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LUCKNOW, THURSDAY AUGUST 11, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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SURYA STAYS
AT NO.2 IN T20s
12 SPORT

Nitish blows bugle for 2024 LS poll combat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid buzz that he could be projected as the Opposition's Prime Ministerial candidate in 2024, Nitish Kumar, who was on Wednesday sworn in for the eighth time as Chief Minister of Bihar, asserted that the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre should now "worry" about its prospects in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Talking to media persons after after being administered the oath of office by Governor Phagu Chauhan, Kumar said, "Those who came to power in 2014 should now worry if they will be there after 2024." Nitish was responding to a question: Will he continue to be with the Mahagathbandhan till the 2025 Bihar Assembly polls or make another U-turn.

"They should worry about themselves. I think they will surely not be there after 2014," he said. Later in his more elaborate comment he talked about 2024, realising that 2014 was a slip of tongue.

Kumar also rubbished the BJP's claim that the new Government will not last its full term, and said his former ally "will be back where they were after the 2015 Assembly polls".

Kumar was sworn in besides RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, who is likely to be designated as his deputy. Sources in the seven-party ruling coalition said a Cabinet expansion would



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with his deputy Tejashwi Yadav during their swearing-in ceremony at the Raj Bhavan, in Patna, on Wednesday

PTI

take place later.

Kumar is likely to retain the all-important Home portfolio, while the RJD may get most of the departments that were previously with the BJP, a highly-placed source said, adding an

in-principle agreement has been reached about the composition of the new Cabinet, which is likely to have 35 members or more drawn from Kumar's JD(U), the RJD, the Hindustani Awam Morcha

and the Congress.

Euphoric scenes were witnessed outside the Raj Bhavan and residences of Kumar and Yadav, as hundreds of supporters of the JD(U) and the RJD celebrated beating drums,

bursting crackers and distributing laddus (sweetmeats).

Leaders of the BJP, which is the second largest party in the Assembly with 77 MLAs, were conspicuous by their absence at the swearing-in ceremony that took place inside the Raj Bhavan.

Kumar's virtual challenge to Prime Minister Modi for the 2024 combat came amid speculation that he may join the race to be projected as the joint Opposition's candidate to take on Modi in next general elections.

While he himself denied harbouring any such ambition, Opposition leaders have hailed his decision to break ties with the BJP even as newly-elected TMC member of Lok Sabha Shatrughan Sinha has said Kumar along with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will be in the "front row" of the Opposition camp to end the "Modi raj" in the country in the 2024 election.

Talking to reporters in Patna, Sinha said the JD(U) leader has given the BJP a dose of its own medicine after it dislodged Governments of Opposition parties in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

"Due to his bold decision, Kumar today stands in the front row in the Opposition camp along with Mamata and others to lead the downfall of 'Modi raj' in the next Parliamentary election," he said.

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No limit on domestic airfare from August 31

Call taken after careful analysis of daily demand and ATF prices, says Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

After 27 months, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has decided to do away with the airfare cap imposed on domestic airlines in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. The airfare caps would be removed from August 31, the Civil Aviation Ministry said on Wednesday, lifting restrictions on ticket prices.

The decision to remove the airfare cap from the domestic flights will bring relief to airlines. The decision will allow the airlines to price tickets freely.

In an order issued on Wednesday, the Ministry said, "After review of the current status of scheduled domestic operations viz-a-viz passenger demand for air travel...it has been decided to remove the fare bands notified from time to time regarding the airfares with effect from August 31, 2022."

On May 25, 2020, the Government regulated fares by imposing a minimum and maximum band based on the flight's duration to prevent ticket prices from spiking due to pent-up demand arising



from an easing of restrictions on air travel.

The lower caps were there to protect the financially weaker airlines and the upper caps to protect passengers from high fares.

The airlines and airport operators must, however, ensure that the guidelines to contain the spread of Covid-19 are strictly adhered to and Covid-appropriate behaviour is strictly enforced by them during travel, it added.

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Twitter, "The decision to remove airfare caps has been taken after careful analysis of daily demand and prices of air turbine fuel (ATF)."

Stabilisation has set in and we are certain that the sector is poised for growth in domestic traffic in the near future."

ATF prices have been coming down during the last few weeks after jumping to record levels, primarily due to the Russia-Ukraine war that began on February 24. On August 1, the price of ATF in Delhi was ₹1.21 lakh per kilo-litre, which was around 14 per cent lower than last month.

As per the limit imposed by the Government, airlines currently cannot charge a passenger less than ₹2,900 (excluding GST) and more than ₹8,800 (excluding GST) for domestic flights of less than 40 minutes.

Nitish wanted to be VP: BJP; It's a white lie: JDU



BJP MP Sushil Kumar Modi addresses a press conference at the party office, in Patna on Wednesday

PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICES ■
NEW DELHI

A day after the exit of Janta Dal United (JDU) from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi on Wednesday claimed that Nitish Kumar's party wanted him to become Vice-President of India, a claim dismissed by the JD(U) as "white lies".

"Some JD(U) people had

come to say 'Nitish Kumar the Vice President and the BJP should rule in Bihar,' the BJP Rajya Sabha member said at a Press conference just before Kumar took oath as Bihar Chief Minister for a record eighth time.

JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan 'Lalan' Singh who also held his presser in Patna squarely dismissed Sushil's allegations.

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SC grants bail to Varavara Rao on medical grounds in Bhima case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted bail on medical grounds to Maoist ideologue and poet P Varavara Rao in the Bhima Koregaon case. A bench headed by Justice UU Lalit observed that the medical condition of the 82-year-old Rao, who is currently out on interim bail on health grounds, has not improved to such an extent that the relief granted earlier to him be withdrawn.

The top court noted that though the chargesheet in the case has been filed, some of the accused have not been apprehended yet and the matter has not been taken up for framing of charges against the accused. The bench, also comprising Justices Aniruddha Bose and Sudhanshu Dhulia, observed that various applications preferred by the accused seeking discharge are still pending consideration.

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SC shifts FIRs against Nupur to Delhi Police over threat to her life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed clubbing and transfer of all present and future FIRs lodged across the country against suspended BJP spokeswoman Nupur Sharma to the Delhi Police in connection with her remark on Prophet Mohammed made during a TV debate.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala also extended the interim protection to her till the probe is concluded by the Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations (IFSO) of the Delhi Police.

The apex court said Delhi Police's IFSO shall be at liberty to take assistance from other police forces to take the case to a logical end.

"Since this court has already taken cognizance of the serious threat to life and secu-



rity of the petitioner (Sharma), we direct that all FIRs against Nupur Sharma be transferred and clubbed for the investigation to the Delhi Police.

"In particular facts and circumstances, we clarify and deem it appropriate that the investigation is carried out by the Delhi Police. The petitioner shall be at liberty to pursue her rights and remedies by approaching the Delhi High Court for quashing the current and future FIRs," the bench said.

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'Black magic' can't end your bad days, Modi taunts Cong

PTI ■ PANIPAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a fresh broadside against the Congress, terming its "black cloth" protest against price rise as "black magic" that will not be able to win them the confidence of people again.

After dedicating to the nation the ₹900 crore-second generation ethanol plant at Panipat, Modi also said freebies are a spoke in India's effort to become self-reliant and also a burden on taxpayers.

Without naming the Congress, he said some people out of frustration resorted to black magic on August 5. "On August 5, we saw how some people tried to spread 'black magic'. These people think that by wearing black clothes they can end their dependency. But they do not know that by engaging in witchcraft, black magic and superstition, they

cannot earn the trust of people again," Modi said.

The Congress protested against price rise by wearing black clothes in Parliament and outside as part of a nationwide protest on August 5.

"Some people think wearing black clothes can ward off their pessimism and negativity but they don't know that they can resort to any such tactics but can't win back people's confidence," he said.

Continued on Page 9

Jumlaeevi making pointless issue: Cong

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his "kala jadu" remark, saying while the country wants him to talk about their problems, "jumlaeevi" keeps on saying anything.

CAPSULE

UU LALIT 2ND CJI FROM BAR TO BENCH DIRECTLY
New Delhi: Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, who was on Wednesday appointed as the 49th Chief Justice of India (CJI) after President Droupadi Murmu signed his warrant of appointment, will become the second head of the Indian judiciary to be directly elevated to the Supreme Court bench from the Bar.

28 YEARS AFTER RAPE, VICTIM GETS JUSTICE
Shahjahanpur: A child born out of rape has helped his mother get justice, 28 years after the crime. Police put one of the alleged rapists behind bars last week and the other on Wednesday. Police said a DNA reported nailed the criminals — two brothers who had fled to Hyderabad after the investigation in the rape case began.

HOLIDAY NOTICE
The Press and offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on Thursday, August 11, 2022 on account of Raksha Bandhan. The next issue of the newspaper will appear on Saturday, August 13, 2022

EC refuses to be on SC-proposed multi-member panel on freebies

Not proper for Constitutional body to be part of ministerial committee, reasons poll panel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India has refused to be on an expert panel proposed by the Supreme Court to examine the issues of promise of "freebies" by political parties during elections. The EC has argued that since it was a Constitutional body, it may not be proper for it to join any such panel.

"It may not be appropriate for the commission, being the



Constitutional authority, to offer to be part of the expert committee especially if there are Ministries or Government bodies in the expert body. Further there are continuous elections in the country and any opinion/view / comment during deliberation in a multi-member body might, in the event of being publicised, amount to pre-deciding the

issue and disturb the level playing field," the EC has told the Supreme Court in a reply.

"The answering respondent respectfully submits that it will be greatly benefitted by the recommendations of the expert body that the court may deem appropriate to set up and commits to give its high-level consideration to the same, while strengthening/modifying its existing guidelines in the interest of purity of electoral process. The answering respondent respectfully further submits that it would abide by any direction which this court considers appropriate to pass," the affidavit states, the EC added.

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Gun salute with desi Howitzer on I-Day

Mortuary workers, mudra scheme borrowers special invitees on I-day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

For the first time, an indigenously designed and manufactured Howitzer gun will be used for ceremonial gun salute during the Independence Day here to showcase capabilities of the Indian defence industry.

Also, people from different walks of life like mortuary workers, mudra scheme borrowers and anganwadi workers will be special invitees for the event at the Red Fort.

Besides these novel additions, National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets, wearing traditional and local dresses, will form the gathering when Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation on Monday, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said here on Wednesday.

Giving details of the new features of the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort this year, he said an indigenously made Howitzer will be used for the ceremonial 21-gun salute. The gun salute entails firing of blanks by the World War II era howitzers of British make till now.

The Howitzer or the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) is developed under the Government's "Make in India" initiative by the



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The ATAGS will give the ceremonial 21-gun salute along with the British guns which are being traditionally used till now, Kumar said.

The initiative to use the

Establishment (ARDE), Pune, led by scientists and artillery officers worked on the project to make use of the gun possible for the Independence Day ceremony.

The ATAGS project was started in 2013 by the DRDO to replace older guns in service in the Indian Army with a modern 155mm artillery gun.

This specialised gun system is compatible with C4I systems like the Artillery Combat Command and Control System called Shakti for technical fire control, fire planning, deployment management, operational logistics management of the Indian Army. The ARDE has collaborated with Bharat Forge Limited and Tata Advanced Systems Ltd for the manufacturing of this specialised gun.

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Govt working towards ‘One Dist, One Medical College’, says Yogi

35 ANM centres, 3 dialysis centres, oral cancer centre inaugurated

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

When the country is celebrating 75 years of independence, the state government is working towards ‘One District, One Medical College’ and when India celebrates 100 years of independence, every person in the state will have health insurance. The Health department should make efforts to bring down maternal mortality rate and get on with the success which it achieved in checking JE and dengue.

Chief Minister Yogi expressed these views at the inauguration of 35 ANM centres, three dialysis centres and an oral cancer centre on Wednesday.

“The importance of health workers was witnessed during Covid pandemic. A screening campaign was run in all the villages and the ANMs and ASHA workers went from one house another working with commitment. If we did not have trained workers, we could not have managed the pandemic.

Trained health worker, nursing and paramedical staff are the backbone of any health service. The better trained the staff is, the better the health services will be. In UP which has a vast population, there will always be challenges in terms of manpower,” he said.

“For those receiving training as ANMs, it was a challenge because they had to go to private institutes and it required money. Those who could not pay the fee were unable to receive the training. The government helped but that was also restricted and the trainees had to out up in hostels which were far off and it became an added expenditure. I am happy that in one go, we are starting 35 ANM centres. There are infrastructure, labs, libraries and modern equipment & facilities. In one go, 1,750 ANMs will be trained through proper arrangements,” he said.

Yogi said that from the next session, an examination should be made a criteria for the selection of candidates so that



the families that are financially weak can get some relief.

“The girls will get a very good opportunity to serve people apart from making a career for themselves,” he added.

He said three dialysis centres have also been started under the Prime Minister Dialysis Scheme and they are providing free services in 65 districts.

“Three districts have joined and work has been started for seven districts. In all the 75 districts, they may be no nephrologists but there will be physicians. If the physicians are trained and some technicians are provided in these districts with the help of PPP, we can run the programme along with the Central government. Our effort is to provide free dialysis service in all the 75 districts,” he added.

“When someone is suffering from hypertension, they become diabetic and it affects their kidneys and eyes. Precaution is better than treatment. To keep away from stress, we need to join health and wellness centres. Besides, yoga should be included for our wellness exercise,” he said.

“The PM has taken up the concept of organic farming because pesticides can cause a bad impact on our health. Prevention from oral cancer, which has been started, is a very good initiative by the Health department. Public address systems should be used in the Arogya Mela for spreading awareness,” he added.

Monsoon session of UP Assembly likely in Sept

Lucknow (PNS): The monsoon session of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly is likely to be convened in September.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna said here on Wednesday that the schedule of the monsoon session was yet to be decided. He said as soon as the business of the monsoon session was decided the matter would go before the cabinet.

The first session of the 18th Uttar Pradesh Assembly was held here from May 23 with Governor Anandiben Patel addressing a joint sitting of both Houses of the state legislature. During the first session of the 18th Vidhan Sabha, the first budget of the Yogi Adityanath government 2.0 was also passed. The budget was for the current fiscal 2022-23.

The proceedings of the budget session were paperless, or digital, in many ways due to the adoption of e-Vidhan. UP Assembly, the largest assembly of India, is the first state legislature to go digital and implement the e-Vidhan system.



(Top) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paid a courtesy call on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi and extended warm greetings to her. The CM presented ODP products of Varanasi and also invited the president to visit Uttar Pradesh. (Above) Yogi Adityanath with Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Fatma Khatoun to FATMA JAVED W/o Mohammad Javed R/o 97/114 Yateemkhana Parade Kanpur for all future purpose.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Pooja Devi to POOJA AIDASANI D/o Seetal Das Aidasani R/o J-10 Indraprasth Apartment Ratan Lal Nagar, Kanpur for all future purpose.

NOTICE

I have changed my daughter's name Sanchi to Sanchi Khandelwal for all future Purpose, Sanchi Khandelwal D/o Sandeep Khandelwal R/o 14/59 Flat No.801, Sangeeta Apartment, Civil Lines Kanpur.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was AKASH which is now changed to AKASH VARDHAN. In future I shall be known as AKASH VARDHAN. Akash Vardhan S/o Raj Vardhan C-72, Sanik Housing Society Colony, Sarojini Nagar Lucknow

NOTICE

MOHD TARIQ ANSARI and MOHAMMAD TARIQ ANSARI son of MOHD ZAKI ANSARI and ZAKI MOHAMMAD ANSARI both are the same person and there is no difference between the two for all future purpose. Address - 581/67 Cantt, Kanpur.

NOTICE

It is informed that in my high school marks certificate, my name is Tashu which is wrong, the correct name is Tashu Singh, we should be known and recognized by this name. Tashu Singh D/o Atul Kumar Singh Vill+Post : Royal Hotel, PS: Kotwali, Ballia, U.P.

NOTICE

In my daughter's educational and School documents Father's name is written wrongly as A.K. Shukla while in other documents it is Ajay Kumar Shukla. Both names are of same person, so in School and educational record it should be read and write Ajay Kumar Shukla. Deep Mala W/o Late Ajay Kumar Shukla R/o Sector-1, Ganga Vihar, Shantipuram, Prayagraj,

Govt may withdraw cases against ministers, MLAs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Following the conviction of cabinet minister Rakesh Sachan in an over 30-year-old case and issuance of non-bailable warrant against another cabinet minister Sanjay Nishad by the chief judicial magistrate of Gorakhpur, the state government is likely to withdraw the pending cases against the ministers and the ruling party MLAs. A senior minister in the Yogi Adityanath government, however, said there was no proposal to withdraw the cases under serious charges of crime pending against the ministers and MLAs. The minister said information was being collected from districts and the process of withdrawal of cases was underway.

The minister said, “Rakesh Sachan is the first minister to be convicted in a criminal case under the Arms Act. He was granted bail by the court and also allowed to file an appeal in the High Court.”

He said the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership, after considering all the aspects, had decided to retain Rakesh Sachan in the cabinet. The minister added, “All the cases registered against the ministers and MLAs during the previous regime due to political vendetta would soon be withdrawn.”

According to UP election watchdog, Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), analysis of affidavits submitted by 45 politicians who were sworn in as ministers in Uttar Pradesh showed that nearly half had declared criminal cases against themselves and most of them face serious charges.

According to the ADR report, 22 (49 per cent) ministers have declared criminal cases against themselves and 20 (44 per cent) ministers have declared serious criminal cases against themselves. The ADR defines serious criminal cases as offences for which maximum punishment is five years or more, are non-bailable or an electoral offence. Offences like assault, murder, kidnap, rape, those under the Prevention of

UP govt protecting tainted ministers: RLD UP chief

Lucknow (PNS): Showing the mirror to the Bharatiya Janata Party on the controversy over transfers and postings in Uttar Pradesh government, Rashtriya Lok Dal state president Ramashish Rai on Wednesday said the BJP leaders and ministers should take lesson from their senior leader Lal Krishna Advani who had resigned immediately after the hawala controversy.

Questioning the transparency and good governance of the BJP-led government in Uttar Pradesh, Rai said the government was giving protection to its ministers despite the transfer and posting scams in their respective departments came to light recently.

In a statement, Rai said a few officers were made scapegoats in the name of action and in order to fend off criticism while the main ‘culprits’ were making merry.

“Several BJP ministers and MLA are either facing criminal cases or have been convicted but they still enjoy govern-

ment's protection, which is condemnable. When BJP senior leader Lal Krishna Advani faced hawala allegations, he had immediately resigned. But the same BJP is patronising the ministers accused of crime and is beating the drums of good and clean governance,” he said.

Rai said the Yogi Adityanath-led government had taken back criminal cases registered against BJP ministers during the previous regime and was thinking of withdrawing the cases instead of removing them from ministerial berths.

The RLD leader pointed out that the state government had not withdrawn the cases registered against students protesting against the Agnipath scheme for short-term recruitment in the Indian Army and this showed the government's anti-student mindset.

He said the chief minister should remove ministers who have a tainted image.

Corruption Act and crimes against women are also defined as “serious criminal cases.”

Out of 403 MLAs in UP Assembly, 205 (51 per cent) face criminal charges.

The ministers in Yogi Adityanath government facing criminal charges are Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', Dharmpal Singh, Anil Rajbhar, Dayashankar Singh, Yogendra Upadhyaya, Bhupendra Chowdhary, Kapil Dev Agarwal, Girish Chandra Yadav, Ravindra Jaiswal, Dinesh Khatik, Suresh Rahi, Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh, Ravindra Jaiswal and Brijesh Singh. Besides the ministers, old cases are pending against over two dozen MLAs.

A minister in the Yogi

Adityanath government said most of the cases against the ministers and MLAs were registered when they participated in political agitation and staged demonstrations. “There is nothing wrong in withdrawal of these cases as they were filed out of political vendetta. Nothing new is being done by the Yogi Adityanath government as cases were withdrawn during the previous Samajwadi Party and bahujan samaj party governments,” said a minister. Citing the previous instances, the minister said, “During the government led by Mulayam Singh Yadav, cases against then Samajwadi Party MP Raj Babbar were withdrawn and during the Akhilesh Yadav government cases against Mohammad Azam Khan and Raja Bhaiya were withdrawn.

Har Ghar Jal Yojana empowering women, reducing their drudgery

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Emphasising the welfare of women in the state, the Yogi Adityanath-led Bharatiya Janata Party government has been working to empower them and reduce their drudgery through door-to-door tap water supply under the Har Ghar Jal Yojana.

On the lines of the Ujjwala Yojana launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2016, the Yogi Adityanath government in UP has swung into action to further give pace to the implementation of the Har Ghar Jal scheme to bring relief to the parched homes.

Aimed at improving the implementation of the Har Ghar Jal scheme, in pursuance of the directives issued by the chief minister, real-time monitoring and progress of the scheme will be done at fixed regular intervals. Through dozens of women-centric schemes implemented by the Central and state governments, not only the self-reliance and economical empowerment of women is being ensured, but also their decades-long struggles are gradually coming to an end.

After review by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Jal Shakti Department has intensified the work for provid-

ing piped water through Har Ghar Jal Yojana in about 43,909 villages of the state, including areas in Bundelkhand and Vindhya, under Jal Jeevan Mission on a war footing.

As a result of the monitoring being done by the chief minister, so far as many as 40,86,991 functional household tap connections (FHTC) have been given in the state.

According to the Jal Shakti department, employment opportunities in large numbers are also being provided to the rural women under the Har Ghar Jal scheme. Under the scheme, a target has been set to provide employment to more

than 1.5 crore people in rural areas. Till August 4, more than 1.85 lakh women in the state have completed their water-testing training.

Moreover, the trained women have completed the testing of more than 10 lakh water samples. In addition, about 4.57 lakh women have to be trained to test water samples. Along with this, 7,56,522 jobs are being created directly in the state through the scheme, under which plumbers, fitters, operators and security guards will be hired on a contract basis. Free of cost training will also be given to the people before the hiring.

Keshav Prasad Maurya is new leader of House in UP Council

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After putting in his papers to quit as Uttar Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party chief, cabinet minister Swatantra Dev Singh on Wednesday tendered his resignation from the post of leader of the House in the YO Legislative Council.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has assumed his position as the new leader of the Upper House.

UP Legislative Council Chairman KM Singh confirmed, “UP BJP chief and cabinet minister Swatantra Dev Singh resigned as leader of the House in the UP Legislative Council. He resigned due to his engagements. Keshav Prasad Maurya has been made the leader of the House in the UP Legislative Council.” Swatantra Dev Singh had tendered his resignation last month as state BJP's UP unit chief after his tenure expired on July 16 but BJP national president JP Nadda is yet to accept his resignation.

Sources said that these developments have come in the wake of Dinesh Khatik's resignation from the Jal Shakti



department, accusing the government of ignoring him because of his Dalit credentials.

Khatik, however, returned to the department after receiving assurances from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Earlier on May 19, the UP BJP had decided to nominate Swatantra Dev Singh as the leader of the Upper House in the Council for his tremendous efforts in leading the party's comeback to power after the UP Assembly elections. Keshav Prasad Maurya was credited for his efforts too and made deputy chief minister despite losing the election to Samajwadi Party's Pallavi Patel in Sirathu. He was sent to the UP Legislative Council to continue as deputy chief minister.

Man killed for lodging report against daughter's molestation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational killing in Hamirpur district, a man had to pay the price of lodging a report against the accused for teasing and harassing his daughter.

The accused, held in the case, was recently released from jail and to avenge his imprisonment, he along with his accomplices first shot at the father and later brutally thrashed him to death.

The incident took place in broad daylight on Tuesday

and the family members of the victim charged the police with helping the accused to come out on bail without any opposition.

As the villagers were agitated over the killing, senior police officers visited the spot and deployed a heavy police force there to avert any untoward incident.

The cops also conducted a series of raids and claimed to have arrested three accused, including the main accused. Search for one of the remaining accused was on.

According to reports, Manish Tiwari (40), a resident of Tola Rawat village under Majhgawan police station of Rath town of Hamirpur, was coming home from the farm on a motorcycle on Tuesday when the assailants intercepted him near the Kulhanda canal. Before Manish could suspect any foul play, one of the youths opened fire on him and when he collapsed on the road, the youth attacked him with sticks. Manish tried to run away but the attackers chased him and thrashed him

brutally with sticks and rods.

As the villagers and some relatives rushed to the spot to save Manish the attackers escaped. Manish was rushed to the hospital where the doctors pronounced him dead.

Manish's son said that last year his sister was molested by a youth of Itaura village. The police had registered a case in this matter and sent a local youth to jail only after he continued to harass his sister.

However, as the police did not book the accused with serious charges, he immediately

came out of jail on bail and brutally murdered Manish with the help of his other goons.

In Bareilly, Nagma, daughter of Zafarul Islam, a resident of Shahi police station area, consumed some poisonous substance to end her life on Tuesday evening. She was taken to a private hospital by the family members but the doctors pronounced her dead. Police took the body in possession and sent it for autopsy. The reason for the extreme step was yet not known.

Free bus service soon for women above 60 years, announces CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that the state government would start a free bus service for all women aged above 60 years. The chief minister launched 150 new BS-6 buses, inaugurated automated driving & testing track, Sarthi Hall and bus stations on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Yogi said: “The bus stations in Uttar Pradesh have to be made world-class because when people come from a different state, they first come across bus stations that give them a perception about the state.”

“Airplanes and trains do not reach every place and UPSRTC buses are the best for the purpose of connecting over 1 lakh revenue villages. If India’s airports can be world-class, bus stations can also be made world-class. UPSRTC needs to work in this direction,” Yogi said.

He said that in all the districts where there are intra-district or inter-state buses plying, the bus stations should look aesthetic and have all the facilities. “There should be proper sitting arrangements, restaurants, dormitories, hotels and parking spaces at the bus stations and not on the roads. We have also signed MoUs with several states so that maximum facilities should be given to passengers. The corporation has to improve the services along with the facilities and the buses which have become old should be removed phase-wise and new buses can be pressed into service,” the CM said.

Yogi further said that the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagging off new BS-6 buses

UPSRTC buses or any other government vehicles plying on the roads must be in proper fitness as also their drivers.

“We should come up with professional driving, training and testing institutes and workshops should attach the students of polytechnics and ITIs to increase manpower,” he added.

“The biggest challenge is road accidents. In the past two-and-a-half years, 23,000 deaths were caused by Covid in the state but 20,000 people die in road accidents every year. It is a cause of concern and we need to find the reasons,” he said.

The chief minister said that on the eve of Rakshabandhan, the Uttar Pradesh Transport Road

Corporation (UPSRTC) launched 150 BS-6 buses and in addition, driving, training and testing centres were being inaugurated at Jhansi and Bareilly.

The automated testing track of Bareilly, Sarthi Hall at Firozabad and 60 bus stations were inaugurated while foundation for two bus stations was also laid.

Yogi pointed out that UPSRTC has a long history but it could not progress in a professional manner but when Kumbh was organised in 2019, the state government purchased buses to facilitate the devotees and superior services were provided to people of the state during Covid times.

He said that during the lockdown when migrants in large numbers moved towards

their houses, more than 1 crore of them were ferried both inside and outside through the buses. “The migrants included 40 lakh from Uttar Pradesh and 30 lakh from Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The UPSRTC provided its services to the labourers free of cost. It was for the first time that such a big example of human welfare was seen post the Kumbh in which 24 crore people had participated,” he recalled.

He said there could never have been a better use of the buses than for Rakshabandhan. He added that UPSRTC was recovering from Covid setback and that the government would extend all possible assistance to it.

Gang stealing bikes of army personnel’s children busted

Lucknow (PNS): With the arrest of five accused, the Cantonment police claimed to have busted a gang that had stolen several bicycles of army-men’s children in the past. The accused were identified as Shivam Mishra (22), Kalyan Rai (23), Animesh Rai (21) & Sharad Kumar (22), all of Cantonment and Mayank Bajpai (21) of Telibagh. The police recovered a scooter and four bicycles from the possession of the accused.

The arrests came following an investigation into the complaints. The police said they were regularly getting complaints from army personnel’s families about theft of their children’s bicycles from Cantonment and outside the race course. He said a police team was formed and the gang was busted on Wednesday.

The accused said they sold the stolen bicycles and two-wheelers in the scrap market at throwaway rates and bought intoxicants. They were booked for theft, dishonestly receiving stolen property and assisting in concealment of stolen property. The police said that fathers of four of the accused were army employees.



District admn making efforts to connect maximum people to national anthem

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The district administration is making efforts to connect maximum number of people to the national anthem on August 15 by seeing to it that they stand up wherever they are present after the flag is hoisted by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Details of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ were given by Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob and District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar at a press conference at the former’s office on Wednesday.

She was also accompanied by Lucknow Development Authority Vice-Chairman Indermani Tripathi and Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh.

Jacob said the entire programme which was held within Vidhan Bhawan premises on Independence Day would now be held on the road and seating

arrangements would be made for people from Babu Bhawan to Jhalkari Bai Hospital.

Gangwar said: “There will be screens placed at the venue and the relay of the programme will be done on the crossings through smart screens of the Smart City Office. When the CM hoists the flag, the national anthem will be sounded for 52 seconds and efforts will be made to see that the traffic at the crossings is stopped in its honour. The idea is to connect people with anthem and create a feeling of patriotism.”

He said they have targeted more than ten lakh houses for flag hoisting and there are different agencies making the flags. “We have already begun the distribution of the flags amongst the houses and will ensure that they are distributed at the block levels,” he said. He said that his only appeal to the people was to follow the

instructions while hoisting the flag and see that there is no disrespect which is created.

The divisional commissioner said that the programme would start with a tricolour façade lighting of the Vidhan Bhawan on Thursday. She said that all the departments such as the administration, LDA, LMC and police would be carrying out several programmes.

The divisional commissioner said a number of programmes are being held which included competitions, marathons, cultural programmes, Hazratganj carnival, felicitation of freedom fighters, plantation programmes, boat rally, felicitation of the pink booth police-woman, performances of bands, police patrolling, candle marches cultural programmes in parks which will be open for the general public and exhibitions.

College student rapes classmate, held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A college student allegedly raped his classmate after spiking her drinks and also filmed the act. He showed the video to the girl raped her repeatedly after threatening to share it on social media.

After the victim lodged a complaint, the police logged an FIR for rape and arrested the accused, who was identified as Vinay Singh aka Yash Singh Chauhan, a native of Lakhimpur Kheri and resident of Gontinagar Extension.

It was alleged that the accused befriended the girl and then invited her to a party along with other friends. When

the girl reached the venue, the accused took her to his house where he raped her after spiking her drinks.

“He has been sexually exploiting me ever since. He threatened to upload the video on social media and abused me when I offered resistance,” the girl stated in her complaint.

The police said the girl lodged a complaint on August 9 and the accused was booked under sections 376/504/506 of IPC. “A team was formed and the accused was arrested from near Amity University the same evening,” the police said.

Meanwhile, an employee of a private company was fatally knocked down by a speeding

truck near Buddheshwar bridge in Para police station area on Tuesday night. The deceased, identified as Sunil Kumar, was a native of Atrauli in Hardoi and lived in a house on rent in Dubagga.

Around 11:30 pm on Tuesday when he was returning home from his night shift, his bike was hit by the truck. The police registered a case against the truck driver.

In another case, a 30-year-old man was mowed down by a train in Gontinagar Extension. The deceased was identified as Satish Yadav of Chhota Bharwara village in the area. Reports said Satish had gone on a morning walk.

UP’s first MSME Mart to be inaugurated on Aug 15

Lucknow (PNS): In another move towards fortifying the traditional culture and indigenous crafts of the state, Uttar Pradesh’s first MSME Mart is all set to be inaugurated at the Summit Building in the state capital on Independence Day.

“As part of a series of measures undertaken by the Yogi Adityanath government to provide recognition and platform to the talented artisans and craftsmen of the state, a target has been set to open 75 such marts across the country,” UPI-CON Managing Director Praveen Singh said on Wednesday, adding that in addition, there was also a proposal to open such shops abroad as well.

He said the mart would display the talent of the local artisans and include a wide range of products -- from brass products of Moradabad to wooden toys and items of Chitrakoot.

Singh said that the UP MSME Mart on the seventh floor of the Summit Building had been completed and was serving as a promotional hub and showcasing destinations for the products curated by local artisans, who were trained under various government schemes like One District, One Product (ODOP).

The mart will officially be inaugurated on August 15 and would display the ‘Culture of Uttar Pradesh’ and has been titled the same, he said.

“After the inauguration of the MSME Mart in Lucknow, similar marts will be opened in places like Noida, Prayagraj, Varanasi and Agra. Thereafter, such marts will also be opened in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata,” he said.

Singh further said that the franchise model of UP MSME Mart was also being developed. For the franchise, a proper place will be mandatory and priority will be given to those trained in entrepreneurship, or those who have benefited from the Mukhyamantri Yuva Swarozgar scheme.

“Through the mart, the artisans will get proper recognition. Not only the products made by them will be displayed, but also the hard work put in to make such products will be shown through videos so that customers know the names of the artisans who created them,” he said.

The mart will also serve as an exquisite gifting solution for the customers ahead of the festive season. “In view of the festivities, discounts on various products will also be given to the customers,” Singh said.

Woman kills son for objecting to her illicit relations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heart-wrenching incident reported from Muzaffarnagar, a woman killed her minor son after he objected to her illicit relations. The woman and her paramour, who helped in executing the murder, were arrested by the police. The incident took place in Kurthul village under Budhana Kotwali police station.

Reports said that last Monday, the body of a missing 16-year-old youth named Ashish was found under suspicious circumstances in a secluded place inside the forest. After identifying the victim, the cops sent the body for autopsy.

Ashish’s mother Munesh lodged a report with the local police that her son was missing and apprehending that he might be killed.

During investigation, the cops learnt from the neighbours about the illicit relations of Munesh with one Satyendra and that her paramour visited the house on Sunday night. As Ashish was reported to be missing from Monday morning, the cops suspected some foul play and took both Munesh and Satyendra into

custody and grilled them.

After several hours of grilling, Munesh finally broke down and confessed that she killed her son with the help of Satyendra and that they dumped the body in the jungles and later lodged a ‘missing’ report to mislead the police. During interrogation, Munesh revealed that Ashish often opposed her relationship with Satyendra in the last 10 years.

As Ashish had grown up and became a hurdle for Munesh and Satyendra to continue their illicit relationship, both hatched a plan on Sunday night and strangled him to death. Later to conceal the crime, they dumped the body and lodged a report that Ashish was missing.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal, the body of a 16-year-old child was found on Monday morning in Kurthul village under Budhana police station of Muzaffarnagar. On behalf of the mother of the deceased child, a report of murder was lodged against unknown persons. After investigation, the mother and her paramour were arrested and sent to jail.

In a similar incident

reported from Mathura, a man, who was allegedly set on fire by his wife for opposing her illicit relations, died during treatment at a hospital in New Delhi on Wednesday. He had suffered 80 per cent burn injuries.

The incident took place in Kosi Kalan town on Monday evening. According to reports, the woman, identified as Rekha, had an extra-marital affair and her husband, Chaman Prakash, objected to it. An altercation took place between the couple and later on Monday evening, when Chaman was fast asleep, Rekha allegedly poured petrol on him and set him afire.

Hearing Chaman’s screams, the neighbours rushed in, extinguished the fire and rushed the man to hospital. However, he succumbed to his injuries in Delhi as he had sustained grievous burn injuries.

Kosi Kalan police station in-charge Anuj Kumar, said, “We have received a complaint from the family of deceased Chaman Prakash. A case under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against Rekha and she will be arrested soon.”

CITYBRIEFS



AIRPORT LIGHTS UP IN TRICOLOUR

Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport has been decked up in tricolour. Special selfie points celebrating 75 years of independence have been created inside the Terminal-2. The major highlight of the décor is the installation inside the arrival hall. “It

showcases the journey of India becoming home to world-class infrastructure over the past 75 years,” a spokesperson said. The airport has also planned for passenger engagement activities. “Handicraft artists from Kutch and Viramgam in Gujarat have been invited to the airport. The artists are teaching different forms of handicrafts

JEE MAIN

City Montessori School students registered a record-breaking feat in the recently-declared JEE Main results. Rohan Chaturvedi became the Lucknow topper with 99.96 percentile while Devansh Bansal scored 99.94 percentile, Naman Mishra 99.84 percentile and Suryansh 99.88 percentile.

Love Lucknow for *adab, tehzeeb*. Akshay Kumar

Lucknow (PNS): Actor Akshay Kumar, who has shot in Lucknow on numerous occasions, said he would take his reel sisters for shopping and enjoy delicacies like the Tunday kebabs. The actor, along with director Anand L Rai, was in the city for the promotion of his film recently. He said he loved Lucknow for its ‘adab’ and ‘tehzeeb’.

Akshay recalled that he shot for ‘Jolly LLB’ and ‘Toilet Ek Prem Katha’ and was overwhelmed by the love and affection. Asked whether he was apprehensive about his film’s fate at the box office, he said: “It is not in our hands but what is important is to keep working post the pandemic and attract the audience to theatres.”

All praise for Anand L Rai, Akshay said the director is an expert at making very simple films. “He narrated the story in ten minutes and I said yes to it because people can relate to this film. I don’t think a movie has been made on siblings in the last few years. The last one was ‘Tapasya’,” he said.

The actor admitted that people would be missing his action scenes in the film but he



wanted to send across the message that it was the best film of his life and that he wanted the audience to watch it.

Rai said he decided to make a film on sibling bond because people realised the value of family during the pandemic. “I realised the value of my own family because I was thinking only about my near and dear ones all the time. The main song of the film, which is about the love between a brother and a sister, has to be the soul of the film and it was a challenging part,” the director said.

STATE BANK OF INDIA				
RACPC CP-123, Viraj Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010				
POSSESSION NOTICE [for Immovable property under Rule 6 (1)]				
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized officer of the State Bank of India, RACPC, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a 13(2). The Bank issued demand notice on the date mentioned against account and stated herein after calling upon them to repay the amount, within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice.				
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the Property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said Rule on the date mentioned against the account.				
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of State Bank of India, RACPC, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow for the amount and interest thereon. Details of properties where possession had been taken is as follows:				
S. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower/Branch/ A/C No.	Description of the Immovable Property mortgaged	Amount O/s (as per u/s 13(2))	Date of Demand Notice / Possession
Branch: Gomti Nagar, Lucknow (9916)				
1	Borrower: 1. Mr. Sanjay Kumar Rai S/o Shri Janardan Rai, 2. Mr. Shyam Sunder Rai S/o Mr. Janardan Rai, Both R/o House No. SS-4/628, Vibhav Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010. A/CNo.: 30072918570	House No. SS-4/628, Vibhav Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010. Area: 36.75 Sq.Mt.. Owner: 1. Mr. Sanjay Kumar Rai S/o Shri Janardan Rai, 2. Mr. Shyam Sunder Rai S/o Mr. Janardan Rai. Boundaries: East: House No. 4/640, West: Road, North: House No. 4/627, South: House No. 4/629.	₹ 2,49,756.00 + interest+ other expenses as on 25.05.2022	25.05.2022 06.08.2022
Branch: PNB Gomti Nagar, Lucknow (4216)				
2	Borrower: Ms. Poonam Singh W/o Shri Brijendra Singh, 2. Shri Brijendra Singh S/o Late Mr. Jitendra Singh, Both R/o House No. C-3/263, Vikalp Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010. A/CNo.: 30225241074	House No. C-3/263, Vikalp Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010. Area: 200 Sq.Mt.. Owner: 1. Ms. Poonam Singh W/o Shri Brijendra Singh, 2. Shri Brijendra Singh S/o Late Mr. Jitendra Singh. Boundaries: East: 9 Mt wide road, West: Plot No. 3/238, North: Plot No. 3/262, South: Plot No. 3/264.	₹ 6,24,897.00 + interest+ other expenses as on 17.11.2020	12.05.2022 06.08.2022
Date: 11.08.2022, Place: Lucknow			Authorised Officer, State Bank of India	

UCO BANK			
ZONAL OFFICE : DHANSHREE COMPLEX, 1st FLOOR, D-63/8-1M, TULSIPUR, MAHMOORGANJ, VARANASI			
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)			
Whereas, The undersigned being the authorised officer of the UCO Bank, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued 60 Days Demand Notice dated mentioned against each accounts calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each accounts within 60 days from date of notice (s) date of receipt of the said notice (s).			
The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on this Date mention below.			
The borrowers in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to change of UCO Bank, for the amount, interest and expenses thereon.			
Name of Ac/Borrower/Owner of Property & Address	Description of mortgaged property	Demand Date Possession Date	Current Balance Outstanding
Mr. Sachin Kumar Kaushal S/o Raj Kumar Kaushal Babuganj Antu, District-Pratapgarh	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring 0.16 hect in the name of Sachin Kumar Kaushal S/o Raj Kumar Kaushal registered at sub Registrar-first Pratapgarh as per Book no-1 Vol. no-4288 page no 361 to 384 Doc no-5865 registered on 19.11.2016 situated at Plot no-6, Khata no 87, Vill-Chaturpur Tehsil- sadar District-Pratapgarh. . Boundaries : North : H/o Sumitra Devi, South : Road (Amethi to Pratapgarh), East : Road(Chaturpur to Umri), West : H/o Ram Milan.	05-05-2022 06-08-2022	25,15,837.21 (Rs. Twenty Five Lakh Fifteen Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Seven Rupees & Twenty One Paise Only) + Interest & Other Charges.
M / s I m r a n Enterprises Prop.- Mr. Imran Khan S/o Mohd Naeem Khan Vill-Purabgaon, Post- Kithawar Tehsil- sadar, Dist-Pratapgarh.	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring 0.004 hect in the name of Mr. Imran Khan S/o Mohd. Naeem Khar registered at sub Registrar- Pratapgarh as per Bahi no. 1, Zild no.-5203 page no 391 to 412 Serial no.-800 registered on 14.02.2020 situated at Plot no-480, Khata no 250, Vill-Purabgaon, Post- Kithawar Tehsil- sadar District-Pratapgarh. Boundaries : North : P/o Mahesh Prasad, South : Road (Pratapgarh to Attheha Marg), East: P/o Mohd Naeem, West: P/o Mahesh Prasad.	25-05-2022 06-08-2022	14,05,361.10 (Rs. Fourteen Lakh Five Thousand Three Hundred Sixty One Rupees & Ten Paise Only)+ Interest & Other Charges.
M r . N a r e n d r a Chandra Soni S/o Late Dargahi Vill & Post- Garwara Dist-Pratapgarh.	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring 143 Sq.ft. in the name of Mr. Narendra Chandra Soni S/o Late Dargahi registered at sub Registrar- Pratapgarh as per Bahi no. 1, Zild no.-1566 page no 145 to 162 Serial no.-1096 registered on 04.04.2003 situated at Vill & Post- Garwara Tehsil-sadar District- Pratapgarh. . Boundaries : North : Road(Chandikan Road), South : H/o Kanhaiya Lal, East : H/o Harikesh Maurya, West : H/o of Om Prakash.	25-05-2022 06-08-2022	6,29,656.59 (Rs. Six Lakh Twenty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Six Rupees & Fifty Nine Paise Only) + Interest & Other Charges.
Note : The above notice be also considered as 30 days notice for sale under rule 6, 8 and 9			
Date : 10-08-2022		Authorised Officer - UCO Bank	

Guv lays emphasis on working with unity



Governor Anandiben Patel inaugurates the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav programme at CSJM University on Wednesday.

PNS ■ KANPUR

Chancellor and Governor Anandiben Patel while inaugurating series of programmes at the Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav on Wednesday said all should work with unity because unity had more power and can steer the nation towards development and progress. She said working in a proper direction gave speed to the goal of development of a nation. She also emphasised the need for a pollution-free environment, proper sanitation and hygiene and substantial reduction in food waste and said proper health and nutrition for girls, women and children was highly essential as well. She exhorted gram pradhans that their responsibility was to convey the welfare schemes to each beneficiary. She said every institution

should fulfil its CSR responsibility towards people. Addressing the gathering Vice-Chancellor Prof Vinay Pathak expressed happiness over celebrating a series of different social programmes on the campus and 75 villages for the 75th Azadi Amrit ka Mahotsav. Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar, DM Vishakh G Iyer and university Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Awasthi gave speeches to celebrate 75th Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Governor Anandiben Patel later also launched a special magazine and audiobook on the anonymous freedom fighters of Kanpur. The CSJMU, in collaboration with RK Devi Eye Research Institute, Kanpur, and State Bank of India, later launched a free screening and treatment project for eye diseases, free cancer screening project in collaboration with

Cancer Institute and a free Anaemia Screening Project in collaboration with Paliwal Diagnostics. Along with this, free camps were also organised from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm at four different places — CSJMU auditorium, Sushila Devi Eye Hospital, Luv Kush Ashram, Bithoor, Prempur Vidyapeeth Inter College, Prempur, Chhibramau, Kannauj district, RK Devi Super Speciality Eye Hospital, Pukhrayan, Kanpur Dehat. Dr SN Prasad, Dr Umesh Paliwal and Dr Awadh Dubey informed about health camps for cancer screening, eye screening and anaemia screening. SBI CGM Ajay Kumar Khanna, MP Satydev Pachauri, Registrar Dr Anil Kumar Yadav, Dr Vandana Pathak, programme coordinator Dr Praveen Katiyar, media incharge Dr Vishal Sharma, gram pradhans, students and teachers were also present.

NSS to spread awareness about Covid vaccine benefits

PNS ■ KANPUR

Social organisation Nirman Sewa Sansthan (NSS) has decided to spread awareness about the merits of Covid-19 vaccination among migrant workers. Addressing media-persons here at the Kanpur Journalists Club on Wednesday, secretary Jaivir Singh said there were around 45 crore workers employed in country's unorganised sectors. Besides, of the total migrant workers, 26 per cent belonged to Uttar Pradesh alone. According to a study carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), maximum number of labourers migrate from Uttar Pradesh in India. Around 91 per cent of these migrant workers had received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccination so far. It was now the duty

of NSS to ensure full vaccination of all these workers and their family members by organising the special camps in association with the district health department and making them aware of its benefits through different modes of publicity which included the distribution of leaflets, displaying posters and staging nukkad natak etc among them. Kunal Singh Bagga, Ratan Baudh, Diamond Yusuf, Manoj Markatis, Maulana Abdul Mazid and Ram Dulare Vansaj were present at the news conference. **KILLED:** A contract safai karmachari of Kanpur Nagar Nigam was killed and two others injured when a dilapidated 20 feet long and 8 feet high boundary wall of Cawnpore Textile Mills (a unit of the British India Corporation Ltd) suddenly



NSS office-bearers addressing mediapersons on Wednesday.

caved in on them in Laxmipurwa locality of Raipurwa police station area late on Tuesday evening. In the incident, Devendra Sagar (22), a resident of quarter No 25 and pan masala vendors Sandeep and Mohit of the locality were buried under the debris. Besides, bikes of Rajesh and

Tarun parked there got also damaged. Due to damage to the electric pole power supply in the locality also got disrupted. Immediately ACP Anwarganj Mohd Akmal Khan and Raipurwa SHO Vinay Sharma rushed to the spot and sent all the injured to a near-

by private hospital where Devendra Sagar was declared dead by the doctors. Kin of the deceased said the marriage of Devendra Sagar was scheduled to be held after two months. ACM (IV) Rashmi Lamba, tehsildar and naib tehsildar also reached the spot. ACM (IV) said after collecting application from the kin of the deceased for granting them financial aid a report was being sent to the district magistrate. All possible help would be extended to them, she said. BIC OSD SC Gupta said BIC had nothing to do with this accident. Cawnpore Textile Mills was in custody of official liquidator Sanjay Ghosh of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs appointed by the court since 2012.

Students' Gymkhana hosts book reading session

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Students' Gymkhana, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIIT-K), hosted a book reading session by Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, Chairperson, Narayana Hrudayalaya Limited, on Tuesday at IIT Kanpur. The session titled 'Fighting the Pandemic: Leading from the Front' was based on the chapter Dr Shetty authored for the book 'MODI@20: Dreams Meet Delivery'. The book is an account of the two-decade-long illustrious political journey of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It also detailed his role as three-time Chief Minister of Gujarat and two-time Prime Minister of India. The book consists of twenty-one chapters by twenty-two authors from different fields. It is an analytical compilation on a range of topics, including Prime Minister Modi's leadership and vision

for India, his foreign policies, decision-making attributes, nation-wide initiatives, long-term cohesive planning etc. The book reading session at IIT Kanpur, however, was centred around the mammoth task of responding to the deadliest pandemic of recent times — the COVID-19. Being a country of 1.3 billion people, the onus was more on the Central government to provide timely solutions to protect the nation at a time when no one had any clue about the virus. Dr Shetty highlighted how the Government of India took timely action to ensure effective mitigation of the large-scale crisis. Dr Shetty shed light on several aspects of the successive lockdowns something which was new to the world and posed several challenges for the common people. He discussed the directives of COVID-appropriate behaviour as well which also tested time and patience of the masses.

PNS ■ KANPUR

Director of National Sugar Institute, Prof Narendra Mohan, addressing a seminar titled 'Indian Sugar Industry-Fueling Energy Requirements' on World Biofuel Day on Wednesday highlighted the key role played by the sugar industry to make Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) a success. He said "Indian sugar industry was all set to play a dominant role in Ethanol Blending Programme. He said ethanol, is now a favourite tool to balance sugar demand-supply scenario had to be preferred for its multiple advantages of saving foreign exchange, energy security and having a green fuel. He said sugar industry in future can tap the un-exploited potential of power generation through sugarcane plant residues and production of

compressed bio-gas from filter cake and other agro waste. He said the power export potential through bagasse and sugarcane plant residues can be to the extent of 15,000 MW or even more. He said one can expect about 2 MMT of Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) from filter cake and spent wash from molasses-based distilleries. He said this helped enable economic and environmental sustainability. Dr Seema Paroha, Professor Biochemistry said this day was celebrated to raise awareness about the use of non-fossil fuel as an alternative to conventional fossil fuel thus to minimise carbon emissions. She said in India where about 70 per cent of the power generation was thermal and for automobile fuel the country heavily depended upon imports and thus the subject matter assumed

greater significance. Talking about carbon emissions and green house gases, Prof D Swain stressed upon reducing dependence on fossil fuels as they were not forever and also to minimise carbon and green house gases emissions. He said greenhouse gases trapped heat and made the planet warmer. He said human activities were responsible for almost all the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the last 150 years. He said the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities was from burning fossil fuels for electricity and transportation. He said sugar industry can be an excellent source for providing clean, green and renewable energy, thus, addressing environmental and energy security issues.

Govt to launch awareness drive about oral health

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Community Process Manager (DCPM) Yoginder Pal while addressing the meeting on Oral Health Programme at District

Health and Wellness Centre on Wednesday said it is a matter of concern that major sections of people were totally apathetic towards dental hygiene and as a result they ended with oral cancer. He said the Uttar Pradesh Government had decided to launch an awareness drive especially in the rural and semi-urban areas to spread awareness related to oral health. He said under the camp all the people who approach it will be provided medical help and how to maintain dental hygiene. Addressing the session dental surgeon Dr Rashmi Singh said normally the body's natural defences and good oral health care such as daily brushing kept bacteria under control. She said without proper oral hygiene, bacteria can reach levels that might lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease. She said good dental health translated to good health overall and added that dental problems such as cavities or gum disease can impair the ability to eat and speak properly, cause pain and bad breath. She said many people may not realise was that

poor dental health can have a profoundly negative affect on areas outside of the mouth, including heart, diabetes, pregnancy and chronic inflammation, such as arthritis and a few more. She said studies suggested that bacteria in gum disease can travel to heart and cause heart disease, clogged arteries or stroke. She said gum infections such as periodontitis, have been linked to premature births and low-birth weight in pregnant women. She said diabetes reduced body's resistance to infection making the gums more susceptible to infection, which can adversely affect blood sugar. She said practicing good dental hygiene was important, because it can prevent these type of oral disease and dental problems. Dr Singh advised the gathering that if one had problems like pain, bleeding gums, swelling, both inside and outside the mouth, tenderness, blisters and ulcers that don't heal in colour or texture of the soft tissues then it can be indications of a serious or potentially serious condition such as mouth cancer or chronic gum disease.

V-C: Tiranga Mahotsav's aim is to rekindle flame of freedom

PNS ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chancellor of the Chandra Shekhar University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T) Dr DR Singh led a two-km-long Tiranga Yatra from the university premises to Ambedkar Chowk and back on Wednesday. Later addressing the gathering he said the objective of Tiranga Mahotsav was to rekindle the flame of freedom and to make people realise the sacrifices made by freedom fighters of the nation. He said the national flag always motivated each person. He made an appeal to the faculty, staff and students to unitedly work for the progress of the nation. He said if one had such feelings then one can push the university to the topmost rungs of success ladder and this can be done provided each person devotedly took part. He appealed to one and all present to ensure that they always remembered the sacrifices made by freedom fighters and thus pay homage to them in the right earnest. He made the faculty and staff take oath to maintain unity and integrity of the country and abide by the principles. The V-C on way back paid floral



Vice-Chancellor of CSAU&T leading the Tiranga Yatra on Wednesday

tributes at Chandra Shekhar Azad's statue in the university premises. He distributed over 1,000 tricolours. Addressing the gathering

Registrar Dr CL Maurya said Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is being celebrated to pay homage to India's freedom fighters. He said in addition

during this celebration the country will remember all significant landmarks during India's independence movement and added that the

country will gain new power for future growth and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav reminisces the elixir of the value of freedom. Addressing the gathering Dr Dharam Raj Singh, Department of Agriculture, said this celebration echoed motivation from freedom warriors, new visions, new resolutions and self-dependence. He said it strived to facilitate the youth to shoulder the accountability for fulfilling this Mahotsav and to remain dedicated to the Indian people who had been instrumental in driving India thus far in its developmental journey. Soil scientist Dr Khalil Khan said Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav referred to an epitome of all that was progressive about India's political, socio-cultural and economic identity. He said this Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav officially began on March 12, 2021, which initiated a 75-week countdown to India's 75th independence anniversary. Others present were Dr Karam Hussain, Dr PK Rath, Dr PK Upadhyaya and over 1,500 students and NCC cadets.

COURT NOTICE
CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT)
(Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 81 OF 2022
IN THE MATTER OF
THE GOODS OF
Late Smt. Sumitra Devi Tiwari W/o
Late Abhai Nath Tiwari R/o 220B/16/45,
Sohabatya Bagh, District
Prayagraj.....Deceased.
Manish Tiwari and 2
Others.....Petitioners.
WHEREAS an application has been
made by Manish Tiwari, Anura Tiwari both
sons of Late Anand Narayan Tiwari and
Smt. Nirmala Devi W/o Late Anand
Narayan Tiwari All resident of 220B/16/45
Sohabatya Bagh Prayagraj, for the probate
of the will (or Letters of Administration to
the estate) of Late Smt. Sumitra Devi
Tiwari deceased, who died at Tiwari,
Bhabhary on 21.12.2020 AND WHERE-
AS, the 19th day of September, 2022 has
been fixed for hearing of the said applica-
tion. THIS CITATION is issued calling upon
all persons claiming to have any interest
to come and see the proceedings if they
think fit before the grant of probate (or
Letters of Administration).
Given under my hand and the seal of
the Court this 05th day of August, 2022.
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD
Shri Pooja Agarwal, Advocate
Counsel for the Petitioner.

COURT NOTICE
CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT)
(Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 82 OF 2022
IN THE MATTER OF
THE GOODS OF
Late Ajeet Kumar, R/o 25
Karelabagh Colony, District Allahabad
(Prayagraj).....Deceased.
Laxmi Devi.....Petitioner.
WHEREAS an application has
been made by Laxmi Devi W/o Ajeet
Kumar, R/o 25 Karelabagh Colony,
Tulsipur, District Allahabad (Prayagraj),
for the probate of the will (or Letters of
Administration to the estate) of Late
Ajeet Kumar deceased, who died at
Nazareth Hospital on 10.10.2021
AND WHEREAS, the 19th day of
September, 2022 has been fixed for
hearing of the said application. THIS
CITATION is issued calling upon all per-
sons claiming to have any interest to
come and see the proceedings if they
think fit before the grant of probate (or
Letters of Administration).
Given under my hand and the seal of
the Court this 05th day of August, 2022.
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD
Shri Suneel Kumar Mishra,
Advocate
Counsel for the Petitioner.

Varanasi Region mails over 50,000 rakhis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Post offices of Varanasi Region have booked over 50,000 rakhis to different parts of the country. Besides, about 800 rakhis have also been sent abroad, informed Postmaster General (PMG) Krishna Kumar Yadav on the eve of the festival of Raksha Bandhan. 'Most of these rakhis have been sent to foreign countries like the USA, UK, Singapore, UAE, Germany, France, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa etc. At the same time, sisters living abroad have also sent a good number of rakhis to their brothers living in various districts of Varanasi Region,' said the PMG, adding that special arrangements have been made for booking and sorting of rakhi posts and their speedy delivery from post offices including Railway Mail Service (RMS) and National Sorting Hub. 'Rakhis will also be delivered on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan,' Yadav said. Earlier, the PMG informed that over 1.11 lakh tricolor flags have been sold from the post offices of Varanasi

Region by last Sunday when despite weekly closure, people reached the post offices to buy the tricolor flags for hoisting at homes and workplaces. 'There is a lot of zeal among the people in rural areas also,' said Yadav, adding that recently the officers and employees of the Department of Posts took the initiative to create awareness among the people about the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign by visiting important and historical places like Banaras Hindu University, Ghats of Ganga, Sarnath, Ramnagar Fort, Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Sthal, Tomb of Lord Cornwallis and Bhitari Stambh of Skandagupta in Ghazipur, Shahi Fort, Shahi Pul and Atala Masjid in Jaunpur, Nagwa, the birthplace of Shaheed Mangal Pandey and Rattu Chak, the birthplace of Sher-e-Baliya Chittu Pandey in Ballia. 'For wide publicity, postmen are motivating people to hoist the tricolor at their homes from August 13 to 15 while distributing mail in the area, also, a special campaign is being run by the Department of Posts on social media

as well, the PMG said. **POSTAL EMPLOYEES GO ON STRIKE:** The employees of the Postal department on Wednesday went on a day-long strike in favour of their demands including the restoration of the old pension scheme and regularisation of casual labour & contractual basis employees. On the call given by National Federation of Postal Employees (NFPE), the postmen, MTS and Group-C employees of the Postal department went on a day-long strike and staged a demonstration at the main post office in the Cantonment area here. They demanded that the corporatisation of the Postal department should be stopped, old pension scheme should be restored by withdrawing the new pension scheme, the GDS, casual labour & contractual basis employees should be made regular, the payment of dearness allowance / dearness relief of 18 months withheld from January 2020 to June, 2021 should be paid and the employees Gramin Dak Sewa

category should be provided all the facilities being availed by the government employees. The agitated employees also demanded that the compulsion of a very good branch mark for MACP should be abolished, 5 per cent limitation for the appointment of dependents of deceased employees on compassionate ground should be abolished and all the pending cadre review should be completed. They threatened to intensify the agitation if the government failed in paying serious consideration to the demands. The employees blamed that the government is trying to corporatise the Postal department to benefit the corporate houses and added that the government policies are not in the interest of the Postal department and employees as well. Prominent among those who joined the demonstration were Ranjit Singh, Gurudutt Gupta, Santosh Vishwakarma, Rajnikant Rai and Narendra Singh.

NRC giving life to newborns at DDU

PNS ■ VARANASI

Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) located at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital is engaged in making children 'well-nourished' by getting rid of malnutrition. Within seven years, this centre has given new life to about 1,000 children by making them well-nourished and the effort of the NRC is going on. 'Prevention of malnutrition is a big challenge in today's society. The government is constantly trying to get the society rid of malnutrition and in this direction the NRC is established in DDU Hospital in 2015 and now the centre is running in the newly constructed Mother Child Health (MCH) wing in the hospital

premises,' said Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, explaining that the main objective of the centre is to make the malnourished and hyper-malnourished children well-nourished. According to Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) of DDU Hospital Dr RK Singh, in this centre with 10 beds, malnourished children up to five years of age are given free treatment. Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) teams and Anganwadi and ASHA workers identify malnourished children and get them admitted to the NRC. 'Apart from this, some children are also brought here after being referred from various government hospitals.

Maurya inspects Arajiline block

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya conducted an inspection in Arajiline block here on Wednesday during his two-day visit. On the occasion, he performed Annaprashan rituals of three newborn children and Godbharai of six women. During his address, Maurya laid special emphasis on door-to-door distribution of tri-colour flags to make the Tiranga Abhiyan (Tricolour Campaign) a grand success. 'As the country is celebrating 75 years of independence, the tri-color flags should be hoisted at every house,' he said, giving emphasis on promoting the campaign.

Apart from being celebrated with the aim of spreading the spirit of patriotism across the country, the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is also dedicated to the people of India and the brave soldiers,' he said, adding that during these days, many cultural and literary programmes are also being organised across the country. To make the campaign successful, Yuva Mangal Dal's block president Ram Singh Verma was asked to distribute the tricolor flags from house to house.

In the end, Maurya held a meeting with the Block Pramkh Nagina Patel, Block



Deputy CM KP Maurya performing Godbharai rituals at Arajiline block in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

Development Officer (BDO) Vijay Kumar Jaiswal, other block officers and employees and gave necessary directions.

Maurya also inaugurated the stalls set up by the women groups and child development project in the development block premises by lighting the lamp. He also saw the pre-education kits, weight related equipment, nutritious food at the stalls set up by the child development project apart from different types of tricolor flags, bags, purses, saris, etc

made by the women groups.

Later, Maurya inspected the two Amrit Sarovar (lakes) in Chaukhandi and Thathara villages under the Sewapuri development block. While directing the departmental officers present on the occasion, he said that the Prime Minister's Amrit Sarovar Yojana is a very ambitious scheme and its implementation should be ensured with priority and honesty.

He directed the concerned departmental officers to ensure

the planting of fruit-bearing and shady plants along the banks of these lakes, as well as the arrangement of cemented benches etc for sitting.

MLA (Rohania) Dr Sunil Patel, district BJP president Hansraj Vishwakarma, Kaushlendra Singh, district chief of Apna Dal Dr Narendra Patel, Child Development Project Officer Manoj Kumar Gautam, Bindu Yadav and many others were also present. Later, Maurya left for his visit to Prayagraj district.

IIT (BHU) to do research in power, traffic areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

IIT (BHU) will conduct research with advanced technologies in the fields of electricity and transportation and traffic through smart grid, and transportation and projects related to smart city traffic management systems. For this, the Department of Science and Technology, Government India, I-DAPT Hub Foundation (Varanasi), also run by central government and USA-based National Science Foundation (NSF, USA) will collaborate in these projects with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data science, edge com-

puting, augmented reality etc.

Giving this information, IIT (BHU) Director Prof Pramod Kumar Jain said that India and the United States joined hands in February to encourage the research community of both the nations for collaborative research that can accelerate the development of new technologies, tools and systems for mutual societal and economic benefits. 'This bilateral collaboration will focus on critical and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, data science, edge computing, Augmented reality etc,' he said.

I-DAPT Hub Foundation, IIT (BHU) and NSF USA together invited applications

from prospective researchers working for the advancement of data analytics and predictive technologies in areas like power, healthcare, road transport, telecommunications etc. After stringent rounds of screening of the received applications by NSF and I-DAPT Hub Foundation, two project proposals from IIT (BHU) were finally sanctioned for the grant.

In this regard, he further informed that the first sanctioned project deals with a smart power grid system which will ensure power equity among all and cost effectiveness thus bringing down the overall cost consumer need to pay.

Smart power grid systems will also make way for a future smarter world which includes electric vehicle infrastructure, IoT enabled energy efficient buildings, renewable energy infrastructure, smart meters etc.

The other sanctioned project deals with smart transportation systems and smart city traffic management systems which will reduce congestion on city streets and reduce air pollution, carbon-footprint. The proposed project combines machine learning with IoT and 5G to reduce human-caused accidents. Smart transportation will also be highly cost-effective and thus solve the persisting global oil crisis.

Girls tie rakhis to soldiers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A group of girls reached the 39 Gorkha Training Centre (GTC) campus located in the Cantonment area and tied rakhis to the Indian soldiers here on Wednesday on the eve of festival of Raksha Bandhan. The students of Raghav Ram Verma Girls Inter College took the oath of protecting the country by threading defense threads on the wrists of the army personnel engaged in the security of the border. The girl students tied rakhi on the wrists of the GCO and the jawans so that they couldn't feel like they were living away from home. The army personnel also took the oath of



Girls tying rakhis to the hands of soldiers at 39-GTC in Varanasi on Wednesday.

protecting the country from them.

In the programme, under the leadership of Deputy

Manager Vikas Bagi of Raghav Ram Verma Girls Inter College, dozens of girl students tied rakhis on their hands and applied tilak on the foreheads of dozens of JCOs/ soldiers/ recruits. The jawans were delighted when they came to know that the girl students had prepared the rakhis themselves instead of buying them from the market.

On the occasion, college teacher Neetu Singh, Rani Jha along with students Sneha Chaudhary, Mehak Khan, Shreya Gupta, Priyanshi Seth, Anjali Sonkar, Sania, Sonkar, Priyanka Singh, Suhani Yadav, Laboni Mandal, Palak Seth, Muskan Sonkar and others were present.

BHU V-C honoured at IIT Roorkee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT Roorkee) honoured Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain, an alumnus of IIT Roorkee, with Distinguished Alumnus Award (DAA)-2018. This recognition is bestowed upon him for his excellence in his leadership role in academia. IIT Roorkee Director Prof Ajit K Chaturvedi conferred the award to Prof Jain at the Senate Hall (IIT Roorkee) on Wednesday. The ceremony was graced by the presence of faculty members, students, and staff of the Institute.

Prof Jain was the Director of IIT Gandhinagar for more than 12 years. He is presently the V-C of BHU. Prof. Jain was conferred the Padma Shri in 2020 and the Distinguished Alumnus Award (DAA) of the California Institute of Technology in 2022. As the first Director of IIT Gandhinagar, Prof Jain experimented with numerous ideas in curriculum development, student affairs, faculty recruitment and



BHU V-C Prof Sudhir K Jain being honoured at IIT Roorkee on Wednesday.

faculty management. The DAA is among the highest honour given to alumni of the University of Roorkee (UOR) or IIT Roorkee to recognise their outstanding contributions in academic or research excellence, excellence in engineering or technology innovation, leadership in the government or public sector or private sector etc.

Expressing his pleasure on the occasion, Prof Ajit K Chaturvedi said, 'Prof Jain has made sustained efforts to inculcate the spirit of excellence among the faculty and students of IIT Gandhinagar. Now BHU is benefiting from his rich experience. I am sure his leadership will take BHU to greater heights.'

Prof Sudhir K Jain said, 'I

am grateful to IIT Roorkee so many ways in which it has shaped my life. This award is a recognition of whatever I could achieve as a result of the path that Roorkee put me on. I cherish my time at Roorkee which has not only given me an education in the widest sense of what education may mean, but also given me some extraordinary mentors and friends.'

Police get vital clues to bombing at former MLA's house

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police have got vital clues in the case of bombing of former MLA Rang Bahadur Patel's house in Prayagraj. It is learned that son Anurag's brother-in-law Chandrashekhar had hurled the crude bomb. Along with Chandrashekhar, his partner Rahul was also involved in the bombing. Police have arrested Chandrashekhar and interrogated him.

It may be pointed out here that crude bomb was hurled on Monday night at the house of former MLA Rang Bahadur Patel in Teliarganj pottery street of Shivkuti police station area in Prayagraj city. Vikas Patel and his brother Anurag were injured due to the shrapnel of the bomb. The incident had created panic in the locality.

During the police investigation, CCTV footage revealed that the youths who came in a

white colored scooty had hurled the bomb. When the CCTV footage was scanned, it was found that one of the attackers was wearing a cap, while the other was wearing a lungi. A case was written against the unknown on the complaint given by Vikas.

CO Ajit Singh Chauhan said that Chandrashekhar, a resident of Fatehpur Bichua Georgetown, has been nabbed. He is under interrogation. The bomb was thrown by Rahul and he is also a resident of Georgetown. He too will be caught soon.

Meanwhile, in the case of acid attack on a women bank manager in Kaushambi district, two angles are visible in front of the police investigating at many points.

The first point is to expel secrets from the suspects who were rounded up and interrogated, and the second point is

about the relationship of the bank manager. However, the surveillance team is proving to be very helpful for the police. It is believed that the police officers will soon expose the case through the call details of the victim.

When the police investigated the case of acid attack on the lady bank manager, it was found that a person from the Charwa town had bought a four wheeler. The installment of which was being deposited in the bank.

He had not paid the installment for the last three months. On this he transferred three lakh rupees to the account. As a result, the manager paid the entire amount in installments of the vehicle.

When the owner of the car came to know about this, three days ago he reached the bank with a young man. He also got into a heated argument with

the manager. In such a situation, the victim expressed the apprehension of attack on both the persons.

Another thing is coming to the fore in front of the police team investigating in the other direction. The manager's match was fixed somewhere a year ago. The young man is a teacher.

The family members did not like him. They were looking for another match for their daughter, while the manager was talking to the young man on the phone regularly.

Suddenly on Sunday, other relatives reached the manager's house for marriage. This was known to the first relative. It could also be suspected that marriage to someone else has led the teacher exasperated. However, the police officers probing both the aspects claimed that the case will be unveiled soon.

Rape accused gets bail with conditions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A rape accused has been granted bail with conditions by the Allahabad High Court.

Ashish Kumar Verma of Saray Inayat, Handiya was accused of raping a minor girl, but later the charges were withdrawn by the rape victim girl who was found to be adult.

Justice Saral Srivastava after hearing the plea granted conditional bail to the accused.

The court was told by the lawyer of the accused that Ashish and the girl were in an affair for the past three years, and their marriage was solemnised at Aryasamaj Mandir, Kydganj. After getting protection from the High Court, they had registered their marriage.

After a clash took between them, a lawyer of the village instigated the girl to file a case of gang rape against Ashish and his family members. He also suggested that she present herself as a minor. A complaint was lodged in this regard, but later both the families sat together and the issue was resolved. She also said in her statement before the magistrate that nothing wrong was done with her. She is living with her husband. The age certificate indicated that she was 21.

All of a sudden, after almost one and a half year, the investigation officer of the police expunged the names of her father-in-law and brother-in-law from the complaint and arrested Ashish on the charges of raping a minor girl, and was sent to jail.

The court went through the facts and granted conditional bail to Ashish.

SHUATS, ORGANISES 'AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV': To celebrate the glorious seventy-fifth anniversary of our nation, the Department of English, SHU-ATS, organized the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav on the campus on Wednesday, 10 August 2022.

The inaugural session began with an opening prayer by Mr Deepak Ransom. The chief guest Professor J.N. Mishra, Dean, Faculty of Management, Humanities and Social Sciences encouraged the students to try and become good human beings and model citizens. Dr Shikha Chatterjee presented a special patriotic song and Mr Deepak Ransom read his poem to commemorate the Independence Day.

In the morning session, the essay-writing completion and on-the-spot poetry writing contest was held, in which a large number of university students participated. In the afternoon session, declamation and patriotic singing competitions were held. Abhay Sahil Paul, Akriti Kumari, Prava Das, Shamroz Abrar were among the winners. At the end of the programme Professor Marion Mathew distributed the certificate to the winning participants.

Dr Ashish Alexander, Head, English department extended a vote of thanks. Dr Hira Bose, Dr Aparsa Stanley, Dr Shivani S. Verma, Dr Immanuel Prem Kumar, Dr Shikha Chatterjee, Mrs Amy G. Paul were also present.

Teacher dies in road mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a tragic incident, a female teacher going to her maternal home to tie the rakhi on her brother's wrist, died in a road accident here on Wednesday.

Her husband also sustained grave injuries and is in critical condition. The accident happened on Wednesday in Lala Bazar when a bike-riding couple was hit by an uncontrollable truck. It is alleged that the police left the truck driver even after apprehending him. 42-year-old Munna Dwivedi, a resident of Birbal village of Lalganj, is a private veterinarian. He lives in his maternal grandmother's house in Shekhpur Chauras. His wife

Sarita Devi, 38, was a teacher in a primary school in nearby Birbal village. On Wednesday morning, Munna was going to his in-laws' place in Chitrakoot on a bike. Sarita thought that a day before Raksha Bandhan, she would go to her maternal home and spend some time among her loved ones. And she will be back after the Rakhi festival, but that could not happen.

At around 6.30 in the morning, when both of them reached near Lala Bazar in Manikpur an uncontrolled overload truck coming from Alapur side carrying Morang hit the bike. Due to which both of them fell on the road and got seriously injured. They were immediately taken to CHC

Sangramgarh with the help of people.

There the doctors declared Sarita dead, while the seriously injured husband Munna Dwivedi was referred to Prayagraj SRN Hospital. On the other hand, the truck running away after the incident was chased by the people there. They reached Sangramgarh police station and informed them about the incident. The police stopped the truck, but released it after a while.

Munna's relative Ajay Kumar Pandey alleged that the truck driver was let off even after informing the police. The relatives are angry about this.

One son of Sarita has passed Intermediate exam this

year and her daughter is pursuing BA.

Both study in Prayagraj. Munna's uncle Prem Narayan Dwivedi has given a complaint to the Manikpur police against the unknown truck driver. Sangramgarh Police has termed the allegation of abandonment of the truck as baseless.

SO Satyendra Rai said that no truck was handed over to the police.

People had only reported that a truck had run away after being hit, but by then the truck had gone too far. At present, the CCTV camera installed in the market is being scanned to find out the truck which has caused the accident, added the SO.

Min participates in 'Har Ghar Tiranga Yatra'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Minister of State (Independent Charge) Horticulture, Agriculture Marketing, Agriculture Foreign Trade, Agriculture Export Dinesh Pratap Singh who was in Kaushambi district of UP said that the Bharatiya Janata Party is a party of nationalists and it is because of itself. The alliance is broken in Bihar but why did it break, it should be asked by those who broke it.

Addressing the media at a field in Kaushambi, Minister of State Dinesh Pratap Singh said that BJP is not dependent on Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi

Yadav. Our party will form an independent government there itself.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) Horticulture, Agriculture Marketing, Agriculture Foreign Trade, Agriculture Export Dinesh Pratap Singh participated in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Yatra' organized by the BJP at Manjhanpur Headquarters in Kaushambi.

In response to a question on the concluding day of the tricolor yatra, he said that the slogan of 'Jaihind' can be raised on a bike without a helmet as a part of nationalism. There is no rule for this.

Earlier, Minister of State

Dinesh Pratap Singh reached Kanshi Ram Guest House in Osa, Kaushambi. After that, the tricolor bike rally was flagged off in the BJP office.

After touring along with the rally, he held a meeting with the officials of Udyan and Mandi Committee at Kanshi Ram Guest House.

'Tiranga Pheri': IIIT-A fraternity as part of celebration of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", took out a three km "Tiranga Pheri" from Jhalwa campus here on Wednesday.

The procession that included hundreds of teachers, employees and students was jointly flagged off by Prof GC Nandi, senior professor and

Prof Vijayshri Tiwari, Registrar of IIIT-A.

People carrying tri-color started to march- Tringa Pheri from the Administrative Building and went through residential areas , hostels and Pipal Gaon.

Meanwhile six day Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations will witness two major events like Har Office Tiranga on Aug 11, Hum Sab Tiranga on Aug 12, lectures on Aug 13, 14 and 15 respectively.

Dr Sanjay Singh , Coordinator said that we have identified 26 Institute's buildings where flags will be hoisted on I day.

35-year-old man commits suicide

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A man committed suicide in an area under Chilh police station on Tuesday. As per reports, Birju Yadav (35), a resident of Majhigawaan, had gone to sleep in his room on Monday night. The family members got perturbed when he did not wake up till late on Tuesday morning and his room was found closed from inside. People gathered near the house. Someone peeped through the window and saw Birju hanging from the roof. On getting information Station Officer (SO) Chilh Ajit Srivastava reached the spot, took the body of the deceased into custody and sent

it for th post-mortem examination.

PLANTED: Under Harishankari Plantation Week saplings were planted at 12 places on Monday. DFO PS Tripathi said under the plan the Forest department had decided to develop Harishankari Vatika at 75 places in the district.

He said plants of peepal, bargad etc were being planted amidst the chanting of shlokas. He said most of the plantations were done on the demand of locals.

He said concluding ceremony will be held at Windhom Fall park (developed by Forest department) on August 15 in

which dignitaries will plant saplings in memory of their beloved.

STATE HIGHWAY: The process has been started to construct a new 110 kilometre long state highway in the district. EE PWD Deypal said the department had sought proposal for the work and he had sent it with detailed information. He said the road will be known as 150th state highway. About the road he said it had to connect Ahraura to Kalwari and its width will be 7 metres and will connect other important places, including Sakteshgarh, Jargo and Rajgah.

BHAJAN SANDHYA: Shri Dwarkadhish Ji Trust is

going to hold a grand Bhajan Sandhya on August 17 under its Jhulanotsav anniversary. Trustee Pradeep Bajaj said under the series of programmes which had started on August 8 different tableaux were to be displayed till August 12 at temple premises of Dwarkadhish Ji. He said on Raksha Bandhan Jhulanotsav was being organised regularly since 1900 which was started by his forefather Jamuna Prasad Bajaj and got interrupted for only two years due to Coronavirus. He said bhajan singer Shri Krishna Das was going to perform on August 17. Director Bajaj School Paritosh was also present.

FIRST COLUMN

ETHICS CANNOT BE SEEN IN BLACK AND WHITE

It is a practice one can learn by acquiring maturity



PRAMOD PATHAK

Defining ethics has never been easy. Understanding it has been even more difficult. And practicing it is a job few will be able to carry out. Yet, it is a subject on which society always debates.

The term, which originated from philosophy, has today become a part of several disciplines and is an important area of study in management theory and practice. This is the reason why the word ethics has acquired several connotations. When it comes to the essence, ethics still remains the science of right and wrong. But essentially it is a practice.

Right and wrong often do not have a clear-cut boundary. It depends on the actor or the observer. How the act or conduct is interpreted. The same act may be interpreted differently by different people. Many times, the same act may be construed differently by the same individual under different conditions.

Theoretical ethics, then, is not always a complete guide to ethical conduct. Time and space, society and culture, religion and country have their own ways to explain what is ethical and what is not. Obviously, because a wide range of determinants go into qualifying an act or behaviour as ethical or unethical.

Over the ages, the Indian philosophical approach to ethics from Satyug through Treta and Dwapar to Kalyug, i.e., the present times, has metamorphosed considerably, inviting critical opinion and conflicting views. And rightly so, because human beings have their own touchstone in the form of ego that drives logic. And this often clouds the concept of ethics.



The Western idea of ethics is equally fluid, and there are many views and approaches towards understanding the concept and practice of ethics. However, amid all this the important point to note is that despite the so many approaches and stances one can still make out whether an act or conduct is ethical or not, the three critical qualifying attributes being intent, outcome and situation, in the same order of priority. Intent is certainly the most crucial one.

The universal element of what is ethical and what is not, thus, depends to the maximum extent on intent. Another important dimension of ethics is that it is a practice one can learn by acquiring maturity of mind and sensitivity of heart.

The common understanding of an ethical behaviour is that it is something which is beyond the ambit of the ordinary or the mundane and is laced in spirituality, religion and renunciation. But the truth is that ethics can be practiced in day to day life and without much hassle, the best guide being the voice of conscience.

To believe that pays to be good. But goodness has to be defined objectively. Ethics is something that needs to be understood, practiced and carried out on a regular basis. It is the Dharma, one's duty in a given situation, the right action or conduct. It is not about religiosity, but about doing the right things religiously, with purity of intent.

While actions on their own may appear right or wrong to an external observer, it is what goes in the mind of the actor that will determine the ethicality.

The outcome of the act is not the sole determinant. In one word, it is the conscientiousness that is the final arbiter. This is the reason why even the actions of Gods are interpreted differently. Lord Ram's killing of Bali or Lord Krishna's actions in Mahabharata war can all be open to interpretation. Ethics is not something that can be seen in black and white.

(The author is a former Professor of Management, IIT (ISM), Dhanbad, and Founder, The Goodness Movement & Kaizen Mantra.)

Closing the learning gaps left by Covid

The Covid-19 pandemic caused learning gaps, which are being addressed by Mission Buniyad

AIMAN SIDDIQUI

Now that the children are going to schools, a Delhi Government programme to close the gap that has taken place in learning during the pandemic is helping in more ways than one.

Pooja, a student in a government school in Saket, Delhi had been waiting to return to her school for the past two years. As the classes commenced online during the pandemic, she missed almost all the classes, because she did not have a mobile phone.

"I used to go to my friend's house so that I could attend the online classes. But I mostly stayed and helped at home, while my mother went out to work," she said.

She has recently begun going to the school, and says: "My teachers are helping me a lot. I had missed many classes and some of my friends learnt a lot of things that I had missed during this time. My teachers are now helping me to cope with extra classes that have commenced offline."

Pooja, who has been promoted to class seven this year, says: "I am very happy that I am finally able to go to the school. I am trying to cover most of the missed courses before my new classes start so that I know what my friends learnt." Pooja wants to take up computers when she grows up.

Her school has started classes under 'Mission Buniyad' — a programme to close the learning gap that emerged among primary school students due to the pandemic and subsequent closure of schools. The programme was first launched by the Delhi Government in February 2018 to improve the learning skills of children studying in schools run by the city administration and the municipal corporations. Under this, students are now being provided with extra classes during the summer vacation. Once schools opened up, it was once again put into gear.

Meetu Kumari, a teacher in a government school in Rohini, North-west Delhi, said: "This programme has been started for children of class III to VIII, as many of the students were lagging behind. Some of them had gone back to their villages when the schools closed. In fact, many students missed online classes as their parents could not help them with the necessary gadgets. The parents had not attended schools themselves, and, hence, did not understand how to help their children."

However, she added that most of the students in classes X to XI had somehow attended online schools since those are important years. The students found ways to procure phones with internet connections.

According to Kumari, students of primary sections had incurred a gap of almost two years due to which many "could not form proper sentences in Hindi or do basic operations like addition and subtraction in Maths or sometimes even recognize numbers", which was nec-



MISSION BUNIYAD WAS FIRST LAUNCHED BY THE DELHI GOVERNMENT IN FEBRUARY 2018 TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING SKILLS OF CHILDREN STUDYING IN SCHOOLS RUN BY THE CITY ADMINISTRATION AND THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS



essary and basic for the classes they had been promoted to.

Several teachers and schools adopted different methods to help students cope up with the learning gaps. Teachers in several schools also claimed that they had received training and help from mentor teachers working in 'Mission Buniyad' on how to handle the learning gaps and these strategies were very useful.

Kumari explained how 'Mission Buniyad' was executed. The children were divided into groups according to their level of competence. For example, students who could not recognise numbers or read Hindi words have been put in Level I Group, while those who can recognise numbers but did not know how to multiply were placed in Level II.

Maithili, a teacher at a school in Jamia Nagar, detailed the exercise: "We have made divisions according to old and new students of each class in the primary schools. They sit together as the teacher covers the course of that respective class." She explained that this helps students simultaneously. For example, students who were in class six and have been promoted but need to learn the course (old students) and students that have just reached class six (new students) learn together to bridge the gap.

Another teacher, who did not wish to be named, explained further: "Proper exams could not be conducted during the time when online classes were being held. All the students were promoted on the basis of internal assessments that

they completed at home as that was the only way possible. That could be one of the reasons that the learning gap has emerged."

The classes in Pooja's school under 'Mission Buniyad' have started from April 11 and will go on till June 15, allotting a little more than two months for the students who could not attend online classes. The new session starts from July in which all students, including those who were suffering from a backlog, will continue with their actual classes.

Kumari says that it is hard to judge current improvement as the programme is at an early stage but "the students are showing steady progress."

Many students, owing to different reasons, had faced inevitable discontinuation in their schooling as the schools went online during the pandemic. Pooja's mother Shanti, a single mother and a resident of Neb Sarai Basti, has three daughters. All of them, two girls in class VII and one in class VI, were not able to attend classes, because they did not have a mobile phone. Shanti says: "I am not educated, but I wanted my daughters to get education so that they can fend for themselves." Shanti works as a ragpicker in the area close to her home.

The learning gap obviously occurred during the pandemic due to the inability of several children in accessing classes on smartphones. Netra, a housewife and mother of two girls and a son, who lives in Saidulajab area of Saket, said: "My husband works with

some construction companies. He has to take the phone with him, so we did not have a phone at home."

Rajesh, who irons clothes in Palam Vihar in the NCR region, also faced a similar challenge. He said: "I have two children and there is only one phone at home. Both of them had to either adjust to the timings or miss out on their studies. Most of the time they kept on fighting for the phone."

In fact, even if students could study online, many parents were apprehensive of continuing the education as they felt that they had been burdened with the task of educating the child by themselves. They preferred to skip the year and send their children to schools only when the offline classes commenced. Sarita, a resident of Harijan Basti, Dwarka, said: "When online classes started, I had to sit with my eight-year-old son to make him study. I have not completed my studies; how was I supposed to help him?" The burden fell on the parents, and many were not able to cope up with the task.

Network too became an issue for many families. They said that many times either mobiles do not catch the network, electricity was not available or there was no money for internet recharge. However, the good news is that most of the students who could not attend online classes wished to go back to school once offline classes commenced.

The article is written as a part of the WNCB Awards for Untold Stories on child labour (Charkha Features)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

NITISH KUMAR SIDED WITH CORRUPTION AND CONGRESSISM. CONGRATULATIONS. PEOPLE WILL GIVE YOU REPLY IN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

—BJP MP
RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD



IT'S NOT ONLY A GOVERNMENT THAT WILL TAKE OATH, IT'S 'GHAR WAPASI' OF 2017-2020 MANDATE. IT'S AN OATH OF PEOPLE OF BIHAR.

—RJD RS MP
MANOJ JHA

Chennai is appropriate venue for Chess Olympiad

Chennai is the chess capital of India as it has encouraged for decades young talents, including Viswanathan Anand

Chess became a craze after Celebrated Bengali Director Satyajit Ray's movie Shatranj ke Khiladi created a big buzz in 1977. But the recent Netflix release 'Queen's Gambit' took it to a different level worldwide.

The story is about a child prodigy, living in the 1950s orphanage, going on to challenge the reigning international Grandmaster, and winning it. It mesmerised even those ignorant of the chess game and made a massive boom in the US and other countries. Queen's Gambit refers to a chess opening parlance that evolves into a strategic game. This opening is still a favourite for every elite player.

Chess suits people of all ages and can be played anywhere, anytime. After Covid,



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Chess has been transformed into a sport that commands a massive online following across YouTube and Twitch streams. In recent times, artificial intelligence, has been a revolutionary phenomenon, has undoubtedly changed the landscape of chess.

So it is not surprising why Chennai's current international Chess Olympiad has created a global chess craze this year. Already Chennai is the chess capital of India as it has encouraged for decades young talents, including the much celebrated Viswanathan Anand. Of the 73 Grandmasters, Tamil Nadu roughly has 40 per cent of the total Grandmasters in India. Traditionally, Chennai had seen the birth of several chess clubs. The Tamil Nadu government's decision in 2012 to make chess compulsory in all public schools

has also led to the growth of chess in the state.

How did Chennai come into the picture? Russia was to host the 2022 Olympiad, but that changed with the invasion of Ukraine. Then, supported by the All India chess federation, the Tamil Nadu government staked a claim to host the event and won.

About 2,000 players from 188 countries are participating in the current Olympiad in Chennai. The 'who's who of world chess—Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So, Mariya Muzychuk—are gathered at Mahabalipuram near Chennai. India's top-ranked men's player P Harikrishna, chess wonder R Praggnanandhaa, and top-seed Koneru Humpy are also participating. In 1961, Manuel Aaron

won the country's first International Master's title. Viswanathan Anand became the first Grandmaster from India, Subbaraman Vijayalakshmi, the first Woman Grandmaster in 2001, and Praggnanandhaa, the second youngest Grandmaster in the world, in 2016.

There are many chess queens in India. In 1974, the federation promoted the Women's National Championship, and the Khadilkar sisters—Vasanti, Jayshree, and Rohini—held sway for the next decade. Koneru Humpy, the country's most accomplished woman player, is the world's number four. The women's A team also has Harika Dronavalli, who is heavily pregnant.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the Olympiad open last week, pointing out it

was only fitting that Chennai was hosting the event. Tracing history, "In Tamil Nadu, many temples with sculptures portraying different sports... You will even find a temple — Chathuranga Vallabhanathar temple in Tiruvallur — where it is believed that even God played chess with the princess. So it is natural that Tamil Nadu had a strong historical connection with chess."

Chess is a Sanskrit word (chaturanga) that refers to the army's four main sections: chariots, elephants, cavalry, and infantry. Historically, chess came from India and then spread through Europe. Our mythology references date back to Mahabharata and Ramayana.

Legend has it that Lord Shiva called Chaturanga

Vallabhanathar won a chess game after defeating the princess Rajarajeswai (believed to be an incarnation of Parvathi) and married her as his prize. The temple documents show that chess was popular in Tamil Nadu even 1,500 years ago.

Another myth was that King Ravana first invented chess to divert his mind from the war with Rama. He used to play the game with his wife.

The other story is that an unnamed sultan of India was bored and sought new entertainment. Ultimately a poor man came and showed him a game similar to chess. He asked for a grain of rice for each square and eventually became a rich man.

Research shows that the complex game requires planned moves. Chess gives a

big mental boost. It develops perspective, deepens focus, enhances creativity, protects against dementia, and boosts planning skills. Experts also believe chess improves children's thinking skills and concentration. Some studies have even found that chess can help those who have suffered a stroke to recover.

After Covid, many have started playing mind games, and chess is one of them. The chess Olympiad may take it further. In the current Olympiad, India is a serious contender. Seeded second, right behind the US, it is a testament to the country's growing pool of strong, young grandmasters. India has a strong chance in the absence of Russia and China. I hope our chess masters rise to the occasion.

People PM mentioned in ‘Mann ki Baat’ to be guests at I-Day events



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Women village heads, kin of martyred soldiers and people mentioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio address will be among the invitees at the 'At Home' function to be hosted by the Governors and Lieutenant Governors on Independence Day.

In a communication to States and Union Territories, the Union Home Ministry stressed that apart from the usual protocol-based invitees, the attendees should represent diverse fields.

The invitation for the 'At Home' function to be held at Governor or LG House on August 15 evening should be sent to physically challenged achievers in different fields, people who made an exemplary contribution to society, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, eco-warriors and those who have contributed to environmental conservation, it said. The Home Ministry

said those mentioned in references from states and UTs in the prime minister's 'Mann ki Baat' radio address, Padma awardees from the state, families of martyred soldiers along with participants and winners of Olympics and other important sports events of national and international standards should be invited.

During his monthly radio address, Prime Minister Modi usually speaks about people from various walks of life who have contributed to society and the nation and can be an inspiration to others.

Frontline health workers, children bravery awardees, women 'sarpanches', student toppers, best researchers and innovators should also be invited, the communication said, adding at least 25-50 invites may be reserved for such achievers. The names of such invitees should be announced in advance to enable them to prepare for the occasion.

The home ministry said there should be a system whereby the invitees' list is generated afresh every year so that the opportunity is given to a broad set of people. It could be considered that a person gets an invite just once. It said that special attention may be paid to the band at Governor and LG House.

"It should play patriotic songs and not simply songs from movies," the ministry said.

Govt may withdraw cases against Ministers, MLAs



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Following the conviction of cabinet minister Rakesh Sachan in an over 30-year-old case and issuance of non-bailable warrant against another cabinet minister Sanjay Nishad by the chief judicial magistrate of Gorakhpur, the state government is likely to withdraw the pending cases against the ministers and the ruling party MLAs.

A senior minister in the Yogi Adityanath government, however, said there was no proposal to withdraw the cases under serious charges of crime pending against the ministers and MLAs. The minister said information was being collected from districts and the process of withdrawal of cases was underway.

The minister said, "Rakesh Sachan is the first minister to be convicted in a criminal case under the Arms Act. He was granted bail by the court and also allowed to file an appeal in the High Court."

He said the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership, after considering all the aspects, had decided to retain Rakesh Sachan in the cabinet. The minister added, "All the cases registered against the ministers and MLAs during the previous regime due to political vendetta would soon be withdrawn."

Father killed for lodging report against daughter's molestation in Hamirpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational killing in Hamirpur district, a man had to pay the price of lodging a report against the accused for teasing and harassing his daughter. The accused, held in the case, was recently released from jail and to avenge his imprisonment, he along with his accomplices first shot at the father and later brutally thrashed him to death.

The incident took place in broad daylight on Tuesday and the family members of the victim charged the police with helping the accused to come out on bail without any opposition. As the villagers were agitated over the killing, senior police officers visited the spot and deployed a heavy police force there to avert any untoward incident.

The cops also conducted a series of raids and claimed to have arrested three accused, including the main accused. Search for one of the remaining accused was on.

According to reports, Manish Tiwari (40), a resident of Tola Rawat village under Majhgawan police station of Rath town of Hamirpur, was coming home from the farm on a motorcycle on Tuesday when the assailants intercepted him near the Kulhanda canal.

Before Manish could suspect any foul play, one of the youths opened fire on him and when he collapsed on the road, the youth attacked him with sticks.

SII's qHPV jab for cervical cancer may be part of Govt's immunisation programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Almost a month after the country's top drug regulator 12 granted market authorisation to Serum Institute of India (SII) to manufacture qHPV for cervical cancer, the Government is mulling to include the indigenously-developed vaccine against the deadly disease in the National Immunization Programme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to make an announcement on August 15, sources told PTI.

In a recent communication to the Union health ministry, Prakash Kumar Singh, director (government and regulatory affairs) at SII is learnt to have conveyed that the firm can supply one crore doses of qHPV by December.

At present, the country is fully dependent on foreign manufacturers for the HPV vaccine. Three foreign companies manufacture the HPV vaccine of which two firms sell their vaccines in India. Each dose of the jab available in the market cost over Rs 4,000, a new agency has

quoted sources in the Ministry. SII's vaccine is likely to be available at a much affordable rate. "The Health Ministry is planning to roll out qHPV for girls aged 9-14 years under the National Immunization Programme. The roll out may take up to six months," they said. Cervical cancer in India ranks as the second most frequent cancer among women between 15 and 44 years of age. Globally, 6,04,000 women are affected by cervical cancer and 3,42,000 women die.

In India every year, 1,22,844 women are affected with cervical cancer of which 67,477 women die. Cervical cancer can be prevented by vaccinating girls in the age group of 9-14 years with HPV vaccine.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on July 12 granted market authorisation to SII to manufacture qHPV. The phase 2/3 clinical trial of the vaccine has been completed with support of the Department of Biotechnology. The government's advisory panel NTAGI recently approved qHPV after reviewing clinical trial data of the vaccine.

Need for global vaccine to block SARS-CoV-2 infection: Researchers

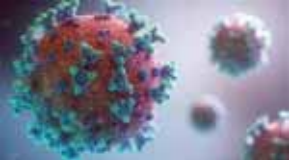
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There is a need for a universal vaccine that can block SARS-CoV-2 infection as well as prevent severe disease from emerging Covid waves in the future, researchers have suggested. The team from Columbia University in the US highlighted the need for more proactive planning and preparedness as different variants of concern (VOCs) evade — the original (or ancestral) SARS-CoV-2 virus, Beta, Delta and Omicron — the effect of both vaccinations and prior infections.

"These repeated pandemic waves have been driven by new VOCs that erode prior immunity from either infection or vaccination, increase transmissibility, or a combination of both," explained Wan Yang, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the University's Mailman School of Public Health, writing in the journal eLife.

"Although laboratory and field studies provide insights into variant epidemiological characteristics, quantifying the extent of immune erosion and changes to transmissibility for each VOC is challenging," Yang said.

To better understand the characteristics of different Covid-19 VOCs, the team developed a mathematical model using weekly case and death data from nine South



African provinces, from March 2020 to end of February 2022, to reconstruct SARS-CoV-2 transmission dynamics. They found that Beta variant eroded immunity among roughly 65 per cent of people previously infected with ancestral SARS-CoV-2 and was 35 per cent more transmissible than original virus. Estimates for Delta varied between provinces, but overall the variant eroded immunity from prior infection or vaccination by roughly 25 per cent and was 50 per cent more transmissible. This aligns with a reported 27.5 per cent reinfection rate seen during Delta wave in Delhi, India.

Finally, for Omicron, estimates varied but consistently highlighted its known higher transmissibility than previous VOCs. The researchers estimated that Omicron was roughly 95 per cent more transmissible than ancestral SARS-CoV-2 and eroded immunity by 55 per cent (prior infections and vaccinations).

These results illustrate that high prior immunity to SARS-CoV-2 does not preclude new Covid outbreaks, as neither prior infection nor current vaccination completely block infection from a new variant.

Centre approves Corbevax as booster dose for 18+ group

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid rising number of Covid cases in the country, the Government has approved Biological E's Corbevax as a precautionary dose for those above 18 years fully vaccinated with either Covishield or Covaxin. This provision would be available from August 12.

This is the first time that a booster dose that is different from the one used for primary vaccination against Covid has been allowed in the country. In a letter to the States, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that, "based on scientific evidence, global practices and the recommendations of domain knowledge experts, it has now been decided to further redefine the precaution dose administration under Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Corbevax will be available as a precaution dose after completion of 6 months or 26 weeks from the date of administration of the second dose of either Covaxin or Covishield vaccines for populations above 18 years." He further said that, "this enables use of Corbevax as a heterologous Covid-19 vaccine for precaution dose administration in this age group. "There will be no change in existing guidelines for homologous precaution dose administration of Covaxin and Covishield vaccine. "In



addition to the existing homologous precaution dose, the option of a heterologous precaution dose with Corbevax would be available to all persons above 18 years of age," said the Health Secretary.

All necessary changes in regard to the administration of heterologous precaution dose using Corbevax, to those who are eligible and due for precaution dose have been made on the Co-WIN portal, informed the senior official.

The Union Health Ministry's approval is based on the recommendations made recently by the COVID-19 Working Group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI).

Under India's Covid-19 vaccination program, 2 billion doses have been administered so far. "About 97 per cent of the 12+ age population of the country has been covered with at least one dose and about 89% of the 12+ age population has been covered with both doses.

"Considerable progress is also being made under "Covid Vaccination Amrit Mahotsav" (from 15th July, 2022 to 30th September, 2022), to cover eligible beneficiaries above 18 years with precaution dose," said Rajesh Bhushan in letter.

Justice Lalit appointed as 49th CJI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit was on Wednesday appointed as the 49th Chief Justice of India after President Droupadi Murmu signed his warrant of appointment. He will assume charge on August 27 after incumbent NV Ramana demits office the day before.

Justice Lalit will have a brief tenure of less than three months. He will turn 65 on November 8 when he demits office. "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, judge of the Supreme Court, to be the Chief Justice of India with effect from 27 August, 2022,"



a Law Ministry notification said. Justice Lalit, born on November 9, 1957, was enrolled as an advocate in June 1983

and practised in the Bombay High Court till December 1985.

He later shifted base to Delhi. Lalit was designated senior lawyer by the Supreme Court in April, 2004. Before being recommended to be appointed as a Supreme Court judge from the Bar, Lalit conducted the trial in 2G scam related cases as special public prosecutor for the CBI. He was appointed a Supreme Court judge on August 13, 2014. CJI Ramana conveyed his best wishes to Justice Lalit for a glorious tenure as the Chief Justice of India.

"Shri Justice Ramana expressed confidence that with his long and rich experience in the Bar as well as on the Bench, Shri Justice Lalit will take the institution of the judiciary to greater heights through his able leadership," said the statement.

ED raids at 21 places in gold smuggling case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has carried out search operations under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at 21 premises in Chhattisgarh and one property in Jharkhand in a case of investigation connected to smuggling of foreign origin gold and other precious metals through illicit channels from Bangladesh to Raipur via Kolkata.

"During the search operation, unaccounted/unexplainable gold bullion weighing around 3,845 gram, gold Ornaments weighing around 12,810.63 gram, silver weighing around 671.77 Kg, cash around Rs 1.41 crore, documents related to sale/purchase of Gold/Silver and some digital devices recovered from the searched premises, have been

seized," the ED said in a statement. The searches were spread for three days from August 5 to August 7 at these 22 premises. The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of a Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet) filed by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) under Section 135 of the Customs Act, 1962.

A professional carrier of gold was caught by DRI while smuggling gold and precious stones through off routes and illicit channels.

DRI recovered gold from his possession which was of foreign origin and was brought into India from Bangladesh through a smuggling channel and was transported from Kolkata to Raipur for its consumption at Raipur by Vijay Kumar Baid alias Vicky and others, the agency said. The ED said a number of such cases

Bansal is BJP's general secy for three States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Sunil Bansal was on Wednesday appointed the party's national general secretary and will be in-charge for West Bengal, Odisha and Telangana. Bansal was general secretary (organisation) in Uttar Pradesh and played key role in UP elections in 2014

when Amit Shah was in-charge of Uttar Pradesh. The BJP-led-NDA had in 2014 won 73 out of 80 Lok Saba seats.

Bansal will be replaced by Dharampal in this position, a party statement said. Karamveer has been appointed as general secretary in the party's Jharkhand unit, according to a BJP statement.

DGCA issues SOP to assess fitness of transgenders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday issued guidelines for medical examiners to assess fitness of transgender persons who have applied for commercial pilot licence.

The DGCA stated in its guidelines that a transgender applicant's fitness will be assessed on a case-to-case basis following the principles of assessing their functional ability and risk of incapacitation.

The transgender applicants, who have been taking hormone therapy or had a gender reassignment surgery within the last five years, will be screened for mental health status, it mentioned.

The DGCA had last month countered media reports that claimed that Adam Harry — a

transman from Kerala — has been denied permission by the regulator to get a commercial pilot licence. Stating that these reports were not true, the DGCA had then said a transgender person can be issued a fit medical certificate provided that there are "no associated medical, psychiatric, or psychological conditions".

"The applicant shall submit a detailed report from the training endocrinologist containing the details — duration, dosage, frequency of dosage, changes made, hormone assay reports, side effects, etc — of hormone therapy the applicant has been taking," it noted. An applicant who is on hormone replacement therapy, or undergoing gender reassignment surgery, will be declared medically unfit for at least three months, it added.



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar being greeted by his deputy Tejashwi Yadav during their swearing-in ceremony, at Raj Bhavan in Patna on Wednesday PTI

‘Vision plan for conservation of tiger soon’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

All the potential tiger habitats within the country will soon be brought under tiger reserve network, Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav said on Wednesday even as he shared that plans are afoot to formulate a vision plan for the conservation of the royal big cat.

India is home to 52 tiger reserves covering approximately 75,000 Sq Km area in 18 States with approximately 75 per cent population of the wild tiger at the global level.

Tigers in India are found in diverse habitats: rain forests, grasslands, savannas and even mangrove swamps. Unfortunately, 93 percent of historical tiger lands have disappeared primarily because of expanding human activity. Underlining that such situation is leading to man-tiger conflict, the Minister while speaking at the pre-summit meeting of the



Tiger Range Countries being held here as a prelude to the Tiger Range Countries Summit slated at Valadivostak, Russia, also stressed on taking inclusive conservation efforts by involving local communities who live in close proximity to tiger reserves.

He further added that "it is time for focusing more on consolidating the gains and the country is in the process of formulating the vision plan for tiger conservation in India by involving all the stakeholders." Despite all odds and ever

transforming world order, Tiger Range Countries have put up a brave front and done a commendable job on the wild tiger front, he said.

During the 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference, the Prime Minister of India had observed that tiger conservation is not a drag on development and both can happen in a mutually complementary manner by reorienting our conservation strategies. The codified practices for wild tiger conservation has proven to be useful in reintroducing locally

extinct species like the Cheetah which will happen very soon, he said, referring to the proposed relocation of the wild cats from Africa.

India achieved the goal of doubling the tiger numbers in 2018 itself, four years in advance from the targeted year 2022.

Also, so far 17 tiger reserves in the country have got CAITS international accreditation and two tiger reserves have received the International Tx2 award, said a senior official from the Ministry.

Parl panel seeks restoration of Rly rebates for senior citizens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A parliamentary committee has recommended that senior citizen concessions be reviewed and restored "urgently" at least for sleeper class and AC 3-tier train travel. In its report submitted on August 4, the Standing Committee on Railways said senior citizens were earlier granted a concession amounting to 40-50 per cent of their railway fares, but the practice was stopped during the COVID-19 crisis.

It also urged the ministry to give wide publicity to the "give up" scheme, which encourages senior citizens to give up their concessions voluntarily.

The Ministry of Railways in its action-taken report has stated that in view of the pandemic, concession to all categories of passengers (except the four categories of Divyangjan, and 11 categories of patients

and students) have been withdrawn. "Given the reply of the government, the committee note that as of now, the concession to senior citizens has been withdrawn in view of the pandemic and Covid protocol.

The committee are of the view that since the Railways are heading towards normalcy, they should consider the concessions granted to different categories of passengers judiciously.

"The committee desire that concession to senior citizens which was available in pre-COVID times may be reviewed and considered at least in Sleeper Class and III AC urgently, so that the vulnerable and the genuinely needy senior citizens could avail the facility in these classes," the committee headed by BJP leader Radha Mohan Singh said. The Railways spends around Rs 2,000 crore on senior citizen concessions annually.

Job scam: CBI follows ED, arrests top SSC officials

PNS/SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

Days after the Enforcement Directorate arrested former Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee and his close aide Arpita Mukherjee on money laundering and other charges, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday made its first arrest in the school-level recruitment scam taking into custody Dr SP Sinha a former Convenor of an advisory committee created by the State Government to supervise the recruitment procedures of the School Service Commission and Dr Ashok Saha a former Secretary and Chairman of the SSC.

The CBI arrested the duo after four rounds of interrogation during which they “not

only evaded questions but also did not cooperate with the investigators,” sources said.

The State Government had earlier created a five-member advisory committee to advise the SSC — an autonomous body responsible for making appointments to all the school level posts — in appointments of Group C, D and secondary level teaching staff. The duo have been charged with criminal conspiracy and corruption in making appointments, etc sources said.

A judicial committee under Justice AK Bag formed by the Calcutta High Court had earlier indicted the members of the stated committee for illegally making appointments to hundreds of posts apparently in lieu of money and had advocated criminal charges against

them. The Committee was formed when Partha Chatterjee was the Education Minister. Investigations have till now revealed 381 fake appointments out of whom 222 candidates not even appeared in any kind of examinations. The High Court has asked both the CBI and the SSC to find out the number of candidates who were given fake appointments.

According to sources in the CBI money might have played a big role in the fake appointments which may run into several thousands. About the modus operandi some sources said that a parallel channel of appointment was created by the advisory committee by-passing the SSC.

Accordingly SP Sinha would recommend the names of ineligible candidates and

get appointment letters prepared through Saha and some other top officials before handing them over to the respective candidates.

“All these money that came from the channel went up to the topmost level of the government,” Opposition Leader Suvedu Adhikari said adding “at least 50,000 fake appointments have been given to ineligible candidates stoking a scam that could be in the vicinity of Rs 3,000 crore.”

Incidentally, Adhikari himself on Wednesday got a big respite from the High Court which turned down a PIL seeking order for the CBI to hasten up investigation against him in Narada and Sharada chit fund cases.

Meanwhile, in a related development and in the back-

drop of increasing incidents of public booing of the TMC leaders after the arrest of Partha Chatterjee, eight TMC ministers on Wednesday held a joint press conference wondering why only they would face the public flak and why the Left and the Congress leaders would be left alone.

Among the senior TMC ministers were Firhad Hakim, Bratya Basu, Arup Roy, Malay Ghatak --- whose name has been embroiled in coal smuggling case --- and others who held a joint press conference to plead innocence and questioned why the opposition leaders were not being hauled up for same charges.

They were referring to a PIL filed in the Calcutta High Court over disproportionate assets that had allegedly been

accumulated by them. The Court earlier ordered the petitioner to make Enforcement Directorate --- now investigating the money laundering part of the school level recruitment scam --- a party to the case.

“There is a misleading campaign going on again us just to heap insult on us just because there was an one off case of Partha Chatterjee... we are ashamed of what he has done but that does not mean that all the TMC men are thieves,” Firhad Hakim said adding the opposition was spreading only the half-truths.

“We have given a full declaration of our source of income during filing income tax returns. There is nothing wrong if there is an increase in your income. I have a business of my own, plus salary and

perks as a minister,” Basu said wondering why the CPI(M) leaders like Suryakanta Mishra, Kanti Ganguli, Ashok Bhattacharya and Congress leader Adhir Chowdhury were not being probed as “there assets too have gone up.”

Chowdhury immediately hit back saying the “TMC leaders are trying to collect sympathy of the people,” adding earlier there was a public perception about their corrupt conduct and now all that had been proved through the recovery of crores of rupees from their coffers.

The CPI(M) leadership too challenged the State Government to “prove your charges.” A senior state committee leader said “the TMC is in power for the past 11 years ... if they have cases against our

leaders we challenge them to prove them and put our leaders in jail ... they have the entire police administration with them.”

The PIL was filed in February 2017, seeking an investigation into the increase in assets of ministers and leaders between 2011 and 2016, disproportionate to the known sources of income.

The Kolkata mayor and state municipal affairs minister termed the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) as “Politically Interested Litigation”, aimed at targeting TMC leaders and maligning them.

“We have nothing to say about the court order and have full faith in the judiciary. We just wanted to point at the political tricks the opposition parties are playing,” he said.

Killer of Rahul, Amreen Bhat among 3 LeT ultras eliminated by forces

PNS ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Wednesday eliminated three Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorists including a self-styled commander Lateef Rather, responsible for killing a Kashmiri pandit employee Rahul Bhat and TV artist Amreen Bhat, near Waterhail area of Budgam. Additional Director General of Police, Vijay Kumar termed the elimination of Lateef Rather as a big success for the security forces in the area. Kumar said, “Lateef Rather alias Abdullah was involved in several terror crime cases including civilian killings and atrocities”. “Lateef was behind the killing of Rahul



Bhat and Amreen Bhat”, Kumar added.

According to police, the anti terrorist operation was launched in the Waterhail area of Budgam in the wee hours of Wednesday. As the security forces tightened the cordon and zeroed in on the suspected hideout of LeT Terrorists the security forces were fired upon

leading to an encounter in which all three terrorists were eliminated.

Meanwhile, alert security forces also averted a tragedy in the South Kashmir district of Pulwama by timely detecting and detonating 25 to 30 Kgs of IED near Tahab crossing on a circular road in Pulwama on Wednesday.

Naidu to resume his ‘unfinished journey’ in service of nation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A day before completion of his five year eventful tenure, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said he will resume his “unfinished journey” in the service of the nation. He also said he will keep interacting with the people in the coming times and his focus will be the youth and farmers.

In humour, he said he does not believe in the concept ‘either President or dissident, otherwise resident’ and that he would continue to engage with people. “I will be resuming from day after tomorrow my unfinished journey in the service of the nation,” he told the media at his residence in the



national Capital.

Naidu's tenure as Vice President ends on August 10 and after the swearing-in of new Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday, he will leave for Hyderabad along with his family. Naidu has been allotted the official bungalow at 1, Thyagaraja Marg, in Delhi.

“Tomorrow onwards I will be again on the move. As I said

earlier, I don't follow that popular adage that - ‘President or dissident otherwise resident’. I will keep interacting with people, as I enjoy all of that more. My focus would be youths and also the farmers, because they need greater focus and attention from government and the system,” Naidu said.

He said he has some other programmes and has already have couple of invitations in spite of the fact he will no longer be the VP after August 10. Earlier in the morning he planted a sapling at Parliament House complex marking the completion of his five years as Rajya Sabha chairman. Speaking on the occasion, Naidu said that one plant is equal to 100 sons as stipulated in our ‘puranas.’

New Omicron sub-variant, BA 2.75 seen: LNJP Hosp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A new sub-variant of Covid's Omicron variant, identified as BA-2.75 with a higher submission rate has been detected in the national Capital. Dr Suresh Kumar, Medical Director of LNJP Hospital said that the new sub-variant has been detected in a study report of 90 samples sent for genome sequencing.

The new sub-variant has more transmissibility which infects even those with antibodies, he cautioned.

“Omicron's subvariant BA-2.75 has been found in the report. It has a higher transmission rate. This has emerged in the study report of

90 samples sent for genome sequencing. This new sub-variant also attacks people already having antibodies and also those who have taken the COVID vaccines in their body,” Dr Suresh Kumar said. However, the scientists are still studying if it is virulent also.

According to the World Health Organisation's Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan, BA.2.75 appeared to have mutated in a way that could indicate “major immune escape”. She noted that it showed a “clear growth advantage” over other variants in India, yet she added “it is too early to know that this sub-variant has properties of being more clinically severe”.

FROM PAGE 1

SC SHIFTS FIRs AGAINST NUPUR TO DELHI POLICE OVER THREAT TO HER LIFE

The top court allowed Sharma to move Delhi High Court for quashing of FIRs lodged over her remark and said all future FIRs would also be transferred to Delhi Police for investigation.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for Sharma, submitted that she was receiving summons from the West Bengal government despite the apex court order. The apex court also refused the prayer of senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, appearing for the West Bengal Government, seeking an investigation by a court-appointed SIT.

Guruswamy submitted the accused cannot be allowed to pick the jurisdiction and her statement has caused maximum damage in West Bengal. Sharma's remark on the Prophet during a TV debate had triggered protests across the country and drew sharp reactions from many Gulf countries. The BJP subsequently suspended her from the party. On July 19, the apex court granted interim protection from arrest till August 10 to Sharma in connection with the FIRs filed against her.

On July 1, the same bench of the top court severely criticised Sharma for her controversial comments against the Prophet, saying her “loose tongue” has “set the entire country on fire” and that she is “single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country”

SC GRANTS BAIL TO VARAVARA RAO ON MEDICAL GROUNDS IN BHIMA CASE

“The medical condition of the appellant (Rao) has not improved to such an extent over a period of time that the facility of bail which was granted earlier be withdrawn,” the bench said. “Considering the totality of circumstances, in our view, the appellant is entitled to the relief of bail on medical grounds,” it said.

Rao had challenged the Bombay High Court's April 13 order rejecting his plea for permanent bail on medical grounds. The case relates to alleged inflammatory speeches made at the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which the police claimed triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon-Bhima war memorial on the outskirts of the western Maharashtra city. Rao was arrested on August 28, 2018.

‘BLACK MAGIC’ CAN'T END YOUR BAD DAYS, MODI TAUNTS CONG

In an apparent reference to the Congress, Modi also said that “black magic cannot end your bad days”.

The prime minister also attacked certain opposition parties for engaging in politics of freebies, saying such things would only do a disservice to the nation as it hampers investment in new tech-

nology.

He said that if there is selfishness in politics, then anybody can even promise free petrol and diesel.

“Such steps will amount to depriving our children of their due and prevent the country from becoming self sufficient. Such selfish policies will put more burden on honest taxpayers of the country,” Modi said. Those who promise freebies will never be able to find resources for investment in new technologies, he said. “This is not a right policy but misleading one; this is not in national interest but it is against the nation; this is not nation building but an effort to push back the country”.

The prime minister said that people who have a tendency to avoid problems by adopting shortcuts for political selfishness can never solve the problems permanently.

“Those adopting shortcuts may get applause for some time, and may gain political advantage, but that does not solve the problem. Adopting a shortcut will definitely result in a short circuit. Instead of following shortcuts, our government is engaged in permanent solutions to the problems. A lot has been said about the problems of stubble over the years. But those with a shortcut mentality could not solve it,” he said.

“Today, when we are completing 75 years of independence, the country is also working on the goal that in the next few years, more than 75 per cent of the households in the country will get piped gas,” he said. Continuing with the permanent and lasting solutions to the problems of the country, Modi also talked about new fertiliser plants, nano fertilisers, new missions for edible oil.

EC REFUSES TO BE ON SC-PROPOSED MULTI-MEMBER PANEL ON FREEBIES

During the last hearing on this matter on August 3, the SC had favoured setting up of an expert body consisting of various stakeholders such as Niti Aayog, Finance Commission, Law Commission, Reserve Bank of India, members of ruling and Opposition parties to give suggestions to address the issue of promise of freebies during election campaigns.

To enable the court to pass an order for the Constitution of such a body, the bench directed the petitioner, Central Government and the Election Commission of India to give suggestions.

GUN SALUTE WITH DESI HOWITZER ON I-DAY

The Defence Secretary also said the NCC cadets from all districts of the country have been invited to attend the main event at Red Fort. These cadets will be seated at ‘Gyan Path’ in front of the Red Fort's ramparts in a geographical formation of the map of India.

The cadets will adorn local dresses, symbolising India's cultural diversity, to carry forward the message of ‘Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat’, he said.

Moreover, in an effort to involve sec-

tions of society, which are usually overlooked, this year's celebrations at the Red Fort will see the presence of anganwadi workers, street vendors and mudra scheme borrowers besides others. They have been invited as special guests, he added. This initiative was first taken during the Republic Day parade this year.

A total of 26 officers and supervisors and 127 foreign cadets from 14 countries -- US, UK, Argentina, Brazil, Fiji, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, The Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Seychelles, the UAE and Uzbekistan -- are already in India for the Independence Day celebrations. Apart from attending the main event at Red Fort, they will visit places of cultural and historical importance in Delhi and Agra.

NITISH WANTED TO BE VP: BJP; IT'S A WHITE LIE: JDU

He said when media reports first speculated that Kumar would likely be the presidential or vice presidential candidate, the JD(U) had clearly denied the possibility of any such thing happening.

“They are just making up stories,” the JD(U) chief said and mocked Sushil as a leader “abandoned by the roadside” by his own party as a “punishment” for “close relations he had with Kumar.”

“He has been shunted by the BJP as a punishment for the close relations he shared with Kumar. May such antics bring him some degree of political rehabilitation,” Lalan said.

At his Press conference in Patna, Sushil, who has known Kumar and RJD chief Lalu Prasad for five decades, also alleged that the JD(U) supremo insulted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of Bihar who had voted for the NDA. The BJP leader, who is also a Rajya Sabha MP, alleged that Kumar will “ditch the RJD and try to split it, taking advantage of RJD boss Prasad's illness”.

He refuted the JD(U)'s claims of a “conspiracy” hatched through RCP Singh, claiming that the former Union Minister had been inducted into the Cabinet after consent was obtained from Kumar by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. “Kumar should not tell such lies,” Sushil said.

“We will like to see how the new Bihar Government functions with (RJD leader) Tejashwi as de facto CM; it will fall before next polls,” the BJP leader added.

“He (Kumar) can never get the same respect he was being given in BJP, in the RJD and Congress. Kumar says his party (JD-U) was being split. The BJP never betrayed any of its allies. We have only broken those who betrayed us... Be it the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra which was in alliance with BJP. And when the Shiv Sena betrayed us what was the consequence?” Sushil earlier asked.

“The BJP has never betrayed anyone. We made Kumar the Bihar CM, five times. The RJD made him the CM twice, we did that five times. We had a relationship for 17 years. But you severed ties (with us) twice,” Sushil said.

In 2020, we got votes in the name of Narendra Modi. Had we received votes in your (Kumar's) name we would've crossed 150-175 & you wouldn't have won just 43. When it seemed the situation wasn't

good, Modi did 3-4 rallies in one day. 2020 mandate was for Modi,” the BJP leader asserted, slamming Kumar for allegedly choosing people who have been charge-sheeted in corruption cases.

NITISH BLOWS BUGLE FOR 2024 LS POLL COMBAT

On who among Kumar and Mamata could emerge as the Opposition face against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next Lok Sabha poll, the actor-politician told PTI that the people of the country and leaders of the Opposition parties would decide it at an “appropriate” time.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said the revival of the grand alliance in Bihar strengthened secular and democratic forces in the country.

“The return of the Grand Alliance in Bihar is a timely effort in the unity of secular and democratic forces of the country,” he said. The ruling DMK had said on August 9 that its president Stalin's vision to fight the BJP at the national level has gained momentum with Kumar's JD(U) pulling out of the NDA in Bihar.

TRS leader K Kavitha, Kavitha, daughter of TRS supremo and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, said the development that took place in Bihar politics is a positive change for the whole country because the “era of the backdoor politics” has been countered very well by Kumar.

Speaking to reporters here she said Bihar and Nalanda Universities have always shown the way to the world and are now doing the same to the country.

“I feel this is appositive change for the whole of the nation because the era of the backdoor politics have been countered very well by Kumar is what I personally believe....This backdoor politics should be one way or the other stopped and Bihar has started the way,” she said.

NCP Chief Sharad Pawar accused the BJP of finishing off its regional allies gradually, and supported Kumar's decision to snap ties with the BJP. Speaking to reporters in Baramati town of Maharashtra's Pune district, Pawar claimed the BJP was planning how to weaken the Shiv Sena and create a division in the party.

“Today, the BJP is planning how the Shiv Sena can be weakened by creating a division in the party, and (present Maharashtra CM) Eknath Shinde and others helped,” he said.

A similar picture was being seen in Bihar. Kumar, of the JD(U), and the BJP contested the last Assembly elections together, he said.

“One more speciality of the BJP is that it joins hands with a regional party at the time of elections, but ensures the ally wins fewer seats. It happened in Maharashtra also,” Pawar claimed. When a similar picture was being witnessed in Bihar, the CM of the State got cautious well in advance and took the decision to snap ties with the BJP, he said.

“No matter how much BJP leaders criticise Kumar, but he has taken a wise step. He took the decision anticipating the crisis the BJP was planning to bring on. I think he made a wise decision for his state and party,” Pawar said.

BJP slams Nitish's ‘betrayal’, protests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after BJP lost power in Bihar the Saffron party on Wednesday staged a massive demonstration in Patna condemning the “betrayal” of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who in 2017 in a similar act had joined hands with the BJP and shared power with it.

Ahead of Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav's oath-taking ceremony, BJP leaders in Patna raised slogans of ‘Nitish Kumar mardabad’ and some were seen holding placards that read, “Vishwasghaati Nitish Kumar” after he broke alliance with the party, and formed a ‘Mahagathbandhan’ for a new government.

Bihar BJP top leaders Ravishankar Prasad, Takeshwar Prasad, Nityanand Rai, Sushil Modi, and Mangal Pandey with several others joined the protest.

The ‘Maha Dharna’ (massive demonstration) staged in front of the party office at Birchand Patel Marg was also attended by all BJP MPs and MLAs from Bihar who vowed to “expose” the 71 years old JD(U) leader through agitations scheduled at district and block levels later this week.

“There is no other reason for the turnaround except his Prime Ministerial ambitions which make him envious of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He should first try to win a state election on his own, without using an alliance as a crutch,” said Union minister Giriraj Singh, the Chief Minister's best known detractor in the state.

The party rank and file seemed bewildered at the sudden turn of events



which has taken the spotlight away from the “Har Ghar Tiranga” programme which the BJP was planning to hold with much fanfare. Kumar had on Tuesday pulled the plug on JD(U)'s alliance with the BJP and resigned, and followed it up by staking claim to form a new government with support of the opposition Grand Alliance.

The development seemingly shocked the BJP workers in the state Capital where it had organized its first ever joint national executive of the party's seven wings (morchas), attended by party president J P Nadda and, most importantly, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, only last month.

The party had issued a press statement asserting that it was looking forward to contesting the next Lok Sabha and assembly polls under Kumar's leadership, labouring under the impression that it would be sufficient to convince the septuagenarian of the BJP's bona fide.

“Nitish Kumar has joined hands with the most corrupt party and this will create problems in Bihar,” was one of the main refrain of BJP leaders on Dharna against the new dispensation in Patna.

Not afraid of ED, CBI: JD(U) on split with BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

After severing ties with his longest time alliance partner BJP, the Janata Dal (U) on Wednesday asserted that it was “not scared of ED and CBI” following its break-up with the BJP, which rules the Centre and is often accused by the opposition of misusing investigating agencies.

“Let them unleash the agencies. We are not afraid of the CBI and ED. Only those who run companies need to live in fear. We depend on the salary we draw as MPs or MLAs besides other legal sources of personal income for survival,” said JD (U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh asked Lalan at a Press conference when asked whether parting ways with the BJP would make the JD(U) vulnerable to alleged political vendetta through probe agencies.

On a query to the BJP's charge of “betrayal”, the Lok Sabha MP of the JD(U) accused the former ally of having deceived the coalition dharma “by weaning away our MLAs in Arunachal

Pradesh, who were already supporting their government”.

He also said the party's decision to snap ties with the BJP was “supported by all, including those who could not attend the Tuesdays meeting, like Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh who spoke to me over the telephone to convey that he will always back Nitish Kumar.” The JD(U) chief accused the BJP of having used the LJP, then headed by Chirag Paswan, “to field its own rebels against our candidates” in the last assembly polls. Lalan also reiterated the allegation that former JD(U) president RCP Singh had become the BJP's “agent”. However, when asked whether the ex-Union minister tried to split the party, he asserted: “Nobody can cause fissures in our ranks”.

“They (BJP) accuse us of betraying the mandate. Why did they agree to join Nitish Kumar's government in 2017? He had won the assembly polls as the Grand Alliance's Chief Ministerial candidate. They better not talk about coalition dharma after what they did to us in Arunachal,” he fumed.

CHINA REAFFIRMS MILITARY THREAT TO ANNEX TAIWAN



AP ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday reaffirmed its threat to use military force to bring self-governing Taiwan under its control, amid threatening Chinese military exercises that have raised tensions between the sides to their highest level in years. The statement issued by the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office and its news department followed almost a week of missile firings and incursions into Taiwanese waters and airspace by Chinese warships and air force planes. The actions have disrupted flights and shipping in a region crucial to global supply chains, prompting strong condemnation from the US, Japan and others.

The Chinese statement said Beijing seeks "peaceful unification" with Taiwan but "does not pledge to relinquish the use of military force and retains all necessary options". In an additional response, China said it was cutting off dialogue on issues from maritime security to climate change with the US, Taiwan's chief military and political backer.

China says the threatening moves were prompted by a visit to Taiwan last week by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but Taiwan says such visits are routine and that China used that merely as a pretext to up its threats.

Chinese envoy tells Australia to show 'caution' over Taiwan

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia's recent change of government was a chance to "reset" its troubled relationship with China, but the new administration must "handle the Taiwan question with caution," a Chinese envoy said on Wednesday.

Chinese Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian said he was "surprised" that Australia had signed a statement with the United States and Japan that condemned China's firing of missiles into Japanese waters in response to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last week.

"We hope that the Australian side could take China-Australia relations with serious attitude. Take the One China' principle seriously, handle the Taiwan question with caution," Xiao told the National Press Club.

US veterans health bill marks personal victory for Biden

AP ■ WASHINGTON

As US President Joe Biden rattled off policy proposals in this year's State of the Union address, he hit an emotional note when talking about veterans who suffer from cancer after serving on military bases where toxic smoke billowed from burning trash.

"One of those soldiers was my son Major Beau Biden," he said. The president was careful to avoid drawing a direct line between the burn pits and his son's fatal cancer, but he left no doubt that he believes there was a connection.

The tragic death from seven years ago marks a ceremony on Wednesday, when Biden plans to sign legislation expanding federal health care for veterans, among the most personal moments for him since taking office.

Senator Jon Tester, D-Mont., who chairs the Senate



Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said Biden was a driving force behind the measure, which passed last week.

"He was continually pushing because whether Beau died of this or not, I think Joe thinks that it had some impact, and so he wanted this fixed," Tester said. "And because he thinks it was the right thing to do. So different president, different set of

priorities, this would have probably never happened."

Burn pits were used in Iraq and Afghanistan to dispose of chemicals, cans, tires, plastics, medical equipment, and human waste.

However, 70 per cent of disability claims involving exposure to the pits were denied by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Native Americans urge boycott of tone deaf Pilgrim museum

AP ■ PLYMOUTH (US)

Native Americans in Massachusetts are calling for a boycott of a popular living history museum featuring Colonial re-enactors portraying life in Plymouth, the famous English settlement founded by the Pilgrims who arrived on the Mayflower.

Members of the state's Wampanoag community and their supporters say Plimoth Patuxet Museums has not lived up to its promise of creating a "bi-cultural museum" that equally tells the story of the European and Indigenous peoples that lived there. They say the "Historic Patuxet Homestead", the portion of the mostly outdoor museum focused on traditional Indigenous life, is inadequately small, in need of repairs and staffed by workers who aren't from local tribes.

Security expert warns UN Africa could be future ISIS caliphate

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The threat from the Islamic State extremist group is growing by the day in Africa and the continent could be "the future of the caliphate," an African security expert warned the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday.

Martin Ewi said the Islamic State "has expanded its influence beyond measure" in Africa, with at least 20 countries directly experiencing the extremist group's activity and more than 20 others "being used for logistics and to mobilise funds and other resources."

"They are now regional hubs, which have become corridors of instability in Africa," said Ewi, who coordinates a transna-



tional organised crime project at the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa's capital Pretoria and was previously in charge of the African Union Commission's counter-terrorism program.

He said the Lake Chad Basin — which borders Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon — is the extremist group's biggest area of operation, areas in the Sahel are now "ungovernable" and Somalia remains the IS "hotspot" in the Horn of Africa.

Yemen officials say fresh infighting kills 35 in south

AP ■ SANAA (YEMEN)

Infighting among pro-government Yemeni forces has killed 35 troops in a southern province in the past 24 hours, officials said, a development that threatens a ceasefire in the country's wider conflict.

They say that an artillery duel that start in the late hours of Tuesday hit areas around a local airport in the city of Ataq, the capital of the southern Shabwa province.

Five civilians were among the dead, they added, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

The fighting comes after months of tensions within the pro-government, Saudi-led

coalition that has been fighting a common enemy — the Houthi rebels — since 2015.

Earlier violence late on Sunday erupted in the area after the province's governor, backed by the United Arab Emirates, decided to sack a police commander known to have an anti-UAE stance, the officials said.

Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthis descended from their northern enclave and took over the capital, forcing the government to flee to the south before its exile in Saudi Arabia.

A Saudi-led coalition — then backed by the US — entered the war in early 2015 to try to restore the government to power.

9 Russian warplanes destroyed in Crimea blasts, says Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV (UKRAINE)

Ukraine's air force said Wednesday that nine Russian warplanes were destroyed in massive explosions at an air base in Crimea amid speculation they were the result of a Ukrainian attack that would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Russia denied any aircraft were damaged in Tuesday's blasts — or that any attack took place.

Ukrainian officials have stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for the explosions, while poking fun at Russia's explanation that munitions at the Saki air base caught fire and blew up and also underscoring the importance of the peninsula that Moscow annexed eight years ago.

In his nightly video address several hours after the blasts, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed to retake the peninsula, saying that "this Russian war against Ukraine and against all of free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea — its liberation."

On Wednesday, Russian authorities sought to downplay



the blasts, saying all hotels and beaches were unaffected on the peninsula, which is a popular tourist destination for many Russians. The explosions, which killed one person and wounded 13, sent tourists fleeing in panic as plumes of smoke towered over the nearby coastline. They knocked out windows and caused other damage in some apartment buildings.

Russian warplanes have used Saki to strike areas in Ukraine's south on short notice, and Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles hit the base.

Officials in Moscow have long warned Ukraine that any attack on Crimea would trigger massive retaliation, including strikes on "decision-making centers" in Kyiv.

A Ukrainian presidential adviser, Oleksiy Arestovych, who is more outspoken than other officials, cryptically said Tuesday that the blasts were caused either by a Ukrainian-made long-range weapon or were the work of guerrillas operating in Crimea.

The base on the Black Sea peninsula that dangles off southern Ukraine is at least 200 kilometers (some 125 miles) away from the closest Ukrainian position — out of

the range of the missiles supplied by the U.S. For use in the HIMARS systems.

The Ukrainian military has successfully used those missiles, with a range of 80 kilometers (50 miles), to target ammunition and fuel depots, strategic bridges and other key targets in Russian-occupied territories. HIMARS could also fire longer-range rockets, with a range of up to 300 kilometers (about 185 miles), that Ukraine has asked for.

But U.S. Authorities have refrained from providing them thus far, fearing that it could provoke Russia and widen the conflict. But the explosions in Saki raised speculation on social media that Ukraine might have finally got the weapons.

Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov said that the Ukrainian forces could have struck the Russian air base with a Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile that has a range of about 200 kilometers (about 125 miles) and could have been adapted for use against ground targets and could be fired from Ukrainian positions near Mykolaiv northwest of Crimea.

Russian diplomat chides US for rushing nuclear inspections

AP ■ MOSCOW

A senior Russian diplomat said Tuesday that Moscow's decision to declare a freeze on U.S. inspections of its nuclear arsenals under a key arms control treaty was triggered by Washington's push for a quick visit by inspectors.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the U.S. Demand for Russia to immediately allow an inspection trip under the New START treaty looked like an "open provocation" amid the current US-Russian tensions.

"A notice about the U.S.

Intention to perform an inspection on our territory in the nearest days became a trigger," Ryabkov said in a statement posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website.

The ministry responded Monday by announcing a temporary halt on U.S. inspections.

It argued that the sanctions on Russian flights imposed by the U.S. And its allies, visa restrictions and other obstacles effectively have made it impossible for Russian military experts to visit U.S. Nuclear weapons sites, giving the U.S. "unilateral advantages."

The Biden administration

had no immediate public response to the move, which came amid soaring tensions between Moscow and Washington over Russia's military action in Ukraine.

While Russia and the U.S. Have suspended mutual inspections under the New START since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Moscow's move raised new uncertainty about the pact's future.

A spokesperson for the U.S. National Security Council noted a pause in inspections due to the pandemic, adding that the responsible thing to do is to resume them safely.

The spokesperson emphasised that resuming mutually beneficial inspections under New START is a key part of Russia-U.S. Cooperation that must continue even when geopolitical tensions are high.

The Russian Foreign Ministry noted that the freeze is temporary, adding in Monday's statement that Moscow "highly values" the New START and saying inspections could resume after the problems hampering them are solved.

The New START treaty, signed in 2010 by President Barack Obama and Russian

President Dmitry Medvedev, limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance.

Just days before the New START was due to expire in February 2021, Russia and the United States agreed to extend it for another five years.

Ryabkov said that Russia has been open to discussions about the resumption of inspections, but emphasised that it should be done on the basis of parity and equality.

MONKEYS UNDER ATTACK IN BRAZIL AMID RISING MONKEYPOX FEARS

AP ■ SAO PAULO

The World Health Organisation expressed sorrow on Tuesday for the killing of monkeys in Brazil amid fears of monkeypox contagion.

Brazilian news website G1 reported on Sunday that 10 monkeys had been poisoned in less than a week in the city of Sao Jose do Rio Preto, in Sao Paulo state.

Similar incidents were reported in other cities.

"People have to know that the transmission we see now is among humans," said Margaret Harris, a WHO spokeswoman, during a press conference in Geneva.

Brazil counts more than 1,700 cases of monkeypox, according to the WHO.

In race to win, UK Conservatives accused of ignoring crises

AP ■ LONDON

As Britain swelters through a roasting summer, and braces for a cold financial reckoning in the fall, calls for the Conservative government to act are getting louder.

But the Conservatives are busy choosing a new leader, through a prolonged party election whose priorities often seem remote from the country's growing turmoil.

Britons' energy bills have soared — and further hikes are coming — as the war in Ukraine squeezes global oil and gas supplies. The Bank of England is predicting a long, deep recession later this year alongside 13% inflation. Meanwhile, temperatures in



Britain hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in July for the first time ever, and millions are facing limits on water use as England's green and pleasant land dries to a desiccated brown.

Russia targets reporter with raid, probe over war criticism

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian authorities on Wednesday raided the home of a former state TV journalist who quit after making an on-air protest against Moscow's war in Ukraine, and launched a criminal case against her on the charge of spreading false information about the Russian armed forces, her lawyer said on social media.

The case against Marina Ovsyannikova was launched under a law, enacted after the February 24 invasion of Ukraine, that penalises statements against the military, lawyer Dmitry Zakhvatov said.

A conviction is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Zakhvatov told the independent news site Meduza that the case is likely linked to a protest Ovsyannikova staged last month, holding a banner that said "(Russian President Vladimir) Putin is a killer, his soldiers are fascists."

He said on Telegram that after the raid Ovsyannikova is expected to be brought into the Investigative Committee for questioning.

Ovsyannikova used to work as a producer with Russian state-funded Channel One. She made international headlines on March 14, when she appeared behind the anchor of an evening news broadcast holding a poster that said "stop the war, don't believe the propaganda, they are lying to you here."

Patronising bullying to take sides in Ukraine-Russia war is unacceptable: SA Foreign Minister

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Attempts to bully countries into taking sides in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is unacceptable, a senior South African Minister has said.

South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor on Monday hosted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is on a three-nation Africa tour.

Blinken arrived in South Africa on Sunday, in what analysts describe is an attempt to counter the growing Chinese and Russian influence in the region, after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Africa last month. This is Blinken's second trip to the continent. Pandor said she was glad that Blinken had confirmed that the US had not asked South Africa to choose sides (between Russia and Ukraine). But she conceded that her government had experienced pressure from certain countries in Europe to align with their policy on Ukraine.

"But in terms of our interaction with some of our partners in Europe and elsewhere, there has been a sense of a patronising bullying of 'you choose this or else'," she said. She also criticised a US bill, which she says



could penalise African countries for not towing the line on the Ukraine conflict, known as the "Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act." "The recent legislation passed in the US House of Representatives we found (to be) a most unfortunate Bill. When we speak about freedom, it's freedom for everybody. You can't say because Africa is doing this, you will then be punished by the US. We hope the other House will not agree to such offensive legislation," Pandor said. The minister said it was important for all to respect different opinions held by different nations. "We are after all, sovereign nations that are recognised as equal in terms of the UN Charter. We may differ in terms of economic power and economic ability to influence devel-

opments in different parts of the world, but what will make the world work is if we respect each other."

"One thing I definitely dislike is being told: 'You choose this or else'," Pandor reaffirmed. Relations between South Africa and the US have been strained after South Africa remained neutral over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The minister said Russia was a "very negligible" economic partner for South Africa. "Our trade with Russia is less than four billion dollars annually, compared to the USD 20 billion with the US. So, this fear that we exist under some putsch is a totally an unfounded belief of the relationship that we have with either country," Pandor asserted.

Lanka introduces bill to clip presidential powers

AP ■ COLOMBO

A Sri Lankan government minister on Wednesday submitted to Parliament a constitutional amendment bill that would clip the powers of the president, a key demand of protesters calling for political reforms and solutions to the country's worst economic crisis.

Justice Minister Wijayadasa Rajapakse presented the bill, which would transfer some presidential powers — including those to appoint independent election commission members, police and public service officials, and bribery and corruption investigators — into the hands of a constitutional council comprising lawmakers and respected non-political persons. The council

would then recommend candidates for those appointments that the president could choose from.

Under the proposed amendments, the president also would only be able to appoint a chief justice, other senior judges, an attorney general and a central bank governor on the recommendation of the council. The prime minister would recommend appointments to the Cabinet and the president would not be allowed to hold any ministry positions except defense.

The bill, which will undergo debate, must be approved by two-thirds of Sri Lanka's 225-member Parliament to become law.

If passed into law, the amendments would reinstate democratic reforms made in

2015. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was ousted as president by angry protests last month, reversed those reforms and concentrated power in himself after being elected to office in 2019. President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who succeeded Rajapaksa, has promised to limit the powers of the presidency and strengthen Parliament in response to the protesters' demands.

Sri Lankans have staged massive street protests for the past four months demanding democratic reforms and solutions to the country's economic collapse. Protesters blame the Rajapaksa family's alleged mismanagement and corruption for the economic crisis that has led to serious shortages of essentials like medicines, food and fuel.

QATAR WC TO START A DAY EARLY ON NOV 20: SOURCES

AP ■ DOHA

The opening match for this year's World Cup, between hosts Qatar and Ecuador, will be brought forward by one day to November 20, World Cup sources said on Wednesday.

The move, which should be approved by the FIFA Council before the 100-day countdown starts this week, will retain the tradition of the first match featuring the host country.

Under the existing arrangement, Senegal and the Netherlands play the first game on November 21, followed by the official inauguration match between Qatar and Ecuador later that day.

The World Cup sources said that confirmation of the change was expected soon. FIFA and the Qatari organising committee declined to comment.



"There were discussions and agreement between the two respective teams and there was a request from CONMEBOL -- the South American confederation," one World Cup source said, speaking on condition of anonymity as no official decision has been announced.

"We wanted to follow the tradition that either the reigning champions or the host country be involved in the opening match," the source added.

For fans who have tickets for the November 21 game, "any disruption will be dealt with so impact is minimal", another tournament source said.

Under the change, Netherlands v Senegal would be moved from 1:00pm (1000 GMT) on November 21 to a 7:00pm start. "It is a better slot for both teams for television and other areas," said the World Cup source.

I had kept his trophies safely wrapped in half-torn saree: Achinta's mother

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Achinta Sheuli's mother has kept his trophies and medals wrapped in a half-torn saree under the only bed in their two-room residence in Howrah district's Deulpur, around 20 km from here.

On Monday morning she arranged them on a small stool when Achinta Sheuli returned home after bagging gold in the 73kg weightlifting event at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

A seemingly happy Purnima Sheuli has requested her younger son to purchase a cupboard to showcase the medals and trophies he has won so far.

"I knew that reporters and photographers would be coming to our house when Achinta came back. So, I kept the medals and trophies on a stool so that they could understand how talented Achinta is. I never dreamt that he would win gold for the country," Purnima Sheuli told PTI.

She remembers how tough it was for her to bring up her sons -- Alok and Achinta -- following the death of her husband Jagat Sheuli. He died of sunstroke in 2013.

"Today, I believe God has started showering blessings on us. The number of people who gathered in front of our house shows that times have changed. Nobody will be able to realise how tough it was for me to bring up my two sons.

"I could not even provide them with their meals every day. There were days when they fell asleep without eating. I don't know how to express myself and what to say," she said.

Both Achinta and his elder brother Alok, also a weightlifter, had to load and unload goods besides doing zari work on sarees at a local manufacturing unit, she recalled. "I had no other option than sending my sons to work. Or it would have been difficult for us to survive," she said remembering how both Alok and Achinta continued weightlifting against all odds.

"I COULD NOT EVEN PROVIDE THEM WITH THEIR MEALS EVERY DAY."

Hard to digest defeat but need to move on: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The bitter loss to Australia in the Commonwealth Games final is "hard to digest" but the Indian hockey team will have to move on, said star drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh, promising a thread-bare analysis of the side's performance in Birmingham.

In one of its worst performances in recent times, India suffered an embarrassing 0-7 drubbing at the hands of defending champions Australia to settle for a silver medal on Sunday.

"It is hard to digest a loss by such a big margin," the India vice-captain said in a Hockey India (HI) release after returning to the country early on Wednesday morning.

"Definitely the entire team is disappointed by the way we played but it's important we move on from this bitter outing. Like Chief Coach mentioned, we lacked the energy and tempo required to match-up to a team like Australia."

While the final was a forgettable experience, India marched into the summit clash on the back of some fine performances in the group stage as they beat Ghana 11-0, drew against England 4-4, beat Canada 8-0 and Wales 4-1 followed by a 3-2 win against South Africa in the semifinal.

"There are many lessons



from this campaign that we can work on and improve upon. Every match we played will be analyzed thoroughly when we return to camp after a two week break and we will be starting from scratch," said Harmanpreet.

The 26-year-old from Amritsar was in sublime form through out the tournament as he scored nine goals and was the second highest goal scorer along with Wales' Gareth Furlong.

"This was a memorable outing for me personally despite the final not going our way. For the first time after the pandemic, we were playing in front of such a big crowds and many Indian fans had turned up," he said.

"My wife travelled to Birmingham to watch our matches, and this was the first time she was watching

me play a big tournament live. This is my first Commonwealth Games medal, so in all it was a special outing for me on a personal note," he said.

Furlong scored nine goals from penalty corners, while Harmanpreet scored eight from PCs and one from a penalty stroke. He also scored a hat-trick, in India's 4-1 win against Wales. England's Nicholas Bandurak remained the highest goal-scorer of the tournament with 11 goals.

India will now prepare for the upcoming FIH Hockey Pro League season 2022/23 which begins in October.

India is scheduled to play New Zealand and Spain at home. The team will return to the national coaching camp in Bengaluru on August 29.

Suarez's Nacional knocked out of Copa Sudamericana

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Veteran Uruguay striker Luis Suarez and his new club Nacional of Uruguay crashed out of the Copa Sudamericana.

Atletico Goianiense of Brazil won 3-0 at home in Goiania to clinch the quarter-finals series 4-0 on aggregate.

Winning the Copa Sudamericana, the second most prestigious club soccer tournament in South America, was a major goal for 35-year-old Suarez ahead of the World Cup in Qatar.

Luiz Fernando scored in the 5th and 53rd minutes at the Serra Dourada Stadium.

Luiz Fernando scored in the 5th and 53rd minutes at the Serra Dourada Stadium. Gabriel Baralhas completed the scoring in first-half stoppage time.

Suarez went on as a substitute in the second half and had few opportunities to score.

He netted his first goal for Nacional on Friday in a Uruguayan championship win over Rentistas.

His contract runs through December, which coincides with the World Cup in Qatar.

Uruguay is in Group H with Portugal, South Korea and Ghana at the World Cup.

Gen Pande felicitates Army sportspersons

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

General Manoj Pande on Wednesday felicitated the Indian Army's sportspersons who participated in the Commonwealth Games in the UK from July 28 to August 8.

The Indian Army's sportspersons performed exceedingly well at this year's games by clinching four gold, one silver and three bronze medals, according to a statement.

"It is indeed a commendable feat that out of 18 participants from the Indian Army in the Commonwealth Games squad, eight sportspersons have earned medals for India," the Army stated.

These medals are the result of a carefully planned and sustained "Mission Olympic Programme", conceived and implemented by the Indian Army since 2001, it noted.

On return of the team to India, General Pande and senior officers of the Army headquarter congratulated and interacted with the sportspersons at an exclusive function organised at Delhi Cantonment on Wednesday, it mentioned.

"Addressing the sportspersons, the Army Chief acknowledged their superlative performance and remarked that the Indian Army participants are the real role models for the nation. The COAS (Chief of Army Staff) said their individual performances have made the Indian Army and the entire nation proud," it noted.



Indian golfers eye strong start in Northern Ireland Open

PTI ■ GALGORM (NORTHERN IRELAND)

The Indian trio of Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar, and Tvesa Malik will once again attempt to find their form this season as they tee up at the star-studded Northern Ireland Open also known as ISPS Handa World Invitational.

This has been a modest year so far for the Indians. While Dagar has had two Top-20 finishes, Tvesa is yet to have even one.

Aditi, on the other hand, has played mostly on the LPGA and a few events on LET, where her best was T-20 at Jabra Ladies. She had two Top-15 finishes right at the start of the season on LPGA.

The cut will be top 60 and ties after 36 holes, with a second cut to the top 35 and ties after 54 holes in each of the tournaments. For the first two rounds, all players will play one round on each course.

Defending champion Pajaree Anannarukarn returns to the site of her maiden LPGA Tour title, where she defeated Emma Talley with a par on the second playoff hole.

Anannarukarn rallied after recording a triple bogey early in the final day on No. 6, but grinded to record a final-round 70 to force extra



holes and become the season's then fifth Rolex First-Time Winner of 2021.

One of the stars of the event will be the LPGA Hall of Fame member Laura Davies as well as major champion Georgia Hall, who finished in a tie for 14th in last year's event.

The field also includes Four-time LET winner Maja Stark, who leads in the Race to Costa del Sol, along with fellow countrywoman Linn Grant, the first woman to

win a DP World Tour event at the co-sanctioned Volvo Car Scandinavian Mixed, will also tee it up this week.

This is the second edition of the tournament and is co-sanctioned by the Ladies European Tour and the Ladies

PGA. The event also sees the men from the DP World Tour also playing alongside.

A total of 132 men and 132 women will compete in two separate 72-hole stroke play tournaments (one for men and one for women).

In-form Bhullar, Rashid to lead Indian challenge

Gaganjeet Bhullar and Rashid Khan, the winner and runner-up last week on the Asian Tour, will lead a strong Indian challenge at the International Series

Singapore.

The USD 1.5 million event has five players inside the world's top 100 and it also includes former Masters champion Patrick Reed.

Bhullar ended a long Indian title drought on the Asian Tour by winning the Mandiri Indonesia Open, even as Rashid finished tied second.

Bhullar will be hoping to maintain the momentum and Rashid will be looking to win his third Asian Tour title, and

THERE ARE ALSO TWO LEGENDS OF INDIAN GOLF. ONE IS JEEV MILKHA SINGH, WHO THIS YEAR IS A ROOKIE ON THE SENIOR'S TOUR AND HAS HAD SOME GOOD FINISHES INCLUDING A TOP-3 IN GERMANY, WITH THE OTHER BEING JYOTI.

the first since the 2014 season when he won two times.

The Indian group of 16 is a mix of young and experienced players. Apart from Bhullar and Rashid, the others include Shubhankar Sharma, Shiv Kapur, Viraj Madappa, SSP Chawrasia, Chiragh Kumar, Aman Raj, Ajeetesh Sandhu, S Chikkarangappa, Rahil Gangjee, Honey Baisoya, and Veer Ahlawat.

There are also two legends of Indian golf. One is Jeev Milkha Singh, who this year is a rookie on the Senior's Tour and has had some good finishes including a Top-3 in Germany, with the other being Jyoti Randhawa.

Both Jeev and Randhawa have tasted success in Singapore. Amateur Yash Majumdar also finds a place.

Jeev said, "I am getting a feel of the game once again and am excited as I did well in some of the Senior events. At the end of the day it is a question of putting together a good round and a good week. Singapore has great memories for me and I love the city."

Bhullar has 10 wins on the Asian Tour including one co-sanctioned with Europe.

"A win is always great and I am feeling very confident," said Bhullar, one of the current standard bearers of Indian golf.

KOHLI HAS ALL TOOLS TO COME OUT OF BATTING SLUMP: JAYAWARDENE

PTI ■ DUBAI

Star India batter Virat Kohli is a quality player and has all the tools needed to come out of his prolonged dip in form, said former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene.

Kohli and a fit-again KL Rahul on Monday returned to a 15-member Indian squad for the Asia Cup scheduled to be held in Dubai and Sharjah from August 27 to September 11.

Kohli is enduring his worst slump in form and has not scored a century in international cricket since November 2019.

His last assignment was the England tour where he could manage just 76 runs from six innings across formats, which included the rescheduled fifth Test, two ODIs and as many T20s in July.

The former skipper was rested for limited over West Indies tour and the upcoming ODIs against Zimbabwe.

"It is unfortunate what Virat is going through right now at the moment, but he is a quality player," said Jayawardene in the latest episode of The ICC Review show.

"I believe Virat has the tools to come out of it (the form slump). He has done that in the past as well and I'm sure he'll come through this. Class is permanent and form is temporary."



Rahul, who did not feature in the T20 series against the West Indies due to COVID-19 and then underwent a sports hernia surgery, will be back as vice-captain during the Asia Cup.

Jayawardene feels lack of game time could be a problem for Rahul as he gears up for the tournament.

"That (Rahul's lack of cricket) would be a concern for India. He has been out for a little while since the IPL, so having game time is quite crucial especially out there in the middle.

"The sooner he can get some game time and get that confidence back, the better. It will help him, as well as the national team."

The former Sri Lankan skipper feels India should go with a left-handed opener, preferably Rishabh Pant, with the right-handed Rohit Sharma incase Rahul doesn't make an impressive return to the game.

Pant had opened twice in T20Is against England in July.

"Even though he (Pant) hasn't done that (open the batting) much in domestic cricket, he has the capacity to do that. Wherever he bats, you're not going to change his game. He is going to be a very natural player so yes, it is an option (for Pant to open)."



Boult released from NZ Cricket contract

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Leading New Zealand fast bowler Trent Boult has been released from his contract with New Zealand Cricket to spend more time with his young family.

Boult has taken 317 wickets in tests and 169 in one-day internationals and with his new ball partner Tim Southee has played a major role in the recent successes of a New Zealand team which won the inaugural World Test Championship and reached the finals of the last two ODI World Cups.

The 33-year-old left-arm paceman recently has been in discussions with national cricket officials about the increasing burden of touring overseas with a young family at

home. "We respect Trent's position," NZC chief executive David White said Wednesday.

"He's been completely honest and up-front with us about his reasoning and, while we're sad to be losing him as a fully-contracted player, he leaves with our best wishes and our sincere thanks."

Trent has made a massive contribution to the Black Caps since his test debut in late 2011 and is now considered one of the best multi-format cricketers in the world. We're very proud of what he's achieved."

Boult will still be eligible to be selected for New Zealand, though it is likely priority would be given to contracted players.

Lanning takes indefinite break from cricket



PTI ■ SYDNEY

World Cup-winning captain Meg Lanning is unlikely to lead Australia in the tour of India later this year as the skipper is taking an indefinite break from the game to "focus on myself."

Australia are slated to tour India mid-December for five

T20s before the home series against Pakistan and the T20 World Cup in South Africa next year.

"After a busy couple of years, I've made the decision take a step back to enable me to spend time focusing on myself," Lanning said in a statement on Wednesday.

"I'm grateful for the sup-

port of CA and my teammates and ask that my privacy is respected during this time," she added.

The announcement comes days after Lanning led Australia to a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

"We're proud of Meg for acknowledging that she needs a break and will continue to support her during this time," Cricket Australia's head of performance, women's cricket, Shawn Flegler said.

"She's been an incredible contributor to Australian cricket over the last decade, achieving remarkable feats both individually and as part of the team, and has been a brilliant role model for young kids. "The welfare of our players is always our number one priority, and we'll continue to work with Meg to ensure she gets the support and space she needs."

The 30-year-old had made her international debut in 2010 and was named captain in 2014. She has led Australia 171 times.

In the past two years, she has led the team to a T20 and a 50-over World Cup titles alongside an Ashes series win.



Ireland beat Afghanistan by 7 wickets

AP ■ BELFAST

Ireland clinched their first home T20 International win of the season by beating Afghanistan by seven wickets in Belfast.

George Dockrell hit the winning boundary off the penultimate ball to lift Ireland onto 171-3 after they were set a target of 169.

Afghanistan's total of 168-7 had been boosted by 30 runs off the final two overs, with Ibrahim Zadran clubbing 29 not out off 18 balls.

But Ireland openers Paul Stirling (31 off 29 balls) and skipper Andrew Balbirnie (51

off 38) set their side on their way, putting on 61 off 7.3 overs for the first wicket.

Wicketkeeper Lorcan Tucker kept Ireland on course with 50 off 32 deliveries and it was left to Harry Tector (25 not out) and Dockrell (10 not out) to carry them home.

Earlier, Dockrell took 2-7 and Barry McCarthy 3-34 while the Afghans' top-scorer, opener Usman Ghani, struck two sixes and six fours in his 59 off 42 balls.

The two sides will meet again on Thursday at the same Civil Services Cricket Club venue in Stormont for the second time in their five-match series.

Yadav stays No. 2, Iyer moves up in ICC T20 ranking

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian batter Suryakumar Yadav held on to his second position while compatriot Shreyas Iyer moved up six places to 19th in the latest ICC T20 rankings released on Wednesday.

Yadav is the best-placed Indian with 805 points in the batting list headed by Pakistan's Babar Azam.

Iyer, who had hit a 40-ball 64 in the final T20 after a subdued show in the first four matches of the recently-concluded series against West Indies, has 578 points.

Among bowlers, spinners Ravi Bishnoi and Kuldeep Yadav also made massive gains in the rankings.

The 21-year-old Bishnoi, who scalped six wickets in two matches in the T20I series against the Windies, galloped 50 places to take 44th position, while Kuldeep, who had a three-wicket haul in the last game, leapt 58 places to 87th.

However, senior pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar dropped a spot to 9th despite having had a good outing in West Indies.

South Africa's Reeza Hendricks is the main gainer in



Pakistan cap Babar Azam has managed to hang on to his mantle as the No.1 ranked T20I batter while Mohammad Nabi continue to top the chart as the best bowler

the T20 rankings, moving up to 13th position with knocks of 74 and 42 in a 2-0 series win over Ireland.

South African spinner Keshav Maharaj is up 10 places to 18th among bowlers, while fast bowlers Lungi Ngidi (23rd) of South Africa and Lockie Ferguson of New Zealand (31st) are others to move up the chart.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has managed to hang on to his mantle as the No.1 ranked T20I batter while Australian Josh Hazlewood and Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi continue to top the chart as the best bowler and all-rounder respectively.

MI Emirates, MI Cape Town franchises unveiled

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The owners of Mumbai Indians, Reliance Industries Limited on Wednesday unveiled the name and brand identity of its franchises for the UAE's International League T20 and Cricket South Africa T20 League.

The two franchises will be known as MI Emirates and MI Cape Town, the corporate house said in a press release. While MI Emirates will be a part of the UAE's International League T20, MI Cape Town will feature in the Cricket South Africa T20 League. Nita M. Ambani, Director of Reliance Industries, said, "It gives me great pleasure to welcome 'MI Emirates' & 'MI Cape Town', the newest additions to our #Onefamily.

"For us, MI goes beyond cricket. It embodies the ability to dream, be fearless and foster a positive attitude in life. I am sure that both MI Emirates and MI Cape Town will embrace the same ethos".

CoA files contempt petition against Patel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Committee of Administrators (CoA) currently running football in the country has filed a contempt petition against ousted AIFF president Praful Patel for "interfering with the proceedings" of the Supreme Court which last week ordered elections to the national federation.

In the contempt petition, the CoA said Patel "conducted a meeting of the 35 Intervening Member Associations (state associations of the AIFF) with the express purpose of interfering with the proceedings of this Hon'ble Court..."

The petition also attached transcripts of the said meeting, which was conducted over Zoom at 11 am on August 8.

It said the contemnners have "interfered with the administration of justice by committing gross contempt of the orders" passed by the top court.

The petition made the plea to bar Patel "from participating in and holding any football related posts forthwith, including and not limited to positions in FIFA and AFC".

It also requested the top court to initiate proceedings for contempt of court against the alleged contemnners "for interference in the administration of justice, and the willful and flagrant disobedience of orders ... And punish them with maximum penalty in accordance with law".

Along with Patel, the virtual meeting was attended by IFA (Bengal football body) chairman Subrata Dutta, Delhi Football chief Shaji Prabhakaran and five others, who form the seven-member committee to represent the state associations of the AIFF in the negotiations for the drafting of new constitution.

All seven of them have also been



made contemnners along with Patel.

If the contents of the transcripts submitted to the top court are proved, it will bring out in the open the murky dealings of Indian football, which have long been talked about in hushed tones.

"...In the said meeting he has impliedly admitted to having arranged for the 05.08.2022 letter from FIFA-AFC," the contempt petition filed by former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi, on the behalf of the three-member CoA, said.

"Mr Praful Patel with the State Associations clearly shows the foul intention to interfere and obstruct the elections that are to be held as per the timeline and direction of this Hon'ble Court."

World football governing body FIFA had on August 5, in a letter to the All India Football Federation, threatened to ban India for third party interference and take away the U-17 Women's World Cup after the Supreme Court ordered elections to the AIFF by including 36 former players in the electoral college.

The elections are to be held on August 28 and the CoA has already appointed the Returning Officer for the polls.

Patel is currently a member of the powerful FIFA Council.

Referring to the transcripts of the proceedings of the meeting, the CoA said "some government officials have had discussions with the State Associations that they would file a Review Petition supporting the State Associations and then the Associations could follow."

"Exactly as discussed in the Meeting, the Union of India has now filed an Application for Modification before this Hon'ble Court and which it seeks to mention before the Court on 10.08.2022 followed by the States who have filed their application," it said.

The petition also said that the "government has been misled by the state associations, as have FIFA-AFC who are ignorant of the duplicitous role being played by Mr Patel".

"CoA has come to learn that the very State Associations who were before this

Hon'ble Court had given their consent in fact approached some individuals in the Union Ministry with a copy of the FIFA-AFC letter (threatening India of ban) and created a fear of AIFF being suspended because of non compliances.

"There was no consultation with the CoA (although extensive meetings had been held earlier with ASG Mr Sanjay Jain and the Officials of the Ministry) on the response to the FIFA-AFC letter, but at the behest of the State Associations, some members of the Ministry were convinced that the Supreme Court's order ought to be modified."

On Tuesday, the sports ministry had moved the Supreme Court seeking modification of its August 3 order concerning elections for the executive committee of the AIFF and inclusion of ex-players in the electoral college saying FIFA and AFC have "strong reservations in the member structure of AIFF".

Further referring to the transcripts, the CoA said in the petition: "All directions and decisions, including about convening the next meeting, are by Mr Praful Patel.

"The repeated admission by Mr Patel that 'the purpose of the letter was to help the State Associations' reveals that it had been arranged at his behest to interfere with this Hon'ble Court's orders," the petition said.

"The statement by Mr Patel that 'I will come to know what FIFA is thinking also ... And what AFC is thinking' reiterates his active role to push India towards a suspension by hiding the true facts from FIFA and AFC," it said.

"The seven authorized representatives of the State Associations who have sworn affidavits in this Hon'ble Court have played a critical part in the meeting and have been dispatched to do the bidding of Mr Patel."



Lanka Premier League to be played from December 6 to 23

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The postponed Lanka Premier League (LPL) will now be held from December 6 to 23, the organisers have announced.

The T20 League which was originally slated to be played from August 1 to 21, had been rescheduled last month due to the economic crisis engulfing the island nation.

"It's my pleasure to announce that the LPL will be held from 6th to 23rd December," LPL tournament organiser Samantha Dodanwela was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

The league's promoters, IPG, also confirmed the news

on Twitter.

Despite the economic crisis and political unrest, Sri Lanka had successfully hosted Australia for a month-long series in July.

However, the Asia Cup, to be played from August 27 to September 11 in the island nation, was moved to UAE.

A decision on the re-draft is yet to be taken.

"It is understood that the tournament organisers are deciding between two options: either holding a fresh draft, or going ahead with as many of the available players as possible with only the slots taken up by any unavailable foreign players being re-drafted," the report read.