

**CITY 3**  
#MITTI\_ME\_MILA\_DUNGA  
TRENDS ON TOP ON TWITTER

**OPINION 6**  
ADAPTING TO CLIMATE  
CHANGE IS IMPERATIVE

**WORLD 9**  
PAK SC HALTS BILL TO  
LIMIT CJ'S POWERS

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY APRIL 14, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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GT BEAT  
PUNJAB IN IPL  
MATCH  
11 SPORT

## Atiq's son Asad, accomplice shot dead in STF encounter

Duo meet tragic end while trying to flee on motorcycle in Jhansi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW / PRAYAGRAJ

Asad, son of jailed gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad, and shooter Ghulam Mohammad were killed in an encounter with the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (UPSTF) personnel in Jhansi on Thursday afternoon, Special Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said on Thursday evening.

Both were wanted in the recent Umesh Pal murder case of Prayagraj and carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh each.

"Sophisticated foreign made weapons were recovered from the accused," Kumar said, adding the UP STF team that gunned down Asad and



(Above) The bodies of Ghulam and Asad lying at the encounter site and (below) Atiq Ahmad being taken to the Prayagraj court earlier in the day to appear in a court hearing.

Ghulam Mohammad was led by deputy superintendents of police Navendu Kumar and Vimal Kumar.

Atiq Ahmad was in the court of chief judicial magistrate in Prayagraj in connection



with the murder case when the news of Asad's encounter broke. He started crying after hearing the news of his son's death. He asked for water and sat down holding his head in the district court premises.

STF officials said Asad and Ghulam were on the run since the murder of Umesh Pal on February 24 in Prayagraj and several STF teams had been pressed to track them down.

Atiq Ahmad, a former SP legislator, had earlier expressed apprehension that he himself could be killed by UP Police while being brought to Prayagraj from the Ahmedabad prison, where he was lodged in connection with another case.

When he was being taken to the city for Thursday's court appearance, he made a similar remark, "I am totally reduced to dust, but please don't trouble the women and children of my family now," the 60-year-old

Continued on Page 8

## K'taka call to end 4% Muslim quota flawed, observes SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing displeasure over the decision of the Karnataka Government to scrap the four per cent reservation for OBC Muslims and raise quotas in government jobs and educational institutions for Vokkaligas and Lingayats by two per cent each, the Supreme Court on Thursday observed the decision prima facie appeared to be on a "highly shaky ground" and "flawed".

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna said from the records tabled before the court it appears that the Karnataka Government's decision is based on "absolutely fallacious assumption".

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Dushyant Dave and Gopal Sankarnarayanan, appearing for members of the Muslim community from



Karnataka said no study was conducted and there was no empirical data available with the Government to scrap the quota for Muslims.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Karnataka, sought some time to file replies to the petitions and assured the bench that no appointments and admissions will be made in the meantime based on the March 24 Government order which has been challenged by the petitioners.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for members of the Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities, said no

interim order should be passed without allowing them to place their response to the petitions. The bench posted the matter for further hearing on April 18 and asked Mehta and Rohatgi to file their responses.

The State Government decided to scrap the four per cent reservation for Muslims in government jobs and educational institutions weeks ahead of the state assembly polls on May 10.

The State Government announced two new categories for reservation and divided the four per cent Muslim quota between the Vokkaligas and Lingayats, the two numerically dominant and politically influential communities. Muslims eligible for quotas were categorised under the economically weaker sections.

The State Government's decision has pushed the reservation limit to around 57 per cent now.

## Act against anti-India elements, PM Modi urges Rishi Sunak

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday raised the issue of security of Indian diplomatic establishments in the United Kingdom in a telephonic conversation with his British counterpart Rishi Sunak and called for strong action against anti-India elements, a statement said. According to it, Modi also sought progress on the return of economic offenders wanted in India.

India is pursuing the extradition of beleaguered businessman Vijay Mallya and fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi from the UK.

Mallya, who fled to the UK in 2016, is wanted in India over a default of Rs 9,000 crore that was loaned to Kingfisher Airlines by several banks. Nirav Modi is facing charges in the estimated USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank loan scam case.

About the vandalism at the Indian High Commission last month, Sunak conveyed to Modi that the UK considers the attack "totally unacceptable" and assured the security of the Indian Mission and its personnel, the statement said.

Last month, the tricolour flying atop the Indian High

Commission in London was grabbed at by a group of protesters waving separatist Khalistani flags and chanting pro-Khalistani slogans, leading to an arrest related to the violent disorder. The two leaders also reviewed the progress on a number of bilateral issues as part of the India-UK Roadmap 2030, particularly in trade and economic sectors.

They expressed satisfaction at the recent high-level exchanges and growing cooperation, particularly in trade and economic sectors and agreed on the need for early conclusion of a mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement between the two countries, the statement said. During the talks, Sunak reiterated the UK's full support for India's ongoing G20 presidency. Modi also conveyed his greetings to Sunak, who is of Indian origin, and the Indian community in the UK on the eve of Baisakhi.

PM Modi invited Sunak for the G20 Summit to be held in September 2023. The British leader appreciated the progress made under India's Presidency of the G20 and reiterated the UK's full support to India's initiatives and their success, the release said.

## Covid 8-month high at 10K+, but just 1 of 1K patients hospitalised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid warning that Covid cases in the country will peak in the next couple of weeks, India on Thursday recorded a single-day rise of 10,158 new infections, highest in nearly eight months and up by 30 per cent over the previous day, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

However, low hospitalisation has come as a breather. "Currently, the hospitalisation ratio is 1:1,000 and this is not a wave. It may be an endemic cycle of Covid-19," officials in the Union Health Ministry said. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.42 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was 4.02 per cent. The active cases now constitute 0.10 per cent of the total infections, as per the Union Health Ministry data.

AIIMS, Delhi, has issued an advisory for its staff to follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour saying that people "must use reusable cloth face cover/surgical mask in the workplace. Ensure proper



cleaning and frequent sanitation of the workplace, particularly of the frequently touched surfaces."

A few AIIMS doctors too have tested Covid positive with a newborn diagnosed with Covid-19 at Delhi's LNJP Hospital.

The number of active cases has increased to 44,998, the data updated on Thursday showed. India had reported 7,830 coronavirus infections on Wednesday. The nationwide Covid-19 recovery rate has been recorded at 98.71 per cent, according to the Health Ministry website.

The case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent.

## ED books BBC India for foreign funds violations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) against British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) India for alleged foreign exchange violations.

The agency also summoned BBC staffers for questioning following which its Deputy Managing Editor deposed on Thursday. The ED action came nearly two months after the Income-Tax Department surveyed the BBC India's offices in Delhi and Mumbai on February 14. The survey operation lasted for three days. The FEMA case was registered about two weeks back to essentially probe purported foreign direct investment (FDI) violations by the company and related instances, according to officials.



ITBP and police personnel guard outside the BBC office at KG Marg in New Delhi. File photo 1 PTI

The ED has called for documents and the recording of statements of some company executives and a team of lawyers representing the company has already submitted some financial documents last week, they added.

## Rahul plea to stay conviction in Modi defamation case: Verdict on Apr 20

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/SURAT

A Surat court on Thursday said it would pronounce on April 20 the order on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's plea for a stay on his conviction in a criminal defamation case over his "Modi surname" remark, made exactly four years ago during a poll rally.

After hearing arguments from both sides, additional sessions judge RP Moghe said he will pronounce the order on April 20.

A metropolitan magistrate's court in Surat had on March 23 sentenced the former Congress chief to two years in jail after holding him guilty for his remark "how come all thieves have Modi as the common surname", made during an election rally in 2019.

Rahul, who was disqualified as MP after the conviction, filed an appeal before the sessions court here against the verdict.

## Pawar meets Kharge; Manjhi-Shah meeting triggers speculation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a day NCP supremo Sharad Pawar met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and other top leaders of the Congress in the national Capital for Opposition unity, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's ally Jitan Ram Manjhi set political circles abuzz with a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday.

The development came amid the Janata Dal (United) leader's talks with several Opposition leaders as part of his effort to forge an alliance against the BJP.

Manjhi, however, sought to quell any speculation and reiterated that Nitish has all the qualities to become the country's Prime Minister.

He asserted that he has sworn to remain with Nitish and rejected any possibility of



joining hands with the BJP, saying it has spoken against the existence of small parties like his. During his 2-day Delhi visit, Nitish interacted with Kharge and Rahul and CPT's D Raja, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accompanied by Bihar Deputy CM and RLD leader Tejashwi Yadav during his two days in Delhi.

Queried about his absence from Wednesday's meeting, Pawar said he was asked to join the meeting in Delhi but was unable to do so as he had work in Pune. The leaders are likely to take forward unity talks as more deliberations are expected in the coming days.

Continued on Page 8

### Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology

KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar

## YOUTH-20 CONSULTATION 2023

Under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India

**April 14 - 15, 2023**

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 Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India

*in the august presence of*  
**Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey**  
 Hon'ble Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India

**Shri Tusharkanti Behera**  
 Hon'ble Minister of State for Home, Sports & Youth Services, and E&IT, Govt. of Odisha

*Special Guest:*  
**Mr. Ricky Kej, Multiple Grammy Winner, India**

**India's G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented and decisive. Let us work together to shape a new paradigm of human-centric globalisation.**

**Shri Narendra Modi**  
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**25** Hon'ble Members of Parliament from 20 countries (USA, UK, Switzerland, Germany, Ukraine, Poland, Armenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Liechtenstein, Sierra Leone, etc.)

**Over 200** Academicians from different countries

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# Live-in partner, aide held for woman's murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of two persons, including the live-in partner of a woman whose charred body was recovered from a vacant plot in Sarauna village under Sairpur police station area, police claimed to have worked out the blind murder case.

Those arrested were identified as Arshad (21) of Alinagar Khadra under Madehganj police station and his aide Mohammed Avesh (19) of Hardoi district. They reportedly owned up to their crime.

Arshad was said to have been living with Shaba Khan (20) of Sitapur district in Adilnagar under Gudamba police station for the last 8-9 months without her parents' consent. Since Arshad's parents refused to let him live with her

in their house, he moved in with Shaba.

A spokesman said the body of the woman was recovered from a vacant plot in Sarauna village on April 6. The police had recovered a talisman with a black thread tied to it, a cigarette lighter and a strip of sedatives from the crime scene.

The police found a CCTV footage in which two youths were seen going along with a woman in an e-rickshaw towards Sarauna village. "In another footage, the duo were seen returning from the village but without the woman. Arshad was identified with the help of the footage," a police spokesman said.

The police traced Arshad and interrogated him. He reportedly owned up to his crime and disclosed the identity of the woman. The police

cross-checked the information from the parents of the deceased. Arshad also disclosed the name of his aide.

DCP, North, Qasim Abidi said Shaba Khan was pressuring Arshad to marry her and the latter was reluctant because of his parents' refusal. He gave her an overdose of sedatives on the way to Sarauna village and she fell unconscious. "Arshad, with the help of Mohammed Avesh, killed her and they burnt the body with a lighter before fleeing the scene," the DCP said.

Meanwhile, a youth was found hanging from a mango tree on the outskirts of his village in Nigoha on Thursday.

Reports said Narendra aka Golu (22) was found missing when his father Suresh Kumar Gautam woke up around 2:30 am on Thursday. He went out to search for him and found

him hanging from the mango tree. He was unmarried.

## STUNT-BIKING

A teenager performing a seemingly dangerous bicycle stunt on a busy road in Hazratganj gave another task to police already grappling with cases involving stunt-biking and live-streaming of acts like brandishing weapons, etc.

A spokesman confirmed that the video, viral on social media, had been brought to police's notice and that police were working on the case.

In the video, a teenager can be seen pedalling his bicycle on the rear wheel. He can also be seen moving past a group of smiling policemen standing on a pavement alongside the road. Sources said though it is a dangerous stunt, it does not come under the ambit of Motor Vehicles Act.



Sea of mourners: A large number of followers of first Shiite Imam Hazrat Ali took out the 'Hasan Mirza ka Taboot' procession in memory of his martyrdom on 21st Ramzan on Thursday. The procession has a 153-year-old history with its inception in 1870 after the founder Hasan Mirza of Lucknow's Rustam Nagar area witnessed a similar commemoration in Iraq. The procession which was taken out from New Najaf in Rustam Nagar in the wee hours culminated at Karbala Talkatora



Patients without masks standing in queue at Civil hospital in Lucknow amidst a fresh Covid surge

# Class 3-pass man held for ₹1.68-cr cyber fraud

Noida (PTI): A 38-year-old man with formal education till Class 3 has been arrested by Uttar Pradesh's Cyber Crime police over Rs 1.68 crore fraud with a businessman on the pretext of trade with a Canadian firm, officials said on Thursday. The fraudster used Facebook to network with glibble people associated with pharmaceutical productions and represented himself as a middle-man who lured them with good monetary returns, they said.

The accused was arrested from Ballia district by a team of Cyber Crime police station, Noida, which was investigating the case lodged over the complaint of the businessman, who lives in Omaxe NRI City in Greater Noida in February 2021, according to the police. "Accused Durga Prasad Mishra alias Rajet Mishra, along with his partners, had posed as a middle-man for a Canada-based pharmaceutical company. Mishra told the complainant that this Canadian firm required 'curvins nuts', an expensive product used for manufacturing of some medicines. If he could procure the product, they would sell it to the Canadian company at a good margin," Inspector Reeta Yadav, in-charge of Cyber Crime police station here, said.

"However, there was no such Canadian company in reality. The whole story of the product requirement was to lure the complainant, who got trapped in the concocted story and ended up losing Rs 1.68 crore," Yadav said.

The FIR was lodged under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 467, 468, 471 (all related to forgery of documents) and under provisions of the Information Technology Act and after investigation, the police arrested Mishra who was hiding in Ballia, she added.

During preliminary questioning, Mishra told police that he hails from Ballia and is educated till Class 3 but has been engaged in online frauds for which he used social media platforms like Facebook, the inspector said.

"The accused said he floated a company named DP Enterprises in 2018 in Ankleshwar, Gujarat along with two more partners - Sachin alias Lallan Pandey and Santosh Tiwari. For this company they had opened a current bank account in which the fraudulently earned money was transferred," she added.

According to police, so far, transactions worth Rs 30 lakh have been found in this account from different sources. Cyber official SP Singh said further investigation in the case is underway and searches are on to arrest other partners of accused Mishra. The accused was on Thursday produced in a court here that sent him judicial custody, police said.

# LDA team seals unauthorised multi-storey housing complex

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The anti-encroachment squad of Lucknow Development Authority on Thursday sealed an unauthorised multi-storey housing complex coming up on Hewett Road in Kaiserbagh.

Besides, LDA Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi on Thursday suspended two supervisors of zone-2 for not doing their job sincerely.

Zone-6 incharge Ram Shanker said the housing complex, which was almost 40 per cent finished, was being constructed without the blueprint having been approved by the mapping department. No permission was sought for land use conversion. The LDA administration had served a notice on the developers in February earlier this year asking them to stop the construction work or the building would be sealed.

It was clearly mentioned that no further notice would be issued and the building would be sealed if the developers failed to stop the construction work on their own. On Thursday, the zone-6 incharge, along with the anti-encroachment squad, reached the spot. Armed police personnel accompanying the LDA team ensured that there were no major protests even as the drive continued for six hours.

# KGMU manages patient in severe cardiogenic shock

Lucknow (PNS): A patient in severe cardiogenic shock (candidate of heart transplant) was successfully managed at King George's Medical University. KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh said that Rajpal Yadav, a 55-year-old man, was brought to the cardiogenic emergency on March 20 last with complaints of severe breathlessness and chest pain. He was diagnosed with heart failure due to severe aortic valvular stenosis and severe mitral valvular regurgitation.

"On assessment, the patient was found to be in cardiogenic shock. Seeing the habitus, it was clear that he was a candidate of heart transplant, but a high-risk trial was planned by cardiac anaesthesia and cardiac surgery team after discussions with the relatives of the patient," he added. The spokesperson said that a rarely

available drug called 'Levosimendan' was arranged by cardiac anaesthesia from a city hospital. After an hour of aortic valve replacement and Levosimendan along with other routine inotropic infusions, the condition of the patient slightly improved," Singh said. The patient was managed for 2-3 hours post AVR in OT to see the response of surgery and drugs. "Our team, cardiac surgery and anaesthesia were fortunate as the condition of the patient improved further. The patient with inotropic support was shifted to ICU with chest open (without closing sternum)," Singh said.

Next day, the sternum was closed and on March 31, the patient was extubated, echo was repeated and the patient was off inotropic support and on room air. The patient was discharged from hospital recently.

# NBFGR to get unique fish museum today

Lucknow (PNS): A first-of-its-kind fish museum will be inaugurated at the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) on Friday. Being designated as the nodal repository agency for the transfer of fish resources under Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), NBFGR is strengthening this programme with the establishment of National Fish Museum and Repository in its premises. The foundation stone for this building was laid by the then DARE Secretary and ICAR DG Dr S Ayyappan on August 12, 2012.

Since then, ICAR-NBFGR has put in efforts to integrate different collections like vouchers, tissue, DNA, bacteria, cell lines, fish milt, etc and provide valuable access to researchers ensur-

ing wide dissemination for the benefit of the stakeholders. The museum displays finfish and shellfish voucher specimens of freshwater, marine, and brackish water environments for research and education of students, teachers, scientists, and the general public.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE  
No. CE/R&B/ACCTS-77/22/107  
Date: 11.04.2023  
Name of the Work: "Widening of Existing Bitumen Road from Cabin Market Square to Central School Square". Estimated cost put to tender: ₹.1,28,31,999.94. Last date and time of submission of Bid 02.05.2023 at 17:00Hrs. For further details, please refer our website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Road & Building Division  
Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/03/2023-24 dtd. 13.04.2023

## CLASSIFIEDS

**NOTICE**  
I tulika Jalota singh declare that my son Aariv Sachdeva (previous name) d.o.b 07/09/2010 shall now be known by his changed name aariv singh

**NOTICE**  
I Yashasvini Rai D/o Ravindra Rai R/o jalalpur tahsil navabganj district Barabanki have changed my name Yashasvini to yashasvini Rai for all future purposes.

**NOTICE**  
My Mother's name is GIRJA PANDEY. Whereas By mistake in class 10th and 12th marksheet it is Printed as GIRJA PANDEY. Shubham Pandey Son of Ashok Kumar Deo Pandey D.A.V Khadia School, Sonbhadra, U.P

**NOTICE**  
My son's name is mentioned as Sarvesh Kumar in the service record, which is wrong. The correct name to be entered is Sarvesh Kumar Singh. Army Number 15344469 F Lance Naik DHARMVIR SINGH S/o Late. Vijay Bahadur Singh, Village+Post : Nikasi, Thana Nagra, Ballia, U.P.

**NOTICE**  
Notify that I have changed my daughter's name from Shivanshi Singh to Shivanshi Raj Singh. Her name on her Adhar Card No. 967727396595, is written as Shivanshi Raj Singh which is correct. In future my daughter will be known as Shivanshi Raj Singh D/o Siddharth Singh R/o 215/450 Amber Hotel, Naka Hindola, Rajendra Nagar Lucknow-Pin 226004

# New services inaugurated at medical university

Lucknow (PNS): The department of obstetrics and gynaecology has got two new services; a new minor OT and hereditary cancer clinic. These services were inaugurated by KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri in presence of registrar Rekha Chauhan with HoD Prof SP Jaiswar and all faculty members of department.

Hereditary cancer clinic is being started by Prof Nisha Singh in the genital cancer control unit as a new service, which is one of its kind in the

country. "Patients with breast ovarian or endometrial cancer or women with family history will be counselled by nurses trained in genetic testing and, if positive, will be given the benefit of preventive treatment," Singh said. She added that the procedures to be done in minor OT include endometrial, cervical and vulval biopsies. Colposcopy for diagnosis of cervical pre-cancer and its treatment by cryotherapy and thermoablation will also be done in the minor OT.

## CITY BRIEFS

**GRAVITAS 2.0**  
The department of business administration, Lucknow University, hosted the launch of 'Gravitas 2.0', the annual management festival. It is inaugurated by LU Vice-Chancellor Prof AK Rai in the presence of head of the department Prof Sangeeta Sahu and faculty coordinator Dr Nimisha Kapoor. In the inaugural ceremony, the HOD welcomed all the participants and briefed them about the various competitions scheduled for the day. Later, the vice-chancellor congratulated the students. The competitions were designed to evaluate the creative, problem-solving, and managerial skills of the participants.

**SCIENCE FESTIVAL**  
A two-day Summer Plant Science Festival was inaugurated at CSIR-NBRI on Thursday. Director of Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR), Ghaziabad, Prof Manoj Kumar Dhar inaugurated the festival. Chief scientist and coordinator Dr Vidhu A Sane briefed about the festival and said that different science competitions will be organised over two days. A cultural programme was also organised by the researchers. As many as 21 oral presentations and 27 poster presenta-



Fourth day of ICGF-2023 organised by CMS

tions were made by the researchers in various sessions on Thursday.

**ICGF-2023**  
Excitement was seen among students, teachers and parents to see good educational children's films on the fourth day of ICGF-2023, organised by City Montessori School. Actress Stefy Patel, writer Manoj Pandey and singer Jaya Tiwari were also present on the occasion. About 15,000 students watched entertaining and educational movies on Thursday.

**MEETING**  
The governing board members meeting was held on at the Institute of Management Sciences, Lucknow University new campus, on Thursday. The members recommended incorporating the introduction of foreign

languages (French, Japanese, Spanish, Chinese) in MBA semester-III and BBA (NEP) semester-III as non-credit in MBA programme. They also recommended more specialised domain core papers in the syllabus of MBA III & IV programmes.

**AWARD CEREMONY**  
'Vishisht Puraskar Vitran Samaroh' for the year 2022-2023 was organised at RDSO on Thursday. RDSO Director-General Sanjiv Bhutani honored 74 officers and employees with certificates for their meritorious services. Running efficiency shields were also given away by the DG to the Wagon Directorate for being the most maintained office, GeoTechnical Engineering Lab for the most maintained laboratory (winner) and Signal Lab (runner-up). The DG also pre-

sented running efficiency shields to the DG, Secretariat, Signal and Track Machines and Monitoring office for the cleanest office, Indoor Signal Equipment Lab for the cleanest laboratory, Sector-A for the cleanest sector and Arunodaya Vidyalaya for the cleanest school.

## INSPECTION

NCC Group Commander, Lucknow, Brigadier Neeraj Punetha inspected 20 UP NCC Girls Battalion and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose PG College on Thursday. Commanding Officer of 20 UP NCC Girls Battalion Colonel Vinod Joshi introduced the Group Commander to all the military and civilian employees. Thereafter, Colonel Joshi gave detailed information on the training, camp, social awareness and campaigns of the cadets conducted in the battalion and 20 colleges. Brigadier Punetha gave tips to girl cadets for success in national and state-level competitions, and NCC exams. He also met the principal, Prof Anuradha Tiwari, along with Lt Pratima Sharma and 80 cadets at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose PG College. He also visited Param Vishisht Seva Medal Gallery and Freedom Fighters Gallery.

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## #Mitti\_Me\_Mila\_Dunga trends on top on Twitter

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The hashtag 'Mitti Mein Mila Dunga' started trending on Twitter soon after the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force gunned down gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and shooter Ghulam Mohammad in an encounter in Jhansi on Thursday afternoon. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had vowed in the state assembly to eliminate criminals the day Umesh Pal was shot dead in broad daylight in Prayagraj. "Mitti mein mila dunga," he had said on February 25 this year after Umesh Pal's murder in Prayagraj.



STF, hashtag Atiq discussed the crimes of Atiq Ahmad and the misdeeds of his son. Chief Minister Yogi's zero tolerance policy against criminals and mafia was also heartily appreciated by the people.

Not only this, after the murder of Umesh Pal, the video of Chief Minister Yogi saying "Mitti me mila dunga..." in the Assembly also went viral. In this video, Yogi was responding to the attack of the opposition.

People tweeted along with photos of Asad and Ghulam killed in the encounter. One user wrote, "Mafia's son and shooter lying in the soil." Another user wrote "Yogi ji had said we will crush the devil history-sheets in the soil, the Yogi raj model should be implemented in the whole country. Another user wrote that no matter how much battling someone does, this is Maharaj ji's government, it knows how to crush the mafia."

Dr Prachi Sadhi wrote, "Yogi means justice, Yogi means security." Another user wrote that Asad's encounter was a lesson for those who want to choose the path of crime and violence in UP.

Till late evening, 23,500 people reacted while 58,800 twitterati engaged on this hashtag which had a potential reach of 78.6 million (7.86 crore) people. After the encounter of Asad and Ghulam, many other hashtags also started going viral on social media. In these, people commented a lot on hashtags like #Encounter, #Atiq Ahmed, #UP Police, #UPSTF, #Guddu Muslim, #Asad Ahmed, #Baba, #Vikas Dubey. In this, while people were appreciating the action of UP

## UP Oppn wants high-level probe in Jhansi encounter

### Umesh Pal's family says justice served

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh raised questions on the killing of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and his aide in a police encounter in Jhansi on Thursday and demanded a high-level probe to bring out the facts before people.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the BJP government was trying to divert attention from real issues with "fake encounters" and BSP supremo Mayawati said the killing could be a repeat of "Vikas Dubey incident".

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, on the other hand, congratulated UP Police on the action. "Nobody will touch you if you don't commit a crime. And nobody will be spared if they commit a crime," Maurya told PTI. He asserted this was a BJP government and not an SP regime that criminals would be spared.

Within hours of the killing of Asad and his aide Ghulam, both wanted for the daylight murder of Umesh Pal and his two security guards in Prayagraj in February, Yadav suggested the police encounter could be "fake".

"By doing fake encounters, the BJP government is trying to divert attention from real issues. The BJP does not believe in courts at all. Today's and other recent encounters should be thoroughly investigated and the culprits should not be

spared. The government does not have the right to decide what is right or wrong. The BJP is against brotherhood," the Samajwadi Party chief said in a tweet in Hindi.

Shortly thereafter, Mayawati too demanded an investigation as "many types of discussions" are happening. She also linked the police encounter to notorious gangster Vikas Dubey's killing in July 2020.

Dubey, who was wanted in connection with the ambush-killing of eight policemen in Kanpur, was shot dead when he tried to escape police custody while being brought to UP from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Police said Dubey's vehicle had overturned during the transit and he had snatched a police official's gun.

"Many types of discussions are happening on the killing of Prayagraj's Atiq Ahmad's son and one other person in a police encounter today. People feel their apprehension of a repeat of the Vikas Dubey incident has come true. Therefore, a high-level inquiry is necessary so that the complete facts and truth of the incident can come before the public," Mayawati, the Bahujan Samaj Party supremo, said.

Both Asad and Ghulam were on the run since the killing of Umesh Pal, a key witness in the 2005 murder of then BSP legislator Raju Pal. Umesh Pal's wife Jaya had alleged in a police complaint that Atiq Ahmad, his brother Ashraf, son

Asad, their accomplice Ghulam and others were behind the killing.

Umesh Pal's family thanked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the police administration. "Whatever they have done is right. He (the CM) has punished the killer of his daughter's husband. I express my gratitude. He is like a father. Justice has been done," Jaya Pal told the media.

She hoped strict action would be taken against the other accused.

"I leave that (action) to the government. The government is giving me justice," she added.

Umesh Pal's mother said the two gunners (Asad and his aide) had "committed a sin".

"They have been punished today. We have faith, we will get complete justice," she added. Following the killing of Umesh Pal, Akhilesh Yadav had tried to corner Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and raised questions over law and order in the state. Adityanath had then retorted to Yadav, blaming his party for "nurturing" criminals. The chief minister had also vowed to "destroy" the mafia in the state.

"The mafia whose name is emerging... is it not true that the Samajwadi Party had made him an MP... He was a mafia nurtured by the SP. Our government is working to break their back. 'Mitti me mila denge' (We will destroy the mafia)," Adityanath had said in the assembly.

## Excise dept launches drive against illicit liquor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Excise department will start a month-long drive from April 14 to check manufacture, sale and smuggling of illicit liquor in view of the upcoming urban local bodies elections.

Additional Chief Secretary (Excise) Sanjay R Bhoosreddy said in view of the local bodies elections there was a possibility of increase in the demand of liquor in the state. He said for peaceful and fair conduct of elections and for maintaining orderliness, effective prevention on manufacture, sale and smuggling of illicit liquor was necessary. "In view of this, instructions have been issued at state level to run a special enforcement drive from April 14 to May 13," he said in a statement issued here on Thursday.

Bhoosreddy said under the special enforcement drive, joint teams of Revenue Administration, Police and Excise would be formed and

road checking would be done in areas prone to smuggling.

He said the excise officers had been instructed that if they find any involvement of mafia in the illicit liquor business, FIR under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Excise Act be lodged against them.

"Surprise checks should be conducted at suspicious dhabas located on national and state highways where illicit alcohol tankers often stop. Complaints are often received about transportation of illegal liquor from grocery, fruit and milk vehicles; such suspicious vehicles should also be checked," he said.

He asked to ensure cent per cent compliance with orders issued by Excise headquarters for control of methyl alcohol so that any unpleasant and tragic incidents could be avoided.

"Many instances of manufacture and sale of illegal liquor have been caught in closed factories. Therefore, such closed factories should be marked and a constant watch should be

kept on them. Special vigil should be kept on the areas where distilleries are located so that there is no possibility of alcohol theft from them," he said.

The additional chief secretary said wide publicity should be given in the context of liquor sold from illegal places by advertisements in newspapers, handbills, posters and through electronic media. He said the general public should be warned against buying and drinking alcohol from illegal places and also about methyl alcohol being a deadly poison and its use causing blindness and even death.

Bhoosreddy said that if any person had any information about the manufacture, sale or storage of smuggled liquor at any place or any other kind of information related to liquor, he or she should immediately inform the control room of Excise headquarters at Prayagraj having toll free number "14405" or on WhatsApp number 9454466019.

## Fake list of RLD candidates for civic polls goes viral

Lucknow (PNS): A list of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) contestants for urban local bodies elections went viral on Thursday, forcing the party leaders on the back foot.

Later the RLD leaders termed the list as fake, saying the party had not yet issued any list of contestants for the urban local bodies polls.

Team RLD national convener Anupam Mishra said the party had not issued any list as yet and the list viral on social media was fake. He said the party would issue the authorised list of its candidates who would contest the election on RLD's "hand pump" poll symbol.

It may be noted that RLD is passing through choppy waters after the Election

Commission of India downgraded its state status after reviewing its performance in the recently held elections. A day after the ECI issued the list of parties downgraded at state and national level, the RLD supremo Jayant Chaudhary wrote a letter to the Uttar Pradesh State Election Commission requesting it to reserve the RLD's election symbol for its contestants in the urban bodies elections. A day after Jayant Chaudhary's letter, RLD national spokesman Anil Dubey said the UP State Election Commission had not reviewed the RLD status in UP and its state status was intact. He further asserted that the RLD and Samajwadi Party would contest the urban local bodies elections in alliance.

## Jilted lover kills girl, commits suicide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth allegedly shot dead a 20-year-old girl and later killed himself in Haliyapur area of Sultanpur district, police said on Thursday.

Nagendra Prajapati (26) was said to be in a relationship with a girl, Renu, for almost a year. Both hailed from Rampur Babuan village, Haliyapur police station in-charge RP Saroj said. Nagendra was already married and had two children. He still wanted to get married with Renu but her brother was against the affair as they both belonged to different castes.

Around 10:15 am on Thursday, Nagendra shot dead his girlfriend before turning the pistol on himself, Saroj said,

adding that both of them succumbed to the bullet wounds. Renu used to live alone after her parents died a few years back. Her brother works in another area while her sister is married and lives with her in-laws, he said. According to villagers, Nagendra killed the girl as he was having suspicion that she was having an affair with someone else so he threatened her saying that if she did not marry him, he would not let her marry someone else and they both had to die to meet in the next birth. The bodies were sent for post-mortem.

Superintendent of Police Somen Burma also reached the spot and inquired about the matter. Meanwhile in Kaushambi,

two youths were killed and one seriously injured when their two-wheeler crashed into a tree in the Karari area, police said on Thursday.

Prince Kesarwani (18) and 19-year-old Kishan Verma died on the spot when their two-wheeler rammed into a tree on Wednesday night, Additional Superintendent of Police Samar Bahadur Singh said.

All three had gone to Karari town from Fakirabad for work. While returning home at night, the two-wheeler lost control and crashed into the tree near Pindra intersection, Singh said.

The injured youth was admitted to the district hospital and the bodies were sent for post-mortem.

## Woman, son die as hut catches fire in Maharajganj

Maharajganj (PTI): A 55-year-old woman and her son burnt to death after their hut caught fire in this Uttar Pradesh district's Bhitauli area, police said on Thursday.

Residents of the Amwa Bhaishi village said the woman had lit a fire inside the hut to keep the mosquitoes out and it could have caused the fire, they said.

As the fire broke out, the roof of the hut fell on Kaushilya, the police said, adding that her son Ashish (34) got trapped inside when he rushed in to save her. Both died on the spot.

Necessary action is being initiated, said Sunil Kumar Rai, an inspector at Bhitauli police station.



Tickets aspirants of local bodies polls make round of BJP State office in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

## Udyami Mitras selection process begins

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To ensure a smooth passage for the entrepreneurs and investors, the selection process of the much-hyped Udyami Mitras (friends of investors) has commenced with the conduct of a written examination.

"After the announcement of the results of the written test on April 16, interviews will be held and the process is likely to be completed by May and all 105 Udyami Mitras will be given appointment letters by the month end," a government spokesman said here on Thursday.

A sum of Rs 70,000 per month along with allowances will be paid to the Udyami Mitras under the Mukhya Mantri Udyami Mitra Yojana. They will be deployed in various districts, development authorities and Invest UP headquarters in Lucknow.

The appointments are being done by the Invest UP under the Industrial Development department.

The official said a written examination was conducted on April 9 and a team of experts was evaluating the answer sheets. According to the fixed cut-off, 300 to 400 candidates can be selected for the next stage. These candidates will, however, be finally selected after an interview and computer test. Separate committees have been formed for conducting the tests.

The statement of purpose (SoP) has also been prepared for the interview and computer tests.

The official said 25 marks had been fixed for the interview and 10 marks for the computer test. Computer test examination will be conducted by preparing question papers through prestigious educational institutions of the state like Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur; Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow; or Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow.

The SoP will be assessed in the interview. Candidates will have to produce all their educational and experience cer-

**A sum of Rs 70,000 per month along with allowances will be paid to the Udyami Mitras under the Mukhya Mantri Udyami Mitra Yojana. They will be deployed in various districts, development authorities and Invest UP headquarters in Lucknow**

tificates in original at the time of the interview. A maximum of 120 Udyami Mitras will be selected on the basis of the weightage of the candidates and their personal interview score, out of which 15 candidates will be kept on the waiting list. This waiting list will remain effective for one year after the declaration of the result.

## Four held for filing false cow slaughter FIR

PTI ■ AGRA

Uttar Pradesh Police have arrested a leader and three other members of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) for allegedly filing a false case of cow slaughter to frame a rival group in Agra, officials said on Thursday.

The official said the four — ABHM national spokesperson Sanjay Jat and members Brajesh Bhadoria, Saurav Sharma and Jitendra Kushwaha — were arrested on Wednesday and sent to jail.

Several criminal cases are pending against the four in various police stations of Agra, he added.

"They all have been booked under IPC section 429 and sections of the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act," Raj Kumar, in-charge of the Itmad-ud-Daulah police station, told PTI.

Police said Kushwaha had lodged a complaint at the behest of a group of Muslims on March 30, alleging an incident of cow slaughter in the Itmad-ud-Daulah area. He had named Rizwan alias Kalla, Nakeem, Viju alias Chhotu, Shanu alias Illi, and Imran in the police complaint.

Police then arrested two of those named in the FIR — Shanu and Imran.

They told the police that they were being framed in the case by a rival Muslim group, who had contacted the ABHM and got the case filed against them. Assistant Commissioner of Police R K Singh said their investigation found the FIR filed was false and intended to frame the five men. "The ABHM members, including its national spokesperson Sanjay Jat, were alleged to be involved in lodging the false FIR to put pressure on police to frame the rival group," Singh added.

## GANGA POLLUTION IN BALLIA

## NGT directs UP chief secretary to ensure remedial action

NEW DELHI (PTI): The National Green Tribunal has directed the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh to ensure remedial action, including fixing the responsibility on erring officers, in a matter pertaining to pollution of river Ganga in Ballia district. The NGT was hearing a petition claiming the discharge of sewage and solid waste into the Katalah drain connected to the Ganga.

Underlining that around 20 million litres per day (MLD) of untreated sewage through the drain was being discharged daily into the river, a bench of chairperson Justice AK Goel said, "We record our dissatisfaction with the failure of the

state administration, particularly the failure to hold erring officers accountable for wastage of public money and preventing damage to river Ganga."

The bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert members A Senthil Vel and Afroz Ahmad said, "Chief Secretary in coordination with other authorities concerned in the state may ensure remedial action in the present case also for which a special meeting of concerned officers be convened preferably within one month to plan and execute remedial measures, including fixing of responsibility of erring officers."

The bench noted an action taken report filed pursuant to the tribunal's earlier order showed "almost total inaction" of the state authorities except for raising huge demands of money as a pretext for avoiding basic responsibility.

It said the funds allocated earlier were not utilised, nor was any attempt made to collect funds locally and accountants were not fixed on erring officials. There was a need to involve higher officers "to fix accountability for the continuing failure of (other) officers involved who appear prima facie to have abused the funds at the cost of public interest," the bench said.

## Rabe Hasni Nadvi dead

LUCKNOW (PTI): President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana Rabe Hasni Nadvi died here on Thursday after a prolonged illness.

Senior executive member of the board Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali told PTI that Maulana Rabe Hasni Nadvi died around 3.30 pm at the Lucknow-based Islamic Educational Institute Nadwatul Ulama (Nadwa).

Mahali said Nadvi had been brought to Lucknow from his ancestral home in Raebareilly four days ago as he was suffering from pneumonia.

He is survived by three daughters.

Nadvi will be the president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board for the last 21 years. His farewell prayers will be held at 10 pm in Nadwa and the body will be laid to rest in Raebareilly on Friday.

## Transport company mgr beaten to death by employer, aides

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Owner of a transport company and their associates threw an open challenge to the law enforcing agencies when they tied their manager with an iron pole and brutally assaulted him till he succumbed.

The sensational incident took place in Shahjahanpur just on apprehension that the victim had stolen a parcel bag.

The 32-year-old victim, identified as Shivam Johri, was allegedly beaten to death on the orders of his boss. Shivam worked as a manager for a transport businessman named Bankim Suri, and a video of the assault went viral, leading to seven people being named in a murder case.

The viral video showed Shivam tied to a pole and writhing in pain as a man repeatedly hit him with a rod. It is reported that Shivam was accused of theft, and the assault was carried out as a punishment.

According to the police, Shivam's body was abandoned at the medical college hospital on Tuesday night, and his family members were informed that he had died of electrocution.

However, when a police officer examined the body, he noticed injuries inconsistent with the claim of electrocution, and the investigation began.

Shivam had been working with transport businessman Bankim Suri for the past seven years. Recently, a package from a prominent business, Kanihya Hosiery, had gone missing, and several employees of the transporters were allegedly assaulted on suspicion of theft.

Meanwhile, Shivam's father Adhir Johri has filed a complaint against seven people, including the owner of Kanihya Hosiery Neeraj Gupta and Bankim Suri, owner of Suri Transport Company, at Thana Sadar Bazar. The father alleged that the duo had accused Shivam of stealing clothes.

"They allegedly forced him to confess the theft on paper, however, when he refused, he was beaten to death," Shivam's father said.

The police have seized a car from the premises of Kanihya Hosiery, which is suspected to be linked to the crime. The post-mortem report is expected to provide more information about the crime, as the investigation continues.

## FATHER-SON DIE IN ACCIDENT

MAHARAJGANJ: A 44-year-old man and his teen son were killed in an accident caused by a pickup van hitting their motorcycle on the National Highway - 730 in this Uttar Pradesh district, police said on Thursday. Ram Kewal and his 16-year-old son Nitesh Bharti died on the spot, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Sadar) Anuj Kumar Singh said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, he added.

## MAN GIVEN 20-YEAR IMPRISONMENT FOR RAPING 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL

BALLIA: A court here has given 20 years of rigorous imprisonment to a man for raping a 15-year-old girl. Additional District Judge Vinod Kumar on Wednesday also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on Rajkumar Yadav.

The incident had taken place in a village in Gadwar area. It was alleged in the FIR lodged on Aug 25, 2019 that Yadav raped the girl initially and later kept sexually exploiting her promising marriage. But when she gave birth to a girl child he denied to marry her, it was alleged.

# KDA V-C inspects progress of schemes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chairman of Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) Arvind Singh inspected the progress of different developed and proposed schemes of KDA in Kalpi Nagar, Ratanlal Nagar, Dabauli, Hamirpur Road, Jarauli, Perna Vihar, Panki Industrial Area and Bingawa in zone 3 on Wednesday. During the inspection on finding developmental works lying suspended and non-disposal of plots in Jarauli phase-2 and Perna Vihar schemes, he expressed displeasure and set up a two-member committee comprising additional secretary and chief engineer to probe the issue and submit a report to him within 10 days. He also directed the officials that if there was a need for revising the schemes of Jarauli phase-2 and Perna Vihar being developed on KDA land, it should be carried out to facilitate the sale of newly-created plots through e-auction or lottery. During inspection of Ratanlal Nagar and Dabauli schemes, he directed to stop illegal construction works being carried out there and initiate penal action against the builders. He inspected the proposed Bingawa township when officials informed that all the lands of approach road were in



KDA Vice Chairman Arvind Singh inspecting the progress of different schemes in zone 3 with officials.

KDA's possession and no dispute was pending there. The preparation of layout of the proposed township was also in the final stage, officials informed him. Meanwhile, Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh also directed the officials to ensure proper security and development of lands which had been won by KDA through court proceedings. He said the cases won by KDA for lands on the cross-section of Hamirpur Road and Dedicated Freight

Corridor be secured by construction of boundary walls around them with installation of a display board there. Plots for setting up hospital, group housing etc be developed according to the prescribed norms. On the shifting of transmission line in Kalpi Nagar scheme, he directed the officials of the engineering section to contact the electricity department and get it shifted within 15 days. **TRAGIC INCIDENT:** The son of gram pradhan was

in a road mishap held near Kandhi village under Derapur police station area of Kanpur Dehat early on Thursday morning. On seeing a seriously injured youth of Khasbara village on the highway, cops on patrolling sent him to the district hospital on ambulance where the doctors declared the youth dead. Rajendra Prasad of Khasbara, Rajpur (Kanpur Dehat) had got some land in Vivapur under Bhognipur police station where he was living and elected gram pradhan. His son Amit Kumar (32) was still living with family in Khasbara village. Around 4.30 am on Thursday he had gone on bike for some work and sustained serious injury on being knocked by an unidentified vehicle on Sikandra-Bara highway. Cops returning from patrolling sent the injured youth to the district hospital on NHA ambulance and informed his family members. Dr Pawan Arya examined the him at the district hospital and declared him dead. On hearing about it Rajendra reached the hospital and fell unconscious. Police have launched raids to nail the vehicle and its driver which had fatally knocked down the youth. In another tragic incident,

a three-year old boy died after falling into a well in Madaiya village under Satti police area of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday evening. The police and fire brigade recovered body of the boy after four hours. The boy suddenly fell into the well while playing in the presence of his father. He was identified as Ishu (3), son of a labourer Jantar Singh. While playing the boy started peeping into the well and by the time Jantar Singh could stop him from doing so, he fell into it. Rescue team had to face a tough time in recovering the boy as the well was very deep and filled with water. Village youth Jamal alias Lula went into the well with the help of a rope and recovered the boy. He was immediately taken to hospital where doctors declared him as brought dead. Station House Officer (SHO) Uma Shanker Yadav said the body was sent for an autopsy. PHC Superintendent, Rajpur, Dr DK Singh said the boy had already died before being brought to the hospital. As preparations were on to celebrate the birthday of Jantar Singh's other son Abir (4) on Wednesday, the event of joy suddenly turned into a pall of gloom. Ishu was the youngest of his two sisters and three brothers.

# DM inspects nomination rooms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer carried out an inspection of the nomination rooms at the Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) and directed the officials to ensure a strong barricading around the nomination rooms. He said all basic infrastructure which was needed for the smooth conduct of nominations should be arranged well in advance by April 15. He said nomination rooms need to be equipped with proper furniture, computer system, scanners, xerox machines and internet connections. He said static cameramen team should also be deployed and regular monitoring should be done. He directed that a control room should also be established and proper PA System should be installed. He directed the officials that on the first and second storey of the KNN nominations of corporators should be arranged. He said there should enough space for parking and special team of police force need to be deployed. He said nominations have to be carried out peacefully and in a transparent man-

ner. He said in view of Covid cases mask will be made mandatory and social distancing had to be maintained. **MISHAP:** The BJP booth president was killed while his friend seriously injured when an unidentified vehicle knocked down their bike in front of Bhadauria Hotel on Jhansi-Kanpur highway in Jalaun on Thursday morning. The deceased was identified as Shailendra Dixit alias Nilu Maharaj (45) of Ramganj, Kalpi, and the injured as Abhijit Singh (38). On seeing them lying on the street passersby took them to the roadside and informed the police. When they were being carried to Orai on an ambulance, Shailendra Dixit alias Nilu Maharaj succumbed to his injury on the way. They had gone to Orai to meet a party leader. When they were going towards Kalpi around 10.30 am an unidentified vehicle knocked them down as a result of which they made fell on the street. Shailendra Dixit, sustained serious head injury in the absence of helmet. He is survived by wife Vandana and two children Shreya and Yishu.

# MGKV invites application for UG, PG courses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The application for the admission in various U courses of Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) could be submitted online from May 5 to 25 on the varsity website. The last date to submit the online application for the admission is May 31 with late fee. The entrance committee of MGKV met at the hall of central library on Wednesday with the Vice-Chancellor Prof Anand Kumar Tyagi in chair to discuss the entrance examination for the admission in UG and PG for the academic session of 2023-2024. The meeting decided to seek online application

from the aspirants for the admission in UG and PG courses from May 5 to 25 and from May 26 to 31 with late fee. The entrance fee could be deposited in Indian Bank, HDFC, ICICI and IndusInd Bank and the candidates applying for two or more than two subjects could get 50 per cent concession in fee, the meeting decided. The university is to start PG Diploma in Remote Sensing & GIS from the coming academic session, the meeting decided, adding that the value-added courses will be run in psychology and pedagogy. The committee also decided to start the entrance process of the international students in the university soon. Prof Anil Kumar Chaudhary, Prof Sanjay and others were present in the meeting.

# NSI develops many value-added products

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

While the year 2023 is being celebrated as "International Year of Millets", National Sugar Institute (NSI)

took a leap forward by developing many value-added products from the stalk of 'jowar' crop, also known as 'sweet sorghum' which may result in many new start-ups and fetch

higher income for millet farmers and also lead to newer investments and employment generation.

This was stated by its Director Prof Narendra Mohan while addressing presspersons about the new value-added product on Thursday. He said grains like 'jowar' were used in a conventional manner as food, researches showed that the stalk of it at present was being used mainly as fodder, which can be a source for making many value-added products. He said the stalk once crushed in mills, yielded juice and fibrous material, both of which can be an excellent source for producing many value-added products. He said by doing so, the whole crop shall have value resulting in higher income to the farmers making its cultivation more attractive. He said the fibrous material having a gross calorific value of about 2200 kcal/kg can be used as fuel for biomass-based power generation. Shalini Kumari, Research Fellow of Physical Chemistry division, has successfully converted this fibrous material into bio-char by physico-chemical process for decolorisation of waste waters and sugar syrups. She said one could achieve colour removal to the extent of 70-75 per cent in the sugar syrups which is considered excellent and will help in making superior quality white sugar. Neelam Chaturvedi and Himanshu Mishra, research scholars, both of Physical Chemistry division got success by developing dietary fibre from the fibre of the stalk. Both said the product besides being in demand in healthcare industry in various formulations for improving the digestion and preventing consti-

pation also finds its application in bakery industry as well. Another research fellow of Organic Chemistry Mamta Shukla derived 'vanillin' from lignin portion of the fibrous material which otherwise was produced from vanilla beans and some other raw materials. She said vanillin known for its vanilla flavour finds its application in various bakery, confectionary, beverage and pharmaceutical industry with significant consumption in ice creams. She added juice contained various carbohydrates and can be utilised for producing ethanol the yield being 45-50 litres per ton of stalk crushed. Another team of sugar technology division comprising Shruti Shukla, Svecchha Singh and Anushka Kanodia, developed a natural sweetener, "Natural low calorie liquid sugar" containing fructose, glucose and sucrose in the range of (45 - 48 per cent), (39 - 42 per cent) and (8 - 10 per cent) respectively from the sweet sorghum juice. Anushka Kanodia, team leader said the product had a total energy value of about 296 kcal/100 g, lower to sugar having 387 kcal/100g and honey having about 320 kcal/100 g. This being one-of-a-kind sugar, has an aroma and taste that was more earthy and had a glossy finish that attracted its application in barbecue marinades, salad dressings, granolas, cookie manufacturing and many more. She expressed gratitude for ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research for providing the seeds for cultivation of five different varieties for sorghum at farm. She said NSI made efforts to exploit the potential of the crop so as to convert this neglected crop to a "Miracle or Wonder Crop" making it attractive to farmers also as they get higher returns.

# Man kills mother, hangs self

PTI ■ KANPUR

A newly-married man killed his mother before hanging himself to death allegedly due to a family dispute, police said on Thursday.

They said Vivek Verma alias Nikhil (28), who ran a coaching class, was found hanging from a ceiling hook on Wednesday, while Rajkumari Verma (60) was lying dead on the floor of their house at RK Nagar under Nazirabad police station area. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Pramod Kumar told PTI the exact reason behind the suspected murder-suicide case was yet to be ascertained. Prima facie, it appeared Vivek first strangled his mother to death before hanging himself, he said. Forensic experts were called in at the site to gather scientific evidence. Locals said there was a property dispute between Nikhil's mother and his wife Priyanka.

# PNB celebrates foundation day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



The officers of PNB inaugurating a seminar organised on the Foundation Day of the bank.

Punjab National Bank (PNB) celebrated its 129th Foundation Day at its divisional office here on Wednesday and a seminar was organised on the occasion. Speaking in the seminar, the divisional head of bank Rajesh Kumar recalled the service of the bank to the nation and discussed the present challenges and responsibilities. He laid an emphasis on cyber security, digital & easy banking, politeness in behaviour to the customers in the bank premises and service to customers with complete dedication. The sub zonal manager Anand Kumar Rai and deputy general manager Balkaran Yadav also expressed their views while the customers gave their suggestions. Presiding over the seminar, the vice-president of Indian Industries Association RK Chaudhary lauded the customer service of the bank and expressed his displeasure over the bank's MSME, loaning and other schemes useful to the public.

# Paramedical staff to take training in BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The paramedical staff of the district government hospital will take training in BHU and they will be deputed in the pediatric intensive care unit and critical care unit in view of rising cases of COVID-19. Meanwhile, with registering nine new cases, the active cases increased to 48 on Wednesday, while a total of 56 patients were also discharged by Wednesday. DM S Rajalingam made an inspection of Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Government District Hospital in Pandeypur on Wednesday and took a review of the number of beds and ventilators in the pediatric ward. When he was apprised by the CMS of the hospital that there are 40 beds and 38 ventilators the DM directed to depute the paramedical staff in the pediatric intensive care unit and critical care unit by getting training to them in BHU. The DM also directed for furnishing demand letters as per the requirement of resources and necessary instruments to increase the number of beds and ventilators in the ward. The DM also directed for making available the facility of ventilator in the observation room and installing AC in the doctors' chambers. Special attention should be paid on the cleanliness and providing better sitting and other arrangements to the attendants of patients, he directed. The DM directed the CMS to identify a place in the hospital to run a cafeteria and also allot to any NGO to run it.

# Training session on preparation of banana fibre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Dr Ritu Pandey, Department of Home Science while addressing a two-day training session on preparing banana fibre at the Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T) said banana pseudostem fibre, being biodegradable, natural source, renewable waste, had a great demand in the international markets. She said its requirement has increased as it did not cause any pollution to the environment. She said the objective was to make women self-reliant by not only cultivating banana but also preparing fibre from banana peel for manufacturing clothes and other materials. She said production of banana fibre, though required a large number of human resources, yet was not labour-intensive and it was a profitable venture providing employment to people and posed no threat to environment, thus making it a sustainable environment-friendly intervention. She said banana fibres can be used to make ropes, mats, woven fabrics as well as handmade papers and this can fetch extra income to women. She said while the men can go in for banana cultivation women can prepare these products and increase their profits. Dr Pandey said in addition to this banana fibre can be

refined and used to make fine cushion covers, neck ties, bags, table cloths, curtains etc. She said rugs made from banana silk yarn fibres were also very popular the world over. She said banana fibres, which were concentrated near the outer surface, were extracted by hand and they can also be extracted by boiling leaf sheaths in sodium hydroxide solution. She said the hand-stripped fibres were generally of better quality than those obtained by machines. She said during the monsoon stalks were usually plentiful and extraction of the fibre from the stripped leaf sheath cut to a size by hand scraping using long blunt blades on a soft wooden plank. The pith is then removed continuously until the fibers appear clean. She said the method of extraction was carried out by artisans in the cottage industry sector. She said after that extraction fibres were washed thoroughly and hung up in sunlight to dry as soon as they are stripped. Over 40 women farmers took part in the training. The women were also trained in braiding and knitting and informed how they can prepare clothes and sarees from banana fibre. Dr Mukta Garg, Dr Archana Singh, Dr SK Tripathi, Ankita, Neha and others were present.

**FELICITATED:** The Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur

Alumni Association felicitated the Vice-Chancellor of the university for successfully completing two years. The vice-president of the association, Dr Praveen Katiyar said under the leadership of Prof Pathak the university had reached greater heights. He said today the varsity was among the noted universities of the state and was on par with many universities across the country. He said universities flourish under able leadership and Prof Pathak was one such academician who had made every effort to ensure that the university was among the leading varsities, especially in research work. He said from the time he took over charge the varsity has reached the topmost rungs of success ladder. He said it was his far sightedness that over 10,000 students have been linked to various courses run by the varsity. Dr Vrishti Mitra said a university becomes a centre of excellence only by the meticulous efforts of its leader and Prof Pathak had given a direction to this university which was now among the renowned universities of the state and country. Dr Mitra said it was Prof Pathak who ensured that every department needed to have an alumni association and that the alumni remained connected to the alma mater. Dr Pravin Bhai Patel, Dr Vivek Singh Sachan and others took part in the function. Later Prof Pathak expressed his gratitude.

# AD Health conducts inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Additional Director (Health), Varanasi Division, Dr Manjula Singh visited the urban and rural areas to know about the activities of the special communicable disease control campaign and during her inspection she gave necessary instructions to the concerned officers apart from appealing to the people to maintain cleanliness as well as take special vigilance against mosquito-borne diseases. She first reached Ulfat Bibi Ke Hata located in the Orderly Bazar area on Wednesday. Along with seeing the cleanliness of the area, she also inquired about arrangements made to prevent mosquito-borne diseases, spraying of insecticides etc. After this, she reached Mawaiyan village of Cholapur area. She was accompanied by District Malaria Officer Sharad Chand Pandey, biologist Dr Amit Kumar Singh, Superintendent of CHC Cholapur Dr RB Yadav, Additional Research Officer Anil Pandey, Health Education Officer Shikha Srivastava besides other officials of the Health department. After reaching the village, Dr Manjula Singh did on-site inspection of a communicable

disease control campaign going on there. She also talked to the villagers about the cleanliness and cutting of bushes, spraying of insecticides etc in the village and expressed satisfaction over the arrangement there. She also informed the villagers about the Dastak campaign starting from April 17 and gave necessary instructions to the officials of the Health department. Meanwhile, CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that most of the communicable diseases are spread by mosquitoes, from one body to another. Examples of communicable diseases are malaria, filariasis, dengue, chikungunya, kala-azar etc. Apart from this, tuberculosis (TB) and Covid-19 also come under the category of infectious diseases. District Malaria Officer Sharad Chand Pandey said that communicable diseases can be avoided only through awareness and cleanliness. For this, the community is already being made aware by running a continuous campaign. He said that for awareness about communicable diseases, a special communicable disease control campaign has been started in the district from April 1, which will continue till April 30. Under this, Dastak campaign will be started from April 17.

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 24.12.2022 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. MR. ASHISH VERMA S/O MR. OM PRAKASH VERMA 2. MR. OM PRAKASH VERMA S/O MR. KRIPAL VERMA 3. MRS. KAMINI VERMA W/O MR. OM PRAKASH VERMA to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 41,52,125/- (Rupees Fourty One Lakh Fifty Two Thousand One Hundred And Twenty Five Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs. 41,52,125/- (Rupees Fourty One Lakh Fifty Two Thousand One Hundred And Twenty Five Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.

**HDFC BANK** Legal Cell  
Nikhlesh Palace, 17/4 A Ashok Marg, Lucknow, 226001.  
**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]**  
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 13.01.2023 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. MR. JAI SINGH S/O MR. GURU DAYAL 2. MRS. RITA SINGH W/O MR. JAI SINGH to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 18,00,518/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Five Hundred And Eighteen Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs. 18,00,518/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Five Hundred And Eighteen Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.

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Nikhlesh Palace, 17/4 A Ashok Marg, Lucknow, 226001.  
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# 'Sports important for development of students'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR



The Sports Committee in Association with the Physical Education Department of Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, organised annual sports prize distribution ceremony on Wednesday. Col Venkatesan R, Command Officer, 17 UP Girls Btn, NCC Kanpur, was the chief guest on the occasion who also inaugurated the function by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Principal Dr Anju Chaudhary welcomed the chief guest with a bouquet and memento. Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Col

show by sports students. Chief guest along with the principal gave away prizes to winner students. Dr Puja Srivastava conducted the proceedings while the convener of Sports Committee Dr Pratibha Srivastava proposed the vote of thanks. Dr Sadhan Pandey, Dr Deepali Srivastava, Dr Pragya Srivastava, Dr Rashmi Singh and Dr Parul Awasthi coordinated for the successful conduct of the event. Incharge, Sports Committee, Dr Deepali Nigam said during 2022-23 as many as 10 students of the college were selected for north zone competitions in different sports. All faculty members were present.

# Atiq Ahmad, Ashraf sent to 14-day judicial custody

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A Prayagraj court on Thursday sent gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf to 14-day judicial custody and also allowed five-day police remand in connection with the Umesh Pal murder case.

The two were produced before Chief Judicial Magistrate Dinesh Gautam at 11:10 am amid heavy security and they remained in the court for over two hours as the arguments proceeded.

Ahmad and Ashraf alias Khalid Azim will be kept in judicial custody till April 26, said advocate Vikram Singh, the counsel for Umesh Pal's wife Jaya.

Singh said after arguments on the application submitted by

police seeking their custody were completed, the court allowed five-day police remand of the duo which will remain effective till evening of April 17.

According to legal experts, the police remand empowers police to keep the accused in their custody and interrogate them regarding the case.

On the completion of police remand, Ahmad and his brother will be sent back to jail. "Both Atiq Ahmad and Ashraf will be sent back to Sabarmati prison and Bareilly jail, where they are currently lodged, on the completion of police remand to complete the remaining duration of judicial custody," said Singh.

The CJM court's verdict came on a day the Uttar Pradesh Police said they have killed Ahmad's son Asad and one of his aides in an encounter

in Jhansi. Both Asad and his aide were wanted in the Umesh Pal murder case.

Umesh Pal, a key witness in the 2005 killing of BSP MLA Raju Pal and his two police security guards were shot dead outside his home in Prayagraj's Dhoomanganj area on February 24 this year.

The daylight killing on a busy street had raised questions over law and order in Uttar Pradesh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had vowed in the state assembly that he will "destroy" the mafia in the state.

Ahmad, Ashraf, their family members and others were made accused in the Umesh Pal murder case based on a complaint by Jaya Pal. Ahmad is also an accused in the Raju Pal murder case.

For the court hearing on Thursday, Ahmad, the 60-year-

old former Samajwadi Party legislator, was brought from Sabarmati jail in Gujarat and Ashraf was brought from Bareilly jail.

This was the second time within a month that Ahmad was brought from the Gujarat jail to Prayagraj via road for a court hearing. On March 28 an MP/MLA court held Ahmad and two others guilty in connection with the kidnapping of Umesh Pal in 2006 and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for life.

The FIR in the Umesh Pal murder case was lodged under IPC sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapons), 149 (unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

# Kashi being decorated with 50 varieties of flowers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Yogi government has changed the picture of this ancient city ahead of the G-20 summit meeting to be held in the city from April 17. The crossings and roads of the city are being decorated like a bride. The work of decorating Varanasi with over 50 varieties of flowers from more than six states is going on in view to make the city get ready to welcome guests from 20 leading countries of the world.

Along with decorating the crossings with special flowers, the way for the guests to come and go is being made attractive through landscaping. VIP routes, Namoo Ghat, Trade Facility Centre (TFC), Sarnath, the area around the airport etc are being decorated on a special theme. Flags of G-20 countries are being installed at establishments and other places. Special features identifying the G-20 countries will also be shaped through landscaping. Topiary has become a selfie point for the people of Kashi.

New Kashi's changed form is now ready for international



City being decorated with attractive flowers on eve of G-20 meeting in Varanasi.

events. The guests attending the G-20 Summit will be able to admire the beauty of the city as soon as they leave the airport. Dinesh Maurya, the owner of DK Decorate, who is doing the

work of decorating the city with flowers and landscaping, said that over 50 varieties of flowers from more than six states have been brought in. The surrounding and other vacant

places of the airport are being beautified through landscaping. The logo of the G-20 and the shape of the green dolphin at the Sant Atulanand crossing are attracting the attention of the people. The places and routes for the guests to stay and roam from the airport are being decorated. A vertical garden has been made on the Varuna Bridge and topiaries of reindeer, giraffes and animals and birds have been made at places around it which has become a selfie point for the city dwellers.

Decorator Dinesh Maurya said that apart from Varanasi, decorative flowers have been sourced from Andhra Pradesh, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Gujarat, Delhi, Agra and other places. VIP routes are being made very attractive. Pots have been placed on the paths of the guests in the city, road dividers have been decorated with flowers. A garden will be built on the theme of G-20 countries at the TFC where the special identity of that country will be made with the flags of G-20 countries. Namoo Ghat, which has become a new centre of tourism, is being decorated with many types of flowers.

# SP announces mayoral candidate from Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Samajwadi Party (SP) has announced the mayoral candidates for eight cities. The SP has made Ajay Srivastava the mayoral candidate from Prayagraj. Ajay Srivastava is a resident of George Town area here. In 2017 he joined the SP along with former minister Indrajit Saroj. He is associated with the business of tiles and real estate.

With Ajay Srivastava getting the ticket disappointment and displeasure has started

growing among the old workers. Ajay was also in the hope of getting the ticket for a long time. He was called to the Lucknow headquarters and then his name was announced.

Ajay Srivastava has been in the BSP earlier for a long time. In the 2002 assembly elections Mayawati made him candidate from Allahabad City North. But he had to face defeat. After this he was given the responsibility of city unit president in BSP itself.

Now SP national president Akhilesh Yadav has once

expressed confidence in him and given him the mayor's ticket. Ajay Srivastava has also been the vice-president of KP Trust. He has played his role in many positions in Kayastha society. Looking at the caste equation, the party has made him its candidate.

Ajay Srivastava has also been a corporator in the Municipal Corporation from 2007 to 2012.

The leaders of Kayastha Samaj have also sat twice on the mayor's chair in Prayagraj. For the first time in 2001 Dr KP

Srivastava became mayor at that time he was in SP.

After this in 2006, Congress made Chaudhary Jitendra Nath Singh its candidate and he also won the election defeating SP's Vinod Chandra Dubey. In 2012 SP did not field its candidate. In the civic elections held in 2017, the SP again fielded Vinod Chandra Dubey as its candidate but the SP lost. Now once again the SP has placed bet on Ajay Srivastava, who comes from the Kayastha community.

# Big challenge before BJP to maintain its winning spree

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

There is a big challenge before the ruling party to maintain its winning spree on the prestigious mayoral seat of Varanasi, being represented in the lower house of the Parliament by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The mayoral seat of Varanasi has been made unreserved this time.

The ruling BJP has been occupying the mayoral seat since the election on this prestigious seat was conducted for the first time in 1995 after the constitution of the Varanasi Municipal Corporation. In 1995, the seat was reserved for the women of OBC category and the BJP nominee Saroj Singh had registered victory.

In 2000, the seat was reserved for the men of OBC category and the BJP candidate

## MAYORAL SEAT

Amar Nath Yadav registered victory. The seat was again reserved for the men of OBC category in 2006 and the BJP made a hat-trick as its candidate Kaushlendra Singh registered victory. The seat was made unreserved in 2012 and the saffron brigade continued its command on this seat as its nominee Ram Gopal Mohle won the election. In 2017, the seat was reserved for the women of OBC category and the candidate of ruling party Mridula Jaiswal registered victory.

The Varanasi mayoral seat is considered to be the stronghold of the saffron brigade and in the present time, all eight assembly constituencies of the district are in the possession of the ruling party. This time, the

seat has been made unreserved and so, there is a big challenge before the ruling party to maintain its winning spree.

Taking a lead, the Congress Party has announced the name of party senior leader Anil Kumar Srivastava as its candidate for the mayoral post, while the BJP and the SP are still brainstorming on the final name of their candidates. A number of leaders of both the BJP and the SP have applied for the ticket but the final decision is to be taken by the central leadership because the district is being represented by the PM.

As per earlier, all the equations seem to be in favour of the ruling party and moreover, the development works done by the PM adds another benefit in the favour. But at the same

time, the common people seem to be unhappy with the BJP MLAs who maintain the distance from their voters instead of paying attention to their grievances.

Though, the electioneering will get momentum after the nomination to be fielded by the candidates and then the actual scenario will be clear. The political analysts are of the opinion that the ruling party would register victory this time too but could face challenge from the SP if the main opposition party fields its candidate keeping all equations in mind.

The nomination process for the mayoral seat and corporators of 100 wards of the district is being carried out nowadays and the polling is scheduled to be conducted on May 4 under the first phase, while the counting will take place on May 13.

# BHU doctors perform upper jaw transplant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of oral and maxillofacial surgeons at Faculty of Dental Sciences, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has successfully rehabilitated with patient specific prosthesis for upper jaw (maxilla) in a post operated case of the Black Fungus (mucormycosis). Patient was diagnosed with mucormycosis in 2021 during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic. His upper jaw (maxilla bone) was completely removed which led to oro-nasal communication due to which the patient was unable to eat, drink and speak properly.

The patient reported the same to the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Unit and examined by unit head Prof Naresh Kumar Sharma and associate professor Dr Akhilesh Kumar Singh for correction of maxillary defect. The team decided to prepare an artificial 3D printed Titanium jaw which was specific to the patient defect. The artificial jaw was made with the help of computer aided manufacturing (CAD-CAM) on the stereolithographic model of the patient's face.



The surgery was performed by the team of doctors led by Prof Naresh Kumar Sharma and comprised Dr Akhilesh Kumar Singh, resident doctors Dr Raveena Rajpoot, Dr Ashwathi Krishnan, Dr Arjun Mahajan, Dr Sharanya, Dr Tanisha and the anaesthesia team led by Dr Reena, assistant professor and the resident doctors Dr Kusum, Dr Deepak and Dr Gaurav. The surgery went for the duration of three hours and was uneventful. No facial incision was given to avoid any scar over the face, the prosthetic device was fixed with the help of

intraoral maxillary vestibular incision approach and the implant was fixed to the zygomatic bone with the help of the titanium screws.

The intraoral defect was closed completely so that the patient can eat, drink and speak properly in future. The artificial teeth will be fixed to the prosthesis after three months in the second stage.

Prof Vinay Kumar Srivastava, Dean of Dental Sciences faculty, IMS BHU, congratulated the team of doctors for carrying out the operation successfully and he said he will try to start the 3D printing facility in the department so that more and more patients may get benefitted.

According to family members, after father scolded Dipanshu for his studies on April 10 he was disturbed. Around 7 pm he left the house without informing anyone. When he did not return they became upset and launched a hectic search for him. On failing trace him, they informed the police. The police registered his missing report on Wednesday evening.

# Boy missing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 15-year-old boy has gone missing from Tavriya Khurd of Karchana Kotwali area. For the last four days, his family members are searching for him, but failed to get any trace of him. Police is also searching for him by registering missing person.

Rajesh Kumar Singh, a private doctor in Tavriya Khurd village under Karchana police station, runs his own clinic in a nearby village. He has two sons - Dipanshu Singh (15), a student of class X and Priyanshu Singh (12) of class VII in an inter college in Naini area.

The Karchana police said that a missing report of the boy has been registered. His picture and details have been sent to the police stations for investigation. He is also being searched through social media.

# Rashid keeps audience spellbound

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Eminent vocalist Ustad Rashid Khan kept the audience spellbound at Sankat Mochan Temple during mid-night hours on the third day of internationally famous Sankat Mochan Sangeet Samaroh. After singing bandishes in Chandrakans, he presented ek taal, teen taal, drut, and ended his singing by presenting a thumri. He was supported by Ojas Adhiya on tabla, Ustad Murad Ali Khan on sarangi and Vinay Mishra on samvadi. During the week hours on Thursday, when vocalist Rahul Rohit Mishra presented Raag Gaurjari Todi, a good number of music lovers were present at the temple premises. He was accompanied by Anshul Pratap Singh on tabla, Dharmnath Mishra on samvadini and Vinayak Sahay on sarangi.

Earlier, the day's programme began with Sanchita Bhattacharya who mesmerised the audience with her presentation of Odissi. Then the sound of Mohan Veena and Satvik Veena echoed from the stage, when Pandit Vishwamohan Bhatt and Pandit Salil Bhatt presented



Pt Vishwamohan Bhatt (Mohan Veena) and Pt Salil Bhatt (Satvik Veena) presenting a programme at Sankat Mochan temple on Wednesday night.

their programmes. They were supported by Himanshu Mehta on tabla.

The next presentation was of Deepika Varadarajan from Chennai, who started her presentation with classical singing and concluded with bhajan.

She was accompanied by Shruti Seal Uddhav on tabla and Mohit Sahni on samvadi.

During the midnight hours, U Rajesh mesmerised the audience by presenting mandolin. Apart from presenting Carnatic ragas, he also presented Rabindra Sangeet. He was accompanied by Yalla Venkateswara Rao on mridanganam.

Then famous flute player Pandit Praveen Godkhindi from Bengaluru presented his programme along with his disciple son Sonu Godkhindi. He was supported by Ojas Adhiya on tabla.

After that, Pandit Jai Teerth Mevundi (Dharwad) sang in such a way that the audience was mesmerised.

He was accompanied by Anshul Pratap Singh on tabla and Mohit Sahni on samvadi.

The next performance turned out to be a memorable performance when paying tribute to his father Guru Pandit Bhajan Sopori, Pandit Abhay Rustom Sopori presented Raag Bhajanshwari.

Followed by jhaptal and teen taal. He was accompanied by Ustad Akram Khan on tabla and Rishi Shankar Upadhyay on pakhawaj.

# Voter awareness rally flagged off

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DM Divya Mittal while flagging off a voter awareness rally at Lalganj on Wednesday said voting was not merely a routine process. She said voting was our right. Addressing the rally CDO Srilaxmi VS said polling last time had touched 57 per cent so now it was the need of the hour that we increase it. SDM Bharat Lal Saroj said in our democracy each person had an equal right to vote so it should be exercised with very that spirit. The programme was conducted by deputy chief veterinary officer Dr Ishwar Dev Narain Chaturvedi. Other officials concerned participated in the rally.

Meanwhile DM and District Election Officer Divya Mittal while inspecting the place of strong room, counting centre and the place for the training of polling personnel on Wednesday directed the offi-

cial concerned to complete all arrangements related to byelection to Chhanbey assembly constituency as well as local bodies' elections in advance. She was accompanied by ADM(F&R) and deputy election officer Shiv Pratap Shukla.

During the inspection of strong room and counting centre for assembly byelection on the ground of Government Polytechnic the DM became aware about the suitability of the place and examined the security measures. She directed the PWD to prepare the detail map, route to the strong room, route for counting personnel and counting agents etc. Regarding security measures she asked the PWD to make adequate arrangements of the barricading. She inspected the place from where the polling personnel were to be despatched for polling stations. CDO Srilaxmi VS appraised the DM about the arrangements for training of the polling personnel.

At Government Inter College Mahuarua she was apprised by the ADM that counting of nagar palika parishad Mirzapur and nagar panchayat Kachhawaan was to be done at the place and a detailed plan regarding strong room, counting places, barricading, route chart, security arrangements etc had been finalised.

At Collectorate the DM inspected the nomination rooms fixed for nagar palika parishad Mirzapur and nagar panchayat Kachhawaan. She was apprised by the ADM about the arrangements, including security, and directed the officials concerned to fix indicators at the entry gates about the place of different nomination rooms. She asked officials concerned to ensure adequate sitting arrangements in the nomination rooms as per the number fixed by the Election Commission. During the inspection SDM Lalganj Bharat Lal Saroj, SLAO Neeraj Patel,

CO (City) Paramanand Kushwaha, EE PWD and other officials concerned were present.

**GUTTED:** Property was gutted in fire in separate incidents on Wednesday. Forty bighas of wheat crop caught fire in in Raikal village under Santnagar police station in which more than two dozen farmers got affected. In Shahpur Mafi village under Jamalpur police station about 10 bighas crop was gutted in fire and half a dozen farmers got affected.

Under Halia police station the hut of Munna Kol in Amaha village caught fire in which the victims suffered loss of bike, crop etc. In Dohri village under Jamalpur police station a pick-up caught fire under mysterious circumstances in the house of Bharos Biyar. A moving car caught fire near a petrol pump under Lalganj police station. Fortunately the persons on it managed to save themselves.

# BHU forms panel for timely admissions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Aiming to timely and efficient completion of the admission processes for undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD programmes so as to facilitate beginning of the upcoming academic session as per the schedule, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has formed a Central Admission Committee. Mandated with ensuring transparent and error

free admission, the committee will also redesign the various admission bulletins of the university like UET, PET, RET and Special Courses of Study. It has also been tasked with developing effective information dissemination tools like help videos/ help desks for effective outreach of the university admission system and procedures in order to aid students and admission aspirants.

The committee chaired by Prof Rakesh Raman, Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, will also work on further improving the admission system and take necessary measures in that regard.

It will also look into the online admission mechanism to suggest effective alterations if required.

The Controller of Examinations will be the officio member of the committee. Other members include Prof Aditya Tripathi, Department of Library and Information Sciences, Prof Rajesh Kumar, Department of Chemistry, Dr Umesh Kumar, Department of English, Dr Chinmay Roy, Faculty of Commerce, and Dr Sabina Bano, Geography, Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV). Deputy Registrar (Academic) is the member secretary of the Central Admission Committee.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Systemic failure

A 12-year-old was tried for murder, convicted, and spent his best years on death row

Niranaram Chetanram Chaudhary is a living testament to the pathetic state of our police and justice systems. In 1994, he was 12 years old — and tried for murder on the presumption that he was 22. This happened because somehow he got dragged into a murder case in Pune, in which five women and two children were knifed to death. After class three he ran away from his school at Bikaner in Rajasthan, went to Pune, and began working in a tailoring shop. He doesn't remember why ran away from his home or with whom, nor could any of his brothers. Some cop misspelled his name as Narayan instead of Niranaram, leading to his trial, conviction, and death sentence. What is startling and heartrending is the fact no one in the system — from cops of various ranks and lawyers to judges at different levels in the judicial hierarchy — could even notice that a child was being on trial. A junior police officer may have misspelled the name, but could he tell a 12-year-old kid from a 22-year-old youngster? And what about the senior officers? And the prosecuting lawyers and defence counsels? And judges in the trial and appeal courts? A 42-year-old man, if he abuses his own body, may look 52; and a 52-year-old man, who takes good care of his body, may pass off as 42. But how on earth can a 12-year-old boy be mistaken as 22 years of age? Even if he did commit the crime, he could not have been imprisoned for more than three years, as per the juvenile law in effect at that time.



Justice is said to be blind, but those responsible for dispensing it are not supposed to be blind; their cognitive and cogitative faculties ought to be sound. In Chaudhary's case, all these were found wanting — and he paid a terrible price. He had to spend 28 long years in prison, and on death row to boot. The best years of his life — adolescence and most of his youth — were spent behind bars. "When you are on death row, every hope is broken. You just try to get through the day," he recently told a newspaper after his release, adding that he now feels blessed to look at the stars on a dark night after spending years confined to four walls under the glare of lights. In prison, he studied a lot, getting a master's degree in sociology. It was at this time that he realised that he was much younger than the prison records showed. The Supreme Court ended his ordeal in March when it concluded that Niranaram was 12 years and six months old at the time of the murders. School documents and medical examination proved that. The exercise was carried out as part of the National Law University's Project 39A which works on death penalty reform. This episode proves, if any proof is needed, that India's justice and police systems urgently need reforms. Our political masters, however, have not shown great zeal for reforms in the justice system. People like Niranaram Chetanram Chaudhary continue to suffer.

# Adapting to climate change is imperative

For a country like ours, which experiences almost extreme weather conditions every year, resilience building must be given top priority



AS MITTAL

The agriculture sector is highly vulnerable to climate change and is a big challenge for the agrarian economy. Food-bowl Punjab and Haryana farmers' fetish for unsustainable big cereal wheat this time has begun to hurt, as returns diminish due to climate challenges. The climate challenge farmers faced this time was erratic rainfall at the end of March, while crops were ready to harvest, likely to affect the yield significantly. In the case of Punjab, the initial deliberation by the agriculture department has indicated that at least 40 per cent of 35 lakh hectares of wheat sown is impacted by rain, winds, and hailstorms.

The serious challenges from climate change-induced impacts of erratic rainfall and the heat waves are not just a threat to our food security and nutrition as well as to the livelihood of 45 per cent of the country's population that depends on farming. It has an impact on their crop loan cycle to return on time to get fresh lending and to invest back into their farms.

Policy makers, agri-scientists and farmers must come together to confront the challenge of climate change. Various climate change policies are established at international, national and state levels to address the impacts of climate change. Traditionally, the focus of such policies remained on mitigation instead of adaptation measures. Adaptation actions are needed to respond to climate change as these actions help reduce vulnerabilities.

Overuse of resources like water, soil, fertilisers and pesticides to boost yield resulted in Green-House Gases Emissions (GHGs). Take the example of Punjab, after the implementation of the Food Security Act; the nation is again looking toward Punjab, but Punjab farmers need to conserve its soil and water management along with adopting diversification in agriculture.

### Why are the funds dwindling?

However, the National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change (NMSKCC) seeks to build a dynamic knowledge system that would inform



and support action for responding effectively to the objective of ecologically sustainable development making agriculture climate resilient.

The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) was established in 2015 to meet the cost of adaptation for the States but why are the funds dwindling to address this serious challenge? The grants released under NAFCC fell from ₹350 crore in 2015-16 to ₹27.76 crore in 2022-23, while the sub-committee of the Ministry of Finance estimates the cumulative expenditure for adapting to climate change at ₹ 85.60 lakh crore by 2030.

Research and development is the bedrock of climate resistance agriculture but the minuscule investments in R&D impede the ability of science and technology research to tackle multiple challenges. As per the Indian Council of Agriculture Research, around 85 per cent of their budget goes towards salaries and other administrative/establishment expenditures, with little left for research. The same is with state agricultural universities facing a financial crunch for R&D work. The total R&D expenditure in India as a percentage of agricultural GDP has been



POLICYMAKERS, AGRI-SCIENTISTS AND FARMERS MUST COME TOGETHER TO CONFRONT THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. VARIOUS POLICIES ARE IN PLACE AT INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND STATE LEVELS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

stagnant at 0.3 to 0.5 per cent in the last two decades. It is much lower than in the US (2.8 per cent), China (2.1 per cent), South Korea (4.3 per cent), and Israel (4.2 per cent).

For a country that experiences almost extreme weather every year, adaptation and resilience building must be a priority. India needs more granular risk analysis that can help target appropriate adaptation action locally while making new infrastructure climate resilient and strengthening early warning systems.

An analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water found the frequency and intensity of extreme climate events increasing by almost 200 per cent since 2005 and three out of four districts of India are facing extreme climate change. Experts' analyst estimates show that climate change might reduce global agriculture productivity by 17 per cent by 2030. According to a study by the World Meteorological Organisation, India is estimated to have suffered an average annual loss of more than ₹6 lakh crore from climate-induced changes.

### The way forward:

To face these risks, adaptation is the key factor. Farmers

should start promoting sustainable integrated agriculture practices that could enable them to lower their vulnerabilities by higher crop diversity from staples to high-value crops, fruit and vegetables. Integrated farming with the inclusion of dairy, poultry, beekeeping, fisheries and mushroom cultivation can give additional high-energy food without affecting the production of food grains. There are four sustainable ways farmers can produce more food.

First, Farmers need hand-holding in the early phases. Support them for knowledge exchange with skill-intensive practices. Second, support technology innovation and adaptation to minimise their vulnerability. Third, Instead of input-based subsidies for fertiliser and power, incentivising outcome-based support could encourage innovation. Four, and the most significant, is enhanced research and development for impact studies compared with conventional farming across agro-climatic zones.

(The writer is vice-chairman of Sonalika Group, and vice-chairman (Cabinet Minister rank) of Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board)

### PICTALK



Students perform 'Bhangra' during Baisakhi celebrations, at a wheat field on the outskirts of Amritsar

PTI

## Tailored corporate courses in demand

A growing number of companies are now opting for flexible training courses that allow executives to attend sessions as per their comfort

Continuous learning is essential in the business world to keep up with the constantly changing landscape. Executive education programs provide tailored courses to meet the specific needs of professionals and organisations. The demand for such courses is global and not limited to specific industries or regions.

Upskilling employees to adapt to new technologies and building leadership and management skills to tackle organisational changes are some examples of the specific challenges that executives face. A skills-based approach can make an organisation achieve greater diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) advantages. Providing the right opportunities and enabling employees to learn skills that the company finds necessary for its future growth can help employees grow individually and the organisation collectively.

Flexible training courses that allow learners to attend sessions as per their comfort, and choose offline, on-campus, or online learning options are being preferred by



corporates. As an executive, every individual and their organisation needs to focus on upskilling and reskilling. Deeper analytical insights can also be provided by executive learning programs apart from the skills that are in demand. With digital automation making existing technologies go obsolete rapidly, upskilling or reskilling can also be instrumental in ensuring that a person remains relevant and effective in the current role, even in the future. As per a global study by Deloitte, about 86% of organisations are aware of this need, but just 10% find themselves ready to address them.

The need for executive education programs is growing as businesses face rapid changes in technology and the global market. Executives need to continually upgrade

their skills and knowledge to keep up with the demands of their industry. Organisations are looking for courses that are not only relevant to their industry but also address the specific challenges they are facing, such as upskilling employees to adapt to new technologies or building leadership and management skills to tackle organisational changes. With digital automation making existing technologies obsolete rapidly, upskilling or reskilling can also be instrumental in ensuring that a person remains relevant and effective in their current and future roles.

To stay ahead of the curve, businesses need to identify the right skill sets that will keep their workforce proficient and in sync with evolving technologies such as AI automation and SaaS-driven activities. Flexible training courses that allow learners to attend sessions as per their comfort, and choose offline, on-campus, or online learning options are being preferred by corporates.

Executives themselves feel the need to retain their competitive edge and acquire skills that will help them take

up new and more complex leadership roles in the times ahead. By joining learning and development programs aimed at specific areas, employees can acquire skills that make them leaders in their areas of expertise and achieve better growth in terms of corporate hierarchy and remuneration. To achieve greater diversity, equity and inclusivity advantages, organisations should focus on providing opportunities for employees to learn skills that the company finds necessary for its future growth. Executive learning programs can provide deeper analytical insights apart from the skills that are in demand.

In conclusion, executive education is necessary to keep up with the ever-changing business landscape. Organisations must identify the right skill sets and provide flexible training courses to keep their workforce proficient and in sync with evolving technologies. Executives themselves need to focus on upskilling and reskilling to retain their competitive edge.

(The writer is Vice Chancellor, Mahindra University)



YAJULU MEDURY

### SUPREME COURT NOD TO RSS MARCH

Sir — The tussle between the Tamil Nadu Government and the RSS began when the former denied permission to organise route marches and public gatherings to the latter in September 2022. The government cited that since the Government of India's decision to ban PFI under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the law-and-order situation is not conducive to organising marches. The single-judge Bench also reprimanded the Tamil Nadu police as it observed that there was nothing adverse in the intelligence reports cited by them. The Supreme Court has given a green signal to the RSS Route March in Tamil Nadu.

CKR Nathan | Trichy

### CONSOLATION FOR YASH DAYAL

Sir — It is really heartening to see that left-arm pacer Yash Dayal, who was hammered for five consecutive sixes by Rinku Singh in the final over to seal the game for KKR, has been receiving consolation messages from all around, including from his father. It is all the more encouraging that the entire KKR team reached out to the GT bowler with a moving post, backing him to bounce back from the setback. KKR's message for Dayal read: "Chin up, lad. Just a hard day at the office happens to the best of players in cricket." No doubt, these words will lift the morale of the bruised bowler and come up strongly in the remaining matches. Yash Dayal can take solace from England's Stuart Broad, who is still respected as one of the great fast bowlers in the world despite he was taken to the cleaners by Yuvraj Singh in the 2007 T20 world cup. Sport is a great leveller, and it always gives a second chance for a player to come good.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### SACHIN ON PILOT'S FLIGHT ROUTE?

Sir — Now that Sachin (the pure) Pilot is set on steering the Rajasthan Congress aircraft to his own chosen course against instructions of central control, it is like-

## Ambedkar's views on religion



Dr BR Ambedkar had asserted "I tell you, religion is for man and not man for religion". Perhaps his words have turned "antique" and so immediately require to be junked! Currently, man is for religious shrines, epic and mythological figures, mythical unseen rivers

urgently in need of "rejuvenation", "holy" animals and "sacred" books! Today, religion is not for married couples even, rather matrimonial bonds are for religion, with divine love getting interpreted as "jihad" of sorts!

So by ignoring all "stories" revolving around poverty-malnutrition-hunger-illiteracy-child labour-human trafficking-unemployment; let's invest all our energy, time and resource to commemorate epic figures monopolised by the "religious" brigade and revolve our precious lives around myths, rituals and "sanctity" of animals! Grand temples and glittering corridors should be our "national pride"; never mind if billions of fellow citizens remain deprived of minimum dignity and rights entitled to human beings!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

ly that he has laid his hands on the same route map taken earlier by Jyotiraditya Scindia. And his landing destination may well be the same. In which case, it befits Pilot to be left to handle Civil Aviation and for Scindia to take over the Shipping portfolio. After all, he is from the lineage of the Maharaja of Gwalior who set up the Scindia Shipping way back in 1914. The BJP is decidedly generous in disbursing landing rights to carriers flying colours other than their own.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

### CROREPATI, TAINTED LEADERS AS CM

Sir — The citizen is not at all surprised to read that 29 of the current 30 Chief Ministers are crorepatris, or 13 (43 per cent) have declared serious criminal cases against them. Based upon the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report, it was revealed that money power and muscle power have a large bearing on the outcome of the election results. If not, then how Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the richest CM in the country with ₹510 crore assets, whereas he with 38 cases, including 35 serious offences (non-bailable offences with over five years of

imprisonment), stood third among the CMs with the highest number of cases booked against him? Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao faces the highest number of criminal cases (64), including 37 serious offences and financial liability.

Actually, being a crorepati is not a huge thing as any property even in a village will command close to ₹1 crore. Moreover, it may be true in case of white money, but as soon as you talk about total money, I'm sure West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee is the only CM (who is not a crorepati) would move close to other crorepati CMs. Interestingly, we are talking about the current 30 CMs, but what about all the Ministers who are not in power or who have already made the loot and are now sitting silently? Unfortunately, our law is so blind that in the defamation case a lawmaker, if found guilty, not only lost his seat but also won't contest an election for the next eight years. But politicians with huge money and muscle power rule the country freely. Truly, 'Mera Naya Bharat Mahan'!

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## MANAGING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IS THE KEY

Companies must invest in staff, listen to feedback and prioritise work-life balance



KARAN JAIN

The success or failure of a business ultimately hinges on the productivity and work quality of its workforce. The workforce is truly the foundation of every corporate and industry, and understanding their experiences within an organization is crucial. This is where employee experience comes into play, as it enables organisations to gain valuable insights into the needs and sentiments of their people.

The unprecedented changes the world of work has gone through have severely impacted and shaped how employees act and what they expect. The workforce is fluid and diverse which makes each of them have a different 'want'. There exists a common underlying tone to their expectations making work-life balance, employee engagement and productivity vital elements for HR to decide what kind of experience they are gaining.

If it becomes complex and opaque, employee experience management (EXM) could become the key to improving the overall situation.

**Build better understanding for the employees:** The pillar of EXM is based on how much HRs or CXOs understand their people or teams. Build a workspace where your employees feel much appreciated and assured.

**Bring dynamic leaders:** Dynamic leaders know the way, go the way, and show the way to their people — a famous quote by author John C Maxwell. Without good leaders, it is more challenging to establish a great company culture and a more positive working atmosphere.

**Create more learning opportunities:** A workplace should be a place for learning and development for the employees. Offer your employees more learning, skilling, and reskilling opportunities. These opportunities give more confidence to your employees to take on new challenges, improve their skill set, and get career maturity within an organisation.



**Continuous feedback and evaluation:** Employee experience management is an ongoing process. The HR department should continuously identify the issues and improve them regularly to ensure employee satisfaction and a transparent workplace setting.

**Offer smooth onboarding:** Onboarding is a vital period for both; new employees and HR. Offer an optimised and smooth onboarding to new hires by providing information regarding their job and tasks, the right tools and software, and a lot of training and guidance to avoid frustration.

**Accept inclusion and diversity:** If an organisation has a diverse workforce, its culture, policies and hiring practices must support diversity and inclusion. Ignoring these critical components could lead to stereotyping, disrespect among employees, and stress.

**Priority to work-life balance:** Employees have realised the essentiality of work-life balance. An organisation must necessitate changes in their office programs and policy to offer flexible workspace, remote work options, more breaking hours, and prioritise employees' mental and physical health.

**Notice the departing employees:** Employees leave organisations regardless of what kind of employee experience they get. It is necessary to know what motivates them to quit.

**Recognise and reward performers:** Reward and recognition are salient components of employee experience. It is a good way to motivate other employees by gratifying the performers with gifts or rewards. It imbues gratitude and inspiration.

**Get rid of micromanagement:** The less micromanagement, the more employee experience. Employees don't feel very comfortable with nagging from seniors or management. Micromanagement spreads a feeling of insecurity among the workforce.

**Focus on employee retention:** An organisation should keep high-performers and talented workers for success and avoid frequent turnovers. To make employees stay, compensate them fairly, focus on engaging them.

Organisations can start investing in their employees, listening to their feedback, bridging the gap between leaders and team members, and prioritising work-life balance.

(The writer is founder, HROne)

## Importance of being Dr BR Ambedkar



BANDARU DATTATRAYA

Our true homage on his jayanti would be to resolve to end poverty and ensure justice and equality for all by sharing national opportunities and facilities

For centuries, we as a nation struggled to cope with untouchability and caste-based discrimination. Such inhuman practices demeaned a vast section of Hindus, who were categorized as untouchables. From time to time, great souls tried to salvage us from the repercussions of various social evils. Some of them were Sant Shiromani Ravidas, Sant Chokhameela, Sant Kabir Das, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Ram Krishna Paramhans and Sant Tukaram to name a few.

At the fag-end of the 19th century, a boy full of promises was enjoying his classroom teaching the school. One day he was made to sit at the back of the classroom when it was found that he was untouchable. Once he was travelling to his maternal uncle's village along with his brother and cousin. The cart man dropped them midway when he came to know that they were untouchables. One day the boy was going somewhere. In between, he stopped to drink water from a public tap. He was beaten as untouchables were not allowed to use the facility.

The boy was none other than Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, born to Ramji Maloji Sakpal, father, and Bhimabai Murbadkar Sakpal, mother, on April 14, 1891, in Mhow Army Cantonment. He was the 14th child of his parents. His tryst with social evils as worse as untouchability, caste-based persecution and discrimination during his childhood left an indelible mark on his life and thought process.

His own experience from the incidents in his life made him realize how deeply casteism, untouchability, insults and humiliation were rooted in Hindu society. Even the cruelty of fate did not spare him. He lost his mother when he was just six years old. Notwithstanding the trauma of discrimination and discrimination, he did not give up and continued his struggle and studies against all odds. It was an incredible example of exemplary grit, determination and a never-say-die spirit.

Dr Ambedkar did his matriculation in 1908 from Elphinstone High School. His father gave him good sanskar and used to share stories and thoughts of great saints like Tukaram, Gyaneshwar, teachings of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He studied Economics and Political Science at Elphinstone College. In 1912, he got a degree from Bombay University. With a scholarship from Maharaja of Baroda, he went to Columbia University, New York City where he got a Master's degree in June 1915 after successfully completing his thesis on 'Ancient Indian Commerce'.

In 1916, he went to the London School of Economics and worked on his doctoral thesis - 'The problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and its solution.' He took Rs 5000 as a loan from Chhatrapati Shahu ji Maharaj for his further studies. In 1920, received the D Sc from London University! He also went to the University of Bonn, Germany. In June 1927, he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Columbia. He was a rare Indian politician of his time who studied at Columbia University, LSE and the University of Bonn.

Dr Ambedkar was worried about the fate of poor people, and untouchables. Dr Ambedkar wanted them to be independent. He established the Depressed Classes Society under the presidency of Baroda Maharaj. In 1920, he started The Mooknayak, a Marathi publication that enabled him to criticize the rigid Hindu



beliefs and Bahishkrit Bharat, also a Marathi magazine in 1927, to highlight the issues and aspirations of depressed sections of society. He was so passionate about eradicating the practice of caste discrimination in India that led him to establish Bahishkrit Hitakarni Sabha. In 1936, he founded the Independent Labour Party. He contested the 1937 Bombay election to the Central Legislative Assembly for 13 reserved and four general seats and won 11 reserved and three seats respectively. For him, democratic values were of paramount importance!



DR AMBEDKAR WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE FATE OF POOR PEOPLE AND UNTOUCHABLES. HE WANTED THEM TO BE INDEPENDENT

(The writer is the Governor of Haryana. The views expressed are personal)

After completing his studies and defying all hardships, Dr Ambedkar dedicated his life to the cause of the downtrodden, their emancipation and empowerment. Hence, the struggle became an integral part of his life. In 1927, Dr Ambedkar led a peaceful agitation by drinking water from Chowdar tank in Mahad, Raigad district in Maharashtra along with thousands of his followers when untouchables were not allowed to access water from the tank despite a 192 resolution moved by CK Bole and adopted by the Bombay government, allowing all untouchables to use public watering places, wells and Dharamshala, which were maintained through public funds.

Dr Ambedkar led a movement on March 3, 1930, to secure the entry of all Hindus to Kalam temple in Nasik. He was in favour of a complete overhauling of Hindu

society and Hindu theology and securing equal rights for all Hindus. He was a votary of inclusivity. Casteism and untouchability go against the spirit of Hinduism, the Vedas. Its essence lies in quality, justice, fraternity and brotherhood. He was surprised that Hinduism is so accommodating and yet treats a vast chunk of Hindus as untouchables, even worse than animals. This was his pain.

He was not inimical to Hindutva. He had resentment against Hinduism but he was not opposed to Hinduism. His acceptance of Buddhism on October 14, 1956, is a case in point as Buddhism is very much rooted in Bharatiya culture. He did not embrace any other religion though Islamic and Christian scholars tried their best to influence him. It is said that when Dr Ambedkar met Mahatma Gandhi during the second Round Table Conference, he told him that he could not accept a religion that treats humans as cats and dogs, and he will embrace a religion that is less harmful to Hinduism.

The versatility of Dr Ambedkar's personality was matchless. His ability to listen to his critics was simply brilliant. Notwithstanding his differences with Veer Savarkar and Mahatma Gandhi on a number of issues, they were unanimous in their views of achieving the goal of social equality and freeing society from abominable evils such as untouchable. Dr Ambedkar did never sup-

port armed struggle but always favoured unity among oppressed social groups to get their socio-political and economic rights. He wanted downtrodden and oppressed sections of society to stay united and acquire knowledge and education so that they are not oppressed.

As the architect of our Constitution, Dr Ambedkar has given us the mantra and roadmap to build a stronger, healthier and more inclusive society. His commitment to the cause of social equality and social justice is a guiding force for all those who are part of public life. He is not only the leader for the oppressed and depressed. He is the leader of 135 crore people in our country - India. He was a true nationalist leader, a true patriot. He has achieved an eternal place in people's hearts. His contributions cannot be estimated but can only be felt and lived by all.

Our true homage to Dr BR Ambedkar on his Jayanti would be to resolve to end poverty and ensure justice and equality for all by sharing national opportunities and facilities. We have rejected untouchability but still, a lot needs to be done to end social disparities in totality. Those who are deprived have to be holistically empowered. By rising above the petty considerations of caste, creed, region and religion, we have to make India Vishwa Guru. Let noble thoughts come from all sides, and let us spread them across the globe in Amrit Kaal!

## The top MedTech trends to watch out for in 2023

Increased demand for treatment facilitated by technology is driving the innovation in the MedTech industry as it would improve access to health equity

The combination of rapid advances in revolutionary healthcare technology and increased demand for treatment has continued to spur innovation in the MedTech industry.

Many leading healthcare experts predict 2023 to be a pivotal year for the Medtech Industry, as the rapid adoption of virtual care and demographic fads, such as an ageing population, rising chronic diseases, and health worker shortages, sustain demand for MedTech-enabled solutions.

Recent research indicates that the market for medical technologies is valued at around \$19.65 billion. The market is anticipated to reach \$22.84 billion by 2027, with a CAGR of 3.83 per cent. Innovators and regulators



CHANDRA GANJOO

in life sciences and healthcare are also looking to MedTech to improve access to care and health equity. From Robotics to Next-Gen Sequencing, let's delve into the list of MedTech trends offering new chances in this dynamic business. The field is rapidly advancing, and new trends and innovations are emerging each year. Here are some of the top MedTech trends to expect in 2023:

**Telemedicine:** Telemedicine, or remote medical consultations, is becoming increasingly popular due to the comfort and accessibility it offers. With telemedicine, patients can acquire medical care from the convenience of their own homes. In 2023, telemedicine is expected to become more prevalent as tech improves

and more healthcare providers adopt this mode of care.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI is transforming the healthcare industry in numerous ways. It is used to analyse patient data, diagnose and develop personalised treatment plans. In 2023, we can expect AI to become even more advanced, and it will likely play a bigger role in healthcare decision-making. AI will also be used to develop new drugs and therapies.

**Next-Gen Sequencing (NGS) technology:** It is a rapidly evolving field that has revolutionised the way genetic information is analysed. In 2023, the trend in NGS is expected to continue to advance with an emphasis on improving sequencing speed, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness. The use of NGS in precision medicine is expected to grow as the technology provides a way to analyse large amounts of genetic information quickly and accurately to inform the development of targeted treatments for individual patients. Additionally, the integration of NGS with other technologies, such as CRISPR-Cas9, will continue to expand the possibilities for genetic research and biotechnology.

**Newborn Screening (NBS):** It is a diagnostic test performed in newborns or infants who are tested for certain genetic or metabolic disorders shortly after birth. In 2023, the trend in newborn screening is expected to continue to focus on improving these tests' accuracy, speed, and cost-effectiveness. This will likely involve implementing new, more advanced screening technologies to develop new, more comprehensive screening panels. Additionally, there may be a growing emphasis on incorporating genomic information into newborn screening to enable earlier detection and diagnosis of genetic disorders.

Another trend in newborn screening is the increasing use of digital technologies, such as electronic health records (EHRs) and telemedicine, to improve the efficiency and accessibility of screening services. This will likely involve the integration of screening results into EHRs and telemedicine to provide remote consultations and follow-up care to families and infants. Overall, these trends

aim to ensure that all newborns have access to high-quality, effective, and timely screening services to detect and treat genetic and metabolic disorders as early as possible.

**Surgical robots:** Investments in robotic surgical firms have been one of the primary drivers of the increase in venture capital funding for medical technology. In addition, many experts assert that the employment of robotic technology during COVID-19 is particularly advantageous because it helps reduce human-to-human physical contact.

As MedTech evolves, the industry will face both obstacles and possibilities. Better patient care solutions that can enhance outcomes and lower

costs will face fewer impediments to implementation. Consequently, this will create further chances to deliver value to healthcare services worldwide and challenge the status quo for inpatient and outpatient care standards.

**Providing a more promising future for healthcare:** Trivitron Healthcare, a leading global MedTech organisation, is establishing sustainable goals and has created numerous advancements in Medical Imaging, In-vitro Diagnostics, Next Generation Sequencing, Newborn Screening, Critical Care, and Radiation Protection. Following the mission to deliver efficient and advanced care, Trivitron positively influences people's lives through collaboration, advancement, and innovation.

(The writer is Group Chief Executive Officer, Trivitron Healthcare)

# This is different India, can meet security challenges: EAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/KAMPALA, UGANDA

Giving a tough message to Pakistan and China, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said this is a "different India" that can meet its national security challenges. He also Indian soldiers have now the "full backing, they have the right equipment and the infrastructure."

Making these assertions while addressing the Indian community in Uganda late Wednesday, he said forces, who indulged in cross-border terrorism against India for decades, now know this is a "different India" which will give them a reply. He emphasized that today the country can meet its national security challenges posed by Pakistan and China while underlining the transformation of the country into a new India.

Speaking about the challenges India faces on its borders, Jaishankar said: "Today, people see a different India that is willing to stand up and India



which will meet its national security challenges whether it is Uri or whether it is Balakot." He was referring to the 2016 Uri attack by Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) insurgents from Pakistan against an Indian Army brigade headquarters and the 2019 Balakot airstrike conducted by Indian warplanes in Balakot, Pakistan against a terrorist training camp.

"Today, the forces which indulged in cross-border terrorism against India for decades and which India tolerated, they now know this is a different India and this India will give them a reply," he said.

As regards challenges on the border with China, Jaishankar said "For the last three years, in violation of the agreements, the Chinese have brought large forces," he said. Today the Indian military is deployed at great heights and in very tough conditions, he added.

This situation is different from the past as Indian soldiers have now the "full backing, they have the right equipment and the infrastructure," he said.

He acknowledged that more work has to be done to develop the infrastructure on the border with China as it has been neglected in the past. "This is a different India which will stand up for its

interests and the world will recognise that," he said. Today, he said India's policies are not impacted by any outside pressure. "It is a more independent India," he said.

Today, India cannot be put under pressure by countries that will "tell us where we should buy our oil and where we should not buy our oil."

"This is an India which will do what is in the interest of its citizens, its consumers," he said.

India has been snapping Russian oil available at a discount after the West sanctioned Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine. India continues to buy Russian oil in large quantities.

He said some people felt "bad" when India joined the Quad.

In November 2017, India, Japan, the US and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence. China has been criticising the formation

of the Quad grouping, saying it was aimed at containing Beijing's rise.

In 2007, Jaishankar said Quad had come up but they bent to pressure and gave up. "But this time we are very clear that if the Quad is in global interest and is good for the world it is good for us," he said, adding India will do whatever is necessary for the global interest.

Jaishankar said today's India is an Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) country.

"Atmanirbhar Bharat at the end of the day is actually a confidence that we are capable of many things. We need a leader who gives us the confidence that we can realise that capability and who can give us the policies that will enable us to go in that direction and it is happening," he said.

This is today a different India which will take positions which will be determined by India's national interest and "that is very much that you can actually see in the personality of Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi," he said.

## Army, IAF joint exercise in Eastern Theatre to meet any Chinese threat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of honing their operational readiness in meeting any challenge from China, the strategic forces of the Indian Army including its elite commandos of the Shatrueet Brigade and IAF in the first week of April jointly conducted a multi domain exercise in the Eastern Theatre.

China had tried to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh on December nine last year. It led to a clash between the troops from both the sides and some soldiers from both the armies also received injuries.

The drill was undertaken to validate joint plans for strategic airlift of specialised forces employing IAF fixed



and rotary wing platforms by landing and dropping in designated areas for undertaking kinetic actions to provide surge to ongoing operations by regular land forces, sources said here on Thursday.

Such Special Operations Exercises are a mix of conventional and unconventional military actions that are undertaken by specially designated, selected, trained and equipped units.

The C17 Globemaster transport aircraft, Chinooks and Mi 17s helicopters undertook multi-mode insertion into designated greenfield landing zones with surgical precision.

Paratroopers from the Shatrueet Brigade conducted special airborne operations with the aim of validating their ability to rapidly deploy into hostile environment using Chinooks and Mi17 helicopters to augment the capability of the regular ground forces.

## Opp slams Govt for omitting Maulana Azad's name from NCERT textbook

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Yet another omission, this time removal of references to freedom fighter and India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from the new class 11 political science textbook by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), has invited sharp reaction from the Opposition parties.

While Congress lashed out at the Government saying there is a concerted attempt to "rewrite" history and pass on a "distorted legacy built on lies", CPI(M) alleged that such "vengeful rewriting of history" is aimed at creating a false narrative to further the RSS' "ideological projects".

The NCERT has, however, claimed that no curricular trimming has taken place this year and the syllabus was ratio-



nated in June, last year.

As part of its "syllabus rationalisation" exercise last year, the NCERT, citing "overlapping" and "irrelevant" as reasons, dropped certain portions from the course including lessons on Gujarat riots, Mughal courts, Emergency, Cold War, Naxalite movement, among others from its textbooks. The rationalisation note had no mention of any changes in class 11 political science textbook.

"Certain changes not finding mention of in the rationalised content book could be an 'oversight'," NCERT Director Dinesh Saklani reiterated.

In the class 11 political science textbook's first chapter, titled 'Constitution - Why and How', a line has been revised to omit Azad's name from the constituent assembly committee meetings. The revised line now reads, "Usually, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel or BR Ambedkar chaired these Committees."

In the tenth chapter of the same textbook, titled "The Philosophy of the Constitution", the reference to Jammu and Kashmir's conditional accession has also been deleted.

"For example, the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian union was based on a commitment to safeguard its autonomy under Article 370 of the Constitution," says the dropped paragraph.

## Tender apology for anti-judiciary remarks: SC orders Lalit Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday came down heavily on ex-IPL commissioner Lalit Modi over his remarks against the judiciary made in social media posts and directed him to tender an unconditional apology on social media platforms and national newspapers. Observing that Modi is not above law and the institution, a Bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar warned any repeat of such conduct will be viewed very seriously.

The apex court also directed him to file an affidavit before it tendering an apology and stating no such posts will be made in future which would tantamount, even remotely, to tarnishing the image of the Indian judiciary. "We have



gone through the counter affidavit filed by the respondent (Modi). We are not at all satisfied with the explanation given. We are of the view even the clarification would tarnish the image of the judiciary.

"Counsel for respondent AM Singhvi has stated at bar that an unconditional apology would be tendered in all social media where he has followers and leading newspapers at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Madras and Kolkata editions," the Bench said while posting the matter for further hearing on April 24.

## ED takes Chanda's statement in land-for-jobs scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday recorded the statement of RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's daughter Chanda Yadav in a money laundering case linked to the land-for-jobs 'scam' in the railway.

Chanda Yadav's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) during her deposition before the ED. She is the fourth child of Lalu, a former Railway Minister, to have deposed before the ED in this case till now. Lalu has nine children.

On Wednesday, his other daughter Ragini Yadav was questioned. Earlier, his MP daughter Misa Bharti and his son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav have also been questioned at the agency's office here.

In March, the agency had searched the premises of



Chanda Yadav, her sisters Ragini Yadav and Hema Yadav, and former RJD MLA Abu Dojana in Patna, Phulwari Sharif, Delhi-NCR, Ranchi and Mumbai. The ED had on Monday questioned and recorded the statement of Tejashwi Yadav in this case.

Misa Bharti was similarly questioned by the ED in this case on March 25, the same day Tejashwi Yadav had deposed before the CBI.

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

## Congressional Caucus meet on Apr 26 to boost US-India ties

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI / WASHINGTON

The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans has announced a meeting to strengthen US-India partnership by bringing key stakeholders together. It is the first of its kind meeting at the US Congress and will take place on April 26. The meeting has bipartisan support and has gained momentum in the past decade.

"I am very excited that leading members of the Indian American community, senior members of the Congress, critical Administration leaders and foreign policy experts will be convening on April 26 to chart out a comprehensive strategy for strengthening US-India partnership," Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna said late Wednesday.

## Bengaluru company unveils chip that could revolutionise satellite-based navigation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a development that could revolutionise satellite-based navigation in India and abroad, Elena Geo Systems, a Bengaluru-based space technology company on Thursday unveiled a chip that could form the core of the navigation, positioning and timing applications in India.

The chip works using navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) or the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) satel-



lites. Elena Geo Systems founder, Lt Colonel V S Velan handed over the chip to Chief of Defence Staff General (CDS) Anil Chauhan here in the presence of Samir V Kamat, Chairman, Defence Research and Development

Organization (DRDO).

The chip has many cores that service the requirements of signal acquisition, regeneration, processing and the output interface and hence it is has been named as the NavIC processor. This will enable high

precision and accuracy for all the three types of applications such as navigation, positioning and timing, providing India much needed self-reliance in this domain.

The company has been pursuing advance technologies to manufacture these chips and modules; some of which have been supplied to the Indian Army and some private entities. Elena Geo Systems, was incubated at IIT-Kharagpur in 2012 and is now a member of the Delhi-based Indian Space Association.

## Data on attacks on Christians not correct, Centre tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday disputed in the Supreme Court the figure pertaining to alleged attacks on Christian institutions and priests, claiming the petitioners wanted to keep "the pot boiling" to sully the image of the country abroad. The apex court was hearing a PIL filed by Rev. Peter Machado of the National Solidarity Forum, Rev. Vijayesh Lal of Evangelical Fellowship of India, and others claiming violence against Christians.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud was earlier told by the PIL petitioners that from 2021 to May 2022, 700 cases of violence against Christians were reported and a majority of those arrested were followers of the faith.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, referred to a report containing the case data

received from Bihar and Chhattisgarh and said most of them related to disputes involving neighbours and, coincidentally, one of the parties happened to be a Christian.

He said the Bench, also including Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, had taken note of the matter based on the figures provided by the PIL petitioners which were wrong. "The petitioner claimed that there are some 500 incidents where Christians were attacked. We sent everything to the State Governments. We collated all the information we got. The figure given by them, which obviously persuaded your lordships, was not correct," said Mehta, citing that Union Home Ministry has collated the responses from all the States. Altogether 38 such incidents were reported from Bihar, and as per the report, they pertained to fights between two neighbours of whom one happened to be a Christian.

## Delhi HC speeds up appeal process in 2G scam cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Speeding up the appeal process in 2G scam cases, the Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the CBI, ED, former Telecom Minister A Raja and others to file their submissions in the appeals challenging the acquittal by the trial court. Justice DK Sharma said the parties shall file brief written submissions not exceeding five pages. The CBI demanded day-to-day hearings and its counsel urged the court to list the matter on an early date when he would argue on the aspect of granting leave to appeal, the judge fixed the matter for May 22 and 23.

The CBI and ED filed appeal against the trial court's verdict acquitting all accused persons on March 2018, five years ago. There were 95 listings and seven judges presided on the appeal process. At one point Justice Najmi Waziri in mid 2018, fined some accused for delaying the process and

ordered them to plant 16,000 trees at Delhi Ridge forest area.

"The matter requires urgent hearing. Fix anytime of the day for conducting day-to-day hearing in the matter," the CBI counsel submitted.

Though the CBI had earlier concluded its submissions on the issue of leave to appeal, it will have to argue the matter afresh due to change of the judge.

Leave to appeal is a formal permission granted by a court to a party to challenge a decision in a higher court.

Earlier, the case was being heard on a day-to-day basis by Justice Brijesh Sethi, who retired on November 30 and had released the matter from his board on November 23 owing to paucity of time. Before retiring, Justice Sethi had decided various petitions and applications filed by the acquitted individuals and firms in the three cases arising out of the 2G scam probe lodged by the CBI and ED.

### FROM PAGE 1

## ATIQ'S SON ASAD, ACCOMPLICE SHOT DEAD IN STF ENCOUNTER

told reporters from inside a police van.

In an apparent reference to Atiq Ahmad, Special Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said there were intelligence inputs that the convoy bringing the accused might be attacked to free him.

On Thursday, police said an STF team led by two deputy superintendents of police reached Badagaon area in Jhansi district after getting information about the gangsters. Asad and Ghulam, who carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh each, had tried to flee on a motorcycle, police said. They opened fire at the STF team when it surrounded them and the policemen retaliated, according to Kumar.

The officer said a British Bulldog revolver and a Walther pistol were recovered.

ADG (STF) Amitabh Yash said, "We knew that they had foreign weapons. We were ready. The way this gang killed Umesh Pal and his two gunners, it was not easy to catch these accused. Both had British Bull Dog revolver and Walther pistol. These weapons are rare."

Visuals showed two bodies lying beside a motorcycle at the site of the alleged encounter. An ambulance later took them to the Jhansi Medical College for post-mortem examination.

With Thursday's encounter, in con-

nection with the Umesh Pal murder case, the UP Police have so far gunned down four shooters. Arbaaz was killed in the first encounter on February 27 in Prayagraj itself. Arbaaz was driving the Creta car by which the assailants had reached Umesh Pal's house. Assad was also in it. The second encounter took place on March 6. In this, Vijay Chaudhary alias Usman, who fired the first shot at Umesh, was killed.

Umesh Pal, a key witness in the 2005 murder case of then Bahujan Samaj Party MLA Raju Pal, and his two police security guards were shot dead outside his home in Prayagraj's Dhoomanganj area on February 24 this year.

His wife Jaya Pal had lodged a report on February 25 against Atiq Ahmad, his brother Ashraf, Asad, Ghulam and others.

Reacting to the news of the encounter, Umesh Pal's family thanked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the police administration.

"Whatever they have done is right. He (the chief minister) has punished the killer of his daughter's husband. I express my gratitude. He is like a father. Justice has been done," Jaya told media, adding she hoped strict action would be taken against other accused.

When asked against whom else she wanted action, she said, "I leave that to the government. The government is giving me justice."

Umesh Pal's mother said, "The two gunners who were killed in broad daylight today had committed a sin. They have been punished today. We have faith, we will get complete justice."

The FIR in the Umesh Pal murder cases was lodged under sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapons), 149 (unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Atiq Ahmad is also an accused in the 2005 Raju Pal murder case.

## PAWAR MEETS KHARGE; MANJHI-SHAH MEETING TRIGGERS SPECULATION

The Congress will convene a meeting of top opposition leaders very soon.

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav too on Thursday said people of the country want change of power, but evaded a direct reply on whether his party would join an Opposition alliance to the BJP. "This is a big question. What name are you giving to it (the grand alliance)? But I know one thing that people of Uttar Pradesh will unseat the BJP," said Yadav who had met West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata last month.

Both TMC and SP had said the two parties would stay away from both the Congress and the BJP and indicated possible talks with other regional players ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Yadav had given his party's support to the TMC during the 2021 West Bengal Assembly poll, which was reciprocated by Mamata when she campaigned for the former in Uttar Pradesh during the 2022 State election.



# Japan to counter China with like-minded countries

PTI ■ BEIJING

Japan has unveiled a new plan to provide "like-minded" countries especially in Asia with military aid as it looks to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific region to counter China's aggressive push over Taiwan and the South China Sea issues.

The guidelines announced by Tokyo early this month included a new programme to strengthen the militaries of like-minded countries by providing "official security assistance" - a move that breaks with its previous policy of avoiding the use of development aid for military purposes other than disaster relief, the Japan Times reported.

Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said the Philippines will be one of the first beneficiaries of Overseas Security Assistance (OSA), with Malaysia, Bangladesh and Fiji also among those being considered, the report said.

Japan, a member of the

Quad alliance consisting of the US, India and Australia, is actively pursuing the Indo-Pacific strategy which China claims aimed at countering its rise.

Tokyo's decision to use international aid for military purposes is a "paradigm shift" but won't lead to an arms race in Asia, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday.

The move will not only build up the defence capabilities of Asian nations amid 'changing security dynamics', but boost the competitiveness of Japan's defence sector, it said.

Japan's new policy of defence aid to neighbours was announced after this month's visit of Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi to China.

In his talks with Hayashi on April 2, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said Japan should not "help a villain do evil", apparently referring to Tokyo's close ties with

## China rolls out new wartime military recruitment rules

Beijing (PTI): China has released a new set of revised rules for military recruitment in wartime, including giving priority to the veterans, drafting high-calibre soldiers and optimising conscription procedures, which an analyst described as combat readiness for a war over Taiwan.

A set of revised rules regarding military recruitment has been released by the State Council and the Central Military Commission (CMC) - the high command of the Chinese military headed by President Xi Jinping - aiming to provide institutional guarantees for consolidating national defence and building strong armed forces, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. The new regula-

tion, with 74 articles in 11 chapters, focuses on recruiting more high-calibre soldiers, standardising and optimising conscription procedures, and improving the system's efficiency, it said in a brief report. The new rules will come into effect next month.

The regulations said recruitment should "focus on preparing for war" and increase efficiency by calling up "high calibre" recruits, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post newspaper reported. For the first time, a separate chapter on wartime recruitment has been included in the regulations, which state that ex-servicemen would be prioritised and expected to join their original units or similar positions.

Washington.

This was the first visit by the Japanese Foreign Minister to China since 2019.

China and Japan have a long-festering dispute over uninhabited East China Sea islands controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

The islands are known as the Senkakus by Japan, while China named them as Diaoyu.

Taiwan also claims the islands but has forged agreements with Japan to avoid any conflict as Tokyo maintains close defence ties with Taipei.

The purpose of Tokyo's new initiative is to "contribute to the creation of a desirable security environment for Japan," while maintaining Japan's "basic principles as a peaceful nation," according to the Japanese ministry statement.

The OSA is being presented as an expansion of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) - one of the world's largest foreign aid programs - to cover projects "for the benefit of

armed forces and other related organisations," the Japan Times report said.

The new framework was revealed as Tokyo moves away from a strict non-military approach to ties with its neighbours and looks to realise its vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), it said.

According to its fiscal 2023 budget, the Japanese government has set aside two billion Japanese Yen (USD15 million) for OSA. Funding will be separate from the Yen 570.9 billion in economic and social development assistance that Tokyo provides to developing countries.

While this year's modest OSA budget appears largely symbolic, especially compared with the ODA funds, experts say the decision to launch the program is significant, as it marks another step in Japan's march toward a more robust and proactive defence posture that could ultimately allow it more leeway in defence transfers, Japan Times report said.

# Pak SC halts bill to limit CJ's powers

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Ignoring calls to stop interfering in the domain of parliament, Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday stopped operationalisation of a bill aimed at clipping the powers of the chief justice.

The lawmakers on Monday passed for the second time the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill 2023 to dilute chief justice's power to take suo motu action and form a panel of judges for hearing of cases.

An eight-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial held the first hearing of at least three petitions challenging the bill which is yet to become a law because President Arif Alvi has not endorsed it. However, it would become a law even without Alvi's signature next week after passing of ten days since it was passed by the parliament.

The bench observed that prima facie the proposed law infringed the powers of the apex court to frame its own rules and it merits a hearing by the court.

The court in its order after hearing stated that any intrusion in its practice and the procedure, even on the most tentative of assessments, would appear to be "inimical to the independence of the

judiciary, no matter how innocuous, benign or even desirable the regulation may facially appear to be."

"It is therefore hereby directed and ordered as follows. The moment that the bill receives the assent of the president or (as the case may be) it is deemed that such assent has been given, then from that very moment onwards and till further orders, the act that comes into being shall not have, take or be given any effect nor be acted upon in any manner," the court stated.

The bench also issued notices to the political parties, the federal government, Attorney General, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan and other respondents in the case.

Later, the proceedings were adjourned till May 2.

Earlier in the day, representatives of the political parties which are part of the coalition government criticised the court for scheduling the hearing of petitions against the bill.

Separately, the parliament passed a resolution calling for the dissolution of the eight-judge larger bench. The resolution tabled by the Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker Agha Rafiullah was approved by a majority vote.

# Norway expels 15 Russian diplomats for 'spying'

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Norway's government said Thursday that it was expelling 15 Russian diplomats from the country, saying they were suspected of spying while working at the Russian Embassy in Oslo. Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt said the move was "an important measure to counter and reduce the scope of Russian intelligence activities in Norway, and thereby secure our national interests."

The Russians declared persona non grata "must leave Norway within a short time," Huitfeldt said, adding: "We will not grant visas to intelligence officers who apply for a visa to Norway."

The minister declined to say whether the government was acting in response to a specific incident, referring questions to Norway's domestic security agency PST for details. The government said the activities of the expelled diplomats were "incompatible with their diplomatic status."

"We are not talking about regular diplomats, but intelligence officers under diplomatic cover. Their activities are a threat to Norwegian interests," Huitfeldt said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow would respond in kind to Norway's action, Russia's Tass and RIA Novosti news agencies reported. Huitfeldt reacted during an afternoon news conference, saying: "Russia has no reason to respond. We have Norwegian diplomats stationed in Russia, but none of them are undercov-

er intelligence officers." She called Russia "an unpredictable neighbor" and "many European countries in the past year have expelled hundreds of Russian intelligence officers under diplomatic cover."

At the same time, she stressed that the government in Oslo wants "normal diplomatic relations with Russia, and that Russian diplomats are welcome in Norway"

"We do not want people who claim they are diplomats and who are actually are intelligence officers," she said. "We cannot accept that."

NATO-member Norway has a 198 kilometre-long (123-mile) border with Russia in the Arctic. Norwegian newspaper VG said expulsions would reduce the number of staff members at the Russian missions in Norway - the embassy in Oslo and the consulates in Kirkenes and Barentsburg from about 40 people to about 25.

Barentsburg, which is located on the remote Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, is a Russian coal-mining town of about 500 people. Under a 1920 treaty, Norway has sovereignty over the archipelago but other signatory countries have rights to explore its natural resources.

A year ago, Norway expelled three Russian diplomats it identified as intelligence officers.

A man whom the Norwegian Police Security Service alleged used a false name and identity while actually working for one of Russia's intelligence services also was arrested last year. He is awaiting trial in Norway.

# Ukraine stands firm on Crimea

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's foreign minister said Thursday his country wouldn't budge from its demand that Russia withdraw its forces from Crimea, as well as from other parts of Ukraine that Moscow illegally annexed more recently. Calling the war in Ukraine "a bleeding wound in the middle of Europe," Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said all his country's territory must be treated equally in dealing with the Kremlin after its full-scale invasion more than 13 months ago.

"We are united by UN charter principles and the shared conviction that Crimea is Ukraine and it will return under Ukraine's control," said Kuleba, speaking by video link to a gathering in the Romanian capital, Bucharest.

"Every time you hear anyone from any corner of the world saying that Crimea is somehow special and should not be returned to Ukraine, as any other part of our territory, you have to know one thing: Ukraine categorically disagrees with these statements," he said at the Black Sea Security Conference.



Ukrainian soldiers chat in war-hit Bakhmut Ukraine on Wednesday. AP/PTI

The Kremlin wants Kyiv to acknowledge Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and also recognise September's annexation of the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine has rejected those demands and won't hold talks with Russia until Moscow's troops pull back from all occupied territories.

Though there is no sign of possible peace talks, the two countries have sporadically exchanged prisoners of war and have engaged in a wartime deal for the export of Ukrainian grain and Russian grain and

fertilisers. The grain deal has helped ease concerns about the global food supply, especially to countries in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia where many are already struggling with hunger.

The agreement, which was brokered by the UN and Turkey last July is delicate, however, and has been the subject of repeated threats by Moscow to end it.

Russia agreed last month to extend the grain deal for 60 days - instead of the 120 days set under a previous extension - to send a warning signal to the West.

# N Korea fires first intercontinental ballistic missile

Seoul (South Korea): North Korea on Thursday conducted its first intercontinental ballistic missile launch in a month, possibly testing a new more mobile, harder-to-detect missile for the first time, its neighbours said, as it extends its provocative run of weapons tests.

Japan briefly urged residents on a northern island to take shelter in an indication of its vigilance over North Korea's evolving missile threats.

The missile was launched on a high angle from near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang and fell in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan following a 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) flight, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

It described its range as medium or longer. The US



A TV screen is seen reporting North Korea's missile launch with file footage during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, on Thursday.

National Security Council called it a long-range missile and Japan's government said it likely had an intercontinental range. South Korea's military believes North Korea launched

a new type of ballistic missile, possibly using solid fuel, a defense official said under the condition of anonymity because of office rules.

If the launch involved a

solid-fuel ICBM, it would be the North's first test of such a weapon. North Korea's known ICBMs all use liquid propellants that must be fuelled before launches.

But the fuel in a solid-propellant weapon is already loaded, allowing it to be moved easier and fired faster.

A solid-fuel ICBM is one of the key high-tech weapons that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to build to better cope with what he calls US military threats.

He also wants a multiwarhead missile, a nuclear-powered submarine, a hypersonic missile and a spy satellite. Kim Dongyub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said the launch may have involved a new intermediate- or long-range missile powered by solid propellants, or

be linked to North Korean preparation to launch a spy satellite.

US National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said the latest launch "needlessly raises tensions and risks destabilizing the security situation in the region."

Watson said the United States will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and South Korean and Japanese allies.

During an emergency meeting of Seoul's National Security Council, officials stressed the need to tighten three-way security cooperation with Washington and Tokyo.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held a meeting of his NSC to analyse the launch and Japan's response.

# Imran gets interim bail till May 4 in 3 cases

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Laure (PTI): An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday extended interim bail to Imran Khan till May 4 in three cases related to the clashes between his supporters and the police during an operation to arrest the former premier in the Toshakhana corruption case last month. Lahore's Anti-terrorism court (ATC) granted one-time permission to Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), to appear for the hearing via video link in the case. Khan had filed petitions for bail in three FIRs registered with the Race Course police station under anti-terror laws.

Khan, 70, has been repeatedly claiming that his life is

under threat because of which he was abstaining from attending court hearings. ATC judge Ejaz Ahmad Bhutta asked Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar what he had done for which he was facing threats to his life. To this, Safdar said those who were behind a gun attack on his client (in last November) could answer this. "If Imran Khan is assassinated Pakistan will descend into chaos like what had happened after the murder of former premier Benazir Bhutto," he said.

"There are credible reports that Mr Khan can be targeted by snipers on his way to courts and these can be verified from the law enforcement agencies," he said. In November last year,

Khan survived an assassination attempt on his life. After hearing arguments, the judge allowed Khan to mark his attendance in court through a video link and extended his pre-arrest bail till May 4, a court official said. The Lahore police had booked Khan and hundreds of his party workers in three terrorism cases during clashes with police last month in an operation to arrest him in the Toshakhana case.

Khan has been in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana, and selling them for profit.

# NY fraud lawsuit: Trump set to give 2<sup>nd</sup> deposition

New York (AP): Former President Donald Trump was expected to visit the offices of New York's attorney general Thursday for his second deposition in a legal battle over his company's business practices.

The Republican was scheduled to meet with lawyers for Attorney General Letitia James, who sued Trump last year. Her lawsuit claims Trump and his family misled banks and business associates by giving them false information about his net worth and the value of assets such as hotels and golf courses. The lawsuit is unrelated to the felony criminal charges filed against Trump by the Manhattan district attorney, which led last week to his historic arraignment, the first for a former president.

Trump and his lawyers have said the Democrat's lawsuit against him is politically motivated and legally baseless. He and the company have denied doing anything wrong. James declined to answer a question about the planned deposition at a news conference on an unrelated matter

Wednesday.

Trump previously met with James' lawyers Aug. 10, but refused to answer all but a few procedural questions, invoking his Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination more than 400 times.

"Anyone in my position not taking the Fifth Amendment would be a fool, an absolute fool," he said in the session, which was recorded on video and later released publicly. Trump predicted a "renegade" prosecutor would try to make a criminal case out of his answers, if he gave them. "One statement or answer that is ever so slightly off, just ever so slightly, by accident, by mistake, such as it was a sunny, beautiful day, when actually it was slightly overcast, would be met by law enforcement at a level seldom seen in this country, because I've experienced it," he said. A trial for the lawsuit is scheduled for October.

It is unclear whether Trump might answer any questions in his second deposition.

# Russia identifies suspect in war blogger's killing

AP ■ KYIV

Russia's top security agency on Thursday accused a Ukrainian man of involvement in a bombing that killed a well-known Russian military blogger at a St. Petersburg cafe.

Vladlen Tatarsky, 40, an ardent supporter of the war in Ukraine who filed regular reports on the fighting from the front lines, was killed on April 2 as he led a discussion at a riverside cafe in the historic heart of St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city. Over 50 people were injured.

A 26-year-old St. Petersburg resident, Darya Trepova, who was seen on video moments before the blast presenting Tatarsky with a statuette that contained explosives, was quickly arrested.

According to Russian media reports, Trepova told investigators she was asked to deliver the statuette but didn't know what was inside it.

# Syria, Saudi move toward restoring embassies, flights

AP ■ BEIRUT

Syria and Saudi Arabia are moving toward reopening embassies and resuming flights between the two countries for the first time in more than a decade, the countries said on Thursday in a joint statement. The announcement followed a visit by Syria's top diplomat to the kingdom, the first since Saudi Arabia cut off diplomatic relations with Syria in 2012.

Syria was widely shunned by Arab governments over Syrian President Bashar Assad's brutal crackdown on protesters, and later civilians, in an uprising turned civil war that began in 2011.

The breakdown in relations culminated with Syria being ousted from the Arab League. However, in recent years, as Assad has consolidated control over most of the country, Syria's neighbors have begun to take steps toward rapprochement.

The overtures have picked up pace since the massive February 6 earthquake in



Turkey and Syria, and the Chinese-brokered reestablishment of ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran, regional rivals that had backed opposing sides in the Syrian conflict.

A delegation headed by Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad, at the invitation of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud arrived in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday for talks about bilateral relations between the two countries, state media from the two countries reported.

Saudi state media reported that Syrian Foreign

Minister Faisal Mikdad was received by the kingdom's Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khurajji.

The meeting focused on the steps needed to reach a "comprehensive political settlement of the Syrian crisis that would... achieve national reconciliation, and contribute to the return of Syria to its Arab fold," the two countries said in a joint statement.

Saudi Arabia is hosting the next Arab League summit in May, where a restoration of Syria's membership is widely expected to be on the table.

# Khawaja Asif warns of striking TTP hideouts in Afghanistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned Afghanistan's Taliban rulers about targeting terrorist hideouts inside the war-torn neighbouring country if the latter were unable to rein in anti-Pakistan militants.

He had earlier said that the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were using Afghan soil for carrying out attacks in Pakistan.

In an interview with Voice of America, the defence minister said that in his visit to Afghanistan in late-February, he reminded the Taliban administration to live up to their cross-border security commitments forbidding terrorists from using Afghan soil to plan and conduct attacks on Pakistan or Islamabad will take action, Dawn newspaper reported on Thursday.

"We have communicated to Kabul during our last visit that please, as our neighbours and brothers, whatever is emanating from Afghan soil is your responsibility," he said.

"If that is not done, at some point we'll have to (...) resort to some measures, which will definitely - wherever (terrorists) are, their sanctuaries on Afghan soil - we'll have to hit them," he said. "We'll have to hit them because we cannot tolerate this situation for long."

Asif went on to say that the Afghans responded to this "really well". "They responded well, really well. Perhaps for them to disentangle the TTP from this stage - of course they want to disentangle, this is my impression [that] they want to disentangle - but this disentangling, perhaps, will take time. "But they are doing well and we wish them well and we don't want to get into a situation where this situation with the [TTP] escalates and we do something that is not to the liking of our neighbours and brothers in Kabul."

During the interview, Asif was asked whether he believed the Taliban's claim that the TTP were not using Afghan soil to carry out attacks in Pakistan. "They still operate from their soil," he replied.

# REAL EARN SOLID LEAD ON CHELSEA

AP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema and Marco Asensio struck for Real Madrid as they dominated 10-man Chelsea and opened up a 2-0 Champions League quarter-final first leg lead on Wednesday.

The record 14-time winners and reigning champions eased to a comfortable win against Frank Lampard's side, who had Ben Chilwell sent off in the second half for pulling down Rodrygo Goes as he ran through on goal.

Benzema netted from close range after 21 minutes after Kepa Arrizabalaga tipped a Vinicius Junior effort into his path.

Despite controlling the game, Madrid had to wait until the 74th minute for their second, with Asensio drilling home from the edge of the box after a short corner routine.

In a battle between the last two Champions League winners, Madrid demonstrated their strength with an impressive display, while Chelsea showed why they are struggling in 11th in the Premier League.

"We are satisfied with the result, for the performance but it's not over yet, we have to fight, to sacrifice for another 90 minutes at Stamford Bridge," said Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti.

"We are satisfied only for tonight, it's not over yet. We



know Chelsea will try to (give) everything next week."

Ancelotti, who coached Lampard at Chelsea between 2009-2011, relied on veteran

midfielders Toni Kroos and Luka Modric to pull the strings.

Lampard, in his second game at the helm since replacing Graham Potter last week,

threw Thiago Silva and N'Golo Kante straight into the starting line-up after injury worries.

Kante shone against Madrid in the 2021 semis as Chelsea beat

them en route to winning the trophy for the second time, and his performance was one positive for Lampard.

The French midfielder

slipped on-loan Atletico striker Joao Felix through at the start, but he fired at former Chelsea

stopper Thibaut Courtois. Madrid fans had shown

their support for Fede Valverde before the game, after he allegedly punched Villarreal's Alex Baena on Saturday, and he nearly rewarded them with a piledriver which flew narrowly off-target.

"For me he was the best player on the pitch, he put in a lot of energy," said Ancelotti. "He was impeccable at recovering the ball."

Benzema, who netted a hat-trick at Stamford Bridge last season and scored the goal which sent Madrid through against the Blues in the second leg, tapped home his sixth goal against Chelsea to open the scoring.

Dani Carvajal lofted a tempting ball over the top and although Kepa got his fingertips to Vinicius's effort, Benzema was left with a simple tap-in.

Chelsea almost produced an instant equaliser but Courtois made a stunning save to deny Raheem Sterling from close range.

Madrid toyed with their opponents, penning them back in their box for large stretches, with Vinicius, Rodrygo and David Alaba going close.

## BLUES BLOWS

Chelsea have struggled badly for goals this season and after their early chances, found it difficult to build in attack.

The Blues have not scored in their last four matches across all competitions for the first time since 1993 — and their

only pure striker, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is not registered to play in the Champions League.

"The last bit is sometimes confidence," said Lampard. "If you work, keep going, something can change."

"No player doesn't want to score a goal, sometimes they need support, confidence and a push in a positive way."

Chelsea's uphill struggle was made harder before the hour mark when Chilwell tugged back Rodrygo as he ran through on goal and was shown a straight red card.

A difficult evening was compounded when Asensio squeezed an effort through Fofana's legs and into the bottom corner to double the hosts' advantage.

Benzema might have netted another in stoppage time but headed off target after Kepa pushed a cross into his path.

Antonio Rudiger made a good block to thwart Mason Mount late on to ensure his former side could not take anything positive into the second leg.

"We're 2-0 down against Real Madrid, that's a fact now, that's done," said Lampard.

"(But) we're in a different place now, we're in a place to prove things wrong, change the tone, change the story."

Chelsea host Madrid next Tuesday, with the winners facing Manchester City or Bayern Munich in the semi-finals.



# Bennacer gives Milan first blood vs Napoli

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan have the slenderest of advantages in their all-Italian Champions League quarter-final after Ismael Bennacer fired his team to a 1-0 win over wasteful Napoli on Wednesday.

Algeria midfielder Bennacer lashed in the decisive strike five minutes before half-time of an engaging first leg at a packed, loud and wet San Siro after Brahim Diaz and Rafael Leao combined brilliantly.

The 25-year-old's second goal of the season ensured Milan's second win over Italy's champions-elect Napoli in less than a fortnight and a narrow lead to defend at the Stadio Maradona in Naples next week.

"It will be a great return leg with a lot of tension and emotion," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli to Amazon Prime.

"We performed at a level worthy of the Champions League... we'll go to Naples with confidence and concentration high, we know how difficult it will be down there."

Napoli, who had Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa sent off in the 74th minute and will be without Kim Min-jae for the second leg, should have Victor Osimhen back for the second leg on Tuesday and without their star striker Luciano Spalletti's team got nothing despite having plenty of chances.

Milan goalkeeper Mike

Maignan made a series of impressive stops, in particular late on when he clawed out Giovanni Di Lorenzo's effort just as the more than 70,000 home fans were celebrating victory.

But Bennacer's strike was just enough to give Milan hopes of their first Champions League semi-final since they were crowned kings of Europe for the seventh and most recent time in 2007.

That prospect will be all the more mouth-watering for Milan fans as their likely opponents would be local rivals Inter following their convincing win at Benfica on Tuesday.

"It's a defeat, but with the attitude we showed today we're confident," said Napoli captain Di Lorenzo to Amazon Prime. "It's not easy to come here without a centre-forward but we created chances."

## MAIGNAN SAVES MILAN

The home fans had barely discarded their pre-match display which read "our destiny is in our hands" when Khvicha Kvaratskhelia wasted a great chance to give Napoli a stunning early lead.

Anguissa's low cross was dealt with terribly by the home defence but the home fans breathed a huge sigh of relief after Davide Calabria and Rade Krunic combined to block the Georgian winger's shot on the line. Anguissa then had a powerful shot tipped over the bar by

Maignan before Di Lorenzo headed a presentable Mario Rui cross over the bar as Napoli flooded towards the Milan goal in the opening minutes.

Kvaratskhelia had a shot blocked after neat exchange with Eljif Elmas and Piotr Zielinski forced Maignan into another good stop with a rocket in the 12th minute.

Milan had barely been in the game up to that point but midway through he first half Leao reminded everyone he was there by fashioning a glorious chance through pure pace only to drag his shot just wide after bursting past Anguissa and Stanislav Lobotka.

And then Bennacer put the hosts into the lead after another brilliant piece of individual skill, this time from Brahim Diaz. The Spanish international span beautifully in the midfield and fed Leao, whose first-time pass alluded Diaz and found Bennacer for a thumping near-post finish.

Simon Kjær then smashed Bennacer's corner off the bar in stoppage time with a header which for a moment had fans celebrating before the ball bounced out just before the line. Napoli began the second half in the same manner in which they started the first but again couldn't find their way past Maignan, who did brilliantly to tip Elmas' looping header over the bar.

# Neeraj to start season at Doha Diamond League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will begin his season at the Diamond League meeting in Doha on May 5, as one of the top draws in a star-studded field.

The 25-year-old Chopra, the reigning Diamond League champion after winning the grand finale in September last, will join world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and Olympic silver medalist Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic in the first meet of the 14-leg one-day series of the season. Chopra, who has a personal best of 89.94m which he achieved while finishing second at last year's Stockholm Diamond League meeting, is currently training in Türkiye. He

will be there till May 31.

Due to an injury, the Indian superstar missed the 2022 Doha Diamond League Meeting where Peters sent the spear to 93.07m, the fifth-longest throw in history, to win the title. World Championships bronze medalist Vadlejch had finished second with a personal best throw of 90.88m.

Alongside the decorated trio, the Doha Meeting will also see European champion Julian Weber of Germany, the Olympic and world fourth-place finisher with a best of 89.54m, former Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott (PB: 90.16m) of Trinidad & Tobago, former world champion and 2016 Olympic silver medalist Julius Yego (PB: 92.72m) of Kenya.



One of the targets for Chopra, the first Indian Olympic gold medalist in track and field, this year will be to cross the 90m mark, the gold standard in the world of javelin. "I'm also getting closer to the 90m mark, so it would mean a lot for me to break that barrier," he said. "While last year was a good year for

me with a new personal best, world silver medal, and the win of the Wanda Diamond League, this year brings new opportunities. My goal for this summer is the World Championships, alongside the Asian Games and the defence of my Wanda Diamond League title."

After scripting history at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Chopra won a silver in the 2022 World Championships in USA, where Peters won gold, but failed to defend the Commonwealth Games gold, he had won in 2018, at the Birmingham edition last year due to an injury. He, however, recovered on time from the injury — which he had sustained during the World Championships — to win the Diamond League Finals in Switzerland.

# Mbappe sees future at PSG

AFP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappe has said he will still be a Paris Saint-Germain player next season despite regular speculation over his future, as the France superstar also admitted he hopes to play for his country at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Asked where he saw himself playing next season in an interview with television channel France 3 on Wednesday evening, Mbappe responded: "At Paris Saint-Germain. I am Parisian, I have a contract and so it's Paris Saint-Germain."

Mbappe signed a new contract with PSG at the end of last season to keep him at the Qatar-owned club until 2025, although French media reports have indicated that the last year of that deal is optional and down to the player.

That would raise the possibility of the 24-year-old being able to leave for free at the end of next season.

Mbappe's comments come a week after he complained over the club's use of an interview with him as part of their season-ticket advertising campaign, before the club removed the footage. He joined PSG in 2017 from Monaco and still hopes to win the Champions League with his home city club.



"I have already got to one final and a semi-final. I have been to the quarter-finals, the last 16. I have done everything but win it," he said.

"That is all I am lacking. I hope it will come as soon as possible."

A World Cup winner with France in 2018 and runner-up last year, Mbappe said it was his "dream" to represent his country at the Paris Olympics.

"I hope to be there. Everyone knows I have always dreamed of playing at the Olympic Games but it doesn't depend on me," he admitted. Clubs are not usually oblig-

ed to release players to compete at the Olympics as it is not part of the FIFA international match calendar.

Mbappe added: "I won't force it because if people don't want me to play at the Olympics that means I must not."

"The truth is that it is not part of the FIFA calendar. I have to think about my club, and my national team too because there is the Euro just before it, so it needs to be discussed."

"All these things need to be considered but of course it would be a dream to play at the Olympics, all the more so in Paris."

## LOCAL EVENTS

### OM ENTERS FINAL

Top seed Om Yadav defeated third seed Pranav Mishra 6-4, 7-6 (4) to enter the boy's under-18 final of the 21st Eldeco Cup AITA Championship on Thursday. He will now take on Sanidhya Dhar in the title clash. Sanidhya beat sixth seed Aniket Srivastava 7-5, 6-7 (3), 6-1 in the second semi-final. Sanidhya also made it into U-14 final.

**Other results (Semis): (SINGLES) Boy's U-14:** Sanidhya Dhar bt Rohin Roy 6-1, 6-0; Vanshraj bt Abhiyudu Singh 7-5, 6-3; **Girl's U-18:** Satakshika bt Satakshi Tiwari 6-2, 6-1, Anvesha Dhar bt Pranjali 6-3, 6-4; **Girl's U-14:** Aarnavi bt Arundhati 6-2, 6-3, Anvesha Dhar bt Siddhi 6-2, 6-2; **(DOUBLES) Boy's U-14:** Arunodhaya/Advik bt Mehar/Mehul 6-2, 7-5; **Girl's U-18:** Sasa Katiyar/Shakti bt Satakshika/Nandani 6-0, 6-7 (10-8); **Girl's U-14:** Aarnavi/Zufisha bt Niti/yYashvini 6-2, 7-5.



Satakshika

### APPOINTED

Ram Prakash Singh has been appointed chairman of Hockey India's selection committee, which will come into effect on April 15. RP Singh replaced Harbinder Singh. The other members of the body are Balwinder Singh, Mohd Riaz, MM Somaya, Subhadra Pradhan, Sardar Singh, BP Govinda, Chinglensana Singh Kanjugam, Rajnish Mishra, VR Raghunath, Sameer Dad, Yuvraj Walimiki, Joydeep Kaur and Asunta Lakra.

### DEEPAK, ARYAN SHINE

Deepak Gaikwad and Aryan played unbeaten innings of 93 and 75 runs respectively, to help Western Zone crush North Zone by 138 runs in a league match of SIDBI Inter-Zonal T20 Cricket tournament at RR Stadium on Thursday.

Batting first, WZ piled up 263 runs for the loss of two wickets. Tejas Shetty also made a contribution of 59 runs off just 27 balls. In reply, North Zone were bundled out for 125 runs in 15 overs. In another match, South Zone pipped Central Zone by three wickets.

### TAEKHYEON SEMINAR



The Korea Taekkyeon Association chairman Lee Il-jae conducted the 1st India Taekkyeon Seminar from April 7 to 9 in Lucknow. In a 3-day seminar, Korea Taekkyeon Association announced the plans to foray into India. The seminar was attended by Kyung-Tae Chang, Seong-Hyeon Kim from Korea and Sanjay Sachdeva of India.

# Medvedev sets up Zverev clash in Monte Carlo

AP ■ MONTE CARLO

Daniil Medvedev cruised through his first match of the year on clay Wednesday, defeating Italian wild card Lorenzo Sonego 6-3, 6-2 at the Monte Carlo Masters to set up a meeting with Alexander Zverev.

Medvedev broke Sonego at the first attempt and then twice more in the second set to reel off his 25th win in his past 26 tour-level matches. "Every match is a struggle (on clay), but I have had some good matches on clay," said Medvedev. "I managed to play good against a very strong player on clay."

"It's completely different on clay, but confidence is added," the third seed added. "It's about winning matches, because

it is always two players that play, and one is going to win... I hope to bring this confidence even further."

Medvedev earned his tour-leading 30th victory of the season and will face Zverev in the last 16 — a first meeting between the pair on clay. "We've had some tough matches," said Medvedev, who has won seven of 13 previous matches against Zverev.

Zverev is still finding his way back after tearing ankle ligaments in the French Open semi-finals last year against Rafael Nadal. Following a difficult first-round tie against the dangerous Alexander Bublik, he beat Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut 6-4, 6-4 on Wednesday.

"I saw him (Zverev) in the first two matches, he seemed to be in good shape. I'm just going



to have to be at my best," said Medvedev.

## RUUD REVENGE

Casper Ruud, coming off a title in Estoril last weekend, kicked off his Monte Carlo campaign with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/1) win over Botic van de Zandschulp. "It is never easy to start at a new tournament and against a

player I have lost to before," said Ruud, who avenged his early exit at the hands of Van de Zandschulp in Miami.

"Sometimes it is a little tricky playing someone you recently lost to, like 'Not again', but in this case I was a bit happy because I felt like some unfinished business from the Miami match."

Ruud, a semi-finalist in the Principality two years ago, will take on Jan-Lennard Struff next after the German knocked out 14th seed Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-2.

Danish teenager Holger Rune swept aside two-time French Open runner-up Dominic Thiem 6-2, 6-4, while Jannik Sinner advanced as Diego Schwartzman retired while trailing by a set and a break.

Karen Khachanov, the ninth seed, downed Ilya Ivashka in straight sets to book a showdown with Andrey Rublev. Novak Djokovic plays Italian youngster Lorenzo Musetti on Thursday for a place in the quarter-finals.

Musetti, who famously led Djokovic by two sets at Roland Garros in 2021 before being forced to retire, thrashed qual-

ifier Luca Nardi 6-0, 6-0. World number one Djokovic is appearing in his first tournament since failing to get a waiver to enter the United States for last month's Indian Wells and Miami events due to his anti-Covid vaccination stance.

Matteo Berrettini won a topsy-turvy three-setter against Argentine Francisco Cerundolo despite blowing a 5-0 lead in the opening set. The Italian recovered to dominate the second-set tie break before completing a 5-7, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 victory. US eighth seed Taylor Fritz overcame 2014 Monte Carlo champion Stan Wawrinka 7-6 (12/10), 6-2.

Chile's Nicolas Jarry will take on two-time defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas after outlasting Australia's Alexei Popyrin in three sets.



# Mohit, Gill shine in GT win

PTI ■ MOHALI

Gujarat Titans roared back to winning ways with a six-wicket victory over Punjab Kings after Mohit Sharma's excellent return to the IPL and Shubman Gill's 49-ball 67 here on Thursday.

Medium pacer Mohit marked his comeback with figures of 2/18 as holders GT restricted PBKS to 153 for eight. Playing in his first game in the league since 2020, Mohit was exceptional in the penultimate over, giving away as little as six runs.

When their turn to bat came, Gill led the way with his fine half-century as GT completed the chase of 154 in 19.5 overs, four days after suffering a heartbreaking loss to Kolkata Knight Riders.

Having done duty as the team's net bowler last season, Mohit, who has also played for the Indian team including in the World Cup, mixed his pace and varied his lengths well throughout his spell.

Later, the young Gill once again showed his class with a quality innings that contained seven fours and a six.

From GT's point of view, it was extremely important that Gill stayed on till the end, especially after the dismissal of captain Hardik Pandya with the team still 48 runs away from their third victory in 34 balls.

For PBKS, Matthew Short top-scored with a 24-ball 36 but it was Masood Shahruckh Khan's nine-ball 22, which helped the team cross 150.

GT were off to a flyer and scored 56 in the six powerplay overs with the Gill going great guns.

Meanwhile, PBKS' lead pacer Kagiso Rabada became the fastest to 100 wickets in the IPL, when he had Wriddhiman Saha (30 off 19 balls) caught at deep square leg off a short ball.

The South Africa speedster took



just 64 games to reach the landmark, six matches fewer than Lasith Malinga's 70.

Earlier, sent in to bat after the coin landed in favour of the returning GT skipper Hardik, PBKS lost Prabhsimran Singh in the second ball of the over when he attempted flick off a length ball from Mohammed Shami went straight to Rashid Khan at short mid-wicket. Prabhsimran departed without scoring.

Short walked in at number three and he got off the mark with a boundary, striking the ball through point. The next ball was short, and Short pulled the

seasoned India seamer through the square leg region for another four.

Sharing the new ball with Shami, Joshua Little was welcomed with two boundaries by the in-form Shikhar Dhawan. While the first one was lofted over cover, Dhawan produced a delightful flick in the next ball, caressing the ball past mid-off in what was a high-class cover drive.

Australia's Short, who has done well for Adelaide Strikers in the Big Bash League back home, took on Shami and hit him for back-to-back fours including an authoritative boundary through mid-off.

However, just when PBKS seemed to be putting GT under pressure Little gave his team a huge breakthrough, dismissing the dangerous Dhawan (8) who came down the track to play the lofted shot, only to end up giving a catch to Alzarri Joseph.

GT got another big wicket when the ever-reliable Rashid (1/26 in 4 overs) foxed a well-settled Short with a googly with PBKS's score reading 55 for three in the seventh over.

Having struck a flurry of fours and a massive six off Joseph, Short had settled down nicely but looked clueless when Rashid decided to bowl the

wrong'un. Short's dismissal set PBKS a bit, and it became trickier when Jitesh Sharma (25 off 23 balls) was sent back by Mohit, thanks to a smart piece of work by Wriddhiman behind the wickets. Sam Curran (22) struck a much-needed six -- a big maximum over deep midwicket after star leg-spinner Rashid missed his length. Sri Lankan Bhanuka Rajapaksa did not convince in his 26-ball 20, until his stay in the middle was cut short by Joseph.

Shahruckh Khan smashed the first ball he faced for a six over deep midwicket, before picking up another maximum off Shami.



# KKR eye hat-trick of wins

PTI ■ KOLKATA

their season opener.

On a high after Rinku Singh's phenomenal knock, Kolkata Knight Riders will be gunning for a hat-trick of victories when they face a resurgent Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Friday.

Having started off their campaign with a reversal against Punjab Kings at Mohali, KKR found two unlikely heroes in two matches to get their campaign up and running.

First, it was Shardul Thakur's storm with the bat that took a star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore by surprise as the pace bowling allrounder's 29-ball 68 led KKR to their first win of the season, a dominant 81-run victory.

Then the low-profile Rinku has become the flavour of the season after pulling off the greatest heist in T20 history by scoring 31 runs in the last over to win a match.

KKR defeated the reigning champions Gujarat Titans by three wickets in their den, the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, courtesy Rinku's astonishing power-hitting.

The two-time former champions, who were hit hard by the absence of their skipper Shreyas Iyer and star allrounder Shakib Al-Hasan and were written off by many following a low-key auction, suddenly have become the side to beat this season.

The two wins have come without any significant contribution from their star power-hitter Andre Russell and skipper Nitish Rana, make them an even more dangerous side.

While Shardul and Rinku have undoubtedly provided the finishing options, KKR think-tank would be keen to prove that these two wins were not a fluke.

By his standard, Russell, the fearsome Jamaican power-hitter, has looked a shadow of his past, barring a 19-ball 35 in their rain-hit loss to Punjab Kings in

the next two matches, Russell would be keen to prove his credentials as he sweated it out during practice ahead of the match on Friday.

KKR have tried out different opening combinations in the three matches so far and it is likely to be changed again against SRH, with England opener Jason Roy likely to be included in place of Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

The Afghanistan player has impressed with a fighting fifty against RCB, but with Roy being included as a replacement for Shakib, the Englishman is likely to be included, while Narayan Jagadeesan may don the wicket-keeping gloves.

As for SRH, the Aiden Markram-led side looks strong on paper after some big buys like Harry Brook, Mayank Agarwal and Heinrich Klaasen at the auction.

Overflowing with white-ball specialists, SRH, however, have failed to impress in their first two matches. However, a Rahul Tripathi special -- 48-ball unbeaten 74 -- led them to their first win of the season when they defeated Punjab Kings by eight wickets.

The high-profile Brook, who has been signed for Rs 13.25 crore, has so far managed scores of 13, 3 and 13.

A member of the England side that won the T20 World Cup last year, Brook has looked out of sorts in the opener's role, and it would not be a bad idea to bring him down the order.

They also have a potent spin attack in Washington Sundar and Mayank Markande, fresh from his 4/15 against Punjab Kings, while the pace attack, led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Marco Jansen, will give KKR a tough fight.

A win for KKR, currently placed third, may take them to the top of the table.



# Don't think Russell is underperforming: Ferguson

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Andre Russell may have had a quiet campaign so far in the IPL but pacer Lockie Ferguson on Thursday believed that his star Kolkata Knight Riders teammate will turn things around in their match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Russell got out cheaply for 0 and 1, even as KKR secured splendid wins over Royal Challengers Bangalore and Gujarat Titans in their previous two matches. But Ferguson said a big knock is due from the explosive Jamaican batter.

"I don't think Andre is underperforming. He played well in the first game (35 vs Punjab Kings), then he had a



couple of early dismissals. I would say he's far from underperforming.

"We all know what Andre can do, particularly here that was my first season and first experi-

ence of Andre, and Jesus! I've not seen a guy hit a ball like that. I'm sure he will put us a show for us tomorrow night," he said, recalling his first season in KKR in 2019. The Kiwi pacer returned

to KKR after being traded from Gujarat Titans along with Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

Playing under an Indian coach in Chandrakant Pandit, Ferguson said he's doing a great job in creating a fine team atmosphere. "It's been a great experience with Chandru from the start. I love his honesty. He gets around all the players. He knows how the team's morale is and how we are going to go about our business as a team."

"Probably from the outset, it's just win or loss but it's about that consistency and try to create a culture and a team value that has Chandru brought into the team from an early stage. It's nice to have him lead from the front," he said.

# Markam pins hopes on death bowlers

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Sunrisers Hyderabad are not intimidated by the sensational batting display of Rinku Singh and Shardul Thakur in KKR's last two IPL matches, and skipper Aiden Markram on Thursday said he is confident of their bowlers executing their plans at the death.

Kolkata Knight Riders posted consecutive 200-plus totals courtesy the duo's power-hitting en route to securing splendid wins over Royal Challengers Bangalore and Gujarat Titans in their last two matches.

"If you look at their squad make-up as a whole, they are going to play aggressively and an attacking brand of cricket. On each one's given day, they can certainly be a massive threat for us," Markram told reporters on the eve of their match.

"It's about sticking to our strengths out in the middle, that will give us the best chance to execute whatever plans we have. Guys have been doing very well for KKR, they (Shardul and Rinku) have been finishing well."

"But we are going to have some good plans in place, we have some good experience in our camp, some really good death bowlers as well, we are

confident in them. Hopefully we can execute nicely, on the night (tomorrow)."

SRH have Indian veteran Bhuvneshwar Kumar to lead the pace attack, which is bolstered by the addition of Markram's fellow South African Marco Jansen, and they will also have the fiery Umran Malik in a three-pronged pace attack.

Having released Rashid Khan, SRH have the spin duo of Washington Sundar and Mayank Markande.

Starting the season with back-to-back losses, SRH got their campaign back on track when they rode on an unbeaten 74 from Rahul Tripathi to defeat Punjab Kings by eight wickets.

A former KKR player, Tripathi will look to give his valuable inputs to the team. "It's always nice having someone in your team who has been a part of the team who you are going to play against. Definitely, we will use Rahul's experience, knowledge as best as we can."

"It's great to see a player like Rahul in form, he's really entertaining to watch and the way he goes about his work. It's great to have him in that frame of mind at the moment," Markram said.

# It is too late to change action: Bishop's advice to Bumrah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Someone who has endured multiple back injuries himself, former West Indies fast bowler Ian Bishop can imagine what a "generational" talent like Jasprit Bumrah is going through at the moment.

The 29-year-old underwent a surgery in New Zealand last month following recurring back issues that have kept him away from the game since September 2022. Bumrah is now racing against time to get fit for the ODI World Cup at home in October-November.

Bumrah's "unique" action has worked wonderfully for him but it has also put a lot of load on his back, making him susceptible to injuries.

Bishop, who could have played a lot more than 43 Tests and 84 ODIs if it wasn't for injuries, feels it is too late for Bumrah to change his action at this stage of his career and he can only be "managed" by picking and choosing tournaments amid

the relentless schedule.

"Any fast bowler worth his soul can play all formats of the game all year and maintain his cutting edge pace, it is just too demanding. The sprint up and down, the hamstring, the workload of the body. It has to be managed," Bishop told PTI in an interview.

"I don't think there is any one recipe (to manage workload). Because we don't decide on the minds and bodies of these outstanding athletes. That decision has to be made by the individual and administrators close to him but I will throw one thing out for governing bodies, it is just an advice. You can't play these guys (Bumrah and Co.) in every tournament," he said.

The 55-year-old from Trinidad is not only worried about Bumrah's future, he is equally concerned for the likes of Jofra Archer, Anrich Nortje and Shaheen Afridi who too have battled injuries.

"With so much cricket going on, the players will have to start



choosing most important tournaments. It is about how can a player secure his financial future and at the same time play enough to secure his cricketing legacy and help his country.

"You want guys like Bumrah and Jofra playing at their best with cutting edge pace. That is what when they have great value. Be very meticulous and specific with when you want them to play," he said.

In 2020, the great Michael Holding had expressed his doubts over Bumrah's longevity considering he generates a huge amount of pace with a short run-up and a unique action.

For Bishop, changing action following injuries did not work and he believes Bumrah is past that stage too.

"Everybody has got a unique way in how they formulate their action and Jasprit is more unique than most others so I think he has got to use the physical gifts he was blessed with and fine tune it as he goes along."

PTI ■ CHENNAI

# MSD nursing a knee injury: Fleming

Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is nursing a knee injury, which is hindering his movement somewhat, said head coach Stephen Fleming after the four-time IPL champions lost a last-ball thriller to Rajasthan Royals by three runs.

Adding to the injury worries, CSK's South African pace bowler Sisanda Magala too suffered a split webbing at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday night.

"He (Dhoni) is nursing a knee injury, which you can see in some of his movement, hindering him somewhat. His fitness has been professional. He comes in months before the tournament starts. He does some nets in Ranchi, but his main pre-season is a month

before he comes to Chennai," Fleming told reporters at the post-match press conference after CSK suffered their second defeat in four games this season.

Seamer Sandeep Sharma nailed a couple of perfect block-hole deliveries to earn a hard-fought victory for the Royals. Chasing 176, Dhoni (32) and Ravindra Jadeja (25) were on course requiring 21 runs off the last over. CSK's final score was 172/6 as Dhoni couldn't end his 200th game for CSK in a manner he would have wanted to on home turf.

Fleming, though, expressed confidence that the former India captain will manage his injury well and will continue to lead the side.



"He works his way back into match form, and you can still see he is playing pretty well. So we always have confidence about how he manages himself."

He always keeps himself up to speed," said Fleming, allaying concerns about Dhoni's fitness.

On Magala, who had to

leave the field with a split webbing after bowling two overs, Fleming said, "For us again, it's losing another player -- that's two games in a row -- and we're already pretty thin, so we'd like it (injuries) to stop."

CSK's list of injured players is growing by the day with England all-rounder Ben Stokes, bought for Rs 16.25 crore at the IPL auction, missing the game due to a heel injury, while pacer Deepak Chahar has been almost ruled out of IPL 2023 due to a hamstring injury he sustained during the match against Mumbai Indians.

"Magala's hand was split unfortunately, so he was unable to bowl those last two overs. And same with Deepak Chahar

in the last game, so we're operating on pretty thin resources. But we're not the only team to have that."

"I think a lot of players coming out of a big domestic season are a little bit broken, but we just keep having to find solutions," Fleming said.

"So we'll do that in the next four days. But, yeah, it's not ideal yet. The captain has to then think on his feet (if bowlers keep getting injured). Moeen Ali had to come back (after Magala hurt his webbing), and he hadn't had a great day but he got the wicket of (Jos) Buttler which was good."

"And you've got young players like Akash (Singh) who is coming in for his first game, having to bowl some key overs. It's not how we plan, but T20 very rarely goes to plan," the CSK coach added.

# Samson fined ₹12 lakh for slow over-rate



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rajasthan Royals skipper Sanju Samson has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during their Indian Premier League (IPL) match against Chennai Super Kings here.

Over rate is proving to be an issue in the IPL again with a lot of games stretching past the four-hour mark.

"As it was the team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, captain Sanju Samson was fined Rs 12 lakhs," read an IPL media advisory.

Rajasthan had pulled off a last-ball win over CSK on Tuesday with Sandeep Sharma bowling a brilliant 20th over to deny M S Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja. It was Rajasthan's third win in four games while CSK suffered their second loss of the season.

ECONOMY

## “China’s economy will recover and develop at a faster pace”

“I visited China three years ago. This time I’ll spend half a month in China. Apart from Beijing, I’ll also go to other cities such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Hangzhou. We’ll continue to invest in China on all fronts, because China’s high-quality development and opening up to the outside world is providing us with rare opportunities,” said Ola Kaellemus, chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, at the China Development Forum Annual Meeting 2023.

Recently, the China Development Forum Annual Meeting 2023 and the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2023 were

held in Beijing and Hainan respectively. Many overseas guests and executives of multinational companies in China agreed that from a global perspective, China’s economic development has shown remarkable resilience and great certainty this year, continuing to bring valuable incremental increase and innovative vitality to the world economy.

At the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2023, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said that China’s economy is gaining momentum, and its contribution to the world’s economic growth is expected to exceed one-

third this year.

This year, many international institutions have raised their expectations for China’s economic growth. Among them, the IMF expects China’s economy to grow by 5.2%.

During his recent visit to China, Christian Bruch, president and CEO of Siemens Energy AG, met with not only his colleagues and team in China but also some Chinese government departments and relevant partners. “I need to understand the opportunities and challenges facing China’s energy transition. I also want to better understand the Chinese market to make sure that we continue to make the right decisions in the future,” he said.

These visits by executives of foreign companies have shown the world’s confidence in China, a giant consumption market of more than 1.4 billion people. Not long ago, the China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) conducted a survey of more than 160 foreign companies and business associations in China. The results show that 99.4 percent of the foreign companies surveyed are confident in China’s economic development prospects in 2023 and will continue to invest in China. In addition, 98.7 percent of the foreign companies surveyed said that they will maintain and expand their investments in China.

“As China’s epidemic pre-

vention and control enters a new phase, China’s economy is warming up and improving. We’ve noted that China has recently introduced a number of policy measures to boost consumption. We believe that driven by these new policies, China’s economy will recover and develop at a faster pace,” said an executive of Panasonic China and Northeast Asia Company.

According to CCPIT spokesperson Wang Linjie, the CCPIT will organize more policy briefings and government-enterprise dialogues to help foreign-funded companies gain a deeper understanding of China’s policy initiatives and enhance their

confidence in operating in China.

(Xinhua, People’s Daily)

“We’ll actively shift the focus of our services for foreign-funded companies to aspects such as carrying out in-depth research, further optimizing the business environment, and helping local governments attract investment, and make greater efforts to retain and increase foreign investment.”

—Wang Linjie, CCPIT spokesperson

FOCUS

We advocate the respect for the diversity of civilizations. Countries need to uphold the principles of equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness among civilizations, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority.

—An excerpt from Chinese President Xi Jinping’s keynote speech at the Communist Party of China in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting

### “The Global Civilization Initiative advocates the respect for the diversity of civilizations”

Asadollah Badamchian, Secretary-General of the Islamic Coalition Party of Iran, recently attended the Communist Party of China in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting via video link from Tehran. He pointed out that the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping of the CPC Central Committee at the meeting not only advocates the respect for the diversity of civilizations but also will promote the unity of civilizations in their common pursuit.

Badamchian said both Iran and China are time-honored civilizations, and that Iran is “very pleased” with the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by the Chinese leader and feels obliged to respond to it. “Gen-

eral Secretary Xi Jinping’s proposal advocates the respect for the diversity of civilizations and promotes greater unity among civilizations, which will lead to greater and better development of global civilizations.”

Badamchian stressed that China’s call for countries to contribute to the promotion of world peace and to sustain mutual help among them shows that China is an important force in promoting world peace and global good. He believes that the Islamic Coalition Party of Iran is willing to strengthen exchanges with the Communist Party of China to help the two countries make new progress in cooperation in various fields such as politics, economy, culture, and medicine.

(Xinhua, Guangming Daily)

CULTURE

### Zhang Hanmin: composing a “symphony” of tie-dyeing and coffee

Zhang Hanmin, a 39-year-old tie-dye artist, repeatedly soaked a silk scarf in a dyestuff of ochre-colored coffee grounds while adding Pu’er tea to it. She completed tie-dyeing the scarf in a matter of half an hour.

With spring flowers blossoming, Zhang brought her parents and eldest son to Shanghai. At an intangible cultural heritage-themed Starbucks outlet, she demonstrated the Bai people’s tie-dyeing techniques—a national intangible cultural heritage item from Dali, Yunnan. Right in front of a group of coffee lovers, she also showed the unique dyeing and color-fixing effects of coffee grounds and Pu’er tea, composing a “symphony” of tie-dyeing and coffee.

Tie-dyeing, originally known as “jiaoxie”, is a set of Chinese textile dyeing techniques dating back ancient times, and Zhang’s hometown—Dali City, Yunnan Province—is believed to be the birthplace of tie-dyeing. About a decade ago, Zhang set up the Lanxu tie-dyeing studio in the village, which has now opened chain stores-downtown Dali, Kunming, and other places, hiring more than 20 full-time employees and 168 part-time workers in total.

At the intangible cultural heritage-themed Starbucks outlet, Zhang was dressed in an exquisite ethnic costume. After demonstrating the coffee tie-dyeing techniques, she also taught a group of coffee lovers to try their hands on this traditional handicraft.

Soon, these keen “apprentices” succeeded in producing their own tie-dyeing patterns, such as cloud, pearl, and fish scale patterns.

Zhang explained that she has named her studio “Lanxu” because she hopes to pass on the “Dali blue” deeply rooted in her memory. “After my grandmother, who took care of me since I was a child, passed away, the dusty loom in her house kept reminding me that if we young people don’t work hard to inherit, the tie-dyeing techniques would be lost forever. I felt a strong sense of urgency,” Zhang recalled.

About a year ago, Starbucks China joined hands with a Chinese public interest organization in launching the “Starbucks Future” project to empower rural women, pass on intangible cultural heritages, and promote rural development. The project has given Zhang opportunities to travel around the country and better promote the Dali Bai people’s tie-dyeing techniques.

“We can dye fabrics blue with Baphicacanthus cusia, pink with Caesalpinia sappan, yellow with gardenia fruit, onion skin, and turmeric, yellow-green with pomegranate skin, brown with walnut skin, and light brown with coffee grounds and Pu’er tea leaves. The silk scarfs tie-dyed in this way are not only beautiful but also convey environmental protection concepts such as recycling and reuse,” Zhang said.

(Xinhua)

IN-PICS



In the past few days, in preparation for the upcoming Water-Splashing Festival, or the Dai New Year, the Dai people in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province have been busy making dragon boats and training for a dragon boat race. For the Dai people in China, the Water Splashing Festival is their most important traditional festival, during which they usually hold dragon boat races that attract excited spectators.

(Xinhua)

STORY

### Hiroto Goto, a devoted Japanese teacher at Yunnan Minzu University

For Hiroto Goto, a teacher of Japanese at Yunnan Minzu University, Yunnan represents a special lifestyle. Now that he has long settled down in Yunnan, he considers this once-strange place his second hometown.

Mr. Goto has recently been awarded the Yunnan Friendship Award. “The award means greater responsibility and spurs me on to work harder in my teaching. I must live up to the expectations for me,” he said earnestly.

“Why have I been awarded the Yunnan Friendship Award? Because I’ve been living in Kunming long enough,” Mr. Goto said proudly, referring to the fact that he has been in Yunnan for nearly two decades.

When Mr. Goto first visited south Yunnan’s Xishuangbanna in 2004, he was deeply impressed by the exotic ethnic culture. Ever since then, he has traveled around Yunnan and taken a large number of pictures of the beautiful landscapes

and unadorned mountain villages. The more he learned about Yunnan, the more fascinated he became. Finally, he chose to stay in Kunming, where he has been teaching Japanese to university students since 2009.

Mr. Goto believes that he has won the Yunnan Friendship Award mainly because of his teaching experience and achievements over the years. “I’ve coached many students in writing and speech competitions. I remember that a

student of mine won second prize in the 2021 ‘China Cup’ National Japanese Speech Contest Southwest China Division. It was really inspiring because that was the best result ever achieved by a contestant from Yunnan.”

“Kunming offers beautiful scenery, a good environment, and living conveniences. I don’t plan to go anywhere else, so I’ll just continue to be a teacher here,” Mr. Goto said with a smile.

(Yunnan Daily)

CONSUMPTION

### Yunnan, vegetable producer for China, ASEAN

At 6:00 am, workers at the plantation base of Yunnan Shenchuang Vegetable Cultivation Co Ltd are busy harvesting baby cabbages with lights on head and knives in hand. The Shenchuang baby cabbages will be served on the dining tables in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou in two days. Carried by cold chain trucks, they will also be sold to ASEAN countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

With great weather, Yunnan province is one of the main vegetable producers in China. Various ecological vegetables of high quality are produced here all year round.

At present, Yunnan sells 70% of its vegetable products to more than 150 cities and 40 countries and regions via diverse distribution channels. Thus, Yunnan is becoming the “vegetable garden” for China, and even for the world.

According to statistics from Kunming Customs, the export volume of Yunnan vegetables has reached 116,300 tons in the first two months this year with a year-on-year increase of 25.78%.

“In recent years, our vegetables can retain freshness through professional cold storage method, and they can be sold smoothly,” said Guo Wang, the General Manager of Shenchuang.

Now a China-Laos-Thailand freight train is

available for transporting Yunnan vegetables. Compared to the fragmented transport of railway and road in the past, the new transport mode has cut the transport duration by one day and reduced the cost by more than 20%.

With the multiple effect from RCEP, Yunnan will build new channels for cold chain transport of higher efficiency and stability, and its vegetable sales enjoy a promising future.

(Yunnan Gateway)

NEWS

### China sees nearly 24 million domestic tourist trips on Qingming Festival

On April 5, the Chinese Qingming Festival or Tomb Sweeping Day, China registered 23,766,400 domestic tourist trips, up 22.7 percent from last year. These trips

were estimated to bring in 6.52 billion yuan (US\$ 945 million) in tourist revenue, an increase of 29.1 percent year on year.

(People’s Daily)

A LIFESTYLE CALLED YUNNAN

### Yunnan’s tourism market recovering quickly

As the warm spring breeze blows, the tourism consumption market in Yunnan is recovering quickly.

You can experience a study tour at the Red Panda Manor in Pu’er, watch a sunrise at Songtsam Meili Lodge in Deqin, sample a cup of coffee in China’s first coffee village—Xinzhai Village of Baoshan Prefecture, buy a piece of Jianshui purple pottery in Lin’an Old Town of southern Yunnan, or join in a Dabiya dance in Laomudeng Village of Nujiang Prefecture. “You’re welcome to experience a lifestyle called Yunnan,” Wang Ning, secretary of the CPC Yunnan Provincial Committee, sent an invitation to people all over the world on March 7.

After the Chinese New Year holiday, tourists are showing an increasingly strong intention to travel, and Yunnan’s tourism industry is ushering in a full recovery. To meet the tourists’ demand for high quality tourism, all localities in Yunnan have released a series of innovative tourism products such as health preservation holidays, outdoor sports, entertainment and performances, study tours, and self-drive camping. The diversified tourism experiences Yunnan has to offer have made the province a pioneer in meeting the needs of tourists and one of the most popular tourist destinations in China.

Ctrip data show that Dali remains a popular destination for staggered travel. The village of Fengyangyi, where the TV series Windy Courtyard was filmed, has received a large number of tourists. In Dali Ancient City, crowds of tourists are seen everywhere. “The once-familiar atmosphere is back,” many busi-

ness owners said.

While improving its tourism products, Yunnan has implemented a package of measures to strengthen the tourism market order, and set up tourism volunteer service organizations at the provincial, prefectural, and county levels to provide tourists with peace of mind. As a new example of smart tourism, the “Yunnan at Your Fingertips” applet also helps to protect the rights of tourists when they travel, shop, and enjoy themselves in Yunnan.

From January to February 2023, Yunnan received 197 million tourists and achieved tourism revenue of 234.171 billion yuan (US\$ 34.118 billion), up 78.4 percent and 71.7 percent year on year, respectively, marking a strong beginning for this year. Since March, despite the usually slack season for tourism, Yunnan has received a large number of tourists in this staggered time slot.

Colorful Yunnan has always been a popular tourist destination. The Yunnan Provincial Government’s work report this year has set the goal of achieving a total tourism revenue of over 1.2 trillion yuan (US\$ 174.84 billion). To deliver a series of world-class tourism products and build itself into a world-class tourist destination, Yunnan will pick up speed to establish a tourism data center, build a number of demonstration scenic spots and hotels for digital application, and promote the transformation, upgrading, and high-quality development of Yunnan’s cultural tourism.

(People’s Daily Overseas Edition, Qujing on Your Palm-top, Spring City on Your Palm-top, and China.org.cn)



Huama street in Kunming, Yunnan province, was bustling with tourists.

(Yunnan Daily)