



**विकास एवं रोजगारपरक
परियोजनाओं के माध्यम से
प्रगति की नयी ऊंचाइयों की ओर**



नये भारत का नया उत्तर प्रदेश



**खाद कारखाना
गोरखपुर**

लागत ₹8603 करोड़
क्षेत्रफल 600 एकड़

- खेती-किसानी के लिए पर्याप्त खाद की उपलब्धता ● प्रतिदिन 3,850 मीट्रिक टन नीम कोटेड यूरिया एवं 2,200 मीट्रिक टन लिक्विड अमोनिया का उत्पादन ● 20,000 लोगों को प्रत्यक्ष रोजगार ● क्षेत्रीय लोगों के लिए भी रोजगार के नये अवसर

एवं



**अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान
(एम्स), गोरखपुर**

लागत ₹1011 करोड़ | क्षेत्रफल 112 एकड़

- 300 बेड का अस्पताल ● उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार, झारखण्ड व नेपाल के मरीजों को उत्कृष्ट चिकित्सा सुविधाएं ● इलाज के लिए बड़े शहरों पर निर्भरता में कमी होगी ● 14 मॉड्यूलर ऑपरेशन थियेटर ● आयुष ब्लॉक, मेडिकल ब्लॉक एवं नर्सिंग कॉलेज का निर्माण ● सीटी स्कैन, एमआरआई एवं अल्ट्रासाउंड जैसी अन्य आधुनिक चिकित्सा सुविधाएं ● 125 एमबीबीएस की सीटें

तथा



रीजनल मेडिकल रिसर्च सेंटर, गोरखपुर

- वायरस रिसर्च और परीक्षण लैब ● जापानी इंसेफेलाइटिस पर शोध व इसके रोकथाम हेतु उच्च गुणवत्तापूर्ण जांच की सुविधा ● कोविड जांच की सुविधा एवं इसके निदान हेतु रिसर्च फैसिलिटी ● अन्य विषाणुजनित बीमारियों पर शोध

₹10 हजार करोड़ की परियोजनाओं

का

राष्ट्र को समर्पण

नरेन्द्र मोदी

प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा

दिनांक : 7 दिसम्बर, 2021

सोच ईमानदार, काम द्ढमदार

We'll make UP the biggest economy of India: Yogi



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing a function at Baba Kinaram Inter College at Sakaidiha on Sunday

PNS ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government had accelerated the pace of all-round development in the state since it came to office in 2017 and it would make the state the biggest economy of the entire country.

He was addressing a function at Baba Kinaram Inter College at Sakaidiha in trans-Ganga Chandauli district on Sunday. During his visit, Yogi

launched projects worth Rs 30 crore, including inauguration of some projects and laying the foundation stones of others. He also launched the work of renovation and beautification of Baba Keenaram Ashram in Ramgarh.

Making a scathing attack on the Samajwadi Party-led previous government for making the state a mafia raj when even the ministers were protecting and giving patronage to criminals, he said that the BJP-led government in less than five

years had not only accelerated the pace of development but also bulldozed the empires of mafia.

“Communal riots were common during the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress regimes but there has not been a single riot since the BJP came to power,” he said, adding that today the people were celebrating their festivals with all gaiety.

Yogi Adityanath praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not only saving the lives of

the people during the COVID-19 pandemic but also looking after their livelihood by providing free vaccination to all without any bias as the previous governments had shown in all their schemes, and free ration.

Wooing the farmers, the chief minister said that they had brought laurels to Chandauli district by exporting its black rice to many countries.

“Just three years ago, black rice was not produced in the district but today 2,400 farmers are cultivating this variety

‘PM to fulfill dreams of eastern UP’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be offering development projects worth about Rs 10,000 crore to eastern Uttar Pradesh on coming Tuesday.

The prime minister, during his visit to Gorakhpur, will inaugurate the Gorakhpur Fertiliser Factory worth Rs 8,603 crore, the first AIIMS of eastern UP to be built in Gorakhpur at a cost of Rs 1,011 crore and hi-tech lab of Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) at a cost of Rs 36 crore.

Asserting that December 7, 2021 would go down as a Golden Day in the history of Uttar Pradesh's development, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing a press conference in Gorakhpur on Sunday, said, “The arrival of Prime Minister Modi on December 7 in Gorakhpur will fulfill the dreams of eastern Uttar Pradesh, which had been neglected by the failures of the previous governments.”

The inauguration of three big projects by the prime minister is the biggest investment so far in the eastern Uttar Pradesh. The chief minister said that what was impossible for the opposition, Prime Minister Modi had made it possible.

“The prime minister has provided these projects for the welfare of farmers, women, youth and children, and for the uplift of the region in the wider public interest, whereas the opposition considered it to be a vote bank till now,” he

added.

Attacking the previous governments, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the fertiliser factory of the Fertiliser Corporation of India (FCI) was closed in 1990 but no government paid attention to it which not only affected the lives of farmers but the development of the common citizens was also affected. He said after 26 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of a new fertiliser factory in Gorakhpur in 2016.

The prime minister will be dedicating the fertiliser factory of Hindustan Fertilizers and Rasayan Limited to the nation on December 7. It will not only supply fertilisers and chemicals to the farmers on time but will also generate vast employment opportunities.

Castigating the previous governments, the chief minister said that earlier, flood and encephalitis had become the identity of eastern UP because no government paid attention towards the poor and helpless people. “In the last 40 years, over 50,000 children lost their lives due to encephalitis but our government has succeeded in controlling the Japanese Encephalitis by about 75 per cent and death figures by 95 per cent in the past three years,” he said.

Yogi also stated that this fatal disease, which had become a curse for eastern Uttar Pradesh, was today in the final stages of eradication and would soon see complete eradication.

On Tuesday, the prime minister will

also inaugurate the AIIMS in the city where the people will get world class specialist medical facilities.

The chief minister said that for a long time there was no proper system for identification of vector-borne diseases like encephalitis, dengue, etc, due to which the samples were sent to Pune. But now a hi-tech lab has been set up in the BRD Medical College-located RMRC of the Indian Council of Medical Research. He said now advanced research on the viruses causing Encephalitis, black fever, Chikungunya, dengue and COVID-19 would be done here. It is worth mentioning that the foundation stone of the lab was laid by the then Union health minister in 2018 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate it on December 7.

Yogi said that along with eastern Uttar Pradesh, the large population of Bihar and Nepal would also be greatly benefited by the three projects that were going to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that more than Rs 8,600 crore had been spent on the construction of a fertiliser factory that was spread over 600 acres; Rs 1,011 crore on AIIMS built in 112 acres, and Rs 36 crore on the RMRC lab. “These development projects will not only facilitate a large population, but will also provide a great deal of employment. The date of December 7 is going to prove to be an important date for the development of eastern Uttar Pradesh and the entire state,” the chief minister added.

Modi to inaugurate Rs 9,802-cr Saryu Canal Project on December 11

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The stage is set for the inauguration of the Rs 9,802-crore Saryu Canal National Project by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Balrampur district on December 11.

Dubbed to be the biggest canal project of Uttar Pradesh

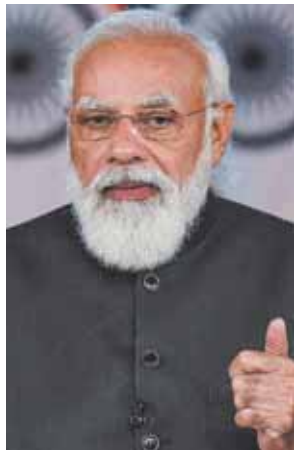
to date, it will benefit 25 lakh farmers in nine districts of Purvanchal region, including Bahraich, Gonda, Shravasti, Balrampur, Basti, Siddharthnagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur and Maharajganj.

It will facilitate irrigation of 14.04 lakh hectares of land and at the same time reduce the risk of floods in several flood-prone areas of the region due to water coming from Nepal.

The project was one of the 99 projects that had been pending for long and which were taken up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for completion. The project, which was started way back in 1971, has been completed due to expeditious handling by the prime minister, said Jai Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh.

An official associated with the Saryu canal section said that all the works related to the project had now been completed and the construction of the railway bridge was also in the final stage.

Five rivers have been connected under this project, including Ghaghra, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga and Rohin while canals with a length of



6,600 kilometres have been linked to the 318 km long main canal.

“This project will solve the problem of floods because of water coming from Nepal. It will reduce the risk of floods in Mahsi, Kaiserganj, Nanpara and Motipur tehsil areas due to water entering the canals,” Mahendra Singh said.

It is worth mentioning here that the state government started this project on a small scale in 1978 for irrigation in two districts at a cost of Rs 78.68 crore. Four years later in 1982, it was expanded to nine districts.

Its name was changed to Saryu Canal National Project and the cost was increased to a whopping Rs 9,802 crore by 2021. Besides, the capacity of the irrigated area was also increased from 3.12 lakh hectares to 14.04 lakh hectares.

An official spokesman claimed that governments came and went, but the project could not be completed until Yogi Adityanath took over as the chief minister of the state in 2017.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took the project seriously and allocated enough budget to complete it, he added.

Saryu canal is built near Girijapuri barrage on Ghaghra river in Bahraich, and will facilitate flow of water to Saryu barrage built on the Saryu river.

Similarly, Rapti canal has been built in Shravasti which will be used for Rapti main canal. Two canals branching out from Saryu main canal will benefit farmers of Basti and Gonda districts. Arrangements have also been made to transport water from Rapti main canal in Shravasti to Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj and Gorakhpur.

Security forces on alert in Mathura

Lucknow (PNS): The temple city of Mathura near Shri Krishna Janmasthan turned into a fortress on the eve of the Ayodhya demolition after some organisation announced to do jalabhishek at the Shri Krishna Janmasthan on Monday.

Central forces, including Rapid Action Force, have been deployed near the Shri Krishna Janmasthan and the adjoining Idgah. An organisation named Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Mukti Dal has announced to march to Mathura on Monday from different parts of the state and offer jalabhishek at the Shri Krishna Janmasthan.

The issue of Mathura turned political after Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya had tweeted that after Kashi and Ayodhya, now people should be ready for Krishna Janmasthan.

Meanwhile in Mathura, on

December 6, vehicles going towards Shri Krishna birth-place and Idgah have been banned, Superintendent of Police (Traffic) in Mathura Harendra Kumar said on Sunday. The traffic restrictions will remain in force from Sunday to Tuesday.

In Mathura district, 2,100 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed around religious places. The residents around Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi were not allowed to leave without investigation. They were allowed to leave only after seeing the Aadhaar card.

According to Superintendent of Police (City) Martand Prakash Singh, security has been divided into two super zones, four zones and eight sectors and those who disturb the atmosphere will be dealt with strictly.

4 injured in firing on RLD leader in Bulandshahr

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Four people were injured when some criminals opened fire on a convoy of Rashtriya Lok Dal leader and former block pramukh Haji Yunus near Bhaipura roundabout under Dehat police station of Bulandshahr district on Sunday.

Police said Haji Yunus was returning from a marriage function in the afternoon when bullets were fired on his two SUVs. Haji Yunus had on Saturday joined RLD after leaving Bahujan Samaj Party.

Yunus had contested assembly elections twice on the ticket of BSP.

Police are investigating the matter. The injured were rushed to the hospital.

जिम्मेदार बनें

यातायात नियमों का पालन करें

सड़क सुरक्षा सप्ताह

06-12 दिसम्बर, 2021

- वाहन चलाते समय हेलमेट/सीट बेल्ट अवश्य पहनें
- तेज रफ़्तार से वाहन न चलाएं
- वाहन चलाते समय मोबाइल पर बात न करें
- नशे में वाहन न चलाएं • बिना लाइसेंस के वाहन न चलाएं
- राँग साइड से वाहन न चलाएं • अपनी लेन में ही वाहन चलाएं
- पार्किंग के नियमों का पालन करें

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पस्विहन आयुक्त कार्यालय, पस्विहन विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

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WOMEN: SIGNIFICANT
OTHER OF HUMANKIND**NATION 10**
INTEL AGENCIES WARN OF
SUICIDE BOMBERS IN INDIA**SPORT 14**
SINDHU SETTLES FOR SILVER IN
BWF WORLD TOUR FINALS

LUCKNOW, MONDAY DECEMBER 6, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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12 VIVACITY

14 civilians killed in Nagaland

**Anti-insurgency op
of Assam Rifles
goes wrong**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOHIAMA

In one of the most serious incidents of violence in the past few years in northeast India, at least 14 civilians and a soldier were killed in Nagaland on Saturday after an Army squad reportedly fired on a mini-bus carrying labourers returning home, after mistaking them for insurgents. The incident took place at Tiru in Mon District of Nagaland. Irrate villagers later ran

amok and in the resultant rioting, a soldier was killed.

Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Sunday promised a high-level probe into the incident and appealed for peace. The State Government constituted a five-member Special Investigation Team (SIT). He was in the national Capital for a meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and rushed back to handle the situation.

The State Government has banned mobile internet and data services as well as bulk SMSs in the district to curb "circulation of inflammatory videos, pictures or text." The incident triggered protests in

some parts of the State with the mobs setting an Assam Rifles camp on fire.

Home Minister Amit Shah in a tweet expressed "deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives. A high-level SIT constituted by the State Government will thoroughly probe this incident to ensure justice to the bereaved families."

Given the nature of the incident, the Army ordered a Court of Inquiry (CoI) and said: "The incident and its aftermath is deeply regretted. The cause of the unfortunate loss of lives is being investigated at the highest level and appropriate action will be taken

as per the course of law. The security forces have suffered severe injuries in the incident including one soldier who succumbed to the injuries."

The Army said that based on credible Intelligence of the likely movement of insurgents, a specific operation was planned to be conducted in the Tiru area.

Reports from the ground indicated that the incident took place when some daily wage labourers were returning home in a pick-up van at about 5 PM.

The security forces reportedly mistook the workers to be insurgents belonging to the Yung Aung faction of the proscribed group NSCN(K). Six

workers were killed in the firing on the spot and two died in the hospital.

When the workers did not reach home till late in the evening, villagers began looking for them. When they came to know of the firing, they surrounded the Army vehicles and set some of them on fire. The Army jawans then reportedly fired in self defence. Six more civilians were killed and a soldier died in the attack by the villagers. The incident triggered protests in some parts of the State on Sunday afternoon as mobs vandalised the offices of the Konyak Union and an Assam Rifles camp.

Continued on Page 4

Omicron spreads its tentacles

**Jaipur sees 9 of
17 new cases in
country; tally
goes up to 21**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The super mutant Omicron, a variant of Covid-19, is spreading fast across the country. As many as 17 new cases were reported on Sunday — Jaipur (9), Pune (7) and Delhi (1) on Sunday — taking the tally to 21 so far.

Delhi on Sunday reported its first case of the Omicron infection. State Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that a man of Indian origin who had come to

Delhi from Tanzania a few days ago and was infected with the Omicron variant. The patient, a resident of Ranchi, had travelled from Tanzania to Doha and from there to Delhi on a Qatar Airways flight on December 2. He stayed in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a week, officials said. The person is "fully vaccinated" and is currently admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital with "mild symptoms", an official said.

Elsewhere, as many as seven people tested positive for Omicron in Maharashtra's Pune district on Sunday. A 44-year-old woman from Lagos, Nigeria, who had come to visit her brother on November 24 in Pimpri-Chinchwad, along with her two daughters, has been found to be

infected with the new variant by the National Institute of Virology, Pune. Her 45-year-old brother and his two daughters aged two and seven, were also found to be infected with Omicron. Additionally, a 47-year-old man, who had recently travelled to Finland, also tested positive for the variant in Pune.

Four of those found positive were fully vaccinated, while the other three are minors, said the officials.

Meanwhile, nine members from a family in Adarsh Nagar in Jaipur tested positive for Omicron after returning from South Africa.

The family of nine recently returned from South Africa. The family members, resident of the Adarsh Nagar area, had tested

Continued on Page 4

Opposition slams Centre, seeks Amit Shah's sacking

**Incident set to
rock Parl today**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Nagaland incident is set to rock Parliament on Monday with the Congress and several Opposition parties on Sunday attacking the Centre over the killing of civilians during an anti-insurgency operation by the Army.

Declaring that they will take up the issue in Parliament, they said the Government must answer what the Home Ministry is doing as "neither civilians nor security personnel are safe in our own land."

Demanding Home Minister Amit Shah's sacking over this crisis, the Opposition parties also announced that the Nagaland issue would be taken up in Parliament on Monday. Reacting to the incident, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "This is heart wrenching. GOI must give a real reply. What exactly is the Home Ministry doing when neither civilians nor security personnel are safe in our own land?"

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee demanded a thorough investigation into the incident which took place in a district along the border with

Myanmar. "Worrisome news from Nagaland. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. I pray for the speedy recovery of those who were injured. We must ensure a thorough probe into the incident and ensure that all victims get justice," Banerjee tweeted.

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi asserted that he will raise the Nagaland civilian killings in the Lok Sabha on Monday. He further demanded that Union Home Minister Amit Shah be sacked. "Shah should not be allowed to resign. Only sacked. I will be giving an Adjournment Motion tomorrow in Lok Sabha," the Lok Sabha MP said. The Nagaland Congress general secretary GK Zhimomi regretted that ultimately, innocent civilians continue to suffer and die.

"Taking advantage of ceasefire & peace talks, different NPGs are busy in tax collection/extortion, while security forces are using Nagaland as retribution ground for what happened in the neighboring State," Zhimomi said in a statement. Head of the Royal Tripura family, Pradyot Manikya, appealed to the Government that laws like AFSPA have to be repealed from the land quickly. "Deeply shocked and saddened hearing about the firing incident and those responsible should be held accountable," he stated.

New Covid testing rules for inbound US, UK travellers

**Passengers must
carry negative
test report or
proof of recovery**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) have made it mandatory for all incoming passengers, including those from India, to carry a negative Covid-19 test report or proof of recovery from the contagion amid the rising number of Omicron cases.

In the US, the new protocol will come into effect from December 6. The UK will implement the measures from December 7.


As per the new amended order, effectively for flights departing to the US from a foreign country at or after 12:01 AM EST (5:01 AM GMT or 10:31 AM IST) on December 6, 2021, passengers are required to show a negative Covid-19 viral test result taken no more than one day before travel. Documentation of a negative SARS-CoV-2 viral test result

from specimen collected no more than one calendar day preceding the passenger's flight to the US or documentation of having recovered from Covid-19 in the past 90 days, before they board their flight.


Air passengers will also be required to confirm in the form of an attestation that the information they present is true. The one-day period is one day before the flight's departure. The order uses a one-day time frame instead of 24 hours to provide more flexibility to the air passenger and aircraft operator.

Continued on Page 4





सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India



75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

Realizing Babasaheb's vision towards social justice

Education and Skill Development

- 5 times increase in central assistance in Post Matric Scholarship scheme for SCs – **4 crore SC students** in 6 years – **Rs. 35534 crore** expenditure.
- **90 lakh SC students** every year get to study free with scholarship schemes – from 9th Class onwards. Free coaching to **3500 students** every year for NEET, JEE, Civil Services and Bank exams.
- **3500 SC students** provided fellowship every year to pursue **MPhil, PhD**.
- **3000 SC students** funded fully for study in top class institutions like **IITs, IIMs**.
- **PM DAKSH** scheme revamped to train and place more than **1 lakh** youth in jobs.
- Under the **Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana**, 820 hostels have been sanctioned for SC students.
- **Over 17000** manual scavengers and dependants covered under skill development training programmes.

Protection

- **Rs. 650 crore** spent for implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
- **Special courts and special police stations** set up for protection.
- In order to provide protection of rights of transgender persons and their welfare, **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019** enacted.
- **Shelter Homes** for destitute transgender persons setup in 12 cities.
- For comprehensive rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of begging, pilot project initiated in the cities of Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Indore, Patna and Lucknow.
- National Help Line for Senior Citizens **14567** has been launched.
- All **58098** eligible manual scavengers provided one time cash assistance of **Rs. 40000 each**, under self employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.

Infrastructure Development

- **1800 SC** majority villages developed as **Adarsh Grams**. Further **19117 villages** have been taken up for holistic development.
- **Since 2018-19**, under phase-II of the scheme, the guidelines of the scheme has been revised to ensure all round development of the selected villages.
- **2000 projects** for sustained economic growth being sanctioned for Schedule Castes.

Economic Development

- Loans of **Rs. 142264 crore** disbursed to the non-corporate, non-farm small, micro enterprises under **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana**.
- **Rs. 28349 crore** sanctioned to SC, ST and women entrepreneurs for setting up a greenfield enterprise under **Stand-up India Scheme**.
- More than **80000 loans** for self employment of SCs from **NSFDC** at a cost of **Rs. 850 crore**.
- Under **Venture Capital Fund** for SCs, funds of **Rs. 459 crore** sanctioned to **149 SC** entrepreneurs.
- Under **Ambedkar Social Inclusion Innovation Mission**, **Rs. 6.90 crore** sanctioned to 23 start up ideas of SC youth entrepreneurs.

“ Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is a Vishwa Manav, who devoted his life in service of the poor and marginalized. Dr. Ambedkar believed in the power of education. His economic vision was unique, with a strong emphasis on welfare of farmer as well as the worker. ”

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister




A Grateful Nation Pays Homage to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his Mahaparinirvan Diwas, 6th December, 2021

All are cordially invited for Floral Tribute

Venue: **Parliament House Lawns** | Time: **9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.** | Entry: **Opposite PTI Building, Sansad Marg, New Delhi**

Venue: **Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, 15 Janpath, New Delhi** | Time: **11:00 A.M.**

COVID - 19 PROTOCOLS

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Akhilesh flays Maurya's 'lungi, cap' statement

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday criticised Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya for his controversial statement on "lungi-wearing people and the cap worn by members of a specific community".

"Keshav Prasad Maurya seems to be referring to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's dress. It's only the beginning and as the election approaches the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders will use more and more intemperate language," Akhilesh Yadav said here on Sunday.

"As far as dress is concerned, the BJP will continue to speak such filthy language. The people of Uttar Pradesh have made up their mind to throw out the BJP government in the 2022 assembly elections. Keshav Prasad Maurya seems to have seen the chief minister's dress (lungi), his outfit up close, that's why he is saying such things. Keshav Maurya's fight is not with the people of the opposition, his fight is with the people inside his party," the SP chief said.

He reiterated that "there will be no yogi government but a 'yogya' (qualified) government in 2022".

He said with the ulterior political motives, the BJP was deliberately creating discord in society and the sole objective of the statements of the BJP leaders in provocative language was to create polarisation of voters ahead of the UP assembly elections.

"If you ask the BJP leaders about the economic devastation suffered by all sections of society due to the pandemic, they have no answer. If you ask



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav flaging off Jan Sandesh Yatra in Lucknow on Sunday

them about unemployment, they have no answer and they are also evasive about the galloping inflation," the SP chief said.

Asked if Hari Shankar Tiwari and his son Vinay Shankar were likely to join the Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh said all those who wanted to join the SP were welcome.

Sources said Hari Shankar Tiwari and his son Vinay, who is the Bahujan Samaj Party MLA from Chillupar assembly constituency in Gorakhpur, recently met Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow and are likely to join the SP soon.

Meanwhile, Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Lok Dal

chief Jayant Chaudhary are expected to share the stage during a joint rally at Dabthuva in Siwalkhas assembly constituency of Meerut district on December 7. A formal announcement of an alliance between the two parties is expected at the rally, for which grand preparations are underway.

The alliance between SP and RLD for the upcoming 2022 Uttar Pradesh assembly election gains importance when it comes to the western part of the state. According to sources, seat sharing between the two parties is almost final.

Leaders of both parties are

now working together for their first joint rally ahead of the announcement of the assembly elections.

SP and RLD leaders claimed that the joint rally will be historic.

The 'bhaichara zindabad' campaign is being run by the RLD in the western part of the state, aiming to bridge the communal gap that widened after the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots.

This rally is being considered important for western UP, as it will also gauge the mood of farmers after the Central government repealed the three controversial farm laws.

APEDA meet to boost exports of agri, processed food products

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

For harnessing agricultural and processed food products' exports potential from the eastern Uttar Pradesh, APEDA (Agriculture Produce Export Development Authority) organised 'Agri-Export Conference-cum-Buyer Seller Meet' at Mirzapur, attended by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Anupriya Patel, and more than 700 farmers, exporters and farmers.

Addressing the conference, Anupriya Patel said that the increase in agricultural and processed food products' exports from Purvanchal would not only boost India's foreign exchange earnings but also help in doubling the income of farmers as well as

boost employment opportunities in the region.

The minister said that the country had set a \$400 billion target for merchandise exports for 2021-22 and \$262 billion of exports had already been achieved during April-November 2021-22 period.

She said that a record export target of \$43 billion had been set for agricultural products in 2021-22 and because of efforts by APEDA and farmers, this target would be achieved in the current fiscal.

APEDA Chairman Dr M Angamuthu spoke about the initiatives taken by the Agriculture Produce Export Development Authority for boosting exports from Purvanchal region.

The event was organized to commemorate the 75th year of

Independence being celebrated with a theme of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

During the conference a memorandum of understanding was signed between leading exporters' association and FPOs of Purvanchal region for increasing agricultural products exports. Export consignments of non-Basmati rice to China and green chillies to the United Arab Emirates were flagged off by Anupriya Patel and Dr Angamuthu.

Senior officials from Uttar Pradesh government, APEDA, International Rice Research Institute, ICAR-India Institute of Vegetable Research and representatives of exporters associations, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and other stakeholders attended the meeting. Farmers mostly

from Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Varanasi, Ghazipur and Chandauli districts attended the conference.

In July, 2021, for promoting agricultural crops exports and adherence to global practices, APEDA in collaboration with FPOs, traders, exporters, agricultural scientists, Uttar Pradesh government and other institutions had organised a meet in Varanasi.

More than 200 farmers from the Varanasi region participated in the meet where agricultural scientists and officials from the leading institutes provided valuable inputs for promoting agricultural products' exports from the region as well as adherence to globally recognised Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) by farmers.

CITYBRIEFS

TRAVEL MART

India Travel Mart (ITM- Lucknow), the B2B travel and tourism showcase & conclave, received overwhelming response from Lucknow, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Aligarh, Bareilly, Jhansi, Mathura, Agra, Delhi and nearby cities. The event concluded on Sunday. A one-to-one interaction session was held between the officials from Jammu and Kashmir Tourism, Madhya Pradesh Tourism and Rajasthan Tourism and travel trade fraternity. During the session and presentations, state tourism officials focussed on the lesser known destinations, wildlife, and places of interest, cuisines, fair and festival of their particular states, customised packages being offered, new innovations being done and other add-ons in the respective states.

BOOK RELEASE

Under Allama Shibli Memorial Helpline, an educational programme was held at Press Club on Sunday. The chief guest was Justice BD Naqvi while the special guests were Athar Nabi and former bureaucrat Anis Ansari. Society's president Noman Azmi focused on edu-



cation. A book by Princess Afsheen Maliki was also released. The author belongs to Royal Family Of Avadh. She has written three books — 'Awadhi Cuisines', 'Hues of Poetry', and 'One-Sided Love'. Her poems have been translated into Russian, Persian, Arabic and Hindi. Afsheen Maliki is a part of International Anthology which was published in America.

SOCIAL OUTREACH

The students of Jaipuria Institute of Management continued the phase-I of the social outreach programme on Sunday with an aim to help the school dropouts and unprivileged students continue with

their online education. As many as 54 teams spread across various residential areas, markets, and metro stations, appealing to the people to donate used phones, tablets, and laptops which will be refurbished by the institute and then given to the unprivileged students of government schools with the help of the department of Basic Education and NGOs. "This initiative is aimed at bringing back those children to the education mainstream who had to drop out of schools due to pandemic and lack of access to digital devices necessary for attending online classes," chairperson of Social Responsibility Committee of Jaipuria Institute of Management Reena Agrawal said.

REQUIREMENT

49 UP Bn NCC, Deoria requires office building for which building should be constructed in 4146 Sq ft. Interested house owner should send his application along with desired fare to the following address

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Tele: 05568-356814, 9415922399

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Woman held in Meerut for eliminating youth having affair with her

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The body of a missing 19-year-old youth, who was in a relationship with a married woman, was recovered from the banks of river Kali in Daurala village near Meerut, police said on Sunday.

Police have arrested the woman and registered a case of murder against her, her husband Brijpal and her second paramour Rajvir, Circle Officer Krishan Kumar said.

Surprisingly, Brijpal committed suicide even before the police recovered the body of the teenager and worked out the case.

Ajay, whose body was recovered in Dadheru village under Charthawal police station in Muzaffarnagar on Saturday, had gone missing on November 13. His brother, Vikrant, had lodged a missing complaint with the police and had alleged foul play by the woman and the two men, Kumar said.

According to the officer, Brijpal nurtured hatred towards Ajay and thus wanted to eliminate him. Brijpal, however, killed himself by consuming poison after Vikrant approached the police.

The woman has confessed to strangulating Ajay to death, the officer said, adding Rajvir, who is also involved in the killing, is absconding.

Meanwhile three men allegedly killed themselves in separate incidents in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts,

police said on Sunday. Of these, two men belonged to Niyamu village in Muzaffarnagar while the third belonged to Kailshikarpur village in Shamli district, police said.

Sachin (25) and Lallu (30), residents of Niyamu under Charthawal police station limits, allegedly hanged themselves from the ceiling fans in their respective houses, police said, adding it was yet to be ascertained whether they were related to each other.

The motive behind the alleged suicides was being investigated, police said.

Dilbahadur Singh (35), a resident of Kailshikarpur village in Garhupukhta police station area, died by consuming poison following a family dispute, police said. His wife Priyanka and their two children were living separately.

The cops registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem. Further investigations are on.

7 more test Omicron positive in Maharashtra

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Seven more cases of Omicron were detected in Maharashtra, as six members of a family that returned from Lagos, Nigeria on November 24 and a man from Pune tested positive for the new Covid-19 variant.

With the seven latest cases, the total number of Omicron positive patients in Maharashtra has gone up to eight. The first case of "Omicron" was detected in the twin township of Kalyan-Dombivli in Thane district where a 33-year-old man - who had arrived from South Africa to Mumbai via Dubai and New

Delhi - tested positive for the Covid-19 variant on Saturday.

Of the latest seven cases, a 44-year-old woman who had come from Lagos, Nigeria on November 24 to meet her brother in Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal area, her two daughters accompanying her, the brother and his two daughters - a total of 6 persons - have tested positive for Omicron variant, according to the report received from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune on Sunday evening.

Additionally, a 47-year-old man from Pune has also tested positive for the Omicron variant, as reported by the National

Chemical Laboratory (NCL). "Thirteen contacts of these three women were traced and tested, and her 45-year-old brother with his daughters, 7 and 1.5 years old, have also tested positive. The Omicron variant has been found in all three contacts," a state health department official said. Three out of the six persons have come from Nigeria, while the rest are their close contacts.

"The Nigerian woman has mild symptoms and other five have no symptoms at all. Out of the six persons, three are under 18 years of age and therefore have not taken any vaccine. The three adults have taken both

doses of vaccine - 2 have taken Covishield and 1 has taken Covaxin. All these patients are being treated at the Jijamata Hospital in Pimpri-Chinchwad and they are stable," the health official said. Giving details of the situation in Pune, a statement issued by the State Health department said: "A patient was found positive for Omicron variant in Pune through routine surveillance. He visited Finland from 18 to November 25 2021. He tested owing to mild fever on 29th November and was found Covid positive. He has taken both doses of Covishield vaccine and he is completely sta-

ble without any symptoms".

Meanwhile, the authorities said the total passengers who arrived at Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur airports since December 1 was 28,221 (4901 from At-risk countries and rest of 23,320), while passengers whose RT-PCR has been done are 5444 (4901 from high-risk countries and 543 were other country. Similarly, RT-PCR same and samples sent for genomic sequencing was (all from high-risk countries). Additionally, field surveillance of all international passengers who have arrived since 1st November is underway.

AAP to take out Tiranga Yatra in Ghaziabad

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aam Aadmi Party will take out Tiranga Yatra in Ghaziabad after holding it in Lucknow, Noida and Ayodhya. AAP state president Sanjay Singh said the Tiranga Yatra launched by AAP will expose the Bharatiya Janata Party's nationalism concept which was a fake one.

He said a mammoth assembly of AAP workers would be seen in the Tiranga Yatra.

Speaking to newsmen, Singh said the people were yet to get freedom from poverty, inflation and corruption even after 75 years of the country's independence.

"In Uttar Pradesh, the people are not able to provide better education to their children because the government-run schools are in a shabby state. Most of the primary schools are in a dilapidated state and there are no teachers to teach. There are several schools which lack benches for children," he said.

Singh said the situation of healthcare was also not good as the government-run hospitals were in a shabby state. "The AAP has launched the Tiranga Yatra across UP to expose the BJP. The Tiranga Yatra will be taken out in Loni assembly constituency in Ghaziabad on December 10. It will be led by Rajya Sabha member and the party's UP incharge Sanjay Singh. The AAP will pledge to ensure 300 units of free electricity, waiver of electricity bills of farmers, better schools and hospitals to people of UP," he said.

AAP state president appealed to the people to take part in the Tiranga Yatra.

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FULLERTON INDIA HOME FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Corporate Office : Floor 5 & 6, B-Wing, Supreme IT Park, Supreme City, Powai, Mumbai-400076.
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DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("the Act") AND THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("the Rules")

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited (FIHFC)** under the Act and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act read with Rule 3 issued Demand Notice(s) under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that borrower(s) is / are avoiding the service of the Demand Notice(s), therefore the service of notice is being effected by affixation and publication as per Rules. The contents of Demand Notice(s) are extracted herein below :-

| Sl. No. | Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrowers / Priority Holders as the case may be | Date of Demand Notice U/s. 13(2) & Total Outstanding |
|---------|---|---|
| 1 | <p>Loan Account No. : 610507510529735</p> <p>I. Amit Mishra, S/o. Hanuman Prasad Mishra 2. Seeta Devi, W/o. Hanuman Prasad Mishra</p> <p>Add. 1 : R/H. No. 25, Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, Naubasta, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh-208 021.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSETS / MORTGAGE PROPERTY :- Private Plot No. 25, Situated at Part of Arazi No. 67 at Naubasta, Kanpur Ngr., Admng. 200 Sq. Yds. Bounded As :- BOUNDARIES :- * North :- Plot No. 27; * South :- 20 Ft. Rd.; * East :- Plot of Ramnath Dixit; * West :- 20 Ft. Rd.</p> | <p>Date : 23.11.2021 & ₹ 36,31,404.77 (Rs. Thirty Six Lakh Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred Four Paise Seventy Seven Only) NPA Date : 31.10.2021</p> |
| 2 | <p>Loan Account No. : 610307210520121</p> <p>1. Raju Yadav, S/o. Kailash Chand 2. Reena Yadav W/o. Raju Yadav</p> <p>Add. 1 : R/House No. 864, Kalindi Vihar, 100 Futa Road, Nr. Khushi Hospital, Agra, Uttar Pradesh-282 006.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF SECURED ASSETS / MORTGAGE PROPERTY :- Plot No. 3 Admeasuring 100 Sq. Yds. Or 83.61 Sq. Mtrs. Having Measurements 20.45 Ft. X 44 Ft., Situated at Part of Kharsa No. 1949 CH. Nagla Rambal, Mauza Naraich, Tehsil : Etmadpur, District Agra, Butted & Bounded As BOUNDARIES :- * East :- Rasta 20 Ft. Wide; * West :- Land Of Other; * North :- Plot No. 2; * South :- Plot No. 4.</p> | <p>Date : 23.11.2021 & ₹ 20,31,808.28 (Rs. Twenty Lakh Thirty One Thousand Eight Hundred Eight Paise Twenty Six Only) NPA Date : 31.10.2021</p> |

The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the Demand Notice(s) and to pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinabove within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, additional interest, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of payment. The borrower(s) may note that **FIHFC** is a secured creditor and the loan facility availed by the Borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property / properties being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s). In the event borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, **FIHFC** shall be entitled to exercise all the rights under section 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the secured asset(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder and realize payment. **FIHFC** is also empowered to **ATTACH AND / OR SEAL** the secured asset(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the Sale of the secured asset(s), **FIHFC** also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the mortgaged properties is insufficient to cover the dues payable to the **FIHFC**. This remedy is in addition and independent of all the other remedies available to **FIHFC** under any other law.

The attention of the borrower(s) is invited to Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets and further to Section 13(3) of the Act, whereby the borrower(s) are restrained / prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the secured asset(s) or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business) any of the secured asset(s), without prior written consent of **FIHFC** and non-compliance with the above is an offence punishable under Section 29 of the said Act. The copy of the Demand Notice is available with the undersigned and the borrower(s) may, if they so desire, can collect the same from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

Place : Kanpur / Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
Date : 04/12/2021

Sd/-
Authorized Officer, **Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited**

14 CIVILIANS...

The police said the autopsy of the 13 people killed was being done and feared that the number of casualties could go up as two to three persons were seriously injured in the firing. They were evacuated to hospitals in Assam while the rest were being treated in Nagaland. Investigations were on to ascertain whether the incident was a case of mistaken identity, sources said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Army chief General MM Naravane were briefed about the incident and current situation, they added. Mon shares a porous International Border with Myanmar, where the Yung Aung faction of NSCN (K) is based. Nagaland Governor Jagdish Mukhi said: "The SIT shall investigate the incident from all angles while a Court of Inquiry has been instituted against the Army personnel involved."

The Chief Minister tweeted: "The unfortunate incident leading to killing of civilians at Oting, Mon, is highly condemnable. Condolences to the bereaved families and speedy recovery of those injured. High-level SIT will investigate

CONTINUEE FROM PAGE 1

and justice delivered as per the law of the land. Appeal for peace from all sections."

In protest against the incident, the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) urged the six tribes of the region to withdraw participation from the ongoing Hornbill Festival, which is the State's biggest tourism extravaganza.

"While expressing deep sorrow and sadness over the indiscriminate firing by Indian security force where more than 10 daily wage laborers from Oting village were blatantly killed, the ENPO vehemently condemn the barbaric act of the security force," a release issued by the organisation said. The ENPO urged the six tribes to hoist black flags in their respective Morungs at the Hornbill Festival venue Naga Heritage Village.

"It has to be understood by all concerned that this order/move is not against the State Govt., but to show resentment against the security forces who have committed this heinous crime, and to show solidarity of the 6 tribes," it said.

Abu Mehta, the advisor to the Chief Minister, said: "Two minutes' silence will be observed and prayers will be held at Kisama for those killed in the incident."

OMICRON SPREADS...

positive for Covid-19 on Friday. Their samples were sent for genome sequencing and the report confirming Omicron infection came on Sunday.

As per a senior medical official, the family had already been admitted to the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS). Five other people who came in contact with the family and were found Covid-19 positive are also being admitted to the RUHS. In the wake of the new Omicron cases, the Rajasthan Government imposed a curfew in the Rohisa area of Nagaur. In the meantime, five passengers, who came from Omicron-affected countries of Africa, were detected Covid positive in Bihar's Gopalganj district on Sunday, and their samples have been sent for genome testing. The new variant of Covid-19 was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on

November 25. As per the WHO, the first known confirmed B.1.1.529 infection was from a specimen collected on November 9 this year. India has added several countries 'at risk' to the list from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in the country, including post-arrival testing for infection.

NEW COVID TESTING...

By using a one-day window, test acceptability does not depend on the time of the flight or the time of day that the test sample was taken, the circular explained. As far as the UK is concerned, the new pre-departure testing requirements will come into effect from December 7, at 4 A.M. All flyers aged 12 or above must take a PCR or LFD Covid-19 test before they travel to England from abroad. The UK has re-introduced compulsory pre-departure tests for all travellers entering the country and added Nigeria to its travel ban 'Red list' amid fears of the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid-19. Under current rules, travellers only needed to self-isolate until they tested negative within two days of arriving into the country.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



CM Yogi Adityanath inspecting Swarved Mahamandir at Umraha in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

CM inspects Swarved temple, holds meeting with BJP leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath, during his one-day visit to the city on Sunday, inspected the Swarved Mahamandir temple at Umraha near Chaubeypur where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit when he will come here to inaugurate his 'dream project' Kashi Vishwanath Corridor (KVC) on December 13. It is expected that after staying here after inaugurating the KVC Project, the PM may go to Umraha next day where he would also participate in the annual function of Vihangam Yoga Samaj at the temple premises. The CM after visiting there saw all the places in the temple and reviewed the

security and other arrangements while talking to the officers present there. He also inspected the site where the PM is proposed to visit.

The CM reached the Swarved Mahamandir premises by helicopter. He was welcomed by Satguru Acharya Swatantrdev Maharaj and Sant Pravara Vigyan Dev Maharaj apart from senior administrative and police officers including District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma. On the occasion, dozens of batuks (Sanskrit students) of Gurukul gave a grand welcome to the CM by making conch shells amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras when the latter landed at a nearby helipad. After this, Yogi reached Swarved Mahamandir Dham, about 300

metres away there and inspected the first floor of Swarved Mahamandir being built at a cost of several crore of rupees. He was impressed to see the craftsmanship on the stone pieces being done by the Rajasthani craftsmen.

Yogi inquired about the grounds, helipad, sitting places, traffic management, security and all other aspects being made there in view of the visit of the PM as it is expected that the programme of Vihangam Yog would be attended by a huge number of followers. Then the CM reached Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and held a meeting with the party officials. During the meeting, he reviewed the preparations being made for the proposed visit of the PM and gave some

necessary directions to the party workers appealing them to make the same a grand success. It is expected that the PM would stay at BLW Officer's Club during the night as it is his favourite destination in his parliamentary constituency.

On the occasion, Union Education Minister and BJP's state election in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, state BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh, Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Minister Ashutosh Tandon, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal, BJP's state general secretary (Organisation) Sunil Bansal, state co-in-charge Sunil Ojha, regional BJP chief Mahesh Chandra Srivastava and many others were also present.

Pradhan launches cleanliness drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and state election in-charge of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday launched the cleanliness drive on the eve of proposed inauguration of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor (KVC) Project on December 13 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Union Minister, along with state BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh, UP Minister for Urban Development Ashutosh Tandon, regional president Mahesh Chandra Srivastava and others inaugurated the drive by making the statue of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel at Maldahiya crossing clean.

Later, carrying brooms in their hands, Pradhan and others swept the roads to mark the inauguration of the drive under which in all the eight assembly constituencies of the district, a massive cleanliness campaign would be launched. Clean India Mission is one of the major programmes launched during the regime of Modi and in his visit to the city in the past, the PM himself had mentioned



Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launching a cleanliness drive in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

how the 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi had expressed his serious concern over seeing the pathetic and unhygienic conditions while offering prayers to Kashi Vishwanath temple in 1916 when he was here to attend the inauguration of Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

During the start of the cleanliness drive, several senior BJP leaders, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, district BJP chief Hansraj Vishwakarma, city president Vidya Sagar Rai and others were present. This drive would continue till December

12 in a big manner by the BJP workers in cooperation with the administration. Even after the inauguration, the cleanliness drive will continue for a month when various programmes will be held under 'Bhavya Kashi, Divya Kashi' campaign to be continued till January 14 next year.

According to the in-charge of the cleanliness campaign programme Vaibhav Kapoor, the drive was launched on four routes after its launching as the Mahila Morcha workers carried out the campaign from the Sardar Patel statue to Subhash

Park (Siga) under Varanasi Cantt assembly constituency. Similarly, the drives were also taken out upto Patel Dharamsala under City North, Chandra Shekhar Azad Park (Lahurabir) and Bhartiya Shiksha Mandir (Englishline) under City South constituency.

Meanwhile, under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) workers took out three tiranga yatras from different localities of the City South assembly constituency in which several educationists, social workers and others were also present.

They were raising slogans of Bharat Mata ki Jai, Vande Mataram etc. According to the city coordinator of the programme Dhairya Vardhan, the first yatra was taken out from Holy Children's Public School at Bhagwanpur Basti and ended at Hari Om Nagar (Samneghat) via Satiyamnagar and Balaji Nagar.

Then a yatra was carried out from Lanka and culminated at Nagwa via Assi and Ravidas Nagar. The last one was taken out from Dhafi which ended at Bachau Veer Baba through Ashok Puram Colony.

Picture postcards on Ganga ghats released

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Department of Posts has issued picture postcards and special cancellation on the famous Ganga ghats of the city. While releasing a picture postcard and issuing a special cancellation by on the 'Ghat of Varanasi' under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' here on Saturday, Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav said that the Indian culture developed from ancient times on the river Ganga and the ghats of Varanasi have world famous spiritual glory as both the festivals of life and death are celebrated here. 'Not only religious and spirituality but also the knowledge and wisdom flows here', he added.

According to him, the picture postcard issued on the ghats of Ganga will give it new dimensions at the national and international level. The programme was organised under the aegis of Prayag Philatelic Society. Speaking on the occa-



PMG KK Yadav, others releasing picture postcards on Ganga ghats in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

sion, secretary of Ganga Seva Nidhi Hanuman Yadav said that the Ganga Aarti, which takes place every evening at Ganga ghats, gives it divinity as the people from all over the world want to be a witness to its beautiful view. Treasurer Ashish Tiwari said that the initiative of the Postal department

and Prayag Philatelic Society is commendable.

Senior Superintendent of Post Offices (Varanasi East) Rajan Rao said that a total of 88 ghats on the banks of the Ganga give it vibrancy. These postcards for Rs 26 will be made available in other bureaux of the country including

Varanasi Philatelic Bureau. Prayag Philatelic Society convener Rahul Ganguly welcomed the guests while Senior Postmaster Chandrashekhar Barua expressed the vote of thanks.

The programme was conducted by Ganesh Gambhir.

Allahabad HC rejects bail plea of former MLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court has rejected the bail application of a former MLA convicted by a lower court for assaulting a person in police lock-up, observing that "nowadays, legislators and political persons consider themselves to be above law... this menace cannot be taken lightly and should be dealt with an iron hand".

The appellant, Hasratulla Shervani, was a sitting member of UP Legislative Assembly when this incident took place on August 30, 2012.

Hearing the appeal filed by Shervani, seeking suspension of sentence and his release on bail during the pendency of an appeal against lower court's conviction order, Justice Mohd Aslam observed, "It was his duty to raise the issue of misuse of law in the Assembly and get it remedied. But instead of it he himself misused the law and took law in his hand and

pressurized the police personnel to adopt third degree and get him lodged in police lock up. This act of the accused amounts to misuse of police machinery, therefore, his act deserves no sympathy instead of condemnation."

The additional district and sessions judge, Kasganj had on August 25, 2021 convicted Shervani and seven others under various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), including the offence of attempt to murder. They were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment of two years with a fine of Rs 1,000 each.

As per the prosecution case, one Shamsad was lodged in police lock-up in connection with a case. On August 30, 2012 at 2 pm, the accused-appellant Shervani, the then MLA along with other persons including his relatives and supporters, went to the police station and instructed the police to beat Shamsad so badly that he

became crippled by foot and hand.

After that, Shervani, armed with rifle and gun along with his supporters, who were armed with sticks, proceeded towards the police lock-up, caught hold of Shamsad's hand from the outside and assaulted him with an intention to kill him by the butt of the rifle. Shamsad could be saved only when then SHO Ram Murti Yadav intervened.

Thereafter, Shamshad lodged an FIR in this connection against the appellant and seven others on September 14, 2012 at police station Dhalana of Kasganj district. It was contended by the counsel for accused-appellants that the informant/injured as well as other eyewitnesses had turned hostile and only two police personnel supported the prosecution.

Opposing the bail plea, the state counsel argued that Shervani was an elected mem-

ber of the Legislative Assembly and had crossed all limits and also obstructed the police in performing their official duties.

At the outset, the court perused the injury report and found that it prima facie supported the contents of the FIR. Therefore, the court opined that in these circumstances and that the injured had turned hostile is of no consequence.

The court in this judgment dated November 12 also noted that it appeared that on the influence of Shervani, the witnesses have turned hostile. The court, however, allowed the bail application of other seven accused-appellants, noting that they had followed the then MLA and the sentence awarded to them will remain suspended during the pendency of the appeal. The court has also listed their appeal against the lower court judgment for a final hearing on January 10, 2022.

Kaushambi to get Indoor stadium, Khelo India Centre for Gymnastics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The neighbouring district of Kaushambi will be given an indoor stadium and the 'Khelo India Centre for Gymnastics'. The announcement was made by Cabinet minister Anurag Thakur, who participated in the closing programme of the sports festival organised under the aegis of Kaushambi Development Council.

The minister said, "We have gifted the district 'Khelo India Centre' and an indoor stadium to play gymnastics".

The minister congratulated the organiser for organising the sports competition and said that the Modi government and Yogi government in UP have done splendid work of taking the state and the country to the highest level.

"The government has done many such works which no government has done in the last 70 years and I am confident that the BJP would again win in the 2022 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh," said Thakur.

He also raised the issue of atrocities done on farmers and said, "No one should forget

how the Congress government under Digvijay Singh or for that matter Sharad Pawar and earlier Congress-led government had opened fired on protesting farmers and here is the BJP government which is providing the enhanced rates of MSP and extending all possible help to the farming fraternity". He also said that during the earlier Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) rule in the state, girls were afraid to come on the streets after sunset and now the girls are here on the sporting field and winning medals.

"SP ke samai mai dange hote the aur BJP ke shashan mai dangal hote hain" (There used to be riots in the society during SP rule and now under the rule of BJP, we have wrestling sports taking place in the sporting arena), said the minister. The cabinet minister presented medals and MP trophies to the winning players.

Earlier, the BJP leaders gave a rousing welcome to the cabinet minister on his arrival. Thakur took the salute of the parade. MP Vinod Sonkar presented a mace to the cabinet minister.

Rahul Gandhi accorded grand welcome in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Former national president of All India Congress Committee Rahul Gandhi arrived in Prayagraj on Sunday and was accorded a grand welcome by Congress leaders at the airport. Gandhi was welcomed under the leadership of

senior Congress leader Pramod Tiwari. He took part in the marriage ceremony of Kamala Nehru Memorial Trust CEO Madhu Chandra. After spending a few hours in Prayagraj, Gandhi left for Varanasi.

Gandhi reached Bamrauli Airport in Prayagraj by a chartered plane at 4 pm on

Sunday. All India Congress Working Council member and senior leader Pramod Tiwari gave a grand welcome to Gandhi.

He grabbed Pramod Tiwari's hand and made him sit in the car with him. From the airport, Rahul reached Swaraj Bhawan, located next

to Anand Bhavan by car. Rahul took rest for sometime at Swaraj Bhawan.

After this, he also attended a wedding at the place of Kamala Nehru Hospital CEO Dr Madhu Chandra's place. After attending the function, Gandhi left for Varanasi at 8.10 pm.

Electrification of Sitamarhi to Raxaul section completed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Kolkata project of Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) Prayagraj, taking forward the target of 100 percent electrification of broad gauge routes by the ambitious plan of the Government of India, has completed the work of the Sitamarhi to Raxaul (79.3 RKM) section, falling in the Samastipur division of East Central Railway.

After completing the electrification work, an important achievement has been achieved by successfully completing the work of CRS inspection here on Saturday.

With the electrification of this section, about 11 mail/passenger trains going from Samastipur to Raxaul via Darbhanga, Sitamarhi will now



run on electric traction. One end of this section is the Raxaul

station, the gateway to Nepal and Bihar and the other end

connects to Samastipur Junction. This electrified section is strategically important from the point of view of increase in traffic, which will lead to more convenience in plying of trains in this section and better utilization of available resources. The cost of electrification of Samastipur-Darbhanga-Sitamarhi-Raxaul rail route is about Rs.253.6 crore. CORE, Prayagraj, is playing an important role in the path of making Indian Railways a Green Rail with zero carbon emissions committed to a clean environment.

Expressing happiness over the achievement of the Kolkata Project, the General Manager, CORE, Yashpal Singh said that all the new projects of CORE are committed to make all broad gauge railways of India fully electrified by 2023.

Four youngsters set out on expedition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Four youngsters — Pramod Das from Kolkata, Ajit Kumar Singh of Ranchi, Rakesh Kumar Pawan of Aurangabad (Bihar) and Manish Mishra of Prayagraj — set out on their Golden Quadrilateral Cycle expedition to cover 6,000 kms in 33 days. The flag off ceremony was organised by Rotary Prayagraj and partnered by Ride Ganges and Prayagraj Pedlars. The

ceremony started with prayers for the success of the rally and for safe returns of the team. Prayers were conducted by Rotary former president Muni Raj. The chief guest was CO City II Santosh Singh.

Speaking on the occasion, Manish Mishra, officer at Accountant General Office, Prayagraj, said that the expedition is in support of the environment and support of differently abled. It is also a campaign to make people aware

that cycling is not only good for health but also for the environment as every time one cycles saves pollution from vehicle emissions.

Santosh Singh said that one should take a vow to at least cover an area in a radius of 3-4 km on cycle rather than on automobiles or two wheelers. This would also contribute to the 'Fit India, Young India' campaign of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Club president Sanjeev Goel added that

Supporting Environment is one of the seven focus areas of Rotary and Rotary Prayagraj is proud to organise the flag off.

Earlier, Bansal welcomed the chief guest and the team on expedition. Muniraj presented Bhagwad Gita to the chief guest and the riders.

The expedition was flagged off in a traditional manner by blowing of conch shells by Muniraj, Siddharth Azad and Sanjeev Goel.

Third Covid wave in India almost certain: IIT-K Prof

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Professor in the department of computer science engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) Dr Manindra Agarwal said, "If the available statistics of the new coronavirus variant, Omicron, is taken into account, it is likely that it would spread in the country and the third wave could set in early months of next year."

Prof Agarwal is a co-founder of the government-backed Sutra model which was used to mathematically project the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic in India.

Asked if the Omicron variant of novel coronavirus was deadlier than the Delta variant and could it bypass natural and vaccine immunity, Dr Agarwal said, "Nothing concrete can be said about this as of now. The indications so far suggest that the Omicron variant of coronavirus spreads faster than the

Delta variant. But, is this variant deadlier than the Delta variant, meaning will more people be needing hospitalisation (due to Omicron), cannot be commented upon now because the data which has emerged from South Africa and some other countries, all those people there infected with Omicron, have mild infection and are not severely infected."

He further said, "Chances are very high that Omicron would spread in our country and since it is known to spread faster than the Delta variant, it would spread. If we believe that it (Omicron) has started to spread, then it could be said that the third wave could set in the early months of next year and reach its peak, around the same time as the assembly elections in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, after which it would gradually subside. But it appears that the third wave

would not be as lethal as the second wave of COVID-19."

On whether Omicron will impact India harder than the Delta variant, Dr Agarwal said, "As per initial reports, it is being believed that Omicron can bypass the immunity developed after getting vaccinated, but this is yet to be substantiated. The symptoms for this infection (Omicron) suggest that it is not able to bypass the natural immunity (the immunity developed in people after they contracted COVID-19) developed in people. If this is true, then it appears that Omicron will not have much impact on the Indian population because almost 80 per cent people in India have developed natural immunity against COVID-19. Other than this, a large population here (India) has got vaccinated. If these two aspects are kept in mind, it seems Omicron won't be able to make much impact on Indian people."

Keeping all statistics in view, it does not appear that there would be high demand for oxygen or hospital beds like it happened during the second wave. The symptoms that we see now suggest that there may not be high demand for oxygen. But, it is important that one should remain extra vigilant. Wear a mask because a mask can prevent a person from getting infected. Those who have not got themselves vaccinated, should take the jab as early as possible. Those who have taken only the first dose, should hurry up and complete their vaccination course, he added.

Prof Agrawal said that a third wave in the country was nearly certain; however, how bad it would get would depend on how the government tackled it. He recommended mild lockdowns (night curfew, restrictions on crowding) to control the spread of the virus and reduce the peak value.

SIT re-probing Kanpur anti-Sikh riots of 1984 identifies 67 accused

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up to reinvestigate the riots in Kanpur after the assassination of former prime minister Indira Gandhi, has identified 67 accused in 11 cases so far.

The SIT has handed over the list of the accused to the government and they would be arrested when the order is received.

It may be recalled that 127 Sikhs were killed in the 1984 riots in Kanpur. During that time, 40 cases were registered in Kanpur under sections relating to murder, robbery and

dacoity. The police had submitted the final report in 29 of these cases. Earlier, the SIT had recorded statements and searched the records by meeting people of the victims' families living in different states. Superintendent of Police (SIT) Balendu Bhushan Singh said that 20 cases with the final report were considered fit for advance consideration and investigation was started, out of which the investigation into 11 cases has been completed.

"In these cases, 146 rioters were marked but 79 of them have already died. In such a situation, the number of rioters who survived has been reduced

to 67. Out of these, 20-22 accused are those who are more than 75 years of age or are suffering from serious diseases," he added.

On the question of their arrest, he said that he had given a report to the government and as soon as permission was given, the process of arrest of the remaining 45 accused would be started.

It may be recalled that the state government had set up a SIT on February 5, 2019 to inquire into the circumstances leading to the deadly riots. The team was set up after the apex court issued a notice to the state government in August

2017 on a petition seeking SIT probe into the riots.

The four-member SIT is headed by retired UP DGP Atul. The other members are retired district judge Subhash Chandra Agarwal and retired additional director (prosecution) Yogeshwar Krishna Srivastava. Balendu Bhushan Singh is its member-secretary.

Recently, the tenure of the SIT had been extended by six months. The SIT had written a letter to the state government seeking extension of its tenure. The SIT has now been given time to complete the investigation and make arrests by May, 2022.

Young couple electrocuted death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a tragic incident, a young couple was electrocuted to death in Randhirpur village under Mangalpur police station of Kanpur Dehat late Saturday night.

According to reports, Golu (23) was married to Vandana (22) about three years ago. Late Saturday night, when Golu woke up to ease himself he touched the iron gate of his house that had come in contact with a live electric wire current and screamed on receiving the electric shock. On hearing his scream, Vandana also woke up and in a bid to rescue her husband, she also came in contact with the electric current.

Hearing noise, family members rushed to spot and separated the live electric wire from the iron gate with the help of a wooden stick. They immediately took the couple to Hawaspur community health centre where doctors pronounced both dead.

The couple had no issue even after three years of their marriage.

Station House Officer CD Yadav said the couple was electrocuted to death.

INAUGURATED: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) inaugurated the premium big bike business vertical -- the Honda BigWing -- in Kanpur at 127/W-1/70, Saket Nagar. Speaking on the inauguration of BigWing in Kanpur, Yadvinder Singh Guleria, director, sales & marketing, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. Said, "Our focus is on expansion of Honda BigWing (Honda's exclusive premium motorcycle network) to deliver a truly differentiated immersive experience closer to customer. Today, we are delighted to inaugurate BigWing in Kanpur. Through this new premium outlet, we aim to take Honda's fun motorcycles closer to customers in Kanpur and bring to them our mid-size range of premium motorcycles."

The differentiated Silver Wings expanded from its first Gurgaon showroom inaugurated in the end of FY 2020 to now over 79 operational touch points across the country.

RS Gaur celebrates birthday with kids

KANPUR (PNS): The aspiring candidate from Raniya assembly constituency, Ravi Singh Gaur, celebrated his birthday with the children of his constituency on Sunday.

He visited the constituency and after cutting the cake with the children, shared moments of joy with them.

On this occasion, he attempted to extend all possible help to the needy and destitute children and expressed his gratitude to all those present there. Kunwar Rajat Ravi Singh Gaur of Durga Lawn, while conveying his birthday greetings, highlighted the works done by Babuji for the welfare of society and taught children to follow his ideals.

Prominent among those present on the occasion were Ajay Tewari, Shiv Baran Singh Chauhan, Raj Kumar Savita, Manoj Verma, Swami Bathgiri, Rakesh Srivastava, Anil Singh, Anuj Nigam, Sunil Nigam, Ram Singh and other dignitaries of the city.

They all wished Ravi Singh Gaur a long life and extended their greetings on his birthday.

MAITHANI HELPS DIVYANGJAN GET HEALTH CARD: Surendra Maithani, the legislator of Govind Nagar assembly constituency, took physically challenged Om Prakash to the e-Shram Card camp organised by him and got his Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Health Card covering treatment up to Rs.5 lakh issued. He delivered the card to Om Prakash and felicitated him with garland at the camp. He also asked him to make people aware and ask them to get their Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Health Card issued from the camp. Maithani said he had organised the e-Shram Card Camp at nine places in Govind Nagar assembly constituency on Sunday where 930 health cards were issued. He appealed to the eligible people to visit the camps as soon as possible to get their health cards issued. During the drive, Sarvesh Katiyar, Pawan Savita, Ashok Singh Dadda were also present.

'Ensure availability of sufficient medicines at wellness centres'

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee was held at the meeting hall of divisional commissioner's office on Saturday which was attended by people's representatives, DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar, CDO Srilaxmi VS and other officials concerned. Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel directed the district horticulture officer make available list of fruits whose farming was being done in the area. She said that effort was on to introduce a kisan rail by which products of the district could be sent at low cost to other districts to make available an attractive market to the farmers so that they could get a reasonable price for their products. The minister directed the CMO to ensure availability of sufficient medicines at wellness centres and publicise about the ambulance equipped with advanced facilities so that people could avail them. Rajya Sabha MP Ram Sakal said to make available list of ongoing works under MGNREGA scheme. About the shifting of toll plaza from Narainpur to Ahraura on Varanasi-Shaktinagar highway the members were informed that the matter was in process. In the meeting progress in all schemes was reviewed and members were of the view that works should be intensified in



the interest of the people. The meeting was also attended by all MLAs, MLC, Zila Panchayat chairman and others. While addressing an agriculture export conference and buyer-seller meet as the chief guest at an auditorium on Jangi Road on Saturday the minister as per the vision of Prime Minister the government was committed to taking all steps to make agriculture a lucrative business. Appreciating Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), which was organising the event, she said the district had the potential to export not only fruits but fresh vegetables too and appealed to farmers to produce such items which could attract foreign markets. Among those who spoke on the occasion were DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar, CDO Srilaxmi VS, progressive agricultural exporters and officials concerned. The vote of thanks was proposed by APEDA chairman Dr M Angamuthu.

'TIRANGA YATRA': In the series of the programmes under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava a 'Tiranga Yatra' was taken out from BLJ ground, Mahuwaria, under the aegis of the city unit of Amrit Mahotsav Samiti on Saturday. After paying respect to the martyrs at Shaheed Udyan the 'yatra' culminated in a public meeting at Mahuwaria. It's main attraction was a 300-metre-long tricolour. Tableaux depicting martyrs and portrait of Bharat Mata mesmerised the people. The speakers said through such programmes youth and the new generation are getting aware about the heroes of freedom struggle. Among those who took part in the 'yatra' were UP Minister of State for Energy Rama Shankar Singh Patel, MLAs, Ratnakar Mishra and Shuchismita Maurya Chairman NPP Mirzapur Manoj Jaiswal, NPP former chairman Rajakumari Khatri, Bhupendra Singh, Manoj Srivastava, Ravi Sahu, Sandhya Tiwari and others.

Ajit Singh hogs limelight

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

In the third match of the Inter-departmental Cricket Tournament organised under the aegis of North Eastern Railway Sports Association (NERSA) at Railway cricket ground here, the Operating



department on Saturday by registering victory by four runs entered the next round. The third match was played between the Operating depart-

ment and the Electrical department. Batting first after winning the toss, the Operating department scored 141 runs in the allotted 20 overs for the loss of six wickets. In this score Alamdar contributed 52 runs from 42 balls with the help of six fours, Prem Shahi 16 runs

and D Rama Rao 21 runs took two wickets each and Bhupendra and Manish Srivastava got one wicket each. Chasing the target of 142 runs, the Electrical department could only manage 137 runs in the stipulated 20 overs for the loss of seven wickets. Thus Operating department won the match by four runs. Electrical department's Ajit Singh scored 74 runs with the help of seven fours and one six and Manish scored 19 runs with the help of two fours. No other player could cross the double figure mark. Alok Kumar Singh, Ajit Singh and Nishant of the Operating department while doing excellent bowling picked up two wickets each while Tariq got one wicket. Ajit Singh of the Electrical department was declared the Man of the Match for his spectacular performance in batting as well as bowling.

Painting competition organised

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Under the Energy Conservation National Campaign-2021 of the Ministry of Power, Government of India, a painting competition was organised at NTPC Rihand to increase awareness about energy conservation among children. For organising this competition in Uttar Pradesh NTPC Limited has been entrusted with the task as the nodal agency. The students of Kendriya Vidyalaya, DAV Public School and St Joseph's School of NTPC residential campus participated in the competition. The topic of this competition was — Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav :



Energy Efficient India and Amrit Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Clean Earth. Following the Covid-19 protocol, students enthusiastically participated in this competition. Along with maintaining social distancing at the places where the competition was held, arrangements for masks and sanitisers were also made. It is noteworthy that in this competition, first prize (₹50,000), second prize (₹30,000), third prize (₹20,000) and 10 consolation prizes of ₹7,500 will be given to the winners. NTPC Limited not only produces electricity but also promotes the culture of energy conservation.

DCPO conducts inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Deputy Chief Personnel Officer (DCPO) of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) Shyam Babu inspected the BLW OBC Association office on Friday. After the inspection, the DCPO presented the booklet of the Constitution to the president of the Association, Ram Narayan, and while addressing the newly elected office-bearers in his speech threw light on the Preamble to the Constitution. On the occasion Senior Personnel Officer (SPO) RK Chaudhary while mentioning the work done by the association said that the OBC Association together with the BLW administration is playing a leading role in all the programmes. The association is also making an important contribution in maintaining industrial relations and peace. Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar, who was present in the programme, said GM is very



sensitive towards the BLW employees and all their associations and had directed the BLW administration to ensure at their level that all the facilities provided by the Government of India, Ministry of Railways and National Commission for Backward Classes were provided to BLW OBC Association. During the inspection all the officers expressed satisfaction over the work done by the BLW Association. While conducting the programme general secretary

Hari Shankar Yadav expressed happiness over the cooperative role played by the BLW administration with the OBC Association. Former joint secretary Ramayan Singh Yadav, Arvind Kumar Yadav, Ramji Prasad, Dinesh Pratap, Vivek, Ramesh Kumar Prajapati, Ratan Prabhakar, Raj Kumar Gupta, Suresh Pal, Suryanath Prasad, Ankit Sharma, Pradeep Yadav, Alok Verma, Rituraj Singh Yadav and a large number of association members were present.

Triple murder accused still at large

KANPUR (PNS): The last location of the mobile phone of the accused doctor Sushil Kumar, who is at large after allegedly killing his wife, son and daughter at their flat in Divinity Home Apartments, Indira Nagar, on Friday, was traced to Atal Ghat (Ganga Barrage). 'Keeping in view the possibility of his jumping into the Ganga, searches are being conducted with the help of Jal Police', said the DCP West BBGTS Murti on Sunday. He said "The forensic team took hammer, bedsheet, some white powder and tea from the spot as evidence for analysis. A case of murder has been registered on the complaint of the doctor's brother."

His wife and children to 'liberate them and remove all their troubles in a moment'. In a 10-page note left by him mentioned that he was suffering from an incurable disease and also that Omicron and COVID-19 will not spare anyone. Sushil had also told his brother Dr Sunil Kumar a few days ago that he was suffering from depression and wanted to kill his wife. He had sent a message to his brother at 5.32 pm on Friday asking him to go home. His brother Dr Sunil Kumar immediately reached his house and found the bodies lying in separate rooms. In his message, Sushil had also written "Inform the police, I am in depression and have killed Chandra Prabha, Shikhar and Khushi". During police investigations, it

was revealed that Sushil remained at home till 1.10 pm and the location of his mobile phone was found in Mandhana at 6.30 pm. Station House Officer, Kalyanpur, Ashok Kumar Dubey said "The statement of Dr Sunil and the letters suggest that the accused Sushil was suffering from depression. But, the probe is pointing towards some conspiracy. Questions are also being raised on the intention of Sushil who himself was an expert of forensics, so it is believed the murder was carried out in a planned manner. Had he been really ill, he would most probably have called the police himself after the murders. It seems the entire family was first sedated and then murdered." Police were of the opinion that Sushil hit his wife

several times on the head with a hammer which shows his extreme hatred for her. Investigations were on whether Sushil used to doubt his wife and that is why he carried out the grisly crime. Meanwhile, the staff of Rama Medical College where Sushil worked said his behaviour was normal. Rama Medical College's Principal DN Tripathi said that he had met Sushil two days ago. During conversation it did not seem that he was under any stress. "His behaviour and interactions with everyone have been simple. He never had any rift with anyone in the staff", said the principal. Family sources informed that Sushil had been a student of Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi Memorial Medical College from where he had done MBBS 15 years ago.

‘Birth’ right

The law prohibiting abortion after six weeks of pregnancy questions women’s federal rights

The United States is caught in a raging debate over human rights violations after its Supreme Court backed an unprecedented Texan law that prohibits medical abortion after the first six weeks of pregnancy. The law came into force on September 1. Democrats and liberals say they are stunned that their Supreme Court would support a law that assaults women’s reproductive rights. The issue has snow-balled into a controversy with four Supreme Court justices, including the Chief Justice, dissenting against the 5-4 verdict. Texas is a Republican stronghold and pushed the law through. In a State where the majority of abortions generally happen after the six-week mark, the new law gives a woman barely over a week to detect her pregnancy, consult family and get the abortion done. Doctors admit it is difficult for a woman to know she is pregnant in the time the law allows her. The law is being flayed also because it denies a woman the right to abort even when she is pregnant because of rape or incest. The Republicans have been dismissive saying, with a straight face at that, that they will rid Texas of rapists. The law has determined that the foetus gains a heartbeat at the sixth week of pregnancy. Doctors say the heartbeat sound is created by the cardiac valves which do not exist at six weeks of gestation. However, the most controversial part of the law is that it empowers any private citizen to drag a doctor to court for an abortion after the sixth week and impose a hefty fine. The law explicitly



refuses to consider the woman’s consent as moot.

The Texas law stands out as a glaring example of where the conservative American society is going with laws concerning women. For close to 50 years, American law protected a woman’s federal constitutional right to have an abortion during the first stage of pregnancy. The law also provided that nobody has the authority to regulate such abortion. The Texas law dismisses both laws summarily. What is surprising is that the Supreme Court did not address the constitutionality of the State law before supporting it. The petitioners did raise the matter, but the court said they did not meet the burden to prove their point. It is also without precedent of the apex court deciding such a crucial case without full briefing or argument and after less than 72 hours of thought. That is what the dissenting justices said. The first inadequacy is the apex court backing such a law. The ruling amounts to protecting the Texas law from judicial review until the Supreme Court takes up another petition challenging the law. Secondly, the Supreme Court has to look into the prospect of the Texas law turning ordinary citizens into bounty hunters and making pregnant women subjects of illegal surveillance and possibly, stalking. Is Texas outsourcing the implementation of a questionable law to its citizens? Who but the Supreme Court can protect women’s choice on birth or abortion?

PICTALK



Police use tear gas to disperse demonstrators during a protest in Brussels, Belgium

AP

Clouds in balcony

Efforts to get acquainted with the culture and customs of North-east is in our best interest

It’s like being on that Assam-Meghalaya highway; on your side, you are in one State but take a U-turn and are into the other. No differentiators, weather is the same, temperature is the same, even the people are more or less the same. But somehow the warmth that you get, and need, up in the higher altitudes, is missing. Like the warm embrace of the *ma*, or a sibling, or just a loved one. Like so many other places on earth, the North-east has developed in a major way: in terms of *bhasha*, in terms of inclusivity, in terms of food. From the frontier gateway of Guwahati (the old-timers though these days miss the romance of calling it Gauhati, which mostly remains in the High Court’s name) to the scenic beauty of Meghalaya and the lonely cherubs of Arunachal Pradesh, it’s all there. A feast for the eyes and the hungry soul. But let’s not try to forcibly convince you until after you’ve seen it yourself. Like the gent, Rakesh Sharma, said while offering compassion to a visually impaired child, telling him how the Moon looks: ‘*Ab main kaise bataun; dekh paate toh to batata. ...*’



People are lush with friendly smiles, kids glow with inherent purity, neighbours and acquaintances will follow up with queries about the well-being of your own self and the larger family, including *chachi* and *naani*, and they all offer special warmth during the festive Christmas season; basically get enveloped in the Yuletide spirit, and share it fully with an open, overflowing-with-love heart! Now what we – as an entire nation, because they are reaching out and giving us dollops of love and affection – need to do with utmost urgency is to throw out our limbs and cling on to them, making them feel not as different from the mainstream. They are our brothers, sisters, and friends, after all! We met a few who have been in Assam via Bangalore and Chennai, and even earlier, Frank Anthony’s school in *saadi Dilli*’s Laipat Nagar. So, the theme here should be that the Government’s ‘Look East’ policy is very welcome, but it rather not turn out to be a case of myopia. There are many good things that the rest of India doesn’t know well about the North-east and its habitants and we shall do ourselves a great service if we make sincere efforts to get acquainted with their culture and customs. Let’s keep all our good people on our side, and let’s row the boat with them.

Women: Significant other of humankind



PRAFULL GORADIA

Education, rather than reservation, may well be the key to women’s emancipation and genuine progress as compared to mere tokenism

An Arabic proverb says, “Trust neither a king, nor a horse nor a woman”. Another one questions, “What does a woman have to do with the council of a nation?” A third one says, “Obedience to a woman will have to be repented of” (*Dictionary of Islam* by Thomas Patrick Hughes; Rupa & Co, 1999). Prophet Mohammad improved upon such sentiments. Nevertheless, it is not easy to erase what has been part of a culture for long. As a result, even today, in any matter, if a man happens to be a witness, two women will be required to counter him, according to the Sharia. Which means a woman is half a person compared to a man. But in our sub-continent, we have worshipped *devis* — Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati and many others. As far as I know, the pantheon of no other religion practiced today worships any goddess.

A possible explanation is that Hinduism has intuitively followed nature’s trail of man and woman being indispensable for the perpetuation of the species. Hinduism is not the gift of any prophet, unlike most other faiths. Mostly, religions were founded by men who assigned a subordinate role to the woman.

Intriguingly, foreign faiths that came to India have been influenced by the peculiarity of Hinduism. *Devas* and *Devis* both have to be worshipped, not just the male deities or messiahs. It is possible that other faiths have been deeply influenced or affected through the converts who came into their fold. This possibly explains why Bangladesh has had two women Prime Ministers, Sheikh Hasina Wajed and Begum Khaleda Zia. Pakistan, with comparatively more imported blood, has had only one lady Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. The cultures of both countries allowed their womenfolk to reach the portals of politics, but not into the gates that may lead them to godliness. We can only hope that the era may not be far when this too will come about. A clergyman, I am friendly with, told me that this is very unlikely as it would threaten our god-given faith.

Upon arguing further, the



clergyman was rather obstinate on the issue of women. My contention was that shutting out women means excluding half the population from participating in civilisation’s progress. If the wheel of progress is to move on as well as accelerate, such exclusion would mean the loss of half the people. Having done so, one cannot complain that one’s community is poor and backward. Prof Timur Koran of the Duke University, USA, has dwelt at length on the backwardness of most of West Asia. What embarrasses me is that the community whose princes ruled large tracts of India should now claim to be poor and backward. Some speakers even compare the condition of their community with that of the Dalits.

Uncannily, the USA, the world’s great democracy, has yet to elect a woman president. Only recently has a lady become the Vice-President of America after 240 years of the country’s flourishing. This evokes the question as to whether female backwardness is an Abrahamic flaw and not merely an Islamic fault? The prejudice against women, however, clashes with the current march of time. Women

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have progressed in many fields except perhaps in the realm of power. This is not to suggest that the current Hindu ethos merits unqualified applause. It too needs to lockstep with time and enable its womenfolk to attain and avail of a wider scope, without resorting to the escapism of reservations. Such marking out of seats has been an Indian obsession, which has not really taken anyone forward.

What is perhaps necessary is to create special opportunities for women to get educated. Education, rather than reservation, may well be the key for women’s emancipation and genuine progress as compared to mere tokenism. Especially so if a girl is encouraged in accordance with her aptitude. This lever of learning has not been consciously attempted even for the Dalits.

It is no mere cliché to state that empathy for and acceptance of women as equals in the endeavour of life brings about greater harmony in societies and nations. Setting aside the religious aspect briefly, we cannot overlook the fact that societies and cultures that have traditionally relegated womenfolk to a subordinate position have also been less tol-

erant of ways of life that differ from their own. Historically, this has engendered societal tension, conflict and warfare which humankind is still forced to endure and come to terms with. It is not a coincidence that the most debilitating projects of expansionism, wars and civilisational upheavals emanating from them have come from the western side of the world.

On the other hand, genuine empowerment of womenfolk can achieve not only societal balance but also a civilisational ethos based upon empathy, which are natural feminine attributes. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen’s contention that education and health are the best guarantors of economic development is particularly relevant when it comes to the application of these two very crucial indices for women. It would be no exaggeration to state that the better half of humanity must be really worshipped, for the sake of not only democracy and progress, but for a secure future of human society itself.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ELEPHANTS FACE A MAMMOTH RISK

Sir — The information accessed from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) via the Right to Information Act by activist R Pandiarajan, in wake of the deaths of five elephants in railway accidents at Madukkarai in Tamil Nadu’s Coimbatore district on November 26, and at Jagiroad in Assam’s Morigaon district on November 30, observed that 1160 elephants lost their lives to electrocution, train hits, poaching and poisoning in the last 11 years; it has lent a new urgency to elephant conservation.

The elephant is a fascinating animal; it is a delight to behold; its bigness, its hue and attributes stand out and capture our eyes and imagination. With its thick grey skin, large ears, tusks and a trunk, it is an aesthetically pleasing giant. As per a 2017 count, India has a total of 29,964 wild elephants; it is a small number that should alert us to take steps in real time to save them and create an environment congenial to an increase in the elephant population. Live wire fences and train collisions account for most of the casualties; it should prick our conscience that we are solely responsible for the avoidable deaths of elephants for ‘reasons other than natural causes’.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

ARE WE PREPARED FOR OMICRON?

Sir — Despite the concerns over the detection of a new COVID variant Omicron, mask compliance still remains at the lowest. A latest survey conducted by digital community based platform LocalCircles reported that one in three Indians, say the majority of people in their area, don’t even carry masks with them when stepping out. The Government’s efforts have not proved enough to educate people about the virus, spread awareness about mask compliance and complete vaccination amid growing concerns of the newly emerged variant.

Getting each person’s attention is not an easy task but the Government should adopt different mechanisms. The OTP system for vaccination has achieved its

A life lived large comes to an end



It’s always a daunting challenge to encompass in words the personality and contributions of a man such as veteran TV journalist Vinod Dua, who passed away yesterday. He was arguably one of the country’s most popular and influential news broadcasters, who will be best remembered as the doyen of Indian television journalism. When TV was at a budding stage in India, he worked at Doordarshan and NDTV. His

wife Chinna Dua had succumbed to COVID-19 earlier this year. He was also the host of the highly popular food show ‘*Zaika India Ka*’ for NDTV that saw him exploring distinct food cultures of different cities and towns in India.

For his excellence in journalism, the veteran journalist was honoured with several awards, including India’s fourth highest civilian award Padma Shri by the Government of India. He was also the first electronic media journalist who was awarded the coveted Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award in 1996. The nation is poorer when great personalities like Vinod Dua fade away. He will always be remembered as a towering figure in the world of Indian TV journalism and with his demise, an era ends leaving behind a legacy of excellence. A glorious chapter of Indian TV journalism has come to an end. May you be at peace, Vinod Dua.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

goals. Now, such systems should be replaced by a non-OTP system to achieve 100 per cent vaccination because a significant number of people residing in rural areas don’t have a mobile number linked with their Aadhaar which is mandatory to receive an OTP. The public should realise that it is the need of the hour to think out of the box by supporting the Government’s efforts to combat the new variant. After the horrific consequences followed by the first and second wave of COVID-19, neglecting the new variant is not a wise move at all.

Shivesh Patidar | Ujjain

WEATHER IN GOA IS ACTING DRUNK

Sir — Goa is in the throes of a peculiar weather pattern which threatens to disrupt normal life in all respects. The rather strange phenomenon where the State gets to experience all the three weathers of the year in the course of 20 hours truly merits a discussion in international science forums. The region’s ‘sensational’ climat-

ic upheaval which could be hailed as a tourism ‘attraction’ leads the locals through a pleasant winter in the early hours of the morning, peak summer in the afternoon and light to heavy showers accompanied by thunder and lightning thereafter.

This is precisely what has been happening in the past few days. Suffice to say that the undulating climatic ‘configurations’ have left everyone in a state of utter confusion. However, the erratic weather conditions are indeed a matter of concern. As two of the most pressing issues of the world today — global warming and climate change — have purportedly reached a point where it is almost irreversible. If that in itself is not portentous, the increase in the frequencies of cyclones and other natural disasters is a veiled warning about the dangers in store for mankind in the coming future.

Pachu Menon | Margao

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

What exactly is the Home Ministry doing when neither civilians nor security personnel are safe in our own land?



Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi



President Biden will underscore US’s concerns with Russian military activities on the border with Ukraine.

White House press secretary
—Jen Psaki

I am not a part of any Bollywood camp. I have reached here because of my talent.



Actor
—Kartik Aaryan



England will take confidence from India’s win over Australia at the Gabba earlier this year.

England captain
—Joe Root

It looks like that Mamata Banerjee is contemplating something new excluding the Congress.



Shiv Sena MP
—Sanjay Raut

FIRST COLUMN

HANDLING STRESS OF THE TIMES

A scientific response to the threat is going to take some time and a bit of luck as well



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The 'World International Day of Kindness' has come and gone. The planet has perhaps never needed such a theme for focussed attention as now. Just about everyone is under some kind of stress; personal, social, financial, wellness, travel related and more. The surfacing of Omicron has sent a new wave of fear in a situation showing its first sign of recovery from a pandemic after nearly two years. The regulatory system globally, nationally and state-wise has not always been aligned. Threat perceptions are determining the regulatory system. It multiplies the burden of the individual's response to keeping on the right side of the regulations which often come in suddenly and at times get changed abruptly. The argument for this would be lack of clarity and variegated data on the nature of the threat itself. This, however, does not mitigate the stress burden of the individual or groups that have to respond.



Consider the case of the Omicron threat. As of now there seems to be little consensus on the efficacy of the vaccines to handle it. This is understandable because of the nature of the mutations in the virus continue to be undefined and are still under study. That being so, the line of treatment also becomes a matter of dealing with a situation which in many ways remains undefined.

Omicron has been detected in 38 countries. Predictably, the response has been to tighten the screening system. There is the inevitable option of the administration taking over the monitoring system directly if there is a perceived violation. This could be in the way of taking the suspected person infected with this virus to a government quarantine system. The adequacy of the government quarantine is in many cases open to doubt. Media reports have the description of a couple in a Dutch airport offloaded from the aircraft and sent to a government-monitored quarantine in a tuberculosis cure centre. There was a reported attempt at escape by one of the couple. It was infructuous. What followed is another story. The substantial point is that the overall environment of stress has magnified many times in the last few days and threatens to intensify with passage of time.

Under such circumstances, a scientific response to the threat in all its dimensions is going to take time and perhaps a bit of luck. Scientific breakthroughs cannot always be programmed and it is good when they can happen.

The simple point till then is the practise of the virtue of kindness and understanding. This thought is not new but the practise of it over the years has not intensified. In dealing with another person and in interacting with him, it is important to keep reminded that the other person may be as much under stress as one is oneself. This requires the quality of patience, reasonableness and empathy. The sooner it becomes a two-way street, the less painful would be the response to a totally unprecedented situation which this planet is faced with.

To sum up, therefore, where it is obvious that tracks keep changing and the scientific response is tentative, one has to keep faith alive. Kindness to oneself and the other person has to be the desired underpinning of relationships. Perhaps under such circumstances, urges of consumerism and profiteering may be somewhat kept under control. Several narratives are available on the behaviour of people when pushed to the brink because of COVID-appropriate anxiety. There will be wisdom in trying to control the threats with sensitivity, greater logic and some lead time built into getting to know of the updated regulations.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

Colombo project gives tactical edge to China



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The Hambantota and the Colombo ports can serve as nodal points involving future Chinese military communication and intelligence network systems

In 2014, on his visit to Sri Lanka, China's President Xi Jinping launched the Colombo Port City (CPC) Project worth \$1.4 Billion, second biggest after the Hambantota Project. In February 2021, the cabinet ousted India and Japan from the tripartite agreement and a month later, Sri Lanka awarded a contract to China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) to construct the second phase of Colombo Port's East Container Terminal (ECT) for a lease of 99 years. The Rajapakse administration further approved the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill that established a Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

The most striking feature of the Bill is that it establishes a "Commission" whose geographical jurisdiction extends to the entire 'Area of Authority of the Colombo Port City', thereby giving China the 'right to decline' to any other third country, or to Sri Lanka itself, requests for establishing businesses. It also gave China a freehold over the 'Area' for 99 years as per Clause 67, which explicitly states that the 'permit' cannot be cancelled before the stipulated time or till China wished for it. Thus, any other foreign presence on the port will require a Chinese nod, and even if Sri Lanka objects to any of the Chinese officials or the activities resulting from the agreement, there would be little that the island country would be able to do. Sri Lanka would not be able to oust China if it increases its hostile behaviour against its neighbouring states or Sri Lanka itself. It would not be wrong to say that it will genuinely establish a "Chinese Enclave", a terminology coined by the opposition political parties of Sri Lanka.

The importance of the Project is ascertained from the fact that Colombo ranks among the top 25 busiest container ports of the world and gives access to the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal. The approved Bill thus has international ramifications from a security aspect. Located in India's strategic backyard, CPC gives the PLA-Navy (PLAN) of China a tactical and strategic edge. The presence of China in Hambantota has already raised the threat perception for India and other countries like Australia. The distance between the two ports is approximately 250 nautical miles. The logistical limitation that PLAN had in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) now seems to be done away. The debt trap policies of China aim to disturb the traditional balance of power in the IOR. The dual-use capabilities of the Hambantota port might be an intelligence and surveillance hotspot apart from providing the deep berthing rights to the Chinese submarines. Both the ports are close to Djibouti and create a for Beijing a safety lane for PLAN in times of open hostilities. The dots of its 'ports' can be connected with the Chinese strategic intent of joining them with Chabahar, Gwadar and the Karachi ports, apart from the news of Uganda's airport takeover. China's peacekeeping force in



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT IS ASCERTAINED BY THE FACT THAT COLOMBO RANKS AMONG THE TOP 25 BUSIEST CONTAINER PORTS OF THE WORLD AND GIVES ACCESS TO THE ARABIAN SEA AND THE BAY OF BENGAL. THE PRESENCE OF CHINA IN HAMBANTOTA HAS ALREADY RAISED THE THREAT PERCEPTION FOR INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES, LIKE AUSTRALIA

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



Africa multiplies the magnitude of the problem as they can be immediately called upon to participate in case of conflict. In this way, China is an active threat to the critical choke points of world trade.

In the Eastern sector of the IOR, China has overcome its 'Malacca Dilemma' through its presence in Myanmar, and its naval presence in the Coco and the Greater Coco islands and Thailand's. The strategic experts well understand the use of canals for military purposes. China has militarised the IOR by disturbing the 'zone of peace', which India has focused on since 1947. The Hambantota and the Colombo ports can serve as nodal points involving future Chinese military communication and intelligence network system.

Apart from the port acquisitions, China simultaneously internally balanced itself, which is evident through its Science of Military Strategy (2013) had spoken of local wars and then rapidly shifted to prioritising an enhancement of its capabilities for 'system warfare' (2015). The warfare encompasses overall strengthening of its reconnaissance, early-warning and command and control systems apart from the rapid development of medium and long-range precision strike capabilities through land, air and sea joint operations. Accordingly, what we see today is the culmination of its strategy in initiating battles in the enemy land (Galwan) and heightened vertical proliferation of its precision strike capabilities (hypersonic missiles and quantum increase of missiles).

Nevertheless, China has also made critical technologies available to Pakistan (horizontal proliferation).

Apart from the doctrinal incorporations at a tactical level, to confuse its enemies, the ports of OBOR provide China with a camouflage wherein anything ranging from critical arms such as conventional missiles to its military personnel can be hidden to 'act' at a suitable time. The military build-up in these ports can be used for deception purposes to hide its 'intent and area of action'. The intelligence agencies need to keep a stern watch over what military facilities are placed in the Sri Lankan ports apart from the LAC. Indian ministries of foreign affairs and defence should not miss the rising sentiments against India and Japan in Sri Lanka. The ports of Karachi and Gwadar are feasible options for China, but the Sri Lankan ports will serve as the nodal points of its future military actions given their strategic position in the IOR. Further, the ports are a gateway to the European shipping lanes. A new war theatre near the southern coastal states of India thus seems to be rapidly building up.

However, most actions have a flip side too. The political resolve of AUKUS to restrict Chinese hegemonic designs against India and Australia exposes China to immense vulnerabilities. Whether the Chinese supply chains use the Malacca Straits or the Kyaukphyu port, they have to pass through the Southern IOR and cannot solely depend upon the CPEC which lends Beijing to the mercy of the Taliban in the vicinity. The military dependence

on these ports, especially at Hambantota as a 'stocking point' of Chinese military assets, can cost Beijing significant disadvantages in a short "local war" or a few hours of tension build-up.

The democratic nations have already been vocal about ensuring a free passage of the IOR in other critical international waters such as the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. The joint naval drills only display the building resolve against the Chinese hegemony. Multilateral naval presences in batches of two to three nations at different locations on high seas in the Southern IOR and Taiwan Strait can counter the Chinese threat and militarily confuse Beijing. The options of various permutation combinations by the joint armed forces of AUKUS can implement economic and military blockages in case of a, first, collusive Sino-Pak threat to India, second, military actions to usurp Taiwan. It is possible that the 'game' that China has planned for others, especially India, fails miserably, and it might suffer multiple losses.

For this reason, Xi had stated that AUKUS aims to "stifle China in its Asian areas of influence". His statement was followed by Qi Zhenhong, the Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka, reiterating that AUKUS would endanger Sri Lankan security. The previous week, the Chinese Envoy Wang Qun bitterly criticised the deal and stated it jeopardised the 'post-war international security order. Perhaps it becomes easy to understand who is at more risk — China or Sri Lanka.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I ADDRESSED THE ISSUES OF TEACHERS IN DELHI AND WILL RESOLVE ISSUES IN PUNJAB AS WELL.
—DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
ARVIND KEJRIWAL



THE AAP PROMISED TO REGULARISE CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS AND GIVE THEM EQUAL WAGES, BUT MADE IT WORSE BY HAVING GUEST TEACHERS.
—PUNJAB CONGRESS CHIEF
NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU

The creeping-in tendency of global capital

The manner in which global finance sought to creep into the power sector through reforms should be a warning for the farmer community

Finally, the central government repealed the three contentious farm laws buckling under pressure from a sustained peaceful movement of farmers. The victory of the farmers makes us to reflect on the linkage between public resistance and policy makers' response. Whether the central government is honest in its commitment to the farming community is the core question.

Though the net outcome partially meets the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) demands, the government failed to present a reasoning why it initially thought the farm laws would enhance the living conditions of the farmers and why it backed out from that stand. In the whole exercise, the Union Minister for



VEERAIYAH KONDURI

(The writer is an independent researcher and runs Mana Manchi Pustakam Youtube Channel. The views expressed are personal.)

Agriculture is nowhere visible. When the three acts were passed, several commentators from government and autonomous think tanks seriously defended the government. But such voices are missing when the laws were repealed. At the time of passing the repeal bills, surprisingly, the government was not inclined to debate them clause by clause. All in all, the time spent on Farm Laws Repeal Bill 2021 in Lok Sabha was a mere two minutes; eight minutes in the Rajya Sabha.

The statement of objects and reasons mentioned in the Farm Laws Repeal bill curiously sticks to the euphemism that only a group of farmers were protesting against these laws. This clearly indicates the fact that nothing has changed in



the government's perception about the year-long peaceful agitation and the demands of the farmers cutting across the political spectrum. Through the repeal bill, the government tried its best to miscommunicate when it said: "These enactments were made for the overall socio-economic develop-

ment of the farmers and rural sector after extensive consultations with various stakeholders following the felt need and demand of the farmers' organisations, suggestions and recommendations of the experts, professionals, agricultural economists, expert committees over the years." This is exactly contrary to the argument of the SKM which alleged that the government seldom consulted any one of them.

There are several other justifications the government tried to put forward in the repeal bill that we cannot find in the Prime Minister's address to the nation on Guru Purab day. That is because it does not want to expose itself before the global investor community for buckling under pressure.

The government's dishonesty was evident when it used the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to substantiate backtracking on the farm bills.

The above facts clearly bring us back to the tendency of global finance capital that tries until it succeeds in its ventures. The creeping-in nature is the most dominant form of international finance capital's maneuvering capacities. To buttress this impending danger, we should recollect what had happened to power sector reforms as a whole.

The deregulation and privatization of power sector was prescribed to India by Fund-Bank think tanks two decades ago. They found their brand ambassador in Chandrababu Naidu who wanted to be a pioneer of reforms at the state

level and often at national level. After resuming power, he immediately resorted to unbundling of the power sector in the then Andhra Pradesh. He had to encounter a sustainable resistance from the Left as well as government employees. The subsequent agitation culminated in the then Telugu Desam government letting loose police action in which five people died. Following that movement, the power sector reforms failed to pick speed like the proponents of globalization wanted to and neither Telugu Desam nor Chandrababu Naidu were successful in retaining the public trust. And this was the agitation that catapulted the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy to power and played a solid role in mopping up numbers for

Congress during the UPA years.

Despite the heroic struggle of the people of Andhra Pradesh, the international finance capital crept into the power sector slowly but steadily, charting out the progressive reforms at its own pace by co-opting government after government. Now, it is struggling to push through complete privatization of distribution which is being met with stiff resistance.

The two-and-a-half-decade experience with power sector reforms compels any keen observer of the reform path in India and warn the farming community about the creeping tendency. This is further buttressed by the government through what it states in repeal bill.

Media losing credibility: Parliamentary panel

Reflected in paid news, fake news, TRPs’ manipulation, media trials, sensationalism, says Tharoor-led panel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary standing committee on Communications and Information Technology has expressed concern that the media is gradually losing its credibility and integrity, which is reflected in the form of paid news, fake news, TRPs’ manipulation, media trials, sensationalism and biased reporting.

In its 27th report on ‘Ethical Standards in Media Coverage’, the panel, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, said that it is a matter of grave concern that media which was once the most trusted weapon in the hands of the citizenry in our democracy and acted as trustees of the public interest is gradually losing its credibility and integrity where values and morality are being compro-



mised.

“Rampant instances of violations of code of conduct of ethics by the media reflected in the form of paid news, fake news, TRPs manipulation, media trials, sensationalism, biased reporting, etc. have placed a big question mark on its credibility in the minds of people which is not a good sign for the healthy democracy,”

the report said.

On the television audience mechanism in the form of television rating points (TRP) the Committee also observed that the present TRP system is heavily biased towards urban areas and there is a need to change the system of measurement by giving equal weightage to rural and semi-urban areas through increasing

the sample size.

The Committee said that the Ministry should study global practices adopted in the TRP system including the possibility of finding a solution to the privacy issues in the STBs through appropriate technical measures such as the use of scramblers to ensure accuracy, confidentiality and transparency within the TRP system. “The Government has constituted a Committee to examine BARC. The Committee desires to examine the report of the BARC inquiry Committee, commissioned by the Government of India. Must be placed before them for examination,” it said.

The committee has also asked the information and broadcasting Ministry to properly define the term “anti-national attitude” used in the

Cable Network Rules, 2014, saying it may be the cause of unnecessary harassment of private channels.

The Committee further said that the term ‘anti-national attitude’ has, however, not been separately defined in the programme code enumerated in the CTN Rules, 1994. The Ministry has justified that ‘anti-national’ is commonly understood as opposed to national interests or nationalism.

There are a total of 1,44,893 newspapers/ periodicals which have been registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), 926 permitted satellite television channels (with 387 channels being under News and current affairs category and 539 being under non-News and current affairs category), 36 Doordarshan channels with 2 News and 34 non-

News channels, 495 All India Radio FM radio stations and 384 private FM radio stations. The Committee finds that in addition to the above, social media platforms, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc. have placed journalism in the hands of the citizens. Citizens use their personal recording devices including cell phones to capture events and post them on the internet.

Though, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) does not have a record of the number of internet websites in India, according to a popular site ‘Internetlivestats.com’, there are at present more than 150 crores websites across the world and it is expected that around 20 crores out of these are active websites across the world.

Intel agencies warn of suicide bombers in India

9 JeM terrorists have sneaked in to bolster outfit’s ops in J&K

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistani terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) recently infiltrated two groups of highly trained suicide attackers into India, Intelligence agencies have warned.

While one group sneaked in from Shakargah area of Pakistan (bordering Indian Punjab), the other group came in from Pak Poonch area along Jammu

According to the input, the JeM has infiltrated nine terrorists who are “well-trained” and have been sent to bolster the outfit’s terror operations in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

Pakistan Army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) are believed to have plotted the infiltration with inputs suggesting that 3,000 Afghan SIMs have been activated in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. Intelligence agencies have noticed attempts by Pakistan-based groups to rope in Afghan mujahideen to ramp up terror attacks in the Valley.

JeM boss Maulana Masood Azhar and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) chief Hafiz Sayeed have been frequenting Afghanistan to liaise with the ISI-propped Haqqani Network and also to strengthen Jaish bases in Helmand and Kandahar, experts tracking terror networks in the region said.

The ISI has plans to temporarily shift some of its terror sanctuaries from its home bases in Pakistan amid scrutiny from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The shifting is aimed at providing safe havens to global terror masterminds like Sayeed and Azhar, who are on



the radar of global agencies. By shifting them, Pakistan obviously wants to shed its image as a terror-sponsor and avail of international financing to bring its shattered economy on the growth tracks, they said.

The ISI is also working on using the terror proxies like JeM and LeT networks to counter-balance the Taliban regime from acting independently.

Additionally, Islamabad, through its home grown terror groups like JeM and LeT, is seeking to get terrorist financing from illegal drugs trade originating from Afghanistan and patronized by Taliban.

The Pakistan Army-ISI combine along with their terror cohorts are also seeking to direct the Afghan mujahideens to Jammu & Kashmir with the twin agenda of scaling up violence in the valley. Amid the FATF scrutiny and financial mess Islamabad is facing, Jaish and LeT chiefs are avoiding the limelight for some time on Pakistani soil but their terror networks are intact in that country and beyond.

India developing its own anti-drone tech to thwart threat to security: Shah



Jaisalmer: India is developing indigenous anti-drone technology to thwart the growing threat from these devices on the country’s borders and it will soon be made available to the security forces, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion of the 57th Raising Day of the Border Security Force (BSF) in Jaisalmer, Mr Shah said for the Modi government, border security is national security and it is committed to providing the best border guarding technologies in the world to the force.

He noted that it is the first time since 1965, when the BSF was raised, that its Raising Day function is being celebrated at the border.

“A country can prosper and move ahead in the world when it is safe. You ensure the safety of the country... Always remember that by guarding the borders you are ensuring the safety of the country and providing a platform to it globally,” Mr Shah told the BSF personnel.

He said the government will ensure that the world’s best technologies are made available to the BSF.

“It is the commitment of the government. There was a mention of a growing threat from drones. BSF, DRDO and

NSG are trying to develop an anti-drone technology. I have complete faith in our scientists that we will be able to develop an indigenous anti-drone technology soon,” he said.

Mr Shah said since 2014, the Modi government has given special emphasis to border security.

“Wherever there were attempts of incursion on the borders, attack on security forces and CAPFs, we have ensured immediate retaliation.

India has ensured that no one can take our borders or soldiers lightly. The central government under (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ensured a strong retaliation in the form of surgical and air strikes after Uri and Pulwama attacks, respectively. The entire world appreciated this action,” he said.

In order to fill vacancies in the BSF, the government has recruited 50,000 jawans and their training has started, he said.

“The road construction budget for border areas was ₹ 23,000 crore during 2008-14. Between 2014 and 2020, the Modi government increased the budget from ₹ 23,700 crore to ₹ 44,600 crore. This shows the commitment of the Modi government to improve the border area infrastructure,” he said.

PTI

RS shows signs of return to normalcy

PRODUCTIVITY GOES ABOVE 95 PER CENT IN LAST TWO DAYS

NEW DELHI: After several days of the ongoing winter session of Parliament being washed away due to “disruptions and forced adjournments” amid Opposition ruckus, Rajya Sabha showed signs of a return to normal functioning as the productivity remained above 95 per cent on the last two days of the first week of the winter session.

The best productivity of 100 per cent was reported on Friday and 95 per cent on the previous day last week showing signs of a return of the House to normal functioning.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu on Friday met with some opposition leaders and ministers and urged both sides to further discuss their views on the suspension of 12 members of the House in the wake of the Opposition’s demand for its revocation.

During the first week of the current monsoon session, two



Bills-- the Farm Laws Repeal Bill and the Dam Safety Bills-- were passed by the House. As many as 27 Zero Hour and 15 Special Mentions were made in the House. 23 of the listed 67 Starred Questions were orally answered. 8 listed Questions had to be deleted further to suspension members who raised those questions.

Rajya Sabha has taken up the Private Members’ Business for the full scheduled time of

two and half hours on Friday, doing so after one year nine months and 24 days and after 66 sittings. The last time it happened was on February 7, 2020, during the Budget session, the 251st session of the House.

The Upper House has lost 52.30 per cent of the scheduled sitting time during the first week of the ongoing winter session that concluded Friday on account of disruptions and

forced adjournments.

The productivity of the House during the last week has been 47.70 per cent of the scheduled time. However, with the House sitting for 33 minutes beyond the scheduled time on Thursday last, the overall productivity for the first week against the scheduled time has improved to 49.70 per cent.

On Friday last week, 22 Private Members’ Bills were introduced in Rajya Sabha and one was discussed. The introduction of one such bill seeking to amend the Preamble of the Constitution was put on hold.

Private Members’ Business was not scheduled during the 252nd session, the first full session held under Covid protocol. It was dispensed with during the 252nd to take up other business. No business could be transacted during the 254th session on Fridays, meant for Private Members’ Business due to disruptions. **Agencies**

Priyanka scripts end of own kahani; quits Sansad TV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a mark of protest, one of the 12 suspended Rajya Sabha MPs, Priyanka Chaturvedi on Sunday resigned from Sansad TV where she was roped in to host a TV show ‘Meri Kahani’.

In a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, the Shiv Sena MP expressed her wish to step down as the host of ‘Meri Kahani’ following her suspension from the House during the Winter Session of Parliament.

“After my arbitrary suspension, that has totally disre-

garded established Parliamentary norms & rules, to stifle my voice, my party’s voice inside the chamber, I am unwilling to continue taking space on Sansad TV when my primary oath to the constitution is being denied to me,” the Shiv Sena leader wrote.

She and some other MPs, including Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor, were roped in by the Parliament secretariat to host a series of human interest program on Sansad TV.

“That this suspension also chose to disregard my parliamentary track record and my contribution beyond the call of

duty so as to give a platform to women parliamentarians to share their journey, I believe injustice has been done but as it is considered valid in the eyes of the chair, I must respect it,” Priyanka said in her letter to Naidu.

Priyanka Chaturvedi, along with 11 other Members of Parliament, was suspended from the Upper House for alleged unruly conduct towards the end of the monsoon session in August when marshals were called after Opposition members stormed the Well of the House during the passage of the General Insurance Business



(Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021.

Chaturvedi further wrote to Naidu, saying, “It is with great anguish but with a sense of responsibility and having thought through this, I wish to

inform you that I would like to step down as an anchor for Sansad TV’s show ‘Meri Kahani.’”

“I believe it is my duty that when today the highest number of women MPs have been suspended in the recorded history of Rajya Sabha for an entire session for speaking up for the people of this country then I need to speak up for them and stand in solidarity for them. Also, not to forget 12 MPs being suspended for an entire session for their conduct in previous session has never happened in parliament’s history,” she added.

The suspended members comprise six from the Congress, two each from Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena (including Chaturvedi), and one each from CPI and CPM.

Thanking the Sansad TV, the Shiv Sena MP wrote, “I am certain they will also understand the reason for my inability to see the entire commitment of getting women parliamentarians (to) share their story through a platform they truly deserved to have and which helped them share their trials and tribulations to reach the parliament.”

Polysaccharide Ulvan in seaweed may prevent Covid infection: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ulvan, the major water-soluble polysaccharide extracted from the cell wall of green seaweed, an edible marine algae, could help stop Coronavirus from infecting human cells, according to a team of researchers from Tel Aviv University.

“The lack of access to vaccines takes the lives of many victims and even accelerates the creation of new variants,” said TAU’s Prof. Alexander Golberg, who led the study on ulvan that was recently published in PeerJ - a peer-reviewed science journal. “The study is still in its early stages, but we hope that the discovery will be used in the future to develop an accessible and effective drug, preventing infection with the coronavirus.

Golberg and his team have been working with seaweed for the past eight years, looking for different compounds, mainly for the food industry. But he said that during the first lockdown, they started to think about how they could play a role in helping find solutions for the pandemic. Through other research they knew that certain seaweed compounds had antiviral properties and so decided they wanted to evaluate them against Covid.



“Ulvan is extracted from marine algae called Ulva, which is also called ‘sea lettuce’, and is food in places like Japan, New Zealand and Hawaii,” Golberg explained. “It has previously been reported that ulvan is effective against viruses in agriculture and also against some of the human viruses - and when coronavirus arrived, we asked to test its activity.”

They grew Ulva algae, extracted the ulvan from it and sent it to the Southern Research Institute in Alabama. There, the US team built a cellular model to assess the activity of the substance produced in Golberg’s

laboratory.

The cells were exposed to both the coronavirus and to ulvan. It was found that, in the presence of ulvan, the coronavirus did not infect cells.

“In other words,” he said, “ulvan prevents the cells from being infected with coronavirus.”

He noted that the ulvan the team used was actually a mixture of many natural substances and therefore more work is needed to determine specifically which is the one that prevents infection. Additionally, tests need to be done on small animals, monkeys and then, of course, humans.

Amid Omicron scare vaccination crosses 1 crore mark on Sat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid fears of the new Omicron variant of coronavirus, the number of Covid vaccine doses administered in a day crossed one crore on Saturday after more than two months, taking the total jabs given so far to over 127.5 crore.

Senior officials from the Union Health Ministry said that the vaccination has gathered pace in the country over the last one week after South Africa reported the new variant which has been designated as a variant of concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

“India achieves another 1,00,00,000 #COVID19 vaccinations today! With The #HarGharDastak campaign in full swing, the world’s #LargestVaccinationDrive is touching new heights & accomplishing new feats under PM @NarendraModi ji’s leadership,” Union health minister Mansukh Mandviya tweeted.

The daily vaccination tally is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late Saturday night.

According to the government data, 59.32 lakh vaccine

doses on an average were administered per day in November compared to 19.69 lakh doses per day in May this year. Besides, 55.77 lakh doses on an average were administered per day in October, 78.69 lakh in September and 59.29 lakh in August.

Officials said around 84.8 per cent of the adult population in India has been given the first dose of the Covid vaccine, while 50 per cent has received the second dose.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated in the first phase. The vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) started from February 2.

The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions.

The country launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years from April 1.

The government then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be vaccinated from May 1.

Patients with severe Covid develop pronounced scarring of lungs, say researchers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A majority of patients with severe Covid-19 develop unusually pronounced scarring of the lungs, due to misguided immune response, according to a team of researchers led by Charite - Universitätsmedizin in Berlin, in the journal Cell.

They said that macrophages - immune cells which engulf and digest foreign substances - play a central role. In patients with severe COVID-19, damage to the lungs is so severe that the body can no longer absorb sufficient oxygen from the air - a condition known as Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS).

“At the very least, SARS-CoV-2 is a potential trigger for a misguided macrophage response,” explained Prof. Dr. Matthias Selbach, from the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC). “Rather than replicating inside the immune cells, the virus appears to reprogramme them,” he added.

The researchers considered a number of potential causes for this prolonged lung



failure, including a particular type of ARDS, which causes pulmonary scarring leading to tissue thickening and stiffness.

Tissue remodelling of this type (known as fibrosis) had been observed in certain patients relatively early on in the pandemic.

As part of their research, the team used a number of microscopic imaging techniques to study lung tissue from deceased Covid-19 patients.

“Almost all affected patients showed extensive tissue damage. The majority of the alveoli had been destroyed and the alveolar walls showed extensive thickening. We also found ubiquitous deposits of collagen, the main component of scar tissue. All of this is characteristic of severe fibrosis,” said Prof. Dr. Peter Boor, lead at the RWTH Aachen University Medical Center’s

Institute of Pathology.

The reason for this phenomenon was initially unclear.

In patients with Covid-19, respiratory failure typically only develops in week two or three after symptom onset, at a point when viral loads have started to decline.

“This suggests that lung failure is not caused by the uncontrolled viral replication, but by secondary host responses, including those involving the immune system,” explained Prof. Dr. Leif Erik Sander of Charite’s Department of Infectious Diseases and Respiratory Medicine.

The researchers, therefore, analysed the composition and characteristics of immune cells taken from bronchioalveolar lavage and lung tissue samples of severe and deceased COVID patients.

They found that the pronounced accumulation of macrophages is one of the key features in Covid-19 patients who develop respiratory failure.

Using cell cultures, the researchers discovered that SARS-CoV-2 exerts an effect on macrophages which may, in turn, accelerate the process of fibrosis.

IN DAMAGE CONTROL EXERCISE

Pakistan PM calls Lankan President

Imran Khan assures justice to lynched Lankan man

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has assured Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa that there will be no mercy to the mob which lynched Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana over allegations of blasphemy, the President's office here said on Sunday.

Khan telephoned Rajapaksa and said that 113 people have been arrested so far, it said.

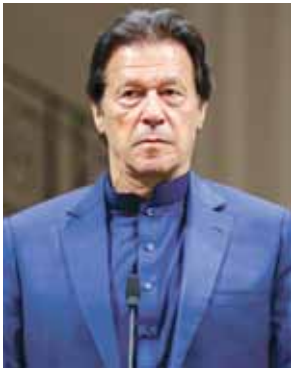
"All the videos and information related to the incident have been

obtained by the Pakistani security forces," a statement from the President's office said.

Prime Minister Khan informed President Rajapaksa that Diyawadana, who had served in Pakistan for a long time, had shown a high level of professionalism as a manager.

In a shocking incident on Friday, angry supporters of the hardline Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Diyawadana, who was in his 40s, before setting his body on fire over allegations of blasphemy.

As pressure mounted on the Pakistani government to bring the guilty to justice, over 800 people have been booked



Peradeniya, is survived by his wife and two children. He left for Pakistan for employment in 2010 and has been working as the manager of the Sialkot factory since 2012.

He was working as the general manager in the Rajko industries (dealing in garments - sportswear) in Sialkot district, some 100 kilometres from Lahore.

Sri Lankan Parliament and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday condemned the lynching and hoped that Prime Minister Khan will keep his commitment to bring all those involved to justice and ensure the safety of the rest of the island nation's expat workers.

'Nearly all bones of victim were broken, 99% body burnt'

PTI ■ LAHORE

Nearly all bones of Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana were broken and his body was 99 per cent burnt in the horrific lynching incident in Pakistan's Punjab province, a media report on Sunday said, citing his post-mortem report.

Angry supporters of the hardline Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked a garment factory on Friday and lynched its general manager Diyawadana, who was in his 40s, before setting his body on fire over alle-

gations of blasphemy.

The post-mortem report of Diyawadana cited skull and jaw fractures as the cause of death, the Geo News reported.

All his vital organs, liver, stomach and one of his kidneys, were affected, while torture marks were visible all over his body and his spinal cord was broken at three different points, the report said.

The post-mortem report of the Sri Lankan national revealed that 99 per cent of his body was burned, and with the exception of one foot, all his bones were broken, it said.

Pak rights activist convicted of espionage; gets RI for 14 years

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani rights and political activist has been convicted of espionage and sentenced to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment, according to a media report on Sunday.

The verdict on Idris Khattak was pronounced this week after the trial concluded in Jhelum.

"Khattak was found guilty of espionage and leaking of sensitive information by a Field General Court Martial (FGCM). He was handed down 14-year rigorous jail term," a security source was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

The source said he was tried under the Pakistan Army Act and Official Secrets Act, 1923. He was accused of providing the sensitive information to a foreign intelligence agency.

Defending his court-martial, the source said that any

individual accused of espionage, whether or not he is a serviceman, can be tried by a FGCM. Khattak has reportedly been shifted to Jhelum district jail for serving the sentence. The source said he could appeal before the appellate tribunal and subsequently before the army chief.

Khattak remained associated with Amnesty International and had investigated enforced disappearances in erstwhile tribal areas and Balochistan.

He was travelling from Islamabad to Peshawar on November 13, 2019, when he was picked by an intelligence agency near Swabi interchange.

After nearly six months of a public campaign by his family and filing of a habeas corpus petition at the Peshawar High Court, the defence ministry on June 16, 2020, admitted that he was in military's custody and had been charged

with treason under the Official Secrets Act.

Khattak's brother later filed a petition with the Peshawar High Court seeking an end to his trial by the military court. The high court, however, on Jan 28, 2021, rejected the appeal.

Meanwhile, three retired military officers were given varying jail sentences by another FGCM in Rawalpindi, reported Dawn.

According to the security source, Lt Col (ret'd) Faiz Rasool was given 14 years rigorous imprisonment, Lt Col (ret'd) Akmal 10 years rigorous imprisonment, and Maj (ret'd) Saifuddin 12 years rigorous imprisonment.

All three officers were also convicted of espionage and leaking sensitive information.

The source said all the three were retired at the time of the commissioning of a crime.

MEA flags 'sharpening of tensions' on territorial issues across Asia

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

The consequences of China's rise and its growing capabilities are "particularly profound", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said as he flagged the "sharpening of tensions" on territorial issues across Asia with Beijing's actions raising a question mark on the agreements of yesteryears.

Speaking at the fifth Indian Ocean Conference — IOC 2021 — in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, Jaishankar also said that in a globalised world, it is vital that the freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce are respected and facilitated.

Noting that a number of developments have taken place that have direct bearing on the well-being of the Indian Ocean region, the minister said that two developments - the chang-

ing American strategic posture and the rise of China - have influenced the evolution of the Indian Ocean in recent years.

"Since 2008, we have witnessed a greater caution in US power projection and an effort to correct its over-extension. It may have taken different forms and be articulated in very different ways. But there is a larger consistency over three Administrations that they themselves may not readily recognise," he said.

"It is expressed in footprint and posture, terms of engagement, extent of involvement and nature of initiatives. Overall, the United States is moving towards greater realism both about itself and the world. It is adjusting to multipolarity and rebalancing and re-examining the balance between its domestic revival and commitments abroad," he said.

GLOBE TROTTER

AVALANCHE IN AUSTRIA KILLS 3, INJURES 2

Berlin: Three skiers have been killed and two injured in an avalanche in central Austria, authorities said Sunday. The victims were part of a group of 11 skiers, eight of whom were hit by a roughly 200-meter (655-foot) wide slab of snow as they ascended a slope during a ski tour on Saturday in the Tweng area, in Salzburg province.

PRINCE WILLIAM OPENS UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

London: Prince William, the second in line to Britain's throne, has opened up about sensitive topics such as coping with mental health pressures during his work as an air ambulance rescue pilot and memories of his late mother Princess Diana.

HUNDREDS MARCH AGAINST COVID CURBS IN BELGIUM

Brussels: Hundreds of people marched through central Brussels on Sunday to protest tightened Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the Belgian government to counter the latest spike in coronavirus cases. Marchers came to protest the measures that were announced Friday, the third week in a row that the government has tightened its rules as the latest surge in cases strains the country's health services, depriving people with other life-threatening diseases.

WOMEN ACTIVISTS CALL FOR MORE RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul: Women's rights activists in the Afghan capital of Kabul insisted Sunday they would continue fighting for their right to education, employment and participation in Afghan political and social life, and said a recent Taliban decree banning forced marriage was not enough to address the issue of women's rights.

LINGDEN ELECTED PREZ OF NEPAL'S PRO-HINDU PARTY

Kathmandu: Nepal's pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) elected Member of Parliament Rajendra Prasad Lingden as its chairman, after incumbent, president Kamal Thapa was defeated at the outfit's General Convention here on Sunday. Lingden, 58, secured 1,844 votes, while Kamal Thapa, 68, secured 1,617 votes. Lingden is the only elected Parliament Member belonging to the RPP.

Time of 'extreme pain' in India: Abhijit Banerjee

ECONOMY BELOW 2019 LEVELS

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

People in India are in "extreme pain" and the economy is still below the 2019 levels, with "small aspirations" of people becoming even smaller now, Nobel laureate economist Abhijit Banerjee has said.

He was virtually addressing students of the Ahmedabad University in Gujarat on Saturday night from the US during the varsity's 11th annual convocation which was also held online.

The economist was sharing his observations from a recent visit to West Bengal.

"You (students) are in a place where you can give back. Society really needs it. We are in a time of extreme pain in India," he said.

"I just spent some time in rural West Bengal and stories you hear about, you know, all the aspirations that have been a little bit dashed are very real...Small aspirations which became smaller now," Banerjee said.

"I think we are in a moment



of great pain. The economy is still well below as against what it was in 2019. We don't know how much below, but it is substantially below. And I am not blaming anybody, I am just saying," said the economist, who won the Nobel Prize along with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer in 2019.

He also urged the students not to succumb to pressure from family or society in choosing their career paths, but have the courage to do what they really want to do in life.

Banerjee also informed the audience that he had spent 10 days in Tihar jail during his student days at

the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi. "When I was about to leave the JNU and go to Harvard, I was in a student demonstration and then I was taken to Tihar jail, and kept there for ten days. When I came out, lot of elders told me that I have ruined my career, and Harvard or the US will never let you in. They thought I should be regretful," he said.

To make his point about choosing careers, Banerjee pointed out that two of India's great filmmakers - Satyajit Ray and Shyam Benegal - were economics graduates but chose to walk a different path.

RBI likely to keep key policy rate unchanged, say experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Amid global scare due to new coronavirus variant Omicron, the RBI is likely to maintain status quo in its upcoming monetary policy and wait for a more opportune time to calibrate benchmark interest rate to promote growth without sacrificing the main objective of containing inflation.

The Reserve Bank Governor-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet during December 6-8, 2021. The decision of the rate setting panel would be announced on Wednesday (December 8). The central bank had kept the benchmark policy rate unchanged in October.

"...We believe the talks of a reverse repo rate hike in the MPC meeting may be premature as RBI has been largely able to narrow the corridor without the noise of rate hikes and ensuing market capch-ony," said an SBI research report.

According to it, the RBI is not

obliged to act on reverse repo rate only in MPC. "Also, change in reverse repo rate is an unconventional policy tool that the RBI has effectively deployed during crisis when it moved to a floor instead of the corridor," it added.

A Kotak Economic Research report said with uncertainty around the new Covid variant, the RBI would possibly wait for some clarity before moving decisively on rates.

"We maintain our call for a reverse repo rate hike in February with the December meeting remaining a close call. We expect the RBI to continue on its path of normalisation with the reverse repo rate hike in February policy and repo rate hike in mid-2022-23," it said.

Property consultant Anarock said there have been expectations that the RBI may raise the reverse repo rate to a nominal extent during the forthcoming monetary policy. "However, it is likely that the RBI will hold on to the current

regime in reaction to the flare-up of Omicron concerns at a time of generalised economic recovery. Therefore, home loan borrowers may enjoy the ongoing low interest rate regime for some more time to come," said Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group.

That said, an increase in repo rates and consequent increase in home loan interest rates is inevitable and will definitely take place in the future, he added.

If the RBI maintains status quo in policy rates on Wednesday, it would be the ninth consecutive time since the rate remains unchanged.

The central bank had last revised the policy rate on May 22, 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rate to a historic low.

The RBI has been asked by the central Government to ensure that the retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Biden, Putin set date for call as Ukraine tensions grow

AP ■ MOSCOW

Presidents Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin will speak in a video call on Tuesday, the White House and Kremlin said, as tensions between the United States and Russia escalate over a Russian troop buildup on the Ukrainian border that's seen as a sign of a potential invasion.

Biden will press U.S. concerns about Russian military activities on the border and "reaffirm the United States' support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Saturday, confirming the planned call after first word came from Moscow.

Putin will come to the call with concerns of his own and intends to express Russia's opposition to any move to admit Ukraine into the NATO military alliance. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "the presidents will decide themselves" how long their talk will last.

The last known call between the leaders was in July, when Biden pressed Putin to rein in Russia-based criminal hacking gangs launching ransomware attacks against the United States. Biden said the U.S. would take

any necessary steps to protect critical infrastructure from such attacks.

Ransomware attacks have continued since then, though perhaps none has been as alarming as the one from May that targeted a major fuel pipeline and resulted in days of gas shortages in parts of the U.S.

Russia is more adamant than ever that the U.S. guarantees that Ukraine will not be admitted to the NATO military alliance. But NATO's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, said this past week that Russia has no say in expansion plans by other countries or the alliance. Numerous former U.S. and NATO diplomats say any such Russian demand to Biden would be a nonstarter.

U.S. intelligence officials, meanwhile, have determined that Russia has massed about 70,000 troops near its border with Ukraine and has begun planning for a possible invasion as soon as early next year, according to a Biden administration official who was not authorized to discuss that finding publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The risks for Putin of going through with such an invasion would be enormous.

No shortage of sanction options if Russia invades Ukraine

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration has plenty of options to make good on its pledge to hit Russia financially if President Vladimir Putin invades Ukraine, from sanctions targeting Putin's associates to cutting Russia off from the financial system that sends money flowing around the world.

The United States and European allies have made no public mention of any plans to respond militarily themselves if Putin sends troops massed along the border into Ukraine, a former Soviet republic with close historical and cultural ties to Russia but now eager to ally with NATO and the West.

Instead, payback could be all about the money.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken this week promised financial pain — "high impact economic measures that we've refrained from taking in the past." President Joe Biden on Friday said the U.S. had developed the "most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. Putin."

The United States over the past decade already has put a range of sanctions in place against Russian entities and individuals, many of them over Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea and its support for armed separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014. U.S. sanctions also have sought to punish Russia for election interference, malicious cyber activities and human rights abuses.

Since 2014, the West also has helped Ukraine build up its military. So while Putin denies any intention of launching an offensive, his troops would face a Ukrainian army much more capable of putting up a fight.

Israel urges hard line against Iran at nuclear talks

AP ■ TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday urged world powers to take a hard line against Iran in negotiations aimed at reviving an international nuclear deal, as his top defense and intelligence officials headed to Washington to discuss the flailing talks. Israel has been watching with concern as powers sit down with Iran in Vienna in hopes of restoring the tattered 2015 deal. Iran last week struck a hard line as talks resumed, suggesting everything discussed in previous rounds of diplomacy could be renegotiated. Continued Iranian advances in its atomic program have further raised the stakes.

The original deal, spearheaded by then-President Barack Obama, gave Iran much-needed relief from crippling economic sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear activities. But then-President Donald Trump, with strong encouragement from Israel, withdrew from the deal in 2018, causing it to unravel.

Indonesian rescuers dig through volcanic ash after 14 people die

AP ■ LUMAJANG

Rescuers were sifting through smoldering debris and thick mud in search of survivors a day after the highest volcano on Java island erupted with fury, killing at least 14 people with searing gas and ash.

Mount Semeru in Lumajang district in East Java province spewed thick columns of ash more than 12,000 meters (40,000 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Saturday triggered by heavy rains. Villages and nearby towns were blanketed and several hamlets buried under tons of mud from volcanic debris.

Authorities warned the thousands of people who fled the volcano's wrath not to



Villagers look at the broken bridge destroyed by the lava flow by the eruption of Mount Semeru in Lumajang district, East Java province, Indonesia on Sunday. AP

return during Sunday's lull in activity. But some were desperate to check on livestock and possessions left behind. In sev-

eral areas, everything — from the thinnest tree branch to couches and chairs inside homes — was caked with ash.



BEST WAY FORWARD

Longer OTT premiere windows signal that theatres will bounce back sooner than later, says ANAND PANDIT. By TEAM VIVA

The veteran producer says pushing OTT premieres by six to eight weeks will boost the business of cinema

Exhibitors can possibly exhale with relief once again with studios showing the willingness to delay OTT premieres after the theatrical release of their films. Veteran producer Anand Pandit whose film *Chehre* enjoyed a theatrical release and an OTT premiere this year, shares, "Longer OTT premiere windows signal that theatres will bounce back sooner than later. Returning to a six to eight week window will boost the business of cinema and I just hope that the sense of normalcy and good cheer we are beginning to see now will gain even more strength in the months to come."

The festive season is usually a very lucrative time for the industry and a wave of hope has rippled across theatres with the success of recent releases and Pandit mentions, "There is no bigger high for a producer than to see his film showcased on the big screen and even for the audience, watching



a film in the theatres is an unmatched experience. Production houses are hoping that the pandemic will be contained even more in time and things will go back to normal as when a film's premiere and its OTT unveiling were spaced sufficiently. This benefited everyone, including the producers, the exhibitors and the audiences who enjoyed a film in two different mediums."

OTT platforms, he says, bailed out the industry during the critical phase of the lockdown and now they can play an equally important role by synergising with the industry creatively and commercially. He adds, "Both industries can help each other to showcase content in a productive way so that every stakeholder feels included. Ideally, a six to eight week window is the best way forward for now."

Anand Pandit's next production is *Thank God*, a comedy headlined by Ajay Devgn, Sidharth Malhotra and Rakul Preet Singh. The film has been written and directed by Indra Kumar and will release in theatres on July 29.

WEBBED



AARYA S2

It follows the journey of a mother combatting the dark world of crime and enemies closing in on her family and children. The key question the trailer of the second season raised is — 'Can Aarya Sareen escape her past, or will her own family betray her, yet again?' *Aarya S2* will premiere on December 10 on Disney+Hotstar.



ENCOUNTER

The movie revolves around a decorated marine who goes on a rescue mission to save his two young sons from a mysterious threat. As their journey takes them in increasingly dangerous directions, the boys will need to leave their childhoods behind. It starts premiering from December 10 on Amazon Prime Video.

QATIL HASEENAON KE NAAM

The serial is set in the timeless lanes of Androon

Sheher — a mythical neighbourhood. It showcases stories of love, lust, power, and redemption woven in a web of betrayal, angst, and revenge. Each story from the anthology depicts the fearlessness of women and their determination to avenge deceit. It starts premiering on Zee5 and Zindagi from December 10.



Tribute to forest warriors

On her 40th birthday, DIA MIRZA pledges 40 lakhs to the bereaved families of India's 'Guardians of the Wild' who died of Covid-19. By TEAM VIVA

On her 40th birthday, Dia Mirza pledges 40 lakhs to the families of forest warriors who died of Covid-19.

The actor will donate a lakh each day over a span of 40 days with the hope that contributors will also do their bit to make a collective difference

The actor, producer, and champion for nature turns 40 on December 9. This year, she is dedicating her special day to the frontline forest warriors who lost their lives during the ongoing pandemic and have pledged 40 lakhs to their families.

In a deeply moving appeal, posted on fundraising platform Milap and on her

social media handles, the star said, "On my birthday this year, I would like to take the opportunity to request all those who may want to send me flowers or gifts to instead make a donation to WTI to help our VanRakshaks. There could be no better birthday gift! Your gift will help support the bereaved families of India's 'Guardians of the Wild' who lost their lives to Covid 19 while protecting our natural heritage."

She added, "Beginning with my 40th birthday on December 9, for the next 40 days, I will donate a lakh each day and hope that you all will (contribute alongside me to the best of your

abilities/match or better that amount) as we seek to maximise our collective impact!"

Mirza further said, "Our guardians of the wild, our van rakshaks risk their lives in service to nature. They often fall to accidents in the toughest of terrain, inclement weather, attacks by wild animals, or poachers. When the second wave of Covid-19 tore through the country leading to nationwide lockdowns, these men and women were out patrolling our country's forests on foot. Between March and June 2021, when most of us stayed at home, India lost more than 500 of these conservation heroes to Covid-19. Most of them were

young, between 30 and 50 years of age, and had committed their life to preserve India's wildlife. The sudden demise of so many young, committed people is not only heart-wrenching but a blow to nature conservation. The least we can do now is to recognise their service and stand in support of the young families they leave behind, who have suffered the biggest blow."

Mirza, also the ambassador of WTI, concluded, "I appeal to you to join me and donate for the cause. Our target is to raise the remaining amount to cover all 65 families and your contribution can bring us closer to our goal."



Sustainability as the way forward

BHUMI PEDNEKAR requested people to be environmentally conscious on World Soil Day. By TEAM VIVA

Bollywood star Bhumi Pednekar has always been a socially conscious citizen and she has started a much-lauded pan India advocacy campaign — Climate Warrior, to raise awareness on environmental conservation and climate change. Climate Warrior is a concerted social media initiative that Bhumi spearheads to highlight the incredible work done by tireless environmental activists and citizen groups across India. She uses her highly engaged social media following to voice concerns about the rapidly changing climatic conditions in the nation. On World Soil Day, Bhumi requested people to look at sustainable living as the only way forward to preserve the planet.

Bhumi expressed, "If we all want to be centred, grounded, patient, we have to form a connection with Mother Earth. I'm blessed that my parents named me Bhumi aka earth aka soil. So, I guess they pre-empted that I would grow up to do my bit for the nature that nourishes us in every way possible."

She added, "We are in a reality where we can't ignore the fact that if we are unsustainable, we can save lives and on World Soil Day, I would nudge everyone to do their bit to learn, educate and practice the art of sustainability. It will save our planet. We've seen the worst happening globally from forest fires, hail storms, cyclones, floods, droughts in the recent past. If we



still do not understand the importance of course correction, we are soon going to reach a point of no return."

Bhumi has become a bigger champion of sustainability ever since she built her terrace garden that now produces fruits and vegetables for the Pednekar family.

She said, "Though I had always felt a deep bond with causes related to nature and environment, I think my connection to what I

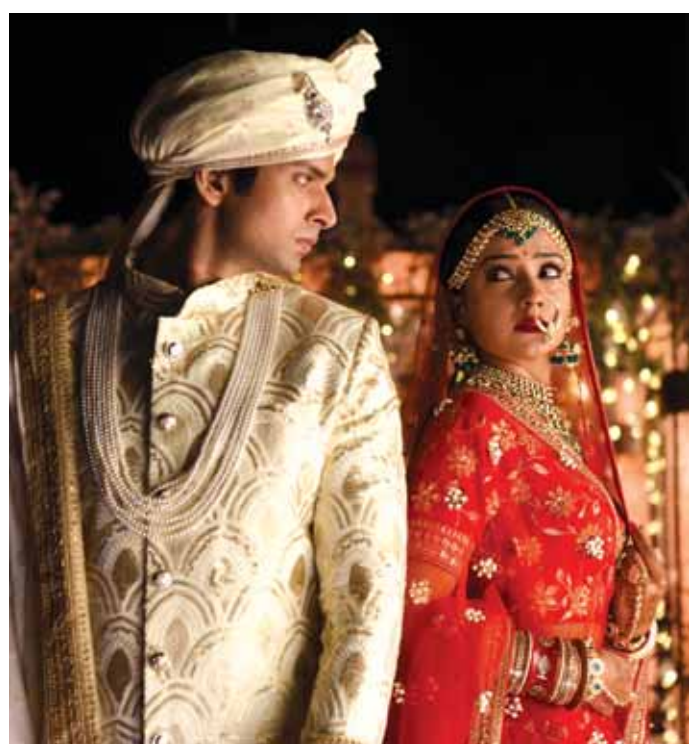
believe in grew stronger when I decided to have a sustainable garden at my home. My mother and I spoke about it at length and we decided that sustainability is the way forward for the Pednekar family. The process of building the right soil that nourishes us today with so many fruits and vegetables made me realise that I must talk about this to everyone and try and urge people to also look at sustainability as the way forward."

Progressing towards better content

HITESH BHARADWAJ and AKSHITA MUDGAI roped in as leads for Zee TV's new show *Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain*. By TEAM VIVA

A channel known for its thought-provoking narratives that question people's mindsets about a variety of subjects relevant to Indian society, Zee TV is back with a story that will make audiences reconsider their approach towards women achieving more than their male counterparts. A woman is often told — 'focus on your marriage, not just your career. If you keep achieving on the career front, it won't be long before your relationship slips out of your hand.' And if the woman in question begins to make significant strides at work and is possibly looked upon as more successful than her husband, she is warned that her success could make him insecure and the marriage itself could fall apart. Such is the conundrum of Paragi Parashar, the female protagonist of *Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain*, who along with her love interest Sanjay Pathak, is preparing for her UPSC exam. While both of them are extremely motivated towards their joint goal of becoming IAS officers, the show captures the dynamics between the two families after Paragi clears her exam with flying colors and Sanjay doesn't.

Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain will feature popular television actress Akshita Mudgai who will be portraying the role of Paragi, a smart, witty, and studious girl. On the other hand, the role of Sanjay will be played by none other than



Hitesh Bharadwaj. Both of them will be seen playing IAS aspirants and the two actors are kicked about being part of such a unique show.

Mudgai shared, "I am very excited to play the role of Paragi in *Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain*. In fact, as soon as I was approached, I felt that

unapologetic about the same, why shouldn't women be accorded similar freedom? Why are women asked to focus on the personal front when they make strides at work and achieve more success than their husbands? Do women not deserve to scale their fullest potential or do we need to curtail our growth to avoid denting the male pride? My character, through her graph, will question some of these age-old thought processes."

Bharadwaj added, "I am very eager to play the part of Sanjay as I see a lot of myself in him. He is a well-mannered, hardworking, respectful young man who believes in equal opportunity for all and how success needs to be merit-linked and earned the hard way. He is extremely supportive of women pursuing their dreams and goals and isn't one to curb their growth. Other than that, his sunny disposition and affable charm are likely to win the hearts of audiences as the story progresses."

While it will be interesting to see Bharadwaj and Mudgai's on-screen chemistry, it will be even more intriguing to know — *patni agar ho pati se ek kadam aage, toh kya toot jaate hain rishton ke dhaage?*

(To know more, tune into *Iss Mod Se Jaate Hain* which premieres on December 6 and airs every Monday to Saturday at 6:30 pm, only on Zee TV.)

TRENDBLAZER



BHOSLE'S 75 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

AMITABH BACHCHAN will be seen giving a heartfelt speech honouring Asha Bhosle's 75 glorious years in the industry in a heart-warming video on *India's Best Dancer 2*.

In the video message, the star said, "Ashaji, on behalf of the entire film industry, I would like to wish the heartiest congratulations to you on completing 75 years in the film industry. We hope that for the next 75 years too, you keep adding joy in our lives with your singing. Ashaji, your singing prowess is Godlike, indeed."

fairtalk

AAKANKSHA SINGH



'During the shoot of the film, I got injured and ended up with a fracture. However, I continued to shoot despite the pain. I used to arrive on set on a wheelchair but never missed a day of work. Big B especially got a buggy for me from his house. He noticed that I was facing difficulty moving around on the wheelchair. Being the gentleman that he is, he also went to the extent to make sure I was okay.'

dailytalk

RAM MADHVANI



'I don't purposely choose female characters to headline my stories. *Neerja* was a women-oriented subject, *Aarya* is also a woman-oriented subject. I don't choose them because they are women oriented, I choose them because I'm interested in the character, in the story, by what I want to say, by the themes and I think in the first season, it was *dharam* instead.'

BALDWIN ON THE DEATH OF HALYNA

Veteran actor ALEC BALDWIN says he would go to any lengths to undo the death of Halyna Hutchins, the cinematographer who died after being shot on the set of *Rust* during an accident.

"I want to make sure that I don't come across like I'm the victim, because we have two victims here. All of what happened that day leading up to this event was precipitated on one idea, and that idea is that Halyna and I had something profound in common. We both assumed the gun was empty, other than those dummy rounds," he shares.





With a splash of red, a hint of black, a deep indigo — Bagh print — made from natural dyes extracted from various plants and vegetables provides a source of livelihood for the people from Bagh village. It also upholds the importance of sustainable art.

The renowned traditional Indian handicraft is believed to be over 1,000 years old and is an important source of rural livelihood. From the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, it typically comprises geometric, paisley or floral motifs, predominantly in red or black. Mohammed Bilal Khatri, the master craftsman of Bagh print, has made significant contributions to the advancement and promotion of this traditional art form on both national and international levels. In September, he also got the opportunity to showcase his handicraft in a four-day long Turtuk Festival, organised by the Ministry of Culture.

GOING PLACES

Mohammed Bilal Khatri, the master craftsman of Bagh print, is taking the art beyond the physical confines of his village, says RUBY SARKAR

This young artisan hails from Bagh village in Madhya Pradesh. He has learned this art form from his father, Mohammed Yusuf Khatri and grandfather Ismail Sulemanji. From the age of eight, he has been involved in this traditional handicraft and has gained more than 20 years of experience. In 2011, he was awarded the National Merit Award by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, followed by Russian Diploma Award

from International Ethnomir 'Dialogue of Cultures- United World' Fund in 2014.

Sharing his experience at the Turtuk Festival, he said, "I was really delighted to be honoured by the Ministry of Culture of Government of India and secondly, by the Turtuk Executive Councillor, Ghulam Mehndi on behalf of the administration. Furthermore, coming to Turtuk village and interacting with the locals provided

me with a sense of peace."

Turtuk, the last village of India, is approximately 203 km away from Leh in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The village was under the control of Pakistan after 1947, but India regained it after the war of 1971. To mark 50 years of this historic accomplishment, the Indian government organized Turtuk Festival under 'Aazadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' — an initiative to commemorate 75 years of its rich history,

diverse population, culture and achievements. A total of 200 artisans from across India participated in this festival, Bilal being one of them.

"I provided complete information to the locals about the historic importance of this art. They showed great interest in knowing more about Bagh print and also tried their hand at stamping the prints," informed Bilal.

According to him, the beauty of Turtuk, which is situated amidst the ancient Shyok river and snow-clad Himalayas, coupled with its generous locals, is unparalleled. "This area is surrounded by the Karakoram Mountain range. As far as the eyes can see, there are mountains. And besides the natural beauty, even the people here are so simple," shared Bilal heartily.

Further, diving deeper into the details of this traditional handicraft, Bilal mentioned that the printing of Bagh prints and the treatment of fabric is a multi-stage process, which includes colour treatment, fabric soaking, boiling, drying, washing and printing. These steps are usually repeated depending on the number of colours used on the fabric.

"The process starts with soaking the fabric in raw salt, hot water and goat dung. This step is the reason for the light-yellow colour of the fabric. After this, the fabric is washed, spread and dried in the open. At this stage, the red colour is extracted by soaking and boiling tamarind seeds and alum in a big copper vessel. The red colour distinguishes the Bagh print," explained Bilal.

The blocks are made with great precision to complement cotton, crepe, silk and other types of fabrics. After this, the fabric is spread on a plank or a table with many layers of jute, straws and fabrics which provides a flexible base for block printing, which is done skillfully by the artisans. The red colour extracted from tamarind seeds is highlighted using different blocks. There are many patterns including flowers, leaves and traditional sculptures.

"Till further instructions, the artists use their imagination to bring fabric to life by meticulously embossing the designs," he added.

—Charkha Features

Wars Don't Bring Peace

The conflict between nations is rooted in religious bigotry, a scramble for power or a spirit of revenge, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI



A recent violent face-off between the two emerging world powers over a long-disputed border issue has highlighted the repercussions that this can entail. Unless the concerned countries desist from the use of force, even a small, old issue can develop into a big war, with possibilities of involving the superpowers and influencing the whole world. As the world, with a huge nuclear stockpile, has turned into a powder keg, every sane person wants that war should be banished from society. But to cure the malady of wars, one will have first to identify the causes of war.

A well-known epigram, on this question, says, "Wars are born in the minds of men." Though this is true in general terms, it would be better if, to explain the origination of wars it is said, "Wars — hot or cold — are born either from the temptation to possess more territories or from the feelings of national pride or hurt pride, or from hatred, suspicion and fear that grip men's mind and finally, from the will to prove its superior strength or to wreak vengeance on the opponent." The recent issue between the two powerful Asian countries is no exception to this rule. One cannot explain as to why the soldiers of one nation barged into the territory of another nation, despite knowing very well that there has been a peace treaty between the two nations for years. Was it some kind of fear or some insecurity, feelings of national pride or wounded pride? Whatever may be the reason, the fact remains that today the whole world is in danger of nuclear war and that makes every nation build up heavy stocks of weapons of mass destruction in the name of self-defense and security. If, therefore, mankind wants to do away with wars, once for all, the first thing it must do is to remember well that war is an inhuman, brutish and insane way of settling disputes.

It would be useful to know, in this context, that behind every action, there is in one's mind, "a related conviction or what may be called 'philosophy of action'". So also, behind wars, there is what may be called a 'philosophy of wars', perverted though it may be. Students of history would know that by the end of the 19th century, a powerful war cult had arisen in Europe, inspired by the belief that only the fittest should survive. War, it was argued, was an instinct of mankind. Death on the battlefield was described as the loftiest of human sacrifices or the most heroic devotion to society. Philosophers, such as Renan, said, "War is, in a way, one of the conditions of progress, the cut of a whip which keeps a country from going to sleep." John Ruskin called war, "the foundation of all arts... of all virtues and faculties of men." Obviously, this war cult ignored war's brutalising effects and the indelible scars it inflicted on both the victors and the vanquished.

If, now, the philosophy of Renan and Ruskin and such other men, as Prussian Marshal Moltke, who said that "war is an element of the order of the world, established by God", continue to be believed by the nations, then, of course, wars cannot be banished. Nations will take to the path of reconciliation and non-violence if — like the Indian king, Ashoka — they keep uppermost the suffering wars cause uppermost in their minds. Today, the lack of peace is an outcome of mankind's inability to realise the truth behind the factors that lead nations to race for military superiority, build up weapons and subjugate other people and territories. These are powered by religious bigotry, a scramble for power or a spirit of revenge. Because of his lust for power, man cheats himself of happiness. It is a pity that he easily forgets that the power of arms or money without the power to rule one's own mind is pure evil. Also, man does not realise that the political power without the power to rule one's physical senses and without the intent to use power for human good, leads to turmoil. Lasting happiness of the human race depends not on the power to dominate others but on his mastery over his demonic traits. So, the rub of the matter is that man needs to be reminded effectively that if he does not kill the demons of hate, anger and war with the weapons of love and universal brotherhood, the demons will kill mankind.



The toughest part of a race is right before the finish line. The same is the case with a phenomenon called 'Year-end fatigue', which means that feelings of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion will encompass you. It will leave you feeling irritability, exhaustion, and low motivation.

Are you just tired or is it something more? Fatigue is when you perpetually exhausted or weak. You need to remember that fatigue is a symptom, not a condition. If you feel like this exhaustion is impeding your daily routine, it may be a medical condition and you are advised to visit a doctor as soon as possible.

Reasons for year-end burnouts:

The end of the year means that people are in a rush to get things done. From work goals to family pressures, you are faced with the need to get things done. But accompanied by the constant sense of fatigue, it makes accomplishing anything next to impossible.

Here are a few ways to deal with this exhaustion and fatigue and begin 2022 with a fresh perspective.



Ace your game

SONAL SINGH has some tips up her sleeve to bid adieu to year-end-fatigue

Take a social media break

You must have heard about the phrase — digital detox. The constant need to keep in touch through social media can get overwhelming, and while it is difficult to shut yourself off from social media completely, you can fit a mini digital detox into your workday. Giving your complete attention to a particular activity — spending time with family or friends while leaving your phone aside is one way of doing so. Another way is you can download apps that limit screen time and alert you when you exceed the set limit. According to UW Health psy-

chologist Shilagh Mirgain, one can improve productivity, focus, mindfulness and bonds with friends and family by restricting the use of technology.

Rest up

A side effect of fatigue is that it also impacts your sleep. You may experience broken sleep patterns or even fail to sleep peacefully at all. While you might feel that sleeping for 18 hours would help solve your fatigue, in fact all you need to do is reset your sleep cycle by trying to get seven to eight hours of sleep. Not only will this



improve your mood, but it will also help you feel revitalised.

Keep your physical activity in check

At such a time, you are bound to get tired with even the thought of picking yourself off the couch and exercising. You need not spend two or three hours a day at the gym, but a simple 30-minutes' walk or jog will set a tone for the day and

help reduce stress, eventually making you feel fit and healthy.

Healthy food is a must

You may not realise the value of eating healthy and its effect on your mood, stress and energy. Not only does it help in combating stress, but it also leaves your body feeling nourished. Be cautious of skipping meals at such a time, as it may worsen your mood. Instead, include a healthy and balanced meal plan in your routine. A study published in the journal *Nutrients* shows that consumption of junk food leads to increased stress. Also, do remember to not pressurise yourself at such a time and indulge in comfort food, if need be.

Be grateful

Dr Guy Winch, author of the book *Emotional First Aid* said that 'gratitude is an emotion that grounds us and is a great way to balance out the negative mindset that uncertainty engenders'. It is crucial to keep in mind that negative feelings will only bog you down. You must show gratitude and remind yourself of the bigger things in your life. This helps release dopamine and serotonin — happy hormones that make us feel light and happy internally, and in turn helps beat stress.

To stay ahead of the curve and practise the suggestions above to beat the year end fatigue. Prevention is better than cure, so ensure that you are mindful of your feelings, the pace at which you're moving in life. Slow down, take a deep breathe to start the new year with a fresh outlook to explore the numerous possibilities.

(The author is co-founder and director, Fitrr.)

“

You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated.

—Maya Angelou

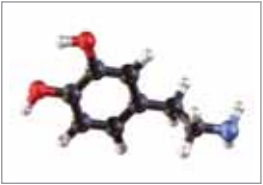
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DOPAMINE LEVELS ELEVATE DUE TO STRESS

Pioneering research shows that dopamine levels increase in response to stressful stimuli, and not just pleasurable ones, potentially rewriting facts about the 'feel-good' hormone — a critical mediator of many psychiatric diseases. This discovery is cause to rethink treatment for psychiatric disease and addiction.

This research was led by Erin Calipari, assistant professor of pharmacology, and Munir Gunes Kutlu, a postdoctoral fellow in Calipari's laboratory.

"A common theme of all drugs of abuse is that they increase dopamine release in the brain, which helped feed the notion of dopamine as a reward molecule. This work clearly demonstrates a much more sophisticated role for this neurotransmitter, and it means we need to rethink models of addiction that depend on the dopamine/drug reward mentality," said Danny Winder, director of the Vanderbilt Center for Addiction Research.



POTENTIAL STRATEGY FOR FIGHTING OBESITY

USouthwestern Scientists may have identified a method of safely mimicking the weight-loss benefits of a plant compound that — despite its harmful side effects — hold critical answers to developing therapies for obesity.

Celastrrol, derived from the root extracts of a white-flowered plant in China, has drawn increased attention in recent years after studies showed it can both prevent and reverse obesity in mice. However, because celastrrol can cause reactions such as high blood pressure and lethargy in mice, researchers have sought to understand how the compound works and use that knowledge to develop safe weight-loss treatments for people.

"This new understanding of how celastrrol works on the cellular level opens more possibilities for targeting pathways that can improve our metabolism without the negative health impact," said Kevin W Williams, an investigator at UT Southwestern's Center for Hypothalamic Research.



ARE THERE DBPs IN THAT CUP OF TEA?

Surpassed only by water, tea is the second most consumed beverage worldwide. When boiled tap water is used to brew tea, residual chlorine in the water can react with tea compounds to form disinfection byproducts (DBPs). Now, researchers measured 60 DBPs in three types of tea, unexpectedly finding lower levels in brewed tea than in tap water. However, they also detected many unknown DBPs with uncertain health effects.

Although disinfection is important to ensure drinking water safety, a downside is DBP formation. Tea contains about 500 compounds, including polyphenols, amino acids, caffeine and others, that can react with chlorine to form DBPs, some of which have been linked in epidemiological studies with cancer and adverse birth outcomes. In addition, DBPs can form from reactions with compounds in the tap water itself.

Researchers brewed the teas and then measured the compounds using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.



CANNABIS MAY IMPACT SPERM COUNT

An intense but short-term exposure to cannabis vapor lowered sperm counts and slowed sperm movement, or motility, not only in the directly exposed male mice but also in their sons, according to a new study.

The findings show that cannabis can impede male reproductive function. The current study uses more controlled circumstances than human studies, which often have to rely on surveys, and is the first known reproductive study to use vaporised whole cannabis in mice, which is the more common form humans use. Previous animal studies used other administration methods such as injections of THC, the main psychoactive component of cannabis.

"This is a warning flag. You may take cannabis for some kind of momentary stress, but it could affect your offspring," said Hayashi, an associate professor in WSU's School of Molecular Biosciences.



NEW INJECTABLE HYDROGEL REPAIRS WOUNDS

Combining knowledge of chemistry, physics, biology, and engineering, scientists from McGill University develop a biomaterial tough enough to repair the heart, muscles, and vocal cords, representing a major advance in regenerative medicine.

"People recovering from heart damage often face a long and tricky journey. Healing is challenging because of the constant movement tissues must withstand as the heart beats. The same is true for vocal cords. Until now, there was no injectable material strong enough for the job," says Guangyu Bao, a PhD candidate at McGill University.

The team developed a new injectable hydrogel for wound repair. Once injected into the body, the biomaterial forms a stable, porous structure allowing live cells to grow or pass through to repair the injured organs.



Ashwin turns it on as India aim for four day finish

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's middle-order worries going into South Africa series remained but that didn't deter Ravichandran Ashwin from turning the heat on as his three quick blows left New Zealand tottering at 140 for five in pursuit of an impossible 540 on day three of the second Test.

While Daryl Mitchell (60 off 92 balls) and Henry Nicholls (36 batting) added 73 runs for the fourth wicket, there is no denying that India in all likelihood will finish it early on the fourth day with Ashwin (3/27) looking menacing after every passing over.

What will hurt New Zealand team most in this defeat is the fact that this is the game where one of its own -- Ajaz Patel, equalled the world record and grabbed a match-haul of 14 wickets, something that no one has ever done against India in Test cricket.

The tall Mitchell at least tried to use his reach to counter Ashwin and also attack Jayant Yadav and Axar Patel but looked more like the last man standing, trying to delay the inevitable before a rush of blood saw him being holed at deep extra cover. Tom Blundell had a suicidal runout going for a non-existent single.

But it was Ashwin, who again got the new ball and immediately got into the act by removing skipper Tom Latham with an angular delivery while Will Young gave bat pad to forward short leg and Ross Taylor, who has been a walking wicket, failed miserably in his attempt to slog sweep the wily off-spinner.

There was one over where Ashwin literally toyed with left-handed Nicholls who couldn't gauge which one would turn away like a classical off-break and the one that will straighten



or come in with the angle.

But there will be some issues that would need coach Rahul Dravid's urgent attention.

For India, even in what could be a facile victory, the wobbly middle-order would keep them worried going into the South Africa series.

Ajinkya Rahane failed in the first Test and had to be dropped on pretext of a hamstring niggle. Cheteshwar Pujara had three bad innings and one where he looked better but that was after the pressure was released by the bowlers.

Skipper Virat Kohli, whose primary aim of not enforcing follow-on was to get some batting time under his belt, also didn't look confident during a scratchy innings of 36 off 84 balls.

Former India batter said Virat Kohli doesn't have a technical deficiency or any mental issue that is stopping him from getting to a 3-figure score and that the India cap-

tain has to be patient to end the long drought for a hundred in international cricket.

VVS Laxman said the 3-figure score will come Virat Kohli's way soon and once it does, Kohli will be back to scoring big runs for India. The former batter's comments come after Virat Kohli was dismissed for 36 on Day 3 of the 2nd Test against New Zealand in Mumbai.

India declared their second innings at 276 for 7 after Axar hit four sixes and three fours in his 41 off 26 balls to prop up the innings towards the end.

Their confidence already shattered, the New Zealand bowlers conceded as many as 25 fours and 11 sixes in the 70 overs they bowled in the second innings. In fact, all Indian batters save Wriddhiman Saha hit at least one six.

Kohli's idea of batting again was partially successful because Pujara did look good during his 47 and Mayank Agarwal (62, 108 balls) did his cause no harm by smashing

'I DON'T THINK KOHLI HAS A TECHNICAL PROBLEM' I JUST THINK HE HAS TO WAIT PATIENTLY. IF THERE IS A PATTERN IN THE WAY HE IS GETTING DISMISSED, WHEN HE IS OUT THERE IN THE MIDDLE IF HE IS STRUGGLING TO TIME THE BALL, IF HE IS STRUGGLING TO GET ON TOP OF THE BALL, THEN IT'S A PROBLEM. I DON'T THINK HE HAS THAT PROBLEM. —VVS LAXMAN

another half-century to top up his first innings score of 150.

The duo added 107 runs for the opening stand to add insult to New Zealand's injuries and it was compounded by another 82 runs that Shubman Gill (47) added with Kohli.

Save a six that he hit off opposition's weakest link, Will Somerville, Kohli for the better part of his 84 balls didn't look convincing before playing on to a friendly left-arm spin from Rachin Ravindra, who also had three wickets.

Agarwal was looking good for his second hundred of the game but in his bid to hit another six off Patel he could not reach to the pitch of the delivery and Will Young comfortably took the catch at long-off.

For Pujara this was the best chance to get a fifty and increase his confidence before the tour of South Africa.

He survived a strong DRS appeal but then one delivery that was pitched slightly fuller and turned, got his outside edge and went to Taylor's safe hands in the slips.

India lose to France to finish 4th in Jr Hockey WC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Title hopes already shattered, defending champions India even failed to finish on the podium as they lost 1-3 to France in the bronze-medal play-off match of the FIH Junior Hockey World Cup here on Sunday. France skipper Timothee Clement slammed a hat-trick. Clement converted three penalty corners for France in the 26th, 34th and 47th minutes while India's lone goal was struck by Sudeep Chirmako in the 42nd minute.

It was the second consecutive flop

show from the Indians after their superlative performance against Belgium in the quarterfinals.

The third-fourth place match was a chance for India to avenge their 4-5 defeat against France in their tournament opener, but it was not to be as the European side continued to dominate the hosts with a superb performance.

France were by far the better side on the pitch as they controlled the proceedings after a sedate first quarter and earned as many as 14 penalty corners as against India's just three. India started on a bright

note and exerted pressure on France defence in the first quarter, which resulted in a penalty corner as early as in the first minute of the game, but the hosts failed to utilise the chance. The Indians continued to press hard and came close to securing the lead in the 12th minute when Arajjeet Singh Hundal's shot from top of the circle hit the post.

France got their footing into the match at the fag end of the first quarter when they secured three penalty corners in succession but the Indian defence did just enough to keep their rivals at bay.

India's fringe players look to make impact

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

The third unofficial Test between India A and South Africa A beginning here on Monday will give the fringe players another opportunity to make their case for national selection ahead of the senior team South Africa's tour later this month.

A squad of at least 20 is likely to be picked for the South Africa tour comprising three Tests and three ODIs beginning December 26.

Hanuma Vihari, who was controversially dropped for the New Zealand series at home, is expected to come back into the side. He looked good in the drawn second unofficial Test scoring couple of fifties.

Abhimanyu Easwaran, who could be picked as a back up batter in the top-order, has been in sublime touch on the tour. He scored a hundred in the series opener and followed it up with a fifty in the second innings of the game held earlier this week. Prithvi Shaw has not made most of his chances in South Africa, not helping his case for selection. After a tough outing in the series opener, the pacers were impressive in the second game with the young Ishan Porel standing out with a match haul of six wickets.

Navdeep Saini too was amongst the wickets, taking five in total.

Sindhu settles for silver in BWF World Tour Finals

PTI ■ BALI

Indian badminton ace P V Sindhu settled for a silver medal at the BWF World Tour Finals after going down meekly against Korean teen sensation An Seyoung in the summit clash, here on Sunday.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion and two-time Olympic medallist, could neither match the pace nor breach the defence of the world number six Korean, losing 16-21 12-21 in the 40-minute lop-sided clash. It was Sindhu's third successive loss -- all straight games -- to the Korean in as many meetings.

With this victory, An Seyoung became the first ever South Korean woman to win the season-ending title.

It was also her third straight title in Bali, following wins at the Indonesia Masters and Indonesia Open in the last two weeks.

Making her third final appearance in the year-end tournament, world number seven Sindhu looked a pale shadow of the player who had claimed the title in 2018 to become the only Indian to achieve the feat.

"It was a good game. An Seyoung is a good player so I don't think it was going to be easy. I was prepared for a good match," Sindhu said after the

title clash.

"From the beginning I should not have given her lead because in the end I came back covering few points. It is a bit sad but lot to learn.

"It has been a good three weeks in Bali. So lot of positives to take from here and it's time to go back, recover and get prepared for the world championships," added the 26-year-old.

Up against the 19-year-old Korean, Sindhu once again looked short of ideas. She couldn't mount her attacking game or make use of the full court.

An Seyoung looked more polished at the nets and rode on her good quality of strokes. She produced some sensational full stretch diving saves with her swift movement to blunt Sindhu's game plan.

The Indian had a forgettable start and was left to fight a tough battle after lagging 0-4. Sindhu played a good rally to log her first points with a cross court return. She tried to narrow the gap by engaging her rival in rallies but An Seyoung was quick on her feet and showed better anticipation to always keep her nose ahead.

The Korean doubled the lead to 16-8 after resumption. Sindhu tried to make up the deficit with a few good points but the Korean managed to collect eight game points.

Barcelona loses to Betis 1-0 before critical Bayern trip

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona lost its first match Bunder Xavi Hernández when it fell to Real Betis 1-0 at home just before its critical trip to Bayern Munich.

Striker Juanmi Jiménez finished off a well-orchestrated counterattack to take Betis' winner in the 79th minute at Camp Nou on Saturday night.

Barcelona had won twice and drawn once since Xavi took over as coach from Ronald Koeman. The defeat left the team in seventh place and in danger of falling even further behind leader Real Madrid, which played at Real Sociedad later. Barcelona visits Bayern on Wednesday needing a win to ensure its place in the Champions League round of 16. Bayern, which is already qualified as the group winner, beat Barcelona 3-0 in their first meeting this season.

If it loses, Barcelona would need Benfica to not beat Dynamo Kyiv to avoid elimination. Before kickoff, Barcelona player Alexia Putellas presented the 65,000-plus fans her Ballón d'Or for the world's best women's player.



“मेरा आदर्श : स्वतंत्रता, समानता एवं
बंधुत्व पर आधारित समाज होगा”
- डॉ. भीमराव आंबेडकर



भारतीय संविधान निर्माता एवं महान समाज सुधारक
भारत रत्न डॉ. भीमराव आंबेडकर
के
परिनिर्वाण दिवस
(6 दिसम्बर) पर
कोटि-कोटि नमन
- योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश



 सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश