



CITY 3 POLLS DONE, GOVT FOCUSES ON MAJOR INFRA PROJECTS

OPINION 6 LET STATECRAFT REPLACE VICIOUS PROPAGANDA

WORLD 10 UNSC ADOPTS GAZA CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹ 3



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SANGRAM SET TO JOIN MMA 11 SPORTS

UP govt approves new transfer policy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government on Tuesday approved the New Transfer Policy for 2024-25. Under this policy, Group A & Group B officers who have completed three years in district and seven years in division can be transferred. However, the oldest officers in Group C and Group D will be transferred first.

The maximum limit for the transfer of Group A and Group B officers has been kept at 20 per cent, while for Group C and Group D, the maximum limit is 10 per cent. Under the new policy, all transfers must be done by June 30.

It is worth mentioning here that a total of 42 proposals were placed in the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday and 41 of them were approved. Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna provided details on the proposals approved during the meeting, announcing that the cabinet has endorsed the transfer policy for 2024-25. This policy is consistent with the provisions of last year's policy.

According to the new policy, Group A and Group B officers who have served seven years in the division and three years in the district will be subject to transfers. The policy stipulates that up to 20 per cent

The cabinet also announced a significant gift for lakhs of state government employees as government employees retiring on June 30 and December 31 can benefit from the proposed salary hike from July 1 and January 1, respectively.

of officers in Group A and Group B and up to 10 per cent of officers in Group C and Group D can be transferred.

For Group C and Group D, the policy prioritises transferring the longest-serving officers first. Ministerial approval will be required if it is necessary to transfer more than 10 per cent of Group C and Group D officers. Similarly, transferring more than 20 per cent of Group A and Group B officers will necessitate approval from the chief minister.

Khanna stated that Group C and Group D transfers would be managed entirely through the Manav Sampada portal. This system facili-

tates online arrangements for handing over and taking charge post-transfer. Additionally, it allows for the digitisation of service books and officers' salaries.

He also mentioned that under the existing system for the eight aspirational districts and 100 aspirational development blocks across 34 districts, filling vacant positions in these areas was the top most priority.

The cabinet also announced a significant gift for lakhs of state government employees on the occasion. According to the announcement, the government employees retiring on June 30 and December 31 can benefit from the proposed salary hike from July 1 and January 1, respectively. Khanna said that according to the system that was in place till now, the employees retiring on June 30 and December 31 could not benefit from the salary hike implemented from July 1 or January 1.

The cabinet's approval will not only facilitate salary hikes for such employees but also increase their pension and gratuity. Khanna said that after a decision of the Supreme Court, judicial employees had already been availing the benefits and now the policy would also benefit other government employees.

In other decision, the Yogi government also made minor amendments to the names of five

Continued on Page 9

NEET: We need answers, SC to NTA, Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the counselling for admissions of students to the medical colleges over alleged paper leak and irregularities in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) undergraduate (UG) examination 2024.



The apex court has also issued notice to the Centre and NTA and listed the matter for consideration on July 8, after the summer vacation which commenced on May 20 comes to an end.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said the "sanctity has been affected" and "we need answers". However, the court refused to stay the counselling process for admission of those who have cleared the exam.

"Let the counselling start. We are not stopping the counselling," said Justice Nath as Senior Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara urged the court to stay the counselling. Besides the Centre and the NTA, which conducts NEET-UG, the bench also issued notices to the Bihar Government. There were allegations of malpractice in holding the exam in the State. "How much time do you want...Immediately on the re-opening? Otherwise, the counselling will start," the bench said. It tagged the plea filed by Shivangi Mishra and nine other MBBS aspirants with a pending petition and asked the NTA to file the response in the meantime.

NEET-UG, 2024, was held on May 5 and results were declared on June 4. It was expected to be declared on June 14.

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Nadda in Cabinet, hunt on for new BJP chief

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the induction of Jagat Prakash Nadda in the Modi 3.0 Cabinet, speculation among party workers and leaders is about whom the party will fall back on as the next president. Nadda's tenure is ending by the end of this month. There is some possibility that the party could continue with Nadda for some time till the new party president is appointed.



Union Health Minister JP Nadda Photo Ranjan Dimri

Besides Nadda, the BJP also is set to kickstart soon the process of organisational changes with the launch of a fresh membership drive followed by an internal poll across States leading up to the election of a new party president.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha, speculations were doing the rounds that former Haryana Chief Minister Manoharlal Khattar, Madhya Pradesh BJP chief Vishnuddutt Sharma, Gujarat BJP president Chandrakant Raghunath Paatil, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupendra Yadav. Leaders like Khattar, Chauhan, Pradhan and Yadav have been inducted in the Cabinet.

After that several names are doing the rounds which include the party's general

secretaries Vinod Tawde, Sunil Bansal, BL Santosh and Sharma. Tawde is from Maharashtra while Bansal is from Uttar Pradesh. Santosh is from Karnataka. Insiders said Vishnuddutt Sharma is currently among the top contender for the post.

In 2014, when then party president Rajnath Singh became the Union Minister he passed on a baton to Amit Shah.

After Shah became the Union Minister in 2019, Nadda was appointed party president in June 2019. Nadda took over as BJP chief at a time when the party was witnessing vigorous challenges from a united Opposition in Assembly elections in several States amid signs that it needed to rework its electoral strategy.

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Results a reality check, says RSS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In its first reaction to the BJP's below par performance in the high decibel just concluded general elections, the ruling party's ideology, RSS, has apparently come out in defence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he was being criticised for winning less than majority LS seats and blamed on the party workers for the kind of show which has forced Modi to be on toes given the coalition needs.

In an obvious reference to the BJP's remarks mid way elections that the party does not need RSS to contest elections, RSS in an article noted that though the RSS is not a "field force" of the BJP, the party leaders and workers did not reach out to its 'swayamsevaks' (volunteers) seeking their cooperation in electoral work. The LS poll results have come as a reality check for "overconfident" BJP workers and many of its leaders as they were happy in their "bubble" and enjoying the glow of Modi's aura but not listening to the voices on the streets.

Continued on Page 9

DADLS-09



Shri Narendra Modi Hon'ble Prime Minister



"Jay Jagannath"
Odisha will play a pivotal role in the Journey to Vikashit Bharat.



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi Hon'ble Chief Minister (Designate)

SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY

of the

New Council of Ministers of Odisha

Date: 12th June, 2024

Time: 5:00 pm onwards

Venue: Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar

LIVE ▶ iprodisha X IPR_Odisha f iprodisha

Department of Parliamentary Affairs | Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha

Woman accused of murder bid on mother-in-law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was accused of attempting to murder her mother-in-law following a dispute over dowry-related issues in Bakshi-Ka-Talab police station area on Tuesday. The victim, Shanno Khatoon, sustained burns to her waist and hands, but her condition is stable according to the police.

DCP (North) Abhijeet R Shankar stated that the police received a call from Anjum of Bhainsamau village in the morning. Anjum informed the police that her sister-in-law Shaheen Bano had allegedly tried to kill

her mother Shanno Khatoon over a dispute related to their residence. The DCP explained that an investigation revealed a disagreement between the accused, Shaheen, and her mother-in-law Shanno regarding dowry-related matters. "Shaheen Bano had returned to her in-laws' house just three days before the incident, following a compromise she had reached with Shanno at the office of the Fatehpur circle officer," the officer added.

A case of attempted murder was registered against Shaheen Bano, and the matter is currently under investigation. During police interrogation, Shaheen claimed innocence, stating that during a verbal altercation, Shanno set herself on fire using a sofa, which Shaheen alleged was brought as dowry. She further claimed that the villagers extinguished the fire upon hearing her cries for help. In her complaint, victim's daughter Anjum alleged that her sister-in-law Shaheen had fought with her mother Shanno over ownership of the house. Subsequently, Shaheen allegedly assaulted and set fire to Shanno with the intention of killing her.



Information

It is informed that due to mistake my name has been entered in my service book as Subiya Begum and my date of birth as 01/10/1985 which is wrong and incorrect. The name entered in the correct and other forms is Subiya Bano and date of birth is 15/10/1985 which is correct and correct. Therefore, I should be known and recognized by this name. Subiya Bano wife of Mumtaj Mohammad Resident - Nandakheda, Nishtha Tehsil - Lalganj District - Raebareli.

NOTICE

I, Girish Babu s/o Rambharoshe Lal, resident of vill-Saiyapur post-Bhagwan pur Tah-Tirwa Dist-Kannauj My service record my wife MALATHI DEVI son MANEESH KUMAR, 09-08-1996, AVANISH BABU, 08-07-2004 and Daughter NISHI, 06-09-2002 named and Dob mentioned by mistake That the correct name my wife MALATI DEVI, 01-01-1967 SON MANISH KUMAR, 12-08-1997, AVNEESH KUMAR, 10-07-2004 Daughter NISHI, 20-08-2000 "Be Known By This name in Future

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Kuldeep kaur to Kuldeep kaur Arora. In future I shall be known by this name only. My DOB is 09/11/1948. Kuldeep kaur Arora W/o Manohar Singh Arora, R/o-750, Abbas bagh, Unnao, UP-209801.

NOTICE

I Sanjay Kumar Asthana S/o C.B. Lal Asthana, Property no. - 1/771 F Vishal Khand Gombi Nagar owner of this property wants to inform that Allotment letter dated 21/02/1986, Hire purchase agreement dated 08/10/1989 and Possession Letter dated 29/12/1989, the original of which are laminated for safety purpose, the aforesaid property documents shall undergo equitable mortgage with SBI RACPC, any objection in this regard may be submitted within 15 days of this publication. Mobile no.-955990361

NOTICE

I chandrasekhar Singh s/o Banke Singh, R/o H.No.1575 Patel Nagar, Orai Distt-Jalaun declare that in my army records my son's name is incorrectly mentioned as Sourya pratap singh, his correct name is Shaurya Pratap Singh and it will be used for all purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Sukha Beer to Sukhbeer. In future, I shall be known and recognised as Sukhbeer S/o Shri Bhikha Lal, Sukhbeer S/O Shri Bhikha Lal Resident Pamakheda, Post Kotra Rasulabad Unnao Uttar Pradesh Pin Code 241503

NOTICE

Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. It is being informed to the general public that Shoaibuddin S/o Moinuddin is the absolute owner of the property House bearing Municipal No. 133/251/79 built over part of Plot No. 37, Area 800 Sqft., Situated at Mohalla Sarai Durviyaganj, Ward Bashirganj/Ganeshganj, City Lucknow. The said property was purchased by Mr. Shoaibuddin from the Amar Pal Singh etc through a registered sale deed dated 20.04.2022, duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Lucknow Vide Book No. 1, Vol. no. 25863, Pages 319/940, Doc. No. 7190. The above mentioned owner is going to mortgage the said property in Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. If any person or any financial institution or bank has any objection/claim in this regard, kindly inform within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and after the completion of above time period, no claim of any kind will be considered.

NOTICE

I, Rajiv Kumar Awasthi S/O Shri Nagendra Nath Awasthi residing at 1121 A, Yamuna Puram Colony, Raibareli Road, Lucknow, UP, India, changed my son's name from Harshvardhan Awasthi to Mayank Awasthi vide Affidavit dated 18.05.2024, sworn before Notary Shashi Kant Advocate at Kanpur. Henceforth my son shall be known as Mayank Awasthi for all purposes.

NOTICE

I am R K Sethi, Director of Gagandeep Hotel and Restaurants Pvt. Ltd. Intends to create a charge Viz. Mortgage or otherwise, on basis of laminated original title deeds of the property 63/6, Harbans Mohal, Kanpur, Dated 26.07.1999 was Registered at Freehold Deed Serial No. 2464 on Page Numbers 285-306 of Book Number 1, Volume Number 1923. I wish to create charge for availing a loan/credit facility from State Bank of India, SME Branch, Ashok Nagar, Kanpur. Branch Code 06218. In case any party has any claim towards the said property, the same should be lodged with the intending party and also with the above stated branch of State Bank of India, within 15 days from publication of this notice.

Five cops relieved of duties over bus conductor's torture

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking strict action against a recent incident of brutal torture of a bus conductor in Chinhat and a lapse in duty, five policemen, including a sub-inspector, were relieved of their duties on Tuesday.

According to reports, the decision was made after DCP (East) Prabal Pratap Singh personally intervened in the case and directed that the five errand officers be sent to the Reserve Police Line. The individuals facing disciplinary action were identified as sub-inspector Ajay Kumar Singh, head constable Vijay Pratap Singh, constables Kulwant Singh, Imtiaz, and Amit Kumar, all stationed at the Chinhat police station. DCP Singh stated that the officers reassigned to the police lines had demonstrated negligence in the performance of their duties.

The incident in question involved allegations by bus conductor Santosh Dubey, also known as Badri Dubey, who claimed that a group of policemen assaulted him while he was transporting passengers from the Kamta tri-section under the jurisdiction of the Chinhat police station. According to his account, the policemen, travelling in a police vehicle, stopped their vehicle in front of the bus and

then apprehended Santosh. Subsequently, the victim was taken to the Kamta police outpost, where he was confined to a room and subjected to brutal beatings with a plastic PVC pipe. As a result, he sustained bruises, and his thigh exhibited redness due to the severity of the beating. Following the incident, the ACP (Vibhuti Khand) was tasked with investigating the victim's allegations. The subsequent report confirmed the misconduct of the officers in questions, leading to their reassignment to the Reserve Police Line. Singh emphasised that the decision to reassign the officers was made after a thorough investigation into their conduct and performance of duty. Meanwhile, the West zone of Lucknow police issued a proclamation for the attachment of property belonging to three individuals wanted in a case of fraud and for defying a non-bailable warrant issued by the Special Court under the SC/ST Act, on Tuesday. A town crier made the announcement before notices were affixed at the residences of the accused.

A police spokesperson stated that a team led by the ACP (Chowk) visited the residences of the accused — Hani Abbas in Jafaria Colony (Thakurganj), Syed Mehndi

Hasan, and Wasif Hasan (both in Aminabad). Proclamations were posted. The police urged the public to provide any information they might have regarding the whereabouts of the accused. The spokesperson added that the accused were wanted in a fraud case registered at Wazirganj and Thakurganj police stations. The actions were taken under Section 82 of the CrPC.

WOMAN MURDERED

A 26-year-old woman was found murdered just metres away from her house, allegedly due to an old feud between hers and a rival family residing in the same locality in Dubagga on Tuesday morning. The incident raised concerns among residents, with many speculating that the woman may have been sexually assaulted before being murdered. According to witnesses, the woman was abducted on her way home after fetching water from a hand pump in the Dubagga police station area on Monday night.

DCP (West) Durgesh Kumar stated that an autopsy would determine the cause of death and whether there was any sexual assault involved. "The victim has been identified by her family, and her body has

been sent for autopsy. An investigation is underway," he added.

While the victim's family did not initially report any sexual assault, they named two individuals as suspects due to an ongoing rivalry. Reports suggest that the woman left her house to fetch water around 11 pm on Monday and subsequently went missing. She was later found lying on the roadside about 400 metres from her home. Eyewitnesses revealed that the assailants strangled her with a dupatta, and evidence suggests that she put up a brave fight against them, evident from the injuries on her body. Despite intensive efforts, the police have yet to determine a motive for the murder beyond the angle of family enmity. The victim's family suspected the involvement of a local resident due to past disputes but CCTV footage showed the suspects inside their homes. Police are now exploring other possible motives, including why the woman left her home at night while her family members were asleep.

The incident site was examined by the DCP, ADCP, and ACP (Maliabad), along with field units, a dog squad, and a surveillance team. The DCP assured that necessary legal actions were being pursued.

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve footfall crosses 46,000-mark

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Over 46,000 tourists visited the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve before the close of the tourist season on June 15, marking the highest number of visitors since it opened for the public in 2015.

Deputy Director of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve Manish Singh announced on Tuesday that the significant increase in footfall was attributed to better tiger viewing opportunities, including the chance to witness a swimming tiger, a rare sight in other tiger reserves. Last year, the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve attracted 21,500 tourists, making the current figures more than double that of the previous year. Singh highlighted the diverse habitats within the reserve, including grasslands, water bodies, sal, and jamun forests, which are conducive to both tiger populations and tourism. "The main attraction is the opportunity for good tiger sightings. Many tourists who were unable to spot a tiger in Dudhwa and Jim Corbett tiger reserves have visited the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve," he said. Declared a tiger reserve in 2014 and opened for public tourism in 2015, the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve has seen a significant increase in international tourists, with 168 visi-

tors this year compared to 50 last year.

Regarding tourist demographics, Singh mentioned that 42 per cent were female and 58 per cent were male, with most visiting with their families. Singh noted that tourists from Delhi, Maharashtra, and other states outside Uttar Pradesh were attracted to the reserve due to its favourable weather conditions and abundant water availability, which also lead to frequent sightings of swimming tigers, a unique feature not commonly seen in other tiger reserves.

He highlighted the rich biodiversity of the reserve, which includes bears, leopards, small cats such as leopard cats, jungle cats, and fishing cats, as well as a variety of herbivores such as cheetal, sambar, barking deer, hog deer, and swamp deer, the state animal. Additionally, the reserve is home to over 350 species of birds, owing to its moist forest environment.

Tourist facilities at the reserve include private and government accommodations, with government accommodations mainly located in Chuka and managed by the Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation. These accommodations include four huts and one tree hut. The reserve also offers jungle safaris, boat safaris, souvenir shops, and a canteen.

CPI leader: Foreign investment has fallen by 3.5 pc

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Communist Party of India leader Dr Girish said on Tuesday that despite claims of being the world's fifth largest economy and the ongoing election noise, foreign investment in the country had fallen by 3.5 per cent to 44.42 billion dollars. "This figure mocks the establishment's claims of making the country the world's third largest economy and achieving a 5 trillion dollar economy. It is also noteworthy that this investment decline is evident in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Karnataka," he pointed out.

Dr Girish stated that due to low investment in sectors such as services, telecom, computer hardware-software, auto, and pharma, foreign direct investment (FDI) in India had decreased by 3.5 percent in the financial year 2023-24, down from 46.03 billion dollars in 2022-23. Citing government data, he noted that if equity was included, the total FDI had fallen by one percent to 70.95 billion dollars. "A year ago, it was 71.35 billion dollars," he added. He highlighted that investment had decreased in Uttar Pradesh, despite numerous investment fairs organised at significant public expense. Dr Girish added that the national decline in FDI and the inclusion of a state like Uttar Pradesh in this trend raised many questions.

"The main issue is that investors have lost faith in the double-engine government, which operates on a divisive agenda," he said.

Research team develops solution to address environmental pollution

Lucknow (PNS): A research team led by associate professor Brijesh Kumar from the department of physics, Lucknow University, has developed a pioneering solution to address environmental pollution using nanotechnology. Kumar said on Tuesday that they successfully removed cancer-causing carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which pose a serious threat to both humans and animals, with the help of biocompatible two-dimensional nanomaterials. PAHs primarily originate from anthropogenic activities, including incomplete combustion of fuels and biomass, pyrolysis of petroleum products, and the manufacturing of coal tar, he explained. He added that while light molecular weight PAHs are emitted in the gaseous phase, high molecular weight PAHs are emitted in the particulate phase, contributing to the formation of

particulate matter such as PM10 and PM2.5 in the ambient air. Providing an example, Kumar highlighted that Anthracene and Pyrene PAHs are frequently found in soil, water, and air, where they can adversely impact human health. He noted that cooking kitchens are also a source of indoor production of PAHs.

Kumar elaborated that he and his student Mamta synthesised biocompatible nanocrystalline reduced graphene oxide quantum dots using an environment-friendly approach through a hydrothermal method. Subsequently, they utilised this nanomaterial for efficient adsorption and degradation of PAHs with the assistance of visible light illumination. This method is cost-effective, environment-friendly, and efficient for degrading organic PAH compounds using the surface of nanomaterials. Furthermore, Kumar empha-

sized that PAHs were successfully adsorbed and degraded using the thin film of nanocrystalline reduced graphene oxide quantum dots. This breakthrough paves the way to improve the air quality index or clean the environment in cities or areas with poor air quality. He highlighted that this work not only has the potential to remove cancer-causing substances from the environment to protect human health but also has the potential to achieve the goal of cleaning the environment on a massive scale by depositing the thin film of 2D nanomaterials on flexible and foldable surfaces of fabric or plastic. Kumar, who also served as a research scientist at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and research professor at SKKU-SAMSUNG Graphene Centre at SKKU, South Korea, received the Human Interface Nanotechnology Excellent Researcher Award in 2011.

KMGU to ensure availability of drugs within 72 hrs

Lucknow (PNS): King George's Medical University (KGMU) will now ensure that medicines are available for the patients within a 72-hour timeframe. In a bid to see that the patients are provided the necessary medicines in time, KGMU has strengthened its system of Hospital Revolving Fund (HRF). Addressing mediapersons on Tuesday, KGMU spokesperson Sudhir Singh said that the institute had been working on the issue for the past several

days to see that the patients got an uninterrupted supply of medicines. "Our process which was very lengthy for the procurement of drugs from the central store has been shortened and brought online so that whatever proceedings are taking place, take place online. In addition, we are bringing the HRF and the local purchase on the same platform which will benefit us because it will ensure the visibility of medicine for all stakeholders which will give them the con-

venience of placing the order online. This will reduce the process for the procurement of drugs from days to hours," he added. He said that they had put a cap of 72 hours for the medicines which are available in Lucknow. Surgical equipment which are procured from Delhi and Mumbai have been given a cap of 120 hours. "If there is any laxity on the part of any vendor, we will implement the penalty clause under the MoU signed with it," he added.

Doc highlights rise in heart-related diseases

Lucknow (PNS): Senior consultant, cardiology, at Cardiac Care (Medanta), Dr Himanshu Gupta highlighted the rising prevalence of heart-related diseases and incidents during a faculty and staff development programme and workshop on lifestyle and health held at the School of Management Sciences on Tuesday. Earlier, institute director Dr Ashish Bhatnagar welcomed all the invited speakers to the event. Dr Gupta delivered a presentation on the cardiovascular system and related diseases, emphasising the importance of a balanced diet, brisk walking, and regular checkups. He also addressed questions from the audience.

In his address, Joint Secretary, General Administration of Uttar Pradesh Secretariat, Ajay Kumar Pandey encouraged all employees to approach their work with pure thoughts, dedication, and determination. He emphasised recognising one's abilities and leveraging them for personal growth. Community nutritionist Dr Ranu Singh underscored the crucial role of both diet and lifestyle in maintaining health. She emphasised the importance of consuming a nutrient-rich diet to enhance productivity. Dr Rajeev Singh stressed the significance of time management and achieving productive outcomes to reduce workplace stress. He also advocated for prioritising sleep, recommending at least eight hours of rest per night. Secretary and CEO of the institute Sharad Singh reiterated their commitment to employee health and well-being. He called for the continuation of such workshops and encouraged everyone to maintain a healthy lifestyle by incorporating activities like morning walks, yoga, and meditation.

CITYBRIEFS

REVIEW MEETING

Northern Railway General Manager Shobhan Chaudhuri conducted a thorough performance review meeting with department heads and Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs), including those from the Lucknow division, to evaluate various operational aspects. The focus was on improving passenger amenities, such as platform extensions, level increases, washable aprons, and accessibility enhancements for 'divyangians'. Safety, mobility enhancements, developmental infrastructure, freight loading, and track safety were also assessed. Chaudhuri awarded safety awards to seven employees and urged officials to expedite doubling and new line projects. He emphasised regular training to minimise errors and boost staff morale, while urging business development units to attract new customers.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLAY

Children from urban poor communities in Aliganj, Gomti Nagar, and Vikas Nagar gathered at Nehru Vatika to celebrate the first-ever International Day of Play, organised by an NGO in collaboration with UNICEF. The UN has designated June 11 as the International Day of Play to advocate for children's right to play. UNICEF emphasised the vital role of play in children's holistic development and highlighted parents' significant role. Traditional games like kho-kho, kabaddi, and others were enjoyed by the children.

Demolition drive continues

Lucknow (PNS): As the demolition drive continued on Tuesday, a total of 53 additional structures, both temporary and permanent, were brought down in Akbarnagar, bringing the total to 98, with 45 structures razed on the first day. Approximately 32% of the area has been cleared so far. Vice-Chairman of Lucknow Development Authority Indramani Tripathi stated that the duration needed to clear the entire Akbarnagar locality remains uncertain, but they are committed to removing unauthorised structures promptly. The operation slowed during the second phase due to intense heat, with workers given a three-hour rest period and provided with water for hydration. Meanwhile, LDA and Lucknow Nagar Nigam staff assisting residents of the Vasant Kunj housing scheme encountered challenges in guiding them to their new accommodations. Some residents, like Mohammad Haleem, expressed dissatisfaction with their new flats due to their elevated position, making it difficult for elderly parents to access. LDA Secretary Vivek Srivastava assured assistance in relocating Haleem's family to a lower floor by Wednesday.

IEDS
Institute for Educational and Developmental Studies (IEDS), Noida
www.ieds.org.in
Three Faculty Members Required in Social Sciences/ Humanities
Walk-in interview on 20.06.2024 for Assistant Professors.
Salary: As per UGC/ UP Government Norms.
For further details, visit website or contact: 8822469648.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed that Property House No. 117/H-1/90 which Old No. 117/519, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Nagar, Whose Chain Deed Serial No. 4289/4290 Book No. 1 Volume No. 1996 Page No. 263 Dated 17.10.1958 and Book No. 1 Volume No. 965 Page No. 321/378 Serial No. 16717 dated 30.05.1991 purchase by old owners. The original documents (Registry) of the above house has been lost somewhere, and citizen who finds them please inform Prakash Tulsiani, Son of Late P.P. Tulsiani at the following address:
Prakash Tulsiani
Son of Late P.P. Tulsiani
8/80 Arya Nagar,
Kanpur Nagar,
Mob. 9839086241

Form No.5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow
(Area of Jurisdiction: Part of Uttar Pradesh)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE THROUGH PUBLICATION
Dated: 24.04.2024
(Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institution Act 1993 read with rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal Procedure Rules 1993)
HDFC BANK LIMITED ...Applicant
Versus
MIS MATA RANI BRICK FIELD & ORS. ...Defendants
To, Defendant No. 1 Mis Mata Rani Brick Field (Borrower) Through its Partners RIO Village Takaya Murigpurwa, Deva Road, Chinhat, Lucknow-228016, Uttar Pradesh...DEFENDANTS
In the above noted application, you are required to file reply/evidence in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 04.11.2024 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
REGISTRAR, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
MARINE DEPARTMENT
No. MD/ACCS/MAR-05/2024/618 Date: 06.06.2024
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE (e-TCN)
Name of the work: Providing Assistance for Marine Operations for a period of 03 (three) Years. Estimated cost: Rs.3,95,42,593/- plus GST. Last date & time of Submission of tender through online bidding is 17:00 hours on dt.01.07.2024. Technical Bids shall be opened at 15:30 hours on dt.02/07/2024. For further details, please log on to the website: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/12/PR/2024-2025 dttd.10.06.2024

Society for Voluntary Action & Research (SVAR) regd.
NGO inviting bids for F.Y.-2024-25 regarding Man-Power supplies, Transport Services, Furniture supplies, Tent services, Medicine supplies, Catering services, etc, and all related products and services. Bid application form cost is Rs.1000. Application can be purchased from Head-Office from 12-06-2024 to 27-06-2024. Bids open on 29-06-2024 in the presence or absence of bidders. Read all the terms and conditions carefully to avoid cancellation of bid. President Society for Voluntary Action & Research (SVAR) Email: svar.india@gmail.com Mobile No. 9076669235

E-Mail - sencnwanqul@yahoo.co.in
06764 - 236404
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL
No. 1533 // Dt. 10.06.24 //
Cancellation of Tender for Road work
The tender for the work "Construction of flood resilient road from Pingua to Dasmanapatna via- Manjripada road in Gondia Block in the District of Dhenkanal for the year 2023-24 invited vide this office Tender Call Notice No. 619 dt.21.02.2024 (Bid Identification No. Road Online-AGL- 50) by the Procurement officer, Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul is hereby cancelled vide letter No.19290 dt.07.06.2024 per the Tender Evaluation Committee under the Chairmanship of Engineer-in-Chief-I, R.W.(O) Bhubaneswar on 05.06.2024 at 11.30 A.M.
Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Angul
OIPR-25180/11/0003/2425

Polls done, govt focuses on major infra projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the electoral battle over, the Uttar Pradesh government has focused its attention on important infrastructure projects. Besides Ganga Expressway, the state government has expedited the process of land acquisition for the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC) project passing through UP. National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation is developing AKIC along the alignment of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), traversing a route length of 1,839 km in six states. EDFC has been developed by the Dedicated Freight Corporation of India, under the Ministry of Railways. AKIC, which comprises two nodes at Agra and Paragana districts, will span across 20 cities in seven states like Punjab, Haryana, UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. The projects to be implemented under AKIC in Uttar Pradesh include Integrated Manufacturing Cluster (IMC) in Agra, (1,059 acres) and Saraswati Hi-Tech City, Prayagraj, (1,141 acres). AKIC is proposed to be developed in a band of 150-200 kms on either side of EDFC in a phased manner. AKIC is aimed at ushering in expansion of infrastructure and industry in the seven

AKIC, which comprises two nodes at Agra and Paragana districts, will span across 20 cities in seven states like Punjab, Haryana, UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal

states falling along its route for catalysing industrial growth and job creation. It is set to play a significant role in making UP a key investment destination. The objective of AKIC is to optimise the present economic and employment potential of the region, stimulate investments particularly in manufacturing, agro-processing, services and export-oriented units and promote overall economic development of the area through creation of high standard infrastructure and an enabling business environment. The corridor encompasses one of the most densely populated regions in the world and supports nearly 40 per cent of India's population inhabiting comparatively economically weaker districts.

AKIC is proposed to be developed in swathes of land flanking the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while presiding over a review meeting recently, said the state would directly benefit from the AKIC project and asked officials to ensure that there was no delay in acquisition of land. The CM also tasked officials with time-bound resolution of matters pertaining to industry to boost the confidence of investors in the state's 'doing business' ecosystem. The state is promoting various infra projects, such as freight corridors, dry ports, expressways, airports, highways, waterways, and logistics hubs. Recently, a Bank of America (BoA) delegation met UP Additional Chief Secretary and Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner Manoj Kumar Singh in Lucknow to explore investment opportunities. Singh said the state had emerged as a preferred investment destination for both domestic and global companies across sectors. "UP is India's most favoured business destination owing to its rich cultural heritage and favourable business environment. The improved law and order situation has significantly contributed to creating a conducive environment for business and investment," he said.

Bada Mangal: Youth's tryst with divinity

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Youth participated in great numbers in the Bada Mangal bhandaras held on Tuesday. Contrary to the perception that the youth are not interested in religious matters, young boys and girls could be seen organising bhandaras, extending a helping hand, and enjoying prasad. A significant number of students participated in the bhandara organised by the proctor's office at Lucknow University. They not only served visitors at the bhandara but also took part in the puja organised before it began. Many of them also partook in the prasad distributed on the occasion. LU spokesperson Durgesh Srivastava said that both male and female students showed great interest in the bhandara. "These activities in social environments provide a good diversion for the youth, helping them develop their overall personality by understanding what they should do and what they should not do. This also helps them learn about the idea of community service," he said. Meanwhile, a separate bhandara organised by Lucknow University Chhatra Sangh at the Polytechnic crossing witnessed a large number of students. TD Singh, former Lucknow University student leader and state president of Samajwadi Party, said he has been organising the bhandara for the past ten years. "Students of Lucknow University, including hostellers



and those staying as paying guests in different parts of the city, participated in the bhandara. They helped us feed over 5,000 devotees by distributing prasad," he said. Lalit Kumar Verma, a young trader who organised a bhandara in Gomtinagar, said he has been organising the bhandara along with other traders in the area for the past 15 years. "Seventy per cent of the participation is from youth, which is tremendous. The young members of our committee helped chop vegetables last night that were cooked for the bhandara. They also came forward in a big way when it came to serving the devotees. Apart from the youth, young children

aged 10-14 were so excited that they spent the morning planning how they would serve the devotees and help feed as many as possible," he said. He mentioned they used four quintals of flour and over three large vessels of vegetarian biryani for prasad, along with 3-4 drums of sherbet. "We aim to serve the maximum number of people so that none go hungry on this day," he added. Amit Tripathi, a young real estate professional who organised a bhandara at the Husadiya crossing, said he has been organising the bhandara for the past eight years. Considering the hot weather conditions, Amit made vast arrangements for his bhandara,

providing seating arrangements for the devotees along with tables. He also ensured cleanliness by providing two dustbins for the disposal of glasses and plates. "I have been holding the bhandara on the third Bada Mangal along with my brother. It is a great feeling to feed the maximum number of devotees on this occasion. We have also registered with the Lucknow Nagar Nigam and aim to make it a zero-waste affair," he said. Similarly, a large young crowd was visible at the bhandara organised by Kartik Kumar Sharma in Vishal Khan, Gomtinagar. Prapat, part of the organising

team, said the organiser himself is a youth and encourages young people to participate. He said they have been organising the bhandara for the past four years, serving boondi, sherbet, puri, and sabzi. "The basic purpose of organising the bhandara is faith in God, and it is very satisfying to see the devotees partake of the food," he added. Ashish Gupta (30), who cooked the food at one of the bhandaras, said he has immense faith in God and is always an active participant in such activities. "More than 50 per cent of the youth have a great interest in these activities and show keen interest in participating," he added.

AKY: Modi's latest cabinet nothing new except for date and year

PTI ■ SAIFAI

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said the latest cabinet of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is no different from the previous ones except for the date and year. He also said he would soon inform the UP Vidhan Sabha about the seat he will vacate. Akhilesh is an MLA from Karhal in Mainpuri district and won the latest Lok Sabha election from Kannauj. "There is nothing new except for the date and the year," he told reporters in Saifai in Etawah district while talking about the Modi 3.0 government. The SP chief said his party is carrying forward the ideas and thoughts of socialist Ram Manohar Lohia, B R Ambedkar, and Netaji, as the party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav is often referred to. He said his party's MPs will raise the issues faced by the masses in the Parliament whenever the next session begins. He



Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav being garlanded at an event after the Lok Sabha elections, at the party office in Saifai, Uttar Pradesh.

thanked the party workers saying, it was "due to them the SP has become the number three party in the country." The SP won 37 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, only third after the BJP and the Congress in

overall numbers. "The 2024 poll is a victory of what matters to the people," said Akhilesh, whose party had allied with the Congress to forge the INDIA bloc to take on the BJP.

JDU UP president extends congratulations to Nitish

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Janata Dal United's (JDU) Uttar Pradesh state president Anoop Singh Patel expressed happiness over the appointment of party's Lok Sabha MP Rajiv Ranjan, also known as Lallan Singh, as a cabinet minister, and Rajya Sabha MP Ramnath Thakur as a state minister in the government formed for the third time at the Centre under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He congratulated party's national president Nitish Kumar and the informed people of Bihar, attributing the success to the hard work of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Patel noted that Kumar's government successfully launched various public welfare schemes, including women empowerment initiatives, reservation for women in government jobs, 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayat elections, numerous government jobs for the youth, complete prohibition of

liquor in the state, implementation of a caste census, government assistance to the poor, and full support to farmers. "Nitish Kumar deserves congratulations for this success, and we will strengthen and activate the party organisation in Uttar Pradesh under the able leadership of our leader," he said. Chief spokesman Diwakar Singh said that the party contested the elections as a key member of the NDA, with Nitish Kumar playing a decisive role in making Narendra Modi the prime minister for the third time. He expressed confidence that the JDU would perform well in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of state president Anoop Patel. Among those who extended their congratulations were the party's state co-convenors Awadhesh Singh and Khushnawaz Ansari, along with Imran Ilahi, Neeraj Patel, Dr Bharat Gangwar, Mamta Singh, Shailendra Singh Gaharwar, Kalp Nath Verma, Dr Sanjay Singh, Subhash Pathak and several others.

Tension in Moradabad after mosque Imam shot dead

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tension prevailed in Moradabad after another cleric (Imam of a mosque) was shot dead in the early hours of Tuesday. Last Saturday, Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind general secretary and well-known religious leader Maulana Farooq (67) was brutally murdered in the Sonpur village in Pratapgarh, which also led to tension in the area. The police have failed to work out Farooq's murder though they claimed to have picked up a suspect and interrogated him. According to the information, unidentified miscreants called Maulana Akram outside his house at 4 in the morning and shot him in the chest. Police said that the incident occurred in Bhenia village's mosque. The deceased was a resident of Rampur district. He had been serving at the mosque called Badi Masjid for the last 15 years. "Maulana Akram was shot dead. Attackers called

him outside his home and shot him, resulting in his death. The deceased was a resident of Rampur district and had been serving as the Imam of the mosque in Bhainsiya village for 15 years," said Moradabad SP Akhalaish Bhadauria, who reached the spot along with other senior officers to carry out investigations. The forensic team collected evidence from the spot. Maulana Akram had also built a house in Bhainsiya and lived there with his wife and six children. According to family members, Maulana Akram received a call in the early hours of Tuesday. Thereafter, Maulana Akram went out to meet the person who called him. Locals raised an alarm after they heard a gunshot, only to find the cleric lying dead in a pool of blood. The villagers claimed that the police had found a pistol at some distance from the crime scene. The police have taken the pistol in their possession. The police also quizzed the deceased's wife Amna regarding the incident.

Villagers said that Maulana Akram did not have any fight with anyone in the last 15 years and he did not have any enmity with anyone. The villagers also said that when Maulana Akram did not go to the mosque to offer morning prayers, people got suspicious, after which an attempt was made to find him, and his body was found. Meanwhile, a JCB driver created a ruckus at the Chhijarsi Toll Plaza in Hapur district. He went on a rampage, smashing the toll booth after being asked to pay the toll fee. The disturbing act, captured on video, quickly went viral, prompting a swift response from police. The incident took place on Tuesday morning when the JCB driver, apparently enraged over the toll payment demand, resorted to vandalism, causing significant damage to the toll booth. The toll plaza, situated under the jurisdiction of Pilkhuwa police station, became the scene of chaos as the JCB driver wreaked havoc. Following the incident, authorities launched a probe into the matter.

Balyan lost due to his own actions: Som

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heated response to former Union minister Dr Sanjeev Balyan's comments regarding internal betrayal leading to his electoral defeat, Sardhana former MLA Thakur Sangeet Som asserted that Balyan's loss was due to his own actions and behaviour. Balyan had alleged that Som assisted the Samajwadi Party (SP) in the recently-concluded elections. However, Som refuted these claims during a press briefing at his residence in Meerut Cantonment, emphasising that Balyan was defeated in his own constituencies of Budhana and Charthawal, and not in Sardhana. "Balyan did not lose in Sardhana; he received an equal number of votes there," Som stated. "His losses were in Budhana and Charthawal. Even in the urban assembly seat, where the BJP typically leads by 70,000 votes, the margin was reduced to just 800 votes. Only Balyan can explain why this happened," he added. Som highlighted that in the traditionally strong areas of the BJP like New Mandi, the SP candidate won. "I followed instructions from the chief minister and the state president to focus solely on Sardhana, where there was no loss in votes," he said, adding "BJP's vote share also reduced in Khatauli, which is Balyan's fortress." However, despite the criticism, Som clarified there was no ideological rift between



him and Balyan, asserting that both were committed BJP workers striving for the party's success. On rumours of supporting the SP, Som retorted: "How can I help a party that once had me jailed?" When questioned about the BJP's poor performance in western Uttar Pradesh, Som attributed it to vote splitting. He also responded to Balyan's claim that "Som lacks the stature" to engage with him by suggesting that any complaints should have been raised within the party forum rather than in the media. "Washing dirty linen in public is not a good strategy," Som remarked. Additionally, Som criticised the BJP's alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), arguing that it had been detrimental and led to losses in seats in Uttar Pradesh, serving as a significant boost for the party.

RLD leader congratulates Chaudhary Jayant Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

National secretary of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) Anupam Mishra congratulated party chief Chaudhary Jayant Singh on taking charge of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on Tuesday. Mishra stated that Jayant's elevation to a cabinet minister position in the Central government was a significant achievement for the party, and he expressed hope that Jayant would serve the country and people well. The national secretary highlighted that the RLD had always led from the front on issues concerning farmers, youth, women, and people from lower strata of society. "RLD's popularity among the people, especially farmers, is well known. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA recognised the importance of RLD due to its strong base among farmers. The PM honoured the hard work and efforts of the party chief in the recent Lok Sabha elections," he said. He further remarked that the elevation of the party chief to a cabinet minister role in the Central government would motivate the workers and leaders in Uttar Pradesh, serving as a significant boost for the party.

UPSRTC to make services more accessible to public

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath intensifying efforts to expedite projects pending due to the recently-held Lok Sabha elections, the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) has initiated plans to enhance and make transport services more accessible to the public. This includes the construction and renovation of 12 bus terminals, as well as transforming the terminals into commercial complexes. The comprehensive plan includes construction of new terminals and the makeover of old bus stands in cities such as Agra, Gorakhpur, Mirzapur, Bulandshahr, Garhmukteshwar, Mathura, Kanpur Central, and Varanasi Cantt. Additionally, the plan to include 5,000 electric buses in the UPSRTC fleet is also gaining momentum. The tender process for these projects was initiated in March but was delayed due to the Lok Sabha elections. It will now resume on June 14. In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision to enhance public amenities, UPSRTC has started construction of new terminals at Idgah and Transport Nagar in Agra, Sahibabad in Ghaziabad, Gorakhpur, Mirzapur, Bulandshahr, Bareilly, Garhmukteshwar, Rasulabad in Aligarh, Varanasi Cantt,

These projects aim to develop public facilities and convert these spaces into commercial areas, creating a revenue generation model

and Kanpur Central. The corporation will also get the old bus stand in Mathura renovated. These projects aim to develop public facilities and convert these spaces into commercial areas, creating a revenue generation model. This will not only provide modern facilities for travelers, but also help increase UPSRTC's income. All these works being taken forward now are part of the detailed action plan which was prepared under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi. UPSRTC has also restarted the tender process for the supply, operation, and maintenance of 5,000 electric buses, beginning June 14. This marks the first phase of the corporation's plan to revolutionise public transport. As part of a long-term strategy to expand the state's transport network, the process to include a fleet of 50,000 buses has begun and will be completed in the coming years.

		Regional Office : 117/HI-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immoveable Properties) [Rule-8(1)]		
Whereas The undersigned being the authorized officer of Union Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of account to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being of dues with contractual rate of interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.		
The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him u/s. 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules. The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with the property will subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, for an Amount and Interest thereon.		
We also wish to draw kind attention of all concerned towards section 13(8) of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.		
Sl. No.	Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date	
1.	Borrower : M/s Rajvanshi Enterprises, Proprietor : Smt. Rani W/o Shri Akhilesh Chaudhary, Address : 545/56, Kori Quarter, Station Road, Orai, Distt. Jalaun, Guarantor : Shri Akhilesh Chaudhary S/o Shri Badri Prasad, R/o : 545/56, Kori Quarter, Station Road, Orai, Distt. Jalaun. Demand Notice Date: 30-01-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 07.06.2024 Property (1) : Residential Plot at part of Arazi No. 170/2, R/v Madora, Mauza-Madora Orai, Tehsil & Pargana Orai, Distt. Jalaun. Owner of Property : Smt. Rani W/o Shri Akhilesh Chaudhary, Area : 830 Sq. Ft., Bounded-North : Plot of Seller, South : 20 Ft. Wide Way East : Plot of Smt. Rani, West : Plot of Radha Devi. Property (2) : Residential Plot at part of Arazi No. 170/2, R/v Madora, Mauza-Madora Orai, Tehsil & Pargana Orai, Distt. Jalaun. Owner of Property : Smt. Rani W/o Shri Akhilesh Chaudhary, Area : 840 Sq. Ft., Bounded-North : Plot of Seller, South : 20 Ft. Wide Way, East : Plot of Shri Anidaman Singh, West : Plot of Rani. Branch : Station Road O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 2,83,610.15 + Intt. + Others Charges Orai, Distt. Jalaun	
2.	Borrower : Smt. Sarita Devi W/o Shri Diwakar Shastri, R/o : 1084, Naya Patel Nagar, Churkhi Road, Bhanghaura, Orai, Distt. Jalaun and Shri Diwakar Shastri S/o Shri Bachchan Lal, R/o : 1084, Naya Patel Nagar, Churkhi Road, Bhanghaura, Orai, Distt. Jalaun. Demand Notice Date: 08-05-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 07.06.2024 Property : Residential Property at 1084, Naya Patel Nagar, Churkhi Road, Bhanghaura, Orai, Distt. Jalaun. Owner of Property : Smt. Sarita Devi W/o Shri Diwakar Shastri, Area : 147 Sq. Mtr./1575 Sq. Ft., Bounded-North : House of Uma Shanker, South : House of Bharat Singh, East : House of Laxmi Shanker, West : 18 Ft. Raod. Branch : Orai Main, Distt. Jalaun O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 8,60,759.51 + Intt. + Others Charges	
3.	Borrower : Late Suresh Pal Singh S/o Shri Raghunath Singh through its Legal Heirs (1) Smt. Mithlesh-Wife, (2) Shri Atendra Singh-Son, (3) Shri Atul-Son, All R/o : House No. 2174, Mohalla Patel Nagar, Jalaun Road, Orai, Distt. Jalaun, Owner of Property : Late Suresh Pal Singh S/o Shri Raghunath Singh, Area : 1200 Sq. Ft., Bounded-North : 5.10 Mtr. Wide P.C. Cone Way after that House of Tomar, South : Open Plot of Ramesh Chandra & House of Yggik Ji, East : House of Shri Raghuvver Singh, West : House of Shri Yogesh Tripathi After that Way. Branch : Orai Main, Distt. Jalaun	
Date : 11-06-2024 Place : Jalaun Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India		

U-WIN app has made vaccination easy: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has made vaccination of pregnant mothers and children from birth to five years easy by launching the U-WIN portal and app on the lines of Co-WIN. "Pregnant women and children are being registered in this app to get the benefit of vaccination and other services", he said, adding that pregnant women and children registered on the U-WIN app can book slots for vaccination on the regular vaccination session day organised every Wednesday and Saturday. "Once the slot is booked, the beneficiary can easily get his vaccination done by reaching at the given time on the same day. This is saving their time with the information about the nearest vaccination centre and the satisfaction of getting vaccinated by trained staff", Dr Chaudhary said, adding that the U-WIN portal is not only helping the health system to improve the vaccination plan but is also encouraging the beneficiaries to get



number of the beneficiary a day before the vaccination. Not only this, the beneficiaries registered on the app available on Google Play Store can take any dose of the vaccine anytime in any part of the country and can book online slots for all types of vaccines of regular vaccination like the Covid vaccine apart from also getting a certificate of vaccination from the app", he said. Dr Maurya said that the facility of U-WIN was started from March 15 this year. From then till May, 10,241 sessions have been organised in the district against the targeted 10,675 sessions. In these sessions, 14,938 pregnant mothers and 63,625 children have been registered and vaccinated. This includes 44,007 children from birth to one year and 19,618 children from one to five years. Apart from this, in the last financial year, 85,987 (117%) children from birth to one year, 83,165 (120%) children from one to two years were covered with MR second dose and 83,140 (120%) children were covered with DPT first booster. Along with this, 74,485 children (120%) of five years were given DPT second booster dose.

process of vaccination (birth dose) within 24 hours of birth at delivery centres is also being strengthened. Soon community survey has also been included, so that people's health can be taken care of", he said. District Immunisation Officer Dr AK Maurya said that information about when the next vaccine is to be given to pregnant mothers and children and when was the previous vaccine given apart from vaccine is to be taken by which member of the family in what interval of days, etc is being recorded on the U-WIN portal and application. "Along with this, its update and alert is also coming on the mobile of the beneficiary. A message is being sent to the registered mobile

number of the beneficiary a day before the vaccination. Not only this, the beneficiaries registered on the app available on Google Play Store can take any dose of the vaccine anytime in any part of the country and can book online slots for all types of vaccines of regular vaccination like the Covid vaccine apart from also getting a certificate of vaccination from the app", he said. Dr Maurya said that the facility of U-WIN was started from March 15 this year. From then till May, 10,241 sessions have been organised in the district against the targeted 10,675 sessions. In these sessions, 14,938 pregnant mothers and 63,625 children have been registered and vaccinated. This includes 44,007 children from birth to one year and 19,618 children from one to five years. Apart from this, in the last financial year, 85,987 (117%) children from birth to one year, 83,165 (120%) children from one to two years were covered with MR second dose and 83,140 (120%) children were covered with DPT first booster. Along with this, 74,485 children (120%) of five years were given DPT second booster dose.

PM to visit Kashi on June 18

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After the formation of Modi government for the third consecutive time at the Centre, all speculations about the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his Varanasi parliamentary constituency have come to an end. According to the information received from New Delhi, the PM will visit Kashi on June 18 and during his one-day stay here will interact with the farmers. Meanwhile, despite scorching heat, the BJP workers along with District Magistrate S Rajalingam visited four-five villages of Rajatalab area including Rakhuna, Mehndiganj Madai, Mehndiganj Ring Road etc behind Rajatalab Mandi here on Tuesday but no place has been finalised yet. According to regional spokesman Navratan Rathi, the party is planning to organise a Kisan Sammelan between Rohania and Sevapuri assembly constituencies. Regional president Dilip Patel, district president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, Praveen Singh Gautam, Arvind Patel and others were present in search of a suitable venue. Besides, the city unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also started preparations under the leadership of its president Vidyasagar Rai for the two events of Modi to be held in the urban area - darshan at Kashi Vishwanath temple and Ganga Aarti. In order to ensure the presence of a large number of workers along with the residents of Kashi to welcome the PM on the route of his journey, UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal, MLAs Dr Neelkanth Tiwari and Saurabh Srivastava have decided to call big meetings of workers in their respective assembly constituencies. It was expected since the announcement of Lok Sabha results that after assuming the charge as the PM again, Modi will express his gratitude to the



BJP leaders, along with DM S Rajalingam, on Tuesday searching site for PM's interaction with farmers on June 18 in Varanasi

voters of Varanasi, who did not disappoint him for the third consecutive time, though the overall political scenario of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) was not favourable for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) performed poorly and won just three seats out of 12 of Varanasi, Vindhyachal (Mirzapur) and Azamgarh divisions. Out of this three, two (Varanasi and Bhadohi) were won by the BJP and one Apna Dal (Sonelal) which retained its Mirzapur seat. The INDIA Bid did superbly well in this region, claiming 75 per cent seats and hoisting its flag in Chandauli, Ghazipur, Macchhalishahr (SC), Jaunpur, Robergtganj (SC), Laljanj (SC), Azamgarh, Ghosi and Ballia seats. The NDA which had claimed two out of three reserved seats in 2019, failed to win a single seat. In view of the proposed visit of the PM, a meeting of city and district office-bearers of BJP was held in the party's Gulab Bagh (Siga) office here on Monday evening to discuss the selection of venue for proposed farmers' conference either in Rohania or Sevapuri

assembly constituency, the two rural assembly segments of Varanasi Lok Sabha seat. In the meeting regional BJP president (Kashi Region) Dilip Patel gave information to the party office-bearers and workers about the arrival of the PM. Patel said after addressing the proposed farmers' conference (Kisan Sammelan), the PM will visit Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham to offer prayers and then participate in the famous Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat. As Modi also offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath Temple after registering victory in 2014 and 2019, it was expected that he would do the same this time also. In 2014, Modi came here even before his swearing-in ceremony. However, this time political situation for the BJP was not the same as it was in 2014 and 2019 when the party single handedly crossed the magic number of 272 winning 282 and 303 seats respectively but in 2024, the BJP slipped down to 240, forcing it to depend on NDA allies to run a stable government. Patel said as the date of PM's visit has been finalised, the party leaders should start

preparations for the grand welcome of Modi. He said the process of handing over responsibilities to the workers regarding the Kisan Sammelan has already been started. The meeting was conducted by city president Vidyasagar Rai and the vote of thanks was proposed by district chief and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma. Regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, Jagdish Tripathi, Praveen Singh Gautam, Ashok Patel, Sanjay Sonkar, Rahul Singh, JP Dubey, Shaileendra Mishra, Ram Bilas Singh, Gaurav etc were mainly present in the meeting. Meanwhile, with the confirmation of PM's visit, the district administration has also started its preparations and arrangements and it is expected that the top officials from Lucknow will visit here soon. Like almost all previous visits of Modi, it is also expected that the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also come here to review the preparations a few days prior to Modi's visit. It will be a little surprise if Modi announces some welfare schemes for the farmers from his own parliamentary constituency.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. CE/RB/ACCTS-46/23/156, Dtd. 06.06.2024
Name of the work: "Annual maintenance & Development of garden in and around Port Township (Smriti Udyan, Nursery, JC Colony, GC and GD colony, Administrative building, Pump house premises (JC & Madhuban), and Balihara Water Works for the year 2024-25. Estimated Cost: Rs.1,27,28,962.76/-, Last date & time of Submission of bid: 28.06.2024 up to 18:00 Hrs., Refer our website for details https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app Sd/- Executive Engineer, Roads & Building Division, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/11/2024-25 Dtd. 10.06.2024

Terrorist attack condemned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The activists of Namami Gange (Ganga Vihar Manch) strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a bus of pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and paid tribute to the victims on the banks of Ganga with the prayers for salvation of their souls. They also observed two minutes of

silence and chanted mantras like 'Om Shanti Shanti Shanti'. They also wished and prayed to the Almighty for the speedy recovery of the injured persons. Continuing their cleanliness campaign on the fifth day under 10-day drive prior to Ganga Dussehra, they reached Scindia Ghat, adjacent to Manikarnika Ghat, known as 'Mokshadwar' of Kashi here on Tuesday and offered 'shramdaan' on the banks of the ghat. District coordinator Shivam Agrahari said after cremation, a large number of participants of funeral processions come to Scindia Ghat for bathing in the Ganga. The team members took out the thrown clothes and sent them for

and Brahma ghats. The message of water conservation was given by performing the aarti of Maa Ganga at Panchganga Ghat, the confluence of five rivers. Region coordinator Rajesh Shukla said that water is a priceless gift of nature and appealed to all to make good use of it. He said clean and safe water is the key to good health. "It is very important to save natural resources so that the coming generations do not have to face much trouble. Due to indiscriminate water extraction from wells, tube wells, ponds and rivers, groundwater has decreased. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every person to understand the importance of water and use it properly and not



Namami Gange activists paying tribute to victims of terrorist attack at Scindia Ghat in Varanasi on Tuesday.

disposal with the help of the Municipal Corporation. Prominent among those present were city co-coordinator Ramprakash Jaiswal, Jai Vishwakarma and Shivangi Pandey. Meanwhile, another group of Namami Gange raised awareness about cleanliness at Panchganga Ghat and offered shramdaan to clean up to Durga

let it flow in vain", Shukla said, appealing to the people to join Jal Shakti Abhiyan and pledge to conserve water by stopping wastage of water. The devotees who came to bathe in the Ganga were requested not to litter. Rajendra Mishra, Dinesh Sharma, Kajal Mehrotra, Saloni Pathak, Suman Gujarati etc were other participants in the event.

Form No. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow
(Areas of Jurisdiction: Part of Uttar Pradesh)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE THROUGH PUBLICATION
O.A. No. 31 of 2024 Dated :- 19.04.2024
(Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institution Act 1993 read with rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal Procedure Rules 1993)
HDFC BANK LIMITEDApplicant
Versus
MRS. RAMPATI SANT LAL MAURYA & ANOTHERDefendants
To, 1. Mrs. Rampati Sant Lal Maurya (Borrower) W/o Sant Lal Maurya Add: Behsa Amausi Airport, Lucknow-226009, Uttar Pradesh-India. 2. Mr. Raj Kamal Maurya, (Co-applicant) Sic) Sant Lal Maurya Add: Behsa, Sarojini Nagar, Ain, Lucknow-226009, Uttar Pradesh - India
In the above noted application, you are required to file reply/evidence in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 25.10.2024 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
REGISTRAR,
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL LUCKNOW

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR
BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR REQUIREMENT OF M.S. PIPE FOR THE YEAR 2024 (Tender ID 59272) (2nd Attempt)
GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery M.S. pipes of 355.60 mm x 5 mm thickness (I/S Solvent free Liquid Epoxy lining + O/S 3 LPE Coating) with ISI Mark 9000 Mtr. Estimated amt. Rs. 274.95 Lacs (without GST) from approved vendor of GWSSB only. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & down load the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>
The last date of submission of online tender is 18-6-2024
INF/146/2024-25

verka
THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX No. 0172-5041812,66
Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop
e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Manpower required for job contract i.e. for processing, Manufacturing, Packing of milk & milk products jobs.	01-09-2024 to 30.04.2025
2.	For Verka Patiala Dairy Single Phase Dairy barn ventilation fan with motor.	100 Pcs
3.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Steam Coal having Calorific Value not less than 5500 Kcal/Kg. (700-800 MT per month) b) Operation and maintenance of milk & milk Products pouches filling machines & Tray washer (along with coding of pouches and photo cell of machine). c) Contract for operation and maintenance of Effluent Treatment Plant, sewerage Treatment Plant, Softening Water Plant (02 nos) and Tube wells installed. d) Hiring maintenance engineer and instrument technician for spray dryer milk powder plant capacity 25 MT PD.	2000MT Annual 01 Job 01 Job
4.	For Verka CFP, Ghania-Ke-Banger a) Disposal of old bardana Jute Gunny bags above 50kgs/ kattas upto 50 kgs/Plastic katta b) Labour job contract for shifting, dumping of raw material & stacking of finished products; dumping of trace elements, filling, packing, shifting of mineral mixture; cleaning, bundling of empty bags; cleaning of plinths and godowns etc.	Annual/ Approx. 13-14 Lac bags Annual

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)
NA/12/23285/2023/34360 Dated CHD :- 6/11/2024

6 housing colonies of KDA to be developed by KNN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Six housing colonies of Skanpur Development Authority (KDA) will be developed by the Kanpur Nagar Nigam with an investment of ₹26.14 crore. These included Mahavir Nagar Extension, Transport Nagar Phase-1, Phase-3, Kalpi Nagar (in zone 3), Highway City and Chandra Nagri Part-3 (in zone 2). This will facilitate about 50,000 people with all basic amenities. At a meeting held under the chairmanship of the Divisional Commissioner Amit Gupta, the KDA has handed over the cheque to Kanpur Nagar Nigam to meet expenses on development of these colonies. The latter will invite tender for the job on June 12. The developmental works will start from next month. The KDA will transfer these colonies to Kanpur Nagar Nigam within 15 days. District Magistrate Rakesh Kumar Singh, KDA Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal, Secretary, Chief Engineer and zone engineers were present at the meeting. The divisional commissioner also directed that the inspection of remaining colonies be also carried out jointly by the engineers of KDA and KNN in due course. He said the transfer of six colonies to KNN be ensured within next 15 days. DIRECTIVE: Mayor Pramila Pandey held a review meeting with the officers of Jalkal Vibhag at its headquarters and directed them to ensure that there is no waterlogging in

the city during the forthcoming monsoon. General Manager Anand Tripathi informed that the 70-km long sewer line will be cleaned by super sucker machine. For this tenders had been invited and the work will be completed by month end June. The mayor directed to complete the work quickly as the monsoon was likely to arrive between June 20 and 25. She also asked the officers to check the shifting of water/sewer pipeline from Metro Phase-2 CSA to Barra-8. Pandey directed to examine all the works carried out by the Metro Corporation. On the damaged manholes, general manager said there was no open manhole on all the main roads of the city. During the past two months, repairing of 1,000 manhole covers had been carried out by the department. Besides, repairing of water pipeline leakage had been carried out at 36 places. In Zone 1, repairing of sewerline was done at six places while the work at two places in Halsey Road was yet to be carried out. At the same time, as many as 263 water supply connections had been regularised near Nai Sarak. On the directive of the mayor, Jalkal Vibhag had sent the bills to 263 residents of FM Colony. Executive Engineer, Jalkal Zone-1, Farhat Hussain, Executive Engineer, Jalkal, Zone-2 Jagat Pal, Executive Engineer, Jalkal Zone-3 PK Singh, Zonal Engineer, Jalkal Zone 5 Mohd Shamim and Zonal Engineer, Jalkal Zone 6 and others were present.

'Our country unique example of unity in diversity'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandi Ben Patel virtually inaugurated the newly-constructed auditorium of North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC) here on Monday evening. She was scheduled to come here but her programme was cancelled in the evening itself. She said the inauguration of the newly constructed auditorium dedicated to art in the Sangam city is a matter of great joy. Our country is a unique example of unity in diversity and various arts have been born and nurtured in dif-

ferent areas. The governor said that many folk arts, especially those found in rural areas, are becoming extinct due to lack of recognition and not being documented. In such a situation attention through research will have to be paid for the uplift of art and culture. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Amita Prasad Sarabha, Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant and District Magistrate Navneet Singh Chahal were also present. Notably, about Rs 3 crore have been spent in preparing this auditorium with about 400 seats. It is completely eco-friendly. The governor is

also the chairperson of NCZCC located in Prayagraj. NCZCC is one of the seven regional cultural centres established in the country. It covers seven states UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Delhi. Cultural programmes are conducted here continuously. PROTEST: A large number of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) Allahabad University unit workers protested against the alleged irregularities in the NEET exam results. They raised slogans in front of the Allahabad University Students' Union building. The

office-bearers of the organisation said an impartial CBI inquiry be conducted and action should be taken against the guilty. Unit President of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad Allahabad University Unit Alok Tripathi said "There have been cases of students committing suicide after the NEET exam results were declared, this is very sad. In an important exam like NEET, a large number of students participate and work hard to prepare for it." State Media incharge Abhinav Mishra said this matter should be investigated by the CBI and strict action should be taken against the culprits.

Youth's charred body found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The charred body of a youth was recovered on the railway track in Ghatampur police area on Tuesday morning. The police along with forensic team rushed to spot and after investigation and collecting evidence from the spot sent the body for an autopsy. Saurabh

Savita (25) of Bhadrar village was a labourer. Brother Pankaj said late on Monday evening when Saurabh was cooking food with friends in the village he received a phone call and immediately returned home without having dinner. Meanwhile, he again received a call and went out of the house and did not return till late at

night. The residents found his charred body on the Banda railway track on Tuesday morning and informed the police. The kin alleged the killing of the youth. Station Officer (SO) Ghatampur Pradip Kumar Singh said on the basis of complaint and the autopsy report, further action will be initiated in the matter.

Youth dies under mysterious circumstances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 27-year-old youth Sunil Yadav of Purebhikha village under Pratapgarh police station died under mysterious circumstances here on Tuesday. He was shot in the head. His body was found in his field, two hundred metres away from the house. On getting information the police reached the spot, took the body into possession and sent it for post-mortem examination. ASP (East) Durgesh Singh also reached the spot. The forensic team collected samples from the crime scene. An old weapon and his mobile were found in Sunil's pocket. The mobile was on flight mode. ASP (East) Durgesh Singh said that the matter is being investigated whether it is murder or suicide. However, the family members did not raise any doubt of animosity. But the police are investigating on all the angles, he added. Meanwhile a couple committed suicide in a forest near Mansaita river in Tulapurvan on Tuesday morning. Both first cut the veins of their hands, then hanged themselves from the tree. Both the lovers

were missing from their respective homes since Friday. The youth has been identified as 27-year-old Bhagirathi Yadav of Ghatampur village of Nawabganj. The girl (17) who was also from the same village had come to her aunt's house in Dhanbalpur a week ago. The police is investigating the matter. Bhagirathi was in a love with a teenage girl and they had eloped last year. The girl's family had filed a case against Bhagirathi at Nawabganj police station. The police arrested him and sent him to jail. Some time ago, he came out of jail on bail. The girl's family was constantly keeping an eye on him. A week ago, the teenage girl was sent to her aunt's house in Dhanbalpur. On Friday night, the girl left the house on the pretext of going to the toilet and did not return. When she was not found, her uncle lodged a complaint at the Bahria police station. The police was searching for the girl when on Tuesday morning, their bodies were found hanging from a tree with the help of a rope in the forest near the Mansaita river. DCP Ganga Nagar Abhishek Bharti said that the statements of both the families have been

recorded. Investigation is being done. The post-mortem of the bodies is being done. Suicide note is being searched in the forest. In another incident, a speeding car ran over bike riders killing a 22-year-old youth on the spot and leaving another 20-year-old youth badly injured in Manda area late on Monday night. He was admitted to the Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. Sachin of Sonbarsa village in Manda police station area, had gone to his sister's house on Monday afternoon with his friend Shivam. Both were returning from there on a bike. Around 10 pm, a speeding car coming from the front hit the bike hard near the Piyari canal as a result both the youths were seriously injured. The car riders fled with the vehicle. Sachin died on the spot while Shivam was brought to the city hospital for treatment. When Sachin's family got the news of the death, they were shocked. The wife of the deceased fainted after hearing the news. Station Officer (SO) Manda Dharmendra Singh said the driver managed to escape after committing the crime. A search is on to trace the car driver after registering a case in this regard.

Discussion on French literature tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 'Pardon My French' programme with a literary discussion on French literature on modern art will be held at Harmony The BookShop, Assi Ghat here on June 13. The event will be organised by the French Institute in India with a view to bringing French literature to bookstores across the nation, in dedicated corners with a list curated for local readers, in partnership with the bookstores. The event will be attended by Ambassador of France to India Dr Thierry Mathieu. "Our goals are to ensure that the Indian bibliophile has as much access to French titles as their international counterparts. The selection includes iconic French classics from Sartre to Proust, those contemporary French titles with an established following in India (Marjane Satrapi, Annie Ernaux) as well as new voices seeing international acclaim (Victoria Mas, Edouard Louis, Virginie Despentes) and more", said Rakesh Kumar Singh of 'Harmony The BookShop'. The selection includes iconic French classics from Sartre to Proust, those contemporary French titles with an established following in India (Marjane Satrapi, Annie Ernaux) as well as new voices seeing international acclaim (Victoria Mas, Edouard Louis, Virginie Despentes) and more.

Modi 3.0 Cabinet: New Government signals both change, continuity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Several Ministers including Amit Shah, S Jaishankar, Manohar Lal, JP Nadda and Ashwini Vaishnav among others on Tuesday assumed charge of their respective Ministries. The new government signalled both change and continuity. A day after the much anticipated portfolios were announced and two days after Modi and 71 ministers were sworn in at a grand ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan, there were flowers and felicitations aplenty in the corridors of power. In a seamless transition from the previous government to the present one, the four big front-line portfolios stay the same - Amit Shah for Home, S Jaishankar for External Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman for Finance and Rajnath Singh for Defence. 'Bharat First and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The world is one family) will be the two guiding axioms of Indian foreign policy, Jaishankar said shortly after taking over. On ties with China going forward, Jaishankar said some issues remained along the border with that country and efforts will be made to resolve them. "Our focus with regard to China will be on how to

resolve the remaining issues," he told reporters. BJP president J P Nadda assumed charge of the Health as well as the Chemical and Fertilisers ministries. Several ministers made initial statements as they took charge of their ministries. Ashwini Vaishnav who continues to hold the key portfolios of Railways and Electronics and Information Technology, assumed charge as Information and Broadcasting minister in the presence of senior officials, including Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made service to the poorest of poor the motto of his life and the main aim of the government. He has taken measures for welfare of the farmers, youth and empowerment of women," Vaishnav told reporters. Donning his MeitY hat as he resumed charge of the ministry, he said the government will push ahead with its tech-driven agenda of cementing India's global lead in semiconductor and electronics manufacturing and as a technology and digital hub. Jitendra Singh, who took office as Union Minister of State (MoS) for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions at his North Block office, said



good governance reforms undertaken in the last decade will continue to increase citizen-centricity and ensure ease of living for every citizen. Modi is in charge of the ministry. "Last 10 years have witnessed a series of revolutionary governance reforms happening under the guidance of PM Modi, which were basically inspired by the spirit of 'minimum government, maximum governance' and increasing citizen centricity to bring ease of

living for every citizen of the country," Singh told reporters. Jyotiraditya Scindia, appointed Communications minister, said both the telecom sector and the India post division have key roles to play at the global as well as local stage. The minister recalled his previous tenure as the Minister of State for Communications about one and half decades ago. "It is also a little bit like coming full circle for me. I worked as a junior minister in this

department many many years ago in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Therefore for me it is also a department with which I have had tremendous emotional ties," Scindia said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, also given the responsibility of Minority Affairs, said he will make all efforts to take everyone along to ensure smooth functioning of Parliament. There was no need to pull each other down on the basis of numerical

strength, he added. "We need not pull each other down on the basis of numerical strength. People use muscle power outside Parliament, but inside the House, we should use vocal power for good debate," he said after assuming charge in the presence of his predecessor Pralhad Joshi and Ministers of State Arjun Ram Meghwal and L Murugan. Annapurna Devi, the country's new Women and Child Development minister, said

she will work towards fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a Viksit Bharat. Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat echoed her and said his ministry will contribute towards the vision of making a Viksit Bharat. Senior BJP leader from Karnataka Pralhad Joshi took over as minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and said his priority would be to implement the 100-day agenda of the government and further strengthen the food security system. "I am thankful to the prime minister who has given me the responsibility of this important department which is linked to the common people, where we provide free foodgrains to 80 crore people," Joshi told reporters. Rashtriya Swayam Sangh (RSS) pracharak, Haryana's former chief minister and now Union Power minister Manohar Lal met heads of public sector undertakings in the power sector and other top brass of his ministry to understand the dynamics of the sector. Chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram" were heard from party supporters when the BJP's Gujarat unit chief Chandrakant Raghunath Patil took charge of the Jal Shakti ministry.

Before doing so, he took to social media to state that the conservation and enhancement of the country's water resources is a "sacred goal". Promising continuity, new Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said the Modi government will continue to balance development with environmental protection and conservation. Listing the major achievements of the Modi-led government, he said, "India met the quantitative and qualitative targets set under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) - the national climate plan to achieve Paris Agreement goals - nine years ahead of schedule." All eyes were also on the allies of the BJP who were given ministerial berths. There were jubilation scenes when Chirag Paswan, the two-time MP from Bihar and chief of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), took office as minister of Food Processing Industries after a small religious ceremony in the presence of his mother and other family members. "There is huge potential in the food processing sector, and the 100-day plan will be ready after discussion with ministry officials," Paswan said, underscoring the sector's importance in directly benefiting farmers.

Shah assumes charge as HM for second consecutive term

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Amit Shah on Tuesday here took charge as the Union Home Minister for the second consecutive term. Shah, who has been holding the portfolio since 2019, has returned to the Modi 3.0 government in the same capacity. Before taking charge of the ministry, Shah visited the National Police Memorial in the city's Chanakyapuri area to pay homage to policemen who had laid down their lives while serving the nation. The 59-year old Shah was elected from Gandhinagar constituency in Gujarat in the Lok Sabha election. Shah has also retained his other portfolio in the Ministry of Cooperation. In the fresh tenure as home minister, the immediate priority of Shah will be the implementation of the three newly enacted criminal laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023. These laws, scheduled to come into effect from July 1, are set to replace the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, marking a significant shift towards a more



efficient and effective legal framework. Aimed at reshaping the landscape of the country's criminal justice system, Shah brought the three laws last year aimed at modernising and replacing outdated British-era legislation. As Union home minister in the second Modi government in 2019, Shah had played a pivotal role in shaping key policies, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Known for his meticulous approach, Shah's tenure has been marked by proactive decision-making and a commitment to strengthening national security and justice systems,

exemplifying his enduring influence in Indian politics. Shah has also been instrumental in quelling Maoist violence and restoring peace in the northeastern states through strategic peace accords. Known as the second most influential figure in the country after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a person dedicated to the saffron ideology, Shah rose as the BJP's master organiser when its alliance secured 73 seats from Uttar Pradesh in 2014 under his leadership as the party's general secretary. Recognised for his political acumen and strategic prowess, Shah has played a pivotal role in the phenomenal growth of the saffron party.

Oman, Qatar congratulate Modi on securing third term

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Oman and Qatar on Tuesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for securing third term. Oman's Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq has spoken to Prime Minister Modi to congratulate him as he began his third term in office, the PMO said on Tuesday. The Sultan emphasised the centuries-old ties of friendship between Oman and India and conveyed his best wishes for the progress and prosperity of the people of India, it added. Modi thanked him for his warm wishes and spoke of his historic visit to India in December 2023 which led to deepening of bilateral cooperation in all areas. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening and strengthening India-Oman partnership for the mutual benefit of both countries, it added. Modi also extended warm greetings to him and the people of Oman on the upcoming Eid Al Adha festival. Modi spoke with Amir of



Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on Tuesday during which the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advance India-Qatar ties to unprecedented heights. "Pleased to speak with my friend, the Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani. I thank him for his warm wishes and positive sentiments towards India," Modi said in a post on X. "We reaffirmed our commitment to advance India-Qatar ties to unprecedented heights," the prime minister said. Several world leaders have extended their wishes to Prime Minister Modi after he took oath for a third term in office.

Modi to undertake first official trip to Italy after assuming office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake his first foreign official trip to Italy this week after assuming office. He will attend the annual summit of G-7 advanced economies there and meet several world leaders, it was learnt here on Tuesday. The G7 summit, to be held in the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia in Italy's Apulia region from June 13 to 15, is likely to be dominated by the raging war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza. US President Joe Biden, his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are among the top leaders attending the summit. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is also scheduled for a session on the Russian invasion of his country. Modi is likely to leave for Italy on June 13 and will return late on June 14, adding it will be his first trip abroad after taking charge as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. He will be accompanied by a

high-level delegation that is likely to include External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, sources said. The prime minister is set to hold a number of bilateral meetings including with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Modi had attended the previous G7 summit in Hiroshima in May last year. On the sidelines of the summit, he had held talks with Zelenskyy and a number of other leaders. The G7 comprises the US, the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan. Italy is holding the current presidency of the G7 (Group of Seven) and is hosting the summit in that capacity. A key focus of the Italian presidency has been to defend the rules-based international system. Russia's military action in Ukraine has undermined its principles and triggered growing instability, with multiple crises unfolding worldwide, according to Italy. The G7 will give equal importance to the conflict in the Middle East, with its consequences for the global agenda, it says.

Modi appeals to people to make yoga integral part of their lives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the International Day of Yoga on June 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called upon people to reiterate their commitment to making yoga an integral part of their lives and also encourage others to do the same. In 10 days from now, the world will mark the 10th International Day of Yoga, celebrating a timeless practice that celebrates oneness and harmony, he said on X. Yoga has transcended cultural and geographical boundaries, uniting millions around the globe in the pursuit of holistic well-being, the prime minister said. Modi said, "As we approach this year's Yoga Day, it is essential to reiterate our commitment to making Yoga an integral part of our lives and also encouraging others to make it a part of theirs." "Yoga offers a sanctuary of calm, enabling us to navigate life's challenges with calm and fortitude," the prime minister said and also shared a set of videos showing various forms of yoga and their benefits.

CBI to seek Interpol Red Notice against three accused in human trafficking network

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will seek Interpol Red Notice against three accused for their alleged involvement in the human trafficking network that pushed Indians into the Russia-Ukraine war zone in the garb of lucrative employment opportunities in Moscow, officials said Tuesday. The central probe agency wants the custodial interrogation of alleged hawala operator Ramesh Kumar Palanisamy, Mohammad Moinuddin Chhipa, both understood to be in Russia, and Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan, believed to be in the UAE, to unravel the conspiracy, they said. An Interpol Red Notice is a request to law enforcement agencies of 196 member countries to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender or similar legal action. The CBI seeks to extradite the three accused to face legal action and join the investigation. The CBI had busted major human trafficking networks operating across the country in March which were allegedly pushing the Indian youths to the Russia-Ukraine war front in the garb of providing



them with lucrative foreign jobs. The agency has booked 24x7 RAS Overseas Foundation, KG Marg, and its Director Suyash Mukut, O.S.D Bros Travels & Visa Services Pvt Ltd., Mumbai and its Director Rakesh Pandey, Adventure Visa Services Pvt Ltd., Chandigarh, Punjab and its Director Manjeet Singh, Baba Vlogs Overseas Recruitment Solutions Pvt Ltd., Dubai and its Director Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan alias Baba in the FIR. The modus operandi deciphered by the CBI shows that Dubai-based Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan allegedly used

his YouTube channel to lure Indians into jobs in the Russian army, as security guards, or as helpers, promising a better life, a fat salary, etc., without revealing the nature of the job. The central probe agency, which has examined the number of victims in the last three months, learned that Khan gave the number of Mohammad Sufiyan and Pooja to interested aspirants to proceed. The couple allegedly asked the aspirants to deposit money in the accounts of Baba Vlogs, Sufiyan, Moinuddin Chhipa and Sadiq Chhipa and submit their pass-

ports to Cosmo Travels Pvt. Ltd, which arranged tourist visas for them on the promise that it would be converted into a work visa. These job seekers were asked to reach the Chennai Airport, where their passports were handed over to them. They were then given the contact numbers of Nijil Jobi Bensam and Ramesh Kumar Palanisamy, both based in Moscow. The duo received the candidates in Russia and kept them in a house there, according to the CBI findings. These victims were "deceptively" made to sign contracts for the Russian Army and handed over to them to be sent to the Russia-Ukraine War zone, the CBI has found. In Russia, Moinuddin also started extorting money from the victims for not sending them to the war zone. The agency has found 35 instances of youth being taken over to Russia lured through social media channels like YouTube, etc., and also through their local contacts and agents for highly paid jobs in Russia, they said. "They were being trained in combat roles and provided with Russian army uniforms and batches. After that, these Indian nationals are being deployed at front bases in the War Zone against their wishes and put their lives in grave danger," the CBI FIR said.

Promotion of violence never acceptable in Canada: Envoy to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada, Canadian envoy to India Cameron MacKay said on Tuesday, two days after display of a float depicting former prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassination at an event in Greater Toronto triggered fresh tensions in bilateral ties. India has already taken up the issue with Canadian authorities. "The Government of Canada is aware of further imagery displayed in Brampton on Sunday. Canada's position is clear: The promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada," MacKay said on X. The float glorifying Indira Gandhi's assassination was part of a parade that was taken out in Brampton to mark the 40th anniversary of Operation Bluestar. Operation Bluestar was an India Army operation carried out in June 1984 to flush out militants including their leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. India has been asking Canada to come down hard on pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil. The ties between the two countries came under severe strain fol-



lowing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd". India has been maintaining that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity. There have been instances of pro-Khalistani elements threatening to harm Indian diplomats. Days after Trudeau's allegations last year, India asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity. Canada subsequently withdrew 41 diplomats and their family members from India.

Rahul targets Modi Government over dynastic politics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday targeted the Modi government over dynastic politics and dubbed the NDA ministry a "parivar mandal" as he pointed out several ministers in the Modi 3.0 government who hail from political families. "Those who call the tradition of struggle, service and sacrifice of generations as nepotism are distributing the will of power to their 'sarkari parivar' (government family)," Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. "This difference between the words and actions is called Narendra Modi," he added. In his post, Rahul Gandhi named H D Kumaraswamy, son of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, Jyotiraditya Scindia, son of former Union minister Madhav Rao Scindia, Kiren Rijiju, son of first pro tem speaker of Arunachal Pradesh Rinchin Kharu, Raksha Khadse, daughter-in-law of former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse, Jayant Chaudhary, grandson of former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, Chirag Paswan, son of former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, and J P Nadda, son-in-law of former MP and Madhya Pradesh minister Jaysree Banerjee as part of



NDA's "Parivar mandal". To the list, he added Ram Nath Thakur, son of former Bihar chief minister Karpoori Thakur, Ram Mohan Naidu, son of former Union minister Terren Naidu, Jitin Prasad, son of former MP Jitendra Prasad, Rao Inderjit Singh, son of former Haryana chief minister Rao Birendra Singh, Piyush Goyal, son of former Union minister Ved Prakash Goyal, Ravneet Singh Bittu, grandson of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, Anupriya Patel, daughter of Apna Dal founder Sonelal Patel, and Kirti Vardhan Singh, son of former Uttar Pradesh minister Maharaj Anand Singh. Rahul Gandhi's post came in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi accusing the Congress of practising "dynastic politics" during the election campaign for the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The road ahead

The depleted BJP's decision to retain key Ministries is a double-edged sword

There are a number of ways to look at the depleted-in-strength BJP decision to hold onto important Ministries within the Union Government, despite pressure from coalition partners like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal United (JDU) for a larger share of the pie. For its part, the BJP has sought to guarantee itself centralisation of power over significant policy choices by holding onto important ministries. This will obviously support upholding a constant course for policy and governance, besides facilitating the quick execution of its agenda and cutting down on red tape. Sitting in significant Ministries enables the party to present its accomplishments and capacity for governance to the public, which is essential for retaining and growing its support base. On the flip sides, disagreements within the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) may arise from coalition partners feeling excluded. Relationship tension could result from this being seen as a lack of respect or trust by powerful regional parties like the TDP and JDU. The partners may utilise their ability to bargain to obtain greater sway, which could spark arguments or even inspire threats of abandoning the relationship. This might cause the partnership to become unstable, particularly since the BJP does not have the numbers to prop a Government on its own. On the other hand, it also means that the coalition will not be able to take use of the variety of perspectives and knowledge that its partners can offer. Policies as a result may be less sensitive to local quirks or inclusive. Sometimes, having all the authority in one place results in lack of accountability.



Sharing Ministries within a coalition can encourage a more balanced Government and serve as a check on decisions made by one person. In the long run, political instability could result from coalition partners feeling consistently ignored. In maintaining control, the BJP must make sure that its coalition partners are respected and feel included. However, the BJP's chances in States where these allies have sizeable support bases may suffer if coalition members leave over discontent. This might be harmful in elections that are hotly contested. Even if they do not hold important Ministries, the BJP is still able to include coalition partners in significant decision-making processes. This may lessen feelings of isolation. Keeping a stable alliance and addressing coalition partners' concerns can be achieved by regular consultations and talks. Providing them with strategic ministries or other types of political recompense might assist maintain coalition members' commitment and satisfaction. Maintaining important Ministries, therefore, is a two-edged sword for the BJP. It can guarantee policy continuity and improve governance efficiency, but it also runs the danger of upsetting coalition partners, which could result in political instability. The outcome will mostly depend on how the BJP humours its alliances and strikes a balance between inclusiveness and shared authority and centralised control.

Let statecraft replace vicious propaganda

The BJP poll machinery's aggressive narrative proved to be counterproductive; it's now time to change the nature of dialogue from confrontation to consensus



SIDHARTH MISHRA

The seamless swearing in of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the third term, given the fractured mandate handed out by voters in the Lok Sabha elections in 2024, must have come as big relief for those who invest in the Indian market. The investor could be a small-time shareholder or a rich corporate professional. The economic reforms launched by Dr Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister in the Narasimha Rao Government in 1991, have tumbled on through the regimes of another five Prime Ministers, who followed Rao, including Manmohan Singh himself. The importance of the continuity of these reforms can be gauged from the fact that in the past three decades, it has lifted more than 50 crore Indians out of mortifying poverty. From the economic point of view, the Narendra Modi Government's biggest shortcoming during its second term, which had a very strong mandate, was its inability to carry out farm reforms. It faltered in communicating to the farmers the benefits of the new agriculture laws and the profits it could accrue to the farm hands. The negative narrative perpetuated by the communication machinery of the Modi regime, which was largely taken over by the IT Cell of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), proved to be an impediment not just in the implementation of the farm legislations but also failed to immerse the spirit of Hindu pride in the months following the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. An aggressive narrative, borrowed from the cantankerous television debates and not necessarily backed by facts, on the social media platforms prove to be counterproductive. With the rise of the fact-checking tools, the decisions to let Jawaharlal's Nehru's love stories and propaganda of similar genre overshadow the Narendra Modi Government's achievements proved to be one of the biggest deflating factors in the BJP's campaign of 2024, with the



party falling way short of the halfway mark. The communication battle on the farm laws, instead of focusing on the merits of the reforms, became a fight between the Hindustanis and Khalistanis. The attempt to paint those opposed to the reforms as espousing the agenda of Balkanisation was ill thought of, and the BJP has paid a heavy price for it electorally not just in Punjab but across the farmlands of the country. Several other initiatives which could have welded people strongly in the support of the Modi 2.0, got undone by the showing of the brute power of large numbers, not as much on the ground, as in the narratives floated by the establishment's publicity arm. The whole attitude to run down the 'Argumentative Indian', an expression borrowed from the title of the bestseller by Amartya Sen, as anti-national in the event of s/he not agreeing with the Government only helped firm up the anti-Government stand than making them fall

FROM THE ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, THE NARENDRA MODI GOVERNMENT'S BIGGEST SHORTCOMING DURING ITS SECOND TERM, WHICH HAD A VERY STRONG MANDATE, WAS ITS INABILITY TO CARRY OUT FARM REFORMS

in the Government's line. The biggest question which must be haunting the BJP leadership is that when the residents of Uttar Pradesh took an "overwhelming" part in the celebration of the consecration of the Ram Temple, why did it not endorse the party as enthusiastically when it came to the electoral battle? Once again, the propaganda machinery only helped turn a happy moment into an instant of loyalty test. It was seen that handing out an invitation to the Opposition leaders to a 'quasi-political' function was to get them to refuse and get branded as 'anti-Hindu'. No communication expert would ever prepare a model which would spend time in their hour of glory on the rivals. The narrative so floated in the end created a situation where the 'homecoming' for Ram Lalla got overtaken by 'Ayodhya-coming' of the Opposition leaders. Today, the BJP Government is perched on the support of Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United). Both the leaders did not come to Ayodhya but have come to the support of Narendra Modi 3.0. In the past, they have even called the Ramjanambhoomi Movement as a 'political project' of the BJP. The latest narrative of the open denouncement of the voters of Uttar Pradesh by the BJP's extended family will certainly not find traction with either Kumar or Naidu. The castes and communities who did not vote for the BJP voted for Kumar and Naidu in their respective States. The call of the hour is to change the nature of the dialogue from confrontation to consensus, not only among the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners but among all the stakeholders of India, that is Bharat. The demand of the situation is to push the economic and strategic agenda as statecraft than a tool to demonise and belittling those opposed to the Government. (The writer is an author and president of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views are personal.)

PICTALK



Competitors at the annual dragon boat race in Hong Kong

PTI

India's green energy rise, including 'Green Coal'

Green coal projects reduce pollution, groundwater contamination, promote sustainability, carbon neutrality and spur economic growth

The Reserve Bank of India's latest report reflects a surge in global optimism regarding India's economic prospects, particularly in the energy sector. This year alone, green energy projects valued at approximately Rs 700 billion are set to commence, marking a significant investment milestone. By 2025-26, further project investments are anticipated to reach Rs 765.2 billion, supported by progressive policies promoting sustainable energy. India's power sector has now achieved full electrification and is integrated into a unified national grid, providing rural areas with 20 hours of electricity daily and urban areas with 23.5 hours. Additionally, India has ascended to become the world's third-largest producer of renewable energy, underscoring its commitment to sustainable development. A key innovation on the horizon is green coal, which is poised to revolutionize energy production in India. Green coal offers significant potential as a sustainable alternative to traditional coal, seamlessly integrating into existing



thermal power plants. For instance, a 1,000 MW power plant consuming around five million tonnes of coal annually could see a significant reduction in carbon emissions by replacing just 10 per cent of its fossil fuel with green coal, equating to half a million tonnes of sustainable fuel. It is estimated that using 1 kg of green coal instead of fossil coal can reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 2 kg per kg of coal replaced. India's largest state-run power generation company is making substantial strides in the green energy sector, including green coal initiatives. An Initial Public Offering (IPO) for NTPC Green, a subsidiary focused on green energy, is expected by the end of the year. NTPC, a major player in India's power sector, had previously planned to produce green coal, also known as torrefied charcoal, from municipal waste. This project, executed by its subsidiary NTPC

Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd and awarded to Macawber Beekay, boasts a plant with a capacity to process 600 tonnes of waste daily, producing 200 tonnes of green coal from municipal solid waste (MSW). The success of NTPC's Varanasi Harit Koyla Pariyojna, managed by Macawber Beekay Private Limited (MBL), Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while inaugurating the Varanasi Harit Koyla Pariyojna, praised the project as a testament to the government's dedication to environmental sustainability. The green coal project is a cornerstone of the "Make in India" initiative and represents significant progress towards the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" mission. MBL has successfully produced green coal for NTPC Ltd, one of India's largest coal consumers in the power sector. After demonstrating the technology in Varanasi, the CPSU has entrusted MBL with additional projects, including the establishment of the world's largest waste-to-green coal plant in Greater Noida. Indian companies have

increasingly diversified into green energy solutions, with MBL leading the way in transforming municipal solid waste into eco-friendly green coal. The inauguration of the world's first commercial green coal plant by Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the company's innovative capabilities. The technology not only converts waste into a viable alternative to fossil fuels but also addresses critical waste disposal challenges. The waste-to-energy process involves the meticulous collection and treatment of MSW, followed by moisture removal and the segregation of non-combustible materials. The refined waste is then processed to produce high-calorific charcoal powder that exceeds the energy value of traditional coal. This method reduces carbon emissions, promotes carbon neutrality, and provides economic benefits by lowering the costs associated with traditional coal usage and mitigating the health risks linked to mining and waste accumulation. (The writer is Chairman & Managing Director, Macawber Beekay; views are personal)



AJAY KUMAR GUPTA

SUNLIGHT'S INFLUENCE ON LIFE

Madam — Apropos the news story "Sunshine on shoulders, a spring in my step!", published on June 11, this is my response. Summers have been harsh this year. I do not recall Delhi temperatures shooting to 50 degrees plus in the 26 years since we shifted to the national capital. Advisories have been issued by the state governments to avoid venturing out in the afternoons. However, a month down the line, we would forget the harrowing days and long for a glimpse of the sun as monsoon clouds darken the skies. The sun's impact on our lives is undeniable. Reflecting on a hazy morning in east India and contrasting vacations in England highlight how sunlight influences our mood and activities. Sunshine's warmth and brightness are universally cherished, sparking joy in parks and bringing health benefits like the essential 'sunshine vitamin.' Despite modern conveniences, nothing rivals the sun's antibacterial properties for drying clothes. Beyond practical benefits, the sun inspires language and culture, as seen in phrases celebrating people as 'sunshine.' However, this fleeting sunlight also reminds us of the urgent need to combat pollution. By prioritising a cleaner environment, we can ensure future generations enjoy the sun's life-giving rays. Siya Bhatia | Mangalore

OPEN ACCESS TO GREEN ENERGY

Madam — Apropos the news story "India's green power policies come of age," published on June 7, this is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, it's encouraging to see the strides being made towards green energy in India. The MNRE's Surya-Ghar initiative and other regulatory reforms highlight a significant shift towards renewable energy (RE) accessibility. The Surya-Ghar scheme aims to provide affordable electricity through rooftop solar installations, potentially benefiting millions of households by 2027. This is a commendable step towards sustainable energy for all. The recent amendments to the Electricity

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Surge in numberplate violations



Apropos the news story "Traffic Police Books 16,800 People for Defective Number Plates This Year," published on June 10, this is my response. As a regular reader of the newspaper, the recent spike in penalties for defective number plates in Delhi is quite striking. The Delhi Traffic Police have booked over 16,800 people this year, a stag-

gering 286 per cent increase from last year. This sharp rise underscores the intensified efforts by the authorities to enhance road safety. Defective number plates are more than a minor infraction; they pose significant risks, from impeding law enforcement to contributing to traffic violations.

The focus on high-traffic areas and the detailed breakdown of top violator zones, like Mayur Vihar and Nand Nagri, highlights the strategic approach taken by the police. It's commendable that alongside enforcement, there are awareness campaigns aimed at educating vehicle owners about the importance of compliant number plates. This holistic approach not only aims to correct current issues but also to prevent future violations, ultimately contributing to a safer and more orderly city. Saanvi Jain | Jamshedpur

Rules, 2005, highlight the government's dedication to enabling consumers to establish and maintain dedicated transmission lines, enhancing energy efficiency. The Green Energy Open Access Rules of 2022 aim to simplify approval procedures, fostering transparency and consistency nationwide. Judicial interventions are vital for ensuring proper interpretation and enforcement of laws. These efforts signify significant advancement in India's renewable energy drive towards a greener, more sustainable future. Reyansh Tiwari | Tirupati

ATTITUDE SHAPES HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Madam — Apropos the news story "Factors that influence our attitudes," published on June 10, this is my response. Reading about the Mahabharata and its timeless narratives offers profound insights into human nature. The epic, attributed to sage Veda Vyasa and transcribed by Lord Ganesha, vividly portrays the complexities of human attitudes. It showcases a spectrum of emotions and standpoints that drive actions, often influenced by exter-

nal factors. Duryodhana, a prominent character, exemplifies how arrogance and anger, fueled by his uncle Shakuni and others, lead to destructive behaviour. This mirrors historical atrocities like the Nazi genocide, highlighting the dangers of prejudice and hatred.

Conversely, the story of the Zen Master and the Thief underscores the transformative power of compassion. The Master's forgiveness and understanding helped the wayward student reform, illustrating that empathy can foster positive change. Human attitudes, shaped by social interactions and experiences, can lead to either constructive or destructive outcomes. This continuous learning process underscores the importance of compassion and understanding in shaping a better society. Harold S Geneen aptly encapsulates this, emphasising that leadership is reflected in attitudes and actions, not just words. Aarush Kapoor | Vijayawada

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

Every segment of society should work to fulfil the expectations of other segments



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all dream of a better world where there is peace, happiness and harmony, don't we? No one would like degradation of the environment, loss of human lives due to wars and murders, corrosion of human spirit by crime and corruption, dehumanisation through poverty and troublesome social, economic and political conditions, embroiled with high tension and turmoil that drain human energy and make life miserable. On the contrary, all would like life to be characterised by harmony and health, well being and wealth and heavenly happiness and purity.

But the question is, what are those values and how can such a socio-political-economic system be established which has those values and which will enhance human experience and enable men and women to have such lifestyle as can make such a society viable? If we conduct a survey among various groups of people, we will find that their opinion would most probably crystallise around 10 or 15 major points. They would say that a better world is one in which the following exist only in milder forms or to a lesser degree than we have in the present-day world.

These major problems or causes of sufferings are wars, violence and cruelty in any form --- poverty, unemployment and social, economic and political injustice, environmental pollution and ecological imbalance, corruption, crime, indiscipline and obscenity, disease, infirmity and high mortality rate, slavery, lack of freedom or deprivation of human rights, hunger, malnutrition or starvation, wrong attitudes towards the other sex and abuse of children, addictions, intoxications, tensions and lack of happiness, hatred, suspicion, fear, cut-throat competition,



rivalry and absence or lack of love and co-operation at various levels of society.

Post this survey, if we conduct another kind of survey, asking every segment of society about what efforts or improvements they expect from the other segments so that we may have a better world order, a fair enough consensus on the following lines would emerge. People would say that they want: Scientists to have an orientation of spirituality, religious leaders to have scientific temper, doctors to treat not only the body but also the mind or the soul, education to have spiritual and moral development also among its aims, women to be given proper social status and man's attitude and outlook towards them to be more spiritualised. The youth and the children should be given more love and they should give more regard and service to the elders. The society should have a balance of love and law and it should be based on the principles of justice, fair play and equality of opportunity.

Now these and such other aims can be fulfilled if every segment of society works for the fulfilment of what other segments expect of it. Each individual also has to contribute of his or her talent or time to work towards raising awareness of the people so as to realise the above goals. For this global task, global cooperation is required. Hence, a new kind of bank to which each individual or institution can offer its contributions so as to build a better world is the need of the hour.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views personal.)



AJEET GODARA

newfound awareness people in large numbers are turning to organic products and getting healthy chemical-free products on their plates, India's organic product market has witnessed an unprecedented surge over the last decade, driven by growing consumer awareness about health, sustainability, and environmental impacts.

As urban populations increasingly seek out healthier lifestyle options, the demand for organic food products has soared. This trend is not just limited to a niche segment; it has permeated mainstream consumer preferences, pushing organic products to the forefront of the food industry. The organic food market in India, valued at \$1,582.2 million in 2023, is expected to

grow exponentially to \$8,918.5 million by 2032, showcasing an impressive growth rate of 21.19% per annum. This meteoric rise is indicative of a larger green wave sweeping across the country, where consumers are increasingly inclined towards sustainable and eco-friendly products. Consumers today are more inclined to buy products that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. This aligns with the broader trend towards sustainable and ethical consumption, making organic foods an appealing choice for consumers.

Today organic companies have impressive portfolio of hundreds of SKUs, including staples like pulses, millet, wheat, mustard, barley, rice,



and oils. The products of organic companies are available not only through its website but also on major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Bigbasket, making them accessible to a broad consumer base.

The brands have also expanded their product range into seed verticals, encompassing

wheat, barley, mustard, and other grains. By doing so, organic companies aim to ensure that their organic farming practices start from the very beginning of the agricultural process. What is interesting is that Organic companies are committed to sustainable farming practices and farmer welfare. They provide specialised

training programs to farmers to enhance crop management skills and boost yields. The farmers must be safeguarded from any potential contaminants in their food supply so that the end users get a real organic product. There is definitely a need to maintaining high-quality standards in organic farming else the consumer trust is broken and the industry as a whole suffers.

With online registration and certification processes in place most of the fraudulent practices in the segment have been wiped off. But the field is not without challenges. However, the transition from chemical to organic is not simple. It is a painstaking process but rewards are gratifying. Transforming agricultural land into organic farm-

ing takes around three years. And in places where chemical fertiliser use is rampant, it could go beyond three years. Besides, fraudsters often damage their reputations. Often prices are jacked up unrealistically.

The growth of organic products in India is a testament to the changing consumer landscape and increasing awareness about health and sustainability. Still, the market share of organic products is just one per cent but the growth is exponential. This sector is growing at the rate of 20 per cent which shows the growing demand for organic food and people's interest in them.

(The writer is confounder of Natureland Organics; views are personal)

The Garhwal Regiment's glorious military heritage



ASHOK K MEHTA

Lansdowne, steeped in military tradition since the establishment of the first Garhwal Battalion in 1887, tells a tale of valour and colonial legacy

The still air in June over the Bhawani Dutt Joshi Parade Ground carved out of Kaludanda (renamed Lansdowne after the then Viceroy) converts into an air pocket when the fourth batch of 251 Agniveers call out Jai Badri Vishal Ki Jai, the feared Garhwal regiment war cry. The raising of the first Garhwal Battalion was ordered in 1887 by C-in-C, later Viceroy, Lord Roberts. The British may owe India USD 49 Trillion as reparation but their payback was impressive: instruments of governance, strategic culture and infrastructure, including 5000 to 6000 feet high ridge-top cantonments, today's hill stations like Lansdowne whose Mall Road became the exclusive white's only-promenade, restricting locals to the windswept 'Thandi-sadak' on the reverse slope.

Dotted with pine, oak and rhododendrons, the ridge lights up with the majesty of Nanda Devi towering among the distant Himalayas. The sprawling Bungalow No 6 amongst a hundred such, constructed in 1906 was home to Colonel Mainwaring commandant of 3/9 Royal Garhwal Rifles and was bought by MES for a princely Rs 10,053!

It was after Nepal's second invasion that Garhwal capitulated and through legendary Jung Bahadur Rana's progeny married into Garhwal's Sah ruling family. Scattered but indistinguishable descendants of erstwhile Nepalese can be found in Pathankot village as are remnants of 2/3 Gorkha Rifles also raised here which have an umbilical cord with the Garhwal Regiment. Originally Garhwalis and Kumaonis joined 5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) whose first Colonel was Bobs Bahadur, Victoria Cross winner, Lord Roberts who gave Veer Garhwali a separate identity.

The nom de plume of the Garhwali soldier is valour: in World War I and Waziristan, it won three Victoria Crosses (Rfn Gabbar Singh Negi -posthumously; Naik Darwan Singh Negi and Lt David Kenny) and innumerable battle and theatre honours and gallantry awards till 1947 that would fill this page. After independence, the Regiment bagged one Ashoka Chakra, four MVC, 18 KC, 51 SC, 52 VrC, and 375 Sena Medals. The Regiment has 22 Infantry battalions, three Rashtriya Rifle battalions and two Territorial Army battalions. To commemorate its unique achievements in operations, the Regiment was conferred the Royal title: Royal Rassi (Lanyard) in 1921 and to honour its braves and martyrs, an iconic bronze statue was built in 1923 which was unveiled by C-in-C, Lord Rawlinson. Designed by makers of Victoria Memorial Calcutta, Martin and Co, the statue on green granite is the most unique and defiant image in the world of unknown soldiers, the Veer Garhwali. Added later was the epic shloka from Mahabharat. Lord Krishna to Arjun: 'Lament not the death of a warrior; for one killed in battle is honoured in heaven'. It was a silver replica of this Unknown Soldier that PM Modi presented to the PM of France in 2015 to commemorate the centenary of WWI.

The Darwan Singh War Museum is the grand repository of the history and achievements in war and peace of the Regiment. But the creme d la creme of Lansdowne is the Garhwali Officers Mess which is India's most spectacular, filled with collector's items. Officers and ladies



THE STATUE ON GREEN GRANITE IS THE MOST UNIQUE AND DEFIANT IMAGE IN THE WORLD — OF UNKNOWN SOLDIER, THE VEER GARHWALI

of the battalion who arrived in 1887 chose this ridge-top locale and declared it their mess which sprouted only in 1892. Its red slanting roof and miniature Victorian-style colonnades are draped with ivy and creepers.

In the middle of the lawn is the still functional Sun Dial measuring time by the position of the sun. Carved below is: "The shadow of my finger cast divides the future from the past; Before it stands the unborn hour in darkness and beyond thy power: Behind its unreturning line the vanished hour no longer thine: One hour alone is in thy hand, the now of which the shadow stands." Nearby is the ubiquitous Unknown Soldier, covered with bushwork. The Officer's Mess initially had three large rooms: the main hall, dining room and billiards room. Add-ons were the Card room, the Generals gallery, the indispensable bar and two libraries on either flank. Rooms are resplendent in silver trophies and walls covered by big and small game heads and skins that will draw ire from RSPCA. The Visitors' Book table is eye-popping and studded with memorabilia. The broken China-glass floor is laid out in a design that radiates towards four Maltese Crosses, the original crest of the

Regiment. Crocodile skin sofa sets glisten as no one sits on them. To insert the John Roberts and Co. made billiards table, the entire roof had to be uprooted while the piano from Chappells, Bond Street London (more famous for sartorial products) rests rhythmically in a corner. The glistening mahogany dining table adorning the dining hall is credited to makers C Lazarus also of Calcutta. Every room has a fireplace with brass railings and customised settings The Card room contains the letter by Field Marshal Bill Slim written in 1967 eulogizing the gallant Garhwali: "I have commanded Battalions of every Regiment of Indian Army but I never had a better one than 3 Garhwal-and that's something from a dyed in the wool Gurkha as me to say. But it is true". The bar has charming water-colour sketches made by a local Gorkha lad, a long-gone Gopal Chhetri that cheer your drinks. The quaint downtown market survives on a small but happy populace determined not to let Lansdowne be renamed either Jaswant Garh (after MVC awardee Jaswant Singh Rawat of 1962 war) or even Bipin Nagar (after late CDS Gen Bipin Rawat whose Shaun village is 30 km away). Soldiers and civilians are agnostic

about shedding colonial legacy and wish to retain Lansdowne. Locals say the state government is monumentally corrupt: so ex-servicemen and politicians don't mix. Still, two Generals made it good. Bhuwan Khanduri who became Chief Minister and TPS (Topsy) Rawat many times minister while highly decorated Ajay Kothiyal KC, SC, VSM and a double Everester lost his deposit during the last state elections. Subedar Major Shailendra Mohan Bhist located at Garhwal Regiment's Kotdwar detachment is look-alike brother of Ajay Bhist more famous as Yogi Adityanath! The clock has moved a full circle: Garhwali bhullas (brothers) are now again joining the depleting Gorkha Regiments and learning to speak Nepali. The Garhwal regimental legacy is protected by its three symbols: Lord Badrinath, the regimental deity, the iconic Unknown Soldier and the Royal Rassi. They help instil gumption and guile while invoking Jai Badri Vishal Ki Jai.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

Organic renaissance: India's rapid shift towards chemical-free farming

As consumer awareness of health and sustainability surges, India is witnessing an unprecedented rise in the organic food market

There was a time in the country when everything produced was organic, the farmers used natural manures like cow dung and compost fertilisers in their fields. The yield was low but it was healthy, tasteful and above all sustainable practice. Then came chemical fertilisers which no doubt increased the yield manifold but also led to several side effects. It is not sustainable and lacks the taste of organic products and above all not as healthy as it should be. Besides the farmers are also paying the price in terms of their health and overuse of Urea and other chemicals ruining the soil quality and depleting the water table. In this scenario, organic farming is the way to go. Now with

Chandrababu poised to take over as Andhra Pradesh CM

PTI ■ AMARAVATI



TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu is set to take oath as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, marking his fourth term in that role. Naidu is scheduled to take oath at 11.27 am at Kesarapalli IT Park near Gannavaram Airport on the outskirts of Vijayawada. On Tuesday, the Telugu Desam Legislature Party and NDA partners elected Naidu as their leader. Leaders of the NDA comprising TDP, BJP and Janasena would meet Governor S Abdul Nazeer and stake claim to form a government. There could be an invitation from the Governor to form the government by Tuesday evening. Along with Naidu, some more leaders are likely to swear-in, who could include TDP general secretary and Naidu's

son Nara Lokesh and Janasena leader N Manohar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several other dignitaries are expected to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Reviewing the arrangements for the ceremony, Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad said the prime minister is expected to leave

from Delhi for Gannavaram Airport at 8.20 am and arrive by 10.40 am on Wednesday. According to the tentative schedule, he said Modi is expected to reach the venue by 10.55 am to participate in the swearing-in ceremony from 11 am to 12.30 pm. Thereafter, the PM is expected to return to the airport at 12.40 pm and take

off for Bhubaneswar at 12.45 pm. Naidu first became the chief minister in 1995 and went on to have another two terms. His first two terms as chief minister were at the helm of united Andhra Pradesh, beginning in 1995 and ending in 2004, nine years at a stretch while the third term came post-bifurcation of the state. In 2014, Naidu emerged as the first chief minister of bifurcated Andhra Pradesh and served it until 2019. He lost the 2019 polls to remain an opposition leader until 2024. Following a landslide victory in the 2024 elections, he is returning as the CM for the fourth term. The NDA comprising TDP, BJP and Janasena won a landslide victory in the recently concluded simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the southern state with a brute majority of 164 Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha seats.

Winning Vikravandi bypoll may turn out to be cakewalk for ruling DMK

PTI ■ CHENNAI



Though the opposition AIADMK has a strong presence and could turn out to be a tough contender in the Vikravandi assembly by-election scheduled for July 10, the BJP's ally, the PMK and ruling DMK's trusted ally, the VCK, could upset AIADMK's winning prospects. The Left parties, which are aligned with the DMK, too, have a noticeable presence in the constituency. Being alone in the electoral fray may not be advantageous to the AIADMK. It remains to be seen if the AIADMK will announce to take on the DMK or prefer to abstain in order to concentrate on the 2026 Assembly elections. The by-poll verdict has traditionally been in favour of the ruling dispensation. And winning this seat for the DMK may turn out to be a cakewalk. Vikravandi assembly constituency in neighbouring Villupuram district is the only constituency from the five southern states that would go

to polls on July 10. The by-poll was necessitated following the death of DMK legislator N Pugazhenthin in April this year. He won from this seat in the 2021 elections, defeating AIADMK's R Muthamilselvan. The constituency was formed during the delimitation exercise in 2007. CPI(M) candidate R Ramamurthy won in 2011 elections and DMK's K Rathamani romped home as winner in 2016. AIADMK's R Muthamilselvan registered a victory in the 2019 elections but lost to the DMK in 2021. According to a source in the Congress, the party would not stake a claim as the seat has been won by the DMK. "So, naturally the DMK should

contest from here just as the Congress contested and won from Vilavancode assembly by-poll that was held along with the Lok Sabha elections," he said. Despite Congress leader S Vijayadharani switching loyalties to the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the grand old party retained Vilavancode and proved that the seat is its bastion. Congress candidate Tharaha Cuthbert defeated BJP's V S Nanthini and won by a margin of 40,170 votes. Cuthbert secured 91,054 votes. The DMK won the 2021 assembly election, ending the decade of AIADMK rule, and sent the AIADMK and BJP packing home in the Lok Sabha elections. It is confident of winning Vikravandi hands down. The PMK is unlikely to give up the seat to its ally, the BJP, as this Vanniyan dominated party has a strong presence in this district. Meanwhile, the Tamil nationalist party - NTK - has announced to contest the by-election.

Kannada film actor detained in murder case



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Leading Kannada film actor Darshan Thoogudeepa has been arrested in an alleged murder case, police sources said on Tuesday. The 47-year-old was picked up from a hotel in Mysuru in connection with the murder of a man, identified as Renuka Swamy, on June 9 coming under the Kamakshipalya police station limits here, the sources said. After the alleged killing, the body of Swamy, who worked with a pharmacy company and hailed from the district headquarters town of Chitradurga, was thrown into a stormwater drain in Kamakshipalya. It is alleged that the deceased had made some derogatory comments against a film actress in a social media post. Police came to know about the murder after some local residents alerted them. The body was sent for an autopsy and the forensic report confirmed that he was murdered, the sources said. Further investigation led to the arrest of some suspects, who spilled the beans, a police official said. Based on their statement, police detained Darshan, sources said. Investigations are into whether the actor was directly involved in the murder or was part of the conspiracy, the sources added. Police have provided tight security at Darshan's house at RR Nagar here

Why Manipur being given such treatment when it is integral part of India: Sule

PTI ■ PUNE



NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule on Tuesday expressed concerns about the violence in Manipur and wondered why the north-eastern state was being given such a treatment when it is an integral part of the country. Speaking to reporters here, the Baramati MP said a terror attack took place in Jammu even as Narendra Modi was sworn in as prime minister for a third term. "We have been questioning the government over the Manipur issue for months. A lot of discussions took place in the Parliament over the Manipur situation. Manipur is an integral part of the country. The people, women, children there are Indians," Sule said when asked about RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remark that peace had eluded the north-eastern state even after one year. Bhagwat had on Monday said the situation in the strife-torn state must be considered a

priority. "In Manipur, the convoy of the Chief Minister was also attacked. It shows that somewhere something is going wrong. A word is not spoken about Manipur, though we sought a discussion on the issue. Leaders from the INDIA bloc travelled to the state, but we were stopped there. Manipur is an integral part of India, and why is it being meted out such treatment?" she said. Sule further said that as a re-

elected MP, raising the issue of unemployment will be her priority in the Parliament. She reiterated that the issue of companies leaving Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park in Hinjawadi was worrying, and said that the Maratha Chambers of Commerce has requested NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar to convene a meeting and urge firms not to leave Maharashtra. "More than 6 lakh people are working at the IT park, and it is worrying if firms are leaving," the NCP (SP) leader said. Talking about the row over the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, 2024, Sule questioned why the Central government was outsourcing the conduct of the examination. The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the response of the Centre and the National Testing Agency on a plea seeking fresh conduct of the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, 2024, on the grounds of alleged question paper leak and other malpractices.

LDF Govt claims no shortage of plus one seats in Malabar region

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



The Kerala government on Tuesday claimed in the state assembly that there was no crisis in plus one admission in the northern Malabar region, a contention refuted by the Congress-led UDF opposition which accused the Left administration of making inaccurate statements in the House. State General Education Minister V Sivankutty said that every year after plus one (class 11) admissions in the Malabar region, thousands of seats remain vacant there. He also claimed that despite every year, temporary additional batches are permitted in that region to ensure that students get their choice of streams. He made the submissions opposing the adjournment notice moved by the UDF to stop the House proceedings and discuss the issue of alleged shortage of seats for plus one admissions in the northern Malabar region.

In view of the submission made by the minister, Speaker A N Shamsheer denied permission for the adjournment. As it was denied, the opposition staged a walkout from the House in protest. Leader of Opposition in the state assembly V D Saatheesan said that if thousands of seats were lying vacant in the Malabar region, then why did the state government permit a 30 per cent marginal increase in class strength? Saatheesan further said that due to the marginal increase, it would be difficult for teachers to teach the 65-75 students in each class. Deputy Leader of

Opposition P K Kunhalikutty said that despite the marginal increase there is a shortage of seats. Kunhalikutty also claimed that there appears to be a lack of attention or neglect towards the Malabar region on the issue. UDF MLA N Samsudheen, one of the opposition members who moved the adjournment notice, said that the figures cited by the minister in the House were incorrect when compared to the data available on the government's website. He said there was an acute shortage of seats in plus one in all six districts of the Malabar region with the highest in Malappuram. He said that giving temporary

additional batches or permitting a marginal increase in strength of classes was not a solution. "The only solution would be to give permanent batches," he said. The UDF MLA also suggested that the seats for students should be ensured at the taluk level as otherwise children will have to travel over a hundred kilometers within a district to attend school. Samsudheen also said that the government increased the number of bars in the state by over 1,000 during eight years of its administration, but no permanent additional batches were permitted during the same period. Refuting the opposition allegations, Sivankutty said he cited the correct figures. He also said that Kunhalikutty had met with Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan regarding the seat shortage. "The CM assured that if there was a seat shortage after three rounds of seat allocation were over, then steps would be taken to address it," the minister said.

Periyar fish death due to low oxygen in water; no chemical waste discharged in river: Kerala CM

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said in the assembly that the recent mass death of fish in the Periyar river resulted due to less dissolved oxygen in the water and there was no discharge of chemical waste from factories into the river. The chief minister made the submission in response to a query by opposition UDF MLA T J Vinod with regard to action taken against those who allegedly discharged chemical waste into the river resulting in the death of the fish. Vijayan said that the State Pollution Control Board (PCB) conducted an inspection of the river following the incident and the water samples tested showed dissolved oxygen to be below the levels required for fish to survive. "According to the preliminary investigation, when the shutter of the Paltham regulator-cum-bridge was opened following heavy rains, a large amount of oxygen-poor water flowed into the river from the upstream side of the regulator," the CM said. The initial probe also did not find any discharge of chemical waste into the river from the factories on the shores of the Periyar, he said. The CM further said that the PCB will submit its detailed findings only after getting the report of the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) on the issue. Regarding the loss suffered by fish farmers, Vijayan said that preliminary data indicates that it was to the tune of Rs

13.56 crore. Once recommendations are received regarding the compensation to be given to the fish farmers, they will be examined and appropriate action will be taken, he said in the House. Fish were found dead in large numbers in fish farms across panchayats adjoining Periyar such as Varapuzha, Kadamakkudy, and Cheranalloor in Ernakulam district on May 21. Subsequently, the state government had held a meeting and worked out long and short term measures to prevent a recurrence of the incident. The short term preventive measures included formulating protocols for opening the Paltham regulator-cum-bridge on Periyar river and installation of biofilters on industrial units on the river's banks. The long term measures were with regard to protecting and reclaiming the Periyar as well as other rivers in the state and included taking steps to set up a river-related authority, state Industries Minister P Rajeev said last month.

Five newly elected BJP MLAs take oath in Gujarat

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD



Five MLAs of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who won in the recent bypolls in Gujarat, took oath of office in Gandhinagar on Tuesday. The newly-elected legislators, including four Congress turncoats, were administered oath by assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhary in his office in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, an official release stated. In the assembly elections held in December 2022, the BJP retained power by winning a record 156 out of 182 seats, and now, with five more MLAs in its fold, the party's strength has risen to 161. MLAs Arjun Modhwadia, CJ Chavda, Arvind Ladani, Chiragkumar Patel and Dharmendrasinh Vaghela took the oath. Vaghela was an independent MLA from

Vaghodia seat, while the remaining four had won on Congress ticket in the 2022 assembly polls by defeating their closest BJP rivals. They resigned as legislators between December 2023 and March 2024 and

subsequently, joined the BJP, necessitating the by-election in the Porbandar, Vijapur, Manavadar and Khambhat assembly constituencies. The BJP fielded those who joined the party from their respective seats in the by-election held on May 7. Modhwadia won from Porbandar by a margin of more than 1.16 lakh votes. He polled 1.33 lakh votes against 16,355 received by Congress' Raju Odedara. Modhwadia had won the 2022 assembly elections from Porbandar as a Congress candidate, defeating BJP's Babu Bokhiria. Chavda won from Vijapur, defeating Congress' Dinesh Patel by more than 56,000 votes, while Ladani retained Manavadar with a margin of more than 31,000 votes against Congress rival Haribhai Kansagara.

Chhattisgarh Deputy CM Vijay Sharma visits violence hit Balodabazar

PTI ■ BALODABAZAR



Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma along with two cabinet colleagues on Tuesday visited Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar city, a day after a mob set fire to a government office and scores of vehicles during a protest called by the Satnami community against the alleged vandalism of a religious structure. Sharma, who holds the Home portfolio, directed that stern action should be taken against those who indulged in the arson, an official said. More than two dozen cars, around 70 two-wheelers and a government building were torched at the district office premises after the protest turned violent on Monday. Several police personnel were also injured in stone-pelting. Unidentified persons vandalized 'jaithkam' or 'victory pillar', a sacred symbol worshipped by the

Satnami community, near the holy Amar Gufa at Giroudpuri Dham in the district on the intervening night of May 15 and 16. Police subsequently arrested three persons in connection with the incident. To protest against the incident, the community called for a demonstration at Dussehra Maidan here on Monday, and also a 'gherao' at the collector's office. As the protest led to arson and stone-pelting, the Balodabazar-Bhatapara district administration imposed

section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, prohibiting assembly of four or more people in Balodabazar city till June 16. To take stock of the situation, Deputy CM Sharma, Revenue Minister Tank Ram Verma and Food Minister Dayaldas Baghel visited the district office in the wee hours of Tuesday. Talking to reporters, Sharma expressed grief over the incident and instructed officials to take strict action against those who took part in the arson. Many of the damaged vehicles belonged to poor people who had come for work at the government office. Government property was also damaged and documents in the record room were burnt, the deputy CM said. He also noted that earlier, after leaders of the Satnami community demanded a high-level inquiry, being dissatisfied with the police probe into the

damage to 'jaithkam', Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai ordered a judicial inquiry. People of the community expressed satisfaction over it and said they would submit a memorandum expressing gratitude to the CM, but some anti-social elements committed arson during Monday's protest, he claimed. Visuals of the protest site showed some 50 motorcycles, two dozen cars and the building housing the offices of the Collector and Superintendent of Police damaged due to arson. A fire brigade vehicle was also torched by the mob which was seen clashing with police. Several people have been taken into custody, police sources said. The influential Satnami community, founded by medieval-era social reformer Baba Ghasidas, represents the largest Scheduled Castes group in Chhattisgarh.

Women in Karnataka avail free rides in Govt buses in one year, says Minister

PTI ■ BENGALURU



Women in Karnataka have availed themselves of 227 crore free rides in government non-luxury buses under the 'Shakti' guarantee in the last year, costing the state exchequer Rs 5,526.64 crore, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said on Tuesday. The Congress government, led by Siddaramaiah, launched the 'Shakti' scheme -- one of the five guarantees which the party had promised before the Assembly elections -- on June 11 last year. These promises are said to have yielded rich electoral dividends to the Congress, helping it dethrone the Basavaraj Bommai-led BJP government. As the government celebrates one year of 'Shakti' guarantee implementation, Reddy said in a statement that 226.95 women travelled free of cost in the government buses. Most such rides were accounted for by the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses (BMTC-71.45 crore), followed by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC-69.5 crore). North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) and Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) posted 52.12 crore and 33.47 crore free rides, respectively. KSRTC incurred an expenditure of Rs 2,111.14 crore, NWKRTC Rs 1,352.68 crore, KKRTC Rs 1,125.81 crore and BMTC Rs 937.01 crore, the statement said.

Reddy said several measures have been taken to improve the public transport system such as approval for the induction of 5,800 new buses. In addition, 2,438 new buses have been inducted across the four transport corporations in recent times. According to the minister, the state inducted new buses with brand name 'Pallakki', 'Ashwamedha Classic', 'Kalyana Ratha' and 'Amogha Varsha'. Approval has been accorded for recruitment of 9,000 posts in the department. In this regard, appointment orders have been issued to recruit 1,844 driver-cum-conductors and technical assistants, Reddy said. "Recruitment for 6,500 posts (KSRTC- 2,500 driver-cum-conductors, BMTC- 2,000 conductors, NWKRTC -1,000 drivers and 1,000 conductors) is under process and will be completed soon," the minister said. The government has also enhanced accident relief compensation from Rs three lakh to Rs 10 lakh to dependents in case of death of any passenger in an accident while travelling in bus operated by state-run corporations, he added.

UGC nod to two admission cycles

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian universities and higher education institutions will now be allowed to offer admissions twice a year on lines of foreign universities with the University Grants Commission giving a go ahead to the plan, UGC chief Jagadesh Kumar said.

The two admission cycles will be July-August and January-February from the 2024-25 academic session.

"If Indian universities can offer admission twice a year, it will benefit many students such as those who missed admission to a university in the July-August session due to a delay in the announcement of board results, health issues, or personal reasons," Kumar told PTI. "Biannual university admissions will help students maintain motivation since



they do not have to wait one full year to be admitted if they miss admission in the current cycle. With biannual admissions in place, industries can also do their campus recruitment twice a year, improving employment opportunities for the graduates," he added.

The UGC chief explained that biannual admissions will also enable the higher education institutes (HEIs) to plan their resource distribution, such as faculty, labs, classrooms and support services, more

efficiently, resulting in a better functional flow within the university.

"Universities worldwide already follow a biannual admission system. If Indian HEIs adopt the biannual admission cycle, our HEIs can enhance their international collaborations and student exchanges.

"As a result, our global competitiveness will improve, and we will align with the global educational standards," Kumar said.

"If HEIs adopt biannual admissions, they need to work on administrative intricacies, good planning for increased use of available resources, and providing seamless support systems for the smooth transition of students admitted at dissimilar times of the year. HEIs can maximise the

usefulness of biannual admissions only when they sufficiently prepare faculty members, staff and students for the transition," he added.

Kumar, however, clarified that it will not be mandatory to offer biannual admissions for universities and those HEIs that have the required infrastructure and teaching faculty can utilise the opportunity.

"Offering biannual admissions will not be mandatory for the HEIs, it is the flexibility that UGC provides to the HEIs which want to increase their student intake and offer new programmes in emerging areas. To be able to admit students twice a year, HEIs must make suitable amendments to their institutional regulations," he said.

BJP's Majhi new Odisha CM, will have 2 deputies

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/AMRAVATI

BJP's tribal leader Mohan Charan Majhi will be the new Chief Minister of Odisha, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced here on Tuesday. KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida were made Deputy Chief Ministers of the State, he said.

The new Government will take oath at Janata Maidan on Wednesday which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and some of his Cabinet members who are also scheduled to grace the oath ceremony of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu's swearing in ceremony as Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh.

The TDP legislators, Janasena and BJP as part of NDA constituents elected Naidu as their leader in the Assembly. Along with Naidu as CM, some leaders from Janasena and BJP could swear-in on June 12. The decision in Odisha was taken at the BJP legislature party meeting attended by Singh and Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav as observers.

"Mohan Majhi has been elected by the legislature party unanimously," Singh informed the media.

Mohan Charan Majhi, 52, defeated Mina Majhi of the BJD by 11,577 votes from the Keonjhar assembly constituency. The chief whip of the BJP in the previous Assembly, he was elected to the assembly for the fourth time. Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo defeated Saroj Kumar Meher of the BJD by 1357 votes from Patnagarh, while the other deputy CM Pravati Parida beat BJD leader Dilip Kumar Nayak by 4588 votes from Nimapara.



Congress MPs Rahul Gandhi, Kishori Lal Sharma and party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a public meeting in Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday

Priyanka would have crushed Modi: Rahul

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ RAEBARELI

Rahul Gandhi, in a fiery address at a thanksgiving rally in Raebareilly on Tuesday evening, targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming that Modi narrowly escaped defeat in Varanasi but his party was defeated in Ayodhya. Rahul said if his sister, Priyanka Gandhi, had contested from Varanasi, Modi would have lost that seat as well. He said Priyanka might have won by a margin of over 2 to 3 lakh voters.

"Modi and Shah were playing with the foundation of the nation, hence the nation united against them in this election. For the first time, I saw that the Prime Minister of the country is doing politics of violence, spreading hatred amongst the public, and extending benefits to three industrialists," said Rahul.

The rally saw the presence of Union Minister Smriti Irani

in Amethi. The venue for the rally was shifted from Amethi to Raebareilly only on Monday morning.

Highlighting the BJP's loss in Ayodhya, Rahul remarked, "You all saw that they lost the Ayodhya seat. The temple was built in Ayodhya, but they did not invite any poor people to its inauguration. They even barred the President of India from attending. Not only in Ayodhya, but even in Varanasi, the Prime Minister somehow survived a near-certain defeat. If my sister Priyanka had contested there, Modi would have lost by a margin of 2 to 3 lakh votes," he asserted.

Priyanka also addressed the rally, sharing her efforts in the election campaign. "When I came to Raebareilly, I asked everyone to utilise the remaining 300 hours and sleep for just 2 hours daily. Now, the results are before you. This is not just the victory of Rahul or KL Sharma but the victory of the

people of Raebareilly and Amethi. We feel proud to continue serving you."

Both Rahul and Priyanka expressed their gratitude towards the people of Uttar Pradesh, especially Raebareilly and Amethi, for their unwavering support to the Gandhi family. They hinted that Rahul might retain his seat in Raebareilly and resign from his seat in Wayanad, where he won by a margin of over 3 lakh votes.

Upon arriving at Fursatganj airport, Rahul and Priyanka were warmly welcomed by party AICC General Secretary, Incharge UP, Avinash Pandey, UPCC Chief Ajay Rai, and other senior leaders, including CLP Aradhana Mishra 'Mona' and Deputy Leader of the Party in the Rajya Sabha, Pramod Tewari. The Congress party plans to hold 'Thanksgiving' rallies and processions in all 403 Assembly segments of Uttar Pradesh over the next five days.

Delhi sizzles, goes off the grid

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In what could be called a triple whammy for the people of Delhi on Tuesday reeling under the scorching impact of an unprecedented heatwave and a severe water crisis, they faced a major power outage caused by a fire at the Mandola power grid in Uttar Pradesh, a critical supplier of electricity to the national Capital, providing approximately 1,500 megawatts of power.

As temperatures soared to 42 degrees Celsius, the power cut for varying lengths exacerbated the hardships of the residents of Delhi in various pockets, including the area housing Delhi LG Secretariat and Chief Minister's residence.

Amid IMD forecasts that heatwave conditions are likely to prevail for the next five days, Delhi Power Minister Atishi termed the incident as a matter of concern. She said, "There has been a major power cut in many parts of Delhi since 2:11 pm today. A power grid in Mandola, UP, which supplies 1,500 MW of electricity to Delhi, has caught fire. We are linking it to our

other power sources." She said she has sought time to meet the newly appointed Union Energy Minister (Manohar Lal Khattar) and the chairperson of PGCIL (Power Grid Corporation of India).

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, criticising the Centre, said, "It is worrying that the national-level power infrastructure has come to a standstill today. The failure of the national grid in the country's Capital is quite worrying. There was no power cut even when Delhi's peak power demand reached 8,000 MW. This power cut happened due to the failure of the national infrastructure."

In a post on social media X, Atishi said the fire at a sub-station of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) in Mandola near Loni (Ghaziabad) in Uttar Pradesh had led to power outages in many parts of the national Capital.

The power restoration process has begun and electricity is now gradually returning to different areas, Atishi said. "Delhi is the national Capital. If the power infrastructure in the country's Capital fails like

this on behalf of the national grid, then it can have very serious consequences. Delhi has always tried to provide electricity 24x7. A few weeks ago, when the peak power demand reached 8,300 MW, Delhi fulfilled it without any blackout or major power failure.

"Today there is a power cut in Delhi due to the national power grid and we will take immediate action on this," said the Minister.

Several areas in Delhi faced a power outage at around 2 pm on Tuesday. Power outages for long hours were reported on Tuesday afternoon from most parts of the city like ITO, Laxmi Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Jamia, Narela, Model Town, Rohini, Gopalpur, Sabzi Mandi, Wazirpur and Kashmiri Gate. Power discom officials said several areas, largely in central and east Delhi, were affected due to the failure. Some areas in north Delhi also faced outages.

"Areas likely Civil Lines, Model Town, Kashmiri Gate, Gulabi Bagh, Shakti Nagar and Vijay Nagar in North Delhi faced outages. The supply was resumed within an hour," said a discom official.

He said the power supply of LG House and Chief Minister's residence was also briefly affected.

While the city Government blamed the outage on a fire at the sub-station in Mandola, sources said a power generation unit owned by the Delhi Government also faced a snag, indicating two versions of the power failure in some areas of Delhi.

As a matter of fact, both Pragati Maidan power station and Mandola sub-station tripped almost simultaneously. The reason can be ascertained only after the technical investigation.

However, the power outage and the ruling Government blaming the BJP ruled neighbouring State is likely to further escalate the already strained relation between the AAP and the Centre-appointed Lt Governor of Delhi, VK Saxena, who are already locked in a feud for acute water crisis. Saxena had met with AAP Ministers over the water crisis and asked them to refrain from a blame game with Haryana, which has been accused by AAP of not releasing Delhi's share of water.

VIP security system set for overhaul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Depending upon the new threat perceptions by the central intelligence agencies, the Modi Government 3.0 is likely to undertake a significant overhaul in the VIP security setup in the coming months, leading to the transfer of security duties for over a dozen high-risk individuals from the National Security Guard (NSG) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to other paramilitary forces. This exercise will cover political figures, ex-Ministers, retired bureaucrats and some others.

However, officials said on Tuesday that there was no such proposal for the time being.

The plan to interchange security duties of high-risk individuals has been in the making since 2012. It is expected that around 450 'black cat' commandos are expected to be freed once NSG is withdrawn from VIP security duties.

The plan envisages

"restructuring" the role of a security agency and using its manpower to raise and station strike teams of commandos in some high-risk areas and around some critical assets located in different parts of the country.

Top four Ministers of the Modi Government — Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Foreign Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who were Ministers in the previous Modi 2.0 Government, will retain their 'Z' plus security.

Sources said, it has been decided to completely withdraw the 'black cat' commandos of the National Security Guard (NSG) from VIP security duties. All its nine Z-plus category protectees will be handed over to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) VIP security unit.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will review the current list of allottees, which may result in the modification,

reduction, or enhancement of security cover for various political figures, former ministers, retired bureaucrats, and others," sources added.

The CRPF and the CISE VIP security wings secure more than 200 persons at present. In addition, some of the VIPs secured by the personnel of the border guarding force Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) may be transferred to the CRPF or the VIP security wing of the CISE, known as the Special Security Group (SSG).

In 2012, it was first proposed to relieve the NSG from VIP security duties when the commanders of the elite group foresaw an event where simultaneous terror attacks could be witnessed at one time across multiple places. In such a situation, the commandos will have to be rushed into various directions.

Those protected by the close protection force of the National Security Guard (NSG) commandos include Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, his

predecessor and BSP supremo Mayawati, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh, veteran BJP leader and former deputy prime minister L K Advani, Union shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal, BJP leader and ex Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh.

Former Jammu and Kashmir CM and Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) president Ghulam Nabi Azad, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah and TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu are also protected by NSG commandos.

The ITBP protects veteran BJP leader Murlu Manohar Joshi, NC leader Omar Abdullah and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti and some others. The Union government has decided to "restructure" the NSG and use its manpower to raise and station 'strike teams' of commandos in some high-risk areas like near the Ram temple in Ayodhya and around some critical assets located in the southern part of the country.

Frenzy builds up for Speaker's election

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the allocation of ministerial portfolios in the new BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government completed, the focus has now shifted to electing the Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha. After a pro-tem or temporary Speaker administers the oath to newly-elected MPs during a Special Session, the Speaker will be the presiding officer of the Lower House of Parliament. The Special Session of Parliament is slated to commence on June 24 to elect the Lok Sabha Speaker. Sources said for the first two days new Members of Parliament will be taking their oaths followed by



election of the Speaker. The session will go on till July 3. The Lok Sabha Speaker's post has become a prized catch as the NDA parties, both TDP and JD (U), are eyeing the chair. In the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, the BJP was only able to bag 240 seats, and fell short of the 272 mark.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said the

presiding officer of the Lower House should have experience in handling parliamentary work as well as ability to conduct proceedings smoothly by coordinating with both the ruling and Opposition benches.

"The Lok Sabha Speaker's job is to smoothly run the House in coordination with the ruling party and the Opposition. In my opinion, the Lok Sabha

Speaker should be a little experienced. S/he should have experience in handling parliamentary work. If such a person is found for the post, it will be a very good thing," she said.

As the BJP lacks a majority in the new Lok Sabha, it will need to get its allies, especially the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (United), on board to decide on the Speaker's post. Congress led INDIA Bloc constituent, AAP, asked the TDP and JD(U) on Monday to ensure the Lok Sabha Speaker is from one of the two parties, and said this would be in their interests as well as that of the Constitution and democracy.

FROM PAGE 1

RESULTS A REALITY CHECK, SAYS RSS

The RSS linked magazine "Organiser" mentioned this.

Neglect of older dedicated workers who worked without the urge for recognition by the new age social media-aided selfie powered activists was also evident in the poll results, it said.

"Results of 2024 general elections have come as a reality check for overconfident BJP karyakartas and many leaders. They did not realise that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call of 400 plus (seats) was a target for them and a dare to the Opposition," noted in the article.

The BJP with 240 seats fell short of a majority but the NDA secured the mandate with 293 seats in the Lok Sabha polls. The Congress bagged 99 seats while the INDIA bloc got 234 seats. Following the polls, two Independents who won have also pledged support to the Congress, taking the INDIA bloc tally to 236.

RSS ideologue also flagged "unnecessary politicking" as one of the many reasons behind the BJP's underperformance in the Lok Sabha polls.

"Maharashtra is a prime example of unnecessary politicking and avoidable manipulations. NCP faction led by Ajit Pawar joined BJP though BJP and split SS (Shiv Sena) had a comfortable majority. Sharad Pawar would have faded away in two-three years as NCP would have lost energy with infighting between cousins," it said.

"Why was this ill-advised step taken? BJP

supporters were hurt because they had fought against this Congress ideology for years and were persecuted. In a single stroke, BJP reduced its brand value. After years of struggle to become numero uno in Maharashtra, it became just another political party without any difference," he added.

The BJP fared poorly in Maharashtra as it could win only nine seats compared to the 2019 tally of 23 constituencies out of the total 48. Shiv Sena led by Shinde faction bagged seven seats and Ajit Pawar-led NCP just one.

Without naming any leader, author of the article Ratan Sharda said the induction of Congressmen into the BJP, who had "actively promoted" the bogey of saffron terror and persecuted Hindus and also called 26/11 "RSS ki saazish" and branded RSS as a terrorist organisation, showed the BJP "in poor light" and also hurt the RSS sympathisers "immensely".

Sharda noted that the idea that Modi was fighting on all 543 Lok Sabha seats had "a limited value". "This idea became self-defeating when the candidates were changed, imposed at the cost of local leaders and defectors given more importance. Sacrificing even well performing parliamentarians to accommodate late comers hurt. It is estimated that around 25 percent of candidates were seasonal migrants," he said.

"This happened despite the shocking experience of 30 per cent rebels in the last Himachal Pradesh elections that resulted in defeat of the BJP. Local issues, track record of the candidate does matter, one can see. Disinterest of local BJP workers

was due to this factor too," he added.

NADDA IN CABINET, HUNT ON FOR NEW BJP CHIEF

Despite its overwhelming win in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP suffered several defeats in Assembly polls since 2018, except in Haryana where it formed a Government in an alliance with the Jannayak Janta Party.

Notably, during Nadda's tenure, Assembly elections took place in 29 States and Union Territories. Of them, BJP came to power in 16 States at a strike rate of 50 per cent. This include Haryana (2019), Bihar (2020), Assam and Puducherry (2021), Goa, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Gujarat (2022), Tripura, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (2023), and Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh this year.

The losses that the BJP faced were in Maharashtra, Jharkhand (2019), Delhi (2020), West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala (2021), Punjab, Himachal Pradesh (2022), Meghalaya, Karnataka (2024), Mizoram, Telangana (2023) and Sikkim (2024).

Sources in the BJP said the shift of some BJP State presidents to Governments, either at the Centre or State, besides its electoral setback in a key State like Uttar Pradesh is likely to bring new faces in their place, sources said.

The BJP's president in West Bengal, Sukanta Majumdar, has become a Union Minister while his Bihar counterpart

Samrat Choudhary is a deputy Chief Minister in the State. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini also heads the party in the State. Rajasthan BJP president C P Joshi is likely to be replaced to balance the party's social coalition as the state chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma is a Brahmin like him.

The party's dismal show in the Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh has turned attention to its State president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary. BJP sources noted that organisational polls and changes were put on hold as the party focussed on the poll campaign.

The process will now begin in right earnest, more so after its below-par showing in some states during the polls. The BJP lost its majority in the Lok Sabha even though its alliance, NDA, comfortably crossed the magic figure of 272.

NEET: WE NEED ANSWERS: SC TO CENTRE, NTA

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) examination is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. It took note of the submission that the fresh plea be tagged with a similar petition filed earlier on which a bench headed by CJI DY Chandrachud had issued notices to the Centre and the NTA on May 17 and that the plea was already

listed on July 8. The court granted the prayer.

"The allegation is that exam papers were leaked, and a large number of students got the exam papers in advance, and they became successful. Twenty three lakh students wrote the examination, and the total number of seats available is 1 lakh. This is the most coveted examination. Sixty-seven students got 720 out of 720 marks.

Mishra and nine other MBBS candidates sought a direction to the NTA "to recall the results of the examination conducted on May 5 and to conduct the examination afresh after issuing due public notice upon revelation at the end of investigation through a report that large number of examinees are bound to be affected by the declaration of results depriving those qualified examinees of just and fair opportunity to compete in seeking admission in college of their choice".

The plea has also sought a direction to the Centre and the NTA to take effective and meaningful steps to ensure that "malpractices and fraud", in particular leaking of the question papers as has happened in the previous examination, does not happen again.

It said petitioners are young aspiring students hailing from different states and are "shaken at the core" due to the question paper leak. The petitioners are under tremendous stress and anxiety as the alleged paper leak has denied them a level playing field, it said.

"Four individuals, including two MBBS students, have been arrested for allegedly running a paper solver gang for NEET

exams at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Mehta Vidyalaya in New Delhi," the petition said. "Hence, in the backdrop of ...Peculiar facts and circumstances, the Petitioners seek kind indulgence of this court urgently in the interest of justice, equity and good conscience," it said.

The plea alleged that NEET-UG, 2024, was riddled with malpractices and various instances of paper leaks have come to the knowledge of the petitioners.

UP GOVT APPROVES NEW TRANSFER POLICY

universities in the state, dropping the word 'state' from Maharaja Suheldev State University (Azamgarh), Maa Shakumbhari Devi State University (Saharanpur), Maa Vindhavasin State University (Mirzapur), Maa Pateshwari Devi State University (Balrampur), and Uttar Pradesh State University (Moradabad).

The Uttar Pradesh State University (Moradabad) has been renamed Guru Jambheshwar University.

Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay said that the state government was committed to developing higher education for the benefit of the state's students. For this, along with government universities, private universities were also being promoted, he added.

In this sequence, a proposal to give a Letter of Intent to two new private universities has been passed. One of these is HRIT (Ghaziabad), and the other is Future University (Bareilly), both of which have fulfilled the standards.

UNSC adopts Gaza ceasefire resolution

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The UN Security Council on Monday overwhelmingly approved its first resolution endorsing a cease-fire plan aimed at ending the eight-month war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. The US-sponsored resolution welcomes a cease-fire proposal announced by President Joe Biden that the United States says Israel has accepted. It calls on the militant Palestinian group Hamas to accept the three-phase plan. The resolution - which was approved with 14 of the 15 Security Council members voting in favour and Russia abstaining - calls on Israel and Hamas "to fully implement its terms without delay and without condition".

Whether Israel and Hamas agree to go forward with the plan remains in question, but the resolution's strong support in the UN's most powerful body puts added pressure on both parties to approve the proposal.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Israel on Monday, where he urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accept the plan for postwar Gaza as he pushed for more international pressure on Hamas to agree to the cease-fire proposal. Netanyahu has been sceptical of the deal, saying that Israel is still committed to destroying Hamas. Hamas said it welcomed the adoption of the resolution and was ready to work with mediators in indirect negotiations with Israel to implement it. The statement was among the strongest from Hamas to date, but it stressed the group would continue its struggle against Israeli occupation and work on setting up a "fully sovereign" Palestinian state. "Efforts are continuing to study and clarify some matters to ensure implementation by the Israeli side," Hamas spokesperson Jihad Taha said Tuesday. He said Israel was "stalling and procrastinating and creating obstacles in order to con-

tinue the aggression." A senior Israeli diplomat did not directly mention the resolution, telling the council Israel's position is unwavering: "We will continue until all of the hostages are returned and until Hamas' military and governing capabilities are dismantled." "This also means that Israel will not engage in meaningless and endless negotiations, which can be exploited by Hamas as a means to stall for time," Minister Counsellor Reut Shapir Ben Naftaly said. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield reiterated, however, that Israel has accepted the cease-fire deal, which is supported by countries around the world. The resolution's adoption, she said, "sent a clear message to Hamas to accept the cease-fire deal on the table." "The fighting could stop today, if Hamas would do the same," Thomas-Greenfield told the council. "I repeat, this fighting could stop today," US deputy ambassador

Robert Wood told reporters earlier on Monday that the United States sees the deal as "the best, most realistic opportunity to bring at least a temporary halt to this war." Earlier Monday, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders met in Qatar to discuss the proposed cease-fire deal and said later that any deal must lead to a permanent cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, reconstruction and "a serious exchange deal" between hostages in Gaza and Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said Moscow abstained because details of the three-phase plan haven't been disclosed and "we have a whole host of questions." "Hamas is called upon to accept this so-called deal, but still there is no clear clarity regarding official agreement from Israel," Nebenzia said. "Given the many statements from Israel on the extension of the war until Hamas is completely defeated ... what specifically

has Israel agreed to?" Algeria's UN Ambassador Amar Bendjama, the Arab representative on the council, said that while the text isn't perfect, "it offers a glimmer of hope to the Palestinians, as the alternative is (the) continuing killing and suffering of the Palestinian people." "We voted for this text to give diplomacy a chance to reach an agreement that will end the aggression against the Palestinian people that has lasted far too long," Bendjama said. The war was sparked by Hamas' surprise Oct 7 attack in southern Israel in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mainly Israeli civilians, and took about 250 others hostage. About 120 hostages remain, with 43 pronounced dead. Israel's military offensive has killed more than 36,700 Palestinians and wounded more than 83,000 others, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It has also destroyed about 80% of Gaza's buildings, according to the UN.

French opposition parties seek alliances ahead of snap polls

AP ■ PARIS

Empowered by a stunning triumph at the European elections, France's far-right National Rally on Tuesday hit the national campaign trail running with its star leader, Jordan Bardella, promising supporters "the largest possible majority" at the upcoming parliamentary elections. Opposition parties on the left and the right have been scrambling to form alliances and field candidates in the snap national elections called by President Emmanuel Macron after his party suffered a crushing defeat by the far right in the European Union vote on Sunday. While sharp differences between parties on both sides of the political spectrum remain, prominent figures calling for a united front in both camps appear to have one thing in common: They don't want to cooperate with Macron. Despite their divisions, left-wing parties agreed late Monday to form a new alliance that includes the Greens, the Socialists, the

Communists and the far-left France Unbowed of Jean-Luc Melenchon. Leaders have not agreed on who will head the new coalition nor on its program. In light of the European polls, politicians on the left are focused on closing ranks to prevent a win for the National Rally that could result in the French far right leading a government for the first time since World War II. For now they have also vowed not to join forces with Macron's centrists. In a joint statement, the alliance called on all forces on the left, including the influential labor unions, to unite behind a "new popular front" to form an "alternative to Emmanuel Macron and to fight against the racist project of the far right." The National Rally leader Marine Le Pen is working to consolidate power on the right ahead of the two-round elections that will take place on June 30 and July 7. Le Pen's niece, Marion Marechal, who won a seat in the European Parliament on Sunday as a member of the rival

Reconquer! party of Eric Zemmour, on Monday visited National Rally headquarters in Paris to negotiate a far-right alliance at the upcoming elections. Le Pen also met with members of the conservative Republicans party to discuss a united front. Some conservative lawmakers have supported some of Macron's bills in the National Assembly since the president lost a majority in the lower house of the French parliament following the 2022 general election. "We have a historic chance to allow the national camp to put France back on track," Le Pen said in an interview with the French public broadcaster on Monday evening. She said the National Rally and the conservatives could agree on several policy goals, including an economic recovery plan, boosting purchasing power and curbing immigration. Bardella, Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé and the face of the far right's European triumph, also urged French conservatives to ride the wave of popularity with the National Rally.

Blinken meets Netanyahu in Israel

AP ■ JERUSALEM

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his latest trip to the Middle East, where America's top diplomat urged approval of a cease-fire proposal that faced new uncertainty following Israel's hostage rescue operation that killed many Palestinians and turmoil in Netanyahu's government. With no firm public response yet from Hamas or Israel to the proposal they received 10 days ago, Blinken started his eighth visit to the region since the conflict began in October by meeting with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt, a key mediator with the militant Hamas group. He then flew to Israel for talks with Netanyahu and other Israeli officials. Blinken once again called on Hamas to accept the plan, which he said has wide international support. "If you want a cease-fire, press Hamas to say yes," he told reporters before leaving Cairo on the trip that also will take him to Jordan and Qatar.



Blinken said Israel has accepted the proposal, though Netanyahu has expressed skepticism. "I know that there are those who are pessimistic about the prospects," Blinken said, putting the onus on Hamas. "That's understandable. Hamas continues to show extraordinary cynicism in its actions, a disinterest not only in the well-being and security of Israelis but also Palestinians." While President Joe Biden, Blinken and other US officials have praised the rescue of four Israeli hostages on Saturday, the

operation resulted in the deaths of 274 Palestinian civilians and may complicate the cease-fire push by emboldening Israel and hardening Hamas' resolve to carry on fighting in the war that started with its October 7 attack in Israel. Blinken said the plan is the "single best way" to get to a cease-fire, release the remaining hostages and improve regional security. In his talks with el-Sissi, Blinken also discussed plans for post-conflict governance and reconstruction in Gaza. "It's imperative that there be a

plan, and that has to involve security, it has to involve governance, it has to involve reconstruction," Blinken said. Netanyahu and his government have resisted calls for any "day after" plan that would bar Israel from having some form of security presence in the territory. Blinken said he would urge Israel to come up with alternatives that would be acceptable. "It would be very good if Israel put forward its own ideas on this, and I'll be talking to the government about that," he said. "But one way or another, we've got to have these plans, we've got to have them in place, we've got to be ready to go if we want to take advantage of a cease-fire." The three-phase plan calls for the release of more hostages and a temporary pause in hostilities that will last as long as it takes to negotiate the second phase, which aims to bring the release of all hostages, a "full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza" and "a permanent end to hostilities," according to an American-drafted resolution put before the UN Security Council. The third phase calls for reconstruction in Gaza.

'Israeli and Palestinian armed forces accused of war crimes'

Geneva (AP): The UN human rights office is citing possible war crimes by Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in connection with a deadly raid by Israeli forces that freed four hostages over the weekend. Office spokesman Jeremy Laurence expressed concerns about possible violations of rules of proportionality, distinction and precaution by the Israeli forces in Saturday's raid at the urban Nuseirat refugee camp. Palestinian health officials say at least 274 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children, were killed in the operation. Laurence said Palestinian armed groups who are holding hostages in densely populated areas are putting the lives of nearby civilians and the hostages at "added risks" from the hostilities.

Suspect in custody for stabbing four US college instructors

Beijing (AP): Chinese police have detained a suspect in a stabbing attack on four instructors from Iowa's Cornell College who were teaching at a Chinese university in the northeast city of Jilin, officials said Tuesday. Jilin city police said a 55-year-old man surnamed Cui was walking in a public park on Monday when he bumped into a foreigner. He stabbed the foreigner and three other foreigners who were with him, and also stabbed a Chinese person who approached in an attempt to intervene, police said. The instructors from Cornell College were teaching at Beihua University, officials at the US school said. The injured were rushed to a hospital for treatment and none was in critical condition, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said at a daily briefing Tuesday. He said police believe the attack in Jilin city's Beishan Park was an isolated incident, based on a preliminary assessment, and the investigation is ongoing. Cornell College President Jonathan Brand said in a statement that the instructors were attacked while at the park with a faculty member from Beihua, which is in an outlying part of Jilin, an industrial city about 1,000 km (600 miles) northeast of Beijing. Monday was a public holiday in China. The State Department said in a statement it was aware of reports of a stabbing and was monitoring the situation. The attack happened as both Beijing and Washington are seeking to

expand people-to-people exchanges to help bolster relations amid tensions over trade and such international issues as Taiwan, the South China Sea and the war in Ukraine. An Iowa state lawmaker posted a statement on Instagram saying his brother, David Zabner, had been wounded during a stabbing attack in Jilin. Rep Adam Zabner described his brother as a doctoral student at Tufts University who was in China under the Cornell-Beihua relationship. "I spoke to David a few minutes ago, he is recovering from his injuries and doing well," Adam Zabner wrote, adding that his brother was grateful for the care he received at a hospital. News of the incident was suppressed in China, where the government maintains control on information about anything considered sensitive. News media outlets had not reported it. Some social media accounts posted foreign media reports about the attack, but a hashtag about it was blocked on a popular portal and photos and video of the incident were quickly taken down. Cornell spokesperson Jen Visser said in an email that the college was still gathering information about what happened. Visser said the private college in Mount Vernon, Iowa, partners with Beihua University. A college news release from 2018, when the program started, says Beihua provides funding for Cornell professors to travel to China to teach a portion of courses in computer science, mathematics and physics over a two-week period.

'Migrant boat sinks off coast of Yemen, leaving at least 49 dead, 140 missing'

Cairo (AP): A boat carrying migrants sank off the coast of Yemen, leaving at least 49 dead and 140 missing, the UN's International Organization for Migration said Tuesday. The boat was carrying some 260 Somalis and Ethiopians from the northern coast of Somalia on the 320-kilometer journey across the Gulf of Aden when it sank Monday off Yemen's southern coast, the IOM said in a statement. It said search efforts were continuing and so far 71 had been rescued. Among the dead were 31 women and six children, it said. Yemen is a major route for migrants from the East Africa and the Horn of Africa trying to reach Gulf countries for work.

ICC prosecutor seeks evidence of atrocities in Sudan

The Hague (Netherlands) (AP): The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor appealed on Tuesday for information and evidence of atrocities in Sudan, saying his ongoing investigation "seems to disclose an organised, systematic and a profound attack on human dignity." ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan released a video statement in the aftermath of an attack Sunday by the notorious Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group that forced the closure of a main hospital in the western Darfur region. The group fired shots and looted the hospital in al-Fasher, aid group Doctors Without Borders reported. The attack came as the RSF, which has been fighting the Sudanese army for a year, intensified its offensive seeking to wrest control of the city, the military's last stronghold in the sprawling Darfur region. Two weeks of fighting last month in and around al-Fasher has killed more than 120 peo-

ple. "The terrible events in West Darfur, including El-Geneina, in 2023 are among our key investigative priorities," Khan said. "In addition, I am extremely concerned about allegations of widespread international crimes being committed in al-Fasher and its surrounding areas as I speak." A long-running conflict Sudan's conflict began in April last year when soaring tensions between the leaders of the military and the RSF erupted into fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country. The war has killed more than 14,000 people and wounded thousands more, while pushing its population to the brink of famine. The UN food agency warned the warring parties last month that there is a serious risk of widespread starvation and death in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan if they don't allow humanitarian aid into the region. The war also created the world's

largest displacement crisis as more than 10 million people have been forced to flee their homes, including over 2 million people who crossed into neighbouring countries, the UN migration agency told The Associated Press Monday. Khan said he is urgently investigating in Sudan. "The evidence my office has collected to date seems to show credible, repeated, expanding, continuous allegations of attacks against the civilian population, in particular, attacks directed against camps for internally displaced persons," he said. "It seems to show the widespread, prevalent use of rape and other forms of sexual violence. It seems to disclose consistently the shelling of civilian areas, the looting of properties and attacks against hospitals," he added, stressing that he was "particularly concerned by the ethnically motivated nature of these attacks against the Masalit and other communities".

UK Conservatives attempt mood shift with election promises ahead of polls

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Rishi Sunak doesn't know whether he'll still be Britain's prime minister the day after next month's election. There's nothing unusual about that. What is unusual is that he's been forced to deny rumours he could quit even before polling day, amid alarm inside the governing Conservative Party over Sunak's lackluster campaign. Sunak gets a chance — maybe one of his last — to change the narrative on Tuesday when he releases the Conservatives' manifesto, a handbook of policies that forms each UK party's blueprint for power. Despite gloomy polls and bruising headlines, Sunak insists the election is not a "foregone conclusion" and says resigning has not crossed his mind. "People are going to say what they're going to say," he told reporters on Monday. "The reality is I'm not going to stop going, I'm not going to stop fighting for people's votes, I'm not



going to stop fighting for the future of our country." The Conservative manifesto is likely to include promised cuts to personal taxes, a chance for Sunak to repeat his claim that a government led by Labour's Keir Starmer would raise taxes while a Conservative one would lower them. The Labour Party points out that the tax burden has risen to its highest level in decades during 14 years of Tory

rule. On July 4 British voters will elect lawmakers to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons, and the leader of the party that can command a majority — either alone or in coalition — will become prime minister. Sunak's surprise decision to call a summer election — several months earlier than most people expected, even those in his own party — was intended partly to catch the opposition unpre-

pared. But it's the Conservatives who have seemed off-balance from the moment Sunak stood outside 10 Downing St. in the rain on May 22 to announce the start of the campaign. The Conservatives were already on the defensive after jettisoning two prime ministers without an election in quick succession in 2022: first Boris Johnson, felled by scandals, then Liz Truss, who rocked the economy with drastic tax-slashing plans and lasted just seven weeks in office. The party's prospects worsened last week when populist firebrand Nigel Farage announced that he would run for Parliament at the helm of the right-wing party Reform UK, vowing to be a "bloody nuisance" to the established parties. While Reform, with its anti-establishment and anti-immigration rhetoric, is aiming to attract disaffected voters from both Conservatives and Labour, it's likely to take more votes from Sunak's party.

NZ renews search for father who vanished into forest with children

AP ■ WELLINGTON

Zealand authorities offered a reward and immunity from prosecution on Tuesday to anyone who can help their search for three children who have been missing since their father vanished with them from a remote rural community more than two years ago. The December 2021 disappearance of Tom Phillips and his children — now aged 8, 9 and 10 — has confounded investigators. They are not believed to ever have travelled far from the remote rural settlement where they lived, but there have been no credible sightings of the family for months. Police officers converged on the township, Marokopa, population 69, to seek fresh leads in a case that has fascinated the country of 5 million people. Phillips is accused of

committing an armed bank robbery while on the run in May 2023. He allegedly shot at a member of the public and fled on a motorbike with a passenger who investigators believe was one of his children. Phillips no longer has legal custody rights for his children, Acting Detective Inspector Andrew Saunders said at a news conference in the city of Hamilton, south of Auckland, on Tuesday. "These are not the actions of a good father," said Saunders. The children have not had access to formal education or healthcare since they went missing, he added, and police have concerns "for the welfare of the children who have been living in isolation for the past two and a half years, with no connection to others". Saunders said that a reward of 80,000 New Zealand dollars

(USD 49,000) — large by New Zealand standards — and an offer of immunity from prosecution is targeted at people who already know the family's whereabouts. The authorities have long said they believe that Phillips has had help concealing his family. The reward, approved by New Zealand's Commissioner of Police, expires in two weeks, Saunders said. "We don't want them waiting months and months to decide," he said. "Come forward and tell us where the children are." It is not the first time Phillips prompted national news headlines after disappearing with his children. The family went missing in September 2021, provoking a 3-week land and sea search after Phillips' truck was found abandoned on a wild beach near where he lived.

Malawi's vice president, 9 others die in plane crash

Blantyre (Malawi) (AP): Malawi's vice president and nine others were killed in a plane crash, the country's president said Tuesday. The wreckage of the military plane carrying Vice President Saulos Chilima was located in a mountainous area in the north of the country after a search that lasted more than a day. There were no survivors of the crash, Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera said in a live address on state television. Hundreds of soldiers, police officers and forest rangers had been searching for the plane that also carried a former first lady after it went missing Monday morning while making the 45-minute flight from the southern African nation's capital, Lilongwe, to the city of Mzuzu, around 370 kilometers (230 miles) to the north. Air traffic controllers told the plane not to attempt a landing at Mzuzu's airport because of

bad weather and poor visibility and asked it to turn back to Lilongwe, Chakwera said. Air traffic control then lost contact with the aircraft and it disappeared from radar, he said. Seven passengers and three military crew members were on board. The president described the aircraft as a small, propeller driven plane operated by the Malawian armed forces. The tail number he provided shows it is a Dornier 228-type twin propeller plane that was delivered to the Malawian army in 1988, according to the ch-aviation website that tracks aircraft information. Around 600 personnel were involved in the search in a vast forest plantation in the Vipha Mountains near Mzuzu, authorities said. Chilima was serving his second term as vice president. He was also in the role from 2014-2019 under former President Peter Mutharika.

Chinese premier to visit NZ, Australia and Malaysia

Melbourne (AP): Chinese Premier Li Qiang will visit New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia starting Thursday, officials said. Li will visit the three countries from June 13 to 20, a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said Tuesday. Australia earlier announced that Li would land in the Australian city of Adelaide on June 15 and leave Perth on June 18. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Li are to hold an annual leaders' meeting at Parliament House in the Australian capital, Canberra, during the visit. The New Zealand and Malaysian governments have yet to announce Li's itinerary in their countries. Li's visit to Australia and New Zealand will be the first by a Chinese premier, the second most powerful official in

China's leadership, in seven years. A Chinese premier hasn't visited Malaysia since 2015. Li's Australian trip follows a visit by Albanese to Beijing last November, when leaders agreed to resume key bilateral dialogues and further several areas of cooperation. China imposed a series of official and unofficial trade barriers that cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (USD 13 billion) a year after Australia's previous government urged an international inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of those barriers have been removed since Albanese's government was elected in 2022. Albanese said he would push for barriers to Australian lobster to be lifted and for imprisoned Australian democracy

blogger Yang Hengjuno to be freed. "Premier Li Qiang's visit to Australia is an important opportunity to engage directly on key issues for both our nations," Albanese said. "Australia continues to pursue a stable and direct relationship with China, with dialogue at its core," he said. New Zealand officials say their discussions with Li will focus on their aim to double the value of the nation's exports to China in a decade. New Zealand has traditionally sought to balance its trade relationship with China with the interests of its Western allies in the Five Eyes intelligence sharing partnership, who have more assertively decried China's growing influence in the region. Malaysia has similarly resisted taking sides in the US-China rivalry.

RIFLE, PISTOL TEAM FOR OLYMPICS ANNOUNCED; BHAKER PICKED IN TWO INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Women's pistol ace Manu Bhaker was the only one to be picked in two individual events after her excellent run of form in selection trials as the national shooting federation on Tuesday announced a 15-member Indian rifle and pistol team for the Paris Olympics.

The team was finalised during a selection meeting held virtually. The squad has eight rifle shooters and seven in pistol discipline. The selectors decided to give precedence to trial results, shutting the door on the likes of world champion Rudranksh Patil, who has been pleading to be considered despite overwhelming scores in his pet 10m air rifle event as he had won the quota. In shooting, quotas are won by countries and not individual athletes. All the team members, along with the coaches and

support staff, are currently in a camp in Volmerange-Les-Mines, France, mainly aimed at "acclimatisation and hard-training" before they come back home for a two-week break. The shotgun squad will be announced after the ISSF World Cup in Lonato, Italy, competitions in which start from Wednesday and go on till June 18. The Paris Games will be held from July 26 to August 11. Indian shooters managed to secure a record 21 of the 24 possible quotas, including a full allocation of eight each in rifle and pistol events. This is India's best-ever quota haul in shooting at any edition of the Olympics, eclipsing the 15 from Tokyo Games. This means the athlete who clinched the quota can be replaced by another, leading up to the Games on the basis of scores in the selection trials conducted by the national federation. Sharing his thoughts, National Rifle Association of

India's (NRAI) senior vice president Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, said, "The selection committee met and deliberated at length. After deliberating at length, we feel we have selected the best team on current form as per merit and sticking to the policy. "We are confident that everything has been put in place for the team to deliver. Given our depth in rifle and pistol, some very good shooters are not part of the squad. However, they will have a chance to make a comeback. We wish the squad all the very best." Deo is right as the performance of the shooters in the trials underlined India's depth and bench strength in rifle and pistol shooting but that is no guarantee for a rich haul at the Olympics. For proof, one can go back to the Tokyo and Rio Games, where India fielded 12 and 15-member teams and returned empty-handed on both occasions.



On behalf of the federation, Deo thanked the Government of India, the Sports Ministry, and the Sports Authority of India, who have "guided and supported us in every step of the preparations." Besides all 16 possible shots at a medal, in eight individual rifle and pistol events, India will also have a record five starts across the four individual shotgun events. Additionally, India will also field five mixed teams, two each in rifle and pistol and one in shotgun. K Sultan Singh, secretary general at NRAI, said, "The team is in good form and battle ready, consisting of as many as four Olympians and other senior shooters as well as a lot of extremely promising, confident and matured young talent. "They have been training very systematically for a long time under the guidance and support of the entire training squad of the HPD (High-Performance Director), foreign coaches,

national coaches, the sports science team, the physios etc. Who have been steadfastly and minutely working towards one goal and that is to have a successful podium finish." The NRAI will also be looking to exchange the spare quota place which has freed up because of Bhaker making it to two events, appropriately as per ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) rules. **Indian rifle and pistol team for Paris Olympics:** Rifle: Sandeep Singh, Arjun Babuta (10m Air Rifle M), Elavenil Valarivan, Ramita (10m Air Rifle W), Sift Kaur Samra, Anjum Moudgil (50m Rifle 3 Positions W), Aishwary Tomar, Swapnil Kusale (50m Rifle 3 Positions M) Pistol: Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Cheema (10m Air Pistol M), Manu Bhaker, Rhythm Sangwan (10m Air Pistol W), Anish Bhanwal Vijayveer Sidhu (25m RFP M), Manu Bhaker, Esha Singh (25m Pistol W).



India to host Junior Hockey World Cup in 2025

PTI ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

India will host next year's Men's Junior Hockey World Cup, marking the event's return to the country after nine years, the Executive Board of the International Hockey Federation announced on Tuesday. The tournament will be held in December and it will be the first time ever that a Hockey Junior World Cup will include as many as 24 teams. This was announced by FIH President Tayyab Ikram who said: "Giving more opportunities to play to a larger and more diverse number of National Associations is one of the key pillars of our empowerment and engagement strategy." "We saw at the FIH Hockey5s World Cup in Oman this year how more diversity brings a huge added value to our events. "Therefore, I'm very happy that we've increased the number of participating teams for the FIH Hockey Junior World Cups and I look forward to seeing these 24 young teams, representing the future of our sport, next year!" he added. The last edition of the tournament was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2023 with Germany emerging winners with a 2-1 win over France.

Spain and India took the third and fourth places respectively. India have, in the past, hosted the tournament three times in 2013 (New Delhi), 2016 (Lucknow) and 2021 (Bhubaneswar). India were the winners of the 2016 edition as well. "At this stage, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Hockey India for their commitment to organise yet another fantastic event," Ikram added. Extending his gratitude, president of Hockey India Dilip Tirkey said: "This prestigious tournament highlights India's growing importance in international hockey and shows our dedication to developing the sport for future generations. "We're excited to share India's rich hockey history and provide a stage for young talent to showcase their skills." Secretary general of Hockey India Bholu Nath Singh termed this a significant step for HI. "We appreciate the FIH's trust in us. This event offers a fantastic chance to bring hockey to even greater heights, inspiring a whole new generation of players and fans in India and globally. "We're committed to making this tournament a memorable experience that celebrates everything hockey is about," he added.

Poland's Kaczmarek wins 400m European title in 48.98

AP ■ ROME

American standout Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone is leading the way as expected in the 400 meters with the Paris Olympics less than 50 days away. Jamaica's Nickisha Pryce and Poland's Natalia Kaczmarek are not far behind, though. Kaczmarek clocked 48.98 seconds at the European athletics championships on Monday to mark the third straight day that a woman has cracked the 49-second barrier. Pryce got it started with a 48.89 for Arkansas at the NCAA championships on Saturday. Then McLaughlin-Levrone responded with a 48.75 in New York on Sunday.



In Rome, Kaczmarek surged past Ireland's Rhasidat Adeleke in the final meters to smash Irena Szewinska's 48-year-old Polish national record of 49.28 and set the fastest time by a European this century. "Coming to the start, I was dreaming about the Polish record but this 48.98 was something more than my imagination," said Kaczmarek, the silver medalist at the worlds last year. Adeleke, who helped Ireland to gold in the 4x400 mixed relay, took silver in 49.07. Lieke Klaver of the Netherlands claimed bronze in 50.08. In the men's 400, Alexander

Doom of Belgium also came from behind to win in a championship record 44.15 ahead of Charles Dobson of Britain (44.38) and Liemarvin Bonevacia of the Netherlands (44.88). There was an upset in the hammer throw when Sara Fantini of host Italy beat three-time defending Olympic champion Anita Wlodarczyk for gold. Then Timothe Mumenthaler of Switzerland silenced the home crowd when he edged Filippo Tortu - the anchorman from Italy's 4x100 gold at the Tokyo Olympics - to win the 200 in 20.28. "It was a lost opportunity," Tortu said. "The gold was within reach. I just didn't run well. It's very upsetting and I can't celebrate this silver.

Sangram Singh set to be first Indian male wrestler to join MMA



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Commonwealth heavyweight champion Sangram Singh is set to become the first Indian male wrestler to join mixed martial arts. Sangram will be the second Indian overall after Puja Tomar to compete as a MMA fighter for which he has requisite skills

being a wrestler, stated a release on Tuesday. "Wrestling has given me so much including the love from the people of my country and I hope that they will continue to do the same in my new endeavour," Sangram said. "MMA is the future, its growing popularity in the last few years speaks for itself. India has one of the highest viewerships for the sport and I hope that the fans of the sport can support me in the same manner," he added. The 38-year-old Sangram recently made his return to wrestling after six-year gap at the Dubai Pro Wrestling Championship, in which he defeated Muhammad Saeed in a largely one-sided affair.

AP ■ WARSAW (POLAND)

Strikers Robert Lewandowski and Karol Swiderski were in doubt for the European Championship after they were injured as Poland beat Turkey 2-1 in a warmup on Monday. Lewandowski set up Swiderski for the opening goal in the 12th minute. But in his celebrations, Swiderski hurt his ankle and had to be replaced. Captain Lewandowski, Poland's all-time leading goal-scorer, lasted until the 32nd when he hurt his right leg and was substituted. The double blow was a nightmare for Poland. Arkadiusz Milik was to be up front with Lewandowski for the Euros until he damaged his left knee on Friday in the friendly against Ukraine. Milik returned to Juventus and had successful knee surgery on Monday. Lewandowski and Swiderski have only until Sunday to recover when Poland opens its Euros campaign against the Netherlands in Hamburg. Turkey threatened the equalizer in the second half. Arda Güler and Orkun Kökçü were saved but goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny was helpless when half-time substitute Baris Alper Yilmaz shot from the edge of box deflected in. After Turkey's Kerem Akturkoglu hit the crossbar from long range, Poland won in the 90th thanks to a beauty by Nicola Zalewski, who weaved past two defenders to the box and scored his maiden international goal.

Poland strikers Lewandowski, Swiderski injured in last Euros warmup



Turkey faces Georgia in its opener on Tuesday week in Dortmund, while Poland will be sweating on its strikers. There was nothing wrong with the Dutch attack. They have warmed up with consecutive 4-0 wins. Iceland was put to the sword in Rotterdam, with Virgil van Dijk and

Wout Weghorst scoring, just as they did against Canada last Thursday at De Kuip. Xavi Simons' first goal for the Netherlands was teed up by Denzel Dumfries' header in the first half, then Nathan Ake's nod set up Van Dijk. Substitute Donyell Malen scored thanks

to Memphis Depay, but Depay was denied moments later when VAR ruled out his goal because of an earlier handball. However, VAR overturned another on-field decision to allow Weghorst's goal in added time. The Czech Republic struggled to subdue North Macedonia 2-1, needing two second-half penalties in Hradec Králové. After Malta was ravaged 7-1 last Friday, the Czechs made nine changes to give their likely Euro lineup a run before facing Portugal in a week in Leipzig. But nobody scored until the 60th when Patrik Schick converted a penalty for a foul on Tomas Soucek. Just five minutes later, North Macedonia was level after Isnik Alimi headed in a rebound of Aleksandar Trajkovski's shot off the right post. The Czechs needed all seven minutes of added time to find the winner, from a spot kick by Antonin Barak. They suffered a setback on Sunday when midfielder Michal Sadilek, who captained the team against Malta, withdrew from the Euro 2024 squad after injuring his shin from falling off a bike on a day off.

Indore to host diving and water polo trials for National Junior Championships

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Adhoc Committee, Delhi Swimming Association (Regd.) as appointed by the Swimming Federation of India will conduct trials on Saturday, 15 June 2024 at 10.00 am onwards at the Dr. SPM Sports Complex Swimming Pool, New Delhi, to select Delhi Water polo & Diving Teams of Junior Boys & Girls. These selected Teams will participate in the ensuing 40th Sub Junior & 50th Junior National Swimming Championship (Water-polo & Diving Events) - 2024 which will be held in Indore (MadhyaPradesh) from 7th to 11th July 2024 as informed by its Chairman Mr. Balraj Sharma. All interested players who wish to participate in these selection trials are required to reach the venue at the specified time with valid SFI UID Card renewed up to 31.03.2025.

Euro 2024 will not feature Europe's top striker: Who else is missing?

PTI ■ LONDON

Goalkeepers and defenders: Exhale. The most feared striker in Europe won't be playing at the European Championship. That's because Erling Haaland's Norway didn't qualify. Haaland's goal-scoring statistics with both club and country are staggering: 90 goals in 98 matches across all competitions in two seasons with Manchester City, and 30 in 32 matches for Norway since his national team debut in 2019. But Halaand produced "only" five goals in six qualifying matches for Norway, which finished third in Group A behind Spain and Scotland and didn't even reach the playoffs. Norway's absence also means that Arsenal and Norway captain Martin Odegaard won't be at the tournament in Germany. Norway won only three of eight qualifiers and finished six points behind group runner-up Scotland. A look at some other top players who won't be at Euro 2024, which starts Friday: **THIBAUT COURTOIS** Thibaut Courtois was healthy enough to

make two key saves during the first half of the Champions League final and help Real Madrid to another title. But the Belgium goalkeeper announced in December that he would miss the Euros and has not backpedaled on his decision despite returning to full fitness for Madrid after a long-term knee injury. There's also this: There are ongoing tensions between Courtois and Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco. Courtois questioned Tedesco's "reality" after the coach accused him of abandoning his teammates and faking an injury before a qualifier last year. Without the Madrid keeper, Tedesco's choices in goal are: Matz Sels (Nottingham Forest), Koen Casteels (Wolfsburg) and Thomas Kaminski (Luton). **KARIM BENZEMA** Benzema retired from France's national team the day after "Les Bleus" lost the 2022 World Cup final without the striker. Then last year he left Real Madrid for Saudi Arabian club Al-Ittihad and now, at age 36, his days at the top seem finished. Benzema was awarded the Ballon d'Or as the world's top player in



2022 but then missed the World Cup in Qatar that year after tearing a left thigh muscle in pre-tournament training. He also didn't play in France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign because he was still exiled from the national team for his alleged role in a sex-tape scandal

with teammate Mathieu Valbuena. France coach Didier Deschamps has plenty of options up front without Benzema, led by captain Kylian Mbappé. France's other forwards include Bradley Barcola, Kingsley Coman, Ousmane Dembélé, Olivier Giroud, Randal Kolo Muani and Marcus Thuram.

Two more former France starters missing are midfielder Paul Pogba, who is serving a doping ban, and defender Lucas Hernandez, who recently underwent surgery after rupturing his left ACL. **MARCUS RASHFORD** The Manchester United striker paid the price for a disappointing season at

the club level and failed to make the cut for England coach Gareth Southgate's initial 33-man selection. Rashford managed just eight goals for a United team that suffered its lowest-ever Premier League finish - eighth. The omission comes only two seasons after Rashford had a career-best campaign, scoring 34 goals for club and country. Jack Grealish, Harry Maguire and Jordan Henderson - who all played in the final when England lost to Italy in a penalty shootout in 2021 - were also left out by Southgate. "These are difficult calls, you are talking about players who are very good players, who have been an important part of what we have done," Southgate said. "With Marcus, I feel players in the same area of the pitch have had better seasons, it's as simple as that." **MATS HUMMELS** Reaching the Champions League final wasn't enough for Mats Hummels to make the squad for host Germany. Hummels made a strong case for inclusion with his inspirational performances in Borussia Dortmund's run in Europe. But Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said there were "1,000 components"

to the decision not to include the veteran defender. Nagelsmann sees Real Madrid's Antonio Rüdiger and Bayer Leverkusen's Jonathan Tah as his preferred central defensive pairing - and anyone else would need to be content with a backup role. Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck is evidently content to take the reserve role and did make the squad. Bayern Munich midfielder Leon Goretzka was also left out, despite a strong finish to the Bundesliga season. **SANDRO TONALI** Newcastle midfielder Sandro Tonali is serving a 10-month ban for betting on teams he played for - ruling him out of consideration for defending champion Italy. It leaves coach Luciano Spalletti without his top choice at playmaker but opens space for the likes of Jorginho and Lorenzo Pellegrini. Tonali had seemed poised to inherit the role that once belonged to Andrea Pirlo by setting the pace and directing the attack for Italy's squad. Several other Italy players are out injured: Domenico Berardi, Nicolò Zaniolo, Francesco Acerbi and Giorgio Scalvini

INDIA VS MINI INDIA: ROHIT & CO EYE BETTER BATTING SHOW AGAINST USA

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's batting prima donnas would want to unchain themselves from the vagaries of a much-maligned drop-in track and chance their arms freely against an impressive-but-inexperienced USA in their group league game of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

India, who are classified as A1 (irrespective of points), need just one more win to ensure their Super Eight berth and despite the two-paced nature of the Nassau County track, they wouldn't like a repeat of the match against Pakistan where they lost their last seven wickets for 28 runs.

Against USA, the approach could be a high-risk one like Pakistan but perhaps with higher dividends.

Their dreams of wearing the India blues remained unfulfilled but when a sprightly bunch of Indian Americans take the field against their country of birth, the likes of Saurabh

Netravalkars and Harmeet Singh would once again like to be the proverbial David against the Goliaths of the game.

Even though the track has significantly bridged the gap between teams, the USA, which is an eclectic mix of eight Indians, two Pakistanis, a West Indian, one New Zealander, a South African and a Dutch might just find the gulf with India too much to bridge.

Neither have they grabbed air time on American channels nor the famous broadsheets have been devoting any newsprint on them even after the Super Over win over Pakistan but Wednesday could just be the day when the country of their choice takes note of their performance.

Monank Patel, Harmeet, Netravalkar, Jessy Singh and Noshush Kenjige all have their little Indian story to tell and if the opposition has Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant in its ranks, it would be a touch more endearing.

It's not everyday that one gets a

chance to bowl at Kohli and Sharma and face Bumrah even if it's far from being a sweet experience. But its experience nevertheless and that too of a lifetime.

For India, it will be their last match in the 'Big Apple' extension and the one where they wouldn't mind batting first.

If India bowl first, there could be a high chance that USA might not be able to touch the three-figure mark against Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Ravindra Jadeja.

There will be some beautiful and emotional sub-plots as well if Netravalkar gets a chance to bowl to his former Mumbai teammate Suryakumar Yadav with whom he played in Mumbai U-15, Ranji and Vijay Hazare Trophy.

"It will be an emotional moment to play against India and especially Surya as we go back a long way," Netravalkar told PTI recently.

For the two left-arm spinners Harmeet and Kenjige, the challenge of trying to keep



Rishabh Pant quiet will be altogether different level. Both Harmeet and Kenjige will try to maintain dart-like accuracy but that could well be dismantled by Pant, who is sure to use his feet. For Ali Khan, his extra pace and the bounce that he extracts from even benign surfaces would certainly provoke Rohit to use his pull shot frequently.

There would be Nitish Kumar, who could be cheeky with his shot selection and prove to be a thorn in India's flesh.

SHIVAM DUBE AND AN EXTRA SPINNER: In the first game, India's weakest link was Shivam Dube. The Chennai Super Kings' most valued 'Impact Player' is finding it tough on two-paced tracks where the ball is gripping and coming late onto the bat.

But unlike tactician-par excellence Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who could bench him during CSK's bowling in the IPL, national skipper Rohit Sharma doesn't have such luxury and needs to hide him in areas of the field where the ball is expected to travel less.

Dube is a monstrous hitter of spinners on good flat decks and his military medium seam-up stuff does give the Indian skipper cushion to manoeuvre with the bowling combination.

But in a format like T20, the team management, which asked for Dube at the expense of Rinku Singh, would want

him to come good.

Else, there is Yashasvi Jaiswal in the 15, who is a way more rounded batter than the big-bodied Mumbaiakar.

Two wrist spinners, Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, should be given some game time or else they might just enter the Super Eights a bit undercooked in the Caribbean where the pitches will be more spin-friendly.

SQUADS:

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj.

United States: Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones, Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshush Kenjige, Saurabh Nathralvakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangi

Australia face Namibia with an eye on Super Eight; SL in must-win situation against Nepal

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Living up to the favourites tag with two consecutive wins, a confident Australia will aim to secure a Super Eight berth when they face lower-ranked Namibia in their Group B T20 World Cup clash here on Wednesday.

Australia fired in unison to become the first team in this edition of the tournament to score 200-plus runs in a one-sided 36-run win over arch-rivals England in their last group league match.

It was their second win from as many matches, having started off with a 39-run triumph over Oman. Beating Namibia will be enough for them to make the cut before they take on Scotland in their concluding Group B league fixture.

Scotland lead the table with five points and along with Australia, are firmly ahead in the race to make the Super Eight at the expense of defending champions England who have one point from two matches. Their opening game against Scotland was a washout.

Australia defeated Namibia by seven wickets after restricting their opponents to 119/9 in their only T20 meeting, albeit in a warm-up game two weeks back.

Playing his last World Cup for Australia, David Warner has been in splendid form with one half century and it was his 16-ball 39 that set the tone for their 201/7 against England.

Warner incidentally scored a fifty in the warm-up against Namibia as well. He has 97 runs in the tournament at a fine strike rate of 141.79.

Warner's opening partner Travis Head has also been at his explosive best and the duo will look to give the team a fiery start.

Namibia will expect their veteran all-rounder David Wiese to step up after he starred in their Super-Over



win against Oman.

The globe-trotting all-rounder has the experience of facing Australia four times in T20s during his stint with South Africa.

Left-arm spinner Bernard Scholtz, who has been tidy conceding just one four and one six in his eight overs, will also look to make an impact.

TEAMS (FROM)

Australia: Mitchell Marsh (c), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner and Adam Zampa.

Namibia: Gerhard Erasmus (c), Zane Green, Michael Van Lingen, Dylan Leicher, Ruben Trimpelmann, Jack Brassell, Ben Shikongo, Tangeni Lungameni, Niko Davin, JJ Smit, Jan Frylinck, JP Kotze, David Wiese, Bernard Scholtz, Malan Kruger and PD Blignaut.

Match starts: 6am IST.

SL IN MUST WIN CLASH VS NEPAL

Former champion Sri Lanka's campaign has gone terribly haywire after defeats to South Africa and they are now faced with a do-or-die clash against

Nepal in a group D fixture in Lauderdale, Florida. Nepal, on the other hand, lost to the Netherlands by six wickets in their only match so far.

South Africa have already qualified to Super Eight following their nervy win over Bangladesh.

A win for the Wanindu Hasaranga-led side will further heat up the race for the second spot with Bangladesh, Netherlands, and Nepal also in the reckoning. For that to happen, the onus will be on the batters.

A loss, on the other hand, would mean curtains for Sri Lanka.

TEAMS (FROM):

Nepal: Rohit Paudel (c), Aasif Sheikh, Anil Kumar Sah, Kushal Bhurtel, Kushal Malla, Dipendra Singh Airee, Lalit Rajbanshi, Karan KC, Gulshan Jha, Sompal Kami, Pratis GC, Sundeep Jora, Abinash Bohara, Sagar Dhakal and Kamal Singh Airee

Sri Lanka: Wanindu Hasaranga (c), Charith Asalanka, Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya De Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmanth

I am truly sorry: Akmal apologises for inappropriate comments against Arshdeep

PTI ■ LAHORE

A day after being called out for making disrespectful comments against India pacer Arshdeep Singh, former Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Kamran Akmal apologised for his "inappropriate" remarks while analysing the recent T20 World Cup clash between the two sides in New York.

In a viral video, Akmal was seen making fun of Arshdeep's Sikh religion, prompting a furious response from ace Indian cricketer-turned-commentator Harbhajan.

"I deeply regret my recent comments and sincerely apologise to Harbhajan Singh and the Sikh community. My words were inappropriate and disrespectful. I have the utmost respect for Sikhs all over the world and never intended to hurt anyone. I am truly sorry. #Respect #Apology," Akmal



wrote on X, tagging Harbhajan. Akmal's remarks came during the tense penultimate over of the clash, when Pakistan needed 17 runs in the last over in their chase of 120.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep performed the task to perfection, sealing a six-run win over the arch-rivals. Akmal, while

analysing the match on ARY News, made the controversial comments on Arshdeep before he came in to bowl.

"Kuch bhia ho sakta hai... Dekhe last over karna Arshdeep Singh ne hai. Waise uska rhythm nahi laga. 12 baj gaye hai (Anything can happen. The last over will be bowled by Arshdeep Singh; he hasn't looked in a great rhythm. And it is already 12)," he said.

In the video reposted by Harbhajan, Akmal was also seen laughing with other panellists on the show. The Indian off-spinner lashed out at Akmal. "...You should know the history of sikhs before u open ur filthy mouth. We Sikhs saved ur mothers and sisters when they were abducted by invaders, the time invariably was 12 o'clock. Shame on you guys.. Have some Gratitude."

The win at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York put India at the top of Group A with four points from two wins.

Pakistan crush Canada for first win in T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Pakistan batters finally rose to the occasion to beat Canada by seven wickets in their must-win Group A match and give their campaign a boost in the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Opting to bowl, Pakistani bowlers produced a unified show to restrict Canada for a modest 106/7. Chasing, opener Mohammad Rizwan and skipper Babar Azam took Pakistan over the line with 15 balls to spare. Rizwan and Babar shared 63 runs for the second wicket to set up the platform for the win.

Babar made a run-a-ball 33 with one six and a four, while Rizwan once again played the role of an anchor in a small chase, scoring 53 not out from as many deliveries with two

fours and a six.

Pakistan did appear to be making heavy weather of a modest chase when they had crawled to 28 for 1 in the powerplay with the Canadian seamers doing a fine job.

However, run-scoring became much easier when Canada spinners came into the attack and with their vast experience, Babar and Rizwan brought the equation down with deft rotation of the strike and punishing the bad balls.

Earlier in the first half, Aaron Johnson's 52 was the only bright spot for Canada as an inspired Pakistan restricted their opponents to 106 for 7.

On a two-paced wicket with the occasional uneven bounce making the rest of their batters struggle, Johnson waged a lone battle for Canada with a 44-ball 52,

studded with four sixes and as many fours even as the Pakistani bowlers kept chipping away with wickets.

While Mohammad Amir was the pick of the bowlers with 4-0-13-2, Haris Rauf returned with 2/26 while Shaheen Shah Afridi (1/21) and Naseem Shah (1/24) recovered well after wayward starts.

The only Canadian batter to trouble the Pakistan bowlers, Johnson did not shy away from attacking on every available opportunity.

It was his hits down the ground that caught the eye and he managed to clear the ropes with brute power even if he had not timed them well.

But shortly after having completed his half-century, Johnson perished when he missed a Naseem Shah delivery to be cleaned up.



It was not a good call for us: Hridoy on Bangladesh losing 4 leg byes due to DRS rule

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The on-field umpire's decision to adjudge veteran batter Mahmudullah Riyad LBW, which was subsequently overturned in a review, was a bad call that cost Bangladesh the match against South Africa, their young batter Towhid Hridoy has said.

Bangladesh ended at 109/7 while chasing a target of 114 against South Africa. A contentious ICC rule saw them lose four leg bye runs when Mahmudullah was given out leg before by on-field umpire Sam Nogajski off an Otniel Baartman delivery.

The ball had crossed the boundary ropes but it was deemed dead as Mahmudullah opted for DRS and got the decision overturned.

As per ICC rules, no extra runs (leg-byes or byes) can be given if on-field umpire gives a batter out LBW even if the decision is overturned by the third umpire. However, leg-bye runs can be awarded if the on-field umpire's decision of not out stays after a review.

"Actually, to be honest, that wasn't a good call. It was a tight

match. So, I think in my point of view, umpire gave out, but it's bit hard for us because those four runs would have changed the match scenario.

"So, I don't have anything to say about it," Hridoy said when asked about the four runs that Bangladesh didn't get.

The 23-year-old Hridoy, however, chose to side-step the query when asked whether he agrees with the rule.

"See, the rule, what the ICC has done is not in my hands but at that time those four runs were very important for us. I think the umpire has given the call and the umpire can give a call. They are also human beings and they could have made a mistake.

"But we had two-three more wickets which were not given. So, in a match like this, where hardly a run is being made in a low-scoring match, one or two runs are a big factor.

"So, I think those four runs or two wide runs were close calls. Even my out (dismissal) was the umpire's call. So, I think there is room for improvement in these areas. And we have nothing to do with rules that the ICC made."

If you showcase this to world, it is not great selling product: Klaassen on New York pitch

PTI ■ NEW YORK

If the ICC wants to market T20 cricket in the USA, the pitch and outfield at the Nassau County Cricket Ground isn't a "great selling product", South Africa's flamboyant batter Heinrich Klaassen said joining the chorus of criticism against the venue.

The new drop-in pitch at the ground located in the Long Islands has been dual-paced with uneven bounce, making batting very difficult. India and South Africa have been able to defend totals as low as 119 and 113 respectively on back-to-back days on this track.

"Obviously, if you have to showcase it to the world and sell it, I don't think it's a great selling product, but for cricket, it's tight competition. It brings the other teams and the higher teams very close to each other," Klaassen, who scored 46 off 44 balls in team's four-run win said at the post-match

press conference.

The power-hitter said that all premier batters across teams would love to just get out of New York while the bowlers would love to stay put forever.

The ICC has already acknowledged that the pitches here have not played as consistently as was desired.

"I think all the batters are keen to get out of this place, to be fair. The bowlers would love to stay here but - no we've done our job that was the goal to win three out of three here. Obviously, it was a little bit harder than what we thought," he said.

"For us, it's very nerve-wracking, because every game becomes a really big game. There's no easy games for us especially in our group. So, it's still good entertaining cricket. Everyone is on the edge of their seats and any team can beat any team on the down this on this field."

Klaassen was a part of the inaugural edition of Major League Cricket last



year and when asked if he has enjoyed this ICC project of trying to market cricket in a new city with a temporary stadium, his answer was a mixed one. "Yes and No," he said before

elaborately explaining his take.

"I played in Dallas and in North Carolina where I think there's a little bit more cricket there. The wickets (pitches) are better so it's easier to seek cricket in that aspect," he said.

"It's fantastic what they've done with the stadium here and I think as the wicket matures, but obviously I think they're taking it out in two - three days' time so that doesn't help," Klaassen explained.

"The more the wicket matures, the better these conditions will get and I think it will be a better showcase for the people. This wicket is I think, four months old, so there's a lot of maturity that needs to go into the wicket that will produce bigger scores."

Klaassen was an integral part of a very successful Sunrisers Hyderabad batting unit which redefined Powerplay in this year's IPL with the help of an Impact Player and flat batting decks. The towering batter

said that one month is ancient history now.

"Yeah, it's a big change you see scores there - well it was a month and a half ago we were part of a score that's 270-260 so it's well off, but it's part of the game.

"It doesn't look like the Caribbean wickets are too much better. So, we have to play smart cricket and use our cricket brain a little bit more."

He feels that once the Super Eight starts in the West Indies, the par-score will be 160 plus.

"Out of us all, the thing on stats that are out of 18 games, it's only been one score above 200. So normally in the Caribbean, it's about 160 as par. If you get to 160-170, you're in a good shot and you have to bowl well."

"So, I reckon that's normally the good scores there, or power scores. Depending where you play, the wickets are very different around the Caribbean."