumstances.

The chief minister said that out of six years, the government worked while fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic for three years. “UP, which was known as a BIMARU state that cannot develop, today is in the race for number one position in implementation of all the flagship schemes of the prime minister. The infrastructure of UP is



Chief minister Yogi Adityanath unveils a poster in Lucknow on Saturday

being discussed all over the country. There is transparency in provision of jobs to the youths. In the private sector too, efforts are on to create a lot of jobs and employment opportunities. Today, UP is providing an annual pension of Rs 12,000 to more than one crore destitute women, old women and the differently-abled,” he said.

Chief Minister Yogi said that this was the same UP, where all the parents used to worry about how to get their daughters married and educate them. “Today 14 lakh daughters have benefited from the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana while marriages of 2.25 lakh daughters have taken place under the

Chief Minister’s Mass Marriage Scheme. Continuous work is going on. Women self-help groups are working as a new model. Every malnourished family has been linked to the nutrition scheme of the Women and Child Development department. Their units are being set up in every block. UP has moved forward as an ideal state in terms of empowerment, honour and self-reliance of women,” he remarked.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the youths of the state were today getting jobs and employment opportunities and were moving towards economic independence. According to him, the work done in the micro, small and

medium enterprise (MSME) sector for self-employment was visible while Vishwakarma Shram Samman was giving a new identity to the handicraftsmen.

“We were able to make two crore youths technically competent. UP is the first state in the country where we have benefited 20 lakh youths from this. Today there is no district of UP where the youths have not got government jobs. Without discrimination, the youths of every section are getting jobs in a respectable manner. We have got success in furthering the prospects of jobs and employment to crores of youths. One District One Product (ODOP) scheme has provided employment to every

worker. UP has presented the standard of how to work with challenges in times of adversity,” he said.

To bring prosperity to farmers, an amount of Rs 3.5 lakh crore had been deposited in their accounts through DBT (direct benefit transfer), the chief minister said, adding that the amount increased to Rs 4 lakh crore if the loan waiver was added to this. “This shows the priorities of the government, which are villages, the poor, the youth, women and farmers rather than caste, or religion,” he added.

‘Six years free of fear’

Lucknow (PNS): Celebrating his six years in office, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted the achievement of a crime-free society giving a one-liner ‘six years sans fear’.

“There has not been a single riot in six years. Establishment of law and order in the state, which was considered impossible, has been made possible today. The process of recruitment of 1.64 lakh police personnel was completed in a transparent manner. Efforts were made for police reforms. Seven police commissionerates have been formed in UP. Fire brigades were established at every tehsil level in UP,” Yogi said while addressing a function held at Lok Bhawan here on Saturday.

He added: “Infrastructure facilities of the police have been improved. Good barracks have either been built or are in the process of being built in every police station and police line. Work is in progress to set up cyber police stations at every range and district level. The work of setting up forensic labs is also going on at every range level. The capacity of police training has been increased three times.”

“Cyber and forensic lab is being set up in Lucknow. Three battalions were formed for the establishment of SDRF (State Disaster Response Force). The 54 defunct battalions of the PAC were reconstituted. The number of women personnel was increased from 10,000 to 40,000. This in

itself is an example of women empowerment,” he said.

The chief minister said there was stability not only in the government but also in the administration.

“For the first time you must have seen that the district magistrates and district police chiefs are completing their tenure. Earlier officers were shuffled like playing cards. When there is stability in governance, there is stability in administration too and 25 crore people of UP are getting its benefit today,” Yogi Adityanath said.

#6SaalUPKhushHaal most popular trend on Twitter

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As the Uttar Pradesh government completed the first year of its second term on Saturday and Yogi Adityanath became the first chief minister to hold the power of UP for six years in a row, the hashtag #6SaalUPKhushHaal continued to be the most popular trend on the social media platform Twitter.

During this, the hashtag reached more than 85.7 crore Twitter users. At the same time, through this hashtag more than 21,000 times, people praised the achievements of the Uttar Pradesh government under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Apart from this, about 45,000 times users expressed their feelings through likes, replies, comments and retweets.

Two days ago, Twitter users from India and abroad had declared Yogi Adityanath as the most favorite chief minister of India.

UP BJP announces new executive

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The day Yogi Adityanath completed one year in office in his second term, the Uttar Pradesh unit of Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday night announced its 45-member state executive committee headed by party’s state president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary.

The reshuffle has taken into account all the castes with prominence being given to Other Backward Classes as 54 per cent of the committee members belong to this class.

MLA from Noida, Pankaj Singh, son of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has been retained as vice-president along with Vijay Bahadur Pathak, an MLC.

In the state executive there are 18 vice-presidents, seven general secretaries and 16 secretaries, party sources said.

Manish Kapoor will be the treasurer and Sanjeev Agarwal his deputy. Bharat Dixit will be the headquarters in-charge and Om Prakash Srivastava will be the in-charge of the cells. The party has also named presidents of the regional committees.

Yogi has realised vision of PM, says UP BJP chief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party state president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had realised the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by taking the state forward on the path of good governance and development. Expressing gratitude to the people for continuously blessing the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Chaudhary congratulated the chief minister for completing six years in office.

“Yogi Adityanath has dedicated his life to the welfare of the poor and has worked for the empowerment of the poor and the downtrodden. Uttar Pradesh is emerging as the growth engine of new India today, setting new dimensions of development. The model of good governance and development of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is becoming an example for other states,” the BJP state president said in a statement issued here. He said it was the result of the hard work and dedication of Yogi Adityanath and his cabinet colleagues that Uttar Pradesh was being counted among the leading states of the country. “The double-engine government of the Centre and the state has been successful in providing basic facilities to the public,” he said and added that working on the basic mantra of sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas, Yogi Adityanath had been able to win hearts of many.

‘Perception of people about UP has changed in last 6 yrs’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the biggest achievement of the double-engine government was that the perception of people had changed in the last six years as now no one looked at UP with suspicion.

“Today no one thinks negatively about UP. People used to look at UP with suspicion, but now their faces light up when they hear the name. This is the biggest achievement of our double-engine government,” Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while addressing a function organised to celebrate his six years in office.

The chief minister remarked: “The commitment with which the team has worked is the reason why the perception of UP has

‘Most mobiles phones are being made in UP’

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that UP had become the largest centre in the field of new age hi-tech manufacturing and most mobile phones in the country were being made in the state.

Besides, UP is the state with the maximum number of registered e-vehicles. UP is going to become the biggest data centre in the country. The outcome of transparency and

honesty in governance is visible to all.

Expressing gratitude to the state’s population on the completion of 6-year tenure, the chief minister said, “I assure them that the legacy and identity of UP will be carried forward with a new aura in every sector. This state will be known for its festivals rather than its miscreants and mafia. Gunda raj and jungle raj are a thing of the past.”

changed. It is the result of the teamwork of the cabinet, public representatives, organisations and officials. Today UP has moved forward as a leading state in every sector.”

The chief minister said that UP would touch new heights of development. He said the people of Uttar Pradesh had blessed the double-engine government, which would not only provide them the benefits of the Central and state schemes by living up to their expectations with complete honesty, but would also protect their interests wherever necessary.

The chief minister said that in 2017 his government started the work with industrial development projects worth Rs 80,000 crore. Private sector projects worth Rs 5 lakh crore were started in UP in six years, providing employment to lakhs of youths. The investment proposals of Rs 35 lakh crore at the Global Investors’ Summit surprised everyone,” he said.

The chief minister said that only 2.5 lakh toilets were built in the first two and a half years of the previous government, while in his government 2.61 crore toilets were constructed in one and a half years after 2017.

According to him, during the previous government, only 18,000 houses were sanctioned under the PM Awas Yojana (Urban) and they too were never built, whereas in the last six years, 5,27,7000 houses had been sanctioned in urban/rural areas.

“Apart from this, houses were made available to more than one lakh poor people under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. These include castes such as Musahar, Vantangia, Tharu, Kol and

Sahariya, whose voices were not heard for 70 years after Independence. Electricity is now distributed equally to all rural and urban areas, putting an end to the VIP culture,” he pointed out.

The chief minister further said that today UP ranked second in the country in terms of Ease of Doing Business. “UP’s budget has been doubled. Previously, 17 lakh women received destitute pension of Rs 500; today, 31 lakh women are receiving a pension of Rs 1,000. Earlier 37 lakh beneficiaries used to get the facility of Rs 500 per month old age pension, but today 56 lakh women are getting its benefits, and the monthly amount has also been doubled,” he added.

The chief minister said that the unemployment rate was 18 per cent in 2016, but it had now dropped to 3-4 per cent. “We have now paid twice as much for sugarcane as was paid in UP between 2007 and 2017. Till now we have paid more than Rs 2, 02,000 crore as sugarcane price,” he said.

“Earlier, paddy and wheat were purchased through brokers and agents. Between 2012 and 2017, only 123 lakh metric tonnes of paddy were procured through middlemen, for which Rs 17,190 crore was paid. But since 2017 till now, 345 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was purchased and the payment of Rs 64,000 crore went directly to the farmers account through DBT,” he pointed out.

Similarly, in the case of wheat, 94 lakh metric tonnes of wheat was purchased through middlemen from 2012 to 2017 and Rs 12,800 crore was paid through middlemen. Between 2017-2023, over 219 lakh metric tonnes of wheat was procured and Rs 40,159 crore was paid into the account of the ‘annadatas’, the chief minister added. Chief Minister Yogi said that today UP was number one in the country in ethanol production. “UP is producing 118 crore litres of ethanol today. The state is moving towards One District One Medical College. Very soon there will be a medical college in every district. The government is going to provide a university at every commissionerate level,” he added.

“Many projects are in progress in the pharmacy sector throughout the state, whether it is the Medical Device Park or the Yamuna Authority, or the Pharma Park in Lalitpur. The planning of Mega Textile Park has started on 1,200 acres of land between Lucknow and Hardoi,” he added.

Oppn parties debunk Yogi’s claims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The opposition parties have debunked the claims of achievement made by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on completion of the first year of his second term government.

Yogi Adityanath took over as chief minister for the second time on March 24 last year.

Former chief minister and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati questioned the rationale of the exorbitant expenditure on the publicity of the achievements of the Yogi Adityanath government.

“Lofty claims made in exorbitant advertisements inserted by the government have no relation with the ground reality. The poor and deprived sections of society are not enthused and they are disappointed. The claims of the government about prosperity and development exist only on paper,” Mayawati said in a tweet on Saturday.

She added: “The government should shun the policy of

caste-based political vendetta and focus its attention on public interest and welfare.”

Yogi Adityanath has completed six years in office as chief minister. On Saturday he completed the first year of his second term.

In another tweet, Mayawati questioned the claims of the government about one medical college in each district. She advised the Yogi Adityanath government to focus its attention on development and welfare of the people.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav poked fun on the claims of development and ease of doing business by the “double-engine government” on Saturday.

Akhilesh Yadav tweeted a video showing a police constable slapping a street vendor, saying it was the evidence of ease of doing business in Uttar Pradesh.

The SP and BSP also criticised the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in UP for allegedly failing to deliver on promises made to people, saying it should give an account of the

work done by it in the past six years instead of gloating over the completion of the first anniversary of its second term.

Akhilesh Yadav told reporters that the “double engine government” had presented seven budgets so far and it should give an account of all these years and not just one year.

“Don’t count his one year term. This is the seventh budget brought in UP. So they should give an account of these seven budgets,” said Yadav in a statement tweeted by SP.

Yadav, the leader of opposition in the assembly, also said the BJP government at the Centre had presented 10 budgets and 10 and seven of UP together made 17 budgets.

“So BJP people should give an account of 17 budgets,” he said.

He also asked why the government had not delivered on promises made for fulfilling basic facilities related to healthcare, jobs and river cleaning.

In a series of tweets, the SP

listed Adityanath’s promises and termed them “incomplete” after six years.

“The promise of providing at least one employment or self-employment opportunity to every family is incomplete. The promise of free life insurance for all construction workers is incomplete,” it said.

It also said that the promise of filling all departmental vacancies and building a metro rail network in Varanasi, Meerut, Gorakhpur, Bareilly, Jhansi and Prayagraj were also incomplete.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) termed the first year of the second term of the Adityanath government “the year of bulldozershahi”.

In a statement, CPI-ML state secretary Sudhakar Yadav termed the first year of the second term of the Yogi Adityanath government “the year of bulldozershahi” and claimed more development had happened on paper than in reality and figures had been juggled up to show investment in the state.

UP now a hub of religious, spiritual and eco tourism

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has been transformed into a ‘hub’ of religious and spiritual tourism as well as a centre of eco-tourism in last six years with fairs and festivals being organised throughout the year which not only accelerated the development of tourism in the state but also emerged as key components of the state’s income and employment generation.

In terms of the tourism industry, the past year has been full of remarkable accomplishments. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the tourism industry was suffering massive losses all over the world, it took a tremendous leap in the last year in UP, Principal Secretary (Tourism) Mukesh Meshram said.

He said in the last one year, 27,63,38,828 tourists visited Uttar Pradesh, including 27,56,94,233 Indians and 6,44,595 foreign tourists.

This number is a significant record in itself. Previously, places of religious significance in the state were neglected, but the Yogi Adityanath government has transformed these religious sites into the state’s most important centres of development and prosperity.

The tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh has gained a new direction and momentum as a result of year-round fairs and festivals organised around religious sites in

the state. Deepotsav in Ayodhya, Rangotsav in Braj and Kashi, Krishnotsav in Mathura, Brajraj Utsav, Geeta Mahotsav, Basant Utsav, and many other local festivals are establishing Uttar Pradesh as the country’s most important tourist centre.

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the country’s largest centre of religious tourism, with festivals playing an important role in increasing the number of tourists. The arrival of more than one crore devotees in one year after the inauguration of Kashi Vishwanath Dham has taken everyone by surprise.

Besides, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of religious tourists to Braj, Chitrakoot, Prayagraj and Ayodhya. After the construction of the grand temple at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya will be completed in 2024, the size of religious tourism in UP will grow faster than expected.

Given the endless possibilities for religious and eco-tourism in UP, big tourism investors have proposed an investment of Rs 1,29,498 lakh crore to the government. The Yogi government is now hopeful that a total of 938 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will result in the creation of approximately 3,52,800 jobs.

The Yogi government is now focusing on heritage tourism to improve hospitality experiences in the state, in addition to religious and eco-tourism. Many palaces

and ‘havelis’ of heritage significance in the state are being developed for this.

Efforts are being made to strengthen the heritage hotel chain by converting old buildings, forts, havelis, and mansions built before 1950 into hotels. The state Tourism department is converting these structures into heritage hotels, public museums and MICE (meeting, incentive, conference, and exhibition) centres.

The Tourism department has identified 31 such forts in the Bundelkhand region alone. The master plan for this is almost ready. Bundelkhand, once known for drought and rebellion, is now the most popular tourist destination in Uttar Pradesh.

Meshram said that the department had organised various festivals in the last year to increase tourism activities in accordance with the chief minister’s intention.

Good results have been received for tourism-based events from Purvanchal to Bundelkhand. Aside from the tent city and hot air balloon in Varanasi, the government is also moving forward with regional planning in Bundelkhand. To expand tourism activities in the state, adventure sports, wellness tourism, kayaking, canoeing, hot-air ballooning, and a variety of cultural programmes and festivals are being organised.

“This is why the number of tourists visiting UP has reached an all-time high in the last year,” Meshram said.

Govt working on policy of zero tolerance in state: Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Jal Shakti Minister of Uttar Pradesh Swatantra Dev Singh said that today criminals are scared in Uttar Pradesh. The government is working on the policy of zero tolerance in the state. The criminal who commits the crime will not be spared. The government and the police administration will send them behind the bars.

Swatantra Dev was talking to reporters at Circuit House on Saturday. He was counting the achievements of the government on completion of one year of the second term of the Yogi government. He said that today Uttar Pradesh is becoming crime-free state. He said that 175 dreaded criminals were eliminated in the state. Work has been done to send 15,885 criminals who were carrying rewards to jail. Action is being taken against all the culprits.

Swatantra Dev Singh said that in the previous governments, people did not want to leave their houses as soon as it was evening. There was an atmosphere of fear. Women were also not safe. Today, ever since the BJP government has



Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister Swatantra Dev Singh releasing a book of completion on six years of Yogi government in Prayagraj

Pioneer

come, people can go from Haridwar to Kashi even at night. He said that today people from all over the country and abroad come to visit Uttar Pradesh, not only for sightseeing but also for employment. This Uttar Pradesh of ours is going to become the number one state of India. He spoke of the 6-year tenure of the Yogi government.

Meanwhile Jal Shakti Minister Swatantradev Singh

got angry on MLC Surendra Chowdhary.. At the behest of other office bearers, the MLC kept silent in his seat. Swatantra Dev Singh came down from the dais to meet the people in the auditorium of Circuit House. Then MLC Surendra Chowdhary stopped him. The MLC wished Navratri to everyone from stage. Government is giving benefits to all the eligible people without any discrimination

from the schemes run on the principles of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas. Before this, he also held a review meeting of all the departments at the Circuit House. Here the candidates also submitted a memorandum to the minister for the recruitment of 69000. It may be pointed out here that the cabinet minister was in Prayagraj on a two-day tour. He left for Lucknow this evening.

Case of honour killing comes to light in Karchhana

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A case of honour killing has come to light in Karchhana of Prayagraj. When the two girls who ran away from home returned, the father killed the elder daughter and buried her in the graveyard. The other was held hostage. He was trying to kill her too. But, the police came to know about it and the whole matter came to light. Due to which the life of another girl was saved.

The police have taken the murderer father, mother along with his two sons into custody. They are being interrogated. On their painting out, the body of the elder daughter buried in the cemetery was exhumed by the police. After this it was sent for postmortem.

The first wife of Lallan Miyan, a resident of Hindupur village of Karchhana police station area, has died. Lallan has two sons from her, Rahim and Munna. After the death of the first wife, he had remarried. He has two daughters Chandni (19) and Aashiya (16) from his

second wife. Chandni is a student of class 12th and Aashiya is of class 9th. Both the sisters had gone missing on February 25. After much searching, both the girls returned on March 2. Both told the family members that they had gone to Mumbai.

On March 4, both the girls suddenly disappeared again. Meanwhile, Lallan and his family members did a hectic search for them but failed to trace them out. It was learned that the elder girl had gone with a boy from Rampur in the industrial area. The other girl had gone with a boy from Vindhyachal, Mirzapur. Since then the parents were searching for both. The father had also lodged a missing complaint of both the daughters at the Karchhana police station. But, they failed to trace them and were not able to know anything about them. On March 20, both the sisters came back again. Lallan had already made a plan to kill the daughters. That's why when both the daughters returned, he did not inform the Karchhana police

station.

Angered by the running away of the daughters, the father Lallan along with the son made a plan to kill both the daughters. The father and son thrashed both the sisters before killing them. After this, on March 23, as soon as he got a chance, at 3 am, elder daughter Chandni was attacked with a heavy weapon and killed. Meanwhile, the younger daughter was kept hostage at home. They were trying to kill her too, so that she could not say anything to anyone. Father and son kept the body of the elder daughter in the house for a day.

After killing the elder daughter with full planning, father and her brother buried the body at 3 pm on March 24 in the nearby Chenani village cemetery. His wife also supported him in this heinous crime. At the same time, on asking the relatives and the people of the village, they told that Chandni had slipped and fallen on the floor in the house. Due to which her head got hurt

and she died. When the villagers got suspicious, they informed the police. The police investigated and started questioning Lallan Miyan in custody.

When the police strictly inquired, Lallan Miyan confessed to the murder. He told the police about the younger daughter being taken hostage. The police went to the house and rescued the younger daughter who was kept hostage in the room. After this, the police reached the Chenani cemetery with the father, both brothers and mother. There the grave was dug by calling laborers. Chandni's dead body was taken out. Blood was oozing from the girl's head from inside the shroud.

ACP Karchana Ajit Singh Chauhan said that the body has been sent for postmortem. The accused are being interrogated by taking them into custody. Detailed information will be given after the postmortem report is received and the inquiry process is completed, added the ACP.

Justice Pritinkar Diwakar new CJ of HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Justice Pritinkar Diwakar has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court. Law Minister Kiren Rijiju gave information about the new appointments by tweeting.

The name of Justice Diwakar was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium. The post was lying vacant after the elevation of the then Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, Justice Rajesh Bindal, as a judge of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court collegium, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, had recommended the appointment of Justice Diwakar to the Central

Government. It was said in the recommendation that Justice Diwakar should be appointed to the vacant post due to the appointment of Allahabad High Court Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal as a judge of the Supreme Court.

Justice Pritinkar Diwakar was transferred from the Chhattisgarh High Court to the Allahabad High Court in 2018. Being the senior-most Justice here, it has been recommended to appoint him as the Chief Justice.

NSUI STUDENTS BURN EFFIGY OF PM: NSUI students burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and blocked the road leading to Collectorate in front of Allahabad University over the

cancellation of Rahul Gandhi's membership.

The students lay down on the roads and stopped vehicles from coming and going. On the other hand, seeing this ruckus, the police force was present on the spot. However, after hours of persuasion by the police administration, the students removed the the blockade.

NSUI state spokesperson Chandrasekhar Adhikari said that Rahul Gandhi is constantly raising his voice in the interest of the country. The government is giving the entire property of the country to the capitalists illegally. A total of 38 cell companies i.e. fake companies are being run by a capitalist in the country and abroad. When Rahul Gandhi

raised this issue from the road to the House, the Modi government started attacking him. At the behest of the Modi government, the work of canceling the membership of Rahul Gandhi was done.

On the other hand, student leader Adarsh Singh Bhaduria said, the way the undeclared emergency has been implemented in the whole of India today, its highly pathetic. The way Rahul Gandhi's membership has been canceled from the Lok Sabha, it shows dictatorial rule. Together, we will beat the government. Allahabad University has always been the land of revolutionaries. The struggle will continue till the membership is returned, the protesters added.

other knowledge and added that the progress of Sanskrit would be fruitful for the people if it is communicated by adding new knowledge and emphasised on making it the language of common people. Prof Rahasbihari Dwivedi and Dr Uma Maheshwar N also expressed their views.

Presiding over it, the V-C of SSU Prof Hareram Dwivedi said that this program is being held to benefit the teachers and students to protect this disappearing knowledge. Prof Hariprasad Adhikari and Prof Dinesh Kumar Garg Prof Ramkishore Tripathi offered a vote of thanks while Prof Rampujan Pandey, Prof harishankar Pandey, Prof Sudhakar Mishra and others were present



and economic power are important to make any country great. The act of ashtavadhana through the power of knowledge is the display of the growth of technical knowledge, he said further.

The guest of honour and prominent poet Padmashri Prof Abhiraj Rajendra Mishra said that the organisation of ashtavadhana is an effort to reestablish this knowledge in

the university after decades and added that the art of ashtavadhana is also described in Vedas and Puranas and it is also played even by birds. The knowledge of ashtavadhana makes intellectual, mental and physical growth, he said further.

The V-C of CIHTS, Sarnath Prof GN Samten said that the progress of Sanskrit language leads the growth of

Two youths killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two youths were killed when a speeding truck knocked their bike on Mahoba-Kabrai road on the Kanpur-Sagar highway in Mahoba late Friday night. After knocking them, the truck dragged the bike-borne youths up to around 500 metres with it. Truck driver escaped after leaving the vehicle on the spot. Police sent bodies for the autopsy and carried out investigations. Sunil Kushwaha (23) of Kidwai Nagar, Kabrai, had taken the field of Raja Nat in Makarbai village on sharing basis. After the crop became ready for harvesting, Sunil with friend Ansar (18) proceeded for the field around 12 O'clock on Friday night on bike for carrying out the threshing of the crop. On the highway, near Kabrai, a speeding truck coming from Mahoba knocked them in front of the Radhey Shyam Sales Corporation. After their bike got entangled with the truck, they were dragged with it up to about 500 metres

which led to their killing on the spot. Other vehicle drivers passing that way informed the police. By the time police rushed to spot, guilty truck driver escaped by leaving his vehicle there. Both the deceased youths were not wearing helmet. Police sent the bodies for autopsy and launched raids to nab the guilty truck driver.

MANY PASSENGERS INJURED IN ROAD MISHAP: Around a dozen passengers were injured when a private bus rammed into a truck from behind on Agra-Lucknow Expressway under Saurikh police station area of Kannauj late Friday night. All the injured were admitted to the government medical college, Tirwa. The incident took place around 1 am on Friday night. The bus was going to Bihar from Delhi. Shabbir Ahmad son of Ghulam of Shirdi Khwaja, Mandi, Jammu Kashmir, is the bus driver. He had proceeded from Delhi for Bihar with 35 passengers. On the Agra-Lucknow Expressway,

under Saurikh police station area, the bus rammed into a truck ahead of it which caused injury to around 12 persons. UPEIDA staff provided the first aid to the injured. Prince Pandey son of Shambhu Pandey of Meerpur, Belaghat, Gorakhpur, and Laxman son of Janak of Rajpur Bagaha, Saroli, Kushinagar, were seriously injured and sent to the government medical college, Tirwa, on UPEIDA ambulance. Other passengers were sent to their destination from another vehicle. Meanwhile, a youth was killed and two others were injured when their uncontrolled car collided with a road divider on Agra-Lucknow Expressway under Talgram police station of Kannauj late Thursday night. Injured were admitted to the government medical college, Tirwa. Devendra Kumar of Ashok Nagar, Etah, along with Virendra Kumar of the locality and Prajwal of Atharwa, Etah, was returning from Prayagraj on car. Late Thursday

night, the speeding car hit to a road divider which led to killing of Devendra Kumar. UPEIDA staff got the damaged car parked at the toll plaza.

TRAVEL SERVICES: inDrive, a global ride-hailing platform, is all set to expand its services all over the state, including Lucknow and Kanpur. It had launched its services in Lucknow in 2019 and since then has been giving customers the liberty to set the price for their intracity and city to city rides. Addressing mediapersons, Director Roman Ermoshin said, "We launched inDrive in Lucknow to make mobility more accessible to all people in the city because, at our core, we believe that everyone has the right to accessible and affordable services". He said When it comes to getting around in the state, auto-rickshaws are a staple. It was a people driven company that believes that there was no technology in the world that can replace human empathy, he added.

Seminar on sustainable development & conservation of biodiversity held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Prof Girish Chandra Tripathi, ex-Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University while inaugurating the three-day national seminar on "Recent Trends and Experimental Approaches for Sustainable Development and Conservation of Biodiversity" organised by the Department of Zoology, DBS College on Saturday in his address highlighted the necessity of sustainable development and conservation of bio-diversity and the challenges towards achieving that in a country with such a huge population as India.

Prof Tripathi, explicated the nuances and importance of the topic and how one can maximise the benefits of researches in the field of sustainable development and biodiversity. He said biodiversity was declining rapidly due to land use change, climate change, invasive species, over-exploitation, and pollution. He said these resulted from demographic, economic, sociopolitical, cultural, technological, and other indirect drivers.

He said across the range of biodiversity measures, current rates of change and loss exceed those of the historical past by several orders of magnitude and show no indication of slowing. He said at large scales, across biogeographic realms and ecosystems (biomes), declines in biodiversity were recorded in all parts of the habitable world. He said among well-studied groups of species, extinction rates of organisms were high and increasing and at local levels both populations



Prof Girish Chandra Tripathi, ex-Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University lights the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the national seminar at DBS College on Saturday.

Pioneer

and habitats were most commonly found to be on decline.

Addressing at seminar the Principal of the College, Dr AK Mishra said sustainability can take many shapes and sizes, but there were five main areas of sustainability mainly environmental, socio-cultural, technological, economic, and public policy. He said environmental sustainability was conserving natural resources and protecting ecosystems to help support its health and well-being now and in the future. He said a key to environmental sustainability was that it was a slow-moving process, so changes made today may not be felt for many years, meaning one must look ahead at the longer-term effects of this area of sustainability to realise its full benefit.

He said sustainability was not all about the environment and ecosystem but it was also about society and culture as a

whole and this was where socio-cultural sustainability came in. He said similarly technological sustainability was innovation that considered natural resources and supported economic and social development. He said this technology's main goal was to dramatically reduce environmental impact and ecological risks while creating a sustainable product. He said the last but not the least was economic sustainability which was the ability to support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting a community's social, environmental, and cultural aspects.

The Head of Department, Prof Indrani Dubey, stressed upon the necessity of sustainable usage of natural resources and conservation so that essential resources can be passed onto the next generation. She also stressed upon the usage of recyclable sources of energy such as sunlight as important

aspects of sustainable development. She then presented the vote of thanks and expressed her gratitude to all the guests who had graced the occasion with their presence and the faculty who had worked meticulously to give a practical shape to this seminar.

Gauravendra Swaroop, Prof SP Trivedi, Lucknow University, Dr Sunil Kumar Srivastava, the Bursar, DBS College and the rest of the faculty were present on the occasion.

Gauravendra Swaroop, in his address, shed light upon the illustrious heritage of the Dayanand Siksha Sansthan and the luminaries that it had produced, citing the examples of the ex-President of India Ramnath Kovind, ex-Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and a few more. He also assured continued support to academic endeavours.

Tiwari: There is rule of law and fear-free environment in UP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former UP Minister and MLA from City South Assembly constituency Dr Neelkanth Tiwari on Saturday claimed, "There is a rule of law and fear-free environment in the state. The criminals can't even think of committing a crime." He was talking to the presspersons at Circuit House here on the completion of one year of the second term of Yogi Adityanath-led Government.

More than 7 crores devotees visited Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in one year and a total of 1,243 projects worth Rs 17822.68 crore have been completed in the last eight years in the district, Dr Tiwari informed, adding that about 364 projects worth Rs 11842.33 are undergoing including the projects of ROB in Kajiakpura and Babatpur worth Rs 144.53 crore and Rs 32.77 crore respectively.

Many projects are being carried out in the district in view of the tourism and beautification including the development of Sarnath Buddhist Circuit worth Rs 72.63 crore and construction of Pawan Path worth Rs 24.32 crore, he informed and added that the number of works were also done in the medical field

including the construction of community health centre in Sarnath with a cost of Rs 6.73 crore, the construction of primary health centre in Shivpur with a cost of Rs 1.36 crore and the increase of beds in the government hospitals with a cost of Rs 5.92 crore.

The municipal corporation is carrying out a total of 306 works in 99.72 km with a cost of Rs 123.30 crore and the Zila Panchayat completed a total 194 works with a cost of Rs 18.69 crore, Dr Tiwari informed, adding that many works have also been done in the field of education including the construction of Atal Awasiya Vidyalaya in Karsara with a cost of Rs 66.65 crore and the construction of ITI in Mahagaon with a cost of Rs 14.16 crore and construction of mid-day meal kitchen in LT College with a cost of Rs 13.91 crore. To promote the sports activities in the district, the stadium, hostel, track, shooting range and gallery are being constructed, he informed further.

The procurement of wheat and paddy was made from 17,721 and 7,019 farmers respectively, he informed and added that a total of 2,69,151 farmers are being honoured with Kisan Samman

Nidhi while a total of 26.70 lakh people were saturated with the National Food safety Scheme. As many as 36 Job Fairs were organised in the district this year and a total of 10,917 youths were benefitted in various service sectors, he informed, adding that a total of 1139 youths got self-employment under Skill Development Mission. A total of Rs 137760 crore was invested by as many as 448 entrepreneurs through Global Investment Summit, he informed further.

Not only the development of infrastructure facilities was made but also the additional attention is being paid in the education, labour, employment, medical and other service sectors, Dr Tiwari said claiming that the district was scaling a new height of development.

Dr Tiwari distributed tool kits to 10 beneficiaries under One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme and also released a booklet of public welfare schemes of the government assembly of the district which was published by the Information department. The MLAs Saurabh Srivastava, Dr Awadhesh Singh and Tribhuvan Ram were also present on the occasion besides

the DM S Rajalingam, CDO Himanshu Nagpal, BJP district president hansraj Vishwakarma and City president Vidyasagar Rai.

SRINGAR MAHOTSAV OF KAL BHAIRAV: The annual Sringer Mahotsav of Baba Kal Bhairav was held on Saturday. The devotees in large numbers thronged the Kal Bhairav temple to have darshan of Baba. A bhandara was also organised on the occasion.

The entire temple Baba Kal Bhairav was decorated with the lighting and flowers under the annual Sringer Mahotsav. The seer of temple Pt Sumit Upadhyay opened the door of the temple at 4 am in the early morning for the devotees to have darshan of Baba. The devotees started thronging the temple right from early morning to late night. The long queues of devotees were seen in and outside the temple.

The jhanki of Baba was made after putting on a new silver mask and Basant Aarti was performed in the afternoon.

A bhandara was also organised outside the temple and the devotees took prasad in large numbers. The bhandara lasted till late night.

Foundation Day of SSU organised

VARANASI (PNS): To mark the 66th Foundation Day of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU), a programme of Akhil Bharatiya Ashtavdhan' was organised on Saturday at Parini Bhavan auditorium of the university under the joint auspices of Bharatiya Gyan Parampara Kendra of SSU and Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Sansthan.

The chief guest and Vice-Chancellor of Maharshi Parini Sanskrit and Vedic University, Ujjain Prof Vijay Kumar Menon said that there was military power in India earlier but now the time has come of the power of knowledge and the SSU has an important role in promoting it and added that both knowledge power

Covid surge: Centre raises concern at low testing by States, UTs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Even as the Covid cases are climbing up gradually in some parts of the country, States and UTs seem to have lowered their guard with the Centre on Saturday raising concern at low level and insufficient testing by States and UTs compared to the standards prescribed by WHO i.e 140 tests per million. It also asked them to keep a close watch on the evolving etiologies (causes of diseases) of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases.

In an advisory issued jointly by DG, Indian Council of Medical Research, Dr Rajiv Bahl and Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, the Centre pointed out that India usually sees a seasonal rise in influenza cases from January to March & again from August to October. Presently, the most



prominent subtypes of influenza in circulation in the country seem to be influenza A (H1N1) and influenza A (H3N2). "The States must keep a watch on these causes of diseases."

"A gradual but sustained increase in the trajectory of Covid-19 cases in the country has been witnessed since mid-February 2023. As on date, most of the active cases in the country are largely being reported by a few states like Kerala (26.4 per cent), Maharashtra (21.7 per cent),

Gujarat (13.9 per cent), Karnataka (8.6 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (6.3 per cent).

"While the rates of hospitalisation and death due to the disease remains low, largely because of the significant coverage achieved in terms of Covid-19 vaccination rates by all states/UTs, this gradual rise in cases needs reinvigorated public health actions to contain the surge," said the advisory. The states have been told that Covid and influenza share a number of similarities in terms of mode of transmis-

sion, high risk population, clinical signs and symptoms. While this may present a clinical dilemma for the attending doctors in terms of diagnosis, this also renders both these diseases easily preventable by following simple public health measures like avoiding overcrowded and poorly ventilated settings, wearing a mask in crowded & closed settings, advisory reads.

The States have also been advised to take a stock of hospital preparedness including drugs, beds including ICU beds; medical equipment, medical oxygen, capacity building of human resource on existing guidelines as well as vaccination coverage.

"Testing at the level of districts & blocks also varies, with some states heavily relying on the less sensitive rapid antigen tests. Hence it is critical to maintain optimum testing for Covid-19, equitably distributed across the states," said the advisory.

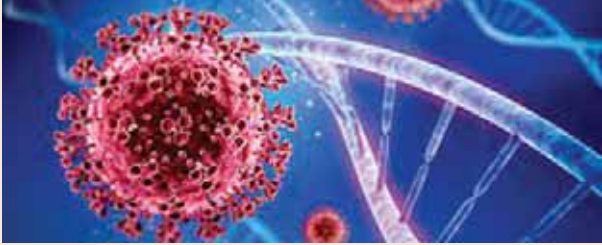
'Virus may alter DNA in infected patients'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The virus that causes Covid-19, may alter DNA in the patients it infects. This not only explains immunological symptoms after infection, but also potentially links to long Covid, researchers have said.

In a study published in the Nature Microbiology, they said that the genetic materials in the cells of the human body are stored in a structure called chromatin. Some viruses of other categories have been reported to hijack or change our chromatin so that they can successfully reproduce in our cells.

But SARS-CoV-2's effect on chromatin was not known. "This particular finding is quite unique and has not been seen



in other coronaviruses before. "What we found here is a unique mechanism of SARS-CoV-2 that is associated with its severe impacts on human health," said Wenbo Li, Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology of the McGovern Medical School at University of Texas-Houston.

In this study, researchers used leading-edge methods and comprehensively characterised the chromatin archi-

ture in human cells after a Covid-19 infection. They found that many well-formed chromatin architectures of a normal cell become de-organised after infection.

For example, there is one type of chromatin architecture termed A/B compartments that can be analogous to the yin and yang portions of our chromatin. "After SARS-CoV-2 infection, we found that the yin and yang portions of the chromatin lose their nor-

mal shapes and start to mix together. Such mixing may be a reason for some key genes to change in infected cells, including a crucial inflammation gene, interleukin-6, that can cause cytokine storm in severe Covid-19 patients," Li said.

In addition, the study published in the journal found that chemical modifications on chromatin were also altered by SARS-CoV-2. "The changes of chemical modifications of chromatin were known to exert long-term effects on gene expression and phenotypes. Therefore, our finding may provide an unrealised new perspective to understand the viral impacts on host chromatin that can be associated with long Covid," added Xiaoyi Yuan, from the McGovern Medical School.

Army Chief presents 'President's Standards' to 4 Armoured Regiments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Saturday presented the prestigious 'President's Standards' or 'Nishan' to four Armoured Regiments of the Indian Army, namely 49 Armoured Regiment, 51 Armoured Regiment, 53 Armoured Regiment and 54 Armoured Regiment during an impressive Standards Presentation Parade held at Suratgarh Military Station in Rajasthan.

The Armoured Corps is one of the premier combat arms of the Indian Army. Since Independence, the valour, courage and fortitude shown by the Armoured Regiments during the wars have been exceptional, officials said here.

Pande reviewed the Standard presentation parade and appreciated the rich lega-



cy of valour, sacrifice and traditions displayed by the Armoured Corps in war and in peace.

The Army Chief in his address commended the Regiments who received the prestigious President's Standards, for their exemplary

service and conveyed his best wishes to the ranks and families. He also brought out that the modern and professional Indian Mechanised Forces are always ready to meet the future challenges and stand committed to guard the nation against all threats.

India, US will boosting ties, says Indian envoy to US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

India and US will work towards further strengthening their bilateral ties, Indian Ambassador to Washington Taranjit Singh Sandhu said soon after meeting the new US ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti. He was sworn in as the next envoy to India late Friday.

The meeting between the two envoys took place hours after Garcetti's oath taking ceremony in Washington. Garcetti, President Joe Biden's close aide, was officially sworn in as the US Ambassador to India by Vice President Kamala Harris, ending over two years of delay to fill one of Washington's most critical diplomatic positions.

"Congratulated @eric-garcetti on his swearing-in as



the Ambassador of America to India," Sandhu tweeted after the meeting.

"As he prepares to depart for India, we discussed some immediate priorities in deepening the bilateral partnership, in line with our Leaders' vision," Sandhu said. He said he looked forward to working with Garcetti.

The US Embassy in India has been without an ambassador since January 2021, the longest stretch in the history of US-India relations that the

post has sat vacant, since Kenneth Juster, the last US envoy in New Delhi, stepped down after the change of government in America.

The US Senate confirmed Garcetti's nomination earlier this month, ending a protracted hiatus of over two years to fill the key diplomatic position. Garcetti's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Joe Biden.

Garcetti's daughter Maya held the Hebrew Bible during the swearing-in ceremony. The ceremony was attended by his close family members, including wife Amy Wakeland, father Gil Garcetti, mother Sukey Garcetti and mother-in-law Dee Wakeland.

"I cannot wait to serve," Garcetti said, when asked about his new diplomatic assignment.

Misa questioned by ED, Tejashwi by CBI in land-for-jobs scam case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the CBI on Saturday questioned Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav at its headquarters here for eight hours in the land-for-jobs 'scam', the Enforcement Directorate grilled his sister and MP Misa Bharti in the connected money laundering case for seven hours.

Earlier, Yadav had skipped summons thrice.

Yadav arrived at the agency's office at around 10:30 AM and left at 8 PM. He also took a break for lunch for nearly 90 minutes.

Bharti reached the ED office at around 11 AM and left around 7 PM with an hour-long lunch break.

During Yadav's questioning, the investigators pointed questions relating to his financial transactions, including his purported links to AB Exports Private Limited and AK Infosystems Pvt Ltd. Both these companies are alleged to be beneficial companies in the alleged scam.

Last week, the CBI assured the Delhi High Court that Yadav would not be arrested this month. On March 15, a special CBI court had granted bail to Yadav's father Lalu Prasad Yadav, mother Rabri Devi, sister Misa Bharti and others in the case.

The CBI's probe is part of an ongoing investigation into documents and evidence that emerged after the initial charge sheet was submitted, as well as the alleged involvement of accused persons that could



not be completed by the time the initial chargesheet was filed.

The CBI has alleged that during Lalu Prasad's tenure as railway Minister from 2004 to 2009, favourite candidates were appointed in violation of norms and procedures without any advertisement or public notice.

The agency further claimed that substitutes from Patna were appointed in various zonal railways in Mumbai, Jabalpur, Kolkata, Jaipur, and Hajipur. In return, the candidates, directly or through their family members, allegedly sold land to Prasad's family and its associates at highly-discounted rates.

Likewise, the ED quizzed Bharti, 46, is a Rajya Sabha MP of the Rashtriya Janta Dal after she reached the agency headquarters at around 11 AM following which her statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Both the agencies recently initiated action in the case, with the CBI questioning Lalu Prasad Yadav and his wife and former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi and the ED carrying out raids against the RJD chief's family under PMLA.

USBRL project will be completed by Jan-Feb 2024: Vaishnav

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
JAMMU

Union Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav Saturday announced the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) project will be completed by Jan-Feb 2024.

The Union Minister also said after connecting with the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla train service, a specially built Vande Bharat train will be introduced in the rail section.

Addressing media persons



at Srinagar Railway Station the Union Minister said that the budget allocation for USBRL was about Rs 800 crore per year before 2014, which has been increased to Rs 6,000 crore in the year 2022-23.

The Minister also visited Budgam Railway Station and inquired about various procedures related to the maintenance of trains at Carriage & Wagon Depot, Budgam.

Ashwini Vaishnav also undertook a journey from Budgam Railway Station to Baramulla Railway Station by special inspection car. He also made a detailed overview of the safety and security of

the railway section and took stock of the passenger amenities at Baramulla Railway Station. The Minister discussed with the concerned railway officers the development works to be done at Baramulla Railway Station. He also interacted with Railway employees and inspected the dry fruit stall of "One Station One Product". He appreciated the local dry fruits of Baramulla and purchased them using the digital mode of payment.

The Parcel Office was also inaugurated at Srinagar Railway Station in the presence of the Union Minister.

India pushing for TB vaccines to eliminate infection by 2025

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Faced with the target to achieve Tuberculosis (TB) elimination by 2025, India is pushing for expediting, manufacturing and introduction of potential TB vaccines at the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) slated September this year.

"TB vaccine is needed urgently", Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said while highlighting the crucial importance of TB vaccine in the global fight against the disease. Speaking at the 36th Board Meeting of STOP TB Partnership on Saturday, he urged its officials to take up the matter of need for TB vaccines at the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September this year.

"We have seen the unwavering commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to end TB in India. We are ready to lead from the front and be the voice of the Global South in the collaborative fight against TB," said Mandaviya.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Mandaviya stated that "India has identified 3 impor-

tant health priorities under the G20 Presidency. All of these are focused on universal health coverage and relevant to our response for TB elimination".

Dr Mandaviya emphasized that effort is on not only to rebound from Covid but also bring innovative strategies like the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan which has become a one-of-a-kind movement in the world.

Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership Dr Lucia Ditiu emphasized that "India has a pivotal role in eliminating TB because India's progress will drive the world."

She also praised India for "doing very sophisticated modelling with their Ni-kshay data."

"Our innovations, ideas and strategies for bringing healthcare closer to people is something that the whole world can emulate", she stated.

The Stop TB Partnership Board also appreciated India's estimation of TB burden developed with in-country evidence.

An "Accountability Report of TB-affected Communities & Civil Society: Priorities to Close the Deadly Divide" was also launched at the event.

Septuagenarian's odyssey in law knows no bound

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■
KOCHI

While the youth of the country study for earning a livelihood, S D Parameswaran, the septuagenarian from Ernakulam is engaged in studies for the sake of studying. Seventy two year old Parameswaran did his college, Government Law College, Thrissur, proud by passing out in the three-year LLB course with all As and enrolling as a lawyer in Kerala High Court early this week. The fact that all his classmates were young enough to be his grandchildren did not deter him from waking up at 3 in the morning, complete his studies and homework for the day and travel 80 km to Thrissur by train to attend daily classes.

For Parameswaran, who had retired from the Department of Atomic Energy as General Manager of Indian Rare Earths Ltd, life itself was a challenge. Though he passed out of the matriculation class with top honors, his poor parents could not afford to send him for higher education.

"Those were the days when typists and stenographers were very much in demand. I managed to excel in stenography and with the meagre income from that job, joined in the higher secondary class and then in Regional Engineering College, Kozhikode.

Secrets of beetles' survival revealed

ARCHANA JYOTI ■
NEW DELHI

Ever wondered how beetles, commonly found pests like grain weevil and red flour beetles which eat their way through thousands of tons of food globally, manage to survive even in extremely dry environments? Scientists have now found that secrets lie in their rear ends as they have the ability to open their rectums and take up water from food and moist air and convert it into fluid.

"Besides being able to suck water out of the air, beetles are also extremely effective at extracting liquid from food. Even dry grain, which may consist of 1-2 percent water, can contribute to a beetle's fluid balance," said the researchers after investigating the molecular and physiological processes underlying the ability of beetles to survive their entire lives without drinking any liquid water whatsoever.

The new collaborative study by researchers from the University of Copenhagen and the University of Edinburgh explains just how. Beyond helping to explain how beetles thrive in environments where few other animals can survive, the knowledge could eventually be used for more target-



ed and delicate control of global pests such as the grain weevil and red flour beetle.

Insect pests eat their way through thousands of tons of food around the world every year. Food security in developing nations is particularly affected by animal species like the grain weevil and red flour beetle which have specialised in surviving in extremely dry environments, granaries included, for thousands of years.

"We have shed new light on the molecular mechanisms that allow beetles to absorb water rectally. Insects are particularly sensitive to changes in their water balance. As such, this knowledge can be used to develop more targeted methods to combat beetle species which destroy our food production, without killing other animals or harming humans and nature," says Associate Professor Kenneth Veland Halberg of the Department of Biology, who led the research.

Differences between Govt, judiciary doesn't mean confrontation: Rijiju

PTI ■ MADURAI

Denying any clash between the government and judiciary as speculated in the media, Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday contended that differences were inevitable in a democracy but they should not be construed as confrontation.

The Minister inaugurated the Chief Judicial Magistrate court, Mayiladuthurai, in the presence of Chief Justice of India Justice D Y Chandrachud, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court Justice T Raja here.

"We have differences, but it doesn't mean there is confrontation. It sends a wrong message across the world."

"I want to make it clear that there is no problem between different organs of the State. There are signs of robust democratic actions, which are not a crisis," he emphasised.

Pointing to some media reports of alleged differences between the government and the Supreme Court or the legislature and judiciary, the Union Minister said, "we must understand that we are in a democracy. There are bound to be certain differences in terms of some outlook but you can't have conflicting posi-



tions. This doesn't mean confrontation. We are the largest democracy in the world."

The Centre would support the Indian judiciary to be independent, he said, and called upon the bench and the bar — being two sides of the same coin — to work together to ensure that the court complex is not divided. "One can't exist without the other. Court must have proper decorum and conducive atmosphere."

He further said, "everybody can't think alike."

"We are not ruled by a dictatorial king, so the difference of opinion can't be termed as a crisis in Indian democracy. We can criticise each other but when it comes to national interest we must be one," he stressed.

His Ministry was involved in developing a common core vocabulary where Indian languages will have certain common usages, purely technical in nature, soon, to ensure that common people receive orders

in their respective languages.

Lauding the courts in Tamil Nadu for their excellent performance during the pandemic in delivering justice to the people, he said judicial infrastructure in Tamil Nadu was comparatively better than in many States in India.

Recently, he visited Puducherry and found that the kind of work being done to improve the judicial infrastructure was possible only when the judiciary and government worked together in understanding the issues and tried to solve them.

Talking about fund allocations, he said last year the government had allotted Rs 9,000 crore for district and other courts in the State, and his department was pushing hard for utilisation of funds so that more could be sought.

"In some States, I realised that requirement of court and understanding of government has some shortcomings," Rijiju said.

Pro-Khalistan groups protest at London’s Parliament Square

PTI ■ LONDON

A small group of protesters carrying pro-Khalistan flags and banners in support of Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh gathered at Parliament Square here on Saturday, as part of similar protests in Canada and the US.

Banners for the so-called “Protest against the discriminatory actions by Indian police forces against Bhai Amritpal Singh and other innocent Sikhs” had been circulating on social media, along with similar protests called in the cities of Toronto, Vancouver, Indianapolis and Fresno.

The protest in London comes days after a planned demonstration outside the Indian High Commission in London on Wednesday when protesters hurled coloured flares and water bottles towards the mission.

They have since taken to social media to allege that the objects were hurled by the Indian mission instead, allegations which have been countered by India House. It comes in the wake of violent disorder at the Indian mission last Sunday, when pro-Khalistan extremists smashed windows and also attempted to pull down the Tricolour from its flagpole at the mission. India has registered a strong protest with the UK government and the issue was also raised in the House of Commons earlier this week.

“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,” Leader of the Commons Penny Mordaunt told MPs.

“There is ongoing work with the Metropolitan Police to review the protection measures around the High

‘Canada closely following developments in Punjab’

PTI ■ TORONTO

Canada is “very closely” following developments in Punjab and will continue to address the concerns of the community, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly has said amid Punjab Police’s crackdown on radical preacher Amritpal Singh.

Joly was answering a question from Indo-Canadian MP Iqbal Singh S. Gaheer in the House of Commons on Thursday.

“We are aware of the evolving situation in Punjab, and we are following it very closely. We look forward to a return to a more stable situation,” she said.

“Canadians can always count on the Government of Canada to make sure that we will continue to address the concerns of many members of the community,” she added. Gaheer said he had heard about the ongoing mass suspension of Internet services in Punjab and asked Joly to update the House about the situation in India.

Responding to questions about foreign leaders and parliamentarians commenting on the action against Amritpal Singh, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi urged people residing abroad not to believe “inaccurate and motivated narratives” that are being circulated by some elements on

social media.

“Authorities in Punjab are undertaking operations to nab a fugitive. Information regarding that operation is being shared by authorities concerned on a regular basis,” the spokesman said in New Delhi. Authorities in Punjab last week suspended internet and SMS services in the state following the police crackdown against elements of ‘Waris Punjab De’, headed by the radical preacher. Police in Punjab are still searching for Amritpal Singh.

Earlier on Wednesday Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in the House of Commons: “We are looking forward to a swift return to a more stable situation.” Canada has also seen a rise in anti-India activities recently by Khalistan supporters who have vandalised some Hindu temples. A Ram Mandir in Mississauga was defaced by ‘Khalistani extremists’ with anti-India graffiti on February 13, drawing a strong reaction from the Indian Consulate in Toronto.

“We strongly condemn the defacing of Ram Mandir in Mississauga with anti-India graffiti. We have requested Canadian authorities to investigate the incident and take prompt action on perpetrators,” India’s Consulate in Toronto had tweeted.

It followed UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly’s statement to condemn the unacceptable acts of violence and an assurance to conduct a security review at the Indian mission in London.

Four killed while collecting free flour in Pak

PTI ■ LAHORE

At least four elderly people have died in the last few days while trying to collect free flour from the government distribution points in Pakistan’s Punjab province, officials said on Saturday.

The deaths were reported after several people flocked to the government distribution points after the cash-strapped Pakistani government introduced a free flour scheme for the poor especially in Punjab province to beat the sky-rocketing inflation.

Four elderly people died and several fainted in a bid to

collect free wheat flour in Multan, Muzaffargarh and Faisalabad cities during the last few days,” a Punjab government senior officer told PTI.

He said the incidents occurred due to the huge rush of people and lack of facilities at the distribution points set up by the government to distribute free flour among the citizens.

“Two of them died due to stampede and the other two died after getting exhausted while standing in queue for long hours,” he said.

Police on the other hand also baton-charged the people

seeking free flour to force them to stand in the queue.

The people have criticised the lack of proper arrangements by the district administration at these distribution points and the short supply of flour.

Most of them arrive at the flour points early in the morning and have to wait for a long time in queues.

Former prime minister Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has condemned the deaths and criticised the policy.

“This is today’s Pakistan where the people are losing their lives to get free flour.

And this is because of the bad policies of this government of looters and thieves,” PTI Punjab president Dr Yasmin Rashid told PTI.

Seeing the gross mismanagement at the free distribution of flour points, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has started visiting such points.

On Saturday he visited Sargodha city and inspected the free flour points.

Sharif checked the quality and weight of the flour bags and talked to people.

He also directed the district administration to facilitate especially elderly people at the flour distribution points.

Eric Garcetti sworn in as US Ambassador to India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Eric Garcetti, President Joe Biden’s close aide, was officially sworn in as the US Ambassador to India by Vice President Kamala Harris, ending over two years of delay to fill one of Washington’s most critical diplomatic positions.

Garcetti’s daughter Maya held the Hebrew Bible during the swearing-in ceremony on Friday, which was presided by Vice President Harris.

Garcetti raised his right hand while Harris performed the ceremony, and family members cheered when the two longtime friends shook hands.

The ceremony was attended by his close family members, including wife Amy Wakeland, father Gil Garcetti, mother Sukey Garcetti and mother-in-law Dee Wakeland.

“It feels great. Can’t wait to serve,” Garcetti, 52, said when asked about his new diplomatic assignment.

“I’m so honoured the vice

Indian envoy talks partnership

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India’s envoy here Taranjit Singh Sandhu met the newly-appointed US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, and discussed with him immediate priorities in deepening the bilateral strategic partnership. The meeting took place soon after Garcetti was sworn on Friday in as the next US envoy to India.

Garcetti, President Joe Biden’s close aide, was officially sworn in as the US Ambassador to India by Vice President Kamala Harris, ending over two years of delay to fill one of Washington’s most critical diplomatic positions.

president did this,” he said.

Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff also attended the event.

Former Mayor of Los Angeles Garcetti’s nomination was pending before the US



“Congratulated @eric-garcetti on his swearing-in as the Ambassador of America to India,” Indian Ambassador to Washington Sandhu tweeted after the meeting on Friday.

“As he prepares to depart for India, we discussed some immediate priorities in deepening the bilateral partnership, in line with our Leaders’ vision,” Sandhu said.

He said he looked forward to working with Garcetti.

The US Embassy in India has been without an ambassador since January 2021, the longest stretch in the history of US-India relations that the post has sat vacant, since Kenneth Juster, the last US envoy in New Delhi, stepped down after the change of government in America.

Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Biden.

The Senate voted 52 to 42 to confirm Garcetti earlier this month after his nomination

stalled amid concerns by some lawmakers that he had not adequately handled allegations of sexual assault and harassment against a former senior adviser.

Tornadoes kill 23 in Mississippi

AP ■ ROLLING FORK

Emergency officials in Mississippi said 23 people have been killed by tornadoes that tore through the state on Friday night, destroying buildings and knocking out power as severe weather that produced hail the size of golf balls moved through several southern states.

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency confirmed there had been 23 deaths as of 6:20 am on Saturday with dozens of injuries and four people missing throughout the state.

The agency said in a Twitter post that search and rescue teams from numerous local and state agencies were deployed along with personnel to assist those impacted by the tornadoes. The National Weather Service confirmed a tornado caused damage about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northeast of Jackson, Mississippi.

The rural towns of Silver City and Rolling Fork reported destruction as the tornado swept northeast at 70 mph (113 kph) without weakening, racing towards Alabama through towns including Winona and Amory into the night.

Pennsylvania chocolate plant blast kills five, six missing



Smoke rises from an explosion at the RM Palmer Co. plant in West Reading

WEST READING: An explosion at a chocolate factory in Pennsylvania on Friday killed five people and left six people missing, authorities said.

Several other people were injured by the explosion at the RM Palmer Co. plant, said West Reading Borough Police Department Chief of Police Wayne Holben, who did not confirm the exact number of injured.

The explosion just before 5 pm sent a plume of black smoke into the air, destroying one building and damaging a neighbouring building that included apartments.

“It’s pretty levelled,” West Reading Borough Mayor Samantha Kaag said of the explosion site. “The building in the front, with the church and

the apartments, the explosion was so big that it moved that building four feet forward.”

The cause of the blast in the community about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia was under investigation, Holden told reporters.

Eight people were taken to Reading Hospital Friday evening, Tower Health spokeswoman Jessica Bezler said.

Two people were admitted in fair condition and five were being treated and would be released, she said in an email. One patient was transferred to another facility, but Bezler provided no further details.

Kaag said people were asked to move back about a block in each direction from the site of the explosion but no evacuations were ordered. (AP)

FROM PAGE 1

EVEN IF JAILED, WILL FIGHT ON: RAHUL

He said when somebody is guilty of something, they want to distract everybody’s attention. “If you catch a thief, the first thing he says is ‘I didn’t do it’, the second thing he says is ‘look there, look there...’ That is what the BJP is doing.”

Asking where the money into Adani group has come as Adani does not generate this type of money and that money has come from someone,” he said all this drama - OBC, disqualification, anti-national, is being orchestrated to distract from the panic that prime minister is feeling that his relationship with Adani is going to be exposed.

“That relationship is going to be exposed. Nobody is going to stop that. It is going to happen, because the Opposition is going to find that answer,” he said.

Asked if he was hopeful that his membership would be restored, Rahul said, “I am not interested in hope. (Whether) I get my membership back or not, I will do my job. Even if they permanently disqualify me I will do my job, if they reinstate me, I will do my job. It does not matter to me whether I am in Parliament or outside it. I have to do my ‘tapasya’ and I will keep doing it,” he said.

The Congress leader also thanked Opposition parties for extending support to him and asserted that going forward, all of them will work together.

Asked about the consequences of his disqualification, Rahul said the Opposition will benefit the most from this “panic reaction of Prime Minister Modi”.

“They got into panic mode that the truth will come out. They have handed over the biggest weapon to the Opposition because people have a question on their mind... And question is why is the prime minister saying this corrupt person,” Rahul alleged.

He said he will continue to fight for the truth in the country and to defend the democratic nature of this country.

“I will do whatever I have to do to defend the democratic nature of the country. What does that mean? It means defending the institutions of the country, defending the voice of the poor people of the country, it means telling the people of this country the truth about people like Mr Adani who are basically exploiting the relationship with the Prime Minister,” Rahul said.

He alleged that for the BJP-led Government, “country is Adani and Adani is country”.

Asked about the BJP’s charge that his 2019 remarks that were the centre of the defamation case were an insult to OBCs,

Rahul said he has always talked about brotherhood and the issue was not about OBCs but about Adani and his ties to the Government.

In response to another question, Rahul said, “My name is not Savarkar, my name is Gandhi, Gandhi does not offer apology to anyone.”

Asked about the defamation case in which he was convicted, Rahul said it is a legal matter he will not comment on it.

He also said attacks are being made on democracy in the country and examples of it keep manifesting from time to time.

LEGAL RECOURSE OR PAINT RAHUL AS MARTYR? CONG MULLS CASH-IN-ON PLAN

Sibal was a Union Minister during the Manmohan Singh led UPA Governments and on two occasions he has recently come out in support of Rahul including the Delhi Police turning at Rahul’s residence for details regarding the ‘sexual harassment victims’ speech made during the ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’.

“The legal battle will need to be fought in Gujarat alone, as is the requirement, and that may take quite a long time,” sources said.

A party leader said the Election Commission may announce a by-election in Waynad next month to fill the vacancy arising out of the disqualification of Rahul and thus it could set Priyanka to take a plunge into electoral politics. Currently, she is the AICC national general secretary and she has been credited for the Congress win in Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections.

Soon after disqualification of her brother, Priyanka launched a sharp attack on the BJP and Modi Government dispensation for the kind of slur thrown at the Nehru-Gandhi family ever since Modi team is at the Centre.

Within the Congress, Priyanka is being keenly watched out for her ‘sharp articulation and unapologetic counterattack’.

As of now speculation are rife that Priyanka would take a plunge into elections from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, a Lok Sabha constituency represented by her mother and longest serving president of the Congress Sonia Gandhi. Sonia is not likely to contest the next Parliamentary elections, and Priyanka is expected to inherit the family legacy, as the seat was once represented by Feroze Gandhi, her grandfather.

The Congress may be keen to get the Gandhi family member to retain the seat

in Kerala, as the BJP is stepping up efforts to wean away the Christian vote base to enter the State politics. Kerala remains one of the few strongholds of Congress.

A large number of Congress leaders are exploring that if Priyanka theory works then she would lead in Parliament while Rahul who just concluded his four-month Bharat Jodo Yatra will work for the Opposition.

Several Opposition leaders have rallied behind Rahul after his disqualification and hit out at the Government, accusing it of targeting political opponents.

RAHUL LYING, DEFAMING PM, SAYS PRASAD

The former Union Minister also charged Rahul with having been “abusive, not critical” in his utterances about the Modi surname which led to the defamation suit.

Prasad said it is not only Rahul but 32 people in the past have been disqualified under the same law.

“You will not have another law and be treated differently,” said the BJP leader.

Prasad alleged that Rahul is trying to “portray himself a martyr and use it in the Karnataka Assembly poll”.

Prasad also wondered as why the Congress is not appealing in the court against Rahul’s conviction as they did in the case of their spokesperson Pawan Kherra despite having a battery of legal eagles in the party.

NITU, SAWEETY WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONS

(the victory). I am proud of myself and my family and would like to thank my coaches, especially my head coach Bhaskar sir,” Nitu said.

“This medal means a lot to me. I have worked for this for 12 years. My family’s financial problems will be solved after this victory. We will use the prize money to pay off our loans,” added Nitu, whose father took three years leave from work to support his daughter.

Fighting the last bout of the day, Saweety, the 2014 silver medalist, was able to change the colour of her medal.

The Haryana boxer looked to attack as soon as the match started but couldn’t connect any of her punches as Wang used her sharp reflexes to dodge. But then Saweety connected a strong straight jab to the delight of the crowd. She continued to attack to edge out her opponent 3-2 in the first two rounds.

It was an ugly bout as both boxers were clinching and trying to throw each other

on the canvas.

In the third, Saweety mixed attack with defence. She ducked, dodged and side-stepped, avoiding Wang’s punches to take the round 4-1.

The bout was sent for a review with Saweety emerging on top.

“I am thrilled after fulfilling my dream of becoming the world champion. The bout went well and I was able to execute my planning perfectly. My performance in the tournament got better as the bouts progressed, with my body also responding well,” the triumphant Saweety said.

This title can be considered Saweety’s revival because, after winning the Worlds and Asian silver in 2014 and 2015, she fell off the radar. She missed out on a chance to compete at the Tokyo Olympics as well. She then went on to win the Asian Championships bronze in 2021 followed by the gold in 2022.

The two join an elite list that includes six-time champion Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006), Lekha KC (2006) and Nikhat Zareen (2022).

Hosts India are on course to match their best-ever performance in terms of gold medals won with reigning champion Nikhat Zareen and Olympic medalist Lovlina Borgohain set to take the ring on Sunday.

India had won four golds in the 2006 edition which they had hosted in Delhi. It was also their best performance in terms of total medals (8).

CONG SEES K’TAKA AS ATM TO FILL ITS LEADERS COFFERS: MODI

“When no one gets full majority, will Karnataka be in bad shape or not? Do you want a strong and stable government or not? Do you want a government with full majority or not? The first job should be to bring Karnataka out of the politics of manipulation and take it forward at a fast pace,” Modi said.

“The need of the hour for Karnataka is BJP’s full majority, strong and stable government, it is a necessity for the bright future of Karnataka,” he said at the public meeting which marked the culmination of BJP’s state-wide ‘Vijay Sankalpa Yatra’ ahead of Assembly polls.

‘Vijaya Sankalpa Yatra’, had begun earlier this month from four different directions across the state, in specially designed vehicles or “rathas” and have covered all 224 Assembly segments.

Asking people if they want him to serve them and Karnataka, Modi said. “If I have to serve you and do something for you, I will need BJP’s strong government

in Karnataka, and you will have to make BJP win and bring in its strong government”

Cautioning that Congress leaders start wandering with a “bag of false guarantees” ahead of elections, he said they made false promises ahead of polls in Himachal Pradesh, but the assurances did not find a mention in their recent budget there.

“Can we trust Congress that makes false promises? Should they be allowed to step inside Karnataka or should they be thrown out?” he asked, adding the people of Karnataka should be cautious and should not give the party an opportunity “to play their game”.

Alleging that Congress does not have any positive agenda for the country and Karnataka, Modi said, so, Congress is dreaming and even publicly say “Modi teri kabr kudegi” (Modi, your grave will be dug), but they don’t know people of Karnataka are saying “Modi tera Kamal khilega” (Modi your lotus will bloom), a reference to BJP’s symbol.

At Davangere, Modi entered the rally venue in a specially designed vehicle, which made its way to the stage, passing through the pathway made amidst the crowd gathered under the huge pandal.

People showered flower petals on the Prime Minister, who was accompanied by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, BJP veteran leader B S Yediyurappa and BJP state unit President Nalin Kumar Kateel, on the vehicle, as it passed near them.

FM REVIEWS PSBS’ FINANCIAL HEALTH AMID US BANKING FAILURE

The finance minister underlined that PSBs must look at business models closely to identify stress points, including concentration risks and adverse exposures, the statement said, adding that she also exhorted PSBs to use this opportunity to frame detailed crisis management and communication strategies.

The chiefs of PSBs apprised Sitharaman that they follow the best corporate governance practices, adhere to regulatory norms, ensure prudent liquidity management and continue to focus on having robust asset-liability and risk management.

Further, she was also informed by the PSBs that they are vigilant of developments in the global banking sector and are taking all possible steps to safeguard themselves from any potential financial shock.

All the major financial parameters indicate stable and resilient PSBs with robust financial health, it added.

The minister also stressed that PSBs

must leverage the full potential of branches opened in International Financial Services Centres in GIFT City Gujarat to identify international opportunities, including prospects related to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

She asked banks to take focused measures to attract deposits, given the steps taken by the government to reduce the tax arbitrage in some debt instruments and pivot their strengthened financial position to support the credit needs of the growing economy.

The minister asked banks to focus on credit outreach in states where the credit offtake is lower than the national average, particularly in the northeast and eastern parts of the country, and enhance business presence in new and emerging areas like One District One Product (ODOP), e-NAM and drones.

She said PSBs should promote the Mahila Samman Bachat Patra, announced in the Budget, through special drives and campaigns and also focus on increasing brick-and-mortar banking presence in border and coastal areas.

USHA, MITHALI, RAWAT’S DAUGHTER TO WITNESS AGNIVEERS’ PASSOUT

As part of their transformation to Sea Warriors, the Agniveers underwent 16 weeks of ab-initio training at INS Chilka.

The training encompassed academic, service and outdoor training.

During the POP, deserving Agniveers will be presented awards by the Chief Guest in various categories. This year onwards, acknowledging the contribution of the first Chief of Defence Staff, the Late General Bipin Rawat towards the transformational Agnipath scheme, the Indian Navy has instituted the General Bipin Rawat Rolling Trophy for the ‘Woman Agniveer Trainee Standing First in Overall Order of Merit’. This trophy will be presented General Rawat’s daughters.

P T Usha, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), popularly known as the ‘Queen of Indian Track and Field’ and ‘Payoff Express’ is a recipient of the Padma Shri award and President of the Indian Olympics Association (IOA).

Mithali Raj, former captain of the Indian women’s Cricket team is the recipient of Padma Shri, Arjuna Award and Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna awards. The eminent Veterans who would be present to motivate the Passing Out Agniveers include Chiman Singh, a war hero of the 1971 Indo-Pak War who was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra.

Manu wins India's 7th medal

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Olympian shooter Manu Bhaker clinched the 25m pistol bronze medal at the ISSF Pistol/Rifle World Cup to take India's medal tally to seven, including a gold, here on Saturday.

Bhaker, the multiple World Cup medal winner, had shot 290 in the precision round on Friday and entered the second day of the competition well placed for the rapid round.

In the rapid round on Saturday, she again shot three superb series of 98, 99 and 97 to aggregate 294 and advance to the ranking round placed third.

Another Indian, Esha Singh, who had shot 292 in precision, scored 289 in rapid to aggregate 581 and advance to the ranking round placed eighth.

In the ranking match 1, Bhaker qualified for the medal round as the third qualifier with an aggregate of 14 points, along with Germany's Doreen Vennekamp (14 points), while Esha was eliminated.

Two shooters from ranking match — China's Ziyue Du and Yaxuan Xiong — qualified for the medal round with 12 points each, to make up the quartet vying for the top position.

In a tough medal match, Bhaker was no match for Doreen (30 points) and Ziyue Du (29 points) who won the gold and silver, while the Indian



could aggregate only 20 points to finish her campaign with a bronze.

This is the first medal in the ongoing World Cup for Bhaker, who had failed to impress in her

favourite event, air pistol, on the opening day of the competition, finishing 16th with 568 points.

China continued their domination in the tournament, winning a sixth gold medal out

Om's rear-guard action propels him into tied second

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Om Prakash Chouhan fired a 66 to zoom 11 spots to tied second with a card of 13-under 203 while emerging as the highest-placed Indian at the USD 300,000 Duncan Taylor Black Bull Challenge here on Saturday. Italy's Lorenzo Scalise shot the third day's best score of seven-under 65 to take a two-shot lead at 15-under 201 at the Karnataka Golf Association (KGA) course.

Chouhan was in a four-way tie for the second spot along with Spain's Victor Pastor (67), England's Ashley Chesters (68) and Sweden's Rikard Karlberg (69). Aman Raj (71) was the second Indian in the top-10. He was placed tied ninth at 10-under 206.

Lorenzo Scalise (68-68-65), on his first trip to India, has posted only one bogey in his last 54 holes. The 27-year-old from Monza, who currently sits in 10th position on the Road to Mallorca Rankings, was pleased with every part of his game as he went error-free.

Scalise said, "I hit it great off the tee and put myself into some great positions. My putting was very good, and I only left myself short sided once.

"I've started the season well and my aim is to be in contention every week because you



have to play consistently throughout the year if you want to finish in the top 20 and get your DP World Tour card."

Chouhan (70-67-66), a seven-time winner on the PGTI, had a quiet start with just one birdie on the front-nine. The Mhow-based Chouhan then began to gather steam with birdie-eagle on the 10th and 11th making a 16-foot conversion on the latter.

Chouhan then stumbled with a double-bogey on the 12th where he found the hazard. He then came up with a fantastic rear-guard action by sinking long-distance birdie putts on the 14th, 16th, 17th and 18th to rise into contention.

The 36-year-old Chouhan said, "After a good start, the double-bogey on the 12th was quite disappointing but fortunately I didn't let that affect my game. I was pleased with the very strong finish. "I've been working on the mental aspect of my game as errors on the course used to affect me a lot in the past."

Satwik-Chirag duo enters semi-final of Swiss Open

PTI ■ BASEL

Dynamic Indian doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has entered the semi-finals of the Swiss Open Super Series 300 badminton event defeating the Danish pair of Jeppe Bay and Lasse Molhede in three hard-fought games.

On Friday night, the Indian pair fought off the challenge in 54 minutes, winning 15-21, 21-11, 21-14.

The victory came after a hard-fought 84-minute quarter-final battle and now they will face the Malaysian pair of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi late on Saturday night.

Satwik-Chirag are the only Indian contenders left in a tournament where the likes of PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen suffered early defeats.

The Indian pair didn't have a great start as they lost the first game easily at 15-21. The duo did pull things up in the middle of the game, reducing the deficit to just one point as they trailed 15-16.



However, the Danish pair won six consecutive points to wrap up the first game with ease.

The Indian pair picked up the tempo in the second game as they quickly got a seven-point cushion of 11-4 at the halfway break. They extended the lead to 10 points by the time parity was restored.

The third game started on an even keel but the Indians were fantastic at the net as they first got an 11-7 lead and then maintained a seven-point advantage till the end of the match to enter the last-four in style.

A tournament win will be a good comeback for the pair after a disappointing early round exit at the All England Championships.

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Former India star Renedy Singh is hoping that his football-crazy home state of Manipur gets to host more national team matches in the near future.

Manipur, which has been providing footballers to the national team for the longest time, is hosting its first international competition in the form of the ongoing tri-nation tournament involving India, Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan.

The seven Manipuris in the current Indian team are lucky to experience something that one of the state's greatest players, Renedy couldn't while representing the Blue Tigers.

"I was part of the national team for 12 years, but I never got to play even one match over here," said Renedy, the former midfielder who donned the India jersey 66 times between 1998 and 2011. Renedy was the star performer in many of India's memorable triumphs, including the LG Cup in Vietnam, the AFC Challenge Cup and twice in the Nehru Cup, but never had the opportunity to play for the national team in front of his home crowd in Manipur.

"I feel 25-30 thousand people turning up for India's first

I hope Manipur gets more national team matches in future: Renedy



match in Manipur is a big thing. I'm really happy for the current Manipuri players, and I hope we get more matches in the future," Renedy said. "In this state, football has always been number one. It's not cricket here in the northeast," he said.

"As we all know, we're one of the states which produces the most number of footballers, and we are still working hard to produce more. In every locality and community, you will see kids playing football. If the academies in Manipur keep

working, I'm sure we'll continue to provide good players in the future."

Speaking of academies, Renedy himself is a coach at the Classic Football Academy, one of Manipur's best, and which is increasingly making its

mark at the national level.

CFA started as Renedy Football School in 2018 before being renamed three years ago.

"We just became the Hero U-17 Youth Cup champions. Our U-21 squad qualified for the Manipur state league and won the Shaheed Manoranjan Singh Memorial Tournament, beating former champions Sagolband United 7-0," Renedy said proudly. Rigorous competition at the youth level is a big reason why Manipur stands out in terms of churning out national team players. "There are many academies in Manipur with former players as coaches who are also working hard. Our rivalry and competition will only help Indian football," he claimed.

As a coach, Renedy spends a lot of time analysing his team's matches. So in attendance at the India-Myanmar game, it was natural for him to make some assessments. "Our players are fit, fast and well-built, but the only thing I want to see is them being more comfortable with the ball," he said.



Jeev, Chikka, Ahlawat tied 11th in rain-hit match

PTI ■ HONG KONG

Jeev Milkha Singh showed that he remains a force to reckon with and was the leading Indian alongside two youngsters — Veer Ahlawat and S Chikkarangappa — on the third day of World City Championship which has now been reduced to 54 holes.

Lightning and rain stopped the third round at 11.48 local time at the Hong Kong Golf Club and play was unable to restart again as the inclement weather persisted.

Jeev, who now plays on the Senior Tours in Japan and Europe, followed his second round 4-under 66 with another strong display as he was 2-under through eight holes in the third round.

With four Open slots available at the event, Jeev may well fancy his chances. At 5-under he is tied 11th with Ahlawat and Chikka.

Bidding to become the first player from Hong Kong to win an Asian Tour event and qualify for The Open, Taichi Kho was 1-under through two holes and was 13-under and last week's winner in DGC Open Miguel Tabuena (1-over through two) was 9-under.

Four other players are at 7-under and another four at 6-under, while the three top Indians with six others are at 5-under.

Other Indians are Gaganjeet Bhullar (66) who is among the few who have completed their third round. He is 4-under and tied 20th. He is alongside SSP Chawrasia at 1-under through eight holes. Chawrasia has a total of 4-under.

Shiv Kapur has a total of 3-under with six holes to play, while Karandeep Kochhar has a 1-under total with two holes to play. Honey Baisoya is 3-over with four holes to play.

Manika, Sreeja move up with other seeds

PTI ■ JAMMU

Top-seeded Manika Batra and second-seeded Sreeja Akula, also the defending champion, made short work of their respective opponents in women's singles to enter the Round of 32 in the 84th Senior National Table Tennis Championships here on Saturday.

Other seeded players, including Reeth Rishya, Diya Chitale, Sutirtha Mukherjee, Anusha Kutumbale, Swastika Ghosh and Prapti Sen scored easy wins to join the leaders in the race for the crown and the top prize purse.

But what aroused interest were the matches that went down to the wire, including the one between former national champion Ankita Das from PSPB and Pelf from Chandigarh and between Shamini Kumareshan, also a former national champion, and Deshna Vanshika from Karnataka.

Though Ankita advanced, Shamini could not.

Ankita did not begin well and conceded two of the first three games to the Chandigarh qualifier. But the inexperienced Pelf, too, suffered in the next and allowed the Olympian to restore parity.

Yet, Pelf made another desperate attempt to go ahead of her known rival before succumbing to the pressure and yielded.

AP ■ MUNICH

New Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel acknowledged on Saturday that he faces a challenging start to his new job after his surprise hiring on Friday to replace Julian Nagelsmann.

Tuchel goes straight into crucial games, starting with German title rival - and Tuchel's former club - Borussia Dortmund on April 1.

"The challenge can't be any greater," Tuchel said.

Ten days later, Bayern plays Manchester City in the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

There will be little time to rest or practice new tactics, with many Bayern players currently away with their national teams and then seven games in the first 22 days of April.

"I was relatively naive in the first conversation (with Bayern). In the first 30 seconds I didn't know what we were discussing or what it was about," Tuchel said.

Once it became clear

Tuchel ready for tough start at Bayern after surprise move



Bayern wanted him to take charge immediately, "it occurred to me that it actually begins right away with Dortmund with an international break beforehand."

Bayern against Dortmund is "the" game in German soccer, he added. Tuchel said the

Germany since 2017. When he left, the only major trophy he'd won was the German Cup with Dortmund. He returns having won two French titles at Paris Saint-Germain and the Champions League and Club World Cup with Chelsea.

Bayern can still win three titles this season - the Bundesliga, the German Cup and the Champions League.

Consistency is a concern after Bayern chief executive Oliver Kahn highlighted that as a reason for getting rid of Nagelsmann.

Bayern is likely to be looking for Tuchel to get the best out of players like Leroy Sané and Serge Gnabry, whose form has dropped off this season, and Sadio Mané, who has rarely been at his best in an injury-disrupted season since joining from Liverpool.

Tuchel hasn't worked in

Mané scores on return to action with Senegal

AP ■ CAPE TOWN

Sadio Mané put his World Cup disappointment behind him by scoring on his return to international action as Senegal swept past Mozambique 5-1 in African Cup of Nations qualifying.

Mané darted behind the defense to poke home a pass by Youssef Sabaly with his left foot for the reigning African champion's second goal in Dakar on Friday.

Mohamed Salah netted Egypt's opener in a 2-0 win over Malawi.

And there was also a successful return for Ivory Coast striker Sébastien

Haller, who scored to help his country beat Comoros 3-1 in his first international since his comeback after receiving treatment for testicular cancer.

Mané smiled as he celebrated his goal with teammates, who had to do without their star player at the World Cup last year after he was injured just before the tournament.

Without Mané, Senegal was knocked out by England in the round of 16 at the World Cup. But the convincing win over Mozambique, Mané's first game for Senegal since before the World Cup, kept the Cup of Nations titleholder at the top of Group L with



three wins from three and on course to qualify for the continental championship next year in Ivory Coast.

Sabaly scored the first goal in the ninth minute, Mané made it two in the 16th, and Iliman Ndiaye and Boulaye Dia ensured Senegal led 4-0 at halftime. Habib Diallo sent a diving header in for the fifth with two minutes to go.

Gildo Vilanculos got Mozambique's only goal when he headed a parry by Alfred Gomis straight back past the Senegal goalkeeper to make it 4-1 early in the second half.

Senegal didn't allow that to threaten its dominance and controlled the rest of the game, with Mané at one point urging his team not to settle for 4-1 and go forward in search of more goals.

Diallo eventually delivered one.

Salah took his goal with a first-time shot from a cross in the 20th minute to give Egypt the lead against Malawi in Cairo. Omar Marmoush was credited with the second but his low shot took a wicked deflection off a Malawi defender and looped over goalkeeper Charles Thom.

Egypt had 21 shots to Malawi's five and 75% possession, and the win revived the record seven-time African champion's qualifying campaign after it lost to Ethiopia in the last round to slip to the bottom of Group D on goal difference.

I HAVE PLANNED A SPECIAL DELIVERY FOR THIS IPL, SAYS SHIVAM

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Gujarat Titans fast bowler Shivam Mavi says he is developing a “special delivery” for the upcoming IPL. There is still some work left on it before it is executed.

“I have planned a special delivery for this IPL, will not mention here what it is but hopefully I am able to execute it and then I will talk about it. I am at 99 per cent with it, the work is still in progress,” he said.

Mavi also said the defending champions have overcome the challenge of having a weak bench strength in their maiden season last year, and is confident of a strong show with the bat late in the order.

“You would have witnessed that (lower order) batting has become very important for all teams in the last 1-2 years, irrespective of the teams whether it is your country or IPL or any domestic side.

“If you are able to execute 2-3 hits then it is very beneficial to your side. I am backing myself to score say 30-35 runs towards



the end with the tail-end batters,” Mavi told media during an interaction on Saturday evening.

The 24-year-old right-arm fast bowler Mavi, who was ear-

lier a part of the Kolkata Knight Riders camp, said Gujarat Titans have worked hard to bolster their bench strength this season. “Honestly there is no pres-

sure (on Gujarat Titans). The kind of cricket we played last year wherein everyone played their respective roles, similarly, this year too we would want

play our roles. But this year we also have bolstered our bench strength, we felt we lacked on this front so we worked on it,” he said.

Mavi added that the fringe bowlers along with youngsters will look to impress in the IPL to earn a place in the national side.

“The bowlers aim to try and perform here and get a berth with the national side. My aim is to do whatever I can for the team in terms of my performance. I do not think of things too far ahead. I just focus on whatever is ahead of me,” he said.

Mavi said he has worked hard on his fitness to overcome some major issues, and his overall game has improved having played domestic cricket regularly.

“I have focussed a lot on my batting over the last two years, I have improved a lot as well. I am trying to work as hard as possible to be useful to my team. I have focussed on managing my workload. Since I am able to maintain that, I am

playing cricket regularly,” he said.

He added, “I have worked on my hitting. I always used to bat well but could not hit those sixes easily. I have worked very hard on that and have got some good returns too. I have also put in a lot of work on my fitness. My glutes and core were weak, but now I am feeling very strong.”

Heaping praise on his franchise and India T20I captain Hardik Pandya, Mavi said, “Hardik bhai never pressurises young players; he only backs them. There is a very light environment in the Gujarat camp and whenever a youngster comes in, he experiences a free setup. When the atmosphere is good then players are naturally able to perform.”

Mavi also praised Gujarat Titans coach and former India player Ashish Nehra for his policy of players-first.

“He gives you a free hand, you are required to go to the field and utilise your time well. If you want to rest then you take a rest. He is like a friend.



All-rounders will play big part because of ‘Impact Player’ rule: RCB’s Hesson

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore’s director of cricket Mike Hesson likes the newly-introduced ‘Impact Player’ rule and feels all-rounders will have a bigger role to play this IPL because of the innovation.

Under the ‘Impact Player’ rule, a batter or bowler can be replaced in the middle of the game as per match situation, in order to make it more exciting.

“I think we heard about the Impact Player before the auction, so obviously we looked at it and thought about how can we maximise it. Potential for the all-rounder to play a big part. So actually there is some strategy involved in it,” Hesson said in a video posted on RCB’s twitter handle.

“I quite like it... I actually thought it brought a little intrigue. You could introduce the player anytime. So whether the batter is being dismissed or not... It was a nice development.”

The Kiwi, however, was of the view that two different team sheets at the toss is set to negate the Impact Player rule quite a bit.

“It’s a substitute rule. So you name at the toss whether you have a batting eleven which will obviously be stronger,” Hesson said.

“And if you bat first you will swap out a batter and bring in an extra bowler so vice versa and the other way around. So after the toss, you give them your bat-

ting 11 and bowling 11. So it’s not an impact rule now it’s a substitute rule.”

Teams can also review wide and no balls in the upcoming IPL, and Hesson said it’s a welcome move.

“It is already being used in WPL I think the more people become used to it the more instinctively they will look to challenge I think it’s a good rule.

“I guess what you don’t want is (for it to) be the umpire’s decision to be the highlight of the game,” he said.

“It removes that (confusion) of whether it’s a waist-high no ball or whether it’s called a wide when flicked pads or vice versa actually. All the players and spectators want is as many decisions right as possible to take a bit of pressure off the umpire which I think is a good thing.”

Talking about other rules to be introduced in this year’s IPL, Hesson said: “So if you don’t complete your 19th over by the time you have to bring an extra fielder inside the circle.”

“That rule has been in place in other tournaments around the world and will be here for the first time in the IPL. There won’t be as many discussions between the batter and the bowler. It is a good rule.”

RCB will open their campaign against five-time champions Mumbai Indians at the Chinnaswamy Stadium here on April 2.

My left leg has healed but will take months to be fit: Maxwell

PTI ■ BENGALURU

As Australia and Royal Challengers Bangalore all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has said that while the injury to his left leg had healed, it’ll take a “number of months” before he is back to full fitness as he prepares for the upcoming edition of the IPL.

The RCB player had suffered a broken left fibula in a horrific mishap during a friend’s birthday party days after Australia were knocked out of the T20 World Cup at home in November last year.

The grievous injuries required urgent surgery and a long period of rehabilitation. Maxwell returned to the ODI side, which won the three-match series against India 2-1 recently, and the cricketer is now looking forward to playing for RCB on its home turf, the Chinnaswamy Stadium, after nearly two years.

In a video posted by RCB on social media ahead of the IPL season, scheduled to commence on Mar 31, Maxwell, said, “The leg’s okay. It’s going to be a number of months before I’m 100 per cent.”

The 34-year-old added that he is hopeful of doing the job for RCB following his recovery from the injury.

“Hopefully it’s (leg) good enough to get through the tournament and still do the job.”

With IPL 2023 set to return to the home-and-away format after two years of playing in bio-bubbles due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maxwell said he was pumped up to play in front of the home fans.

“Finally getting back after a couple of years (of playing inside bio-bubbles). It’s pretty exciting and I’m pretty pumped to play in front of our home fans,” added Maxwell, one of the three players retained by RCB ahead of IPL 2022.

He had contributed 301 runs and taken six wickets in 13 matches during the previous edition of IPL.

Players did not put boundary ropes, says Harmanpreet on short WPL boundary limits

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India and Mumbai Indians captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Saturday declined to comment on the issue of short boundary in the Women’s Premier League (WPL), saying that administrators and not players should be deciding on such limits.

The inaugural WPL began earlier this month on the directive from the BCCI that the boundary limits should be brought in, five metres lesser than last month’s T20 World Cup to a maximum 60 metres.

The decision was to facilitate more high-scoring games and entertainment for crowds in the stadiums and watching elsewhere in terms of more boundaries and sixes.

However, both the venues of WPL 2023 -- the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai and the Brabourne Stadium -- witnessed boundaries being brought in as close as 42-44 metres, with plenty of batters making most of the opportunity and scores in excess of 200 being notched up with ease at such limits.

While the high scores did dry up as the pitches tired out gradually, becoming slow and assisting spin bowlers, batters still enjoyed success on shorter boundary limits.

At one stage, New Zealand and Royal Challengers Bangalore all-rounder Sophie Devine even made a plea for pushing back the boundary limits.

Ahead of the final on



Sunday here at the Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai Indians captain Kaur shot back when the topic came up, although in jest, saying that players are not the ones to decide if boundary limits should be increased from next season onwards.

“Ham logo ne thodi na

rope lagaya hai. Jinhone rope lagaya hai aap unko poocho na. (We did not put the boundary ropes in place. You can ask whoever has done that),” Kaur replied laughing during her joint media conference with Delhi Capitals’ Meg Lanning ahead of the WPL final on

Sunday.

“It is not in our hands no?”, she continued. “It is in the hands of the officials. You can talk to them,” Kaur added.

Both the captains who have led their respective teams into the final of the five-team tournament after 20 league games hoped that the WPL is a start of something special in Indian cricket. Lanning said Australia’s WBBL has played a big role in the success of national side and hoped the same for WPL.

“WBBL has played a massive role in the development of cricket in Australia and around the world as well. It provides great opportunities to players and exposes everybody to pressure situations in big games, the need to perform when it really matters,” Lanning said.

NZ beat SL by 198 runs in 1st ODI

AP ■ AUCKLAND

Harry Shipley took 5-31 as Sri Lanka was bowled out for 76 on Saturday to lose the first one-day international against New Zealand by 198 runs.

New Zealand made 274 batting first on a drop-in pitch at Eden Park and Sri Lanka was dismissed for its lowest-ever ODI total against New Zealand, its fifth-lowest in all one-day internationals.

Sri Lanka lost its first two wickets at 14, its third at 20 and its fourth and fifth at 31 as its innings unraveled inside the first 10 overs.

When a break was taken after 14.2 overs to honor victims, rescuers and recovery workers involved in Cyclone Gabrielle which battered New Zealand’s North Island on Feb. 14, Sri Lanka was 49-7.

Wickets continued to fall steadily and when Sri Lanka was all out after only 19.5 overs, it was for the second lowest one-day international total at Eden Park. Angelo Mathews, who was playing his first ODI in two years, was one of only three Sri Lanka batsmen to reach double figures.



Sri Lanka’s first wicket fell to a runout in the sixth over. Shipley took his first wicket in spectacular style when his angled delivery to opener Pathum Nissanka jagged back through the batter’s shot and uprooted his leg stump.

He also dismissed Kusal Mendis (0), Charith Asalanka (9), Chamika Karunaratne 11 and captain Dasun Shanaka for a first-ball duck. Shipley was playing his first match for New Zealand in New Zealand after making his debut in India late last year.

“It was pretty cool, not what I was expecting to do when I came to the ground,” Shipley said. “The batters said there was

enough there and the score we had on the board was going to be tricky so that gave us confidence to go out there and do that.”

Shanaka said his team went out to bat confident that New Zealand’s total was “chaseable” at Eden Park which is noted for its short boundaries.

“The way we started, I thought it was going to be a very good game,” he said. “The way Shipley bowled, the movement he got and the bounce was responsible for the things that happened tonight so credit should be given to him.”

New Zealand wouldn’t have been confident when its innings ended at 274, not a massive score by Eden Park standards. Finn Allen top-scored with 51 and Rachin Ravindra made 49 on debut as New Zealand posted what seemed a moderate total.

South Africa-born opener Chad Bowes, on debut at 30, struck the first ball of the match and his international career for four to announce that intention. But after reaching 108-2 in the 19th over, New Zealand lost three wickets for 44 runs, its momentum slowed and couldn’t be entirely recovered.

LOCAL EVENTS

ELLIS, SEKIGUCHI LIFT DOUBLES TROPHY



Australian Blake Ellis and Japanese Suichi Sekiguchi emerged victorious in the men’s doubles category at the ITF \$25,000 World Tour international tennis tournament at the Ekana Sports City on Saturday.

The duo defeated the Indian team of Parikshit Somani and Manish Sureshkumar in a hard-fought match that lasted three sets. Ellis and Sekiguchi won the first set comfortably with a score of 6-2. However, the Indian pair put up a tough fight in the second set and managed to take the lead with a score of 4-2. But the foreign pair rallied back to level the score. However, Somani and Sureshkumar played some good passes to take the second set.

In the third set, Ellis and Sekiguchi took advantage of the Indian team’s unforced errors and managed to seal the match in a nail-biting tie-break with a score of 10-8.

UP GIRLS BAG BRONZE



Uttar Pradesh junior girl’s team bagged the bronze medal in the 45th National Junior Girl’s Handball Championship, held at Bareilly from March 22 to 26. UP lost the semi-final match to Haryana 41-35 and shared the third place with Rajasthan. DRM Rekha Yadav, SP (Traffic) Ram Mohan Singh, Anandeshwar Pandey, Tejraj Singh and Vinay Singh from Handball Association of India gave away the prizes.

INTERACTION

Lucknow Super Giants assistant coach Vijay Dahiya and fielding coach Jonty Rhodes conducted a coaching masterclass at Colvin Taluqdars’ College on Saturday. Dahiya and Rhodes interacted with U-12, U-14 and U-16 teams and shared their real life experiences. They also indulged in skill development drills.



UP Warriorz rue Sciver-Brunt’s dropped catch after loss to Mumbai Indians

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Warriorz captain Alyssa Healy on Friday rued all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunt’s dropped catch early on in her innings as the batter went on to score an unbeaten 38-ball 72 to power Mumbai Indians to a 72-run win in the Women’s Premier League Eliminator game.

Sophie Ecclestone spilled a regulation catch at mid-on when Sciver-Brunt was just starting out. The Mumbai Indians all-rounder made the most of the reprieve by striking nine fours and two sixes to guide her team to 182 for 4. UP Warriors were then dismissed for 110 in 17.4 overs, with Isabelle Wong taking a stunning hat-trick.

“We dropped her (Nat) on

six and she went on to make a 20-ball 50. I will back our decision to bowl first, it is something that we have done really well this whole tournament. I will back our ability in that regard,” Healy said after Mumbai Indians advance to the final.

“We have got a lot of spinners, it (wicket) was taking a lot of turn. So, I think defending on that wicket would have been even harder. I still back our decision there, it got a little bit away from us. At the end, I thought 170-odd was a par score, we just needed to bat well but we quite did not do that,” said the Australian.

Healy admitted the UP Warriorz needed to work on their fielding, which was an area of concern during the inau-



gural WPL season. She also pointed out inconsistency in the top order during their campaign.

“It has probably been the tale of our season, losing early wickets in clumps, you cannot get any momentum in your chase. They (MI) bowled pretty well and had better execution as a batting group. We will reflect on that, probably, as a top three or four. We were not consistently great throughout the whole tournament. If you are going to win a tournament you are going to bank on your top-three to make the heap of runs, and we were not able to do that,” Healy said.

The UP Warriorz captain said it was a difficult decision exclude a world-class fast bowler like Shabnim Ismail from the XI,

adding the team was hoping the spinners would get the job done.

“T-Mag (Tahlia McGrath) was probably a (pace bowling) option but I backed our spinners to do the job nine times out of 10. We probably did not execute quite as much at the back end. It is really hard to have someone like Shabnim Ismail sitting on the bench for us, but, at the moment, the way we are set up, we need the extra batting. I bet the six bowlers that we used tonight (Friday) to get the job done more often than not. They executed for 15 out of 20 overs and it got away from us towards the end,” Healy said. Wong, who returned figures of 4-0-15-4 including the first WPL hat-trick, said it was crucial for her to execute her plans well.

“It (hat-trick) will be up there (among the best),” Wong said. “When I’m not out bowling well, I look back at my 24 balls (and see) which ones I want to do the job nine times out of 10. We probably did not execute quite as much at the back end. It is really hard to have someone like Shabnim Ismail sitting on the bench for us, but, at the moment, the way we are set up, we need the extra batting. I bet the six bowlers that we used tonight (Friday) to get the job done more often than not. They executed for 15 out of 20 overs and it got away from us towards the end,” Healy said. Wong, who returned figures of 4-0-15-4 including the first WPL hat-trick, said it was crucial for her to execute her plans well.

“I made a conscious effort to execute it. There have been a few moments in the past when I have been in similar situations where I am too much in the moment or like you said, hyperactivity, to actually focus on it and execute. I was trying to become quite clear at the end of my bowling mark. I wanted to bowl a yorker and nail it, but missed it a little bit,” she said about her hat-trick.

The predator wants
your silence. It feeds
their power, entitlement,
and they want it to feed
your shame
— Viola Davis



ROBOTS & RITUALS

Robots are performing rituals — some devotees fear they'll replace worshippers, writes HOLLY WALTERS.

It isn't just artists and teachers who are losing sleep over advances in automation and artificial intelligence. Robots are being brought into Hinduism's holiest rituals – and not all worshippers are happy about it.

In 2017, a technology firm in India introduced a robotic arm to perform "aarti," a ritual in which a devotee offers an oil lamp to the deity to symbolise the removal of darkness. This particular robot was unveiled at the Ganpati festival, a yearly gathering of millions of people in which an icon of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, is taken out in a procession and immersed in the Mula-Mutha river in Pune in central India.

Ever since, that robotic aarti arm has inspired several prototypes, a few of which continue to regularly perform the ritual across India today, along with a variety of other religious robots throughout East Asia and South Asia. Robotic rituals even now include an animatronic temple elephant in Kerala on India's southern coast.

Yet this kind of religious robotic usage has led to increasing debates about the use of AI and robotic technology in devotion and worship. Some devotees and priests feel that this represents a new horizon in human innovation that will lead to the betterment of society, while others worry that using robots to replace practitioners is a bad omen for the future.

As an anthropologist who specializes in religion, however, I focus less on the theology of robotics and more on what people actually say and do when it comes to their spiritual practices. My current work on religious robots primarily centers on the notion of "divine object-persons," where otherwise inanimate things are viewed as having a living, conscious essence.

My work also looks at the uneasiness Hindus and Buddhists express about ritual-performing automatons replacing people and whether those automatons actually might make better devotees.

RITUAL AUTOMATION IS NOT NEW

Ritual automation, or at least the idea of robotic spiritual practice, isn't new in South Asian religions.


Historically, this has included anything from special pots that drip water continuously for bathing rituals that Hindus routinely perform for their deity icons, called abhisheka, to wind-powered Buddhist prayer wheels — the kinds often seen in yoga studios and supply stores.

While the contemporary version of automated ritual might look like downloading a phone app that chants mantras without the need for any prayer object at all, such as a mala or rosary, these new versions of ritual-performing robots have prompted complicated conversations.

Thaneswar Sarmah, a Sanskrit scholar and literary critic, argues that the first Hindu robot appeared in the stories of King Manu, the first king of the human race in Hindu belief. Manu's mother, Saranyu – herself the daughter of a great architect – built an animate statue to perfectly perform all of her household chores and ritual obligations.

Folklorist Adrienne Mayor remarks similarly that religious stories about mechanized icons from Hindu epics, such as the mechanical war chariots of the Hindu engineer god Visvakarman, are often viewed as the progenitors of religious robots today.

Furthermore, these stories are sometimes interpreted by modern-day nationalists as evidence that ancient India has previously invented everything from spacecraft to missiles.



DEBATES OVER USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY IN DEVOTION AND WORSHIP ARE INCREASING. SOME DEVOTEES AND PRIESTS FEEL THAT THIS REPRESENTS A NEW HORIZON IN HUMAN INNOVATION THAT WILL LEAD TO BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY, WHILE OTHERS WORRY THAT USING ROBOTS TO REPLACE PRACTITIONERS IS A BAD OMEN FOR THE FUTURE.



MODERN TRADITIONS OR TRADITIONALLY MODERN?

However, the recent use of AI and robotics in religious practice is leading to concerns among Hindus and Buddhists about the kind of future to which automation could lead. In some instances, the debate among Hindus is about whether automated religion promises the arrival of humanity into a bright, new, technological future or if it is simply evidence of the coming apocalypse.

In other cases, there are concerns that the proliferation of robots might lead to greater numbers of people leaving religious practice as temples begin to rely more on automation than on practitioners to care for their deities. Some of these concerns stem from the fact that many religions, both in South Asia and globally, have seen significant decreases in the number of young people willing to dedicate their lives to spiritual education and practice over the past few decades. Furthermore, with many families living in a diaspora scattered across the world, priests or “pandits” are often serving smaller and smaller communities.

But if the answer to the problem of fewer ritual specialists is more

robots, people still question whether ritual automation will benefit them. They also question the concurrent use of robotic deities to embody and personify the divine, since these icons are programmed by people and therefore reflect the religious views of their engineers.

DOING RIGHT BY RELIGION

Scholars often note that these concerns all tend to reflect one pervasive theme — an underlying anxiety that, somehow, the robots are better at worshipping gods than humans are. They can also raise inner conflicts about the meaning of life and one's place in the universe.

For Hindus and Buddhists, the rise of ritual automation is especially concerning because their traditions emphasise what religion scholars refer to as orthopraxy, where greater importance is placed on correct ethical and liturgical behaviour than on specific beliefs in religious doctrines. In other words, perfecting what you do in terms of your religious practice is viewed as more necessary to spiritual advancement than whatever it is you personally believe.

This also means that automated rituals appear on a spectrum that

progresses from human ritual fallibility to robotic ritual perfection. In short, the robot can do your religion better than you can because robots, unlike people, are spiritually incorruptible.

This not only makes robots attractive replacements for dwindling priesthoods but also explains their increasing use in everyday contexts: People use them because no one worries about the robot getting it wrong, and they are often better than nothing when the options for ritual performance are limited.

SAVED BY A ROBOT

In the end, turning to a robot for religious restoration in modern Hinduism or Buddhism might seem futuristic, but it belongs very much to the present moment. It tells us that Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions in South Asia are increasingly being imagined as post- or transhuman: deploying technological ingenuity to transcend human weaknesses because robots don't get tired, forget what they're supposed to say, fall asleep or leave.

More specifically, this means that robotic automation is being used to perfect ritual practices in East Asia and South Asia – especially in India and Japan – beyond what would be possible for a human devotee, by linking impossibly consistent and flawless ritual accomplishment with an idea of better religion.

Modern robotics might then feel like a particular kind of cultural paradox, where the best kind of religion is the one that eventually involves no humans at all. But in this circularity of humans creating robots becoming gods, and gods becoming human, we've only managed to, once again, re-imagine ourselves.

(AP/The Conversation

For wider adaptability of PD treatment, it favored PPP mode for PD treatment delivery with private service providers providing consumables and public sector providing care among others.

More than 10 million cases are recorded every year. The disease has worsened as it has become increasingly resistant to available medicines.

(The writer has covered Russia and other former Soviet nations for The AP since 1992)



Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday

Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

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