

CITY 2
CM FOR SETTING UP SPECIAL
AGENCY ON LINES OF CBI

OPINION 6
PRAGATI BHAVAN AND
RAJ BHAVAN'S TIES

WORLD 10
LANKA OPP FOR CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT TO END PREZ SYSTEM

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 158 Issue 107
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY APRIL 22, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



PSG ON
CUSP OF
LIGUE 1 TITLE
11 SPORT

Guru Teg epitome of Indian tradition of sacrifice: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Reminding that the 9th Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur gave up his life for his ideals, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that his "balidan" should be seen as a continuation of great sacrifices made by "our Rishis and Gurus" to defend and preserve the "great heritage and tradition" of India and not as a separate event.

Addressing the nation from the Red Fort to mark the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur, the PM said, "In front of Aurangzeb's tyrannical thinking, Guru Teg Bahadur became 'Hind di Chadar' and stood like a rock. This Red Fort is a witness that even though Aurangzeb severed many heads, but could not shake our faith."

The Red Fort was chosen as the venue for the event as it was here that Mughal ruler Aurangzeb had given orders for the execution of Guru Teg Bahadur in 1675.

As Shabad Kirtan like "Hari ko naam sada sukhdayi" wafted in the air, Modi wearing a Sikh turban looked immersed in the prayer.

The Prime Minister later released a postal stamp and a commemorative coin on the Sikh guru.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays obeisance during the 400th Parkash Purab celebrations of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Red Fort in Delhi on Thursday PTI

Addressing the gathering of the devotees, Modi said "When Guru Teg Bahadur was born, it was said that this child will eliminate sorrow of the marginalised. Gurdwara Shish Ganj Sahib, which is close to the Red Fort, is a symbol of Guru Teg Bahadur's sacrifice", he said.

Seeing a "unity" in the sacrifices made by the Gurus and the "millions" others, Modi

said all of them laid down their lives so that Indian heritage lives on. He said Guru Teg Bahadur lived and sacrificed himself for his ideals.

India, he said is "not only a country but a great tradition which is 'nursed' by thousands of Rishis and Gurus and that sacrifice of Teg Bahadurji "cannot be seen separately".

The PM recalled the tremendous services of ten

Gurus and specifically referred to Guru Nanak whose travels unified the country.

"Guru Nanak Dev ji united the whole country in one thread. Guru Teg Bahadur's followers were everywhere. Patna Sahib in Patna and Rakabganj Sahib in Delhi, we see 'Ek Bharat' everywhere in the form of Guru's wisdom and blessings," he said.

Continued on Page 9

SC raps mayor for demolition drive after stay order

Supreme Court to hear Jahangirpuri anti-encroachment case after 2 weeks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday extended the status quo until further order in the anti-encroachment drive in the violence-hit Jahangirpuri area and expressed displeasure against the NDMC Mayor for uprooting structures with the use of bulldozers even after the SC passed an order to stay it on Wednesday.

Issuing notice to Centre and others, bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai asked the matter to be listed after two weeks and said it will take a serious view of the demolition which was carried out for more than two hours after the stay order was passed and communicated to the Mayor.

"Status quo to be maintained till further order...List after two weeks and pleadings to be completed till then," the court said on the petition filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind that claimed that buildings of the Muslim riots accused were razed.



Lawyers Dhusynat Dave, Kapil Sibal, Prashant Bhusan and CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat's lawyer PV Surendranath informed the apex court that NDMC continued demolition for two hours even after the court's order was communicated to Mayor.

"We will take a serious view of the demolition which was carried out even after the Supreme Court orders, even after NDMC Mayor was informed. We will take that up later," the bench said.

Initiating the arguments, Dave, appearing for Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, said this matter raises far-reaching questions of constitutional and national importance. The bench asked, "What is national importance in this matter? It is only pertaining to an area."

Continued on Page 9

PK for non-Gandhi as Cong president

Kishor presents Natraj model for revival of Cong, proposes 'India Deserves Better' campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The fourth and perhaps the final round of the series meeting between poll strategist Prashant Kishor and batches of Congress leaders, including party chief Sonia Gandhi, is scheduled for Friday to give direction to the party as well as Kishor's much-awaited induction in the party.

According to some leaked reports claiming to be that of Kishor's 600 slides presentation to the Congress leaders spanning over five days, the poll strategist has advised a non-Gandhi to head the grand old party. Kishor has titled his five steps Congress revival plan as "Natraj", the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe.

As per the Kishor's Natraj model, Sonia can continue as UPA president and Rahul Gandhi can lead the party and leaders in Parliament, but Congress president should be



a non-Gandhi. He has also proposed a campaign like "India Deserves Better" by the usage of powerful social media tools.

He has suggested that the Congress should avoid mainstream media and that the party should create a powerful digital army that can take on the BJP. He recommended that the Congress should aim to bring 30 crore voters together to win the election. He has also suggested a topic like Gandhi vs Godse.

Kishor has suggested that the Congress has to take six fundamental resolutions to rebuild itself. Kishor has stated in his recommendation that the Congress is no longer a democratic organisation and 65 per cent of the district presidents and 90 per cent of the block presidents have not had any meeting with the Congress president or general secretary.

He also recommended internal reforms like one family one ticket, fixed tenure of Congress president and Congress Working Committee and prevention of manipulation in internal elections.

Continued on Page 9

India, UK to ink £1b deals

India-Russia ties during Ukraine crisis to figure in Johnson-Modi talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom will further cement their strategic, defence and economic ties by inking deals worth over one billion pounds during Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ongoing visit.

Johnson landed in Ahmedabad on Thursday and will arrive in New Delhi for a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. This is the maiden visit by Johnson to India as the Prime Minister. He had to postpone his tour twice last year in the backdrop of a surge in corona cases in Britain and India. He will be accorded ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

India's ties with Russia in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine sanctions will be discussed in the summit



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson climbs onto a JCB at the new JCB Factory in Vadodara on Thursday PTI

with Modi, Johnson said on Thursday. The two leaders will meet in New Delhi on Friday. Making this assertion in

Ahmedabad after arriving from the United Kingdom on a two-day visit, Johnson said, "As I think everybody understands,

India and Russia have historically very different a relationship, perhaps, than Russia and the UK have had over the last couple of decades. We have to reflect on that reality, but clearly, I'll be talking about it to Modi."

The conflict will figure in the summit with both sides exchanging their views. However, Britain is likely to maintain its stand that it is not in the business of lecturing or telling other countries what to do, sources said here on Thursday. The two leaders are also likely to review the long term consequences of the Ukraine crisis.

Giving details of his visit, the British High Commission said Johnson will announce a draft of commercial agreements and hail a "new era" in bilateral trade and investment ties.

Continued on Page 9

CAPSULE

J&K EX-GUV MALIK GRAFT CHARGE: CBI FILES FIRS

New Delhi: The CBI has filed two FIRs in connection with corruption charges levelled by former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik in the awarding of contracts for a group medical insurance scheme for government employees and civil work worth ₹2,200 crore related to Kuru hydroelectric power project in the erstwhile State, officials said on Thursday.

CLERIC 'INSTIGATING' MOB IN HUBBALLI ARRESTED

Hubballi: A cleric was arrested on Thursday in connection with the violence reported in the city recently over an alleged social media post hurting the sentiments of a community.

THOSE IN OTHER JOBS CAN ENROLL WITH BAR: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said that a person engaged in other professions can be allowed to provisionally enroll with a bar council but has to clear the All India Bar Examination and upon clearing the test, will get six months to decide whether he or she would like to be an advocate or continue with the other job.

Putin says Mariupol 'liberated', Ukraine scoffs at win claim



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu during their meeting in the Kremlin in Moscow on Thursday AP

AP ■ KYIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday claimed victory in the strategic city of Mariupol, even as he ordered his troops not to risk more losses by storming the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the war's iconic battleground.

"The completion of combat work to liberate Mariupol is a success," Putin said in a joint appearance with his Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. "Congratulations."

Ukraine jeered at the idea that a Russian victory in Mariupol was already achieved. Detailed report on P9

Former min's aide held for duping youths

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Former UP minister Swami Prasad Maurya's OSD Arman Khan, along with four aides, was arrested by a team of STF for duping around 150 people on the pretext of facilitating them government jobs.

His aides were identified as Asgar Ali of Deoria, Faizi and Vishal Gupta of Basti, and Amit Rao of Kushinagar. They were arrested following a tip-off near National PG College in Hazratganj on Thursday afternoon. The STF team recovered five ID cards, 22 fake appointment letters, 14 educational certificates, an SUV and two passes of Lok Bhawan without bearing any signature.

Asgar Ali confessed to his crime and said he worked in different government departments on contract basis and came in contact with Arman in secretariat in the process Asgar and Faizi used to collect information about government departments from Arman and

Continued on Page 9

In this summer keep your liver, intestines & digestive system healthy with evidence based Ayurvedic medicines

Livogrit & Livamrit
First and only research & evidence based medicine to be published in international research journals as scientific solution for liver problems

Godhan Ark
Detoxes the body and effective in arthritis, constipation, fatty liver and colitis. It is a natural blood thinner and useful in reducing obesity

Permanent & safe relief from constipation

To improve the health of your digestive system

Proven medicine for colitis

Best solution for brain diseases, stress and insomnia

A solution for problems related to menstruation

For heart diseases, blood pressure and cholesterol

For skin diseases and to purify the blood

Divya Asavarisht is available only at Patanjali Stores. It makes the digestive system healthy, gives relief from insomnia and excellent for nervous system and immunity.

All our other medicines are available at leading medical, ayurvedic and others stores across India.

Shop Online - www.patanjaliayurved.net | Customer Care Number - 18001804108 | Email ID - feedback@patanjaliayurved.org | Website - www.patanjaliayurved.org

CM for setting up special agency on lines of CBI

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stressing the urgent need for using modern techniques in both policing and investigation, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, directed the officials to prepare the UP Special Police Establishment Act (UPSPEA) on the lines of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He asked the officials to initiate the process in this regard within 100 days.

To enhance the professional skills of the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) in crime investigation its personnel should be imparted training by various institutions in India besides foreign investigative/intelligence agencies like FBI, Homeland Security, the chief minister added.

This directive was given by the chief minister during the presentation of the action plan of Home, Prison, Home Guard, Secretariat Administration and Appointment and Personnel departments before the council of ministers.

He said energetic, skilled and dedicated personnel should be selected in the next 100 days for the new Special Police Operation Team (SPOAT) and they should be trained in collaboration with the Central Police Force/Indian Army. Sniper training should also be given to them, as well as special adventure courses should also be imparted to increase their confidence, he said.

The chief minister said that in the last five years, Uttar Pradesh had presented a model of strong law and order.

"Organised crime has ended in the state. Illegally acquired assets worth Rs 2,081 crore have been confiscated. In future also, action against the mafia and criminals will continue. Our police should be ready 24x7 for the safety and to protect the honour of the 25 crore people of the state," he said.

Yogi said that all cabinet ministers would now go to the field. "Under the chairmanship of cabinet ministers, 18 teams for 18 divisions are being formed and a programme is being prepared for 18 weeks.

These teams will stay for 72 hours in each division and will travel to different districts. They will meet people, investigate the system, examine the possibilities, after which the nodal officers of 75 districts will take the report of these teams and submit the plan of

CM: Revenue collection through GST, VAT has increased in 5 yrs



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Claiming that revenue collection through goods and services tax (GST) and value-added tax (VAT) in Uttar Pradesh had steadily increased in the last five years, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that this had led to increase in budget size and per capita income of the state.

"Even after the challenges of the COVID-19 period, there is a steady increase in the GST and VAT collections of the state. Against Rs 58,000 crore collected in the year 2017-18, about Rs 1,00,000 crore has been collected in 2021-22," Yogi said during the review of the action plan of the Revenue department here on Thursday.

The chief minister said that Uttar Pradesh had been declared as the best state in filing of GST returns. He said there was a need to intensify awareness campaigns so that more and more merchants could be registered under GST. He said the one time settlement (OTS) scheme should be implemented within the next 100 days for speedy settlement of pre-GST litigations and arrears.

He said if the income of the state had increased this gave the government leverage to expedite

public welfare schemes. He said as the size of the state budget had increased, so had the per capita income. "All this is public money. This money will be used for public welfare programmes," the chief minister said.

"During the previous regimes, mining was a den of corruption while in the last five years, action was taken through a transparent system and there was an increase of 250 per cent in revenue collection as the state collected over Rs 14,000 crore from mining," he said.

Similarly, the Stamp and Registration department would have to focus on increasing the revenue collection, the chief minister said. "Brokers will have to be completely eliminated in the registrar's offices," he said.

Yogi claimed that earlier a syndicate ruled the Excise department and the Bharatiya Janata Party government had eliminated it in a planned manner. He said efforts should be made in a planned manner by the Excise department to raise the state from the category of consumption state to the status of producer state.

For the transport department, the chief minister advocated a massive change and suggested construction of bus stations on PPP model. "The school bus acci-

dent in Ghaziabad on Wednesday was shocking. Along with the culprits in the case, the accountability of the transport officer concerned should also be fixed. One-week drive should be conducted to check the fitness of school buses," he said.

"We have made many innovative efforts in the last five years for the welfare of the traders. Traders Welfare Board has been constituted. The amount of accident insurance has been increased to Rs 10 lakh," Yogi said.

Stressing on use of modern techniques, the chief minister said efforts should be made to increase the revenue of the state by using artificial intelligence and other techniques to effectively curb tax evasion. "Prepare and submit a detailed action plan for the establishment of a GST tribunal in the state," he said.

The chief minister also said there was a need to make the working of the deputy registrar's office more transparent and convenient for the general public.

He said action should be taken for digitisation of all the papers. "Keeping in view the wider public interest, a new resolution scheme should be brought for waiver of interest in stamp cases," he said.

implementation within 15 days," he added.

It was also decided to select Centre in Rampur and like the men's team, form a skilled team of

women commandos in the state. Besides for the next 100 days, a unit of Special Task Force (STF) would be formed in Ayodhya district.

New field units of ATS are being formed in many districts, including Deoband, Bahraich, Aligarh, Kanpur Nagar and Bahraich. The availability of necessary human resources, buildings etc. would be ensured for the new units.

"Efforts should be made to bring down the response time of UP 112 to 10 minutes. A single window system for police, prosecution and organisation should be implemented in a phased manner," the chief minister said.

He said to strengthen law and order, one new women PAC battalion should be set up in Jalaun, Mirzapur and Balrampur districts.

"A tool should be developed with the help of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur for data analytics. Also incorporate video analytics and management technology into CCTV. This will increase its effectiveness," the chief minister said.

He said there was a need for technological development in the field of anti-drone attack system and drone forensics. He said UP ATS police station should be established and operation of women PAC battalions formed in the name of Avantibai and Uda Devi ji in Budaun and Lucknow district respectively should be started in the next two years.

"In the last years, the Appointment and Personnel department has employed skilled youth with complete transparency without any discrimination. Corruption has no place in government jobs. Along with recruitment, emphasis should also be laid on modernisation over training."

He added, Yogi said that the prison should be developed as a correction home. "Sometimes an innocent person also has to go to jail. In order to connect the prisoners with the mainstream of society, reputed voluntary organisations of the district, natural farming MSME units, and skill development missions should also be linked," he said.

The chief minister said the secretary should be kept free from touts. "Keep the thugs who get jobs, work away from the secretariat premises. Field officers should not be called unnecessarily to the sec-

Model district plans to be prepared for all dists of UP

Lucknow (PNS): For the overall development of Uttar Pradesh, the government has drawn a unique blueprint under which a 'Model District Plan' will be prepared for every district based on the problems that a particular district is facing.

A directive in this regard was issued by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a high level meeting on Thursday.

Under this ambitious plan, 18 teams, headed by cabinet ministers, would be sent to 18 divisions in the next 18 weeks. The teams will meet people and try to understand the problems at the ground level.

"Every team has to stay put in the division for at least 72 hours so that they can have a clear understanding about the problems of the said region," the chief minister said while issuing instructions.

He said the report would be handed over to the nodal officers of the 75 districts, on the basis of which a separate model district plan would be prepared for each district.

The nodal officers are expected to submit their reports within 15 days.

The chief minister said that every district had its own problems, for which it was necessary that those problems were solved according to the plan prepared on the inputs gathered from the ground.

retariat. It wastes time and money. No file should be kept pending at any table for more than three days," the chief minister stressed.

He said a project management group should be appointed for the installation of CCTV and 3,000 pink booths in public places. He said the pink booths should also be made near religious places.

He said women personnel had done a good job by joining Beat Police Service so scooty should be provided to every female beat constable.

UP's new textile policy to give special facilities to investors

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In order to make Uttar Pradesh a global textile hub and attract investors in the field of handloom and textiles, the state government is soon going to introduce a new Textiles and Garment Policy-2022 under which arrangements will be made to provide all kinds of attractive facilities to entrepreneurs along with capital investment subsidy up to 40 per cent.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary (Handloom and Textiles) Dr Navneet Sehgal at Lok Bhawan on Thursday to finalise the draft of the Textiles and Garment Policy-2022.

Officers of the Finance and Environment department and officials of various industrial organisations were present in the meeting.

The additional chief secretary said this policy had been prepared after studying the textile and garment policies of other states. He said preparations were being made to provide special facilities to the investors investing in UP and in the proposed policy, investors in Purvanchal and Bundelkhand would be given additional benefits.

Sehgal said that provision was being made to give 100 per cent stamp duty and land cost subsidy in the new policy. In addition, grants would be given for infrastructure facilities, he said, adding that subsidies would also be given for employment generation.

"Additional grant will be given for keeping women workers in industrial institutions," he said.

To increase exports from the state, exemption in export subsidy and electricity duty will be given. Besides, 100 per cent reimbursement will be given to the developer who develops a private textile park.

Sehgal said that entrepreneurs would have to start production within five years from the issuance of a letter of comfort.

He said under the Textiles and Garmenting Policy-2017, 79 proposals for investment in handloom and textile sector were received, out of which 53 were for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and 26 for large, mega and super mega industries.

"With the new policy, a maximum number of investors will come to Uttar Pradesh and employment opportunities will be available to a large number of people. Along with this, Uttar Pradesh will also become self-sufficient in the textile industry sector," Sehgal said.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Nudrat Shoaib Shah D/o Suhail Nafis R/o 680/40 Gajipurwa Jajmau Kanpur 208010 have changed my name to Nudrat Nafis for all future purposes.

NOTICE

Notify that I have changed my name from Dr. Sartaj Shabbar to Dr. Sartaj Shabbar Rizvi for all purposes. Dr. Sartaj Shabbar Rizvi S/o Syed Ali Shabbar Rizvi, 7 Banjari Tola, Chowk, Lucknow-226003

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Vineeta Nahata to Vinita Nahata. In future I shall be known as Vinita Nahata W/o Vineet Nahata, E/312, Sauther Land House, 16/8, Civil Lines, Kanpur

सूचना

मैं सुमन पत्नी आशीष कुमार निवासी पुरई खेड़ा म 0 अलादापुर नेवादा कुडौनी सपडौला हरदोई सूचित करती हूँ कि मैंने अपना नाम सुमन यादव से सुमन कर लिया है। भविष्य में सभी कार्यों हेतु मुझे सुमन नाम से ही जाना पहचाना जाये।

NOTICE

My self Samsit Boro son of Manesar Baro, Army No - 8037160 P, Rank-NK/TS (GD), Address - Vill + P.O - Bardangeri Kuchi, Kamrup, Assam - 781366, My Name in few document is written Samsita Boro which is wrong, Instead my Correct name is Samsit Boro in future this name should be used .

Horticulture Dept imparting training to youth: Maurya

Lucknow (PNS): On the direction of Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, the Horticulture and Food Processing department is imparting training and skill to young men and women in various disciplines to help in their self-employment or facilitate their employment in various institutions.

According to an official communiqué, the training of the third batch of rooftop farming and value addition by Regional Food Research and Analysis Centre Lucknow will be held on April 23.

Director, Horticulture and Food Processing, Dr RK Tomar said that various types of employment training programmes for the general public such as mushroom production and value addition, food processing, food safety, nutraceutical food products, probiotic food, jaggery based products, prevention of adulteration in food products, training for checking etc. were conducted.

Tomar further said that training would be also given on how plants contribute to maintaining a clean environment, organic products, vegetables rich in nutritional elements, fruits, medicinal plants etc, especially to the people living in urban areas.

He said training would be given in this workshop on how to prepare various value-added products of crops produced in the participants' own home along with technical knowledge on installing the apparatus on the roof or balcony of their houses.

Director of Regional Food Research and Analysis Centre at Lucknow, SK Chauhan, said that those interested could get themselves registered (website www.rfacgov.in) on first come first served basis or can contact Satish Jain, (Mobile: 8090033152).

Body of teenage girl found; 'honour' killing suspected

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a suspected case of 'honour' killing in Hardoi, a 17-year-old girl was found brutally murdered behind her house on Thursday.

The victim's throat had been slit with a knife. The family members lodged a report against unknown miscreants but the circumstantial evidence pointed to the hand of some insider in the killing. The police sent the body for post-mortem and were investigating the case.

Superintendent of Police (Hardoi), Rajesh Dwivedi, said, "The murder took place sometime on Wednesday night when the victim's throat was slit. The police are investigating the murder but there is no

evidence of honour killing yet."

The victim, Goldie, was the daughter of a local resident, Deshraj, of Jakhwa village. Her body was found lying in a pool of blood behind her house on Thursday morning. After the locals spotted the body they raised an alarm and also called the family members. Later the police were informed about the murder.

The local police inspected the spot and also enquired from the family members and the relatives about the possible reasons for the victim's murder. In addition to finding a blood-stained knife, the police also recovered a pair of slippers, a mobile phone and mustard oil from near the body. Blood stains were also found on the terrace of the house.

Police are investigating the case apprehending that the killing took place over some 'love affair'. In another tragic incident in Farrukhabad, a four-year old boy was killed when a stray bullet hit him on the head at a pre-wedding tilak ceremony on Wednesday night.

The boy was identified as Dinesh. A probe has been initiated but no one has been arrested so far in connection with the murder.

The incident happened at the house of Kishan Pal Jatav in Khimsepur village under Mohammadabad police station in Farrukhabad district where a pre-wedding tilak ceremony was going on. People in a mood of jubilation started firing from their guns and the boy was accidentally hit on his

head which caused his death. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but he died on the way.

According to the police, the boy was the son of Tinku Jatav, one of Kishan Pal's relatives who stayed in nearby Kuberpur village. Police rushed to the spot and a probe was initiated.

"The minor child sustained gunshot injuries in his head and based on the complaint further action will be initiated," said Inspector Dilip Kumar Bind, who was at the spot to investigate the matter.

Meanwhile, in a bizarre case in Etah, a teacher made an attempt on the life of the principal for opposing him to sign attendance register for the days he was absent. The principal managed to escape unhurt while the teacher was sus-

pected. The incident took place in Jalapur Santhal in Etah's Sakit block. School principal Arvind Kumar said that assistant teacher Digendra Pratap Singh was often absent at school and they had several arguments with him over this issue in the past.

On Tuesday, Digendra Pratap Singh came to school and also signed the register for the previous absent days. When Kumar opposed, he was first beaten up and later the teacher fired three shots with a licensed pistol. Luckily the principal narrowly escaped being hit by a bullet. The incident was captured on a video which has since been widely shared on social media. The sound of gunshots created panic in the school. After firing, the accused

teacher allegedly left the premises waving the gun and hurling abuses.

Kumar said the basic shiksha adhikari (BSA) had been informed about the incident and Block Education Officer Sakeet Neerja Chaturvedi investigated the matter.

The children and others present were questioned by the police. The teacher was immediately suspended.

"The matter is from Sakit block. A primary school teacher arrived late, had a dispute with the headmaster there and fired his gun. There was a complaint of firing, the BSA suspended the teacher and further investigation is being done," said Etah's Additional District Magistrate Vivek Kumar.

Vigilance tightens noose around another UPRNN official

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sleuths of the Vigilance Establishment tightened their noose around another officer of the Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam by registering a disproportionate assets case against him in Meerut.

Earlier, a similar case was registered against officers of the UPRNN in Gorakhpur.

According to reports, the Vigilance Establishment was handed over inquiry against Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam project manager Sunil Kumar Gautam.

On May 31, 2019, the state government handed over a probe against Gautam, who was then posted as project manager in the National Capital Region.

During the probe, the probing team found that Gautam had earned Rs 13.30 lakh more than all his known sources of income.

When quizzed, Gautam failed to give any explanation. The Vigilance Establishment sleuths also collected the expenditure made by Gautam to enjoy stays in hotels and restaurants. The team found that against the total income of Rs 41.56 lakh, Gautam had made an investment of Rs 54.86 lakh, or Rs 13.30 lakh in excess to known sources of income.

The Vigilance Establishment sent its findings to the state government and now after approval, it registered a case against Gautam for further legal proceedings against him.

Meanwhile, in another development in Meerut, a case has been registered against police Inspector Dharmendra Singh, earlier posted at Hastinapur police station, after he too was found to have made huge wealth. The case has been registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act in the

Medical police station of Meerut.

The case was investigated by the Inspector-in-charge, Anti-Corruption Organisation, for the last over one year during which he found that the inspector had amassed 134 per cent more assets than his income.

In 2020, a public representative named Gopal Kali held a press conference against the corrupt activities of Inspector Dharmendra Singh posted in Hastinapur police station and disclosed about the illegal luxurious farm house of the inspector on the land of Hastinapur Forest Century.

Apart from this, the house of the inspector was also raided by the Electricity department and it was found that the house was illuminated by the stolen electricity gadgets. After these disclosures, a probe was handed over to ACO Praveen Kumar.

Maya: Punish officials responsible for encroachments

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party supreme Mayawati on Thursday said that to remove illegal constructions, only poor people should not be harassed, but action should also be taken against those officers under whose supervision illegal constructions had taken place.

She said that if there was a riot anywhere, action should be taken against the original culprits, but it was not right to harass the poor.

She tweeted one after the other and said that bulldozers were being run under the guise of illegal construction in other states of the country, including Jahangirpuri in Delhi, in which poor people were also being affected, while the government should also take strict action against the officials responsible for it.

She said illegal constructions were taking place only because of corrupt officials.

PUBLIC NOTICE

EXECUTION CASE NO. 342 OF 2021
IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION
COMMERCIAL DIVISION

Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited Petitioner/Award Holder
-Versus-
Somesh Kumar & Anr. Respondents/Judgement Debtors

To
1. Somesh Kumar Son of Umesh Kumar, UDI Mode, Etawah - 206001.
2. Devesh Kumar Son of Umesh Kumar, UDI Mode, Etawah - 206001.

Please note that by an order dated 21st February, 2022 the Hon'ble Court had directed to effect service on the Judgment debtors. As the service of the said notice was not clear as per the postal report, the Hon'ble Court has given liberty for this instant publication by an order dated 7th April, 2022. Please note that an execution application has been filed against you by the Award Holder being Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited praying for several interim orders against you the Judgment debtors.

Please note that the Hon'ble Court has directed the matter to be listed on 28th June, 2022, when you the Judgment debtors need to file your individual Affidavit of assets in Form No.16A of Appendix E of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

You are requested to be present in Court on the returnable date and/or be duly represented through your Advocate.

SINHA AND COMPANY
ADVOCATES
5, KIRAN SHANKAR ROY ROAD
KOLKATA - 700 001.
Contact: +9133-2210-1617/1625
E-Mail: sinhacoadvocates@gmail.com
sinhaco@sinhaco.com

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Seek religious leaders' help in maintaining peace: ACS

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Awasthi directed police to hold meetings with religious preachers/gurus and seek their co-operation in maintaining communal harmony. The ACS was reviewing security arrangements for Ramadan processions and other festivals.

He asked officials concerned to make proper police bandobast during Ramadan and ensure peace at any cost. He also directed the officials to ensure foot patrolling to maintain law and order.

Awasthi, along with ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar, conducted a surprise checking of Chowk police station on Thursday in compliance with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions on ensuring peace and rule of law in the state.

He said all the SHOs and senior officers should conduct at least one hour of foot patrolling to instill a sense of security among people and maintain law and order.

Awasthi asked women constables of pink booth to also make active participation. The ACS asked the officials concerned to keep the police station premises clean and get the unclaimed vehicles auctioned.

"The police should be friendly with the public when they visit police stations. The cops must prevent use of drugs,



Mourners taking out 'Gileem Taboot Juloo' from Masjid-e-Kula in Saadatganj to Azakhana Hakeem Syed Mohd Taqi Zaidi in Chowk on the 19th day of Ramadan. The procession was taken out after a gap of two years due to Covid spread and consequent lockdowns. The early morning procession commemorates around 1,400-year-old incident when Prophet Mohammed's cousin & son-in-law Hazrat Ali was attacked with a sword while offering namaz at Masjid-e-Kula in Iraq and was brought home by his sons and well-wishers in a blanket (gileem in Arabic)

gambling/betting, extortion and illegal plying of vehicles. If policemen are found involved of such cases, senior officers must take stern action," the ACS said.

Awasthi directed ADG, Women Security Organisation, Neera Rawat to inspect the pink booths and make special efforts to make them active.

Prashant Kumar said that police should take stern action against those disturbing communal harmony and against

those in the list of top-10 criminals. "The police should ensure maximum jail term to listed criminals by effectively pursuing cases," he said.

Commissioner of Police, Lucknow, DK Thakur was also present in the meeting. He later reviewed security arrangements for Ramadan and other festivals.

DCP Somen Berma, ADCP Chiranjivi Sinha and officials of ACP/SHO rank attended the review meeting.

Thieves make off with cash, valuables from two houses

Lucknow (PNS): Thieves made off with cash and valuables from a flat in Kasmanda House in Hazratganj police station area on Tuesday. As per complainant Naresh Babu Jaiswal of Hardoi, he had gone to Hardoi for some work. Around 8 pm on April 19, a security guard of the apartment called him to inform that the main gate lock was lying broken. "I reached the flat the next day and found it burgled. The thieves had made off with Rs 30,000 in cash and a gold ring," he said.

In another case, the house of an employee of Rajkiya Ayurved College in Sushant Golf City area was burgled and the thieves made off with cash and ornaments worth several lakh. House owner Sandeep Kumar Dwivedi said he had gone to his workplace on Wednesday and his wife to her brother's house. "When we returned home in the evening, we found it burgled. The thieves made off with all the gold and silver ornaments apart from the cash that we had," he said.

ARRESTED

Police claimed to have arrested a drug peddler in Alambagh on Thursday and recovered 9.75 kg ganja from his possession. He was identified as Shubham Tiwari of Bhadohi. The police said that the accused had been in this illegal trade for a long time. "He was arrested under a drive being carried out to check the sale of drugs and other psychotropic substances," the police said.

Surge of fresh cases continues

16 test positive in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The surge of novel coronavirus positive cases continued in Uttar Pradesh as 205 fresh cases were reported in the last 24 hours while 81 COVID-19 patients recovered during this period. Two districts - Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad - continued to bear the brunt as 103 fresh cases were reported from GB Nagar and 52 from Ghaziabad. Lucknow also reported 16 fresh novel coronavirus positive cases during this period. There were 980 active cases in the state on Thursday evening.

As many as 16 people tested positive in Lucknow on Thursday.

While reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the state with senior officials in a

high-level meeting on Thursday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said according to health experts, the new strain of the novel coronavirus could be more transmissible, but this was not a matter of concern for Uttar Pradesh as the form of infection was unlikely to change and would not cause any kind of severity as compared to other variants.

The chief minister directed officials to intensify awareness activities and said, "We have to be vigilant about the health and safety of children and they should be made aware of Covid protocols in schools."

The state government has also made wearing of masks and social distancing mandatory at all public places in the National Capital Region (NCR) districts and Lucknow.

Additional Chief Secretary Amit Mohan Prasad said that as per studies, the vaccinated population had nothing to worry about the new strain.

Inching closer towards another vaccination milestone, Uttar Pradesh has so far administered over 30,95,36,315 doses of the Covid vaccine. Out of these, over 16,99,10,182 are first doses. Over 13,69,75,096 people have been fully vaccinated in the state while as many as 26.51 lakh precaution doses have been administered so far. So far, over 2,19,48,657 children in the age group of 15-17 and over 37,77,707 children in the age group of 12-14 have been administered Covid vaccine doses in the state.

"In view of the importance of vaccination in the prevention of COVID-19, the chief minister has given instructions to intensify the vaccination drive," Prasad said. He said the chief minister had asked officials to ramp up the administration of the booster dose of Covid vaccine to all adults. The booster doses are being administered at 700 private vaccination centres in the state.

3 robbers land in police net

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police claimed to have arrested three robbers/autolifters from PGI police station area on Thursday. They were identified as Aman aka Satyam of Rajajipuram in Talkatora, Rishabh Singh of Sarojininagar and Shavez Khan of Bazaarkhala. The police recovered two stolen motorcycles, a looted gold chain, a piece of looted gold chain, a country-made pistol, a live cartridge and Rs 1,300 in cash from their possession.

ADCP SM Qasim Abdi said the arrest came after several days of work on chain-snatching and autolifting cases. He said the police were tipped off about the movement of the accused who were nabbed from Chiraiyabagh underpass at Shaheed Path. The ADCP claimed that the accused are hardened criminals and do not shy away from opening fire on victims on being confronted or challenged.

The accused told the police that they looted a gold chain from a woman near a school on April 18. They also said that they looted a gold chain from a woman on morning walk on VIP road in Surpotganj locality. They disclosed the name of one of their aides and said they had also looted a gold chain from a woman in Chinhat colony. The accused said that they keep weapons for their protection and open fire on being confronted or challenged by their targets or commuters.



DCP, East, Amit Anand announced a cash reward of Rs 10,000 for the police team that arrested the accused.

It surfaced during probe that Rishabh was named in a case of murder in Talkatora while Aman in three cases and Shavez in two cases of crime form Talkatora and Bazaarkhala police stations.

In another success, police arrested three auto lifters and recovered six stolen motorcycles fitted with fake registration number plates in Banthra on Thursday. Those arrested were identified as Ram Karan, Sudhi Gautam and Ranjeet Ram aka Raju, all of Banthra.

The police also recovered a country-made pistol and two live cartridges from the possession of the accused who were arrested on a tip-off.

Meanwhile, the Vikas Nagar police claimed to have arrested three chain-snatchers and recovered two gold chains, two motorcycles, a country-made pistol and two live cartridges from their possession. They were identified as Sumit Verma of Ghazipur, Nadeem Ahmed of Hasanganj and Khatib Ahmad of Hasanganj. The police said the accused were members of an interstate gang.

Extortion racket whistleblower attacked

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The complainant, who had blown the lid off the extortion racket at Polytechnic crossing was attacked in Gomatnagar Extension on Thursday night. Police said the miscreants opened fire to intimidate him and he escaped unhurt.

The racket of extortion was busted in a surprise inspection by the joint commissioner of police (Law and Order) recently. ADCP, East, Qasim Abdi said Abhishek Rai of Gumbaba, along with his friends Ritesh Dubey and Shyam Singh, was going for some work and his car was intercepted near a school. Two shots were fired in the air while one on Abhishek's car. However, no injuries were reported in the incident.

"Abhishek accused Sajjan Mishra, Rishabh Rai and their aides of attacking him," the ADCP said. He said Abhishek Rai had lodged a case against Ajeet Singh and Bhanu Singh, who were running the extortion racket at Polytechnic bus stand. The ADCP said the victim will give a complaint and stern action will be taken against the accused.

Abhishek accused Bhanu Singh's henchmen of orchestrating the attack on him. There were reports that passersby overpowered the attackers and nabbed them before a police team reached the scene. Sources said the attack was a fallout of rivalry between the victim and his opponents over contract business-related issues.

Ensure availability of drinking water in all hospitals: DyCM

Lucknow (PNS): Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak has issued directions for availability of drinking water in all the city hospitals. He said all the hospitals should have water filters and coolers. Special care should be taken to ensure cleanliness and hygiene in hospitals and medicines be kept in an organised manner, he said. The deputy CM said doctors should behave in a proper manner with the attendants of patients.

To avoid long queues for medicines, large number of counters should be opened and separate counters be made for women. In a video-conferencing with all the additional directors of Health, and CMOs across the state at Yojana Bhawan on

Thursday, Pathak said the Health department has started the exercise of prevention of communicable diseases. He said it would be their endeavour to eradicate dengue, Japanese encephalitis, malaria and zika virus infection from the state and the focus would be to remove the breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Pathak said that in the NCR region, special care should be taken in the neighbouring districts of Gautam Buddha Nagar in view of the increase in Covid cases.

As per the directions of the chief minister, Jan Aarogya Mela will be held at every PHC with special emphasis on regular immunisation of children and decreasing infant mortality.

Shivpal Yadav to remain in SP alliance: Rajbhar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Playing down the news about sulking Shivpal Singh Yadav, Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar said that the Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief was a part of the alliance and would remain in the alliance in future too.

"There is news about Shivpal Singh Yadav claiming that he is angry and will leave the Samajwadi Party alliance. This is all false news. He is still part of the alliance and will remain so," Rajbhar told reporters here on Thursday.

He said that SP, SBSP and PSP would contest the next Lok Sabha elections together. "He is part of the family and all kinds of things happen in a family. Shivpal Yadav was angry

'THERE IS NEWS ABOUT SHIVPAL SINGH YADAV CLAIMING THAT HE IS ANGRY AND WILL LEAVE THE SP ALLIANCE'

even before the election and there is nothing new," Rajbhar said.

When specifically asked whether Shivpal Yadav would be joining Bharatiya Janata Party, Rajbhar said that he had candid discussions with Shivpal Singh Yadav and he was not joining any party. "You journalists speculate too much. No one is going anywhere," he said.

After Akhilesh Yadav was elected leader of the opposition in the UP assembly, the polit-

ical grapevine was pregnant with rumours that Shivpal Yadav would be joining BJP. The rumours got further credence after Shivpal Yadav dissolved all the executive committee of Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) after his meeting with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Some political pundits even predicted that he would be joining the BJP by the end of this month. "You read too much between the lines," Rajbhar said. On the issue of bulldozer, he said that shanties of the poor were being demolished while the actual guilty had been given political patronage. "Through this bulldozer drive attention is being diverted from the real issues of inflation and unemployment," Rajbhar said.

SGPGIMS to train doctors in critical care: Dr Sahu

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

The Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) is starting a special training on critical care which will be conducted by the Critical Care Society of USA to enhance the critical care skills of doctors and around 50-60 doctors will be trained from across the country. The two-day training will begin on April 23.

Giving this information, organising secretary of the training programme and professor of anesthesiology at the SGPGIMS, Dr Sandeep Sahu, said on Wednesday that these doctors would be trained in all aspects of

intensive care unit (ICU) and critical care right from how to approach critical care end patients and how to put them on ventilator. "It is both a skill and knowledge-based course. The training includes how to prescribe antibiotics and how to take care of shock. It's a comprehensive treatment and all varieties like kidney problems and liver problems will be taken up in the course," he said.

Dr Sahu said the importance of the critical care course was highlighted by COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 disease itself has shown that critical care is important. COVID-19 has not yet gone and there are patients who still need ICU

care. When there is no COVID-19, then also there are road accident victims who need intensive care if there is a multiple organ injury. The adult patients also need intensive care," he said.

The senior doctor said all aspects of critical care would be covered in the two-day course and with enhancement of knowledge these 50-60 doctors would step out and improve intensive care units with which they were associated. When asked why critical care training was required and where India was lacking in it, Dr Sahu said that there was no structured training.

"Doctors start learning by default as there is no structured training. In the structured train-

ing the doctors, apart from being taught what can be done, are also taught what cannot be done and how complications can be tackled and how these complications can be detected early and managed. In the unstructured training, a person keeps carrying out the work by default which could be correct or could be wrong too. There is no one to guide you," he said.

The anesthesiologist said the training would be given by the Society of America which governs all the critical care. "This society is attempting to enhance the skills of people in developing countries. They are doing it under a corporate social responsibility initiative and have

given us free 50 manuals of this course and we are conducting it in a hybrid manner -- both offline and online. He said the training would cover incubation, ventilation, NIV and approach of the care in the ICU units.

Giving examples, he said that if there was any case of polytrauma, then the doctor would know what had to be done in case it was a critical case. "The doctor will know that it is important to transfer the case to another hospital and whether he can handle the case or not. This will not cause unnecessary delay. People think that nothing can be done in some cases but there is a lot that can be done. A person dies of two things, one his bleed-

ing is not controlled and the second is because of lack of oxygen," he said.

Dr Sahu said that in any case of internal bleeding it becomes a critical case because external bleeding is seen and can be handled. "These patients can be brought in through ventilation and will have no problem breathing. For internal bleeding, one can through the blood pressure machine measure whether the person is having internal bleeding and then he can be transferred to a bigger hospital. The BP machine is available everywhere and this can be easily taken care of and this way the patient can be saved," he said.

9 IPS officers transferred

Lucknow (PNS): The state government on Thursday shifted nine IPS officers, including seven of ADG rank, one DIG and one SP rank officer.

ADG PAC Ajay Anand has been shifted as ADG Training in Sultanpur. ADG Crime KS Pratap Kumar has been given the responsibility of ADG PAC. Jyoti Narayan, ADG, Traffic and Road Safety, has been made ADG, Police Training School in Jalaun.

Ravi Joseph Lokku, who was recently transferred to Vigilance Establishment, has been shifted as ADG, PTC Moradabad. ADG 112 Ashok Kumar Singh will look after the additional work of Directorate of Traffic.

In the Human Rights Commission, ADG MK Bashal has been given the responsibility of ADG Crime.

Media advocacy workshop to spread awareness about schemes for women, kids

Lucknow (PNS): In a commitment to protect, respect, and make women self-reliant, the Yogi Adityanath government has rolled out many special programmes under Mission Shakti across the state. The Women's Welfare department will organise a state-level 'JAGRUK Media Advocacy' workshop in collaboration with CFAR Organisation on April 25.

Under this programme, awareness will be generated among the masses about departmental schemes such as Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Widow Pension, and Bal Sewa Yojana. They will also be made aware of the various laws and provisions related to violence against women and children. "The

department has been asked to prepare an action plan to ensure all the women of the state get the benefits of various schemes and live their lives with dignity and respect in a safe environment," a government spokesman said.

It may be mentioned here that many special programmes to educate people against harassment of women and children, domestic violence, drug abuse, trafficking, child marriage, discrimination, child labour, and any other kind of exploitations have also been organised by the department.

During the last tenure of the Yogi government, women were connected with various beneficial schemes in the first, second and third phases of Mission Shakti.

BJP MLA proposes warehousing industry in Sarojininagar

Lucknow (PNS): BJP MLA from Sarojininagar Dr Rajeshwar Singh met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday and thanked him for allotting 2.5 acres of land for National Centre for Disease Control to be set up in Jaitkheda village.

He also proposed to develop a warehousing industry and logistics park on Lucknow-Unnao road. He requested the chief minister that 351 acres of land in Kuron village adjacent to Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport has been acquired by Lucknow Industrial Development Authority (LIDA).

He said that a warehousing industry and logistics park could be developed on this land to increase employment opportunities and state's revenue.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

ROSARB, KANPUR
Branch Address : 3rd Floor, 118/330, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur-208 012 • Ph. : 0512-2215173
e-mail : sarkan@bankofbaroda.co.in

Sale Notice For Immovable Property "APPENDIX-IV-A" [See Proviso to rule (6) & 8 (6)]
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule (6) & Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured assets/dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date and time, EMD and Bid increase are mentioned below.

Date of e-Auction : 31-05-2022 **Last Date of EMD Submission : 30-05-2022 upto 4.00 PM**

Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of e-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
Borrower : M/s Jai Maa Sharda Eit Udyog, Address : Village-Sanihapur, Tehsil-Derapur, Distt.- Kanpur Dehat. Partners : Shri Prabha Kant Bajpai S/o Shri Raj Narayan Bajpai & Shri Anand Kumar S/o Shri Uma Kant Bajpai and Smt. Mamta W/o Shri Prabha Kant Bajpai, All R/o : Village - Bhatauli, Post- Rura, Tehsil-Akbarpur, Distt.-Kanpur Dehat. Guarantor : Shri Uma Kant Bajpai S/o Shri Jai Narayan Bajpai, R/o : Village - Bhatauli, Post- Rura, Tehsil- Akbarpur, Distt.- Kanpur Dehat.	Property Situated on Arazi No. 1143, at Village-Sanihapur, Tehsil-Derapur, Distt.- Kanpur Dehat in the name of Shri Uma Kant Bajpai S/o Shri Jai Narayan Bajpai, Area : 0.398 Hectare / 3980 Sq. Mtr.	Rs.33,78,953.00 +Intt. and other charges (Minus amount if any paid after the demand notice or possession notice)	31-05-2022 between 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm	₹ 16,17,000/- (RP) ₹ 1,62,000/- (EMD) ₹ 25,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Constructive	25-04-2022 to 27-05-2022 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm, and e-bikray, <https://ibapi.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 7080701712

Date : 22-04-2022 **Place : Kanpur Dehat** **Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda**

Gazetted police officers to 'adopt' thanas for better upkeep

PNS ■ PRAVAGARAJ

In a first, gazetted police officers posted at Prayagraj district and ranking from Deputy SPs to additional director general of police (ADG) have adopted at least one local police station for its better maintenance and management. While ADG (Prayagraj zone) Prem Prakash has adopted Cantt police station, inspector general of police (Prayagraj range) Rakesh Singh has adopted Civil Lines police station.

Officers have also been asked to conduct videography of 'then' and 'now' status of police stations. "The officer, apart from routine administrative work of the police station, would also be monitoring the status of sanitation facility, potable water availability, separate male and female toilets, visitor's gallery for proper sitting arrangement for complainants, upgraded barrack upkeep, uninterrupted power supply, plantation in and around thana premises, painting work, disposal of scraps, maintenance of maalkhana and other work," the

IG added. He added, "The gazetted officer concerned would utilise resources and could also seek public cooperation in maintaining the police station. Officers have also been asked to conduct videography of 'then' and 'now' status of police stations. The videos would be submitted before the office of IG (Prayagraj zone) within 30 days. The IG further said: "Properly kept and maintained police stations are a step towards maintaining discipline. Also, the police personnel would be getting a better working atmosphere. It would also

help in maintaining law and order directly or indirectly while strengthening policing and bridging the police-public gap." Senior police officers while conducting surprise checks of police stations had recorded poor upkeep and maintenance of police stations. However, now all gazetted officers would be held responsible for all necessary arrangements to improve the status of police stations," the IG added. "Unclaimed vehicles or scraps lying inside or outside the police stations would be shifted to two junkyards of police located at Jhansi and Naini.

Resolve complaints on priority: DM

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Neha Sharma, while addressing a chaupal at Uttampur in Kanpur Dehat on Thursday expressed concern over massive irregularities and negligence. She directed the officials concerned to ensure that they also run chaupals in all villages and ensure that all complaints were sorted out on priority. She said it was the duty of the officials to apprise the masses of welfare schemes being run by the Uttar Pradesh government. She warned of strict action against any laxity and took action against a number of officials for dereliction of duty.



District Magistrate Neha Sharma chairing the chaupal in Kanpur Dehat on Thursday.

Pioneer

She said a drive was already being carried out against land sharks and thus every effort be made to ensure that all encroached lands is freed on top priority and action is taken against them. She said all those who had encroached on government land should be sent to jail. She directed the police officials to ensure legal action taken against history-sheeters and added that all those victimis-

ing others on account of muscle power should be booked by the police. The DM admitted that power supply was in a veritable mess and directed the officials concerned to ensure that it was normalised in the next 10 days. She said it had been observed that overhead lines were hanging too dangerously and could be a cause of fatal accidents. She said overhead wires which were too old and dilapidated should be changed in the next one week.

She said in case if things are not found to improve till the next chaupal officials concerned will be held responsible. She then suspended the secretary of Uttampur gram and recommended strict action against the ADO Panchayat as well. She also recommended quick action to the department concerned. She found massive irregularities in fertiliser distribution. She directed that the salary of AR Cooperatives should be

stopped immediately till further orders. She said it was a matter of deep concern that for the past three months there had been no medical checkup of children in Garhi gram for the past three months and directed action against RBSK team. She said in Rahimpur interlocking was substandard and should be done again and directed that the payment of the contractor should be stopped immediately.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०, बारा टोल, अकबरपुर, कानपुर देहात मो० नं० 8004938792 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना अद्योत्साहनकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विवरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुभवी व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है, निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना वेबसाइट http://etender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है। क्र०सं० 1 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं० 20/वि०वि०म० का०दे०/2022-23 विवरण विद्युत वितरण खण्ड- रनियां, कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत विद्युत आपूर्ति के सुचारु संचालन हेतु केबिल बक्सों की आपूर्ति का कार्य। क्र०सं० 2 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं० 21/वि०वि०म०का०दे०/2022-23 विवरण विद्युत वितरण खण्ड- पुखरायां, कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत विद्युत आपूर्ति के सुचारु संचालन हेतु केबिल बक्सों की आपूर्ति का कार्य। क्र०सं० 3 अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं० 22/वि०वि०म०का०दे०/2022-23 विवरण विद्युत वितरण खण्ड- झंझक, कानपुर देहात के अन्तर्गत विद्युत आपूर्ति के सुचारु संचालन हेतु केबिल बक्सों की आपूर्ति का कार्य। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता वि०नि० मण्डल कानपुर देहात पत्रांक 10065 दिनांक 21.4.22

Plea to fix seating capacity in school vans

PNS ■ KANPUR

Sending children to school has become a major cause of concern for parents. The van drivers were now charging between Rs 2,000 and Rs 5,000 per month depending on the distance. A van which could accommodate around seven children was stuffed with 15 children along with one adult. Any protest from parents ended in van drivers threatening to stop picking up their children. The Parent-Teacher Associations have appealed to Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar to work out a uniform fare for children and maximum number of children to be accommodated in each van.



Vans dangerously laden with school children pose a big risk to their safety.

Van drivers, who mostly resorted to strong arm tactics quickly were becoming a mental tension for parents as these vans were plying without a valid licence and a big number of them were already running with fake number plates. These van drivers parked their vans audaciously exactly in front of the schools on the roadsides causing a bottleneck on the roads. The school management was not willing to disturb the hornets' nest as the van drivers have formed asso-

ciations and running under political patronage, one of the parents claimed. As per RTO rules each van cannot carry more than the 12 children sans adults if the van is eight seater. A seven seater van was carrying between 15 and 20 children and most of the older students were made to make their juniors sit on their lap. Each van was going to every corner of the city to pick up children and thus running it at a breakneck speed early in the morning to meet the school time.

Majority of the vans did not have the logo 'school van' and on the return journey wherever a checking picket was stationed van drivers took a different route and delay the child by around half to one hour to reach home, especially in this excruciating heat, another parent claimed. The RTO teams which were deployed to check vans often ignored the vans carrying around 15 children for reasons well known, he added. The Parents' Associations have decided to hand over a memorandum to the DC asking him to intervene and ensure safety of children travelling to school by such vans and fix fare as per distance.

The district authorities claim that they did not receive any report from the parent or the school administration in this regard.

Illegal colony demolished

PNS ■ KANPUR

The enforcement squad of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) has demolished illegal colony being constructed on 21.50 bigha land in Boodhpur Machhariya and Sakrapur on Wednesday. During the drive, local residents failed to lodge protest due to presence of heavy police force. The illegal construction without the approved layout was going on in full swing in zone 4 of Boodhpur Machhariya and Sakrapur villages for the past several days. On the orders of KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh, a joint team of engineering, enforcement and revenue departments rushed to spot along with the bulldozer and demolished the illegal construction. It first demolished the ongoing illegal construction on 3000 sq mtr land under Arazi



Illegal construction being demolished by KDA enforcement squad.

MNNIT student Apoorva gets gold certificate from Parliament

PNS ■ PRAVAGARAJ

Apoorva Shukla, a research student of Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology (MNNIT), has enhanced the pride of Prayagraj by getting a gold certificate from the Parliament. For the first time in Indian history, she had reached the National Environment Youth Parliament-2022 held in Parliament. Here she has achieved success by talking with rational things.

Nos. 2097, 2099, 2100, 2101 in Boodhpur Machhariya belonging to Udaiveer Singh and Amit Rajput. Likewise, the unauthorised construction carried out on 6000 sq mtr land in Sakrapur village under Arazi Nos. 378, 377 and 380/1 by Alok Yadav was also demolished. Later the team got the illegal construction

on around 8000 sq mtr land bulldozed in Sakrapur village being carried out under the name of Bajrangpur Phase-1 by Axis Earth Home Private Limited and the colony being developed on around three bigha land under the name of Bajrangpur by M/s Araadhya Axis Private Limited.

Apoorva, who lives in Kydganj, is doing her PhD in Goods and Service Tax under the guidance of Dr. Ravindra Tripathi from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in MNNIT. Her father RP Shukla is a chartered accountant and mother Sarojini Shukla is a housewife. Apoorva said that about 50 thousand participants from all over the country participated in the Youth Parliament. Then through training, task, quiz, debate, group discussion etc. organized at many levels, finally 144 selected youths reached Parliament and got the opportunity to sit in Parliament as young MPs in the form of government and opposition. Out of this, 56 participants also got an opportunity to express their views during the proceedings of the House.

Apoorva argued here that to correct the environment, one has to improve first. Human beings are doing this plight. She also elaborated on various aspects of it. Thereafter she was awarded Gold Certificate at Regional Level and Participation Certificate at National Level. Here Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav, renowned entrepreneur and many others were present.

कार्यालय - उपायुक्त उद्योग, जिला उद्योग प्रोत्साहन एवं उद्यमिता विकास केन्द्र, सुलतानपुर

पत्रांक 166/जि०उ० एवं उ०प्रो०के०(सु०)/ग्रा०ओ०आ०/2022-23 दिनांक 20.4.22

विज्ञापित

ग्रामीण औद्योगिक आस्थान लक्ष्मणपुर सुलतानपुर में स्थित नवसृजित भूखण्ड संख्या-16 आवंटन भूमि क्षेत्रफल 410.18 वर्गमीटर (मूल्य रु० 27,81,020-00) पर उद्यम स्थापना हेतु इच्छुक उद्यमियों से नीलामी हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा के सभी प्रपत्र नियम व शर्तें किसी भी कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय उपायुक्त उद्योग जिला उद्योग प्रोत्साहन एवं उद्यमिता विकास केन्द्र सुलतानपुर से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। निविदा जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि 12.05.2022 निर्धारित है।

(अनूप कुमार श्रीवास्तव)
उपायुक्त उद्योग
जिला उद्योग प्रोत्साहन एवं उद्यमिता विकास केन्द्र
सुलतानपुर

KDA exhibition at five places

PNS ■ KANPUR

In order to get Master Plan 2031 approved, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) has organised its exhibition at five places. It aimed at making people understand the concept of Master Plan 2031 and submit their objections, if any. General people, government and semi-government departments, stakeholders and different organisations were asked to submit their suggestions and objections by May 19. On the basis of the approved Master Plan, further developmental works will be carried out.



KDA organised the exhibition of draft master plan 2031.

Pioneer

On the directive of KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh, the exhibition has been organised in KDA campus, district collectorate compound, Nagar Palika office compound in Shuklaganj and Bithoor and district headquarters office in Akbarpur (Mati). If any per-

son or organisation wishes to submit suggestion or objection, they can deliver the same in triplicate in the office of KDA Vice-Chairman or City Planner in Motijheel within the prescribed time limit.

INQUIRY: On the orders of KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh Secretary Sattrohan Vaishya has sent a letter to the state administration for initiating departmen-

tal inquiry against junior engineer Sanjay Gautam posted in Enforcement Zone 2 for his lackadaisical attitude in containing the construction of illegal colonies carried out in full swing in Panki area.

During investigation it was observed that instead of containing the practice of illegal construction in his zone he rather preferred to promote it.

Earth Day to be celebrated today

PNS ■ KANPUR

Earth Day is celebrated on April 22, and the theme for 2022 was 'Invest in Our Planet'. There are umpteen ways to get involved and one of the most important was a zero-waste lifestyle while other ways were to plant saplings, forego car travel and refuse plastic bags.

that people started acting boldly and broadly and equitably and one needs to keep in mind that everyone was accountable. She said littering was one of the most common features of people be it market or school. Littering was a menace and required increased awareness to prevent littering.

This day makes people realise that as humans run short on time to curb climate change and prevent catastrophic calamity, it was important for everyone to take serious, bold actions toward a sustainable future.

She said zero-waste living can be intimidating, but investing time to get accustomed to this lifestyle will be beneficial to one and the planet too. She said on this day each child had to take an oath to start finding zero-waste alternatives.

This was stated by Principal of Riverdale Public School, Dr Anoushka Sebastian, while addressing a seminar on the eve of Earth Day. She said it was high time

She advised children to start making compost to make use of food scraps and yard clippings that would otherwise go to waste.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ASSAM RIFLES, SHILLONG - 793 010

ASSAM RIFLES TECHNICAL AND TRADESMEN RECRUITMENT RALLY 2022

1. Assam Rifles Technical and Tradesmen Recruitment Rally 2022 is tentatively scheduled from **01 Sep 2022** onwards for enrolment into Group B and C posts against 1380 vacancies. Applications are invited from eligible candidates male / female for the trades/ posts as mentioned below:-

(a) Bridge & Road	- 17
(b) Clerk	- 287
(c) Religious Teacher	- 09
(d) Operator Radio and Line	- 729
(e) Radio Mechanic	- 72
(f) Armourer	- 48
(g) Laboratory Assistant	- 13
(h) Nursing Assistant	- 100
(j) Veterinary Field Assistant	- 10
(k) AYA (Para-Medical)	- 15
(l) Washerman	- 80
Total	- 1380

2. The aspirants are hereby advised to regularly visit the Assam Rifles Official website (www.assamrifles.gov.in) for further details and submission of online application.

3. Vacancies are tentative & is subject to variations. The Assam Rifles has the right to make any change in the advertisement or cancel it without assigning any reasons.

4. In case of any query, the following numbers may be contacted on any working day from 0900 hrs to 1700 hrs:-
(a) 0364-2585118 (b) 0364-2585119 (c) 8258923003

Sd/- x-x-x
(K S Thakur)
Deputy Commandant
Staff Officer-2 (Recruitment)
for Director General Assam Rifles

Delegation from K'taka visits IISR in Lucknow

Lucknow (PNS): A 13-member delegation, led by an officer of S Nijalingappa Sugar Institute, Belagavi, visited ICAR-Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research. The delegation consisted of the vice-president of the Governing Council, a member of S Nijalingappa Sugar Institute (Belagavi) Board, members of Cooperative Sugar Mills, cane-grower leader and officials of the Government of Karnataka.

An interactive session with the director and heads & in-charges of divisions and units was organised to have insights into mutual areas of concerns or interest for betterment of sugar and sugarcane sector in the state of Karnataka.

IISR director AD Pathak welcomed the delegates and presented a detailed account of the institute's research and development achievements. Principal scientist and section in-charge of Extension and Training Unit, AK Sah initiated the discussion by mentioning the need of such kind of interaction between scientists, sugar mill officials, cane society executives and progressive farmers. All the heads of the

divisions and section in-charges participated in the session and many issues raised by visiting delegates were discussed and deliberated upon. The cane supply system to sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh, marketing of cane at SAP and present status of cane yield, sugar recovery and IT-based sugarcane information system of Uttar Pradesh were also deliberated in detail in the interactive meeting.

On April 20, the delegation visited the engineering workshop. Principal scientist (Agril Engineering) Sukhbir Singh explained about all cane machines prototypes developed by the institute. The visiting delegates took keen interest in purchase of machines from the institute or private manufacturers. A visit to the integrated farming system model in IISR, KVK, was also conducted and thorough discussion on the different components of IFS model was held. During the visit of Biocontrol Laboratory, principal scientist (Entomology) Arun Baitha explained various methods of biological control of sugarcane insects and pests.

Farewell function organised at DPS

PNS ■ KANPUR

Principal, Delhi Public School (DPS), Azaad Nagar, while addressing the farewell function of the school titled 'Udaan' on Thursday said students of the school had spent a substantial number of years and the school had nurtured them in every way to not only make them excel in academics but also to bring out their latent talents. She appealed to students to act as brand ambassadors for their school and ensure that with hard work and devotion they succeed in their goals of life.



Farewell function was held at DPS Azaad Nagar on Thursday.

Pioneer

The chief guest on the occasion was the Pro-Vice Chairperson of the school Bandana Misra while Alok Misra was the guest of honour, Member Managing Committee, Devavrata Misra too graced the occasion.

The hosts of the event were the class XI students who escorted their seniors with great pomp and show to the beautifully decorated amphitheatre of the school. The class XII boys looked elegant in suits while the girls looked gorgeous in sarees. The students were greeted with flowers. The class XII students were welcomed with a rendition of a melodious song by the class

Bandana Misra honoured the recipients with crowns and sashes. Aadiya Shukla and Vanshika Agarwal were crowned as Mr and Ms DPS while Jatun Pathak won the title of Tech Guru. Jhalak Dhandhania, Hitakshi Jhamtani and Khushi Jain were given the honour of Sparkling Star. Mr and Ms Genius was awarded to Tanmay Barik and Anushka Bhaduria. Mr and Ms Talented were Vansh Kapoor and Anugya Singh respectively, while Akshat Rastogi and Saloni Shukla were given the titles of Mr and Ms Forget Me Not. Aastha Arora and Adarsh Tiwari were given the honour of

Lovely Hair and Well Groomed while Divyanshi Awasthi and Harsh Kapoor were awarded Fashionable Diva and Mr Dashing Vaishnavi Srivastava was declared Million Dollar Smile while Swastika Banerjee and Arjun Agarwal were Ms Popular and Mr Popular Kamran Tanveer, Mallika Gupta, Vedant Dixit and Manvendra Singh Bist were declared as the Sports Star. In the end a movie 'Down Memory Lane' was shown to the students regarding their school life and experiences. The programme came to a close with the words of encouragement by Alok Misra.

Varanasi secures 1st position in PM SVANidhi scheme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In an achievement, the Varanasi district secured the first position in the category of Pradhan Mantri SVANidhi Scheme for the year of 2021. The District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma received the award from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The PM Modi gave away the award to DM Sharma at a function organised on Thursday at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. It was a great moment for Sharma to receive a national level award from the PM for bagging the first position in a national programme. It is learnt that about 32,000 beneficiaries have so far been benefited with this the PM SVANidhi Scheme in the district.

The PM Award was declared in six categories for the year of 2021 keeping the excellent works done from April 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021. The points like the assignment of work to officers & employees, strategy to implement the scheme, capacity development of stakeholders & beneficiaries, complaint redressal, digitisation of process,



DM Kaushal Raj Sharma receiving award from the PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi as the Varanasi district stood first in implementing PM SVANidhi Scheme. Pioneer

cooperation of other stakeholders and public participation were evaluated for the award. The change in living standard of beneficiaries, proper benefit of scheme to beneficiaries, improvement in behaviour, etc were assessed for qualitative evaluation.

The six categories of the award include the public participation in nutrition campaign, to promote sports activ-

ities & wellness through Khelo Abhiyan, digital payment & good governance in PM SVANidhi Scheme, overall development through one district one product, service delivery without human intervention and innovative experiment.

It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched PM Street Vendor's

Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), a Special Micro-Credit Facility Scheme for providing affordable loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown. Under this scheme, the beneficiaries can get a loan up to Rs 10,000 without any guarantee and there is 7 per cent discount in the interest.

Sivamani enthralled music lovers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

It was the memorable moment for the music lovers to watch live performance of the legendary artists of Indian classical music on the first night of the six-day internationally famous Sankatmochan Sangeet Samaroh at Sankat Mochan Mandir, here on Wednesday last and the programme lasted till the wee hours on Thursday. The musical event will conclude on April 25.

The first day of function began with the performance of the prominent drummer Padma Shri Sivamani who enthralled the music lovers with his mesmerising presentation on drum, tabla and other Indian musical instruments together. Uppalapu Rajesh accompanied him on mandolin. Thereafter, the



Drummer Sivamani performing in Sankat Mochan Sangeet Samaroh. Pioneer

noted singer Gautam Kale appeared on the stage and delighted the audience by presenting bandish 'piya ghar na in ek taal in raaj jong and 'tum bin kaise kate din ratia' in teen taal in raaj jong. He received

appreciation from the audience when presented the hymn 'hanuman lala mere pyare sakha' in memory of his Guru Pt Jasraj.

Thereafter, Padma Bhushan, Grammy Award

Winner and prominent Mohan Veena player Vishwa Mohan Bhatt took the stage in his control amidst the thumping and enthralled the music lovers with his performance. When he along with his son Salil Bhatt presented 'raag vihar' forced the audience to be glued to their seats and received appreciation when presented hymns 'raghupati raghav raja ram' and patriotic song 'vande matram'.

Padma Shri Pt Hariram Dwivedi conducted the proceedings and announced that the centenary year of function will be celebrated next year and to commemorate the occasion, a souvenir will be published for which he sought articles and memories from the music lovers. An exhibition on Indian classical music was also organised in the gallery of the temple which drew the attention of the visitors a lot.

Annual function held at Sunbeam School

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Sunbeam School, Sarnath celebrated its first annual function 'Ummid' on Thursday and its main attraction was the cultural programme presented by the students.

The chief guest and President of Cantonment Board of Varanasi Brig Rajeev Nagyal inaugurated the function and lauded the programme. In the beginning of

the function, the winners who achieved success by overcoming the big challenges were encouraged in the beginning and it was followed by presentation of annual achievements of the school by the Principal Saumita Chatterjee.

The schoolchildren presented a cultural programme and delighted the audience. The play 'Abhivyakti' staged by students attracted the attention of the audience.

The students delighted the audience by presenting dance 'jhanki hindustan' and drew the attention of the people present on the occasion towards water conservation by presenting street play 'jal hai to kal hai'. The dance-drama 'gitanjali' presented by the students delighted the audience and received appreciation by presenting puppet dance.

Addressing the gathering, the Chairman of Sunbeam

Educational Group Deepak Madhok and Director Bharti Madhok said that the school will go ahead on the path of progress and the group will continue making a prosperous future of the children.

In the beginning, the honorary director of Group Harsh Madhok, Deputy Director Amrita Berman and Assistant Director Pratima Gupta welcomed the guests and parents.

Jugnauth immerses ashes of father in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth on Thursday immersed the ashes of his father Aniruddha Jugnauth in the holy river Ganga, here.

The Mauritius PM reached Dashaswamedh Ghat in the morning where four Vedic scholars performed puja of ashes with tradition. After performing the religious rituals with tradition, he immersed the ashes of his father in Ganga. During his stay at Dashaswamedh Ghat, the NDRF personnel and cops at Jal Police were deployed in the river.

The security personnel had taken Dashaswamedh Ghat and adjoining ghats in their possessions before the visit of the Mauritius PM from the security point of view and the public movement had been restricted for a time period. The wife of Mauritius PM, Kovita Jugnauth was also present during the immersion of ashes. In the evening, he along with his wife performed puja at Kashi Vishwanath Mandir and also observed the glory of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham.

It is learnt that the Mauritius PM reached Varanasi in the evening on Wednesday last on a three-day stay along with a 17-member team. He was accorded a warm welcome at Lal Bahadur



Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth performing puja at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir. Pioneer

Shastry International Airport in Babatpur when reached by a special plane.

The Cabinet Minister in Yogi Government Anil Rajbhar, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, the Airport Director Aryama Sanyal and senior administrative and police officers of the district received the Mauritius PM at the airport.

From the airport, the convoy of the PM of Mauritius left for a hotel in Nadesar and on the way, the schoolchildren were standing holding the flags of India and Mauritius at various places to greet Jugnauth. At many places, the folk artists also performed in his honour. On Friday, the

Mauritius PM Jugnauth will hold separate meetings with the Governor Anandiben Patel and the CM Yogi Adityanath and he will depart for Delhi the same day.

401ST PRAKASH UTSAV OBSERVED: The 401st Prakash Utsav of the ninth Guru of Sikh Dharma Guru Sri Teg Bahadur Singh was on Thursday observed at Gurudwara in Nichibagh here with simplicity under the joint auspices of Samooch Sadh Sangat and Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Varanasi.

Guru Teg Bahadur Singh had visited Gurudwara, Nichibagh about 350 years ago and did penance for 7 months and 13 days here,

informing Mukhya Granthi of Committee Jagtar Singh adding that when, Guru decided to leave this place, his disciples urged him to stay here as without him, their life is incomplete.

Thereafter, Guru Teg Bahadur left his clothes, charan paduka and self-written Gurubani for the disciples which are available in gurudwara even now for the devotees, informed Mukhya Granthi adding that the Akhand Path was started on April 19 which concluded on Thursday morning.

In the morning, the Amrit Bani Shabad was recited. The Mukhya Granthi prayed for the eradication of COVID-19 at all so that the people of the country could lead a normal life.

FEMALE MEDICAL STUDENT KILLS FRIEND: In a shocking incident, a female medical student killed her friend and proprietor of a beauty parlour with a sharp edged weapon in Takkhu Bawali village, under the Kapsathi police station on Thursday.

The police took the killer in their custody and sent the body for autopsy. The police also recovered the weapon used in the murder. The forensic team collected the evidence from the killing site.

Eight policemen likely to be suspended

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Eight policemen, including two sub inspectors who were sent to line from Yamunapur Karchana police station in Prayagraj district are likely to be suspended. In the preliminary investigation of the case, the allegations against the police personnel are being confirmed. On this basis, preparations for departmental action against them have been initiated. Due to the lapse and negligence found in the inspection made by the SSP, the police personnel were sent to the line.

On the other hand, SSP has deployed Sub Inspector Akhilesh Kumar Rai, Shatrughan Singh, Head

Muharrir Praveen Pandey and constables Ankit Singh, Ravi Rai, Govind Tripathi Harkesh Chauhan, Ajit Prajapati, Garima Kushwaha and Sushma in Karchhana police station. Everyone was instructed to maintain good work behavior and maintain strong professionalism.

On Wednesday, SSP Ajay Kumar had inspected the Karchana police station, where all the flaws and negligence were found.

The matter of leaking the information of surprise inspection was also caught. On this, 10 policemen including two constables were sent to the line with immediate effect.

On Wednesday, the SSP

suddenly reached the Karchana police station. He checked the register while inspecting the lock-up, mess, women's help desk. There was laxity in the work of female constable Dhanita Nishad. In relation to the Scorpio car parked inside the police station, SI Darshanlal and Janmejay said different things. Duty chart revealed that the duty of constable Anuj Kumar is at Kauwa crossroads, five km from the station. Head Muharrir Munni Lal Yadav was sent to locate him, but constable Sunny Kumar informed Anuj about the SSP's inspection from mobile. Then when SSP along with Munni Lal and Sunny reached Kauwa crossroads, Anuj came running there. During interrogation,

he told about the duty in the bank, but in the investigation it was found that he reached after several hours.

Earlier, he was resting in a plain dress in the barracks of the police station. Similarly other policemen could not give satisfactory answers in the interrogation and found lack of professional efficiency.

Those who were sent to the lines included SI Janmejay Kumar, SI-Darshan Lal Verma, Head Muharrir Munni Lal Yadav, - Constable Anuj Kumar Yadav, - Constable Sunny Kumar, - Constable Upendra Yadav, - Constable Neeraj Kumar, - Constable Anand Singh, - Female constable Dimple Yadav and - female constable Dhanita Nishad.

Justice Gupta recuses himself from hearing two cases against Mukhtar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Justice Rajiv Gupta of the Allahabad High Court has separated himself from hearing cases of the Mafia turned politician Mukhtar Ansari. Justice Gupta was hearing two petitions filed by Mukhtar, and the same have been referred to the Chief Justice who will form a new bench for hearing the above cases.

Mukhtar Ansari has been lodged in Banda jail at present. Justice Gupta has separated himself from hearing cases related to misappropriation of MLA discretionary fund in the year 2012-13. Police have submitted a charge sheet in this matter while Mukhtar has challenged the same in the High Court pleading that he had been in jail for the past 17 years, so he cannot be held responsible for any misappropriation of funds. Officers concerned can explain it better.

The second case is related to the Gangster Act. Both the cases were being heard by the single bench of Justice Rajiv Gupta. Reason as to why Justice Gupta separated himself from Mukhtar Ansari's case, is unexplained.

Mafia don Mukhtar Ansari had been MLA from Mau Sadar from 1996 to 2022, and is in Banda jail at present.

WIFE, IN-LAWS HELD IN DEATH OF MAN, HIS GRANDMA: A day after the bodies of two members of a family, including a 40-year-old man and his octogenarian grandmother, were found inside their house in Dhokari village under the limits of Pulpur police station in trans-Ganga pocket on Tuesday, police arrested three persons including the wife of the deceased man. They were booked under section 306 of IPC.

Police said that man, iden-

tified as Arvind Maurya, who committed suicide by hanging himself, had left a nine-page suicide note in which he accused several members, including his wife, of his in-laws' side of harassment.

The arrested persons were identified as Sunita Maurya, wife of Arvind Maurya, Nanhe Lal Maurya and his wife Dhurpati Maurya.

Police claimed that the postmortem report of Arvind Maurya (40) revealed hanging as the cause of his death. The autopsy report of his grandmother revealed a heart attack as the reason behind her death. Both the bodies bore no injury mark.

Meanwhile, a wanted criminal was injured and arrested in an exchange of fire with the police near Kilnari river road, under the limits of Kareri police station of the neighbouring Kaushambi district, in the wee hours.

The injured criminal, identified as Rajendra Kumar Pasi (26), a resident of Charai, was admitted to the district hospital of Kaushambi for treatment.

A country-made pistol of 0.315 bore, along with two live cartridges and a bike was also seized from him. A police team led by Deputy SP (Manjhanpur) Dr KG Singh had an encounter with a criminal who was involved in a rape and murder of a woman in a Kaushambi village.

On Thursday, police received a tip off that the same criminal was planning to move to a neighbouring state. The cops cordoned the area and intercepted him.

The criminal opened fire on the police party. The police team retaliated and the criminal suffered two gunshot injuries (both in his legs) during exchange of fire.

Bid to start offline classes under Abhyudaya Yojana

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): As Covid-19 cases have declined and the state government has lifted restrictions, the divisional commissioner has started efforts to commence offline coaching classes being offered under the Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana in the four districts of Prayagraj division — Prayagraj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi and Fatehpur.

Divisional commissioner Sanjay Goyal has instructed all district nodal officers to redress all problems in this regard so that preparations of the aspirants for various competitive exams are not affected.

Notably, following the outbreak of the pandemic, coaching classes under the Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana were being imparted in online mode.

Instructions have been given to send a team from Prayagraj to other districts for

training and to invite principles of various colleges of the respective districts at the time of training.

While reviewing the district-wise problems being faced in the conduct of classes, the divisional commissioner gave necessary instructions to send Prayagraj's team to other districts for training and invite the principals of various colleges of the respective district at the time of training, so that more and more competitive instructions were given so that students derive maximum benefit from Abhyudaya Yojana. The reason behind sending Prayagraj's team for training to other districts is to share the experience gained from here with other districts.

In this sequence, the divisional commissioner also directed the officials that if a student of any one district of the division wants to take

advantage of coaching by staying in any other district, then in view of that, arrangements should also be made to transfer him from a given district to the district of his choice.

The divisional commissioner has also suggested making arrangements for sending experts/teachers from one district to another, under which if the expert of any subject is not available in any one district, then he can be sent from another district so that the knowledge of that specialist can be benefited. In view of this, he has asked all the districts to identify experts or teachers who are interested in teaching in other districts.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had inaugurated the 'Abhyudaya' scheme on February 15, 2021. As part of the scheme, the UP government has set up coaching centres and is offering free classes

to prepare students for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) for engineering.

National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for the medical aspirants, entrance exam for the National Defence Academy (NDA), Combined Defence Services (CDS) examination and Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Exams.

The platform has over 500 IAS officers, over 450 IPS officers, over 300 IFS officers and several experts on various subjects who contribute by creating educational content through physical classes and virtual sessions for civil services and other competitive exams' aspirants. A dedicated portal <http://www.abhyudaya.up.gov.in/> too has been launched for the benefit of the students. These training classes were given online during the multiple lockdowns that the state went through.

Two vehicle thieves arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Under the joint operation of Chilh police, SOG and SWAT two vehicle thieves were nabbed and one Bolero along with a motorcycle was recovered on Tuesday. ASP (City) Sanjay Kumar told the media at Police Lines on Wednesday on being tipped off about the presence of vehicle thieves on Aurai-Mirzapur Road police team started vehicle checking near Terhawa police outpost under Chilh police station.

During the checking police interrogated a Bolero driver and a motorcyclist. Both the suspects said that they were involved in theft of vehicles. Police seized the vehicles and nabbed them. During frisking a country-made gun of 315 bore and cartridge were recovered from the motorcyclist, Puneet Tiwari, a resident of 251 Shankaracharya Nagar Naubasta Kanpur and currently residing at Laxminagar Colony, Bhullanpur, Varanasi.

The Bolero driver was identified as Deependra Srivastava, a resident of 128/3 D Block Bagoi, Kanpur.

WARNING: Vindhyachal Divisional Commissioner (DC) Yogeshwar Ram Mishra has warned all officials posted in tehsils and blocks to remain in their headquarters otherwise they will have to face the music if found away from the place of posting. On Wednesday when at 10.30 pm the DC inquired about the location of officers BDOs of Karma, Nagwa and Chatra block under Sonhadra district and BDOs of Kon and Chhanbey under Mirzapur district were not found at their headquarters. Taking the matter seriously DC directed all the officers to stay at their place of posting at night positively. He said if government quarter are not fit to stay they should get it repaired.

Meanwhile under the drive to ensure timely presence of staff in government offices DC, ADM(F&R) and CDO

raided the offices and took action against the absent staff on Wednesday. DC inspected the office of development authority in which all the staff was found present but the office was not in proper order so he directed to keep it properly. During the inspection of mines office a woman employee was let off after warning for her arrival a few minutes late.

During the inspection of ADM (F&R) Shiv Pratap Shukla 70 employees were found absent, including EO and office superintendent in Nagar Palika Parishad Mirzapur office.

The ADM inspected almost all sections and found nothing proper. There was no tour programme of field staff. The ADM directed to withhold one day salary of absent employees and issue show cause notices to them.

CDO Shrilaxmi VS inspected the office of RED in which EE was found absent for which the CDO directed to

withhold his one day salary. For the absent employees she directed the official concerned to issue show cause notices prior to further action. The CDO inspected the offices of Jal Nigam and minor irrigation and sought clarification for absence.

RAPE CASE: City Kotwali police took a minor, who was accused of raping minor girl, into custody on Wednesday. A man had lodged a complaint with the police that the accused had lured her minor niece by enticing her. Police started the investigation after registering the case and recovered the girl a few days ago and on the ground of medical report, sections of rape and POCSO Act were added. SHO City Kotwali Arvind Mishra got information about the presence of the accused in his house and raided the spot and took him into custody and completed the legal formalities as per the direction of the court.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Kids of a lesser god?

Besides making the adoption laws more humane, a change in mindset is a must

The Supreme Court has shown interest in a plea to simplify adoption laws in India. It is a tough task. The orphan adoption ratio is highly skewed. There are roughly 30 million orphans, but only around 4,000 adoptions are reported annually. The adoption figure reduced to just over 2,000 in the last two years when work was affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. The lockdown period also made orphans of more than one lakh children because their parents or caregivers succumbed to the virus. The problems begin right from when a child is found abandoned. The Child Care Institutions and the Child Welfare Committee complete all legal formalities to declare the child legally free to be adopted and place them under an agency's care. The system is smooth in urban areas but not so in the countryside and small towns. Some of the CCIs are not even registered. That eventually impacts the total number of legally free children available for adoption. It is also true that a lot of corruption takes place and child traffickers are known to subvert the adoption process and indulge in the illegal sale of infants and toddlers. It is a policing issue that needs an entirely different focus. Be that as it may, the situation in the country is such that the number of prospective parents is in the thousands and very few children are available for adoption. This increases the length of the adoption process.



Parents seeking adoption have their issues. The gender of the child is an issue. They want 'normal' children; they rarely prefer children with disabilities. There are cases where parents have 'returned' such children. All these are disruptions in the adoption process. The official process is quite complex. There are so many criteria, so many forms to fill, so many institutions to negotiate — all this takes a lot of time. The legal process is equally cumbersome. The system is efficient in the big cities but in smaller towns, the cases do not get cleared easily. It depends on the attitude of the local judge. Families visit the courts numerous times, but in vain. There are cases where families have not received court orders even after two years. In others, the Child Welfare Committees do not declare children free for adoption in time and the kids languish in the centres. To speed up the process, the Government recently revised the laws empowering the district magistrates rather than the lower courts to issue adoption orders and monitor the adoption centres. Having said that, the real issue is something else altogether. The approach of the law and that of the adoption centres is parent-centric when it should be child-centric. It is the child's future that is at stake, and the child has no say anywhere. Gender, age, disabilities, looks, skin colour, literally anything can twist the child's fate. Bureaucratic processes can easily be rectified, but what about the mindset?

According to a recent report, the prevalence of psychotropic drugs (heroin, charas, ganja, chitta, opioids etc) across the region is roughly three to four times the national average, affecting most youth in the 15-30 age category. In Himachal, 5,972 persons including 44 foreigners have been arrested in 4,514 cases under the NDPS Act from 2019 to 2021. The gravity can be gauged from the Drug Prevention Helpline data, which was launched on January 6, 2022, and is managed jointly by the HP State Mental Health Authority (HPSMHA) and Nasha Nivaran Board. The data indicates that the use of multiple drugs is on the rise and 40 per cent of calls received were related to multiple substance abuse.

PICTALK



Boatmen offer 'zohar' prayers on the 19th day of Ramzan at a jetty on Dal Lake, in Srinagar

More youth falling in the trap of drugs



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

After raising the spectre of horror in Punjab, the menace of drug abuse is haunting Himachal but the infra facilities needed to fight it are missing

The menace of drugs supply, which initially started from Punjab as a smuggling transit point from the 'Golden Crescent' (Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan) to Europe, first engulfed the State and later spread to the neighbouring Himachal Pradesh. Due to the inability of law-enforcement agencies to control the illegality, all kinds of drugs are being smuggled into Himachal from Punjab. Compounding the matters, drug peddling from the 'Eastern Golden Triangle' (Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) is also thriving simultaneously.

According to a recent report, the prevalence of psychotropic drugs (heroin, charas, ganja, chitta, opioids etc) across the region is roughly three to four times the national average, affecting most youth in the 15-30 age category. In Himachal, 5,972 persons including 44 foreigners have been arrested in 4,514 cases under the NDPS Act from 2019 to 2021. The gravity can be gauged from the Drug Prevention Helpline data, which was launched on January 6, 2022, and is managed jointly by the HP State Mental Health Authority (HPSMHA) and Nasha Nivaran Board. The data indicates that the use of multiple drugs is on the rise and 40 per cent of calls received were related to multiple substance abuse.

In the last four months, 101 calls were received on the helpline, which included 67 calls for help regarding addicts, of which 28 were related to multiple drug users, 15 alcoholic, 13 opioid users, 10 cannabis and one pharma drug while 34 were for queries and information. The maximum cases were from the districts of Solan, followed by Kangra and Mandi. The main reasons for drug abuse were easy availability of drugs, peer pressure, inquisitiveness to try something new and non-cordial relations with family. The problems were more acute in families where there was no elder member to look after the family.

In the face of inept handling of the situation by the administration, the issue of operating de-addiction centres without requi-



site facilities in Punjab's border areas is serious. A case in point is the recent incident where 19 inmates fled a rehabilitation centre at Bir Plassi village in Nalagarh after thrashing the staff. Since running such centres in Punjab is a costly affair, several such centres have come up in Himachal's border areas. Although agencies like HPSMHA have laid down norms for operating such centres, the Rehabilitation Council of India has prescribed the minimum standards for infrastructure and manpower and WHO has recommended treatment protocols, but all rules and regulations are still being violated with impunity.

As per norms, these centres should have at least 75-100 sq ft area per person, facility for sports, yoga and meditation, qualified staff and psychiatrists on call. Actually, however, these centres are operational in substandard rented premises having space constraints, and all the above-mentioned facilities are missing. The patients, most of them hailing from Punjab, fail to get the promised care. Majority of these centres have obtained licences as 'Rehabilitation Centres' and not 'Substance Used Drug Treatment Centres'. As per rules, they are not allowed to take in drug addicts, but they do it to make easy money.



THESE CENTRES ARE OPERATIONAL IN SUBSTANDARD RENTED PREMISES HAVING SPACE CONSTRAINTS, AND ALL THE STIPULATED FACILITIES ARE MISSING. THE PATIENTS, MOST OF THEM HAILING FROM PUNJAB, FAIL TO GET THE PROMISED CARE

There is the general tendency in groups of influential, well-connected people with political patronage coming together to register a society and start such centres without bothering to follow the norms or appointing required specialists.

In 2017, the State Government had constituted the HPSMHA to deal with this problem and made the registration of de-addiction centres mandatory. After receiving complaints of human rights violation, the Authority has taken action against eight de-addiction centres in Una district. Six of these centres have been issued notices and the licences of the other two have not been renewed.

At present, there are 76 private de-addiction and rehabilitation centres operating in Himachal Pradesh with a total capacity of about 2,500 beds. As per Section 20(1) and (2) of the Mental Health Care Act, 2017, the patients admitted to these centres have the right to protection from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Unfortunately, in many cases, the family members of drug addicts lose patience and without understanding their real problems send them to the rehabilitation centres. They should get the psychiatric evaluation of the addicts done before deciding to send them

to these centres. All six medical colleges in Himachal have a psychiatry department and acute withdrawal symptoms leading to body cramps, irritation and aggressive behaviour should be dealt with under the supervision of trained doctors.

We should understand the background of a person who is drawn into the trap of drugs. Generally, they are ignored or misguided people coming from difficult families. The family members should share quality time and maintain constant communication with one another. As they say, "Prevention is better than cure". The families, schools, colleges, social and cultural organisations should step forward to sensitise the masses, especially the youth, to live a purposeful and content life so that they don't fall into the trap of drugs. We should have regular counselling for youth and their parents.

Sports should be made compulsory in schools and colleges. The youth should be provided gainful employment and must be fruitfully engaged so that they don't have time to think of drugs.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ALL'S NOT WELL IN KARNATAKA

Sir — The Karnataka Government cannot escape from the charge that it is out-and-out responsible for the spurt in communal strife in the State. It legislated an anti-conversion law aimed mainly at fostering communal divide and preventing inter-religious marriages. The Karnataka Cattle Act, 2020, which bans the slaughter of cows, calves, bulls, bullocks of all ages and she-buffaloes, is a recycled version of the existing laws in force in the State. The law is projected as a throwback to ancient culture, but it only serves the purpose of "criminalising livelihoods" and "legalising vigilantism".

Also, the recent ban on hijabs in schools, though deemed malicious, is a message cleverly couched in the constitutional ethos of equality. In fact, polarisation along religious lines to win elections is a proven strategy for the saffron party. However, the suicide note of contractor Santosh Patil, wherein he held Karnataka Panchayati Raj Minister KS Eshwarappa responsible for his death, has brought corruption in high places to the centre stage. It was alleged that the Minister's associates had demanded a 40 per cent commission in public works Patil had executed. The die is now cast: It is going to be religious polarisation versus corruption in Government in elections.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

SEERS OR PLAIN POLITICIANS?

Sir — Of late, more and more seers are issuing political statements without being in active politics. Cine artistes, players, singers, and now seers are evincing interest in politics. The latest example is Dingaleshwara Swami from Karnataka. While addressing farmers recently, he alleged that the Karnataka Government has been demanding a 30 per cent commission to release grants to mutts. This statement closely follows contractor Santosh Patil's allegation before he committed suicide. The latest disclosure made by the seer about the commission demand at a political function carries the same weight as the state-

Welcome move by the WHO



It is a welcome move by the WHO to establish the Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar to usher in a new era globally and the Centre will start the age of traditional medicine across the world in the next 25 years. PM Modi along with the Mauritian PM laid the foundation stone for the centre in the presence of WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. It is the first-of-its-kind WHO GCTM and would go a long way in enhancing wellness in society. The traditional medicine in India is often defined as including prac-

tics and therapies such as yoga, ayurveda and Siddha, which have been part of the Indian tradition historically, as well as others — such as homeopathy — that became part of Indian tradition over the years.

Ayurveda and yoga are now practised widely across the country; the Siddha system is followed predominantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala; the Sowa-Rigpa system is prevalent mainly in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul and Spiti. On November 3, 2020, Dr Tedros had announced the establishment of the WHO GCTM in India. The Union Cabinet in March this year approved its establishment in Jamnagar with the signing of a host country agreement between the Government of India and the WHO. India has committed an estimated \$250 million to support the GCTM's establishment, infrastructure and operations.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

ments of politicians.

Generally, the statements made by politicians are taken lightly unless these are proved by an inquiry panel or in a court. What prevented Dingaleshwara Swami from disclosing the commission demand in Government circles before the contractor committed suicide? Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has requested him to provide the details of those who demanded commission from him. The seer is duty-bound to disclose with proof the names of the persons who are thriving on corruption. The abominable practice of demanding bribes for releasing grants to mutts must go, if it really exists.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

KEEP AN EYE ON CHINA'S ACTIONS

Sir — While the world is busy witnessing the war between Ukraine and Russia, China is again in the limelight for its usual sneaky behaviour. China has installed three mobile 4G towers close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) near the Indian territory of Ladakh. Recently,

China has also completed the construction of a bridge over Pangong lake near the Indian border. The infrastructure developmental activities near the Indian border have been very frequent in the last couple of years. As China is already well known for its tricky behaviour, India should always be on high alert.

Following the global events, China might be seeing some selfish design to create tension on the border. This action of China is highly suspect as the 4G towers are also used for military mobilisation. The security forces should keep the situation under watch and must not let China create any kind of misadventure during these difficult times. The heat along the borders has increased since the last two years, the situation right now is quite concerning. China has a history of creating disturbances with every country it shares its borders with.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

India considers it her duty to share ayurveda experiences with the world.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

While looking for solutions to economic problems, it's important to have political and social stability.



Sri Lanka's PM — Mahinda Rajapaksa

The (Vicky Donor) producers just wanted to promote the hero, not Annu Kapoor.



Actor — Annu Kapoor

It was a bad week for us but we have to move on... as soon as we can.



Barcelona coach — Xavi Hernandez

You (Rajasthan leaders) must iron out internal differences ahead of the 2023 Assembly polls.



BJP president — JP Nadda

Bulldozing dissent

Any incident of razing down people's homes has no place in a mature democracy

Now, BSP supremo Mayawati has become the latest politician to jump on to the Jahangirpuri violence controversy bandwagon. Stirring the getting-murky-by-the-hour pot further, she has said that bulldozers were being run in the northwest Delhi locality under the "guise" of checking illegal construction. Several structures were on Wednesday razed in the Jahangirpuri incident during an 'anti-encroachment drive' conducted by the BJP-ruled North Delhi Municipal Corporation amid an unusually heavy deployment (though the local mayor called it "a routine exercise") of paramilitary and police personnel and the onslaught of the humming bulldozers didn't stop until the authorities received a 'written order' from the Supreme Court in this regard. The facts that obeying the apex court's order was deferred till the last possible moment and that the civic body is ruled by the BJP have also lent credence to the conspiracy theory that the action was really aimed at acting against and intimidating the accused of communal offences — including violent clashes, stone pelting, arson and firing — during the passage of a Hanuman Mahotsav procession earlier in the same locality.

In fact, directly pointing the finger at the Centre, because law and order isn't a State subject in the national Capital, Mayawati alleged that using religion as a tool in such exercises can harm mutual harmony and destroy the secular fabric of the country. She also put the ball back into the Centre's court when she claimed that "anti-national forces" could take advantage of such a situation. Another point to ponder in the case is that with the same set of facts, the Delhi High Court had earlier refused to "interfere in the (demolition) process at this stage". The moot question that presents itself in the face of this development is: Is Jahangirpuri the only locality in the national Capital that is afflicted by the curse of 'illegal constructions'? Where is the action against the Government officials whose corrupt practices, or at least turning a blind eye to such illegal developments in good time, led to these constructions coming up? Also, is it not the Government's duty to take care of all the migrant population — including spaces for them to stay in, taking care of their health care needs and ensuring their safety and wellbeing — that may be descending upon Delhi in the search of employment or for any other valid reason?





FIRST COLUMN

THE INDIA-UK TRADE AGREEMENT

India and the UK have had a shaky economic partnership, given their historical contexts



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

UK Prime minister Boris Johnson has added momentum to the trade agreement negotiations between the two countries. In March, India and UK officials concluded their second round of negotiations on the proposed Free Trade Agreement. The third round of negotiations will have some officials from UK travelling to Delhi in the last week of April and others joining virtually. The pace of progress of recent trade agreement negotiations between India and the underscores the importance of agile and technologically future-fit for governments in the current work environment. India has recently concluded two mini-trade agreements with UAE and Australia within a year of the announcement. The UK on its part has concluded FTAs with Japan and renegotiated its deal with EU. Most of these trade agreements for India and



UK with their respective economic blocks have been concluded during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. India and the UK have a shaky economic partnership, given their historical contexts. An independent India has never been able to completely shed the hatred towards its erstwhile coloniser, while many powerful lobbies in the UK haven't been able to give up their "rulers of the region" attitude. The political relations between both have punctured pursuit of any significant economic cooperation, even though, both sides maintained a fairly upwardly mobile bilateral trade relation. The colonial ghosts from the past including geopolitical issues such as Kashmir, Pakistan and Partition always shadowed any bilateral economic ties. The UK, after severing ties with the European Union and facing threats to its liberal economy from China, decided to steer its focus towards the Indo-Pacific for strategic and bilateral reasons. It has already entered into an amilitary alliance with Australia along with the US (AUKUS) that focusses on security in the region. The growing closeness between China and Russia, along the current aggression in Ukraine has forced the UK to make the Indo-Pacific a key element of its foreign, trade, political and economic agenda. The only country from the QUAD group with whom the UK doesn't have a significant economic partnership such as a trade agreement is India. A trade deal with the aim to double bilateral trade between India and UK to about \$100 billion by 2030 seems a focus area for "Global Britain".

India has been dragging its feet on pulling together an economically beneficial trade agreement for nearly a decade. This was primarily a result of its FTAs with ASEAN group and Korea, both of which have competitive rather complementary domestic services and goods, on which limited trade benefits could be achieved by India. A bunch of reforms in India such as the GST regime, cashless toll access, and single-window clearances needed some years of careful alignment of domestic policies with global best practises, before India could boldly negotiate trade agreement terms with new partners. India has shown interest to quickly round up couple of lucrative deals with EU, Canada, Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council besides the UK. Every mini-deal or full-fledged free trade agreement would be stepping stone for the next one in line. India did get a taste of negotiating on sensitive matters such as access to agriculture and dairy products, wine and spirits, etc., when it closed the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement with Australia last month. The UK is a powerful player from the European region with centuries of history of having excelled in trade negotiations. Already business centres from the UK have red flagged "Ease of Doing Business" as key to any proposed India-UK trade deal. This will have to be looked into carefully and significant alignments with benchmarked global practices will have to be done.

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

Pragati Bhavan and Raj Bhavan's ties

Chief Minister KCR's attitude towards Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan depends on his relations with the Government in New Delhi



RAMACHANDRA MURTHY KONDUBHATLA

Governors in India over the decades were talking less and conducting themselves with regal finesse. Chief Ministers and State Governments were treating them with due respect and diligence. After the BJP came to power in 2014 for the second time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose persons with RSS background or BJP leaders for the titular positions. The Modi-era Governors, unlike the ones appointed by Atal Behari Vajpayee, are at loggerheads with non-BJP Chief Ministers.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have running battles since his appointment. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray are not pulling along well. Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi and Chief Minister M K Stalin don't see eye to eye on many issues. Tamilisai Soundararajan, the Telangana Governor, has joined the band of activist Governors who thrive on controversies.

In united Andhra Pradesh there were occasions when Governors played questionable politics. Ram Lal who dethroned NTR for a month became notorious and the movement for restoration of democracy spearheaded by the TDP founder ended only after Ram Lal was replaced by a thorough gentleman like Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma who gave the oath of office to NTR after restoring him as Chief Minister. NTR himself had no respect for Governor Kumudben Joshi but he followed protocol. NTR had problems with Krishan Kanth who decided in favour of Chandrababu Naidu but the actor-turned-politician was not in a position to fight.

The relations between Raj Bhavan and Pragati Bhavan (residence of Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao) deteriorated suddenly. Tamilisai went to Delhi and met Modi on April 6 and Union Home Minister Amit Shah the following day. She also spoke to the media without any inhibition ventilating her frustration with the attitude of KCR. Till some months ago, they were on the best of terms. When she did not sign the file pertaining to Kaushik Reddy's nomination to Legislative Council under the Governor's quota, the trouble started.

In the meanwhile, KCR changed his policy and started attacking the BJP government and Modi directly. He is also meeting non-BJP Chief Ministers like Uddhav Thackeray and Stalin to form a non-BJP and non-Congress front. KCR's efforts were slowed down after the BJP retained all the four States with handsome majorities. But he raised the paddy bogey demanding the Centre to buy paddy, not rice, as it has been doing in Punjab. He asked for one nation, one procurement policy.

Governor Tamilisai has a number of grievances. First and foremost, she has not been shown normal courtesies that are mandatory for a Governor. When she vis-



KCR WAS FRIENDLY WITH THE NDA GOVT TILL RECENTLY SUPPORTING ALL THE BILLS INTRODUCED BY THE MODI GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT. KCR PROBABLY IMAGINED, AS DID CHANDRABABU NAIDU IN 2018, THAT THE BJP WOULD LOSE IN UP AND OTHER THREE STATES IN THE 2022 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND THERE WOULD BE ROOM FOR HIM TO PLAY A NATIONAL ROLE

(The writer is a senior journalist and Editor, primpost, a news website based out of Hyderabad. The views expressed are personal.)



ited Yadadri, the renovated temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, even the Executive Officer was not present to welcome her. No minister and no district collector cared to receive her. Additional Collector Deepak Tiwari was there to greet her with a sapling. When her mother died at the Raj Bhavan, the President of India and the Prime Minister called to say condolences, but KCR did not care to pay floral tributes to the departed soul. He did not even call her. She said her request to provide a special flight to take her mother's body to Chennai was turned down by the Chief Minister. She said all her retours in the State in the last six months were either by road or by train even if it was a distant destination. She has not been invited by the Government to public functions for some months. She travelled to the forest area in Mulugu district on her own to see Sannakka, Saralakajataara where neither the district collector nor Superintendent of Police was present to receive her. She was not invited to address the joint session of legislature before the budget was presented. Had the relations been good, the CM would have personally invited the Governor to address the joint session.

Though KCR did not say anything openly against the Governor, his son K. Taraka Rama Rao, the working president of TRS and Minister for Municipal Administration and Information Technology, Jagadish Reddy, energy minister, and others criticized the Governor for airing her views in Delhi. KTR asked when a Tamil

Nadu BJP leader Tamilisai could be nominated as Governor what was wrong in nominating Kaushik Reddy as an MLC? Jagadish Reddy said she visited Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple as a BJP person. Tamilisai took serious objection to this comment. "I visited the temple as a devotee along with my husband. Did I take BJP flag or BJP leadership to the temple? I did not even care whether the protocol was followed," said Tamilisai in Delhi after meeting Amit Shah. She, in turn, challenged the ministers to show one instance where she used Raj Bhavan for promoting BJP interests. "I am prepared to reveal the appointments given in the last two years" she volunteered. The Governor said she is entitled to respect as a woman if not as a Governor. She used to call CM 'Anna (brother)' and she deserved to be treated well even as a sister.

Tamilisai said she felt ignored and insulted by some actions of the government. She said the ministers and officials have been skipping important events at Raj Bhavan and they should understand that the invitation was not from an individual. The latest cut was on Ugadi day when not a single TRS leader or government official accepted her invitation to visit Raj Bhavan. Even in Delhi, the Commissioner of Telangana Bhavan reportedly did not receive her or met her although she was at Sabari block in the Bhavan for two days.

The Governor went on to lambast the State government. She spoke of the drugs mafia and

neglected Government hospitals and universities where 60 percent of faculty positions are lying vacant. 'As a mother I feel bad for the youth in the State who are becoming drug addicts,' she said. She is understood to have given her report on drugs and corruption to the Prime Minister and Home Minister.

KTR, however, asserted that they have great respect for the constitutional post of Governor. He said, "Why should we have any disharmony with the constitutional head?" The TRS leaders have taken objection to the Governor making allegations of corruption.

The attitude of the Chief Minister towards the Governor depends on the relationship he has with the Prime Minister and the BJP. KCR was friendly with the NDA dispensation till recently supporting all the Bills, including the three controversial farm Bills, introduced by Modi government in Parliament. KCR probably imagined, as did Chandrababu Naidu in 2018, that the BJP would lose in UP and other three States in the 2022 assembly elections and there would be room for him to play a national role in mobilizing regional parties on one plank. In spite of the solid win by the BJP, the TRS continues to be belligerent and the agitation to force the Centre to buy paddy goes on unabated. How would KCR manage the contradictions and find a way to normalize the relationship with the BJP and the Prime Minister remains in the realm of imagination.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

ANOTHER PHASE OF THIS OPERATION IS BEGINNING. I'M SURE IT WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT MOMENT. — RUSSIA'S FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV



THE RUSSIAN TROOPS HAVE BEGUN THE BATTLE FOR THE DONBAS... WE WILL FIGHT. WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES. — UKRAINE PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENKYY

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the defender of Hindustan

The Guru decided to resist the nefarious act of forcible conversion of Hindus even at the cost of his life

The year-long celebrations to commemorate the 400th birth anniversary (Prakash Purab) of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur concluded on April 21 with an address by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Red Fort in Delhi. Prime Minister Modi has all along shown great reverence for the Sikh Gurus.



JAGMOHAN SINGH RAJU

The Prakash Purab serves an ideal opportunity to recall atrocities and persecution suffered by our forefathers at the hands of Muslim rulers and the supreme sacrifice made by the Sikh Guru to protect their freedom and dignity. Hindus, and later the Sikhs, suffered the worst of violence and religious persecution by the Mughals. Guru Nanak's agony over brutal tyranny of Babur, the first Mughal invader, is echoed in his

(The writer is a former IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)

own words: "Khusasan Khasmana Kiya Hindustan Draya. Apey Dos Na Deyi Karta Jum Kar Mugal Chareya. Eyt Mar Pyee Kurlanney Tain Ki Dard Na Aiyaa".

Hindus and Sikhs also suffered the worst brutality during fifty years of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's reign (1658-1707). Aurangzeb was a cruel bigot who wanted to establish Muslim theistic state, Dar-ul-Islam, in India by the power of the sword. With this sinister design, he ushered a reign of terror and tyranny on Hindus. They were coerced to choose between Islam and merciless oppression. He ordered heavy-handed implementation of ruthless Islamic fundamentalist programs on Hindus and Sikhs. Religious tax (jazia) was imposed exclusively on Hindus



to curtail their economic sustenance. Celebration of the most popular Hindu festivals, Diwali and Holi, were forbidden. Many sacred Hindu Temples were demolished, and mosques erected in their place. Forced mass conversion of Hindus and Sikhs to Islam became the first and

foremost function of the Indian Islamic state. Resistance to these atrocities meant loss of life and dignity. Under this genocidal tyranny, millions of Hindus, most in Kashmir, were massacred and their property looted.

According to the earliest historical narrative relied on by the SGPC and other historical literature, Hindus of Kashmir, unable to withstand the tyranny unleashed by Aurangzeb, approached Guru Tegh Bahadur for support. The Guru accepted their prayer and agreed to defend their freedom to religion and religious right to wear their 'sacred threads and frontal marks'. He decided, even if it cost him his life, to resist the nefarious act of forcible conversion of Hindus. On his instructions, a communication was sent to the emperor asserting

that if the Sikh Guru could be persuaded to accept Islam, the Hindus would convert as well. Hearing this, the Guru was summoned by Aurangzeb to Delhi, and, when he refused to forsake his faith, he was publicly decapitated on November 11, 1675 and his followers were butchered for their refusal to abandon their faith. Thus, the Guru led a stubborn but non-violent resistance against zealous proselytization and bigotry of Aurangzeb and willingly sacrificed his life to protect Hindustan. But for his sacrifice, Hindustan would have been Islamised.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the second Sikh Guru to be executed by the Mughals for their unyielding commitment to freedom of religion. Seventy years before his execution (1675),

Guru Tegh Bahadur's grandfather, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606), was tortured by emperor Jahangir. He was chained and thrown into the river Ravi on May 30, 1606 at Lahore. The resistance against religious persecution demonstrated by Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and his son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh, invited the wrath of the Mughal empire. While the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh died in battle against Mughals, his two younger sons were bricked alive for refusing to embrace Islam and protecting the persecuted.

The Hindu-Sikh bond has been cemented in perpetuity by the blood and sacrifice of the Sikh Gurus. And there is universal acknowledgement and gratitude of the Hindu community

towards the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs on account of the sacrifices made by them for the protection of Hindu faith. In recognition of this, Prime Minister Modi arranged worldwide celebrations of the 550th Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and the 350th Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh with immense reverence and fervour. To honour Chote Sahibzadas, December 26 will be celebrated annually as Veer Bal Diwas all over the country.

But some anti-national elements attempt to sow the seeds of division between Hindus and Sikhs. To achieve their nefarious designs, they project fake threat to the Sikh identity. These evil designs must be frustrated. Guru ka Khalsa is invincible. There is no threat to it, least of all from Hindus.

Ukraine to figure in Modi-Boris talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's ties with Russia in the backdrop of ongoing conflict in Ukraine even while several western nations are imposing sanctions will be discussed in the summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday. The two leaders will meet in New Delhi on Friday.

Making this assertion in Ahmedabad after arriving from the United Kingdom on a two-day visit, Johnson said, "As I think everybody understands, India and Russia have historically very different relationship, perhaps, than Russia and the UK have had over the last couple of decades. We have to reflect that reality, but clearly I'll be talking about it to Narendra Modi."

The conflict will figure in the summit with both the sides exchanging their views. However, Britain is likely to maintain its stand that it is not in the business of lecturing or telling other countries what to do, sources said here on Thursday. The two leaders are also likely to review the long term consequences of the Ukraine crisis.

The first British Prime Minister to visit Sabarmati



Ashram from where Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom struggle against colonial rule, he also touched upon India's views on the conflict and said "Well, they've already raised Ukraine, as you can imagine with Prime Minister Modi. And actually, if you look at what the Indians have said, they were very strong in their condemnation of the atrocities in Bucha."

The British Prime Minister termed Mahatma Gandhi an "extraordinary man" who mobilised the principles of truth and non-violence to change the world for better. Johnson wrote in the visitors' book there "It is an immense privilege to come to the ashram of this extraordinary man and to understand how he mobilised such simple principles of truth and non-violence to change the world for the better."

Meanwhile, his remarks about Ukraine came in the backdrop of India, time and again, calling for dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities Modi also urged Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to hold one on one to put an end to the war. India, he said, refrained at least 11 times from voting against Russia in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In his remarks, Johnson also said "India and UK both share anxieties about autocracies around the world, we're both democracies and we want to stick together." On relations between the

two countries, he said "there's also the opportunity for us to deepen our security and defence partnership. As you know, the UK is making an Indo-Pacific tilt in our integrated review of our national defence and security strategy."

Regarding economic ties, the British Prime Minister said both the countries are hoping to complete another free trade agreement "by the end of the year, by the autumn."

On the nuances of the summit, sources said here it will focus on the centrality of India in the rise of the Indo-Pacific, in keeping with the priority attached to India in the UK's integrated review of defence, security and foreign policy in 2021. The two sides may also discuss the issue of economic fugitives such as Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi. Britain is also likely to discuss the issue of pro-Khalistan elements there as it is determined to counterterrorism, sources said.

CBI registers 2 FIRs related to bribery charges by J&K ex-Guv

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered two FIRs in connection with corruption allegations levelled by former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in the award of contracts for group medical insurance scheme for Government employees and civil work related to Kiru hydroelectric power project in the erstwhile State.

After registering the FIRs, the CBI conducted searches on Thursday at 14 locations in Jammu, Srinagar, Delhi, Mumbai, Noida in Uttar Pradesh, Trivandrum in Kerala and Darbhanga in Bihar, the CBI said.

The agency has named Reliance General Insurance and Trinity Re-Insurance Brokers Limited as accused in its FIR related to a controversial health insurance scheme for Jammu and Kashmir government employees reportedly cleared by Malik in the State administrative council meeting on August 31, 2018.

Unknown officials of Finance Department of Government of Jammu and Kashmir by abusing their official position in conspiracy and connivance with Trinity Reinsurance Brokers Ltd, Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd and other unknown public servants and private persons have committed the offences of criminal con-

spiracy and criminal misconduct to cause pecuniary advantage to themselves and caused wrongful loss to state exchequer during the period 2017 and 2018 and thereby in this manner cheated the Government of Jammu and Kashmir," the FIR alleged.

It was alleged in different quarters that there were glaring deviations from the government norms in the contract awarded to Reliance General Insurance like absence of an online tender, removal of an original condition that the vendor should have experience of working in the state and companies having turnover of Rs 5,000 crore among others.

After allegations of irregularities surfaced, the scheme, which was rolled out on September 30, 2018, was scrapped, they said.

The case was registered on the request of Jammu and Kashmir Government on the allegations of malpractices in award of contract of J&K Employees Health Care Insurance Scheme to private company and release of Rs 60 crore in 2017-18, the CBI said in a statement.

"The governor has approved foreclosure of the contract with M/s Reliance General Insurance Company (RGIC) for implementing group mediclaim health insurance policy for the employees and pensioners in the state," a Raj Bhavan spokesper-

son had said on October 27, 2018.

He had said the matter was referred to the Anti-Corruption Bureau for examining the entire process to see whether it was conducted in a transparent and fair manner.

In the scheme which was initially signed up with RGIC for one year, the employees and pensioners would have got Rs 6 lakh cover for themselves and five dependent family members by paying an annual premium of Rs 8,777 and Rs 22,229 for employees and pensioners, respectively.

In its FIR relating to the alleged malpractices in the award of contract for the civil works package of Kiru Hydroelectric power project, the CBI said guidelines related to e-tendering were not followed. The agency has booked IAS officer and former chairman of Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd, Navin Kumar Chaudhary, former MD, M S Babu besides former directors and Patel Engineering Ltd. M K Mittal and Arun Kumar Mishra. The agency has also named Patel Engineering as an accused in this case.

"Though a decision was taken in 47th Board meeting of CVPPPL (Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd) for re-tender through e-tendering with reverse auction after cancellation of ongoing tendering process, same was not implemented (as

per decision taken in 48th board meeting) and tender was finally awarded to Patel Engineering Ltd," the FIR alleged.

Malik, who was the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019 had claimed that he was offered a Rs 300 crore bribe for clearing the two files.

After going to Kashmir, two files came to me (for clearance), one belonging to Ambani and another to an RSS-affiliated man who was a minister in the previous Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP-BJP coalition government and claimed to be very close to the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), he had said.

"I was informed by secretaries in both the departments that there is a scandal and I accordingly cancelled both the deals. The secretaries told me that 'you will get Rs 150 crore each for clearing the files' but I told them that I have come with five kurta-pyjamas and will leave with that only," Malik had told a gathering at an event in Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan in October last year.

The civil works package of Kiru Hydroelectric power project was registered at the behest of Jammu and Kashmir government and entailed allegations of malpractices in award of the contract worth Rs 2,200 crore to private company Patel Engineering in 2019, the CBI said in a statement.

Rajnath invites US defence firms to set up JV in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With growing strategic and defence ties between the two countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday invited US defence manufacturing companies to set up joint ventures and carry out research and development facilities in India.



He listed out a number of initiatives taken by the government to facilitate partnerships between major Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEMs) and Indian companies.

He urged the US companies to take advantage of the policy initiatives taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in India in defence manufacturing to achieve the vision of 'Make in India, Make for the World'. India and the US have a growing convergence of strategic interests and both sides seek a resilient and rules-based international order that safeguards the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, Rajnath said.

He also said the recent India-US '2+2' dialogue and fruitful conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden have created the ground for a more ambitious and strategic engagement between the two sides.

He made these points here while addressing the members of American Chamber of Commerce in India (AMCHAM India) through video conferencing during its 30th annual general meeting.

Rajnath invited the US companies for co-production, co-development, investment promotion and development of maintenance repair and over-

Rajnath pointed out that the US companies have not only been a source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and employment in India, but are also contributing to India's defence exports, totalling around \$2.5 billion to US in last five years. He said it is 35 per cent of total exports achieved during the period.

He termed the recently held 2+2 dialogue as positive and fruitful, saying the defence sector is a strong and growing pillar of the bilateral relationship.

The defence minister emphasised on the need to move from a buyer-seller relationship to one of partner nations and business partners. India and the US are uniquely poised to leverage each other's strengths for a mutually beneficial and bright future, he said. The AMCHAM-India is an association of American business organisations operating in India. Established in 1992, AMCHAM has over 400 US companies as members. The principal objectives include promotion of activities that would encourage and stimulate investment by US companies in India and increasing bilateral trade.

Prepare for security challenge, Army told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has unraveled a new kind of warfare, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday asked the Army top brass to prepare for every possible security challenge that India may face in the future, including that of unconventional and asymmetric warfare.

Underlining this point while addressing the Army Commanders' conference, Rajnath stressed upon the present complex world situation which effects everyone globally.

"Unconventional and asymmetric warfare, including hybrid war will be part of the future conventional wars. Cyber, information, communication, trade and finance have all become an inseparable part of future conflicts. This necessitates that Armed Forces will have to keep all these facets in consideration while planning and formulating strategies," he said.

Touching upon the situation on the Line of Actual

Control (LAC) facing China, the defence minister expressed confidence that while troops are standing firm, the ongoing talks for peaceful resolution will continue and disengagement and de-escalation, is the way forward.

Referring to the situation along the Western borders facing Pakistan, he complimented the Army's response to cross border terrorism but said the proxy war by the adversary continues.

The commanders carried out an extensive review of India's national security challenges along the borders with China and Pakistan as well as assessed possible geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for the region. The five-day conference will come to an end on Friday.

The conclave is an apex level biannual event held in April and October every year. The conference is an institutional platform for conceptual level deliberations, culminating in making important policy decisions for the Indian Army.

PM exhorts civil servants to make decision putting 'nation first'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asking civil servants to make transforming the life of common people their foremost goal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday exhorted them to evaluate every decision in the context of "nation first".

Speaking on the Civil Service Day when he also conferred the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration here at Vigyan Bhawan, Modi stressed on improving the governance and knowledge sharing.

He suggested all the training academies can virtually share the process and experiences of the award winners on a weekly basis. The Prime Minister said from the award-winning projects, one scheme may be chosen for implementation among few districts and the experience of the same may be discussed in the next year's Civil Service Day.

In his address, Modi listed three goals that he said they should be keeping before themselves while serving the democratic set up of the country. "The first goal is that there should be a change in the life of the common people in the country, their life should be easy and they should also be able to feel this ease. The first goal is that there should be a change in the life of



the common people in the country, their life should be easy and they should also be able to feel this ease.

"Common people should not have to struggle in their dealings with the government, benefits and services should be available to them without hassle," he said. This apart, the Prime Minister sought public servants to be in step with global changes and developments lest the focus of their decisions is lost.

"Secondly, given the growing stature and changing profile of India, it is imperative that whatever we do, that should be done in the global context. If we don't follow the activities at the global level, it will be very difficult to ascertain our priorities and focus area. We need to develop our schemes and governance models keeping this perspective in mind, Modi said. Thirdly, he said "Wherever we are in the system, our prime responsibility is the unity and integrity of the country, there cannot be any compromise".

Speak truth to political executive: Naidu to babus



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the perceived rising "nexus" between politicians and civil servants, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Thursday asked bureaucrats to stand up for what is right and speak the truth to the political executive.

He also said that instead of preferring to be indecisive and evasive and defer a decision, every civil servant has to be dynamic, initiative-bearing and problem-solving. "This calls for reorienting bureaucracy into meritocracy. Mediocrity should be disincentivised," the vice-president asserted.

Naidu made these remarks while addressing officer trainees from various services on Civil Services Day in Hyderabad. According to the text of his speech made available by the Vice-President's Secretariat, he said, "I can assure you all that the politicians are wise and receptive to good suggestions if they are presented to them convincingly and rationally."

"This is because no minister would like to risk being punished for wrongdoing or a bad decision. The growing nexus between the political class and civil servants being widely referred to as a matter of deep concern," Naidu said.

The vice-president was of the view that civil servants need not take an adversarial position "on all matters". "When you are instructed to present a particular issue in a certain manner that suits the political executive, all you need to do is to speak for the right and, if required, do so in writing. "If you are overruled, the authority concerned would be taken to task. The political and permanent executive should work in tandem and in the right manner. The political executive should definitely change," he said.

All that the officials have to do, Naidu said, is to show up their character and be on the right side of the law. "If not, you will be conceding ground to your political masters from which neither of you will benefit. On the contrary, the country and the people will suffer that much. So, I advise you to strictly stand up for the right," he advised them. Citing his experience, the vice-president said 'yes sir' types are not respected in the long run while "speakers of truth" are.

BJP bags 82% of ₹258.49 cr 7 electoral trusts, says ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in a new report said seven electoral trusts received a total amount of Rs 258.49 crore from corporates and individuals, and the BJP bagged more than 82 per cent of it.

According to the ADR, 16 out of the 23 electoral trusts submitted details of their contribution for the financial year 2020-21 to the Election Commission of India, of which only seven declared to have received donations.

Electoral trust is a non-profit organisation formed in India for orderly receiving of contributions from corporate entities and individuals to political parties. It aims at improving transparency in the usage of funds for election-related expenses.

"Seven electoral trusts which have declared receiving contributions during FY 2020-21, have received a total amount of Rs 258.4915 crore from corporates and individuals and distributed Rs 258.4301 cr (99.98 per cent) to various political parties," it said.

Doctors urge Prez, PM to postpone NEET PG 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several doctors have urged President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to postpone the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET PG 2022) exam, citing insufficient gap to prepare for the May 21 NEET PG 2022 exam, as the NEET PG 2021 counselling is scheduled to be over only on May 3, and some States' counselling will start afterwards.

"As per the policy of National Medical Commission (NMC), there needs to be a sufficient gap between Counselling of one session and

next examination. But this year the all-India counselling will be over by 3rd May, 2022 and State counselling will start afterwards which might go till mid or may end. The examination is scheduled on 21st May, just a few days after completion of All India counselling. This stands unfair," they said in a letter to the President and the Prime Minister.

Stating that they were in a Catch-22 situation as far as appearing for the NEET PG 2022 exam is concerned, the doctors wrote, "We are in a dilemma if we should attend counselling or prepare for the exam because of this insuffi-

cient time gap. The counselling schedule was changed nearly 7 times by MCC this year, also the mop up round was cancelled both at all India and state level. How could we study amongst these uncertainties created by these exam bodies."

The letter also referred to the previous postponement order, where Union Health Minister, Mansukh Mandaviya, had clearly directed NBE to give a 6-8 week gap between counselling and exam. The doctors requested the President, Prime Minister and other concerned authorities to postpone the medical entrance by at least two months. "I

request you to kindly intervene in this at the earliest keeping in mind the life of thousands of doctors, whom you once called COVID WARRIORS," the letter concludes.

While senior Congress leaders Oommen Chandy and Srinivas BV took up their cause on the Twitter, Member of Parliament Tejasi Surya wrote a letter to Mandaviya, pointing out that more than 5,000, interns from Kerala, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand are ineligible to write the NEET PG due to a delay in completion of their internship owing to the Covid19 pandemic.

Covid behavioural change: Kids glued to gadgets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly a year into the coronavirus crisis, parents across India—and the world—are watching their children glued to the digital world. This has also been indicated by a survey conducted between December 2020 and February 2021 that covered 10,112 primary/secondary caregivers and 2,916 frontline workers across 11 States in the country.

The survey by Niti Ayog painted a gloomy picture of how Covid-19 pandemic changed the world of the kids who were restricted in the four walls of their houses which prompted them to take to the digital gadgets. The outcomes were scary as shown by the report "Evidence-based response to

ECD during the Covid-19 crisis."

It noted that one third of children surveyed started watching videos/ playing games on the TV / phone / computer for the first time following the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Ditto was the case with children less than 2 years of age, when screen exposure, especially passive tech usage is known to be harmful for the cognitive development and psychosocial health of children.

Digital life is driven by urban households, with 41% of urban parents reporting their child started watching TV/phone/computer compared to 26% of rural parents. Conversely, 50% of rural parents reported their child continued to watch TV/ phone/computer compared to 38% urban parents.

In-depth interviews also revealed that parents used phones and videos as a distraction to reign in their children. 1 in 4 households reported children spending less time with other children including siblings, cousins or neighbors' children of their age. A greater proportion of urban households (29%) reported this than did rural households (23%). Additionally, parents high-light children feeling more isolated and agitated; secondary research suggests higher usage of tech products and less interaction with peers may be a cause. 69 During in depth interviews, parents recalled their children becoming agitated due to a lack of routine, lack of social interaction, and staying indoors.

Shah: Terrorism biggest form of human rights violation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said terrorism is the biggest form of human rights violation and action against terrorism cannot be contradictory to human rights. Addressing the 13th foundation day of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) here, Shah said strong action has been taken against terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir and against those who had helped terrorism and were living respectably in society.

Terrorism is the biggest curse for society, he said, adding that if there is any country which bore the maximum brunt of terrorism, it is India. "I have some differences with human rights organisations. Whenever there is an anti-terror action, some human rights groups come forward to raise the issue. But I strongly believe that there cannot be a bigger human rights violation than terrorism. It is the biggest form of human rights violation."

"Action against terrorism cannot be contradictory to human rights. It is absolutely necessary to root out terrorism to protect human rights," Shah



said amid big applause from officers of the NIA and other security organisations. Home Minister said the Narendra Modi government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and was working to root out the menace from India. He said the NIA had registered terror funding cases and these cases helped to a great extent to root out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah said that earlier, there was no proper action against terror funding. In 2018, cases were registered against terror funding for the first time, and because of that, there is no smooth road for funding terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, he added. "In 2021-22, the NIA registered many cases which helped in destroying sleeper cells in Jammu and Kashmir."

Longest-surviving LeT terrorist, aide eliminated in Baramulla

LeT Commander was involved in killing of several civilians and security personnel, including the recent killing of SPO & his brother, one soldier and a civilian

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Thursday achieved a major success by eliminating one of the longest-surviving Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorists along with his accomplice in Malwah area of Baramulla district.

Till the time of filing the report the operation in the area was still going on. According to a police spokesman, "three more terrorists were still inside cordon and exchange of fire was going on".

Meanwhile, one of the slain terrorists has been identified as Yousuf Kantroo. He figured in the list of top 10 most wanted

terrorists in the Kashmir valley.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range Vijay Kumar said, "it's a big success for us".

The LeT Commander was involved in several killings of civilians and security personnel including the recent killing of JKP's SPO & his brother, one soldier and one civilian in Budgam district.

According to police records, "Yousuf Kantroo was an overground worker (OGW) of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit and was arrested in the year 2005. Later, he was released in the year 2008 but he again joined terrorist rank in the year 2017 and started killing innocent civilians, policemen and political workers. Later on he switched from HM to LeT terrorist outfit". However, the identification of the other killed terrorist is being ascertained.

According to a police spokesman, "a special team of

Budgam Police alongwith Army (62RR) initially launched a joint cordon & search operation in Malwah area of Baramulla on Thursday. During the search operation as the joint search party reached the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon them in which four (04) soldiers including one officer received minor injuries. The fire was effectively retaliated leading to an encounter. Later on Baramulla Police headed by SSP Baramulla also joined in the operation. One policeman from Baramulla district also got injured in the encounter who was later on shifted to Army's base hospital in Srinagar.

As per police records, "terrorist Yousuf Kantroo was involved in dozens of civilian atrocities and security personnel killings including killing of SPO Mohd Ishaq Dar and his brother Umer Ahmad Dar resident of Chhatbagh Budgam on 26/03/2022, killing of BDC

Chairman Late Sardar Bhupinder Singh on 23/9/20 in his own native place in Khag, killing of NC Block president at Natipora Chanapora Srinagar and several other cases.

According to police Kantroo was also involved in grenade throwing incidents, abduction and killing of police and security personnel. Moreover, he was also involved in snatching 4 AK rifles from the residence of Legislature Muzafar Parry at J-13 Jawahar Nagar Rajbagh.

Furthermore, on his directions Abrar Nadeem (neutralized terrorist) carried out an attack on CRPF at Lawaypora Srinagar in which 3 CRPF personnel attained martyrdom on 25/03/2021. According to a police spokesman, the killed terrorist was also involved in recruiting innocent/gullible youth into terror folds including recruitment of Faisal Hafeez Dar of Aaripanth Magam into terrorist ranks.

AAP seeks farmers' support in K'taka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday kicked off the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) campaign in Karnataka and said his party will form its third Government in the southern State after being elected to power in Delhi and Punjab.

Speaking at a rally at National College grounds, Kejriwal sought the support of farmer organisations to topple the "40% Government", a reference to the corruption allegations hurled at the BJP Government by the Karnataka State Contractors' Association. The rally was organised by various farmers' body, led by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS). KRRS convenor Kodihalli Chandrashekar also joined the AAP and called upon the members to extend full support to the party. "We have to close the 20% and 40% commission accounts of these governments," Kejriwal said, adding that a corruption-free Government could offer several services for free to the people.

Kejriwal congratulated farmers for their massive agi-

tation in the national capital earlier, which forced the Centre to scrap the three farm laws 13 months after their promulgation.

Kejriwal said even after 75 years of independence farmers' condition has not improved, though 45 per cent of the population depended on agriculture, the children of farmers don't wish to take up farming.

Kejriwal said the previous Congress government in Karnataka had a 20 per cent share in commission from corruption while the present BJP government leads 40 per cent commission.

"We, the common people, were challenged to get into politics when we demanded a law against corruption. We formed a political party. Our first government was formed in Delhi and then in Punjab (this year). Now, we will form our next government in Karnataka," said Kejriwal.

"Delhi has zero per cent commission government because there is a hardcore honest government in Delhi. Not a paise is taken as bribe," said the AAP chief.

"I have gotten a certificate from our country's Prime Minister, Modi ji that Kejriwal

is the most honest man. The CBI, Income Tax and Delhi police raids were carried out against me, Manish Sisodia and 17 MLAs but the agencies could not find anything concrete to 'frame' them," said Kejriwal.

Referring to the riots in Delhi and elsewhere in Karnataka, Kejriwal said all the rowdies, rogues, uncouth and corrupt across the country go to "one political party".

"A Minister's son murders farmers by driving his jeep over them, but his father is rewarded with a ministerial position. Whoever commits rape gets a rousing welcome. A small girl was raped, they took out a 'Shobha Yatra'. In such a scenario how can the country prosper," Kejriwal said.

"We don't know about engineering riots. There are riots across the country. Who is doing this? Which party does riots? People of the country do not want riots. They want peace, they want to live peacefully," said Kejriwal.



The Delhi CM also said AAP does not know anything about rowdiness because his party is of gentle people, patriots and honest citizens who want schools, hospitals, roads, potable water, electricity and free transport.

"Two crore people of Delhi enjoy free healthcare. We supply free electricity in the state too. People get zero bills. All of this is possible because of our honesty and faith in progressive governance. It is because of our commitment to honesty that we are able to give five essential services like education, healthcare, water, electricity and bus transport for women," said Kejriwal.

BENGAL GLOBAL BUSINESS SUMMIT

₹3.42 lakh cr investment, 40 lakh jobs expected in Bengal: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday claimed that the two-day Bengal Global Business Summit had attracted a whopping Rs 3.42 lakh crore investment proposals from the visiting industrialists.

"It makes me extremely happy to announce that we have received investment proposals worth Rs 3,42,375 crores during the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) 2022, a visibly happy Chief Minister said, adding the business proposals were expected to generate around 40 lakh jobs.

"The BGBS was a remarkable success," she said insisting a task force would soon be set

up under the chief secretary for speedy implementation of these projects.

If materialized the investments were likely to generate as much as 40 lakh jobs, the Chief Minister claimed.

Banerjee also said that about "37 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and letters of intent (LoIs) were signed in these two days," adding around 4,300 participants from 42 countries, "including more than 500 international delegates, attended the summit."

Among the noticeable proposals were the one made by Adani Group chief Gautam Adani who announced an investment plan of Rs 10,000 crore in the coming ten years. The JSW Group too



announced investment in a 900 MW pumped storage hydel power project. A strong delegation from the United Kingdom and Bangladesh also expressed interest in investing in Bengal, sources said.

Earlier Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu

Munshi who was leading a 10-member delegation said that his country too was interested in investing in Bengal. Praising the Chief Minister for her remarkable abilities the minister said that the summit would go a distance in promoting India-Bangladesh border trade.

This was the sixth BGBS organized by the TMC Government to promote investment. In the past five summits the State had attracted investment proposal of Rs 12 lakh crore.

Banerjee's claims notwithstanding questioning the ability of the State Government to convert MoUs and LoUs into actual investment BJP national vice president said "before

bragging about the investment proposals of Rs 3 lakh crore the Chief Minister should first make clear that how much of Rs 12 lakh crore proposed in the past five summits have been converted into real investment ... the answer is in fact zero."

CPI(M) central committee member said that the "party that has driven away the Tatas from Singur and chemical hub at Nandigram will never be trusted by investors ... particularly when the State is overwhelmed by syndicates and TMC's extortionists." On Adani's investment proposal he said "this is the same Adani who is the best friend of Narendra Modi with Mamata Banerjee feigns a fight."

CBI files chargesheet against NSE ex-CEO Chitra & GOO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a chargesheet against former NSE MD and CEO Chitra Ramkrishna and former Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian in connection with its probe into a co-location scam case. Ramkrishna and Subramanian are both currently undergoing judicial custody following their arrest by the CBI on March 6 and February 25 respectively.

In its charge sheet filed before a Special Court here, the CBI has alleged that Ramkrishna allegedly abused her official position in key decisions among other charges.

The SEBI on February 11 had charged Ramkrishna and

others with alleged governance lapses in the appointment of Subramanian as the chief strategic advisor and his re-designation as group operating officer and advisor to MD. The CBI which expanded its probe in the co-location scam, after SEBI report surfaced, has arrested both of them and told the court that formless Yogi is none other than Subramanian who was alleged beneficiary of her decisions.

Ramkrishna, who succeeded former CEO Ravi Narain in 2013, had appointed Subramanian as her advisor who was later elevated as group operating officer (GOO) at a fat pay package of Rs 4.21 crore annually. Subramanian's controversial appointment and subsequent elevation, besides other

crucial decisions, were guided by an unidentified person who Ramkrishna claimed was a formless mysterious yogi dwelling in the Himalayas, a probe into her email exchanges in an audit had revealed.

Ramkrishna got elevated as MD and CEO on April 1, 2013 and left the bourse in 2016. During this period, co-location was started by NSE, the CBI has alleged in the charge sheet.

In the co-location facility offered by NSE, brokers could place their servers within the stock exchange premises giving them faster access to the markets. It is alleged that some brokers in connivance with insiders abused the algorithm and the co-location facility to make windfall profits.

Mumbai cops detain brother of Arjun Rampal's girlfriend from Goa

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai police on Thursday detained South African national Agisilaos Demetriades, brother of Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal's girlfriend Gabriella and an accused in the Sushant Singh Rajput death-related drug case, from Goa in connection with a Supreme Court order rejecting his bail application in the three drug cases being handled by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

A visiting team of the Mumbai police executed the detention order issued against Demetriades in the aftermath of the rejection of his bail application by the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court on March 28, 2022 and subsequently by the Supreme Court on April 19, 2022.

Demetriades will be brought to Mumbai and lodged

at the Arthur Road Central Jail (ARC).

The detention order had been issued against Demetriades On September 21, 2021 under Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act in view of involvement in multiple cases under NDPS Act.

Demetriades is being prosecuted in three cases of the NCB - the first registered in connection with the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput in October 2020, the second one cocaine smuggling case Nigerian drug and the third case in which he was arrested with a small quantity of Charas from Goa for which he spent two weeks in judicial custody.

It may be recalled that Demetriades was arrested for the first time by the NCB from Lonavala near Pune on

October 19, 2020.

Demetriades is alleged to be a part of a larger drug syndicate operating in Bollywood, which is being investigated after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The NCB's investigations have revealed that Demetriades was in touch with Omega Godwin, a Nigerian national who had earlier been arrested for supply of cocaine in Mumbai. During his custodial interrogation, Godwin had named Demetriades and others in connection with the Sushant death-related drug case. Among other things, 47-year-old Rampal is being investigated for his links with Demetriades and Australian-architect friend Paul Bartel, both of whom were arrested earlier with the Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case. He had been questioned twice - once for eight-long hours on

November 13, 2020 and once again on December 21, 2021. Rampal was questioned after live-partner Gabriella was subjected to two rounds of questioning by the NCB subjected.

The NCB had earlier carried out searches at the Rampal's Bandra residence on November 9, 2020.

Incidentally, the raid on Rampal's residence had come a day after the NCB officials carried out searches at film producer Firoz A. Nadiadwala's residence along Gulmohar Cross Road at Juhu Vile Parle Development (JVPD) Scheme in north-west Mumbai. During the searches, the NCB sleuths seized a total of 717.1 gm of Ganja, 74.1 gm charas and 95.1 gm MD (Commercial Quantity) along with Rs 3,58,610. They also seized 10 gm of Ganja from another accused Wahid Abdul kadir Sheikh @ Sultan.

CPM serves notice on Power Min of Kerala

Minister is known for his closeness to B Ashok, the IAS officer who is the chairman of the Board

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M) has put on notice the CPI and K Krishnankutty, Kerala's Minister for power and the representative of the Janata Dal (S) in the Left Democratic Front Government.

The COI(M), heading the LDF is not amused by the way Krishnankutty is handling the controversies in Kerala State Electricity Board. The minister is known for his closeness to B Ashok, the IAS officer who is the chairman of the Board in his battles with the trade unions, especially the CITU.

Ashok, known for his integrity and uprightness has taken action against three senior officers of the Board for gross indiscipline. The officers got the disciplinary actions

nullified by the Kerala High Court. But the three were transferred from the head quarters of the Board at Thiruvananthapuram to thye districts and this deteriorated further the relation between the chairman and the officers.

Minister Krishnankutty has been supporting the chairman in the latter's bid to clean the Eugen Stable the Board has become. On Thursday the Board asked M G Suresh Kumar, executive engineer, to pay Rs 6.5 lakh for misusing the official car for trade union works. Suresh Kumar was the de facto Board Chairman during the tenure of M M Mani (Krishnankutty's predecessor in the department of power).

The CPI(M) party secretariat which met on Wednesday reportedly expressed unhappiness over Krishnankutty's infatuation with Ashok and asked the minister to either toe the CITU line or get ready to be ousted from the council of ministers. JD(S) has just two mem-

bers in the House and Krishnankutty knows well that the other MLA is waiting in the wings to become minister. The minister said on Thursday that all issues related to the chairman and the officers owing allegiance to the CITU would be resolved in a week's time.

The CPI, the second largest constituent of the LDF was shocked by an invitation extended by E P Jayarajan, the newly appointed convener of the Front, to Muslim League. "We are in the process of expanding the base of the LDF by bringing in like-minded parties under one umbrella. We would love to have Muslim League among us in our mission to dethrone the BJP from the Centre in the 2024 Lok Sabha election," Jayarajan told reporters on Thursday. He reminded them of the resolution adopted in the 23rd Party Congress at Kannur early this month that the CPI(M) would forge alliance with all secular,

democratic and liberal forces to defeat the "communal" BJP once and for ever.

The new convener waxed eloquence at P K Kunhalikutty, the Muslim League strongman and termed him as the best political strategist in the country.

Kanam Rajendran, the Kerala secretary of the CPI, reacted to Jayarajan's initiative by making it known that there was no agenda in front of the LDF to bring in new allies. "It may be his personal view," said Rajendran, who looked visibly upset over the development. "The CPI leader knows well that their prominence would be eclipsed with the entry of Muslim League to the LDF. But there is no need to give any importance to Jayarajan's statement. He is the new convener of the LDF and wants to make his presence felt. Till 2024, nothing is going to happen in Kerala politics," said P Sujathan, veteran commenta-

FROM PAGE 1

NO DEMOLITION IN JAHINGIRPURI, NEXT SC HEARING IN 2 WEEKS

Dave replied that this is going on everywhere wherever riots are taking place. "Is it an instrument of state policy to engage in fake encounters and now bulldozers, he asked? "They never did anything like this in 1984 and 2002 then why now. Delhi has an Act of 2011 which protected every illegal encroachment till December 2023. A particular section of society is being targeted. This is the warning constitutional framers gave us. I will read Sardar Patel and Dr B R Ambedkar on this. They spoke about this eventuality," Dave said.

He said the Delhi Police registered an FIR against the VHP for carrying out procession despite their objection. "What happened there is a matter of inquiry by an appropriate judicial process but what you do is make large scale arrests from people of only one community and start bulldozing," Dave said.

"This is not confined to Jahangirpuri. If we allow this, there will be no rule of law or democracy left," Dave said, adding, "How can a BJP leader write a letter that you demolish and NDMC demolishes it? Delhi Municipality Act has provision for notice and there is provision for appeals too."

Pointing out that there are 731 unauthorised colonies in Delhi with 50 lakh people, Dave said, "If you want to act against unauthorised constructions, you go to Sainik Farms. Come to Golf Links, where I stay and where every second home is an encroachment. You don't want to touch them, but target the poor people."

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, also appearing for the Muslim body, said encroachment was a serious problem throughout India and it was increasingly being associated with Muslims.

"My plea is that such instances are happening in other states also. When processions are carried out and frictions occur, homes of only one community are bulldozed and the politics in power judges what happens or doesn't happen."

"Look at Madhya Pradesh where the Minister says if Muslims do such a thing they cannot expect justice. Who decides that? Who gave him that power? Somebody is in jail and his house was demolished," Sibal said and sought a stay on demolition with a bulldozer.

GURU TEG EPITOME OF INDIAN TRADITION OF SACRIFICE: MODI

Modi said, "Whenever our civilisation faces a crisis, a new hero rises to the occasion" and that "Empires came and went,

but India stood strong...India is moving ahead". Modi said on this auspicious occasion he bows at the feet of all ten gurus. "I am happy that today our country is moving forward with full devotion to the ideals of our gurus. On this virtuous occasion, I bow at the feet of all ten gurus. Hearty congratulations to all of you on the occasion of Prakash Parv," he said.

Sikh leaders sought a Sikh university in Delhi and wanted that an international airport be named after Guru Teg Bahadur. The event is seen as BJP trying to reach out to the Sikhs in Punjab ever since it decided to go it alone in the Punjab Assembly elections following the break-down of the old alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal over the three farm laws. In neighbouring Haryana, the party has planned a series of events to mark the occasion, including a grand event in Panipat.

FORMER MIN'S AIDE HELD FOR DUPING YOUTHS

lure jobless youths with government job offers. Arman used to make use of his office room as a job consultant and would make gullible youths meet Swami Prasad Maurya. Arman also facilitated work of digitalisation in the secretariat to Faizi.

The private firm given the digitisation contract had also provided part-time jobs

in some departments.

The youths would be taken inside the secretariat for training to make the process appear genuine. Vishal Gupta was said to be the mastermind and he kept a tab on vacancies in the government departments. With the help of Jamil, who is said to be absconding, Vishal trapped gullible youths from places like Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Sultanpur and Prayagraj. Swapnil, an aide of Vishal, was also arrested for making a fake website of Indian Railways to dupe people. The accused also issued fake appointment letters of different government departments with forged signatures.

PK FOR NON-GANDHI AS CONG PRESIDENT

He has said out of 66 CWC members, only two members are below 45 years of age. His presentation said in the last 25 years, the Congress did not have any national-level membership drive.

On the idea of alliances, Kishor has reportedly suggested that instead of forming UPA-III or going it alone, the Congress will have to look for Congress plus and recommended that the party joined hands with leaders and regional organisations who have carved a niche for themselves in the State. Kishor is credited to have planned the electoral strategies of various

parties, including the Trinamool Congress, AAP, DMK, and others.

His plan also includes the work of connecting one crore workers of the Congress party, out of which 50 lakh will be grassroots workers and the rest will be in the form of electoral forces.

Describing Kishor as a brand with proven credentials, Congress general secretary Tariq Anwar said the poll strategist is willing to join the party without any pre-conditions and his induction would certainly help the party. Congress president Sonia, Anwar said, wanted to take senior leaders into confidence and seek their opinion before taking a decision on Kishor's role in the Congress.

Amid the ongoing intra-party deliberations to evolve a long-term strategy and discuss the plan presented by Kishor, former Rajasthan deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot met Sonia on Thursday. Pilot's meeting with Sonia comes a day after she met Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh -- Ashok Gehlot and Bhupesh Baghel.

INDIA, UK TO INK £1B DEALS

It said the UK and Indian businesses will confirm more than one billion pounds ((1 GBP= Rs 99.63) in new investments and export deals in areas from software

engineering to health, creating almost 11,000 jobs across the UK.

"As I arrive in India today, I see vast possibilities for what our two great nations can achieve together. From next-generation 5G telecoms and AI to new partnerships in health research and renewable energy -- the UK and India are leading the world," Johnson was quoted as saying by the High Commission.

"Our powerhouse partnership is delivering jobs, growth and opportunities for our people, and it will only go from strength to strength in the coming years," he said.

The High Commission said Johnson will use his visit to India to "boost our collaboration with one of the world's fastest-growing economies, slashing trade barriers for UK businesses and driving jobs and growth at home."

It said the UK will confirm major new science and tech collaboration, including a digital health partnership and a joint investment fund for Indian deep-tech and AI start-ups, supported by the UK and Indian Governments.

"As he moves on to New Delhi on Friday, the Prime Minister will also use this week's visit to drive progress in negotiations on the landmark UK-India free trade agreement, which is expected to help double our trade and investment by 2030," the High Commission said.

Putin tries to claim Mariupol win but won't storm holdout

AP ■ KYIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin tried to claim victory in the strategic port of Mariupol on Thursday, even as he ordered his troops not to storm the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the war's iconic battleground.

Russian troops have besieged the southeastern city since the early days of the conflict and largely pulverized it - and top officials have repeatedly indicated it was about to fall, but Ukrainian forces stubbornly held on.

In recent weeks, they held up in a sprawling steel plant, and Russian forces pounded the industrial site and repeatedly issued ultimatums ordering the defenders to surrender.

"The completion of combat work to liberate Mariupol is a success," Putin said. "Putting such an important centre in the south as Mariupol under control is a success."

But the Russian leader said that, for now, he would not risk sending troops into the warren of tunnels under the giant Azovstal plant, instead preferring to isolate the holdouts who have captivated the world's attention "so that not even a fly comes through."

His defense minister said the plant was blocked off, while giving yet another prediction that the site could be taken in days.

Putin's order may mean that Russian officials are hoping they can wait for the defenders to surrender after running out of food or ammunition. Bombings of the plant could well continue.

Even though Putin painted the mission to take Mariupol already a success and said the city had been "liberated," until the plant falls, he cannot declare a complete victory.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said about 2,000 Ukrainian troops remained in the plant, which has a labyrinth of tunnels and bunkers that spread out across about 11 square kilometers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that about 1,000 civilians were also trapped there.

Russian-backed separatists in the area previously seemed bent on taking every last inch of the city, which has seen some of the most dramatic fighting of the war and whose capture has both strategic and symbolic importance.

The scale of suffering in the city on the Azov Sea has made

it a worldwide focal point, and its definitive fall would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, complete a land bridge between Russia and the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized in 2014, and free up Russian troops to move elsewhere in the Donbas.

Russian officials now say capturing the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, is the war's main goal.

This week, Moscow's forces opened a new phase of the war, in a deadly drive along a front from the northeastern city of Kharkiv to the Azov Sea. Detaching the region from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm the capital, Kyiv, and amid mounting Russian losses.

Britain's Defense Ministry said that Russia likely wants to demonstrate significant successes ahead of Victory Day on May 9, the proudest moment on the annual calendar marking its critical role in winning World War II.

"This could affect how quickly and forcefully they attempt to conduct operations in the run-up to this date," the ministry said.



Retired British Rear Admiral Chris Parry described Putin's remarks as reflecting a change in "operational approach" as Russia tries to learn from its failures in the eight-week conflict, which turned

from initial hopes of a lightning fast invasion of a neighbour into a war of attrition with ever mounting casualties and costs.

"It seems to me that the Russian agenda now is not to capture these really difficult places where the Ukrainians can hold out in the urban centres, but to try and capture territory and also to encircle the Ukrainian forces and declare a huge victory," Parry said.

In the meantime, Western powers are doubling down on their support of Ukraine, moving to push more military hardware in, heightening geopolitical stakes.

The latest in a long line of Western leaders venturing to Kyiv, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said Thursday: "One of the most

important messages today is that Denmark is considering sending more weapons. That is what is needed."

Several Western officials have promised similar in recent days.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat, on Wednesday. Putin boasted that it can overcome any missile defense system and make those who threaten Russia "think twice." The head of the Russian state aerospace agency called the launch out of northern Russia "a present to NATO."

The Pentagon described the test as "routine" and said it wasn't considered a threat.

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles. The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

In a video address, Zelenskyy said the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launching a new, large-scale offensive."

The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80% of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end."

important messages today is that Denmark is considering sending more weapons. That is what is needed."

Several Western officials have promised similar in recent days.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat, on Wednesday. Putin boasted that it can overcome any missile defense system and make those who threaten Russia "think twice." The head of the Russian state aerospace agency called the launch out of northern Russia "a present to NATO."

The Pentagon described the test as "routine" and said it wasn't considered a threat.

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles. The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

In a video address, Zelenskyy said the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launching a new, large-scale offensive."

The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80% of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end."

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles.

The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

Detaching it from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm capital Kyiv.

The UK Defence Ministry said Russian forces were advancing from staging areas in the Donbas toward

important messages today is that Denmark is considering sending more weapons. That is what is needed."

Several Western officials have promised similar in recent days.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat, on Wednesday. Putin boasted that it can overcome any missile defense system and make those who threaten Russia "think twice." The head of the Russian state aerospace agency called the launch out of northern Russia "a present to NATO."

The Pentagon described the test as "routine" and said it wasn't considered a threat.

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles. The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

In a video address, Zelenskyy said the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launching a new, large-scale offensive."

The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80% of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end."

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles.

The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

Detaching it from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm capital Kyiv.

The UK Defence Ministry said Russian forces were advancing from staging areas in the Donbas toward

Some civilians manage to escape from Mariupol



AP ■ KYIV

Only four buses with civilians managed to escape from Mariupol after several unsuccessful attempts, Ukrainian officials said on Thursday, as thousands more remained trapped under relentless Russian attacks against the last pockets of Ukrainian resistance in the devastated southern port city.

Another attempt to evacuate civilians from Mariupol will be made on Thursday,

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said.

In Kyiv, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and Denmark's Mette Frederiksen became the latest European leaders to show support with a visit to the capital.

They were due to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who warned in a video address overnight that the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launch-

ing a new, large-scale offensive."

"The West stands together to support the Ukrainian people," Danish Prime minister Frederiksen said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said it submitted a draft of its demands for ending the war, and the West raced to supply Ukraine with heavier weapons to counter the Russians' new drive to seize the industrial east.

ahead of its annual May 9 Victory Day celebrations.

"This could affect how quickly and forcefully they attempt to conduct operations in the run-up to this date."

As fears grew for the fate of civilians in Mariupol, the Kyiv regional police said on Thursday that two mass graves with nine bodies were discovered in the city of Borodyanka, northwest of the capital.

The findings added to thousands of civilians reported killed by Russian forces, who have been accused of wholesale abuses of Ukrainians.

Head of the Kyiv regional police Andriy Nebytov said two women and a teenager were among the "civilians killed by the Russian occupiers."

"I want to stress that these people are civilians. The Russian military deliberately shot civilians that didn't put up any resistance and didn't pose any threat," Nebytov said, adding that some of the victims were apparently tortured.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat.

Detaching it from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm capital Kyiv.

The UK Defence Ministry said Russian forces were advancing from staging areas in the Donbas toward

Kramatorsk, which continues to suffer from persistent rocket attacks. The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80 per cent of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas.

Before Russia invaded on February 24, the Kyiv government controlled 60 per cent of the Luhansk region.

Governor Serhiy Haidai said the Russians, after seizing the small city of Kreminna, are now threatening the cities of Rubizhne and Popasna. He urged all residents to evacuate immediately.

"The occupiers control only parts of these cities, unable to break through to the centres," Haidai said on the messaging app Telegram.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end."

In a veiled attack, Imran Khan blames Pakistan Army chief for his ouster

PTI ■ LAHORE

In a veiled attack on Pakistan's Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, former prime minister Imran Khan has alleged that "some elements" in the powerful establishment who indulged in "bad practices" were responsible for his unceremonious ouster from power.

According to experts, Khan, who was ousted from power on April 10 after National Assembly passed a no-confidence motion against him, had apparently lost support of Army after he refused to endorse appointment of ISI spy agency chief last year. Finally, he agreed but it soured his ties with Army. Addressing party workers on Twitter at night, Imran said: "There are also humans in institutions. If one or



two individuals do something wrong, the entire institution is not responsible. If one person (in an apparent reference to Army chief Gen. Bajwa) makes a mistake, this does not mean that whole institution is at fault." Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry told a news channel on Wednesday that relations between the establishment and Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government strained for months.

Biden announces \$800M in new military aid for Ukraine

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Thursday announced an additional USD 800 million in military aid to help Ukraine fight back against the Russian invasion, but he also warned Congress will need to approve additional assistance.

The new military assistance package includes much needed heavy artillery, 144,000 rounds of ammunition, and drones for Ukrainian forces in the escalating battle for the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. It builds on roughly USD 2.6 billion in military assistance that Biden had previously approved for Ukraine. He said USD 13.6

billion approved last month by Congress for military and humanitarian assistance was "almost exhausted."

The new package includes much needed heavy artillery and ammunition for Ukrainian forces in the escalating battle for the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

Earlier this week, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also said his country will send heavy artillery to Ukraine.

And Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that the Netherlands will send more heavy weapons, including armored vehicles.

A senior US defense official on Wednesday said training of Ukrainian personnel on American 155mm howitzers has begun in a European country outside Ukraine.

Biden on Wednesday lauded US military officials for "exceptional" work arming Ukraine as he gathered the nation's military brass for their first in-person group meeting at the White House of his presidency.

It's an annual tradition that had been put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic but is now being resurrected as the US arms Ukraine to help it fight back against Russia's invasion.

but I've been to Ukraine a number of times before the war... And I knew they were tough and proud but I tell you what: They're tougher and more proud than I thought," Biden told military commanders.

"I'm amazed at what they're doing with your help," Biden brought together the Pentagon's top civilian and uniformed officials amid the most serious fighting in Europe since World War II.

Russia's nearly two-month-old invasion of Ukraine was at the center of wide-ranging talks with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and com-

batant commanders. Biden also used the gathering to reflect on his administration's efforts to diversify Pentagon leadership.

Hicks is the first Senate-confirmed woman to hold her role. Biden also chose Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost of the Air Force as commander of United States Transportation Command and Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson of the Army as commander of United States Southern Command. They are just the second and third women to lead combatant commands.

"It's an important milestone," Biden said. "I think that speaks to how we're harnessing the strength and diversity of our country." Following the meeting, Biden and first lady Jill Biden hosted the military leaders and their spouses for dinner in the White House Blue Room.

Such a gathering was last held in October 2019.

Donald Trump was president at the time and was facing a House inquiry that would lead to his first impeachment, which centered on allegations that he withheld military assistance from Ukraine as part of an effort to pressure the country's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to dig up dirt on Biden's adult son's business dealings in Ukraine.

AP ■ KABUL

A series of explosions across Afghanistan on Thursday killed at least 10 people and wounded scores more, according to police and hospital officials.

No one immediately took responsibility for the deadly explosions, but they mostly targeted the country's minority Shiite Muslims and had all the hallmarks of a deadly Islamic State affiliate known as Islamic State in Khorasan Province, or IS-K.

The worst of the three attacks occurred in northern Mazar-e-Sharif where at least 10 worshippers were killed as they knelt in prayer, said Dr. Ghawuddin Anwari, head of the main hospital in northern Mazar-e-Sharif.

Another 40 were injured. They were brought in ambulances and private cars.

The explosion at the Sai Doken mosque in northern Mazar-e-Sharif occurred as Muslims mark the holy month of Ramadan, when the faithful fast from sunrise to sunset. Earlier Thursday in the capital, Kabul, a roadside bomb exploded and injured two children. That bomb also targeted the country's minority Shiites, striking in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood of Kabul, dominated by Afghanistan's minority Shiite Muslims.

Two days earlier in the same area, multiple explosions targeting educational institutions killed at least six people, mostly children, and wounded 17 others.

Lanka Opp for constitutional amendment to end presidential system

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's main Opposition SJB on Thursday presented a constitutional amendment bill that among other provisions seeks to abolish the presidential system of governance, in existence in the country since 1978, and replace it with a system that reinforces constitutional democracy.

The move by the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party came in the backdrop of massive protests demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his Sri Lanka Podujana (Peramuna)-led government over the country's worst economic crisis.

The SJB presented the draft 21st constitution amendment bill to the secretary-general of parliament with proposals including the abolition of the current executive presidential sys-

tem. "We have handed over to the Speaker our proposal to abolish the executive presidential system," main Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa told Parliament. The SJB document proposes to "abolish the executive presidential system and replace it with a system that reinforces constitutional democracy."

While the president will remain the head of state and the commander in chief, the president has no personal discretion in appointing or dismissing the prime minister, according to the proposal. The prime minister shall be the head of the Cabinet of ministers and the ministers are to be appointed by president on the prime minister's advice, it adds. The amendment, while seeking to annul 20th Amendment adopted in 2020, aims to restore 19th Amendment to Constitution to curb the powers of the president and empow-

er Parliament. The 19A adopted in 2015 pruned presidential powers by empowering the 225-member Parliament above the executive president.

However, the 19A was scrapped after prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the November 2019 presidential election. The powerful Rajapaksa family tightened their grip on power after

their massive victory in the general elections in August 2020 which allowed them to amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers and install close family members in key positions.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa is under pressure to quit along with his family as street protests have raged over the government's mishandling of the island nation's worst-ever economic crisis. The demand is to set up an interim

cabinet of all parties and restore the 19A which would deprive Gotabaya Rajapaksa of the full powers of the presidency.

In his 2019 presidential bid, Gotabaya Rajapaksa won a convincing mandate for a presidency during which he sought full presidential powers over Parliament.

Sri Lanka is grappling with an unprecedented economic turmoil since its independence from Britain in 1948.

The crisis is caused in part by a lack of foreign currency, which has meant that the country cannot afford to pay for imports of staple foods and fuel, leading to acute shortages and very high prices. The island nation is witnessing large-scale protests against the government's mishandling of the debt-ridden economy - the worst-ever economic crisis in the country's history.

RAJAPAKSA PROMISES JUSTICE TO EASTER SUNDAY ATTACK VICTIMS

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government will not rest until justice has been served to the guilty behind the 2019 Easter terror attacks, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa vowed on Thursday as the island nation marked the third anniversary of the worst terror incident that killed 270 people, including 11 Indians.

"Today we remember with grief, the tragic events that transpired 3 years ago on that fateful #Easter morning. We mourn the loss of innocent lives and the lives that were impacted. #GoSL has since

made every attempt, to bring those responsible to justice," Rajapaksa tweeted.

Nine suicide bombers belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three Catholic churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, 2019, killing nearly 270 people, including 11 Indians, and injuring over 500. The attack stirred a political storm as the then government headed by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe were blamed

for their inability to prevent the attacks despite prior intelligence being made available. "Thus far 735 persons have been taken into custody, 27 cases against 79 persons have been filed under 25,653 charges.

The govt. Will not rest until justice has been served to the guilty with strict adherence to rule of law and due process," Rajapaksa said in another tweet. The victims' families led by the head of the local church, Archbishop of Colombo Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, have been critical of the slow pace of the investigations which they claim is a

political ploy for cover up.

On Sunday, hundreds of people staged a silent protest in Sri Lanka's capital, demanding justice for the victims of the Easter terror attacks. The protesters joined hundreds of people camping near the President's Office in Colombo seeking resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and all members of his family from the government over the worst economic crisis that has caused critical shortages of fuel, food and medicines in the country. Displaying banners and placards, protesters called for justice for the victims of the Easter attacks.

Man City reclaim top spot

Mahrez, Foden & Silva's strike in 2nd half secure 3-0 win over Brighton



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City held their nerve to move back above Liverpool at the top of the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Brighton on Wednesday.

Riyad Mahrez, Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva all struck in the second half as Pep Guardiola's men edged one point ahead in the title race with six games to go.

Guardiola recalled a number of key players he had left out for Saturday's 3-2 FA Cup semi-final defeat by Liverpool, but it took City time to break Brighton's resolve at a tense Etihad.

The Seagulls had won on the road at Arsenal and Tottenham in their previous two games and frustrated the English champions for the first 45 minutes.

Mahrez bore the brunt of the City support's nerves as he missed the best chance before the break when he passed up the opportunity to take a quick shot from Robert Sanchez's mishit clearance.

City captain Ruben Dias made his return from injury after a two-month absence at half-time.

The Portuguese's return might have come at the perfect time for Guardiola as John Stones limped off in the

second half just six days before the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Real Madrid.

By the time Stones departed, City had the game won thanks to two goals in 12 minutes.

Kevin De Bruyne's driving run through the heart of the Brighton defence teed up Mahrez, who this time did not pass up the chance to slot in his 23rd goal of the season.

Any doubt over the outcome was removed once Foden's deflected effort from a corner worked to the edge of the box gave City a two-goal cushion.

Silva added a third eight minutes from time with an exquisite cushioned finish from De Bruyne's layoff at the edge of the area.

Nketiah's double sinks Chelsea

AP ■ LONDON

Eddie Nketiah boosted Arsenal's bid for a top-four finish in the Premier League as the striker's double inspired a dramatic 4-2 win against Chelsea on Wednesday.

Nketiah was released by Chelsea as a 16-year-old in 2015 and he exacted a measure of revenge with his first league goals this season.

The 22-year-old put Arsenal ahead early on at Stamford Bridge before Timo Werner equalised.

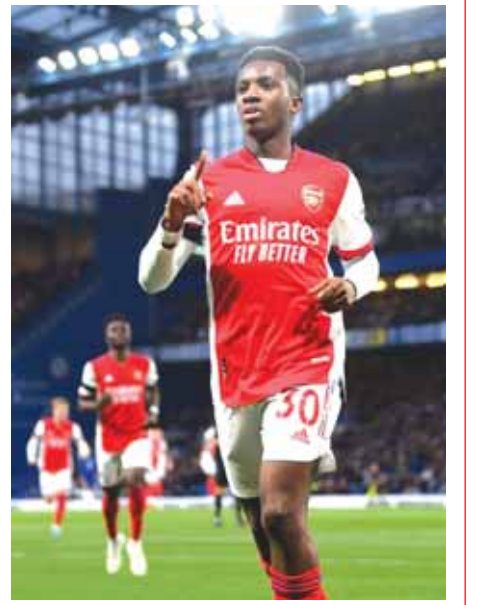
Mikel Arteta's side regained the lead through Emile Smith Rowe, only for Cesar Azpilicueta to draw Chelsea level again.

Nketiah settled a pulsating London derby when he punished shambolic Chelsea defending in the second half and Bukayo Saka bagged the fourth with a stoppage-time penalty.

After losing their last three games, Nketiah's crucial contribution lifted Arsenal back into the race to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top-four finish.

The Gunners are in fifth place, behind fourth-placed Tottenham on goal difference with both teams having six games to play.

Arsenal's hopes of returning to the Champions League for the first time since 2017 face another vital test against sixth-placed



Manchester United on Saturday.

FA Cup finalists Chelsea remain in third place, but they are now only five points ahead of Arsenal and cannot take a top four place for granted.

Ten Hag to become Man Utd manager next season

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Erik ten Hag will leave Ajax to become Manchester United manager next season, the English giants confirmed on Thursday.

The 52-year-old, who has signed a three-year contract, faces a huge task to revive the Red Devils fortunes after a fifth consecutive trophyless season.

The Dutchman becomes the fifth permanent manager at Old Trafford since Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013 sent the 20-time English champions

into decline.

Ten Hag is on course to win his third league title with Ajax and took the four-time European champions to the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2019 for the first time in 22 years.

"It is a great honour to be appointed manager of Manchester United and I am hugely excited by the challenge ahead," said Ten Hag.

"I know the history of this great club and the passion of the fans, and I am absolutely determined to develop a team capable of delivering the success

they deserve.

"It will be difficult to leave Ajax after these incredible years, and I can assure our fans of my complete commitment and focus on bringing this season to a successful conclusion before I move to Manchester United."

United sit sixth in the Premier League, 23 points behind leaders Manchester City, and are unlikely to qualify for next season's Champions League.

The club have been looking for a permanent manager since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked in October.

Juve set up Cup final with Inter



AP ■ TURIN

holders Juventus booked their spot in next month's Italian Cup final against Inter Milan with a 2-0 win over Fiorentina in their semi-final, second leg in Turin on Wednesday to advance 3-0 on aggregate.

Juventus lost their Serie A crown last season to Inter Milan and also fell to an Italian Super Cup defeat by their northern rivals in January.

Sitting fourth in Serie A, Juventus' hopes of avoiding a season without a trophy for the first time since 2011 will likely be played out at Rome's Stadio Olimpico on May 11.

Juve took control of the semi-final against their Tuscany rivals after Lorenzo Venuti's late own goal in the first leg in Florence.

On Wednesday, former

Fiorentina winger Federico Bernardeschi fired the hosts ahead after half an hour, with Danilo adding a second just before the final whistle.

Fiorentina could thank goalkeeper Bartlomiej Dragowski for denying ex-Fiorentina striker Dusan Vlahovic twice in the first half-hour, but Bernardeschi volleyed home the opening goal.

Juventus goalkeeper Mattia Perin saved headers from Arthur Cabral and Lucas Martinez Quarta either side of the break.

Denis Zakaria missed the chance to double Juve's lead on the night, hitting the woodwork after the interval.

An Adrien Rabiot goal was then ruled offside before Juan Cuadrado set up Danilo to score late on as Juve maintained their bid for a record-extending 15th Italian Cup.

PSG a point away from Ligue 1 title

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain won 3-0 away at Angers on Wednesday but will have to wait a little longer to be confirmed as Ligue 1 champions after nearest challengers Marseille beat Nantes 3-2.

PSG started the day 15 points clear with six games left and so knew they could clinch their eighth Ligue 1 crown in 10 years if second-placed Marseille slipped up.

Mauricio Pochettino's side got the result they needed, brushing aside struggling Angers despite being without the injured Lionel Messi and the suspended Neymar.

Kylian Mbappe put PSG in front as Ligue 1's leading scorer notched his 22nd of the season just before the half-hour mark at the Stade Raymond Kopa.

Sergio Ramos then marked a rare appearance by doubling the lead in first-half stoppage time when he headed in Angel di Maria's cross, and his central defensive colleague Marquinhos added a late third.

However PSG, who had young midfielder Edouard Michut sent off in stoppage time, were made to wait for the record-equalling 10th French title in their history as Amine Harit's strike gave Marseille victory at the Velodrome.

OM came from behind twice against Nantes through Dimitri Payet



penalties before Harit struck in the 75th minute to make it 3-2 and secure a precious win for Jorge Sampaoli's side as they chase Champions League qualification.

PSG remain 15 points clear with just 15 points left to play for and also boast a far superior goal difference.

They will be confirmed champions on Saturday with a point at home to Lens.

"It is really important for us to win the championship and I hope we can do it on Saturday," Pochettino told broadcaster Canal Plus.

A 10th title will see them equal the record set by the Saint-Etienne side of Michel Platini when they won their last championship in 1981.

Behind them Marseille are now six points clear in second place, with only the top two in Ligue 1 qualifying automatically for the Champions League and third place entering in the qualifying rounds.

Rennes remain third but are only above Strasbourg and Monaco on goal difference while Nice are two points back in sixth.

Strasbourg beat Rennes 2-1 in Alsace with Ludovic Ajorquez grabbing their winner after Martin Terrier had cancelled out Habib Diallo's early opener for the home side.

Meanwhile Monaco have surged back into European contention and climbed above Nice by beating their Cote d'Azur rivals 1-0 on Wednesday thanks to a first-half strike by Russian international Aleksandr Golovin.

It was a fifth consecutive victory for the principality side.

Real Madrid win again

AP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema missed two penalties in seven minutes on Wednesday but Real Madrid still had enough to defeat Osasuna 3-1 as they continued their march towards the La Liga title.

Benzema was looking for his 45th goal of the season but was twice denied by Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera, who both times dived to his right and both times made the save with Madrid leading 2-1 at El Sadar.

But Osasuna were unable to find an equaliser in the second half and Madrid added a third in injury time, Vinicius Junior teeing up Lucas Vazquez for an easy finish. David Alaba's opener had earlier been cancelled out by Osasuna's Ante Budimir, before Marco Asensio restored Madrid's advantage on the stroke of half-time.

Madrid move 17 points clear at the top of La Liga, ahead of Atletico Madrid.

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti started Toni Kroos and Vinicius on the bench while Luka Modric was left out of the squad completely, with the first

leg of Madrid's Champions League semi-final against Manchester City less than a week away.

Alaba put Real Madrid in front in the 13th minute, bundling in the rebound after Benzema had tapped the ball across, but the advantage was brief as Budimir knocked in Chimy Avila's pass to the back post a minute later.

Madrid restored their lead at the end of the half as Asensio played inside from the right wing and continued his run into the penalty box. Eduardo Camavinga chipped to the left side of the box, and while Dani Ceballos' effort was saved, Asensio's run was rewarded with a simple finish.

Benzema's pair of penalties came in the 52nd and 59th minutes, both won by Rodrygo, whose sharp turn tempted Avila into a handball on the ground before Nacho Vidal stumbled into the back of the Brazilian.

Vinicius came off the bench and should have added a third in injury time but side-footed wide before tearing away again and this time laying across for Vazquez to find the corner.

RB Leipzig in DFB-Pokal final

AP ■ BERLIN

Emil Forsberg headed RB Leipzig into their third German Cup final in four years when he struck the last-gasp winner to seal a 2-1 home victory over Union Berlin on Wednesday.

After an Andre Silva penalty had cancelled out Sheraldo Becker's first-half header for Union, Forsberg headed in a cross in the second minute of stoppage time to seal the semi-final win.

Leipzig are through to the German Cup final on May 21 at Berlin's Olympic Stadium where they face Freiburg, who beat Hamburg 3-1 in Tuesday's other semi-final.

In a typically tense cup atmosphere, visitors Union took the lead with 25 minutes gone when Becker tucked a cross inside the far post to the delight of the travelling fans.

This was the first goal Leipzig have conceded in their run to the cup final.

It was 1-0 at the break, but Leipzig drew level when their top-scorer Christopher Nkunku was brought down in the area.

Portugal striker Silva converted the resulting penalty with clinical accuracy on 61 minutes.



Having failed to score three penalties this season against Paris Saint-Germain, Real Sociedad and Atalanta in Europe, Silva roared in celebration when his spot kick sailed past Union's Danish goalkeeper Frederik Roennow.

Extra time was beckoning when Swedish playmaker Forsberg rose above his mark-

er and guided his header into the corner.

It extended Leipzig's unbeaten run to 15 games in all competitions.

By a freak of the fixture list, Leipzig host Union this Saturday in the Bundesliga ahead of their Europa League semi-final at home to Rangers on April 28.

Granada hold Atletico Madrid

AP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid were left frustrated by a goalless draw with Granada on Wednesday as Diego Simeone's side missed the chance to pull away in the race for La Liga's top four.

The stalemate means Atletico move up to second in the table but could be overtaken by both Barcelona and Sevilla on Thursday. Barca play away at Real Sociedad after Sevilla travel to Levante.

Real Betis, who were beaten by Elche on Tuesday, are four points behind Atletico in fifth.



After six consecutive victories between February and April, Atletico have now managed just one win from their last five in all competitions, bringing back some of the concerns that hung over the team earlier in the season. Without Joao Felix, who will miss the rest of the season through injury, La Liga's reigning champions lacked the thrust needed to break down a determined Granada side, who were playing their first match under new coach Aitor Karanka.

Granada sit 18th, a point behind Cadiz, who have a game in hand.

Djoker criticises 'crazy' Wimbledon ban on Russians, Belarusians



Novak Djokovic hit out at the "crazy" decision by Wimbledon on Wednesday to ban Russian and Belarusian players from this year's tournament over the invasion of Ukraine.

The world number one said he disagreed with war, but said banning athletes was unfair.

"I will always condemn war, I will never support war being myself a child of war," he said at the ATP event in Belgrade. "I know how much emotional trauma it leaves."

"In Serbia we all know what happened in 1999. In the Balkans we have had many wars in recent history."

"However, I cannot support the decision of Wimbledon, I think it is crazy. 'The players, the tennis players,

the athletes have nothing to do with it (war). When politics interferes with sport, the result is not good."

The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), which runs Wimbledon, said it was acting to "limit Russia's global influence through the strongest means possible". But the ATP and WTA organisers have also criticised the ban, saying it was "unfair" and "very disappointing".

Russian Daniil Medvedev is Djokovic's closest rival in the world rankings and denied the 34-year-old a calendar Grand Slam in last year's US Open final.

Djokovic is playing in just his third tournament of the season in the Serbian capital after being deported from Australia ahead of the Australian Open over his Covid-19 vaccination status.

"I will always condemn war, I will never support war being myself a child of war. However, I cannot support the decision of Wimbledon, I think it is crazy."



General secretary of Vovinam Association, Praveen Garg, submitted a letter to Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, demanding accreditation to the sport. Earlier, Garg met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as well to speed up the accreditation process for Vovinam, which is a martial art form of Vietnam.

We (Delhi Capitals) gave him (Kuldeep Yadav) confidence in the practice match and he was told that he would play all the matches and doesn't need to take tension about his performance — AXAR PATEL

MSD's last-ball blow for MI

Delhi face Royals in IPL today

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

The great M S Dhoni turned back the clock to script a three-wicket victory for Chennai Super Kings against Mumbai Indians in the IPL here on Thursday, following a heart-stopping finish that saw him hit a four off the last ball of the game.

CSK pacer Mukesh Choudhary wreaked havoc with the new ball before Tilak Varma's responsible 51 not out off 43 lifted Mumbai Indians to 155 for seven. Dhoni (28 not out off 13) batted like the finisher of his hey days to help CSK get the required 17 runs off the final over to win their second game of the season and extend Mumbai Indians winless streak this season to seven games.

He smashed a six and four off third and fourth ball off Jaydev Unadkat before maintaining his calm to put one past short-fine leg for the match-winning boundary, leaving the bowler and the rest of his Mumbai teammates shattered.

CSK were up against it with 48 runs off the last 24 balls and four wickets in hand but Dhoni with the help of Dwaine Pretorius (22 off 14 balls) ensured his team got over the line in an absolute humdinger. With seven losses in as many games, Mumbai Indians will need a miracle to come back from this position while it was a much needed win for CSK who too are looking for consistency after enduring a poor start to the season.

Earlier, Choudhary (3/19) accounted for Rohit Sharma (0) and Ishan Kishan (0) in the first over and then dismissed Dewald Brevis (4), leaving Mumbai reeling at 23/3.

However, Varma's unbeaten 51 off 43 balls, in which he struck three fours and two sixes, along with Unadkat's blazing unbeaten 19, helped Mumbai cross the 150 run-mark.



While Rohit offered an easy catch to Mitchell Santner at mid-on, Kishan was undone by a swinging yorker, which rattled his off-stump. Brevis (4) became Choudhary's third victim. Brevis tried to chase a delivery outside the off stump, but ended up nicking to Dhoni. Suryakumar Yadav (32) started with a boundary, an on drive. He creamed another drive off Choudhary and then launched into mystery spin-

pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT	6	5	1	0	10	0.395
2.	RCB	7	5	2	0	10	0.251
3.	RR	6	4	2	0	8	0.380
4.	LSG	7	4	3	0	8	0.124
5.	SRH	6	4	2	0	8	-0.077
6.	DC	6	3	3	0	6	0.942
7.	KKR	7	3	4	0	6	0.160
8.	PBKS	7	3	4	0	6	-0.562
9.	CSK	7	2	5	0	4	-0.534
10.	MI	7	0	7	0	0	-0.892

boundarymeter

4s	941
6s	489

ner Maheesh Theekshana (1/35), sweeping him for a maximum. Mumbai were at 42/3 after the power-play. But it was Mitchell Santner (1/16), who dismissed Surya, whose sweep was easily caught by Choudhary at long-leg and Mumbai were reduced to 47/4.

Then Tilak and debutant Hrithik Shokeen (25), tried to rally the innings, but managed to add only 41 runs for the fifth wicket. The duo was brutal on Ravindra Jadeja (0/30), who bled 13 runs in the 11th over, with Varma hitting a six with a slog-sweep.

Mumbai lost half their side for 85. Shokeen, who had three boundaries, top-edged a Dwayne Bravo (2/36) short-ball only to be caught at Robin Uthappa at mid-on.

Wickets kept tumbling for Mumbai with Kieron Pollard (14) and Daniel Sams (5) also falling cheaply. But thanks to a quick-fire 35-run eight-wicket stand off 16 balls between Tilak and Unadkat, Mumbai gave their bowlers something to defend.



Delhi vs Rajasthan
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Yuzvendra Chahal's bagful of tricks will meet its perfect match in Kuldeep Yadav's guile as the two wrist spinners are expected to dictate the narrative when Rajasthan Royals clash with Delhi Capitals in an IPL match, on Friday.

With current 'Orange Cap' holder in Jos Buttler (375 runs) and 'Purple Cap' holder Chahal (17 wickets) in their ranks, Royals are a team that is looking pretty formidable at the moment even with a dysfunctional middle-order, save Shimron Hetmyer.

On the other hand, resurgent Capitals are battling the agony that comes with a mini COVID-19 outbreak in the camp but are still trying to put their best foot forward to stay afloat.

In this backdrop, the two wrist-spinners, who are currently dominating the bowling charts will be itching to show their wares with Kuldeep (13 wickets at No 2) expected to pose some questions for in-form Buttler in case there is a match-up.

For Delhi, Kuldeep along with Axar Patel and Lalit Yadav would like to stem the run-flow but stopping Buttler will be on top of their agenda on a Wankhede track that is expected to be good for batting.

For Chahal, how he varies the pace against a rampaging David Warner or the ever-attacking Prithvi Shaw and skipper Rishabh Pant will be a delight for the fans.

In the past five years, life has come to a full circle for 'Kul-Cha' who were the 'taste' of the nation between 2017 and 2019 when wrist spinners were in vogue during the Ravi Shastri-Virat Kohli era.

While Chahal got a body blow after being dropped from the last T20 World Cup squad and was sporadically picked in white ball formats, Kuldeep also lost his way.

He got very little support from either erstwhile national team management or his previous IPL team (KKR) and also endured a career-threatening knee injury.

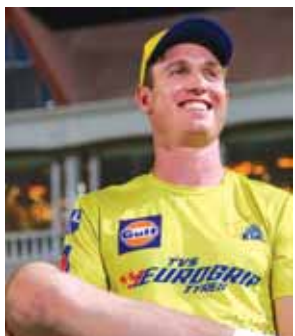
But now the smile is back and so is the guile. The left-arm wrist spinner's googly — the one that turns away from right-hander — is back and so is the conventional left-arm leg-break which comes into the right-hander.

However in these kind of games, the support cast becomes more important as they can create those little game-changing moments that impact the final outcome of the game.

Mustafizur Rahman's cutters and Khaleel Ahmed's clever change of pace could also trouble the likes of Sanju Samson and Riyan Parag.

Similarly, if Trent Boult gets one to tail in first-up, Shaw's response and technique will be tested in earnest.

But Royals have now got a calm death bowler in West Indies' Obed McCoy, who was brilliant while bowling the final over against KKR. If middle-order non-performance is an issue for Royals, the DC doesn't seem to have found the second Indian batter in that middle-order slot apart from skipper Pant, who can take the bowling apart.



Pathirana replaces Milne in CSK squad

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chennai Super Kings on Thursday named young Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana as replacement for injured Adam Milne in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

New Zealand's Milne suffered a hamstring injury in CSK's first match against Kolkata Knight Riders on March 26, which was also the season opener, weeks after which he has been ruled out of the tournament.

Pathirana, a young 19-year-old medium pacer, was a part of Sri Lanka's U19 World Cup squads in 2020 and 2022.

"He will join CSK at the price of INR 20 lakh," the IPL said in a statement.

When you win, everything seems positive even if you commit mistakes: Lalit Yadav

PTI ■ MUMBAI

All-rounder Lalit Yadav, one of the blue-eyed boys of Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting, feels that a victory always creates a positive vibe despite the mistakes committed on the job.

The COVID-hit DC crushed Punjab Kings by nine wickets with 57 balls to spare. Lalit with figures of 2/11, which included the wicket of Shikhar Dhawan, contributed in the victory.

"It was a different vibe altogether. You know, when we win, everything seems to look positive, no matter how many mistakes we commit," Lalit said ahead of Capitals' next match against Rajasthan Royals on Friday.

"That's a really great thing for the team, especially when the next match is in two days. The momentum we've gained is really important, and we will go into the next game with confidence."

With six positive COVID-19 cases in the DC camp, there was an element of uncertainty but Lalit said that players were all focussed on the game.

"We just discussed to enjoy the game and give our 100%. We were just focusing on the match. We also had one training session the other day, so it's not that we didn't have any practice at all."

"It's just that we didn't know whether the match will happen or not, but overall, we were confident about our abilities," he said.

Speaking about the next match, the all-rounder said, "They (RR) have been one of the most consistent teams in the tournament so far, and have been playing quality cricket. However, we will focus on ourselves, we will go with our plans and try to execute them."



Having lost to RCB the other night, a comprehensive win was necessary to get the campaign back on track and that is precisely what happened against PBKS.

"We were looking for a momentum since the start, we've played good cricket so far but we were not consistent. In this game, we were consistent in all three departments, and that's what we were looking for. It has created a good atmosphere in the camp," he added.

Ponting's pep talk lifted our confidence following COVID outbreak: Axar Patel

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Hard hit by COVID-19 outbreak before their IPL game against Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals all-rounder Axar Patel said a pep talk from head coach Ricky Ponting worked wonders in lifting the morale of the side, resulting in a comprehensive win.

DC showed remarkable resilience to overcome a COVID crisis in their camp and hand Punjab Kings a nine-wicket thrashing in an IPL game on Wednesday night.

The match, which was shifted to the Brabourne Stadium from Pune, was given a go ahead barely an hour before the start of play after DC wicketkeeper-batter Tim Seifert tested positive on Wednesday morning. But head coach Ponting did all in his capacity to help his side stay focussed.

"We were quarantined and we started practice two-three days after that, he (Ponting) told us we have two options. We have to play the match. You can think that there are positive cases, and the preparations aren't done."

"Or you can think all outside things are not in our hands and you should show commitment with regard to the effort and preparation," Axar said.

"We were focusing on our game (and) we did our planning (accordingly). So that's it, that was the speech and that was our mindset," added the left-arm spinner, who grabbed two wickets and played a key



role in bundling out Punjab for a sub-par 115. Delhi first bowled out Punjab Kings for 115 and then cantered to the target in just 10.3 overs, riding on David Warner's unbeaten 60.

Axar was also happy with teammate Kuldeep Yadav's return to form, saying the Delhi team management gave him the much needed confidence to prosper after a disappointing last IPL, where he represented Kolkata Knight Riders.

"Like you said, the atmosphere is very important. I had earlier said when he (Kuldeep) came, he needed confidence.

After you don't play well for a season or two, you are less confident, so Rishabh (Pant), I and the coaching staff - Ricky (Ponting) gave him the confidence, which was crucial," Axar said. "We gave him confidence in the practice match and he was told that he would play all the matches and doesn't need to take tension about his performance."

"When he knows that he is playing all the matches, he needs to focus on his bowling. And that is happening. He is now focusing on his bowling and the way he is taking wickets, it becomes easy for me to partner with him," he signed off.

Bumrah, Rohit among Wisden's five 'Cricketers of the Year'

PTI ■ LONDON

India captain Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah have been named among five players in Wisden's 'Cricketers of the Year' in the 2022 edition of the Almanack.

Besides the duo, the list also features New Zealand batter Devon Conway, England pacer Ollie Robinson and Proteas women star Dane van Niekerk.

England's Joe Root has been named leading cricketer in the world, while South African women's team batter Lizelle Lee has been awarded with the title of leading woman cricketer.

Besides, Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan has earned the title of leading T20 cricketer in the world. Bumrah starred for India in their visit to England last summer. Besides his exploits in India's historic win at Lord's, he also produced a match-winning spell at The Oval with the



latter handing India a 2-1 lead in the series that is to be concluded in July this year.

Rohit had an exceptional summer at the top of the order for India, scoring 368 runs in four Tests at an average of 52.57. The India skipper scored a match defining 127 at The Oval, his first Test century away from

home. Root was named leading cricketer of the year after an historic 12 months in which he scored 1,708 Test runs in a calendar year, the third most in history. Lee was named leading woman cricketer in the world after a dominant 2021, averaging 90.28 with the bat in ODI cricket.

Sarita, Sushma take Bronze at Asian Championship

PTI ■ ULAANBATAAR

Defending champion Sarita Mor was not at her best but still managed to win a Bronze medal while Sushma Shokeen also earned a podium finish at the Asian Wrestling Championship here on Thursday.

Competing in the five-wrestler 59kg category, Sarita, the 2021 World Championship Bronze medallist, began with two defeats - against Mongolia's Shoovdor Baatarjav (1-2) and Japan's Sara Natami (VSU) -- but made a comeback by winning her last two bouts.

She first beat Uzbekistan's Dilfuza Aimbetova by technical superiority and then followed that up with a 5-2 win over Diana Kayumova. "I could have won that bout against Mongolian girl. But since she was from home team, she got some favour from the

referees. She was fleeing the mat but was not given any caution, she benefitted from that," Sarita told PTI.

"That Japan wrestler was also beatable. It was just not my day. I could not perform the way I wanted to. Maybe because of weather. It is high-altitude city, I did not feel active on the mat. Plus, hardly there was any gap between my bouts," she added.

Also winning Bronze was Sushma in 55kg category, which also featured only five wrestlers.

She lost by technical superiority to Japan's Umi Imai but bounced back with a 5-0 win over Kazakhstan's Altyn Shagayeva in the next round. Then she enjoyed a stupendous bout against Uzbekistan's Sarbinaz Jienbaeva, winning by fall. However, she ended with a heavy defeat against local girl Otgonjargal Ganbaatar, to whom she lost by technical superiority.

14-year-old Unnati Hooda in Indian badminton team for Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Teen sensation Unnati Hooda, 14, was on Thursday named in the Indian badminton team for the upcoming Asian Games as the national federation announced the squads for the major events this year, including the Commonwealth Games, Thomas and Uber Cup.

The teams were named by Badminton Association of India (BAI) following six days of selection trials at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here. Hooda is the youngest Indian badminton player to be part of the Asian Games squad. Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu will spearhead the women's challenge in both the Commonwealth and Asian Games while London Olympics Bronze winner Saina Nehwal did not unexpectedly feature in the squads. World Championships medallists Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth will lead India's medal



quest among men in the Birmingham CWG (July 28 to August 8) and Asian Games (September 10-25) in Hangzhou, China. Apart from the squads for the three major tournaments which are to be held this year, the BAI also finalised names of 40 players (20 men and 20 women) for the senior national coaching camp and core group for the 2024 Olympic Games, based on players' positions in trials.

For the Commonwealth Games, the men's team consists of Sen, Srikanth, Satwiksairaj

Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty and B Sumeeth Reddy while Sindhu will lead the women's squad which has Aakarshi Kashyap, Treasa Jolly, Gayatri P and Ashwini Ponappa. Sumeet Reddy and Ponappa made the cut in the men's and women's squads respectively for the Commonwealth Games after their top-place finish in the mixed doubles category. Hooda, the teenage sensation from Rohtak, caught the selectors' eyes as she secured a place for the Asian Games as well as Uber Cup by finishing third in the women's singles after Kashyap and Ashmita Chaliha, who claimed first and second positions respectively.

A 10-member women's team for the Asian Games and Uber Cup will comprise Sindhu, Kashyap, Chaliha, Hooda alongside Top-3 doubles pairs from the trials -- Treasa Jolly-Gayatri P, N Sikki Reddy- Ashwini Ponappa and Tanisha Crasto-Shruti Mishra.