

CITY 2

ATS TAKES THREE ALLEGED JEM MILITANTS ON 12-DAY REMAND

OPINION 6

THINK OF 'SERMON ON THE MOUNT'

WORLD 10

BIDEN SIGNS MASSIVE CLIMATE AND HEALTH-CARE LEGISLATION

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY AUGUST 18, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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12 SPORT

Gadkari, Chouhan out in BJP Parl board shake-up

With eye to K'taka polls, BSY inducted in BJP's apex panel; CEC too reshuffled

DEEPAK UPRETI/PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major reshuffle in the BJP's Parliamentary Board, the highest decision-making body of the party, former BJP president and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the party's longest serving CM, were dropped, giving way for six new members, including 79-year-old influential "Lingayat" leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and former IPS officer and Punjab leader Iqbal Singh Lalpura.

The exit of Gadkari and Chouhan from the Parliamentary Board is suggestive of the continuation of "generational changes" policy in the BJP before the next Lok Sabha polls in 2024 which started from 2014 onwards, but Yediyurappa's inclusion surely did not fit in this pattern and could be attributed to political exigency (Karnataka polls).

The BJP has created "Margdarshak Mandal" to



accommodate party veterans like LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi after they ceased to be the members of the board.

Gadkari's recent reported comments that "sometime I think like quitting politics" and "politics is now only for satta" (power) had created ripples in the political circles giving rise to speculation about his equation with the top BJP leadership. Chouhan, the three-time Chief Minister, would be facing Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh in 2023.

This is the first time the board has been rejigged under Nadda, who took over as the party president in 2020.

In an exercise to make the apex body regionally and socially more representative, the BJP has included tribal, OBC, minorities members,



including former Assam CM and Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal (tribal), former Lok Sabha member from Haryana Sudha Yadav (OBC) and former Union Minister Satyanarayan Jatiya (SC) from Madhya Pradesh.

Lalpura, a member from the minority community, was appointed the Minorities Commission Chairman in 2021 for the second time. A decorated officer, he was one of the police officers selected to arrest Sikh extremist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and recently played a key role on behalf of the BJP to negotiate with the agitating farmers in Punjab. His appointment in the BJP's powerful body indicates the party's attempts to expand its base in the AAP-ruled-Punjab in the run-up to 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

One more key entrant to the influential BJP's panel is Dr K Laxman, who is a Rajya Sabha member and comes

from Hyderabad. Former Telangana BJP president, Laxman is currently party's OBC Morcha chairman. His inclusion is BJP's attempt to increase its political footprints in Telangana which is to go to poll before December 2023.

Yediyurappa's entry to the board is also suggestive of the party's efforts to bring unity in the faction-ridden Karnataka BJP where the "Lingayat" patriarch holds considerable clout and could become a rallying point for the party. The State is to face Assembly elections next year.

The parliamentary panel in its previous form had five vacancies caused by the passing away of senior leaders — Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj and Ananth Kumar — and election of M Venkaiah Naidu as Vice-President and Thawarchand Gehlot being appointed as Karnataka Governor.

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Puri announces 1,100 flats for Rohingyas; MHA says 'no'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a clear case of lack of coordination, hours after Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announced awarding refugee status to Rohingyas and allotted them 1,100 flats in Delhi, the Union Home Ministry said no such decision was taken, and termed Rohingyas as illegal foreigners, waiting to be deported.

"India has always welcomed those who have sought refuge in the country. In a landmark decision all #Rohingya #Refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area of Delhi. They will be provided basic amenities, UNHCR IDs & round-the-clock @DelhiPolice protection.

"Those who made a career out of spreading canards on India's refugee policy deliberately linking it to #CAA will be disappointed. India respects & follows UN Refugee Convention 1951 & provides refuge to all, regardless of their race, religion or creed," tweeted Puri at 7.30 am, endorsing the UN Refugee Convention, which India has not approved.

Soon, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and many right wing organisations started attacking Puri for his Wednesday morning tweet and asked the Centre to change the decision and deport Rohingyas.

With criticism coming out

○ Rohingya infiltrations started in India by end of 2012 when Myanmar Army started action against the Muslim population in their tussles with Buddhists. In Delhi 1,200 Rohingyas sheltered in Okhla and North West Delhi.

○ As per the Intelligence agencies, around 40,000 Rohingyas

infiltrated into India during 2012-2014, mostly in Jammu, Haryana's Mewat, UP, Telangana, Kerala, part of Bengal, Assam borders.

○ UNHCR's Report acknowledged that more than 18,000 Rohingyas have taken shelter in India, seeking refugee status



37-year-old woman poses for photographs at the Rohingya refugee settlement area in Kalindi Kunj in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

from all quarters, by 3 pm the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a statement and series of tweets rejecting Puri's claims. Interestingly MHA put out blame on "news reports in certain sections of media" for the goof up created by Urban Development Minister Puri.

"With respect to news reports in certain sections of the media regarding Rohingya illegal foreigners, it is clarified that the MHA has not given any directions to provide EWS

flats to Rohingya illegal migrants at Bakkarwala in New Delhi. The Government of Delhi proposed to shift the Rohingyas to a new location. MHA has directed the Government of Delhi to ensure Rohingya illegal foreigners will continue at the present location at Kanchan Kunj, Madanpur Khadar as MHA has already taken up the matter of deportation of illegal foreigners with the concerned country."

Continued on Page 9

CAPSULE

RUSSIAN OIL: INDIA FOR BEST DEAL, CLAIMS EAM

Bangkok: The US and some others may not appreciate India buying Russian oil, but they have accepted it as New Delhi has not been defensive about its stand but made them realise that the Government had the "moral duty" to ensure that the people got the "best deal". External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said.

PARTIES CAN'T BE BARRED FROM POLL VOWS: SC

New Delhi: Political parties and individuals cannot be prevented from making poll promises aimed at fulfilling the constitutional mandate and the term "freebie" should not be confused with genuine welfare measures, the Supreme Court said Wednesday.

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Press and offices of **The Pioneer** will remain closed on Thursday, August 18, 2022 on account of **Krishna Jannashthmi**. The next edition of the newspaper will appear on Saturday, August 20, 2022.

ED names Jacqueline Fernandez in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday named actor Jacqueline Fernandez as an accused in the money laundering case against common Suresh Chandrashekar, who is facing charges in a ₹200 crore extortion case. The ED has named her as accused in a supplementary charge sheet.

After being chargesheeted, the actor shared a post on her social media page saying she will remain "strong" in these testing times. The agency filed the fresh (second supplementary) charge sheet or prosecution complaint in the case before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court here.

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L-G seeks action against babu for ₹50 lakh bribe, undue favours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has recommended action against IAS officer Udit Prakash Rai for allegedly accepting ₹50 lakh bribe to grant "undue favours" to an executive engineer in two corruption cases.

Rai, a 2007 batch AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories) cadre officer, is currently posted as a special secretary in the health and family welfare department of the Delhi Government.

Sources in the Raj Niwas said the Lieutenant Governor has made this recommendation to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on the basis of a substantiated recommendation made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Continued on Page 9

18 Indian cities in 20 worst PM2.5 list, says US report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has been home to 18 of the 20 world cities with the severest increase in fine particle pollutants (PM2.5) from 2010 to 2019.

Delhi and Kolkata reported 106 and 99 deaths per one lakh population respectively in last year due to the lethal pollutant, a report published by the US-based research organisation Health Effects Institute (HEI) has said.

The analysts of the report used data from 2010 to 2019 from over 7,000 cities across the globe and focussed on two of the most harmful pollutants; fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

PM2.5 refers to fine particles (measuring 2.5 µm or less in diameter) that penetrate deep into the body and fuel inflammation in the lungs and respiratory tract, leading to the risk of having cardiovas-



cular and respiratory problems, including a weak immune system. Also, said the report, overall, India and Indonesia have seen the most severe increase in PM2.5 pollution, whereas China has seen the greatest improvements.

Of the 50 cities with the increase in PM2.5, 41 are in

India and 9 are in Indonesia. On the other hand, of the 20 cities with the greatest decrease in PM2.5 pollution from 2010 to 2019, all are located in China," said the analysts.

In 2019, Delhi recorded an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 110 microgram per cubic metre, the highest

among the most-populous cities in the world, followed by Kolkata (84 microgram per cubic metre), said the report "Air Quality and Health in Cities" by the State of Global Air Initiative, a collaboration between the HEI and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease project.

The comprehensive and detailed analysis of air pollution and global health effects for over 7,000 cities released on Wednesday also shows that Delhi has the highest average level of fine PM 2.5 among the world's most populated cities.

The report summarises data on air pollution exposures and associated health impacts in 7,239 cities (with minimum population of 50,000) from 2010 to 2019. It combines ground-based air quality data with satellites and models to produce air quality estimates for cities around the world.

Continued on Page 9

TOTAL RECEIVABLE PREMIUM	% LATE FEE CONCESSION	MAXIMUM CONCESSION LIMIT
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FROM ₹3,00,001 AND ABOVE	30%	₹3,500

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75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

LIC भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA Har Pal Aapke Saath

Govt offices, schools to celebrate Janmashtami on August 19

Lucknow(PNS): The government has declared Janmashtami holiday in the government offices and educational institutions on August 19.

A government spokesman said here on Wednesday that earlier the holiday for

Janmashtami in the government gazette was on August 18. "As the panchang has declared Janmashtami on August 19, the government has decided to shift the holiday from August 18 to 19," the spokesman said in a statement.



NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was SHAMINA MOGIS which is now changed to SHAHINA MUGISH. In future I shall be known as SHAHINA MUGISH. SHAHINA MUGISH W/o Salim Khan L2/15, Ganga Nagar Colony, Varanasi.

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To Be Informed that I have lost my High School MARKS STATEMENT CUM CERTIFICATE ICSE Board passing year 2006 Roll No-T/6967/035, somewhere NIVESH GUPTA S/o RAKESH KUMAR GUPTA Add-1/428 Vikas Nagar Lucknow

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सूचना

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GENERAL INFORMATION

I Publicly Intimate that my House E-1/4 Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow whose original allotment letter has been lost in my journey in Hazratganj Lucknow on dt. 25.7.2022 using my documents by any person will be illegal. Manjeet Singh L-8/5 Badshahnagar Sachivalaya Colony, Nishatganj, Lucknow.

सूचना

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सचिव प्राचार्य

ATS takes three alleged JeM militants on 12-day remand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sleuths of the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) on Wednesday took police custody of three arrested terror suspects -- Sabauddin, Nadim and Habibul -- for further questioning.

Special Court Judge Anurodh Mishra, granted permission to Uttar Pradesh ATS to take custody of the three terror suspects Sabauddin, Nadim and Habibul for 12 days beginning from August 17 to 29. The UP ATS had pleaded before the Special Court for the remand of the three accused for questioning.

During the investigation, it has been found that the three suspects have links with proscribed terrorist organisations such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, ISIS and others operating from Pakistan and Afghanistan. These terrorists were working towards achieving the goal of making India an Islamic state, sources said.

Earlier, Nadim was quizzed by the Saharanpur unit of the ATS. During this questioning, it came to light that Nadim was in contact with terrorist outfits operating from Pakistan and Afghanistan through social media. Nadim also procured information about bomb making technique with the help of social media from these terrorist organisations operating from Pakistan and Afghanistan soil.

Thereafter, Nadim was taken into custody on August 12, and on the basis of his confessional statement, his cohort Saifullah was arrested. The UP ATS also prayed before the special court that to ascertain with whom the accused were in contact, the police remand of the suspects would be required. Besides, the arrested persons' mobile phones and transcripts and data needed verification and scanning so as to establish their network of crime, the police sources said.

Meanwhile, sources said that the three arrested militants were preparing a background of 'Ghazwa-e-Hind' in the country and its fabric was being woven in UP.

Habibul, a 19-year-old terrorist arrested from Kanpur, was the group's strong link and sources said that he was nursing the dream of Ghazwa-e-Hind. On the orders of his masters sitting in Pakistan, he was preparing Muslim youths of the country to wage a war against India.

Habibul is a prominent social media expert of terrorist organisations which not only create social media accounts and virtual IDs for terrorists, but also make jihadi videos and videos related to Ghazwa-e-Hind and send them to the youth. The ATS will try to extract these details from him during the 12-day remand.

Sources said that during questioning so far by the ATS,

Habibul said, "Jihad leads to heaven. If there is any religion, it is only Islam. I am a true Muslim. I am doing what Deen has said."

When the ATS asked him why he was supporting radical groups, Habibul replied that in Islam, everyone's purpose was the same, Ghazwa-e-Hind. Not only this, he was using the word 'kafir' for Hindus only.

Sources also said that Habibul was also tasked to use social media as a strong weapon of terrorist organisations. He was working as a social media expert for the terrorists sitting in Pakistan who were dreaming of the rule of Islam in India. Habibul used to create social media accounts of terrorists and post jihadi videos related to Ghazwa-e-Hind.

According to UP ATS sources, Habibul was associated in many such 'Telegram' groups from where he was getting orders for jihad to fulfill the dream of Ghazwa-e-Hind.

Among them 'Rah-e-Hidayat' and 'Gurba' groups are prominent and many terrorists associated with Pakistan and Taliban are present in these groups.

These groups send literature and documents to incite the youths to take up war against India. Not only this, books printed in Pakistan are also sent to this group. In this literature, the Ghazwa-e-Hind is described in detail. All these

books have been received by ATS from Habibul.

Habibul was driven to terrorism due to the jihadi ideology he imbibed in the madrasas of Gujarat and Pratapgarh. After this he came to Fatehpur and started instigating his friends and relatives to wage a war against India. Pakistan used to ask for the help of the people living in Afghanistan, Bangladesh. He used to incite jihad by showing videos of cruelty to Muslims. Seeing his jihadi ideology, Jaish-e-Muhammad had made Habibul the strongest link for the mission of Ghazwa-e-Hind.

Sources also maintained that several WhatsApp groups were found in the mobile phone of Marguv Ahmed Danish alias Tahir, arrested in the NIA (National Investigation Agency) raid in Phulwarisharif, Bihar.

There was a chat about Ghazwa-e-Hind and also some videos of jihad. In these videos, there was an appeal to Muslims in India to do jihad. Not only this, the complete action plan for the rule of Islam in India by 2047 was recovered from some other accused.

According to sources in the UP ATS, many of the videos in the groups of arrested people working in the Ghazwa-e-Hind mission in Phulwarisharif were made by Habibul.

He prepared them and made them viral at the behest of terrorist masters.

States vying for \$1-trillion economy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In the spirit of competitive cooperative federalism as stated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address from the Red Fort on Independence Day, along with Uttar Pradesh many other large states are recalibrating strategies to realise unprecedented economic expansion, as each of them aims to far exceed the growth rate targeted by the Centre for the national gross domestic product (GDP) and emerge as a \$1-trillion economy over the next 5-8 years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, said competitive cooperative federalism was the need of the hour and there should be a healthy spirit of competition among the states while progressing in different sectors.

The trillion-dollar economy target for Uttar Pradesh was suggested by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he inaugurated the UP Investors' Summit in Lucknow on February 21, 2018.

"Can Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh compete with each other to become a trillion-dollar economy? Will the UP government compete with other states? More the competition, the more will be the investment," the prime minister had said. The prime minister's observation set the ball rolling and the state government began holding discussions to prepare a roadmap. The UP government floated a tender on June 19, 2020, to hire a consultant. The contract has been awarded to Deloitte and the timeline for achieving the target is 2027.

Uttar Pradesh has lined up the most aggressive target, as it aims to raise its gross state domestic product (GSDP) four-fold to \$1 trillion by financial year (FY) 2027. While Karnataka aims to push up its

GSDP to \$1 trillion by FY 2027 from \$275 billion in FY 2022, Tamil Nadu wants to do so by 2030 from \$277 billion in FY 2022.

Maharashtra, despite having the largest GSDP among states of \$429 billion, is eyeing the \$1-trillion milestone by FY 2030. Gujarat wants to raise its GSDP to \$0.5 trillion by FY 2027 from \$260 billion in the last fiscal.

In contrast, India's aim of achieving a \$5-trillion economy by FY 2027 (delayed by two years due to the pandemic) from \$3.1 trillion in FY 2022 requires a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of a little over 10 per cent, an average trend growth rate seen in the last decade.

Several states have sought requests for proposals (RFPs) with a wide scope from consultants willing to help realise their aggressive targets. Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are looking for comprehensive multi-year plans, including sector-specific strategies, to realise their goals. The consultants will also be required to help implement those plans. Odisha and Uttarakhand are among those set to undertake comprehensive reviews of plans to accelerate economic growth. Five states - Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat - constituted approximately 40 per cent of the country's nominal GDP in FY 2022.

"These efforts augur well for accelerated growth in India where capacity at the state level has frequently been a limiting factor. It marks a significant shift towards improving competitiveness of state economies," said an official of a consulting firm. He added, "For a \$5-trillion Indian economy, states' role is going to be vital. If larger states can do a status check of their economies and identify areas from where growth will come from, it is a welcome step."

UP govt improving irrigation facilities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of its mission to improve the condition of farmers, especially marginal and small farmers, in the state and double their income in the coming years, the Uttar Pradesh government has undertaken a number of initiatives with regard to improving irrigation facilities in the state in the last five years.

According to the Minor Irrigation Department, free bore wells/shallow tube wells are being constructed to facilitate irrigation of agricultural lands belonging to marginal and small farmers and arrangement has been made for irrigation of additional 10 lakh hectares of land in the state in the last five years through various schemes run by the Minor Irrigation Department.

A Minor Irrigation Department press release revealed that 4,88,851 free boring/shallow tube wells had been constructed by the department between financial year 2018-19 and July 5, 2022. It said the shallow tube wells were 30 metres deep, con-

structed from PVC pipes with a diameter of 110 mm.

The government has also done remarkable work in enhancing irrigation facilities, especially in Bundelkhand region, which has been battling with water crisis for long, through the Bundelkhand package under Groundwater Conservation Mission.

A total of 501 ponds have been constructed or renovated by the Minor Irrigation Department from the financial year 2018-19 to July 5, 2022, under the Bundelkhand package. The package aims to ensure groundwater enrichment/irrigation/fish rearing/animal drinking water in selected development blocks.

The Yogi government has also built 718 check dams to augment groundwater level from the financial year 2018-19 to July, 2022. The check dams are constructed on drains during the rainy season to conserve water in order to ensure its availability to the farmers for irrigation purposes.

The department has also dug up 1,256 blast wells with

a depth of 15 metres and a diameter of 4-6 metres in Bundelkhand and Vindhya plateau regions for irrigation purposes between 2018-19 and July, 2022.

Furthermore, the Minor Irrigation Department has drilled 4,064 deep tube wells to a depth ranging between 61 metres and 90 metres as well as 12,007 medium deep tube wells with a depth of 31 metres to 60 metres from 2018-19 till July, which are benefiting farmers of all categories.

Once a deep tube well as well as a medium tube well becomes operational, a total of 12 hectares and 10 hectares of land is irrigated respectively per boring.

Meanwhile, under the private irrigation programme of the Collective Tube Well Scheme, a total of 607 collective tube wells have been constructed by the department from 2018-19 to July 5, 2022, and they are benefiting Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes farmers as well as small and marginal farmers from the general category.

Shopkeeper shot at

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two youths shot at a 25-year-old shopkeeper when he was returning home in the night on Tuesday.

The victim, identified as Atul Kumar of Khalishpur village in Kakori, suffered gunshot injuries on his shoulder and was admitted to the Trauma Centre of King George's Medical University.

Police registered a case of attempt to murder against unknown miscreants. The police suspect the attack was the result of some old enmity that the miscreants had with the shopkeeper.

As per reports, Atul was shot at when he was crossing the Beta Nullah culvert on a motorcycle while returning home after closing his shop at

Moti Neem crossing. The assailants were on another motorcycle and the bullet was fired by the youth riding the pillion and it hit his shoulder.

Denying any enmity, the victim's mother Suhana said apprehended her son was attacked with an aim to loot him. Meanwhile, a man opened fire in the apartment he lives in in an inebriated state in BBD University police station area on Tuesday night. A resident filed a complaint in this regard after which the man was arrested. He was identified as Saurabh Dixit of Silver Line Apartment. As per police, Saurabh fired several rounds while standing in the balcony of the apartment, scaring the other inmates. The police seized the weapon. Saurabh is a native of Etawah.

Lucknow gets 1st prize in decoration contest

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the completion of 75 glorious years of independence, Vidhan Bhawan, secretariat administration, Lucknow received first prize in the decoration competition of state offices (government) in Lucknow city.

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak felicitated Special Secretary Arun Prakash on this occasion.

Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob, District Magistrate Suryapal Gangwar, ACM Pramod Pandey (PCS) were present.

CM visits Shamli, Saharanpur

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Saharanpur and Shamli districts on Wednesday to take stock of the ongoing development works in the region and gave instructions to speed up the various projects while ensuring that growth reached all sections of society. During his visit, Yogi held a meeting with the public representatives and inspected the progress of the Maa Shakumbhari Devi University, which is under construction in Saharanpur. Thereafter, he made a surprise inspection of the government medical college and held a review meeting of the Saharanpur Division.

In the meeting, the officials and public representatives of Shamli and Muzaffarnagar participated virtually. The chief minister stressed that the pace of all the upcoming projects should be expedited and prompt action should be taken against those being negligent.



Canada's High Commissioner to India Cameron MacKay pays a courtesy call on Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel in Lucknow on Wednesday

Stitching Kanha's dresses a big business in Mathura

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Stitching dresses for Kanha is turning out to be a money spinner for small business houses across Mathura as demand for dresses of Lord Krishna from across India and abroad is expected to exceed Rs 500 crore business this year.

Owner of Agarwal Costume Industry, Jawahar Aggarwal, said that with the blessings of Lord Krishna this year the region was witnessing a booming business.

"We started stitching clothes sometimes in May and before Janmashtami we were able to complete all the orders. This Janmashtami has generated a business of more than Rs 500 crore," he said.

The region has witnessed a revival in business this year after two years as supply of Kanha's dresses and other paraphernalia had almost stopped due to the COVID-19 pandem-

ic. There was practically no order from overseas in the last two years while the orders from across the country came down drastically. Thus, the people who were involved in making these dresses were forced to take up other works for survival.

"The experts in dress making are back now. With the state government extending support coupled with a congenial business atmosphere, Janmashtami has brought smiles on the faces of thousands of people involved in this business," Someshwar Agarwal, a local trader, told this reporter.

He said probably Lord Krishna was the only Hindu God with whom people took the liberty to dress Him in modern attire. "That is why every year new costumes with dazzling colours and attractive patterns are introduced," he added.

A few years back a local priest in a Vrindavan temple

dressed Lord Krishna in jeans and T-shirt but changed it to traditional dhoti once people objected to it.

"We have moved a long way from the conventional 'poshak' (dress). Creative minds have now introduced an array of colourful costumes, studded with precious stones, exquisite embroidery and expensive 'gota' (embroidery using applique technique)," said Deepak Parikh, a shopkeeper of Mathura. The business related to stitching dresses of Lord Krishna starts two months in advance. Mathura, in the past few years, has emerged as the country's main hub for 'poshaks' and related knick-knacks. About 20,000 artisans, both Hindus and Muslims, are engaged in producing the dresses and decorative items. While the Muslim workers specialise in embroidery, intricate needlework and zardozi (sewing with gold string), Hindus do the sewing and

stitching of the dresses, weaving attractive patterns.

"They worked 10-12 hours a day to complete the orders," Parikh said.

Besides, other people involved in this trade are raw material suppliers and the traders selling the end product.

"Orders have come from more than 18 countries, including Russia, Dubai, Canada, Poland, and America. The dresses are being couriered daily to dozens of foreign countries or Sri Krishna temples and individuals. Our demand is growing in foreign markets," said BN Sharma, an office-bearer of the Traders' Association.

This year the dress which Thakurji will flaunt is 'Pacharangi' which is five coloured dress adorned with pearls and stones. The cost of the dress varies from Rs 10 to Rs 5 lakh. "The prices are kept to suit everyone's pocket," Sharma said.

UP has witnessed 76 pc growth in tourist flow: Jaiveer Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has witnessed 76 per cent more tourist inflow this year since July 2019, all because of the collective efforts of the government and private stakeholders working progressively to elevate the tourism industry.

This was stated by Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh at a programme organised on Wednesday. He was speaking at an interactive conclave on 'Role of Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Transforming Uttar Pradesh' organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Uttar Pradesh Chapter in collaboration with the UP's Tourism and Culture Department and UP Hotel and Restaurant Association (UPHRA) on Wednesday.

Jaiveer Singh, who was the chief guest, encouraged the participants and stakeholders to work collectively towards developing the tourism and hospitality sector of the state.

The minister said that tourism was crucial to social progress as well as an important tool to extend socio-economic and cultural interaction and encouraged international connections, expansion of markets, creation of jobs and income production, as a source and effect of economic growth.

He said that due to the diverse culture and heritage of the state, the tourism sector was a major contributor to Uttar Pradesh's economy for many years and had been the fastest-growing sector. He pointed out that following the



outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic during the last couple of years, the tourist traffic in Uttar Pradesh had taken a severe blow. He said that in comparison to other sectors, domestic and international tourism had faced the blow more severely during the last couple of years in the pandemic. He said that now in the year 2022, when the pandemic had shown a significant decline, the tourism sector had revived drastically.

The minister said that Uttar Pradesh was the third largest state economy in India. He said that despite the difficult situation owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state gross state domestic product (GSDP) had increased by 40 per cent in the last five years because of good governance.

He said in the year 2016-17, the GSDP of UP was Rs 12.47 lakh crore and at present it had reached the level of Rs 17.48 lakh crore resulting in 40 per cent phenomenal jump.

Singh said that the upcoming tourism policy to be released in 2023 would be more attractive as the practical flaws of the earlier tourism policy announced in 2018 would be removed. "Along with this, every effort will be made to remove the problems being faced in the licensing process of the hotel and service sector, and tourism industry," he added.

He said that by incorporating the suggestions given by the experts of hotels, restaurants, travel and service sector, through the new tourism policy, Uttar Pradesh would be

developed as the most favorite destination in terms of tourism in the next five years. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country had made progress in every field in the last years. Singh said that there many places were scattered in the countryside which had the potential to attract tourists and work was being done on a plan to promote organic farming within a radius of five kilometres along the river Ganga from Bijnor to Ballia.

"Along with setting up of night safari in Kukrail, the zoo will be shifted to Kukrail picnic spot, and a museum will be developed to display war ship (INS Gomti) and its weapons which will become a centre of attraction for tourists," he said. Singh said due to the devel-

opment of tourist-friendly infrastructure, 4-5 lakh tourists were visiting Kashi Vishwanath temple every day and hotels and restaurants were being benefitted from this along with small traders.

He said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath would chair the Eco-Tourism Board formed on Tuesday and it would have ministers of 10 departments as members and the chief secretary as member-secretary. "The government will also rope in specialists from prominent institutions," he added.

Singh urged the tourism and hospitality industry stakeholders to submit as many suggestions as possible for incorporation in the upcoming Tourism Policy 2023, and assured that proper consideration would be given to them.

Farmer hacked to death in broad daylight

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational broad daylight brutal murder in Kanikpur village of Etah district, a farmer was hacked to death with an axe in the middle of the road on Wednesday morning.

More than 10 assailants carried out this gruesome crime and escaped. When the family members of the farmer reached the spot, they were shocked to see his body lying in a pool of blood in the middle of the road. All the killers safely escaped after executing the brutal killing.

As soon as the information was received, the local police reached the spot along with senior officers and started an investigation. They also sent the body for autopsy. A heavy police force was deployed in the village to avert any untoward incident. The preliminary investigation revealed that the victim, Kharag Singh, had a dispute with some local villagers two days ago. The opposite party gave a complaint to the police and a case was registered against Kharag Singh.

On coming to know about the case registered against him,

Kharag Singh also decided to lodge a cross-FIR. He left his house on Wednesday and was on way to the local police station when he was brutally killed.

Kharag Singh's sons Sunil and Rajat said that on the way more than 10 assailants surrounded his father and killed him with an axe. They said the assailants fled after committing the crime. The family got information from the villagers that Kharag Singh was murdered.

Local officers said that teams had been formed and they were conducting raids to nab the assailants who were absconding. They said efforts were on to nab the assailants.

Meanwhile in Jaunpur, three persons, including two women, were arrested in connection with the murder of a man in Madiyahan Kotwali area, police sources said on Wednesday.

Reports said Ram Naresh (50), who worked as a mason, went to meet his friend Vinod Gautam, a resident of Bhawanipur, on Tuesday night. Ram Naresh had a row with Vinod which ended in a scuffle. Vinod assaulted Ram Naresh with an iron rod, injur-

ing him seriously, the sources said.

The police rushed Ram Naresh to a community health centre where he died, leading to the arrests of Pattar Gautam, his wife Geeta Devi and daughter Soni Devi. Vinod is absconding.

In another incident reported from Pilibhit, a 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour, according to police.

The incident took place on Tuesday night when the girl was alone in her house and the accused Sukhlal barged in and raped her, Station House Officer of Puranpur, Ashok Pal, said. The accused has been detained. On the complaint of the girl's father, an FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Circle officer, Virendra Vikram Singh said the girl was admitted to the medical college hospital for treatment and her condition was stated to be out of danger.

In the complaint, the girl's age is mentioned as 12 years but the police are yet to receive documents for ascertaining the exact age, he said.

Man thrashed, looted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

About a dozen men riding separate motorcycles abducted a man and later thrashed him and looted Rs 500 and his mobile phone in PGI police station area on Tuesday evening.

As per reports, the victim, identified as Zabir Khan of Para, was attacked near a dental college in the PGI police station area by his former acquaintance Shailendra Sen.

"Around 6 pm on Tuesday, Sen and his men stopped me near the dental college. They forced me to sit on their bike and took me to Millennium Park where they thrashed me till I

fell unconscious and looted the cash in was carrying," he alleged.

Explaining the reason behind the attack, Khan said he had given Rs 15,000 as loan to Sen eight months back but the latter did not return the money. "When I reminded Sen to refund the money, he lost his cool and abused me. A week back he threatened me of dire consequences," he said.

The victim said after gaining consciousness he and contacted the police for help.

Police registered a case under section of rioting, looting, causing grievous injuries to the victim and other counts.



Tiranga Yatra being take out by Uttar Pradesh Prathamik Shikshak Sang on Wednesday

Pioneer

Youth booked for eve-teasing, abusing girl

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An acquaintance of an 18-year-old girl student of a private university behaved inappropriately with her and thrashed her when she refused to submit to his wishes to marry him. The victim lodged a report with the Gautam Pali police station.

As per reports, the victim met one Mohammed Farhan of Martinpurva locality under Gautam Pali police station of Gomti Nagar through a common acquaintance two years back. Since then they were meeting each other and in due course of time they became good friends. The girl alleged that during their friendship, she came to know that Farhan was in the habit of smoking ganja and drinking alcohol and had other bad habits. Subsequently, she started distancing from him.

According to the girl this irked Farhan and he started pressuring her to associate with him. He started visiting the university where she studies and even used to enter the campus and reach her hostel and get fresh with her. Out of fear she vacated the hostel room and started living in a

house on rent in Malhaur locality to pursue her studies.

She said Farhan found her address through some of his contacts and started visiting the room and behaved inappropriately with her. The girl said she did not lodge an FIR due to fear of being defamed in society. She alleged that Farhan also spoke to her parents and cast aspersions on her.

The police registered a case on the complaint of the victim and started an investigation. A spokesman said a case for eve-teasing, threatening, abusing and thrashing the victim was registered against the miscreant.

In another incident, a woman accused her father-in-law of getting fresh with her in the absence of her husband with whom she married after love. She also accused her husband of marrying another woman in Singapore and planning to divorce her.

In her complaint, the woman said she was in love with a resident of Indira Nagar and married him in 2006 and they had a 12 year-old son. She said after the marriage, she was staying with her husband in Noida

where he worked in a private company. In 2018, her husband got a job in Singapore and she shifted to Lucknow.

"When my father-in-law started behaving inappropriately with me at home, I complained to my mother-in-law and my husband but they ignored it. In 2020, I took a house on rent and started living there with my son. A few months later my husband stopped sending me money to run the house and I came to know that his relationship with another woman in Singapore was the reason behind this. When I ran out of money, I went to my in-laws house where they thrashed me and turned me out. They threatened to kill me and my son," she alleged.

The woman alleged that on August 14 when she went to her in-laws to seek monetary assistance, her father-in-law caught her with wrong intention in an outer room. She said when her mother-in-law and sister-in-law came to the room she complained to them but they abused her and threw her out of the house.

Police registered a case and have started investigation in the case.

Two cops sent to Lines

Lucknow (PNS): Two days after the bloody clash between two rival groups vying for supremacy during the Tiranga procession, the incharges of Bangla Bazaar and Qila police outposts were given the marching orders.

ADCP (East) Ali Abbas said the incharges of Bangla Bazaar and Qila police outposts, Rishakesh Rai and Ranjeet Pathak respectively were sent to the Lines for laxity in the duty.

He said the police teams were conducting raids to nab the miscreants involved in the clash. He said the surveillance teams were tracking the suspects who had gone into hiding and would nab them soon.

The police sources said locations of mobile phones of

two of the accused were found to be out of the city and police suspect they had left the district due to fear.

Two groups had clashed as they crossed one another during the Tiranga procession in the Bangal Bazar locality on August 15. Both groups had pelted stones in which a man was injured while several vehicles and a shop were damaged. Both sides fought a pitched battle until the police reached the scene.

One group was being led by Sonu Rawat who has gained the notoriety of being leader of the infamous team 1000 gang. One of the victims, Ayush Yadav, had lodged a report in this connection and the police had arrested four miscreants including one Dilip who is

said to be the main plotter of the clash between the two groups.

In the incident one Ravi had suffered head injuries while Ayush (the complainant), Veer, Vinod and Shubham also suffered injuries.

Police have registered a case against Saurabh aka Bhoori, Mohammed Faizan, Mangal, Dilp Pathak and several others for rioting and also under the provisions of 7 Criminal Law Amendment Act.

The police sources said the officials concerned, including the SHO Ashiyana, had failed to explain why they allowed permission when they were aware of the rivalry between the leaders of both the groups.

Fragrance of Meri Mitti-75 spreads from Kannauj

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking Uttar Pradesh's traditional fragrance industry to the national as well as global stage and establishing it as a brand as per the vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on the 75th independence anniversary of India, the perfume of 75 fragrances - Meri Mitti-75 -- along with other products, were launched as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

Coming from Kannauj, the perfume capital of India, the rare fragrances are the ODOP (One District One Product) of the district. On Monday, as many as seven businessmen of Kannauj launched various new perfume products, including incense sticks, scented tricolour terrazzo, and candles,

among others at Lok Bhawan in the presence of Additional Chief Secretary (MSME) Navneet Sehgal.

'Meri Mitti-75' perfume has been developed using 75 kg of clay from various parts of Kannauj. Water distillation technology has been used in its preparation. It is prepared with the help of base oil by collecting the sweet aroma that comes from the soil after the first rain. Besides, 75 herbs have also been used to prepare the perfume.

Sehgal said that Attar Ganga, Hind Shamama, Vande Mataram Motiya Divine fragrance, Meri Mitti-75, UD-75 Deo, Tiranga perfume, Azadi-75, Tricolour terrazzo, scented tricolour terrazzo were launched on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in

collaboration with the perfume traders of Kannauj and the Fragrance and Fragrance Development Centre (FFDC), giving a new dimension to the Yogi government's flagship ODOP scheme.

Attar Ganga perfume is prepared from flowers growing on both the banks of the river Ganges flowing in Kannauj. Rose, bela, mehndi, and marigold flowers have been used in making this perfume.

Hind Shamama perfume is prepared from 35 herbs from different states of the country. Known to boost immunity, this perfume is edible and can be used on the body as well.

Vande Mataram Motiya Divine Fragrance is naturally made from bela flowers and can be used for religious purposes. It contains 100 per cent

natural essence of champa and jasmine flowers.

UD-75 deodorant spray has been launched as a totally natural spray free from chemicals, unlike other deodorants. It has been prepared from the soil of Kannauj through the ancient traditional method

Scented tricolour Terrazzo is a tricoloured stone made using the natural perfume of Kannauj. In this terrazzo, focus is on old things so that they can be recycled and used again. Coasters, candles, sinks, soaps, coffee tables, table tops, etc. are being made by this method. Indian and western techniques have been used in making it.

Tiranga Attar is prepared with the fragrance of rose, earthy and bela. It is based on the tricolour of the Indian flag.

Kranti Gulab based on saffron colour is made from rose and sandalwood. Mati-e-Watan is made from the potter's clay from Kannauj. At the same time, Swatantraya Bela has been prepared from the flowers of bela.

Tricolour has been used to make incense sticks prepared from natural fragrance. Made from 75 types of fragrance, it will spread its fragrance all over the country. In this, three fragrances have also been used along with tricolour.

Azadi-75 is made of flowers from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. In total, the natural fragrance of 75 flowers have been blended in making this perfume. This was specially prepared on the occasion of 75 years of Indian independence.

CITYBRIEFS

MOU SIGNED

To increase the capacity building and skill enhancement of the students, KMC Language University signed an MoU with Bajaj Finserv on Tuesday. Under this MoU, Bajaj Finserv will provide employment opportunities to the final semester students and alumni of the Faculty of Commerce in the field of finance, banking and insurance. Also, Bajaj Finserv will provide 96 hours of training to the students, covering various topics like insurance, retail banking, communication etc. The MoU was signed in the presence of Vice Chancellor NB Singh and associate partner of Bajaj Finserv Gaurav.

I-DAY CELEBRATIONS

As a part of the Independence Day celebrations, St Paul College carried out the flag hoisting ceremony. Army Medical Corps deputy commandant Major General Hridesh Sahni hoisted the flag, followed by a felicitation ceremony of the meritorious students. Amongst those who were felicitated were Vrigesh Bajpai, Saniya Tripathi, Samiya Javed of class 12, Adhish Tewari, Ashish Mishra and Ananya Ghosh of class 10. The other meritorious students were felicitated with annual trophies such as Pankaj Awasthi Memorial Trophy, Prabhat Jain Memorial Trophy and Navendu Jain Memorial

Trophy by the president of St Paul Alumni Association Mudassar Hussain, secretary Shashank Kohli and Ashish Yadav. Principal Clifford Lobo gave the congratulatory message and encouraged the students to work hard.

SCHOLARSHIP

National University of Singapore has offered US\$ 86,000 scholarship to Priyank Yadav, a meritorious student of City Montessori School, Kanpur Campus, for pursuing higher education in mechanical engineering with specialisation in robotics. This scholarship will be provided to him during the four-year undergraduate course. NUS is the



world's 12th ranked university as per the QS World University Rankings 2022.

PLEDGE

On the occasion of Amrit Mahotsav, the oath ceremony to protect the girl child was

held, under the guidance of Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Alok Kumar Rai. Every student, teacher, employee and guardian showed a passion for girl child safety, under the Mission Shakti scheme run by the Uttar Pradesh government. Convener of Mission Shakti Professor Madhurima Lal said that security and safety of women and girls has always been top priority of the Vice-Chancellor. Be it education or daily programmes, there was a zero tolerance policy towards any kind of disrespectful act towards women.

FIRST PRIZE

The UP government on Wednesday awarded the first



prize to the Charbagh Railway Station for the best decoration and lighting among all of the

central government buildings, during the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava.

DRM SK Sapra gave special thanks to the electric department of the division.

2 more wanted accused held

PNS ■ KANPUR

Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested two more wanted accused involved in double murder case of Armapore Quarter and Nirla Nagar murder case during 1984 anti-Sikh riots on Wednesday. With this SIT has so far arrested 32 accused involved in the riots. Uma Shanker, son of Beland, was arrested from Safipur (Unnao) for his involvement in the murder of Wajir Singh and Satnam alias Simmi held in Armapore Quarter No.G-1/557, Armapore Estate, Kanpur. Another accused Virendra Singh, son of Jaswant Singh, was arrested from Sajeti, Kanpur, for his involvement in Nirla Nagar murder case.

Both are being sent to jail, said DIG SIT Balendu Bhushan Singh. PANIC: Panic prevailed in H Block, Kidwai Nagar locality when some flesh pieces were recovered adjacent to a temple there on Wednesday morning. When the temple priest lodged a protest, people unauthorisedly living beside the temple beat him up and his son. On hearing about the incident, dozens of BJP and Bajrang Dal activists rushed to the spot and staged a massive demonstration. Babupurwa police reached there and took three persons, stated to be natives of Kannauj, to the police station. A Hanuman Temple is situated near H Block Chauraha, Kidwai Nagar. Pt Gopal Sharma is its priest and lives

with family in its premises. He said about 15 years ago a youth Sunny had set up a puncture repair shop beside the temple. Gradually he encroached the space near temple gate and behind it and called two other persons to join the trade. Sunny had initially introduced himself to be a Hindu. On seeing the flesh pieces near the temple gate on Wednesday, when the priest complained to Sunny, the latter went berserk and indulged in scuffle with the former with his two accomplices. When the priest's son came to rescue his father, he was also beaten up. When the local police did not initiate action against the assailants, the victim brought the issue to the notice of Babupurwa Mandal President of BJP's Anusuchit

Morcha Shashank Rawat. Thereafter, BJP and Bajrang Dal activists rushed to the spot and staged an agitation. Shashank Rawat said all the three youths, running the puncture repair shop, had earlier introduced themselves to be Hindus but during quizzing by police were found to be belonging to a particular community. Though their parents live in Machhariya, they were unauthorisedly living beside the temple. SHO Pradip Kumar Singh said all the three youths are being quizzed. They were natives of Kannauj. He came across a dispute over running puncture shop by them beside the temple. However, investigation was on in the matter, he said.

Missing girl found dead in field

PNS ■ KANPUR

A teenaged girl, missing since Tuesday night, was found dead in a millet field in Jaitipur village under Mangalpur police area of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday noon. It appeared to be a murder case. Local police with forensic experts carried out investigations. Priya (19), daughter of Maya Devi, was student of BCom. On Tuesday night she had proceeded for tying the cattle and answering call of nature but did not return home. Her kin made a futile attempt to trace her throughout the night. On Wednesday noon villagers recovered her body in a millet field on the outskirts of the village. Circle Officer (CO) Vijendra Dubey along with forensic team rushed to the spot. Police recovered her slippers and mobile phone near the body. There were no marks of injury on her body. Sniffer dog squad also failed to provide any clue about the assailant. Maya Devi said she lives in the village with her brother Ram Lakhani. Due to differences with husband, she was living separately for the past 15 years. She alleged that after killing Priya the body was dumped in the field. CO said the exact cause of death would be ascertained on receipt of autopsy report. He had deputed two teams to investigate the case. CDR of her mobile phone will also be examined, he said.



Police carry out investigation after recovery of the body of a teenaged girl in Jaitipur village of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday. Deceased Priya (inset).

Campaign to revive lapsed LIC policies

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Life Insurance Corporation of India has decided to provide a unique opportunity to its valued customers and policy holders to revive their lapsed policies. In the order the LIC issued an official statement on Wednesday informing that LIC brings a distinctive special revival campaign which begins on August 17 to October 21 for its customers to revive their individual lapsed LIC policies. This special revival campaign is a unique drive as it extends to all non-ULIP policies with very attractive concession in late fee. Under this special revival campaign except ULIP policies, all policies can be revived within five years from the date of the first unpaid premium subject to policy conditions. "Total receivable premium up to Rs 1,00,000, 25 per cent (% late fee concession), maximum allowed concession Rs 2,500. Similarly from 1,00,001 to 3,00,000, 25% (% late fee concession), maximum

allowed concession Rs 3,000. In the same manner from 3,00,001 and above (late fee concession) 30 per cent and maximum concession allowed Rs 3,500." There is a 100 per cent waiver of late fee for micro insurance policies to facilitate affordable restoration of risk cover. There are no concessions in medical requirements. Policies except ULIP plans which are in lapsed condition during the premium paying term and not completed policy term as on the date of revival are eligible to be revived in this campaign. The campaign is also launched to benefit those policy holders who were not able to pay premiums due to unavoidable circumstances and their policy lapsed. Life Insurance cover is a risk management for contingent, unexpected loss of life. This campaign gives a rare opportunity for LIC's valued policy holders to revive their lapsed policies and continue the benefit of insurance to protect the financial interests of their family.

Seminar on Atal's contribution to Indian democracy

PNS ■ KANPUR

BJP MP Satyadev Pachauri, while inaugurating the one-day seminar on "Atal Bihari Vajpayee's contribution to Indian democracy" at Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) paid tribute to the former prime minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary. He said Atal Bihari was one of the finest parliamentarians India had ever produced. He said the true homage to him will be to emulate the great leader. He said that students should take inspiration from Atal Bihari's life. He also said that CSJMU should establish the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Research Centre to carry out research on Atal Bihari's life. He also encouraged everyone to study the political life of Atal Bihari to learn about his political characteristics. He said Atal Bihari was voracious reader and powerful orator and above all he was a politician par excellence. MLC Arun Pathak, the special guest while talking about contribution of Atal

Bihari towards Indian democracy, said if one wanted to learn about democracy then one should learn from him because democracy was not about expressing one's opinions but also about respecting others' opinions as well. He said this quality of Atal Bihari made him one of the finest political leaders of India who practised what all he preached. While delivering his speech, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director of Deendayal Shodh Kendra Prof Sudhir Kumar Awasthi said Atal Bihari always respected his opponents and never compromised on values and ideals. He said that Deendayal Shodh Kendra is ready to fund those students who will research on Deendayal and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Poet Prakash Narayan Pandey dedicated his poem 'Hindu Tan Mana Hindu Jeevan Raga Hindu Mera Parichay' to Atal Bihari. Dr Suman Shukla, Prof Sanjay Swarnkar, Dr Vishal Sharma, Dr Manish Dwivedi, Dr PN Trivedi, Prof Roli Sharma and Dr Shashikant Tripathi attended the seminar.



MLC Arun Pathak addressing a seminar at CSJMU Kanpur

Free blood donation camp organized

PNS ■ PRAYAGARAJ

Jeevan Jyoti Hospital organized a free blood donation camp in association with Rotary Allahabad Midtown and Rakt Sankalp Pledging Partner on Wednesday. Advanced Laparoscopy and Cancer Surgeon Dr Arpit Bansal inaugurated the camp by donating blood. The camp was organized under the supervision of Jeevan Jyoti Hospital Director and eminent Gynecologist and IVF Expert Dr Vandana Bansal, Advanced Laparoscopy and Cancer Surgeon Dr Arpit Bansal and Pooja Bansal. Rotary Allahabad Midtown Assistant Governor Shirish Agarwal was also present at the camp. Senior consultant Dr Mohammed Tariq, junior doctors and some staff members of Jeevan Jyoti Hospital also donated blood. Many enthusiastic voluntary donors also turned up to donate blood at the camp, which continued till late afternoon. Those interested to know about blood donation also arrived at the camp in large numbers. Before blood donation proper examination of every donor was conducted by the hospital's team. On the occasion Dr Vandana Bansal and Dr Arpit Bansal encouraged the people to donate blood regularly and highlighted immense benefits associated with blood donation. The duo said that blood donation not only saves the lives of patients who need blood during a medical emergency, but it also keeps the donor's body healthy. Several members of Rotary Allahabad Midtown and Rakt Sankalp Pledging Partner enthusiastically participated in the camp, which was organized with the aim to save the maximum number of lives through blood donation.

Leakage in gas cylinder injures 1

PNS ■ KANPUR

A villager sustained serious burns when fire broke out in a kutchha house due to a leakage in gas cylinder in Majra Kapoor Farm of Katri Domanpur village under Maharajpur police station area on Wednesday afternoon. The injured villager was admitted to Community Health Centre (CHC) Sarsaul. By the time villagers controlled the fire, the entire household goods in Nanku's house were gutted. Later, fire brigade also rushed to the spot. Farmer Nanku lives in kutchha house in Majra Kapoor Farm. On Wednesday afternoon due to leakage in gas cylinder, a fire broke out there which soon spread to other parts of the house and gutted the entire household goods.



A kutchha house caught fire in Maharajpur police station area on Wednesday afternoon

Meanwhile, due to explosion in gas cylinder villager Rama (55) sustained serious burns. Police got him admitted to CHC Sarsaul. Villagers extinguished the fire after around two hours.

Maharajpur inspector Satish Rathaur said the fire broke out due to leakage in gas cylinder. A villager sustained burns due to explosion in gas cylinder, he said.

Sakhi Gharelu Kamgar Sangh to take up poor women's issue

Kanpur: Domestic workers, especially women, generally come from backward areas within the vulnerable communities although they were covered under the unorganised sector, yet they were the most exploited lot and deprived of all facility. About 50 million, approximately estimated domestic workers especially women exist in India yet they were the most exploited labour force and nothing has been done till date. Sakhi Gharelu Kamgar Sangh had decided to take up the issue of these poor underprivileged women and thus it has invited intellectuals to suggest ways for their uplift. This was stated by Sakhi Kendra general secretary

Neelam Chaturvedi while addressing a workshop at the Labour Commissionerate auditorium on Wednesday. She said in India, workers in the informal sector were considered to be vulnerable and marginalised. She said benefits of economic growth rarely reached this segment of the society and they were also excluded from benefits of physical and social infrastructure expansion. She said women were constantly engaged in household activities which were often unacknowledged and unquantified. She said now that more women had started to take up employment outside the house they were not able to perform household

activities. She said stuck between bad working conditions and expectations of subservient loyalty, the Indian domestic worker had to cope with the worst aspects of both feudalism and capitalism. Chaturvedi said the government needed to draw its attention to the urgent need of provision of skill development, written contracts, regulatory body and regular inspections for domestic workers. She said with the basic elements of protection, the government can assure them a minimum standard of living, compatible with self-respect and dignity which is essential for social justice. She said Sakhi Kendra felt that it must take up cudgels to

improve the poor existence of domestic workers who were never debt free. She said they needed valid Identity Documents (IDs) done. She said Sakhi Kendra also felt that they need to motivate the domestic help increase financial literacy and make them realise they needed bank account and encourage and insist them to have one bank account at the earliest. She said they should also be motivated to have life insurance cover because having a life insurance was a must for everyone and government has taken measures to introduce low cost life insurance cover like Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY). PNS

'Girls proving their worth in various fields'

PNS ■ KANPUR

Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, celebrated the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with gaiety. Regional Higher Education Officer Dr Ripudaman Singh was the chief guest on the occasion. He said in today's time girls were also proving their worth in various fields in the service of the nation. He also recited a poem in the glory of the tricolour. In the fancy dress competition organised on the theme 'Role

of Queens', Shivani, Tahream Arshad and Navedita Tewari were declared the first, second and third winners respectively. They also performed in one act play under the theme of Mission Shakti. Besides, many other programmes were also organised from August 5 to 16 under the Mahotsav fortnight. These included the painting competition on the theme 'India of My Dreams' (winners: Nancy Singh (first), Deepika Yadav (second) and Vatsala

(third), slogan competition, essay writing competition and prabhat pheri. Dr Jyoti Kiran anchored the programme while principal Dr Anju Chaudhary proposed the vote of thanks. Dr Vandana Sharma, Dr Deepali Srivastava, Dr Pooja Srivastava, Dr Deepali Nigam, Dr Archana Srivastava, Dr Saba Yunus and Dr Nishat Fatima played an active role in the successful conduct of various programmes during the fortnight.



The winners of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav fortnight at Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar.

Dance performance adds colour to celebration

PNS ■ KANPUR

Principal of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Public School Shikha Bannerjee while hoisting the Tricolour on the I-Day in the school premises said "True freedom lies within us and thus always stand for what you believe is right." She said on this day it was the bounden duty of the institutions and teachers to make the children know about their glorious past and to pay tributes to all those who had sacrificed their lives. Jaipuria School celebrated the Independence Day with great zeal and fervour. Patriotic song was sung by school choir which soaked the audience with patriotism. The cultural programme related to the Varsha Mangal Utsav was spellbinding. The dance performance by students added colour and magic to the celebration. A tree plantation drive was taken up by the leadership team members and the head boy and the head girl enlightened the audience with their thoughts on great sacrifice of martyrs. The Tricolour fluttered proudly



Students of Jaipuria School present a cultural programme on I-Day.

in the lush green campus of Jaipuria School. The celebration was graced by the presence of Vice-Principal- Senior School - Shadeep Adhikari, Vice-Principal, Junior School Madhushree Bhaumik and DGM Shailendra Agnihotri. The celebration concluded with the vote of thanks by associate head boy and head girl of the school. VSIPS: Students presented a stunning cultural pro-

gramme as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Principal Dr Poonam Madan addressing the students appealed to them to follow the footsteps of the great leaders who had sacrificed their lives for the nation. She said it was a matter of pride that in this 75th year of Independence the nation was celebrating it on a large scale. She said the whole world watched in amazement.

AIPWA activists stage protest at Shastri Ghat

PNS ■ VARANASI

The activists of All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) staged a protest at Shastri Ghat here on Wednesday to tell their 'Mann Ki Baat', alleging that the benefits of the government schemes are not being given to the working women of the city. In the protest working women from three villages including Chota Seer Basti, Sushwahi Baijnath Colony and Ganesh Kandhwa participated. Addressing the meeting, the state secretary of AIPWA Kusum Verma claimed that the women of the city are not

getting benefits of any government schemes and it was disclosed in a study done in the three localities. She said that these women are not getting any benefits of schemes related to education, health and employment and asked the government if the women are not getting any benefits where the money has gone. She demanded an inquiry into the claims of schemes launched for women empowerment. Dhamsheela and Vimala of Chota Seer Basti said that though their locality is now a part of Nagar Nigam but the latter has not made any step to solve the prevailing civic issues



AIPWA activists staging a protest at Shastri Ghat on Wednesday.

Pioneer

like construction of drains and solving the problems of water-logging there. Radhika and Sita of Sushwahi Baijnath

Colony said that the residents were not getting fresh drinking water as a sufficient number of hand pumps had not been

Low-lying areas facing flood threat in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

During the last 24 hours the water level of river Ganga has increased sharply, posing threat of floods to the low-lying areas of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP). The river continued rising at a high speed of eight centimeters per hour in comparison to six and one cm during the previous two days. The rise in river Ganga water started from Independence Day when huge water from both river Ganga and Yamuna reached Sangam in Prayagraj district due to floods in Haryana, Uttarakhand and other states in the north and Madhya Pradesh in central India. It was the biggest rise seen in a single day during this rainy season when the water level of the river was increased by 2.84 metres rising from 64.06 metres to 66.9 metres as recorded at 8 am on Wednesday.

As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), the river rising trend has speeded up and now its water level was increasing by 80 mm per hour against 60 mm per hour a day ago. It was rising 30 mm per hour at upstream Mirzapur, 10 mm at Allahabad and 20mm at Phaphamau but 40mm and 70mm per hour at downstream Ghazipur and Ballia respectively. It indicates, the rising trend which



Speedily rising Ganga water level reaches Sheetla Mata Mandir in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

was seen during the last two days is expected to be checked to a great extent in coming days. However, flood threats in low-lying areas in this belt of Purvanchal cannot be ruled out. During the day the water level of river Ganga was recorded rising right from upstream Phaphamau in Prayagraj district to downstream Ballia including Mirzapur, Varanasi and Ghazipur. In Ballia, where

the river reached the warning level recently, has inched close to the same once again as it was recorded at 54.77 metres against a warning level of 56.615 metres. In Varanasi, it was at 66.9 metres against a red mark of 70.262 metres.

As the water level of river Ganga continued on the rise and its rising trend has speeded up further, it reached close to the feet of Sheetla Mata

Mandir at Old Dasaswamedh Ghat forcing the devotees to reach the temple through the water. Due to this, most of the chowkis of pandas have been submerged into the water and the venue of famous regular Ganga Aarti was shifted upstairs. Dozens of low lying temples located at internationally famous 84-odd ghats were either submerged into the water fully or partially.

SBSP hails decision on OBCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

President of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) Om Prakash Rajbhar has welcomed the decision of the state government to assess the representation of 79 most backward castes included in OBCs in government jobs. He has said that according to the facts that came to the fore after the assessment, the state government should do the work of giving their rights to the neglected and deprived castes. 'In order to give proper justice to the most backward castes, the state government should

also seriously consider implementing the recommendations of the Social Justice Committee. Only then the 79 most backward castes included in OBC will get their representation,' he said.

Party's chief spokesman Arun Rajbhar has said that in the first term of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Om Prakash Rajbhar, while being a minister, fought a long battle to ensure the participation of most backward castes. After which the Social Justice Committee was formed by the government. The committee had submitted its report to the

government but its recommendations were not implemented. 'The state government should complete the work of assessment without delay and do the work of giving justice to these castes,' he said, adding that the party has shown seriousness by continuously fighting for implementation of the recommendations of the Social Justice Committee from the Vidhan Sabha to the road. He has expressed his gratitude to BJP National President JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the decision to assess the

share of 79 sub-castes included in OBC in government jobs.

He demanded that before the Lok Sabha election 2024 the work of giving participation to the most backward castes the recommendations of the Social Justice Committee should be fully implemented as the committee has incorporated the same in its report after a thorough study. 'If the state government does this, then there will be freedom from the social injustice being done to the most backward classes and their participation will be expected and this class will get real social justice,' he added.

Booster dose related issues to be sorted out soon: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that the problems being faced by the people to get precautionary (booster) dose to protect them against coronavirus would be sorted out soon as the Health department is making efforts to remove the prevailing technical problems completely and apply the booster dose of the beneficiaries with immediate effect. 'In view of this problem, the Health department has devised a permanent method so that the problem of messages

coming without precautionary dose can be removed through the complaint management unit and the precautionary dose can be applied at the earliest,' he said.

District Immunisation Officer Dr Nikunj Kumar Verma said that due to technical problems, the people are getting messages without precautionary doses showing that they have taken precautionary doses. To overcome this problem, they can go to the Cowin portal (cowin.gov.in) and register their complaint there by selecting the option of Grievance (complaint). Apart

from this, one can get the solution of one's problem by contacting the District Immunisation Officer's mail id (diovn@gmail.com) and phone number (9415820479), he added.

He further informed that along with this, one can remove the wrong message of precautionary dose by going to the Cowin portal and selecting the option of Revoke. Verify it with the help of One Time Password (OTP) by entering the registered mobile number on the Cowin portal and after that choose the option of one's name by selecting the option of

Raise Issue. If the precautionary dose is wrong, revoke it and remove it from there. After this, the status of one's precautionary dose will be updated and one will also be able to get the precautionary dose applied.

Senior Medical Officer and Immunisation In-charge Dr AK Pandey said that the Health department is always ready for any problem related to Covid vaccination or routine vaccination of children. As soon as the complaint is detected, it is being diagnosed as soon as possible so that they can be saved from Covid and other infected diseases.

Lalai Chhath celebrated with gaiety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After two years when rush of devotees was limited due to coronavirus pandemic, this year a good number of women 'vratis' was seen at some ponds including Ramkund Pokhara (Luxa) and Ishwarganji Pokhari in the city here on Wednesday on the auspicious occasion of Lalai Chhath. The women prayed to the Almighty for the long life of their sons. They also observed fast without having even a single drop of water. The women offered several rituals as per their tradition. This festival is famous among the local women.

As per tradition, Lalai Chath falls a couple of days prior to Sri Krishna Janmastami and the day is known to celebrate the birthday of deity Balbhadr, the elder brother of Lord Krishna. It is observed on Krishna Paksha Shashti in Bhadrpad month. Elaborate security arrangements were made on the occasion at some famous ponds where there was a rush of women vratis.



Women celebrating Lalai Chhath at Ramkund (Luxa) in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

They performed puja in groups, singing traditional folk songs.

Review of NCR works concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Two days' Works Review Meeting presided over by GM/NCR Shri Pramod Kumar concluded on Wednesday at North Central Railway head-quarter. During the marathon meeting a total of more than 2000 works in NCR were critically examined. The reviewed works included those of traffic facilities; passenger amenities; road safety works including Road Over Bridges, Road under Bridges; computerization; electrification; technology upgradation; track renewal among others.

General Manager while reviewing the works which have been physically completed and are yet to be closed on account of paper formalities, instructed to expedite the procedural formalities. The need to expedite the ongoing work was stressed by the General Manager.

At the outset GM said that the quality of work should be of highest order and level of supervision needs to be the topmost.

Executing agency wise review of works was done with a threadbare analysis of feasibility issues, delays if any. Works reviewed included 681 works of DRM/Prayagraj, 448 works of



Two days' Works Review Meeting presided over by NCR GM Pramod Kumar concluded on Wednesday at North Central Railway headquarter in Prayagraj

Pioneer

DRM/Agra, 452 of DRM/Jhansi , 257 works of Chief Administrative Officer/ Construction and 322 works of other agencies.

Principal Chief Engineer, North Central Railway Shri SK Mishra moderated the discussions while plan head coordinators apprised about the details and status of the works. While speaking on the financial health, Principal

Financial Advisor Shri YK Shrivastava informed that there is no dearth of funds for infrastructure and safety works.

The meeting was attended by the DRMs of Agra Shri Anand Swaroop, Jhansi Shri Ashutosh and Prayagraj Shri Mohit Chandra along with the Sr. Divisional Engineers(coordination).

From headquarters, the

meeting was attended by AGM(in charge) Shri Kamlesh Shukla, CAO/C- Shri Sharad Mehta PCME- Shri Ajay Kumar Rana , PCCM- Shri Shashi Kant Singh, CPTM- Shri P.K Ojha, PCEE- Shri Satish Kothari, PCSTE- Shri M.K.Beura, PCSC- ShriRavindra Verma, PCPO- Shri Awadhesh Kumar, CM(IT)-Shri Ankur Chandra and other senior officers.

NCR GM congratulates medical staff on one lakh covid vaccination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

General Manager of North Central Railway congratulated medical staff on one lakh covid vaccination.

Railway administration is constantly aware and striving towards the good health & wellness of railway personnel. NCR has been focusing on expanding its health infrastructure. To strengthen commitment towards the best level of healthcare delivery, President NCRWWO Smt Poonam

Kumar and GM/NCR Shri Pramod Kumar inaugurated the facility of Arthroscopy, Harmonic knife Pediatric ICU & 05 part cell counter at Central Hospital Prayagraj.

Arthroscopy will enable the view inside joints in the body. It will help in minimally invasive procedures & help early recovery of patients. It enables providers to diagnose and treat various orthopedic problems. The 05 part cell counter will be helpful in detecting infection level by

checking various blood counts at a speedy rate. On this occasion, Mr. Poonam Kumar and the members of the organization also distributed gifts to the patients in the central hospital.

While addressing the doctors and other staff on the occasion, General Manager Shri Pramod Kumar motivated them and praised their efforts. The General Manager spoke about the extension of the hospital and expansion of the health Infrastructure. He congratulated the Central Hospital

team for improvement in the hospital facilities and maintaining the Cleanliness of the hospital. He further congratulated the team for achieving One lakh covid vaccinations.

On this occasion Dr. J.P. Rawat, Principal Chief Medical Director, Divisional Railway Manager Prayagraj Sh. Mohit Chandra, Dr. Rupa Kapil Medical Director along with other Principal Head of Departments, doctors and other staff of Railway Hospital were present.

Fire breaks out at ortho OT of SRN Hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A fire broke out in the ortho AOT one in the old building of Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital in Prayagraj here on Wednesday. During this, a stir erupted among the medical staff, attendants of the patients present there. Firefighters somehow extinguished the fire. No such damage was caused by the fire.

It was learnt that there is an ortho OT one in the old building of SRN Hospital. On Wednesday afternoon, panic gripped among the hospital staff after seeing smoke coming out from the OT gallery. The attendants present around also got scared.The hospital



Police taking stock of the situation at the SRN Hospital as a fire broke out there.

administration snapped the power supply of OT at the earliest after they were informed

about the fire incident. The police, firefighters arrived with a fire engine. However, the fire

was soon brought under control. During this some properties got burnt. The attendants of the patients also helped in extinguishing the fire. The fire was extinguished by breaking the false ceiling.

Chief Fire Officer RK Pandey said that it was a minor fire, which has been doused. No damage has been done.

It is worth mentioning that the Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Brajesh Pathak had inaugurated this new operation theatre in Prayagraj's SRN Hospital in the month of June. The cost of making the operation theatre was Rs 277.40 lakh. However, it was said that there was no arrangement for extinguishing the fire.

Two held for acid attack on lady bank manager

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police on Wednesday morning arrested the two acid attackers, who had splashed acid on a lady bank manager last week. The arrest was made at 3.00 am after a brief encounter in which the criminals sustained bullet injuries in their leg, and were sent to hospital for treatment.

The Reason behind this acid attack is still unknown because the police could not grill the arrested criminals who had to be rushed to hospital with bullet injuries.

On August 8, a lady manager of Bank of Baroda Kaushambi was going to workplace on a scooter when two bike-borne youths overtook her and splashed acid on the

lady branch manager.

The lady was wearing a helmet, so she sustained acid burns on her body, while the helmet protected her face. She was rushed to the hospital immediately for treatment.

The police had been searching for the acid attackers since then. In late night hours on Tuesday the police came to know that the criminals were spotted near Charva in Kaushambi. The area was surrounded by the police to nab the criminals. It was around 3.00 am on Wednesday when the police traced them out and asked them to surrender, but to escape from the scene the criminals opened fire. The police retaliated in the same language causing injuries to the wanted criminals in their legs.

The arrested criminals are identified as Man Singh and Sant Lal. Sant Lal was reportedly driving the bike while Man Singh threw acid on the lady bank manager riding pillion.

CORE CELEBRATES 75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY: Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) celebrated 75th anniversary of Independence Day with great fervour and festivity under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Mr Arun Kumar, GM/CORE hoisted the National Flag and extended his greetings to the CORE family.

Kumar mentioned that in the year 2020-21, CORE had Commissioned 4277 Rout kilometer (RKM) which was the highest ever in the history of CORE. He informed that a

challenging target of 5876 RKM has been given to CORE for the current financial year and all project units were fully geared up to accomplish this target. On this auspicious occasion, Railway Electrification Women's Welfare Organisation (REWWO) members were also present. Mr Kumar expressed his gratitude to REWWO members for their support and good work for the families of the employees. Later, a colourful cultural programme was presented and prizes were distributed by REWWO President Mrs Nilima Katiyar. Similar activities were undertaken in all nine Project Units of CORE and the Independence Day Message of GM/CORE was read.

Atal's contribution remembered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The death anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was observed at community centre Bariaghat under the aegis of district unit of BJP on Tuesday.

Remembering the contribution of the leader to the nation the speakers said that even as Prime Minister he had amicable relations with ground level workers. The speakers

said as a parliamentarian Atal was respected among the leaders. Atal used to say serious things through his poems. Balendumani Tripathi, Anil Singh, Uttar Maurya, Manoj Jaiswal, Brij Bhushan Singh, Nirmala Rai, Sohan Lal Srimali, Hemant Tripathi, Nirmala Anand, Sanjay Yadav, Akhilesh Agrahri and a large number of workers were present.

APPEAL: Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Rajendra

Prasad has appealed to women to get Rs 100 after taking Antara injection for difference between children.

Addressing a meeting he directed the field staff to make the women aware about the injection and asked all CHCs, PHCs and other health centres to maintain the stock of injections so that the facility could be available on demand. He asked to get the account detail of beneficiaries for sending the

amount directly without delay. The CMO told the staff with the gap of three months four injections are required in a year to avoid pregnancy. He appealed to newly married women to get the injection to avoid pregnancy for two years for their health and after a gap of seven-eight months they could be pregnant as per their wish. He said there was no side effect of the injection.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

'Nari Shakti' goes for a toss!

Just a day after PM called for need to respect women his own party led govt in Gujarat released 11 rape convicts

Just after the day, the prime minister called for the need to respect women his own party-led government in Gujarat released 11 rape convicts, defying logic. On the occasion of 76th Independence Day, the prime minister unfurled the national flag at the Red Fort and made a clarion call to honour 'Nari Shakti Shakti.' He made an emotional appeal to shun misogyny and take a pledge to respect women. As if to mock him, the BJP government in Gujarat released all the eleven rape convicts the very next day. They all were convicted in 2008, by a special court in Mumbai which was later upheld by the Bombay High Court. The gory incident took place in 2002 during the Gujarat riots. Five-month pregnant Bano was gang raped and her toddler daughter was killed along with six others from the family on March 3, 2002. The family was hiding in fields to survive the mayhem when they were spotted by the perpetrators. Only a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave a



clarion call to respect women. The Gujarat government chose to free all 11 convicts giving them amnesty as per its policy, allegedly. The release however is sound technically. One of the convicts approached the court for his early release under the Code of Criminal Procedure, as he had served about 15 years. In line with the Supreme Court decision which maintained that the Gujarat government could decide as per its 1992 policy, which was in place at the time of the conviction. The apex court neither stopped nor allowed the release of the convicts.

Ironically the state government chose to ignore the central government's guidelines for prisoner release. The central government had recently made a special release policy for convicted prisoners to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and the Rape convicts were categorically listed as not eligible for such release. This is a curious case as there is a so-called double engine government in Gujarat and it is very unlikely that the state government took this decision on its own. There are only two possibilities. Either the government of Gujarat doesn't take the prime minister very seriously (which is very unlikely) or second, it knows what the prime minister says is for mass consumption and so it doesn't need to bother about it. The decision is bizarre as elections are round the corner in Gujarat and the opposition is going to make it an issue and give the BJP bad publicity, especially among the women voters. The BJP has recently suffered due to the Tyagi controversy and it would not like to be called gender insensitive during elections. But it might be thinking of polarizing votes as Bilkis Bano happens to be a Muslim woman. Meanwhile, as the perpetrators of the Bano case walk free another lady Teesta Setalvad struggles to get bail. She was the one who fought for Bilkis Bano!

PICTALK



Priests participate in a traditional procession on the occasion of Chingam 1 or Malayalam New Year, in Kochi

Think of 'Sermon on the Mount'



PRAFULL GORADIA

The PM rightly asked the nation to shed its colonial mindset. It is our biggest mental block on the way to becoming superpower

Prime Minister's Independence Day speech reminded one of "Sermon on the Mount" presumably delivered to Prophet Moses and his Judaic followers on their deliverance to Israel. The contents were not necessarily similar but their import was comparably classical. In 25 years, the PM wants India to be a developed country. Until the last century, we used to go deaf hearing that India was a developing economy, belonging to the Third World. From today the open objective is to be a part of the First World by the year 2047. In Hindi, this means India must be Viksit Bharat.

This is a sharp and clear objective for the citizens to pursue especially its leaders. Presently, many of them are obsessed with distributing freebies to win elections. This is a waste of wealth that should be deployed for economic growth. To elucidate this point, take demonetization followed by the introduction of Goods & Services Tax. The first was a loud and clear message to people to keep away from hoarding tax-evaded wealth because it cannot be productively deployed for developmental activities. The GST was a very constructive, ongoing follow-up on retaining surplus wealth and deploying it for growth. Many citizens, habituated to hoarding their surpluses, still cannot see these two measures in this light.

This obstinate mentality which afflicts not only the wayward but also some academics and intellectuals would be one of the enduring roadblocks to the Prime Minister's march towards First World Status. Apart from distancing our people from mental roadblocks, it is necessary for the people, especially the rulers, to undergo an intellectual revolution whereby unethical and stubborn old ideas are rejected spontaneously and not merely by the fear of the Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Inspectors, Central Bureau of Investigation and other agencies.

The other psychological change required is to acquire equality confidence and over-



come anything like an inferiority complex. To give a recent example, I have a friend resident in Chittaranjan Park who was delighted that I may visit Dhaka to attend a wedding. His advice to me to go, to go and see how a poorer neighbour has overtaken the Indian economy comprehensively. A couple of decades ago, there were Indians who believed that Pakistan has overtaken us in terms of economic points. The PM, therefore, asked us in his speech not to be affected by anything like a slavery complex which we could have been contracted by any of us over the last millennium.

The PM asked the people to shed any vestige of a slavery complex that might have been acquired inadvertently over the last many centuries. Indians of older generations did betray a readiness to concede the superiority of a foreigner, say a white person. At the same time, they were equally ready to come in the way of their friends and colleagues getting ahead by competition.

Being aware of one's legacy or virasat is often the best

way to feel self-confident. Other than political performance in the centuries past, Indians have a great deal to be proud of. Had we not been a great civilization we could not have survived the blows of so many foreign invasions. A great deal of our legacy is on display in buildings, temples, literature, epics, and whatnot. Treat our united diversity as a source of strength and how the variety adds power to team India - such a team would be a winning team especially if we keep our motherland as our first love and our priority. And of course, we must resolve to be always free and always free. And not go under a conqueror's boots as we often in the past.

There is nothing that Indians cannot achieve if they collectively make up their mind. Until 2014, for example, we had not paid much attention to cleanliness. But once we decided on Swatch Bharat we have come a long way, the same with the electrification of our villages and several other things. How quickly do we succeed? So with manufacturing our toys and importing as few of them as possible. We

resolved and we achieved.

Look at our frontiers today and contrast them with how weakly defended they were in the past. The secret to success was our willpower and sincere application. Now if we encourage our women-folk to come more and more forward, India would progress must faster. They comprise a huge reservoir of India's strength which is lying untapped and, in effect, wasted. Turning to digital technology, luckily we caught its bus in time. See how soon we will derive what great advantage in this competing world. All in all, India is strong, resourceful, and will do well. Remember our single-minded aim to become a Developed country by 2047.

We have not had the benefit of such a visionary leader in memory. Now that we have his commandments, we should get down to work. I believe one of the great secrets of American success has been the lack of dynastic inheritance.

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



THE PM ASKED THE PEOPLE TO SHED ANY VESTIGE OF A SLAVERY COMPLEX THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED INADVERTENTLY OVER THE LAST MANY CENTURIES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPECT THE INSTITUTIONS

Sir — Mr Naidu the ex-vice president showed anger at his farewell party due to denigrating remarks by opposition members of the house. Such unbearable finger pointing toward going dignitary is unhealthy anyway and it is against the very spirit of farewell. If one has the courage to pass the negative remarks, better it would have done during the tenure. Everyone whether the members of the opposition or the then-present prime minister should pay respect to the retiring office bearer. Disciplinary action should be taken against those who indulge in such indecent behaviour. Democracy functions properly only when the institutions are respected and there is respect for the adversaries. **SM Arif Hussain | Hyderabad**

COSTS TO CUT FRIVOLOUS LITIGATION

Sir — The Chief Justice of India-designate Uday Umesh Lalit wants the costs imposed to cut frivolous litigation. On many occasions in the past cost has been imposed for taking not-so-important issues to courts. There are provisions in the law to impose costs when frivolous litigations are brought to court. Imposition of costs should be in the rarest of the rare cases. It should be more an exception than a norm. Just as it is necessary to block frivolous litigations entering the court, it is also necessary that the litigant public is not instilled with fear to take even serious matters to courts fearing that the case they take may be viewed as frivolous followed by the imposition of heavy costs.

The litigant public should take the call given by Justice Lalit as a wake-up call. The court's time is precious. The litigants who take the cases to court generally believe that they are seeking justice in serious matters. It is for the courts to decide what are frivolous cases and what are cases that merit the attention of courts. The courts should dismiss the cases considered to be frivolous and reprimand the petitioners rather than imposing hefty costs. Just as the pop-

Let us build the India of our dreams!



The diamond jubilee of India's Independence had already been marked with a lot of glittering celebrations all over India. We are blessed to have evolved in the past 75 years. When every Indian enthusiastically participates in the national festival, one can only feel optimistic and hope for a better future for the country.

Now that we have completed 75 years of

Independence celebration, our eyes are on the vision 100 for India. We had so many recommendations of What India should be when it completes 100 years of Independence in 2047. The vision is to holistically change what we are today. Let us dream of India as a technology giant, Tech savvy, economically stronger, and resilient where every citizen can live a life of dignity.

We need to build India which cherishes unity in diversity, and is confident enough to admit its mistakes and make a course correction if required; so let us all work towards making India of the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and BR Ambedkar where justice prevails and freedom is the way of life. Of course, wishes come true when we work for them we need to start today on our lacuna and only then our future turns better.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

ulation is rising, the number of litigants is also on the rise. To overcome this situation, the strength of the judges has also been steadily raised and more courts have come up. Tribunals and Lok Adalats are working in tandem with courts. Appellate authorities are in place in departmental matters. Tribunals, Lok Adalats, and Appellate authorities in government departments have been established to ease the burden on civil, sessions, High Courts, and also Supreme Court. Costs should be imposed in cases, not to the extent that the litigant public becomes afraid of approaching the courts for justice. Frivolous cases should be dismissed at the earliest possible time and the petitioners responsible for bringing such cases should be so admonished that it should be a lesson to others.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

A VICIOUS ATTACK ON RUSHDIE

Sir — The vicious stabbing of the Indian-origin British author Salman Rushdie is horrifying. It is an unpardon-

able blow on freedom of expression too. Rushdie has faced several death threats since his novel The Satanic Verses was published in 1988, as many Muslims consider it to be sacrilegious. (editorial, "A cowardly attack", Aug. 15).

Rushdie has written 14 books, including the 1981 Booker Prize-winning book, Midnight's Children. But, it is The Satanic Verses that made him the target of a fatwa in Iran, forcing him to go into hiding. Fatwas were revoked and even the Iran government had macerated its stance on the issue, and yet the heightened hate towards a book and its author remained alive. After more than 33 years now, the savaging attack on Rushdie has stung the entire literary world. Taking revenge through knives for words is certainly a spineless act. Said Mahatma Gandhi, 'A coward is incapable of exhibiting love, it is the prerogative of the brave.'

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

TRS is running a government of corruption-dictatorship for 8 yrs. CM doesn't meet people. The People don't want such a CM. Such a CM won't remain in Telangana. Lotus will bloom here,



Union Minister
—G Kishan Reddy

To be clear, I support the left half of the Republican Party and the right half of the Democratic Party.

Also, I'm buying Manchester United you are welcome.

Tesla CEO
—Elon Musk

We are boycotting the very people who have given the best of business in the industry. All the Khans in the industry are legends.



Film producer
—Ekta Kapoor

He (Ravi Shastri) had a very low tolerance for somebody who wouldn't bat at a certain pace he did not like. He would not be very appreciative of that.

Cricketer
—Dinesh Karthik

It's not just people who will join the cabinet, every worker & MLA of RJD is a part of it, there will be everyone's participation. The entire cabinet reflects Bihar's interest.



RJD MP
—Manoj Jha

The murder most foul

If the death of innocent Dalit boy due to beating by his upper caste teacher can't stir our conscience, what will?

In yet another shocking incident Indra Meghwal, , anine-year-old Dalit boy in Rajasthan was beaten to death by his upper caste teacher for drinking from matkameant for upper castes. The boy died after three weeks battling for life at hospital in Ahmadabad. The boy was allegedly hit by teacher Chail Singh, on eyes and ears. The boy was also abused by the teacher with cattiest slur. The boy from the SC community studied at third standard at Saraswati Vidya Mandir, a private school, in Jalore. When the matter was widely reported the police swung into action and arrested the teacher on charges of murder and sections of the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted lamenting the death of the Dalit boy and ensured that justice would be delivered fast. The state government alsoannounced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the family from the CM Relief Fund. But unfortunately all this is nothing more than routine set up to



cool the tempers and let the incident bury in the past. Life would then go on as before and the Dalit boys would get a lesson in drinking water. Forget the teacher the society and the administration would remain as insensitive as ever. The body of the boy was buried at night. The family was lathi-charged and asked not to make fuss about it. The congress party must walk the talk as Rahul Gandhi has often maintained that his party stands with the marginalized people.

One MLA and 12 councilors have stepped down owing to the incident. Pana Chand Meghwal resigned saying he doesn't have the right to remain a legislator if he can't protect his community. That gives some hope that one day change would come as somebody would have the courage to stand up against the abhorable practice of caste sacrificing his position. The incident is condemnable on many counts. The perpetrator is a teacher who was supposed to be a mentor or 'guru' and taking lives of students in certainly not 'guru dharma' The boy was just nine years old and he just wanted to quench his thirst, did not meant to hurt anybody or abused anyone. Gehlout government, if it is really disturbed about it, must set an example and ensure that a clear instruction is issued to all the schools in Rajasthan that no discrimination against any student on any ground would be tolerated and harshesht possible action would be taken against the person indulging in castists behavior. Set an example now!

FIRST COLUMN

INVITE KRISHNA TO RESIDE IN YOUR HEART

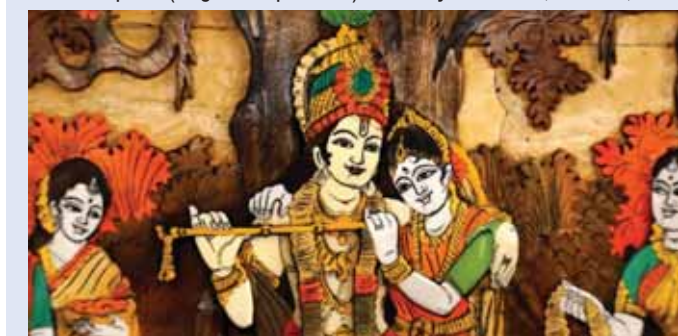
We must cleanse our hearts first for Krishna to enter it



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

Vedic scriptures explain that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. Vedic scriptures explain that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. Brahma Samhitasays, Isvarah paramah Krishna/ saccidananda vigraha, which means 'Krishna who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body.' So, now the question is, if Krishna is God and is eternal then why he has to appear or take birth? We can understand this by the analogy of the sun. When early in the morning we see sun in the eastern horizon we say that sun has appeared (or is born) and when it sets in the evening, we say the sun has disappeared. But the sun is always there in the sky. Based on our seeing it or not seeing it, we say, it appeared or disappeared. Similarly, Krishna is eternal. When we see him on earth, we say that he has appeared and when he finishes his pastimes and returns to the spiritual world, we say he has disappeared because we cannot see him.

Janmashtami is the day when Krishna appeared in this world. He appeared on the eighth day of dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) in the month of Bhadrapada (August–September). But why does God, Krishna, take




birth in this world? What is the need? Krishna answers this in Bhagavad Gita 4.7. He says that he comes here to establish religious principles and to teach people like you and me how to live righteously. He comes to lead us from darkness to light - tamaso ma jyotirgamaya. Krishna appeared in a pitched dark prison cell in the middle of the night to Devaki and Vasudeva who were bound by iron shackles and were living in constant fear of Kamsa. As soon as Krishna appeared, the dark prison cell got illuminated. Not just that, Krishna's appearance dispelled fear from the heart of Devaki and Vasudeva. Before Krishna appeared, Kamsa had killed six sons of Devaki immediately after they were born. When Devaki and Vasudeva had just got married, a celestial voice had predicted that the eighth child of Devaki will be the cause of Kamsa's death. Upon hearing this ominous voice, Kamsa wanted to kill Devaki, his own sister. To save his wife's life, Vasudeva promised Kamsa that he will deliver all the child of Devaki to him, and Kamsa can do whatever he wants to do with the child. So, one after another Kamsa mercilessly killed the six children. The seventh child was mysteriously transferred to the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva's other wife who was living in Vraj, from the womb of Devaki. That child was Balarama. Krishna appeared as the eighth child and as predicted, he killed the atrocious demon, Kamsa.

The six sons of Devakiwho were killed by Kamsa represent six rebellious proclivities of the mind – kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (envy), mada (pride), matsara (illusion).As long as we allow these six enemies to reside in our heart, Krishna will not appear in our heart. If we analyse our life, we will find that we suffer in this world because of these six vices which are called anarthas. In Bhagavad Gita 16.21, Krishna says, lust, greed and anger are gateway to hell so every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul. As soon as we succumb to these lower nature troubles begin in our life. Our mind remains out of our control because of these impurities. It is important that we cleanse our heart of these six enemies which bring inauspiciousness in our life and seek Krishna's shelter? This has been beautifully explained by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founder of Gaudiya Vaisnavism and the pioneer of Bhakti Movement. He says that the best way to take Krishna's shelter is by chanting his holy names like the Hare Krishna Mahamantra which cleanses our hearts. Once our heart is cleansed our mind will come into our control. And when the mind is under our control then we can always live in peace and bliss. So, this Janmashtami let us try to alleviate our life by inviting Krishna to reside in our heart.

(The author is the Spiritual Guru of International Society for Krishna Consciousness)

The idea of India has always been inclusive

May the 'inclusive idea of India' be on the march on the celebrated occasion of the 75th anniversary of independence



MD THOMAS

(The author is Director, Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies.)

'To be inclusive' is to

embrace and celebrate differences. There are differences in backgrounds, perspectives and experiences, like gender. People think, feel, understand, act, react, and the like, differently. Engaging with every category and to be integrated with one and all is the ultimate value of life.

"Taking everyone along", along with going together, crossing all borders is the spirit of inclusiveness. 'Nation' is totally an inclusive idea. It is a country or all the people in a country. It has no particular religion, language, culture, and the like. It is a large body of people, united in terms of a certain territory and government. Nation or country accommodates diverse languages, ideologies, ethnic groups, etc.

People of a certain nation

are known for their 'collective identity', mostly supported by a set of shared history, features, beliefs, institutions, interests and sentiments. A strong sense of community, backed by integrity, integration, solidarity and relatedness are the assets of the people of a certain nation.

India is a nation and a country, at the same time. The 'Republic of India', Bhaarat Ganrajya is a country in South Asia. It is the seventh largest country by area, the second most populous country and the most populous democracy in the world. It is a nation with a self-governing State with cultures and traditions.

'Patriotism', obviously, is at the core of a nation. It is the feeling of love, devotion and sense of attachment to one's

country. Ethnicity, language, cultural traits, social traditions, historical roots and political affiliations could be at the back of the patriotic sentiments.

Patriotism motivates one to have special affection towards one's country, define oneself in terms of one's country, being interested in the welfare of one's country and being ready to sacrifice oneself for the sake of national prospects. This is often the natural trait of all the citizens, while the degree varies.

Patriotism is not the same as nationalism, even though they share several factors. The former is loyalty to a group conceived of in judicial and political terms, whereas the latter is loyalty to a group understood primarily on ethnic and cultural terms. The former has focus on values and beliefs,

while the latter on heritage.

Furthermore, patriotism leads one to serve the country, while nationalism makes one plunge into taking pride in national symbols, monuments and achievements, as well as reviving cultural traits. In either case, devotion to one's country or nation leads one to a sense of 'national consciousness', which proceeds to exalt one's nation or country above some or all others.

'Islamic State' and 'Hindu Raashtra' are outstanding instances of the inordinate type of patriotism and nationalism. Now, what is wrong with 'Islamic State' and 'Hindu Raashtra'? Islamic State is a radical and militant Islamic group of the Sunni tradition. 'Hindu Raashtra' is the fanatic and extremist idea of Hindu polity

that was conceived and mooted by Savarkar. Both are religion-based, exclusive and violent ideologies that brutally cross the courtesy lines between communities of other affiliations and proceed to hate, and even engage in brutal massacres. They function as a 'blend of power, money and faith', though in disguise.

Like 'Islamic State' elsewhere, 'Hindu Raashtra' in India sharply violates the basic fibre of being inclusive. It negates and contradicts the fundamental right of other religious, ideological and cultural traditions to co-exist peacefully.

The India of today is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-ideological, multi-religious, multicultural, multi-cuisine, multi-dressed, multi-coloured,

multi-traditional, multi-party, multi-community, and the like. This is what the tri-coloured 'Indian flag' is all about.

The greatest ideal of India is 'vasudhaiv kutumbakam' from Maha Upanishad, meaning 'the world is one family'. 'Let good thoughts come from all directions' is its real driving force. 'Satyamev jayate', 'truth alone prevails' is the expressway to real development and progress. 'Sarve bhavantu sukhinah', 'let all be happy', is the esteemed destination of India. Nothing less than these ideals could be acceptable to India.

May the 'inclusive idea of India' be on the march on the celebrated occasion of the 75th anniversary of India as a free nation, in special, towards a leadership beyond borders!

Selling public sector banks is no solution

Public sector banks still have enormous relevance which is not matched by their private counterparts

For some time now, the talk of privatization of public sector banks has been gaining momentum in the policy circles. Significantly, under the banking reforms, the Central government has reduced 27 public sector banks to just 12 in just three years after a merger exercise. However, the government has also said that banking will continue to be recognized as a strategic sector.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech this year said that two public sector banks and a public sector insurance company would be privatized. It is noteworthy that according to the current laws 51 per cent participation of the Central government in public sector banks is mandatory. But as per the current announced policy, the government intends to reduce its participation to zero.

The Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill was listed in the Winter session of Parliament last year, but for some reasons it was not presented. It was being said that now this Bill will be presented in the Monsoon session, which also didn't take place.

However, debate on privatisation of public sector banks has intensified recently after Poonam Gupta, director general of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, and Arvind Panagariya of Columbia University, former vice chairman of NITI Aayog, published an academic paper. This article recommends that all public sector banks should be privatised, keeping only the State Bank of India in government's hands. Both the authors are not saying anything new, as their views about privatisation are well known. They consider privatisation to be the solution to all problems in all sectors, including banks.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The arguments of proponents of privatisation of public sector banks cannot be justified for several reasons. When 14 private banks were nationalised for the first time in 1969 and six more in 1980, the government's main objective was to promote inclusive growth. Considering that agriculture, small scale industries, education, export promotion, etc., are of primary importance, the availability of credit was ensured for them through public sector banks, as priority sectors.

Availability of micro loans to extremely small borrowers at very low interest rates was also ensured by public sector banks. However, the situation has changed significantly since then. According to the directions of the Reserve Bank, efforts were made to link private banks also with national objectives, but it is equally true that despite all the rules, bye-laws and instructions, private sector banks are no match to the way the task of financial inclusion is being performed by public sector banks.

After the Narendra Modi Government



GOVERNMENT BANKS ARE BOUND TO IMPLEMENT ALL GOVERNMENT SCHEMES. IF FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL BANKING ARE REMOVED FROM THE FUNCTIONING OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS, THEIR PROFITS CAN ALSO INCREASE IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS.

(The author is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi.)



came to power, Jan Dhan accounts with zero balance were opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), ensuring financial inclusion. So far, 46 crore such Jan Dhan accounts have been opened, through which not only the poor and common people have access to banks and with this they can deposit their micro savings. Direct benefit transfer by the government has also been made possible by these Jan Dhan accounts, which are linked with Aadhaar and mobile phones. Be it transfer of Kisan Samman Nidhi or transfer of COVID related cash to 20 crore women, all this has been made possible only due to Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).

But, we must understand that, today when the share of private banks in deposits and lending is around 36 per cent, only 10 per cent of Jan Dhan accounts have been opened by private banks. This fact speaks tons about the role of public sector banks in financial inclusion.

Not only this, 90 per cent livelihood loans to six crore women under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana are being provided by PSBs and regional rural banks (RRBs), sponsored by PSBs. Similarly, the task of giving loans to street vendors is also performed by public sector banks. In such a situation, naturally, the profitability of private sector banks is higher than that of the public sector banks, because these banks are free from the duty of financial inclusion.

Government banks are bound to implement all government schemes. If financial inclusion and social banking are removed

from the functioning of public sector banks, their profits can also increase in leaps and bounds.

REGULATION BY RBI

The RBI argues that it does not have much say in PSBs' affairs and, therefore, it cannot control them, whereas it has control over private banks. This argument doesn't hold water. The RBI does have control and regulatory powers over PSBs, which include say in key appointments, audit and policy on loans, etc.

As far as NPAs of public sector banks are concerned, it is well known that between 2004 and 2014 (UPA regime), huge loans were given in the name of infrastructure loans and a large number of these loans turned out to be NPAs. To recover these bad debts in one way or the other, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Law was enacted. But, in the process, a lot of money from public sector banks was lost. In such a situation, since the rules have been tightened now and the chances of such frauds recurring in future are very limited.

Therefore, privatization of public sector banks in the name of efficiency can be harmful in view of social banking and financial inclusion requirements.

Supporters of privatization of banks argue that if the manufacturing sector in the country is to be promoted, then privatization of public sector banks is necessary. But now the question is that there is no unanimity about handing over the public sector banks to the big industrial houses, as the same may lead to cronyism. If the promoters of private banks in the

country are not in a position to buy state-owned banks, there is also a danger that the privatization of public sector banks will lead to an increase in the stake of foreigners in the banking sector. It's notable that the exposure of foreigners in the Indian banking system has increased manifold in the last nearly two decades.

Some experts are of the view that privatization is no solution to the present day banking problems. Experience shows that the efficiency of an organization does not depend on its ownership, but on its management. If seen, after the nationalization of banks, the confidence of the general public increased in financial institutions and the mobilisation of household savings in the country increased significantly. Due to all this, necessary financial resources could be mobilized for development in the country. No government bank failed due to the central government's patronage in public sector banks. Many private banks were saved from failure, thanks to interventions of PSBs.

Recently, a private bank named Lakshmi Vilas Bank had to be handed over to DSB, a Singaporean bank. In such a situation, if the financial sector of the country goes under foreign domination due to the privatization of banks, then the economy will have to suffer its consequences. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to carry out the privatization of public sector banks only on the basis of suggestions made by some institutions or some economists. It is necessary to study the changes caused by this and its possible side effects.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE MENTIONED EVERYTHING IN MY AFFIDAVIT. MAKING AN ALLEGATION AND PROVING THE ALLEGATION ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS. —BIHAR LAW MINISTER KARTIKEYA SINGH



I ASK HIM (NITISH KUMAR), IS HE TRYING TO TAKE BIHAR BACK TO LALU'S TIMES? KARTIKEYA SINGH SHOULD BE DISMISSED. —FORMER DY CM, BIHAR SUSHIL KUMAR MODI

NSA DOVAL'S SECURITY BREACH

3 CIsF men axed, 2 officers moved

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has dismissed three commandos from service and transferred two senior officers of its VIP security unit over a security breach at the residence of National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval earlier this year.

Doval is a 'Z plus' category protectee under the Central VIP security list and the security cover is provided by the Special Security Group (SSG) of the CISF.

The punitive actions have been taken after a court of enquiry established by the CISF to probe the February 16 incident held the five personnel guilty on various counts and recommended actions against

them, officials said.

While the three SSG commandos have been dismissed from service, the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) heading this VVIP security unit and his second-in-command, a senior commandant-rank officer, have been transferred, they said.

The security breach occurred at about 7:30 AM on February 16 when a man from Bengaluru attempted to drive his car into the high-security residence of Doval in central Delhi.

The three commandos, who have been dismissed, were present at the NSA's residence on the day of the incident as part of the security detail. The man was intercepted outside the residence and was handed over to the Delhi Police.

5 Kedarnath chopper operators fined ₹5L each

Irregularities in flying records came to light in June audit, says DGCA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Five helicopter operators carrying passengers in the Kedarnath Dham have been fined Rs 5 lakh each. The fine, imposed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has been imposed for anomalies in their flying records.

The DGCA also suspended officials from two other operators for three months on account of breaking safety rules. These irregularities came to light when it was decided to conduct an audit in June. In fact, on May 31, a helicopter carrying pilgrims to a high altitude had a hard landing fol-

lowing which, the regulators formed a team and an audit took place.

The DGCA formed a team for spot check of the choppers involved in shuttle operations in Kedarnath, according to a representative of the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA). "On June 7 and 8, the team conducted a spot check in which serious violations came to light, prompting it to hold a detailed audit of all operators undertaking the shuttle operations," the official added.

The audit was conducted by the audit team from 13 to 16 Jun 2022. The report said that five operators were found not maintaining correct flying records in their respective helicopter Technical Log Books.

In addition to the 05 operators mentioned above, another two operators i.e. total 07 operators, were found to have violated the provisions of the Joint SOP promulgated by



DGCA. After that, Show Cause Notices (SCNs) were issued to all these seven operators involved in the violations.

The operations at Kedarnath are suspended during the monsoon months due to the inclement weather, and are thereafter recommended by the operators in end-August / early September, although the quantum of flying in this second part reduces due to the reduced number of pilgrims. The operations are finally concluded in late October / early

November, depending on the auspicious date decided by the Shrine Board for closure of shrine.

Against the backdrop of various incidents involving SpiceJet and other carriers in recent times, the civil aviation minister also said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has set a target of carrying out 3,709 checks this year as part of its annual surveillance plan. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the target was around 2,775 checks.

Parties cannot be prevented from making poll promises: SC

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said political parties and individuals cannot be prevented from making poll promises aimed at fulfilling the constitutional mandate and the term "freebie" should not be confused with genuine welfare measures.

Observing that the voters are not looking for freebies, the apex court referred to the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and said, "Given an opportunity, they will look for dignified earning". "We all must remember the good old saying: 'There is no free lunch'," the apex court said, adding the "concern is about the right way of spending public money". "There has to be a distinction between the offer of ornaments, television sets, consumer electronics free of cost and real welfarist offers.

The promise of free coaching for professional courses cannot be compared with the promise of free white goods," a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana said.

The bench, also including justices J K Maheshwari and Hima Kohli is mulling and setting up an expert panel to brainstorm the issue of freebies announced during elections. It said that the issue of regulating



freebies is "getting increasingly complicated" and asked all the stakeholders to give their suggestions on the proposed panel while fixing the PIL for hearing on August 22.

The bench said the expression 'freebie' should not be confused with genuine welfare measures" and gave illustrations to distinguish between freebies and "real welfarist offer".

"You cannot prevent a political party or individual from making promises that are aimed at fulfilling this constitutional mandate if elected to power. The question is what exactly qualifies as a valid promise," the CJI observed.

The bench deferred the hearing to August 22 after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said that senior advocate Kapil Sibal wanted to submit his suggestions.

SC restrains J'khand HC from hearing PIL for probe against CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday restrained the Jharkhand High Court from proceeding with PILs seeking a probe against Chief Minister Hemant Soren who has been accused of granting himself a mining lease as the State's Mining Minister.

A bench of Justices UU Lalit, SR Bhat, and Sudhanshu Dhulia reserved its judgement on separate pleas of the Jharkhand government and Soren against an order of the high court that accepted the maintainability of the PIL.

"Heard counsel for the parties. Order reserved. Since this court is now seized of the matter, the high court shall not proceed with the pending petitions," the bench said. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the State Government, submitted that the high court had decided on maintainability

even before all the documents were placed before it. "I have to say this in open court, milords, I am sorry. Where is the occasion in the matter that you are holding the court outside the state and hearing the matter? What is the urgency? Sibal stated. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Soren, questioned the credentials of the PIL petitioner.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate, said criminal petitions should not be thrown out on technical grounds.

BJP national vice president and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das had in February this year claimed Soren abused his position and granted himself the favour of a mining lease, an issue involving both the conflict of interest and corruption. He also alleged violations of provisions of the Representation of People Act.

Play proactive role in FIFA, AIFF issue, SC tells Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to take a "proactive role" in the All India Football Federation (AIFF) matter for facilitating the holding of the Under-17 Women's World Cup in India and the lifting of the suspension of the country's apex football body by FIFA.

The top court deferred till the August 22 hearing on the AIFF matter after the Centre said it is in discussion with the International Football Federation (FIFA) over the holding of the U-17 Women's world cup in India.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, AS Bopanna, and JB Paridwala said, "We would impress upon the Union of India to take a proactive role in the matter so that the holding of the Under-17 World Cup and the lifting of the suspension of AIFF, in order to achieve that object, is duly facilitated". At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, informed the bench that two meetings have been

held by the government and Committee of Administrators (CoA) with FIFA authorities Tuesday and discussions are going on with a meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

Mehta said that all efforts are being made to "break some ice" on the holding of the U-17 Women's World Cup in India in October 2022. He requested that the matter be deferred till August 22 so that a consensus could be arrived at between the active stakeholders of the AIFF.

Mehta said that all through the process CoA has played a very constructive role and urged that a few words from the court to all stakeholders to sort out the situation will help them in their endeavour.

"Yesterday, after the development, which the judges may also be in the know-how, we took up the matter with the FIFA. We had two meetings with FIFA and we can say that we have reached a stage, where we can say that efforts are being made to break some ice. Therefore, I request that the matter be deferred for further hearing till next Monday", Mehta said.

FIR against 6 jail officers in Thrissur for undertrial's death

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed an FIR against six Thrissur jail officials for the alleged murder of an undertrial lodged in the prison two years back. The undertrial Shameer was arrested in a drug trafficking case in 2020.

The CBI, which took up the matter on the reference from the Kerala government last year, has re-registered the case in accordance with the procedures.

The crime branch of the State police had arrested Deputy Prison Officers Arun MS and Subash, Assistant Prison Officers Viveek TV and Pradeesh, Assistant Jail Superintendent Athul, all of Thrissur prison, and Assistant Prison Officer of sub jail Irinjalakuda Ramesh MR.

The Thrissur Police had apprehended Shameer, a daily wage labourer, along with his wife and two friends from a car on the allegations of possessing marijuana on September 29, 2020, officials said.

They were kept in a quarantine facility due to the Covid-19 restrictions in vogue then.



Shameer was subsequently taken to the Government Hospital, Thrissur by jail officials where he was declared dead on October 1, 2020. His death was shown as suicide in the FIR registered by the local police.

In its report filed before the court, the crime branch had recommended adding sections of murder and destruction of evidence against the six officials among other charges under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The victim's family had alleged that Shameer's body had a lot of injury marks.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president JP Nadda and Union Ministers attend the screening of Doordarshan's serial 'Swaraj: Bharat Ke Swatantrata Sangram ki Samagra Gatha', at the Balayogi Auditorium, Parliament Library Building in New Delhi on Wednesday

PNS

India, Malaysia review Defence ties

Vow to uphold principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in Indian Ocean Region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia on Wednesday reviewed their bilateral Defence ties and vowed to uphold the principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

This was reaffirmed during talks between Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and his visiting Malaysian counterpart Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Bin Mohd Sany in the backdrop of growing Chinese presence in the strategically important region.

In their wide-ranging par-

leys, Admiral Kumar and Admiral Reza also identified several new areas to further strengthen bilateral naval cooperation between the two sides. The Malaysian Navy chief is on a four-day visit to India.

The Navy said Admiral Kumar apprised the Malaysian Navy chief of a broad range of foreign cooperation activities pursued by the Indian Navy.

The two chiefs identified several new avenues for further strengthening bilateral naval cooperation and also expressed commitment to their support to uphold the principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region, the Navy said in a statement.

Admiral Reza will also be interacting with high ranking officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).

He is an alumnus of the Indian Navy's Dronacharya Gunnery Training



Establishment at Kochi, from where he graduated as a Gunnery Specialist back in 1990. He is also scheduled to visit his alma mater.

Elaborating upon ties between the two navies, officials said bilateral cooperation between the Indian Navy and Royal Malaysian Navy spans across a wide canvas ranging from training to operations. Both navies carried out the

bilateral exercise Samudra Laksamana in May.

The official visit of the Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy signifies yet another expression of growing collaboration between the two navies and commitment to sustaining the positive trajectory of bilateral relations, the Navy said. The Malaysian chief was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour at the South Block lawns.

Min of Electronics and IT collaborates with Tourism Min for delivery of services

CSCs will become one-stop-shop for all services related to NIDHI portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Common Services Centers, Under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has joined hands with the Ministry of Tourism for delivery of services of National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry

(NIDHI) portal through CSCs in rural areas. NIDHI is a digital platform where all accommodation units can register themselves to become part of the hospitality industry. Registration with NIDHI will ensure electronic delivery of various services and benefits to the hospitality units.

As per MoU, CSCs will be set up at tourist locations to maintain and deliver all other services. Apart from this, a centralized platform will be designed and developed to provide online services to NIDHI registered users. NIDHI users will register on

this portal to offer hotel booking, guide services and all. Further, bookings for all the tourist points will be integrated with this portal. It will be known as NIDHI SETU.

CSC will design and develop a common platform for the Ministry of Tourism covering services like booking for heritage site visit at nearby CSCs, booking for national park visit at nearby CSCs, booking for monuments visit at nearby CSCs, temple visit reservations, Online pooja bookings, Prasad delivery, Hotel booking and other facilities from hospitality and tourism related

booking service, which may be decided between the parties

Elaborating on the partnership, Dr. Dinesh Tyagi, Managing Director, CSC SPV said, "This initiative will transform the ecosystem of tourism sector in rural areas.

Through this partnership, CSC entrepreneurs can help citizens in rural areas access various tourism and hospitality related services. CSCs will now become a one stop shop for all the services related to hospitality and tourism sector and thereby help promote tourism and culture of the country."

Army dog killed by ultras in J&K honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army dog 'Axel', which was killed by terrorists in Baramullah, has now been mentioned by the Army in a citation. The two-year-old canine soldier had rushed towards the building where the terrorists were hiding and they shot him.

The Army said the exemplary "performance, fearless conduct and life-sacrificing acts" of Number 74B7 Army dog Axel in an active anti-terrorist operation are acknowledged under the orders of President Droupadi Murmu and mention of his name in a dispatch by Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande.

Two-year-old Axel's name figured in the list of the 'Mention-in-Despatches' that the government came out along with the gallantry awards ahead of Independence Day on Monday.

Two-year-old Axel's name figured in the list of Mention-in-Despatches that the Government came out along with Gallantry Awards for I-Day



20-22 L J&K voters may be included in list post revision of rolls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

An estimated number of 20-22 lakh voters are expected to be enrolled in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as the special summary revision of electoral rolls is being held for the first time in the last four years after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Labelling it as a "challenging task" Chief Electoral Officer, J&K Hirdesh Kumar Singh Wednesday said that for the first time any Citizen of India Ordinarily residing in J&K for business, job or education can also register as Voter and exercise his/her right to franchise.

Interestingly, the announcement made by the Chief Electoral Officer during a press briefing in Jammu created flutter in the corridors of power especially in the Kashmir valley.

Reacting sharply to this announcement, two former Chief Ministers accused the ruling Bharatiya Janta Party of importing 'temporary votes' to win seats.

Vice President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Omar Abdullah tweeted first in response to the media reports. He wrote, "Is the BJP so insecure about support from genuine voters of J&K that it needs to import temporary voters to win seats? None of these things will help the BJP when the people of J&K are given a chance to exercise their franchise".

On the other hand PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti said the main aim is to rule J&K with an iron fist and to disempower locals.

"GOIs decision to defer polls in J&K preceded by egregious gerrymandering tilting the balance in BJP's favour & now allowing non

locals to vote is obviously to influence election results. Real aim is to continue ruling J&K with an iron fist to disempower locals", tweeted Mehbooba Mufti.

Referring to the marathon exercise of the special summary revision, Hirdesh Kumar Singh said around 600 new polling stations are coming up across Jammu Kashmir and the number of polling stations has been finalized at 11,370.

"The massive exercise to complete the process in time is going on to ensure that all the eligible voters including those who have attained the age of 18 years on October 1, 2022 or earlier are enrolled to provide an "error-free" final list, Kumar said briefing media persons in Jammu.

The Election Commissioner clarified that there was no bar for voting for non-locals. "It does not matter how long one has been

staying in Jammu Kashmir. The ERO will take the final call on whether the non local has been residing in Jammu Kashmir or not. Those living here on rent can also vote," the election Commissioner said.

He said that the only condition to get included in the voters list is that the person should have cancelled his/her voter registration from his/her native state.

Elaborating further about the entire exercise CEO said as part of the pre-revision activities, the process of rationalisation/ re-arrangement of polling stations, removal of discrepancies of demographically similar entries/ similar photo entries, duplicate EPICS, preparation of supplements and integrated draft roll is also going on at present.

He said the projected population of J&K who are 18 plus are around 98 lakhs, while the number of enlisted voters are

76 lakh according to the last voter list.

"We are expecting an addition of 20 to 25 lakh new voters in the final list," Kumar said, adding the Booth Level Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration officers and District Election Officers have been sensitized to ensure that the final list will be "error free" and will also cover all the eligible voters.

Kumar said there is no need for a person to have a domicile certificate of J&K to become a voter. "An employee, a student, a labourer or anyone from outside who is living ordinarily in J&K, can enlist his or her name in the voting list. The documents will be scrutinized by the government officials concerned who will take a decision after being satisfied about the claim." He said like in the

past, many residents of J&K who are working in armed forces and paramilitary forces and are posted outside the Union Territory have an option to get themselves registered as service voters and can avail the facility of postal ballot to register their choice at the time of the elections.

"Likewise those from different parts of the country who are posted here have the option that if they are posted in a peace station they can enlist themselves as voters. Jammu is a peace station and anyone from outside posted in armed forces in the city can avail the option to enlist as a voter," he said.

Referring to the schedule notified by the ECI, Singh said, the Integrated Draft Roll, with reference to October 1, 2022 as the qualifying date, would be published by all EROs of the UT on September 15, 2022, marking the formal



beginning of the revision activities.

He said the Commission has extended the period for filing of claims and objections from 30 days to 40 days: from September 15, 2022 to October 25, 2022. During this period Special camps would also be organised by CEO Jammu and Kashmir on weekends for which the date will be publicised separately.

Objections could be filed through multiple platforms-

offline by submitting a hard copy in prescribed format before ERO/ AERO or concerned BLO and online objections and claims could be filled by logging into <https://www.nvsp.in> portal or by downloading Voter Helpline App (VHA).

The final electoral roll after due disposal of all claims and objections filed within the stipulated time period would be published on November 25, 2022.

Post killings, Kashmiri migrant employees hold protest in Jammu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Angry Kashmiri migrant employees appointed under the Prime Minister's package in Kashmir valley Wednesday staged protest demonstrations in Jammu against the targeted killing of another Kashmiri pandit in Shopian.

Shouting anti government slogans, a large number of these employees also took out a protest march from the office of Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner to Dogra chowk.

The employees also blocked the traffic on the busy Tawi bridge. These employees have been sitting on a dharna since May 10 in support of their single point demand of relocation

to safer places outside the Kashmir valley.

During the massive protest demonstration several migrant employees blamed the union territory administration for not providing adequate security cover to the members of the minority community.

During their protest march in Jammu Kashmiri migrant employees were seen holding posters and banners that read "Save Us" and "Minorities Unsafe in Kashmir". Tires were also set ablaze as part of the demonstrations.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Police Chief, Dilbag Singh Wednesday said that two persons involved in the killing of a Kashmiri Pandit in Shopian have been identified and that



strict action will be taken against them.

Talking to reporters on the side-lines of the wreath laying ceremony of ITBP men, who died in Pahalgam accident yesterday, DGP said so far two persons who were involved in the targeted killing have been identified, while further process has been initiated and strict action will be taken.

Breakthrough in Delhi-Doon E-way project: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said there is a breakthrough in the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project as the last 20-km stretch that passes through the eco-sensitive zone of Raja Ji National Park is being constructed. In a series of tweets, the road transport and highways minister said the tunnel intends to protect the surrounding wildlife.

"Breakthrough achieved on Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project. The last 20km stretch passes through eco-sensitive zone of Raja Ji National Park where Asia's longest elevated wildlife corridor (12km) is being constructed that includes 340 m Daat Kali tunnel," Gadkari said.

Once completed, the expressway would reduce travel time between Dehradun-Delhi from 6 hrs to 2.30 hours and Delhi-Haridwar from 5 hours to 2 hours, he added.

"The tunnel intends to protect the surrounding wildlife. Once completed, the expressway would reduce travel time between Dehradun-Delhi from 6 hrs to 2.30 hrs & Delhi-Haridwar from 5 hrs to 2 hrs," said the minister on Twitter.

The Expressway is a part of Delhi Dehradun economic corridor, which is expected to be completed by March 2024. The final stretch of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway will link Dehradun via the new Daat Kali Devi Tunnel. The phase IV route will go through a vast forest area (surrounding the tunnel), comprising Shivalik Hills and Rajaji Tiger Reserve.



As per the Ministry, before 2024, as many as 26 green express highways will be constructed which will bring down travel time considerably. Once the highways are in place, travel time from Delhi to Dehradun, Delhi to Haridwar, Delhi to Jaipur would only take around two hours. While Delhi to Chandigarh will take 2.30 hours, Delhi to Amritsar will

be done in 4 hours and Delhi to Mumbai in 12 hours.

As many as 7,747 trees were cut and 3,258 saplings were felled for the Delhi-Dehradun expressway project but around 1.76 lakh trees will be planted as per the Compensatory Afforestation scheme prepared by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Forest Departments.

FROM PAGE 1

GADKARI, CHOUHAN OUT IN BJP PARL BOARD SHAKE-UP

Besides BJP president JP Nadda and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the other members of the 11-member parliamentary board are: Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, BS Yediyurappa, Sarbananda Sonowal, K Laxman, Iqbal Singh Lalpura, Sudha Yadav, Satyanarayan Jatiya and BL Santosh (Secretary).

The party also made key changes in its Central Election Committee (CEC) and named Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union minister Bhupendra Yadav among its new members.

Gadkari and Chouhan ceased to be the BJP's Central Election Committee (CEC) members after their omission from the board.

All parliamentary board members automatically become part of the CEC, which has some additional members as well.

Former Union Ministers Jual Oram and Shah Nawaz Hussain and former BJP Mahila Morcha chief Vijaya Rahatkar have been dropped from the CEC. After these changes, the board now has the full strength of 11 members while the CEC has 15 leaders.

The new entrants to the CEC are Rajasthan leader Om Mathur and BJP women wing chief Vanathi Srinivasan from Tamil Nadu, besides Fadnavis and Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav.

According to sources, more changes in the organisation are expected before the Lok Sabha polls and the party would open opportunities to new faces.

PURI ANNOUNCES 1,100 FLATS FOR ROHINGYAS; MHA SAYS 'NO'

"Illegal foreigners are to be kept in the detention centre till their deportation as per law. The Government of Delhi has not declared the present location as a detention centre. They have been directed to do the same immediately," said MHA in a tweet titled as "Rohingya illegal foreigners".

Earlier in a scathing attack on Puri, VHP urged the Centre to reverse the decision and as early as possible deport Rohingyas back to Myanmar. "We are shocked to see a statement of Hardeep Puri, the Union Minister for Urban Development terming the Rohingyas as refugees and allotting them EWS flats in Delhi. WE might remind Puri of the statement by the Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament on December 10, 2020 declaring that Rohingyas will never be accepted in India," said VHP President Alok Kumar urging Centre to deport the Rohingyas immediately.

BJP's national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said the Modi Government has a clear policy that there will be no compromise on national security and the Rohingya infiltrators are a threat to the integrity of the country.

"The law of our country says that they will be deported and this jurisdiction lies with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Rohingya infiltrators are a threat to India's security.

"But (Delhi Chief Minister) Arvind Kejriwal is doing the politics of appeasement keeping the national security at bay. Not long

ago, there were news reports in which the facts were meant to mislead the public. The Ministry of Home Affairs has clarified on that," Bhatia said.

However, Delhi deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia claimed that the decision to shift the Rohingya Muslims was taken by officers at the behest of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG).

He said after taking the decision, it was sent for the approval of the LG without showing it to the Delhi Chief Minister or the Delhi Home Minister.

"The Delhi Government will not allow this conspiracy to illegally settle Rohingyas in Delhi," the Delhi Deputy CM said.

Sisodia said the Central Government was flaunting the settling of Rohingyas as an achievement in the morning, but after it was opposed by the Aam Aadmi Party, "it has now started putting the responsibility on the Delhi Government".

ED NAMES JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

While Fernandez did not directly comment on the case or the charge sheet, she re-shared an anonymous motivational quote on her Instagram stories.

"Dear me, I deserve all good things, I'm powerful, I accept myself. It'll all be ok. I'm strong. I'll achieve my goals and dreams. I can do it (sic)," reads the post.

The 36-year-old actor, famous for films like "Kick", "Bhoot Police" and most recently "Vikrant Rona", is the only accused named in the latest chargesheet.

Earlier, the agency had questioned her multiple times in this case, the last done in June. Fernandez, a Sri Lankan national, debuted in the Hindi film industry in 2009.

The agency in April provisionally attached ₹7.27 crore funds of the actor under the PMLA besides ₹15 lakh cash as the agency dubbed these funds as "proceeds of crime" under PMLA.

L-G SEEKS ACTION AGAINST BABU FOR ₹50 LAKH BRIBE, UNDUE FAVOURS

Udit Prakash allegedly took a bribe of Rs 50 lakh for extending "undue favours" to Executive Engineer PS Meena in Delhi Agricultural Marketing Board (DAMB), by diluting punishment against him in two cases of corruption. One JS Sharma on February 10, 2020, had lodged a complaint with MHA against Rai.

"Udit Prakash, who was then the Vice Chairman of DAMB, virtually let off the charged engineer PS Meena in two disproportionate asset cases - one involving Meena's son and the other involving his wife," sources said.

In the first case, the inquiry report submitted by a retired IAS officer on January 29, 2021, had recommended "major penalty and dismissal from service" against Meena, as per the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) guidelines. "What's appalling is that Udit Prakash issued the 'censure' in 'unreasonable

haste' on the last day of his posting as VC, DAMB, even as his transfer orders to DSFMC had been issued on February 24, 2021," sources said.

"PS Meena had also submitted his reply the same day, that is on February 24, 2021. Further, the punishment of censure was also not dispatched to the persons and officials to whom it was endorsed which resulted in the same not even being mentioned in the service book of PS Meena," they said.

"In the second case of disproportionate asset involving Meena's wife, an inquiry was ordered by the earlier VC of DAMB, but Udit Prakash, without conducting any inquiry in this case, ordered "punishment of censure" against Meena clubbing it with the first case and noted that the "two cases were similar". Prakash did not even issue a formal order in this case separately," they informed.

"The CBI has also recorded these "deliberate lapses" by Udit Prakash in a letter written to the then Chief Secretary Vijay Dev on October 15, 2021," sources said.

"Udit Prakash, a blue eyed boy of AAP Government, indulged in this act as VC of DAMB and has since been holding important position including that of the Managing Director of DSFMC after DAMB and later as CEO of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) where he worked with Raghav Chaddha," they said.

"Finding these 'deliberate lapses' and "undue favours" a fit case of corruption, the LG has recommended the MHA to take necessary action against Udit Prakash. The LG has also authorized the Chief Secretary for setting aside the "punishment of censure" in these cases against Meena and ensure appropriate punishment," the sources further added.

18 INDIAN CITIES AMONG 20 WORST PM2.5 LIST: US REPORT

Beijing in China had the highest PM2.5-attributable death rate of 124 in 2019. Delhi and Kolkata ranked sixth and eighth, respectively.

The report said the burden on health of PM2.5 has grown rapidly in cities in Southeast Asia.

"Of 7,239 cities analysed, all the 20 cities with the largest increase in PM2.5-attributable death rates from 2010 to 2019 are located in Southeast Asia, including 19 cities in Indonesia and one in Malaysia. All 20 cities reported an increase of more than 10 microgram per cubic metre in PM2.5 exposures in 2019 compared with 2010," it said.

In 2019, 1.7 million deaths linked to PM2.5 exposure occurred in the 7,239 cities, with cities in Asia, Africa, and Eastern and Central Europe seeing the greatest health impacts.

The report said geographic patterns of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution are strikingly different from the patterns seen for PM2.5 pollution.

PM2.5 pollution tends to be highest in cities in low and middle-income countries, whereas NO2 levels are high in large cities across countries of all income levels.

Almost all of the most populous cities (81 out of 103 cities) reported NO2 exposures higher than the global average of 15.5 micro-

gram per cubic metre.

At 41.6 microgram per cubic metre, Shanghai in China had the highest population-weighted annual average NO2 exposures in 2019, it said.

In 2019, 86 per cent of the 7,239 cities included in the report exceeded the WHO's 10 microgram per cubic metre guideline for NO2, impacting about 2.6 billion people.

Dr Susan Anenberg of George Washington University, one of the project collaborators, said, "Since most cities around the world have no ground-based air quality monitoring in place, estimates of particulate and gas pollution levels can be used to plan air quality management approaches that ensure the air is clean and safe to breathe."

The report also highlighted data gaps in low- and middle-income nations, a key aspect to understanding and addressing the health effects of air pollution.

According to the WHO's Air Quality Database, only 117 nations currently have ground-level monitoring systems to track PM2.5, and only 74 nations are monitoring NO2 levels.

BIHAR LAW MIN FACES ARREST FOR ABDUCTION, NITISH SAYS 'NOT AWARE'

Kartikkeya was allegedly involved in the kidnapping of a person named Rajiv Ranjan in 2014, and an FIR was lodged at the Bihta police station. The victim had recorded his statement under CrPC of 164 in the court where he had mentioned the name of the RJD leader.

The warrant was issued in the first week of August and he had to surrender before the court or police till August 16.

On the case against him, Kartikkeya said, "The allegations levelled against me are politically motivated, and are not proven yet. We will take action as per the law."

Addressing the media, his lawyers said, "Kartik is not the primary accused in the case that has been registered. The allegation is baseless. It is said by the accused on record that Karthik was seen on the way. Police have acquitted Karthik in its last circular, freeing him of the charge. Now it is the job of the police to inform the court about it. We will just say that we had gone to the court under the legal process of law and we had applied for anticipatory bail immediately. The court had given a stay till September 1."

Demanding Singh's immediate dismissal, senior BJP leader and former deputy chief minister Sushil Modi sought to know how someone "who was supposed to surrender before a court in connection with a kidnapping case got inducted in the State Cabinet".

He said that Singh was an accused in a 2014 kidnapping case, along with 16 others, including former Mokama MLA Anant Singh.

Another senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad hit out at the Bihar Government over inducting Kartikkeya Singh into the Cabinet as the Law Minister.

"We expect Patna HC to take serious notice of this. I expect from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to show some courage and sack Kartikkeya Singh immediately, and take strict action against him" he said.

HC summons Mondal's daughter who got teacher's job after failing TET test

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

After Ankita Adhikari, the dismissed teacher and daughter of former Bengal Education Minister Paresw Adhikari it could be the turn of Sukanya Mondal the daughter of heavy-duty Trinamool Congress leader Anubrata Mondal currently in CBI custody for his alleged involvement in cattle smuggling.

In further setback for the Mamata Banerjee Government, the Calcutta High Court — while hearing a matter on irregularities in appointment of primary teachers — on Wednesday directed Sukanya and five other relatives of Anubrata Mondal to appear before it by Thursday noon with all their testimonials. Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay passed the order following an affidavit filed by advocate Firdaus Shamim who claimed that Sukanya, her cousin Satyaki Mondal, Arka Dutta a personal assistant of Anubrata Mondal and his brother had secured teacher's job in primary school without clearing the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) exams.

Not only Sukanya had obtained her job even after failing in the TET exams but also she had never visited her place of work from where she drew regular salary.

"Without clearing the TET exams she got appointment in

school of her choice situated near her house ... She also would not attend her duty and we have evidence to show how the attendance register was brought to her house for her signature," advocate Shamim told the High Court.

Earlier Ankita Adhikari lost her job and had to return the entire salary — she earned on account of her illegal appointment — following a High Court order.

In a similar matter jailed former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee's security guard Biswambhar Mondal and his ten relatives secured Teachers' jobs through backdoor the advocate told the Court.

Chatterjee was last month arrested by the Enforcement Directorate investigating school level recruitment scam and money laundering. Mondal was arrested last week for his alleged involvement in cattle smuggling.

The Wednesday order comes as a double whammy for Sukanya currently under CBI scanner in cattle smuggling case. She reportedly owns a number of prime properties including lands, business interests in partnership with her father. A group of CBI officials on Wednesday reached Anubrata Mondal's Bolpur house to interrogate Sukanya but she refused to oblige. The CBI was considering legal actions against her sources said.

CBI freezes ₹17 cr fixed deposits of Mondal, kin

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

This monsoon it seems to be raining crores from the possession of Trinamool Congress leaders.

In a major development that could further hurt the TMC's image the Central Bureau of Investigation probing cattle smuggling case on Wednesday froze Fixed Deposits worth Rs 17 crore "related to" arrested TMC strongman and party national executive member Anubrata Mondal and his relatives.

The recovery came hours after the CBI officials interrogated his chartered accountant, sources said adding the Fixed Deposits could be linked to cattle smuggling.

The exact Fixed Deposits amount frozen is Rs 16.96 crore sources said.

"These Fixed Deposits could be a part of the black money earned from cattle smuggling and legalised through various means... This also means that the good big part of the ill-gotten amount has been kept in hiding or converted into immovable property," a former TMC leader from Bolpur said adding it is difficult to imagine that a small time trader (fish seller) before TMC came to power could have made so much money legally.

Crimea ‘sabotage’ highlights Russia’s woes in Ukraine war

AP ■ KYIV

A spate of fires and explosions has turned Russian-annexed Crimea from a secure base for the further invasion of Ukraine into the latest flashpoint highlighting Moscow’s challenges ahead in a war that is nearing the half-year mark.

A statement from British defense intelligence Wednesday that “Russian commanders will highly likely be increasingly concerned with the apparent deterioration in security across Crimea, which functions as rear base area for the occupation”.

Even Russia itself acknowledged it was an “act of sabotage” that caused Tuesday’s explosions and fires that ripped through an ammunition depot near Dzhankoi in once-secure Crimea, leading to chaotic scenes when around

3,000 people had to be evacuated.

As a vivid reminder of Russia’s vulnerability in Crimea, detonations at the depot near Dzhankoi were still continuing Wednesday.

A week earlier, Russia’s military in Crimea already came under pressure when Ukraine said nine Russian warplanes were destroyed following explosions. At the time, Moscow still offered the possibility of a wayward cigarette butt as the cause.

No such explanations would suffice anymore as the war, which had long centered on brutal fighting in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, has now given southern Crimea increasing importance.

Worsening the outlook in Crimea was a report by the Kommersant business paper, that explosions had also taken place near Gvardeyskoye in the



centre of the peninsula. By Wednesday, there still was no comment from the Russian authorities.

The British intelligence report said Gvardeyskoye and Dzhankoi “are home to two of the most important Russian military airfields in Crimea.”

on Feb 24. If Ukrainian forces were behind the explosions, that would represent a significant escalation in the war. Such attacks could also indicate that Ukrainian operatives are able to penetrate deeply into Russian-occupied territory. On the eastern front, the stalemate between both sides continued, with the brutality of the shelling causing ever more death and destruction.

In the Donetsk region at the forefront of the Russian offensive, two civilians were killed and seven others were wounded by recent Russian shelling of several towns and villages.

Russian Tu-22M3 long-range bombers fired cruise missiles at the Odesa region overnight, leaving four people injured, according to Odesa regional administration spokesman Oleh Bratchuk.



Ukrainians flee grim life in Russian occupied Kherson

AP ■ KYIV

It was early one morning when life under Russian occupation became too much for Volodymyr Zhdanov: Rocket fire aimed at Ukrainian forces struck near his home in the city of Kherson, terrifying one of his two children.

His 8-year-old daughter “ran in panic to the basement. It was 2 o’clock in the morning and (she) was really scared,” said Zhdanov, who later fled the city on the Black Sea and has been living in Kyiv, the capital, for the past three weeks.

Kherson, located north of the Crimean Peninsula that was annexed by Moscow in 2014, was the first city to fall after Russia’s invasion on Feb. 24. The port remains at the heart of the conflict and Ukraine’s efforts to preserve its vital access to the sea. For Russia, Kherson is a key point along the land corridor from its border to the peninsula.

Zhdanov and others who made the hazardous journey to escape from the region describe increasingly grim conditions

there, part of a heavy-handed effort by Russia to establish permanent control.

The streets in the city, which had a prewar population of about 300,000, are mostly deserted. Rumors swirl about acts of armed resistance and the sudden disappearance of officials who refuse to cooperate with the Russian authorities.

Occupation forces patrol in markets to warn those trying to use the Ukrainian currency, the hryvnia, in transactions. Pro-Moscow officials have been installed in local and regional governments, as well as on the police force. Workers at various municipal services face pressure to cooperate with Russian managers.

Most schools have closed. Supplies of essential goods are uneven, halting most commercial activity. There are shortages of medicines and spikes in the price of other commodities.

Many residents had been determined to hold out as long as possible for a promised Ukrainian counterattack that hasn’t materialized.

Biden signs massive climate and health care legislation

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden signed Democrats’ landmark climate change and health care bill into law on Tuesday, delivering what he has called the “final piece” of his pared-down domestic agenda, as he aims to boost his party’s standing with voters less than three months before the midterm elections.

The legislation includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some USD

375 billion over the decade — and would cap prescription drug costs at USD 2,000 out-of-pocket annually for Medicare recipients. It also would help an estimated 13 million Americans pay for health care insurance by extending subsidies provided during the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure is paid for by new taxes on large companies and stepped-up IRS enforcement of wealthy individuals and entities, with additional funds going to reduce the fed-



eral deficit.

In a triumphant signing event at the White House,

Biden pointed to the law as proof that democracy — no matter how long or messy the process — can still deliver for voters in America as he road-tested a line he will likely repeat later this fall ahead of the midterms: “The American people won, and the special interests lost.”

“In this historic moment, Democrats sided with the American people, and every single Republican in the Congress sided with the special interests in this vote,” Biden said, repeatedly seizing on the

contrast between his party and the GOP. “Every single one.”

The House on Friday approved the measure on a party-line 220-207 vote. It passed the Senate days earlier with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking a 50-50 tie in that chamber.

“In normal times, getting these bills done would be a huge achievement,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said during the White House ceremony. “But to do it now, with only 50 Democratic votes in the Senate,

over an intransigent Republican minority, is nothing short of amazing.”

Biden signed the bill into law during a small ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House, sandwiched between his return from a six-day beachside vacation in South Carolina and his departure for his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

He plans to hold a larger “celebration” for the legislation on Sept. 6 once lawmakers return to Washington.

China, US spar over climate on Twitter

AP ■ BEIJING

The world’s two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases are sparring on Twitter over climate policy, with China questioning whether the US can deliver on the landmark climate legislation signed into law by President Joe Biden this week.

“You can bet America will meet our commitments,” US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns tweeted in response on Wednesday, using a national flag emoticon for “America.” He called on China to resume suspended climate talks, writing, “We’re ready.”

The punchy exchange, part of a longer back and forth on Twitter, is emblematic of a broader worry: US-China cooperation is widely considered vital to the success of global efforts to curb rising temperatures. With the breakdown in relations over Taiwan and other issues, some question whether the two sides can cooperate.

After Congress passed the climate bill last Friday, Burns took to Twitter over the weekend to say the US was acting on climate change with its largest investment ever — and that China should follow. On Tuesday night, China’s Foreign Ministry responded with its own tweet: “Good to hear. But what matters is: Can the US deliver?”

The verbal skirmish grew out of China’s suspension of talks with the US on climate and several other issues earlier this month as part of its protest over a visit to Taiwan by a senior American lawmaker, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Climate has been one of the few areas of cooperation between the feuding countries.

US officials criticised China’s move, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken saying it “doesn’t punish the United States — it punishes the world.” Asked to respond, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian called on the US last week to “deliver on its historical responsibilities and due obligations on climate change and stop looking around for excuses for its inaction.”

The Min later tweeted some of his answer, and Burns responded four days later with his tweet on the US climate bill. Using the acronym for the People’s Republic of China, he ended with, “The PRC should follow+reconsider its suspension of climate cooperation with the US.” China elaborated on its “Can the US deliver?” message with a second tweet suggesting that the US meet rich country pledges to help poorer countries cope financially with climate change and lift sanctions imposed last year.

S Korean leader: Seoul won’t seek own nuclear deterrent

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said Wednesday his government has no plans to pursue its own nuclear deterrent in the face of growing North Korean nuclear threats, as he urged the North to return to dialogue aimed at exchanging denuclearization steps for economic benefits.

In a news conference in Seoul, Yoon said South Korea doesn’t desire political change in North

Korea that’s brought by force and he called for diplomacy aimed at building sustainable peace between the rivals amid tensions over the North’s accelerating weapons program.

Yoon’s comments came days after he proposed an “audacious” economic assistance package to North Korea if it abandons its nuclear weapons program, while avoiding harsh criticism of the North after it threatened “deadly” retaliation over a COVID-19 outbreak it blames on the South.

Tensions could rise further next week as the United States and South Korea kick off their biggest combined military training in years to counter the North Korean threat. The North describes such drills as invasion rehearsals and has often responded to them with missile tests or other provocations.

Yoon’s proposal for large-scale aid in food and healthcare and modernizing power and port infrastructure resembled previous South Korean offers that were rejected by North Korea,

which is speeding its development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, seen by leader Kim Jong Un as his strongest guarantee of survival. Still, Yoon expressed hope for “meaningful dialogue” with North Korea over his plan and stressed that Seoul is willing to provide corresponding economic rewards at each step of a phased denuclearization process if the North commits to a genuine “roadmap” toward fully abandoning its weapons program.

Israel carried out Gaza strike that killed 5 minors: Reports



AP ■ JEBALIYA (GAZA STRIP)

A Palestinian human rights group and an Israeli newspaper reported Tuesday that an explosion in a cemetery that killed five Palestinian children during the latest flare-up in Gaza was caused by an Israeli airstrike and not an errant Palestinian rocket.

It was one of a number of blasts during the fighting that did not bear the telltale signs of an Israeli F-16 or drone strike, and which the Israeli military said might have been caused by rockets misfired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group. The five children, aged 4 to 16 years old, had gathered in the local cemetery, one of the few open spaces in the crowded Jebaliya refugee camp, on Aug. 7, hours before an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire ended three days of

heavy fighting.

Residents said a projectile fell from the air and exploded in the cemetery. When The Associated Press visited the site, it saw none of the usual signs of an airstrike by an Israeli F-16 or drone, adding to suspicions that the blast was caused by an errant rocket. Both the Israeli military and Palestinian rights groups said at the time that they were still investigating the blast.

On Tuesday, the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights said its investigation of shrapnel and other evidence led it to conclude that the blast was caused by an Israeli airstrike.

“This was a missile fired from an Israeli aircraft,” said Raja Sourani, the director of the group, as he displayed pictures of what he said was a fragment showing the missile’s serial number.

Taiwan, China hold opposing military drills amid tensions

AP ■ HUALIEN (TAIWAN)

Taiwan is staging military exercises to show its ability to resist Chinese pressure to accept Beijing’s political control over the self-governing island, following new rounds of threatening drills from China.

The exercises Wednesday off the southeastern county of Hualien follow days of Chinese missile firings and incursions into Taiwan’s sea and airspace by ships and planes from the People’s Liberation Army, the military wing of China’s ruling Communist Party.

“We strongly condemn Communist China’s continuous military provocations around Taiwan’s sea and air that undermine regional peace,” Taiwan Defence Ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang told reporters at Hualien Air Force Base.

“Communist China’s military operations just provide us with the opportunity for combat-readiness training,” Sun said.

Taiwan’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Joanne Ou said China was using recent visits by US Congress members including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as a pretext for escalating its attempts to intimidate Taiwan



into accepting what it calls its terms for “peaceful reunification.”

“China launched military provocations on these grounds. This is absurd and a barbaric act, which also undermines regional stability and interferes with shipping and commercial activities in the Indo-Pacific region,” Ou said.

China sees the island as a breakaway province to be annexed by force if necessary, and considers visits to Taiwan by foreign officials as recognising its sovereignty.

Alongside its military

threats, China imposed visa bans and other sanctions Tuesday on Taiwanese political figures. China exercises no effective legal authority over Taiwan and it’s unclear what effect the sanctions would have.

China has refused all contact with Taiwan’s government since shortly after the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party. Tsai was overwhelmingly reelected in 2020.

The DPP also controls the legislature, while the vast majority of Taiwanese favor

maintaining the status quo of de facto independence along with strong economic and social connections between the sides.

China accuses Washington of encouraging the island’s independence through the sale of weapons and engagement between US politicians and the island’s government. The US says it does not support independence and has no formal diplomatic ties with the island, but it is legally bound to ensure Taiwan can defend itself against threats from China, including a blockade.

Pak PM likely to meet Chinese Prez during SCO summit: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is likely to have a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping next month on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Uzbekistan, according to a media report on Wednesday.

President Xi is expected to attend the SCO summit scheduled for September 15 and September 16 in Samarkand, The Express Tribune reported.

Pakistan is part of the SCO which also includes China, Russia, India and the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

A bilateral meeting between President Xi and Prime Minister Shehbaz is on

the cards at the sidelines of the SCO summit, sources were quoted as saying by the Express Tribune.

However, there is no official clarity on whether President Xi will attend the summit in person.

Some reports suggest that he may attend the summit virtually because of the strict COVID-19 protocols, the report said. The sources also said that Pakistan was exploring options for a possible bilateral meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Shehbaz. However, nothing is final yet, the sources added.

In an informal meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov invited his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to visit Moscow.

Victims of UK tainted blood scandal to get Govt payout

AP ■ LONDON

Thousands of people in Britain who contracted HIV or hepatitis from transfusions of tainted blood in the 1970s and 1980s will receive 100,000 pounds (\$120,000) in compensation, the U.K. Government said Wednesday. Survivors welcomed the payment, which came after years of campaigning, but said it should be expanded to include more people whose lives were blighted by the scandal. The payment will be made by October to survivors and bereaved partners of the dead but not to other family members, such as parents or children.

Measles outbreak in Zimbabwe kills 157 unvaccinated children

AP ■ HARARE

A measles outbreak in Zimbabwe has killed 157 children, most of whom were unvaccinated due to their family’s religious beliefs, officials said. The measles outbreak was first reported in the eastern Manicaland province in early April and has since spread to all parts of the country. At least 2,056 cases have been reported and virtually all of the deaths have been children who were not vaccinated, Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said.

The government says it is embarking on a mass vaccination campaign targeting children aged between 6 months and 15 years old and is engaging traditional and faith leaders to sup-

port the drive. Zimbabwe continued vaccinating children against measles even during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, but the drive has been hampered by religious groups that preach against vaccines. The Christian sects are against modern medicine and tell their members to rely on self-proclaimed prophets for healing.

Church gatherings that have resumed following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions have “led to the spread of measles to previously unaffected areas,” said the health ministry in a statement last week.

Measles is among the most infectious diseases in the world and mostly spreads in the air by coughing, sneezing or close contact. Symptoms include

coughing, fever and a skin rash, while the risk of severe measles or dying from complications is high among unvaccinated children. Outbreaks in unvaccinated and malnourished populations have been known to kill thousands. Scientists estimate that more than 90% of the population needs to be immunised to prevent measles outbreaks.

The World Health Organisation in April warned of an increase in measles in vulnerable countries as a result of a disruption of services due to COVID-19. In July, UNICEF said about 25 million children worldwide have missed out on routine immunisations against common childhood diseases, calling it a “red alert” for child health.

Bangladeshi tribunal sentences five Islamist militants to death for mosque bomb attack in 2015

PTI ■ DHAKA

A Bangladeshi tribunal on Wednesday handed down death sentences to five militants from the banned JMB outfit, including a former navy soldier, for a bomb attack at a mosque inside a major navy installation near southeastern port city of Chattogram seven years ago.

Chattogram Anti-Terrorism Tribunal Judge Abdul Halim pronounced the verdict as four of the five convicts were on the dock, court officials said.

The fifth militant was tried in absentia as he was on the run. All the convicts belonged to outlawed Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Pronouncing the death sentences, the judge also imposed



a penalty of Tk 50,000 (USD 526 approx) on each of them.

In his observation, the judge commented that the convicts’ act of terrorism inside a naval base tantamount to attack on Bangladesh’s independence and sovereignty, belittling those who were engaged to guard the country’s maritime boundary.

SERENA TROUNCED BY RADUCANU

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Serena Williams bowed out of the WTA/ATP Cincinnati Masters at the first hurdle on Tuesday, losing in straight sets to US Open champion Emma Raducanu as the end of her glittering career looms ever closer.

Williams, who last week indicated that she is planning to retire after this month's US Open, was no match for British teenager Raducanu, who romped to a 6-4, 6-0 win.

The 40-year-old Williams left the court swiftly after the defeat without speaking to television reporters and did not hold a press conference.

Raducanu broke Williams at the start of both sets to claim victory in what was her first and likely last meeting with the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion.

"I was nervous from the first point to the last," Raducanu said. "Serena is dangerous and can come back from any situation."

"I had to stay focused. I'm so pleased I managed to keep my composure."

Williams, winner of titles here in 2014 and 2015, was competing in only her fourth match of 2022 after starting her season at Wimbledon due to injury.

Raducanu announced her intentions from the start with a break to love of Williams and never let up.

The young Briton improved to 14 wins, 17 defeats since winning the Open last September from a qualifying start.

Raducanu meanwhile said she was honoured to be part of the spectacle on Tuesday in what was one of Williams' final games as a professional.

"We all need to honour Serena and her amazing career," she said. "I'm so grateful for the experience of playing her and for the fact that our careers have crossed."

"All she has achieved is inspirational. It's a true honour to share the court with her."

Raducanu never let Williams into the match.

The young Londoner seeded 10th took a 4-1 lead in the opening set and complete-

US OPEN CHAMPION EMMA RADUCANU BROKE UNITED STATES SUPERSTAR SERENA WILLIAMS AT THE START OF BOTH SETS TO CLAIM VICTORY IN WHAT WAS HER FIRST AND LIKELY LAST MEETING WITH THE 23-TIME GRAND SLAM SINGLES CHAMPION. WILLIAMS LAST WEEK INDICATED THAT SHE IS PLANNING TO RETIRE AFTER THIS MONTH'S US OPEN

ly swept the second, advancing on her first match point, an unreturnable serve.

Raducanu committed a single unforced error in the opening set compared to a dozen for Williams.



Venus, Osaka exit in 1st round

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Venus Williams and Naomi Osaka both exited the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Masters on Tuesday with straight-set, opening-round losses.

Williams, 42, who won her last match at the Midwestern pre-US Open event in 2019, lost to 2016 champion Karolina Pliskova 7-5, 6-1.

Osaka's summer form slump deepened meanwhile as the four-time Grand Slam

winner was defeated 6-4, 7-5 by China's Zhang Shuai.

Pliskova, one of the game's biggest servers, struck eight aces and broke four times in a win over Williams lasting for nearly one and three-quarter hours.

Williams, semi-finalist from a decade ago, has gone winless in her last five matches, last earning a victory in the Wimbledon first round.

Pliskova said she had to lift her level to run away with the second set.

"Venus is a great champion, she's a fighter with a big game and big serve," the Czech said.

"She played well at certain points in the first set, I'm feeling physically strong so I was able to up my game in the second set."

Osaka's first-round defeat was the second in as many weeks for Japan's former world number one, now ranked 39th.

The 24-year-old was eliminated in the Toronto first round and has won just a single match out of four on

cement — at the WTA Silicon Valley in July.

World number 44 Zhang moved into the second round in 75 minutes as she won her first main draw match here since 2014.

The Chinese player was on the winning Cincinnati doubles team in 2021 and claimed US Open doubles honours in 2021 with Australian Sam Stosur.

The win brings Zhang level at 3-3 in her series with Osaka.



FIFA agrees to cancel WC qualifier b/w Brazil-Argentina

AP ■ SAO PAULO

The suspended World Cup qualifying game between Brazil and Argentina will not be played, the two countries' governing football bodies said after reaching a deal with FIFA to cancel the match.

Both teams agreed to pay a fine for not playing the qualifier, which was stopped shortly after kickoff last September when Brazilian health officials entered the field saying four Argentina players had broken COVID-19 protocols.

FIFA had wanted the match to be played next month, even though it had been rendered essentially meaningless after both Brazil and Argentina qualified for the World Cup in Qatar despite playing a game less than other South American

countries.

FIFA initially fined the football bodies of both countries and demanded the match be played. Brazil's confederation and Argentina's federation took the case to the Court for Arbitration of Sport, where all three parties agreed to the deal to cancel the game. Brazil coach Tite and his Argentina counterpart Lionel Scaloni had argued that the risks of injuries and suspensions were too high for the game to be played ahead of the tournament in Qatar.

The decision leaves both teams free to schedule September friendlies against different opponents instead.

In Qatar, Brazil is in Group G with Serbia, Switzerland and Cameroon. Argentina is in Group C with Mexico, Poland and Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo blasts 'lies' over Man Utd future

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Cristiano Ronaldo has hit out at the "lies" surrounding reports about his future at Manchester United.

The Portugal forward missed United's pre-season tour to Thailand and Australia due to personal reasons as speculation swirled over whether he would be leaving Old Trafford.

It has been reported Ronaldo wants to play Champions League football, but United maintain the 37-year-old is not for sale and remains an integral part of the plans of new boss Erik ten Hag.

The former Real Madrid star played the full 90 minutes of United's 4-0 defeat at Brentford on Saturday, which left them bottom of the Premier League.

In a reply to a fan account on Instagram that referred to a report linking the United frontman to Atletico Madrid, Ronaldo said fans would "know the truth" in a couple of weeks, adding: "The media is telling lies."

"I have a notebook and in the last few months of the 100 news I made, only five were right. Imagine how it is. Stick with that tip."

Manchester United will seek to kickstart their Premier League campaign when they



host fierce rivals Liverpool on Monday.

United's owners, the Glazer family, have come under fire following the team's terrible start.

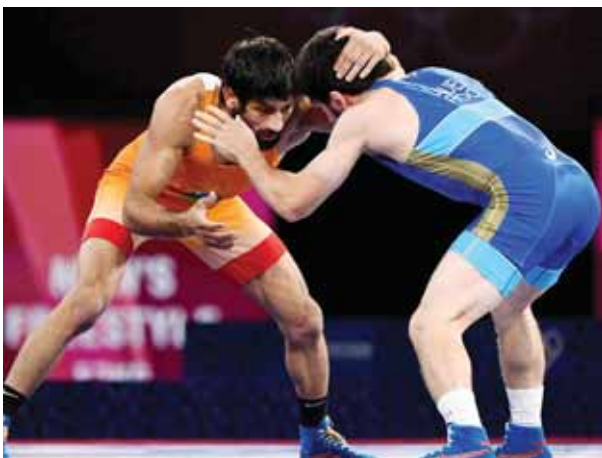
Former United defender Gary Neville has warned the club could finish in the bottom half of the Premier League if they do not address their "horror story" recruitment strategy. Manchester United supporters' group The 1958 is planning a protest march outside Old Trafford against the club's owners ahead of the Liverpool match.

In a statement the group said the ownership was "systematically starving and killing the greatest football institution in world football, for greed".

"We appreciate emotions are running high," it added. "We must keep it legal, we must keep it peaceful.... Bring the heat, bring the noise, bring the passion. Let's show the Glazer family that this time it will not blow over."

Billionaire Elon Musk sparked a social media frenzy on Tuesday evening when he raised the prospect of buying United from the Glazer family.

The Tesla CEO made the comment in a tweet, then later clarified his position by saying he had no intention of buying a sports team and that it had been a "long-running joke".



Ravi headed for Russia camp ahead of Worlds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh from winning a gold medal at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, India's star wrestler Ravi Dahiya is all set for a 29-day training camp in Russia ahead of the World Championships in Serbia in a month's time.

According to a Sports Authority of India (SAI) statement, the 24-year-old Tokyo Olympics silver medallist is headed to Vladikavkaz with his coach Arun Kumar, sparring partner Sahil and physiotherapist Munish Kumar on Wednesday night.

"The travel, visa, board and lodging cost of all four would be covered under

The 24-year-old Tokyo Olympics silver medallist is headed to Vladikavkaz with his coach Arun Kumar

TOPS," the SAI stated.

The 2019 World Championship bronze medallist had trained in Bulgaria besides competitive exposure in Turkey and Mongolia ahead of the CWG.

The World Championships is slated at Belgrade from September 10-18.

GOALKEEPER ERROR NEARLY COSTS PSV

AP ■ GLASGOW

Armando Obispo spared Walter Benitez's blushes as PSV Eindhoven rescued a 2-2 draw against Rangers in the Champions League play-off first leg on Tuesday.

PSV goalkeeper Benitez looked to have gifted Rangers the advantage when he allowed Tom Lawrence's free-kick to squirm through his hands in the second half at Ibrox.

Benitez's howler put Rangers 2-1 ahead after Antonio Colak had cancelled out Ibrahim Sangare's opener for PSV.

But Obispo bailed out his team-mate with a priceless late leveller that leaves the tie on a knife-edge heading into next week's second leg in Eindhoven.

Although PSV will be favourites on home turf, Rangers should still fancy their



chances after staging a rousing comeback from 2-0 down to defeat Union Saint-Gilloise 3-0 in the third qualifying round.

Following on from that dramatic comeback, this was another tense European night for Rangers in their bid to

return to the Champions League group stage.

Rangers last played in that round of the competition in 2010-11 before financial problems saw them drop into Scottish football's bottom tier, from where they eventually returned to the top-flight.

They were knocked out of the Champions League qualifiers by Malmo last season, then enjoyed a memorable run to the Europa League final, only to lose to Eintracht Frankfurt in the final.

In a nod to Rangers' European heritage, Ibrox legend John Greig was watching from the stands alongside former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson.

But Giovanni van Bronckhorst's team initially struggled to rise to the occasion on a rainy night in Glasgow.

"It was very close. The tie is open. PSV are an excellent

team and they showed that. We still have the chance to go through," Van Bronckhorst said.

FC Copenhagen held off a fightback from visiting Trabzonspor to win their first leg 2-1.

Viktor Claesson gave the home team a first half lead.

Lukas Lerager added a second three minutes after half time, smashing the ball in from close range after a corner.

The Turkish champions responded by penning the Danes back, but struggled to break through. Their only goal was a 25-yard shot from Tasos Bakasetas that took a deflection off centre back David Khocholava with 11 minutes left.

In Norway, hosts Bodo/Glimt edged Dinamo Zagreb 1-0. Norwegian veteran Amahl Pellegrino headed in the only goal in the 37th minute.

LOCAL EVENTS



Sports Minister Girish Chandra Yadav giving away the prizes to the winners of various competitions, held on the occasion of Amrit Mahotsava in Lucknow

FELICITATED

Uttar Pradesh Rowing Association on Wednesday celebrated the Amrit Mahotsava at Nishantganj boat club and gave away 'Uttar Pradesh Gaurav' awards to Anandeshwar Pandey, RP Singh, Manish Kakkar, Jata Shankar Mishra, ID Sharma, Alok Soti, Paritosh Sharma, Rakesh Shukla and DK Dhawan for their contributions in the field of sports.

JUDO C'SHIP INAUGURATED

The Senior National Judo Championships was inaugurated on Wednesday at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium by Deputy CM Brijesh Pathak. He also felicitated the Commonwealth Games

medallist Vijay Kumar Yadav.

FOOTBALL TOURNEY

The state-level Subrato Mukherji Football Tournament will be played from August 18 at Guru Gobind Singh Sports College. All the regional teams of the state will be seen in action.

INTER-BRANCH KABADDI

Kati Bagiya branch defeated Shaheed Path branch to win the Shivani Public School Inter-branch Kabaddi championship on Wednesday. In the girl's category, Shaheed Path branch clinched the championship. Founder Satyabhama Dubey and Markandey Dubey gave away the prizes.

PTI ■ HARARE

Skipper KL Rahul's form and fitness will be observed keenly when India take on Zimbabwe in a three-match series, starting Thursday, in 50-over format, which is fast losing popularity and struggling to retain its identity.

Supposed to be one of the most vital cogs in India's T20 World Cup top-order, Rahul would like to make full use of the game time he gets as an opener during the three games against Regis Chakabva's side.

Rahul's immediate task at hand after almost three-month lay-off, during which he underwent a sports hernia surgery, is to keep his opening slot in T20 cricket and adapt to the team's philosophy of going hell for leather from ball one.

It won't just be about runs that skipper Rohit Sharma or coach Rahul Dravid would be looking at when they monitor Rahul's performance in Zimbabwe.

Rather they would like to check out his approach and the manner in which he is scoring runs, something he would need to tweak before that first Asia Cup game against Pakistan on August 28.

On the Harare Sports Club batting belt where Zimbabwe chased down Bangladesh's 300 plus and 290-odd targets in successive games in the recently-concluded series, India's batting lineup with Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda and Sanju Samson will certainly prove to be more than a handful for hosts.

And unlike Bangladesh, a bowling attack comprising Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Deepak Chahar, Kuldeep Yadav along with all-rounders Shardul Thakur and Axar Patel has more potency in any conditions against this Zimbabwe line-up.

For Zimbabwe, the aim would be to become the proverbial banana peel on which Rahul and his men can slip as a series win for 'Men in Blue' would hardly win

CAPTAIN KL RAHUL IN FOCUS IN ZIMBABWE



Zimbabwe vs India
Live from 12:45pm IST
SONY SIX & TEN 3

them any accolades but a defeat would invite sharp criticism.

The hosts therefore wouldn't mind if the likes of Sikandar Raza, Chakabva and Innocent Kaia repeat their batting performances from the Bangladesh encounters and show the world that the previous series win was not just a mere flash in the pan.

OBJECTIVES OF SERIES

Gone are the days of Flower brothers (Andy and Grant), Heath Streaks (now tainted and suspended), Neil Johnsons, Murray Goodwins and Henry Olongas. It was a side that could take the Mickey out of the opposition on good days.

Zimbabwe cricket, like the

country itself has gone through turmoil over the past two decades and the quality has been severely impacted.

Someone like 36-year-old Raza, 34-year-old skipper Chakabva or 34-year old Donald Tiripano are sincere performers but would never make any opposition feel threatened.

India's tours of Zimbabwe are normally a kind of gift from 'big brother' to help a 'younger' gain financial stability.

The TV and digital rights revenue from three India games will cover Zimbabwe cricket's more than half the costs for the year.

So this earns BCCI a goodwill gesture.

On the cricketing part, this

gives selectors a chance to look at bench strength and also jot down some of the names, who will figure in the larger picture for the 2023 50-over World Cup.

Right now, Indian cricket possesses such quality that it can field three white ball teams in three different continents at the same time.

This is one such glorified 'A' series as a lot of the members will be playing in the home A series against New Zealand and Australia later this year.

CHAHAR AND KULDEEP

Two bowlers who would be looking to give it their all are Deepak Chahar, who is back in the mix after six months and

Kuldeep Yadav, who is slowly getting his mojo back.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar has consolidated his place in the T20 set-up but Chahar with his swing bowling in Powerplay overs and ability to hit big shots in the death overs will like to make an impression. He is already in the standby list for the Asia Cup.

Another player, who would fancy a debut would be Maharashtra man Rahul Tripathi, a consistent IPL performer and may be someone who VVS Laxman could use in the middle-order at times at the expense of Shardul Thakur.

In all, a 3-0 clean sweep is the order of the day and any diversion would be considered a below-par effort.

SQUADS

India: KL Rahul (Captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shardul Thakur, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Avesh Khan, Prasidh Krishna, Mohd Siraj, Deepak Chahar, Shabbaz Ahmed.

Zimbabwe: Regis Chakabva (captain), Ryan Burl, Tanaka Chivanga, Bradley Evans, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Takudzwanashe Kaitano, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, John Masara, Tony Munyonga, Richard Ngarava, Victor Nyauchi, Sikandar Raza, Milton Shumba, Donald Tiripano.

Shastri had very little tolerance for failure: Karthik



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ravi Shastri used to push players to achieve special things but he had very little tolerance for failure during his stint as India's head coach, said veteran wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik.

The 37-year-old had played sporadically during Shastri's tenure as India coach, especially during the 2019 World Cup.

The Shastri-Kohli tenure was a good one for Indian cricket but often the duo was criticised for not standing by a few players, who probably needed a bit more empathy during their lean patch.

"He (Shastri) had a very low tolerance for somebody who wouldn't bat at a certain pace he did not like or someone who was doing very differently in the nets and in the match, he would go and bat differently," Karthik said on Cricbuzz.

"He (Shastri) would not be very appreciative of that. Shastri knew exactly what he wanted from the team, the way in which it was played but his tolerance was very little for failures. He always used to push people to do very well."

Karthik, who at 36, is a designated finisher in T20 set-up, has already said that he feels way more relaxed and secured in the Rohit Sharma-Rahul Dravid era.

Shastri had a successful coaching stint as under him India claimed Test series victories on Australia soil twice, drew the Test series 2-2 in England and also entered the World Test Championship final.

"I think Shastri, the player was somebody, who was probably not as talented but fulfilled his talent as coach. He did much better than what he was expected to do. As a coach, he was a larger-than-life person. He was somebody who pushed players to try and achieve special things," he added.

India to play 38 Tests, 42 ODIs, 61 T20Is in Men's FTP '23-'27

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian men's team will be playing a whopping 138 bilateral international matches during the next five-year Future Tours & Programme (FTP) Cycle between May, 2023 to April, 2027, the ICC said on Wednesday.

Most sought-after team commercially, the 'Men In Blue' will play 38 Tests, 42 ODIs and 61 T20Is in the five-year period and focus on shortest format is an indicator how priorities across formats will be changing.

The ODI bilaterals will remain but mostly be three-match series.

India expectedly has a choc-a-bloc calendar but as usual there won't be any bilateral cricket series with Pakistan due to obvious political reasons.

The 12 Members will play a total of 777 international matches - 173 Tests, 281 ODIs and 323 T20Is - in the 2023-2027 FTP cycle compared to the 694 in the current one.

This includes the next two cycles of the ICC Men's World Test Championship, multiple ICC events and a host of bilateral as well as tri-series action.

As far as India's schedule is concerned, the traditional India versus Australia Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, that used to be a four-match affair for a long time will become five-Test series.

India will be playing five-Test series against both England and Australia and also on the T20 front, there are a lot of



five-match series which is on expected lines with the broadcasters demand with premium advertisement rates for short-format matches.

During the next FTP cycle, India would be travelling to West Indies (July-Aug 2023) for a full tri-format series

including 2 Tests, ODIs and 3 T20Is.

The marquee five-Test home series against England will be tentatively held between Jan-March in 2024.

While Australia is visiting India early next year to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a four-Test series

as a part of previous cycle, India's next big trip Down Under is in December-January, 2024-25 when they play Australia in a five-Test series for the first time since 1991.

In this cycle, India will host Bangladesh for a two-Test series in September 2024.

27 ODIS BEFORE WC

The Indian team will play 27 ODI games before it plays the 2023 50-over World Cup in India scheduled in October-November next year.

The 27 ODIs starts with India's series against Zimbabwe in Harare from Thursday. The chunk among the 27 ODIs is from the previous FTP cycle which also include home three-match series against South Africa and an away three-match event against New Zealand just after T20 World Cup.

40 TESTS FOR OZ

Australia and England during the same five-year phase will be playing 40 and 43 Test matches respectively, which is a few games more than India.

The inaugural World Test Championships New Zealand in the next cycle have 32 Tests earmarked, while South Africa in the same duration play only 29 Tests. They mostly play two and some three-Test series.

Pakistan have only 27 Tests between May, '23-April '27 while Sri Lanka and West Indies play 25 longest format games each respectively.

Rabada sparks England's collapse

AP ■ LONDON

Ben Stokes was dismissed on the stroke of lunch on the opening day of the first Test between England and South Africa at Lord's on Wednesday, to leave his side perilously placed on 100-5.

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada once again proved his worth, removing openers Alex Lees and Zak Crawley after England had been sent in to bat by Proteas captain Dean Elgar.

Fellow quicks Marco Jansen and Anrich Nortje followed up by capturing the prized wickets of Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow, with all four dismissed batsmen out in single figures as England slumped to 55-4.

With the final ball of the morning session, Nortje squared up Stokes (20) to have the England skipper caught in the slips. Ollie Pope was the lone batsman to hold firm, with 51 not out.

Spearhead fast bowler Rabada had been doubtful for the opening match of the three-Test series with an ankle injury, but the 27-year-old showed no sign of discomfort, taking 2-26 in nine overs.

England came into the



game with a perfect record of four wins from as many Tests under their new leadership pairing of Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

All of those victories had been achieved by chasing down targets in the fourth innings, something that cannot happen in this match after Elgar won the toss and fielded a green-tinged pitch under overcast skies.

Rabada had left-hander Lees caught behind for five and removed Crawley for nine after he nicked a ball that nipped away low to Aiden Markram at second slip.

Star batsman Root was powerless to prevent further

collapse, the former England captain lbw for eight to a huge inswinger from left-arm pacer Jansen.

Root reviewed India umpire Nitin Menon's decision but replays indicated the ball would have clipped leg stump.

Bairstow had made 106 and an unbeaten 114 during England's most recent Test -- a seven-wicket win over India at Edgbaston last month.

But he was bowled between bat and pad for a five-ball duck by Nortje as he tried to drive on the up, with England now 55-4 inside 17 overs.

Pope completed a 69-ball fifty but the session belonged to South Africa.



Pakistan win 1st ODI by 16 runs

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

Pakistan overcame a slow start and early loss of an opener to beat the Netherlands by 16 runs in their first ODI.

Pakistan won the toss and chose to bat first. Only at 3-0 after four overs, it got worse for the visitors at 10-1 in six overs following Vivian Kingma's maiden wicket which claimed Imam-ul-Haq (2) leg before wicket on referral by the Netherlands.

Opener Fakhar Zaman led the recovery with 109 runs in 109 balls, including 12 fours and a six, before he was run out. Zaman and captain Babar Azam (74 in 85) shared a 168-run partnership for the second

wicket, and Shadab Khan later smashed a 28-ball 48 not out as Pakistan posted a challenging total of 314-6.

Dutch pacer Bas de Leede took 2-42 in 10 overs.

In reply, the Netherlands came close with 298-8. Dutch captain Scott Edwards was not out on 71 in 60 balls. Opener Vikramjit Singh and No. 5 Tom Cooper both hit 65 runs each. Cooper scored at a much faster pace, needing 54 deliveries for his 65 compared to 98 balls for Singh.

Pacers Haris Rauf (3-67) and Naseem Shah (3-51) did most of the damage.

The second of three ODI matches is at Rotterdam on Thursday.

Praggnanandhaa notches up 2nd straight win

PTI ■ MIAMI

Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa continued his fine run in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, beating Anish Giri of the Netherlands 2.5-1.5 in the second round here on Wednesday.

Having started his campaign with victory over world No.4 and the top ranked junior Alireza Firouzja, the 17-year old Indian prodigy scored the all-important win in the fourth and final game, to hand Giri his second straight loss.

Praggnanandhaa, who played a key role in the Indian 'B' team's Bronze medal win in the recent chess Olympiad in Mahabalipuram near Chennai, edged out his Dutch opponent in 81 moves in the fourth game after the first three ended in draws.

The Indian GM is now on six points after two wins, the same as world No.1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway, who beat Hans Niemann 3-1.

Praggnanandhaa will take on Carlsen in the third round later on Wednesday night.

Want to win another World Cup: Russell

AGENCIES ■ ANTIGUA

West Indies all-rounder Andre Russell has hinted at a possible return to the Men in Maroon side at this year's ICC T20 World Cup in Australia.

Russell has not represented West Indies since last year's ICC T20 World Cup in Dubai, but the veteran could be in line for a quick return to international cricket at this year's 20-over tournament. "Of course, of course. The maroon is all over," SkySports quoted Russell as saying.

"Honestly, I have two franchise hundreds and I wish those hundreds were actually playing for West Indies. "I don't regret saying this just now. I really enjoyed playing for Jamaica Tallawahs but those two hundred, it would be more special coming in international cricket."

Following his stint in England, Russell will play for the Trinbago Knight Riders in the month-long Caribbean Premier League that commences at the end of this month.

"I always want to play and give back," Russell told Sky Sports.

"But at the end of the day, if we are not agreeing on certain terms...they have to respect my terms as well. At the end of the day, it is what it is. We have families and we have to make sure that we give our best opportunity while we have one career. It's not like I can start over again. I'm 34 and I want to win another World Cup - or two more - for West Indies because at the end of the day, I'm here now, and I'm just taking it day by day," he added.



Hetmyer, Keemo out of NZ ODIs

Antigua: West Indies suffered big blows ahead of their upcoming ODI series against New Zealand with star all-rounder Shimron Hetmyer, Keemo Paul and Gudakesh Motie have been ruled out of the series. The replacements are middle-order batter Jermaine Blackwood and leg-spinning allrounder Yannic Cariah. Odean Smith, the seam-bowling all-rounder, has been added as a reserve.

Chandrakant Pandit named new head coach of KKR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The doyen of India's domestic coaches Chandrakant Pandit has been appointed Kolkata Knight Riders' head coach for the upcoming IPL season, the franchise announced on Wednesday.

Pandit replaces Brendon McCullum, who is now the head coach of the England Test side.

Pandit, the most celebrated coach in the Indian domestic circuit, recently guided Madhya Pradesh to their maiden Ranji Trophy title, having won the national championship multiple times with Mumbai and Vidarbha.

Known to work wonders with unheralded domestic teams, this will be the former India wicketkeeper's first big assignment at the elite level.

"We are very excited that Chandu is joining the Knight Riders family to lead us through the next phase of our journey," KKR CEO Venky Mysore said in a statement.

"His deep commitment to what he does and his track

record of success in domestic cricket, is there for everyone to see. We are looking forward to his partnership with our skipper Shreyas Iyer, which promises to be an exciting one," he added.

Accepting the new challenge, Pandit said, "I have heard from players and others who have been associated with the Knight Riders, about the family culture, as well as the tradition of success that has been created."

"I am excited about the quality of the support staff and the players who are part of the set up and I am looking forward to this opportunity with all humility and positive expectations."

The 60-year-old Pandit played five Tests and 36 ODIs for India between mid '80s to early '90s.

In an interview to PTI, Pandit had said that he had once had a meeting with KKR's principal owner Shah Rukh Khan during the early years of IPL but back then he had made it clear that he wasn't keen to join support staff as an assistant coach.