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DROP WIKILEAKS CHARGES

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Drugs worth ₹478 cr seized on Gujarat Assembly poll eve

Recovery of booze, cash, drugs 28 times of that seized in 2017, says EC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of the first phase of polling in Gujarat, the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday came out with startling figures of seizures of cash, liquor, freebies, drugs, and even drugs manufacturing units, made by enforcement agencies in the State. Overall, the seizures this time round are over 28 times the recoveries made during the 2017 Assembly polls in the State.

Voting will be held on Thursday for the first phase of Gujarat Assembly elections in 89 seats spread across 19 districts in Saurashtra-Kutch and southern parts of the State where 788 candidates are in the fray.

In fact, two drugs manufacturing units and drugs worth Rs 478 crore were unearthed on Wednesday itself with the enforcement agencies still carrying out their operations in Vadodara (Rural) and Vadodara City till late in the evening.

Voting will be held between 8 AM and 5 PM on Thursday across 14,382 polling stations, the office of the State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said in a release. Out of the 89 seats going to polls in the first phase, the BJP won 48 in the 2017 elections, the Congress had won 40, while one seat was bagged by an Independent candidate.

As per information shared by the EC, the Gujarat ATS unearthed two



mephedrone (synthetic drug) manufacturing units and about 143 kg of mephedrone worth about Rs 478 crore in Vadodara (Rural) and Vadodara City.

"The ongoing seizure process of heavy consignment of drugs is being led by a team of officers of ATS Gujarat. If added, the ongoing seizure of drugs, it becomes whopping 28 times. The ATS have detained five people from Nadiad and Vadodara and a criminal case is being registered in ATS Police Station, Ahmedabad under relevant sections of the NDPS Act, 1985," the poll body said in a statement.

The EC further stated that the operation is in progress and complete details will be made available once the operation is completed. Besides the contraband seized in the ongoing operation, drugs worth Rs 61.96 crore have been recovered. The total seizures in the 2017 Gujarat Assembly Election were Rs

27.21 crores. Going by the seizure chart as on November 29, 2022 which marks total seizures of Rs 290.24 crores, there is a massive jump in the amount of seizures which is 10.66 times of seizures in 2017.

The data showed that 4,11,851.23 litres of liquor worth Rs 14.88 crore has been recovered despite prohibition of liquor in the state. The EC's enforcement authorities have seized precious metals and gold worth Rs 15.79 crore; freebies worth Rs 171.24 crore.

"The process of effective expenditure monitoring starts months before the announcement of elections and includes host of activities like appointment of experienced officers as Expenditure Observers, sensitizing and reviewing enforcement agencies for more coordinated and comprehensive monitoring, marking of expenditure sensitive constituencies, ensuring planning of adequate availability of field level

teams in the monitoring process and regular follow-ups with DEOs/SPs with a view to curb role of money-power in vitiating elections. Visits by the Commission to review the electoral preparedness along with the review of Central Observers and DEOs, SPs has already been taken for comprehensive monitoring," the EC said in a statement on Wednesday.

Similarly, seizures in Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, where polling concluded on November 12, saw more than five-fold increase over figures of 2017 assembly elections. As compared to Rs 9.03 crores worth of seizures in 2017 Assembly Elections, the seizures in 2022 rose to Rs 57.24 crores.

Apart from the BJP, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), 36 other political outfits, including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) have also fielded candidates in various seats which will go to polls in the first phase. The BJP and Congress are contesting in all the 89 seats.

The new poll entrant AAP is contesting in 88 seats. Its candidate from Surat East constituency had withdrawn his candidature, leaving the party with one less seat to contest in the first phase.

Among other parties, the BSP has fielded 57 candidates, BTP 14 and CPI-M four candidates. As many as 339 independents are also in the fray in the first phase of polls. Out of the total 788 candidates, 70 are women including nine fielded by the BJP, six by the Congress and five by the AAP.

AAP's chief ministerial candidate Isudan Gadhvi is contesting from Khambhalia seat in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Saurashtra region that goes to polls on Thursday.

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Somebody has to speak up, says defiant Lapid

Kashmir Files has fascist features, jury shared my views: Nadav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid, whose remarks on 'The Kashmir Files' film triggered a major uproar in the country has defended his observations and said "somebody has to speak up."

He also said the film has fascist features and the entire jury shared his views.

His latest statements on Wednesday came two days after the filmmaker, who was the head of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) jury in Goa, said the film is a "propaganda" and "vulgar".

Israel Ambassador to New Delhi Naor Gilon had reacted sharply to his remarks on the closing ceremony of the festival on Monday and asked the filmmaker on Tuesday to apologise and said he should be ashamed.

Director of the film Vivek Agnihotri and actor Anupam Kher, who acted in 'The Kashmir Files', also slammed Lapid.

Speaking to Israeli news website Ynet over the phone on the controversy over his remarks, Lapid said, "It's crazy, what's going on here. It's a Government festival and it's the biggest in India. It's a film that the Indian Government, even



Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid has been facing flak for his comments on the movie 'The Kashmir Files'.

if it didn't actually make it, at least pushed it in an unusual way. It basically justifies the Indian policy in Kashmir, and it has fascist features." This comment was a rough translation of the interview in Hebrew.

He said there are claims that the move captured dimensions hidden by intellectuals and the media. "It is always the same method — that there is the foreign enemy, and there are traitors from within."

In his interview, Lapid said while he was watching the movie, he was shocked by the "transparent combination between propaganda and fascism and vulgarity". "I couldn't help but imagine an Israeli film like this in another year and a half or two," he told Ynet.

Asked if he anticipated the massive backlash to his remarks, Lapid said he was "apprehensive".

"It is not an easy position, you are a guest, I am the president of the jury here, you are treated very nicely. And then you come and attack the festival. There was apprehension, and there was discomfort," he said, adding, "Let's put it this

way: I'm happy to be on my way to the airport now."

The filmmaker said if the chairman of a foreign jury spoke critically about a film of his country, he would be "happy" even if it is "not a pleasant feeling". "In countries that are increasingly losing the ability to speak your mind or speak the truth, someone needs to speak up. When I saw this movie, I couldn't help but imagine its Israeli equivalent, which doesn't exist but could definitely exist. So I felt I had to," he said.

Meanwhile, in an exclusive interview to a private television channel in India, Lapid spoke at length about the controversy over his comments on 'The Kashmir Files'.

When told that his comment has erupted into a huge controversy and that the Israeli Ambassador had to apologise for what he said, Lapid said he is nobody's property. He also said politicians have a way of making profit out of controversies. Lapid said, "I accept the fact that The Kashmir Files is a brilliant movie. I was my duty to say what I saw."

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AAP may not even open account in Gujarat: Shah

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has downplayed AAP's challenge in Gujarat polls, claiming Arvind Kejriwal's party may not even open its account, and said the BJP State unit's announcement on setting up anti-radicalisation cell is a good initiative that can be considered by other States and the Centre.

In an interview to PTI, Shah described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity, all-round development of Gujarat during his tenure as the Chief Minister and the implementation of zero appeasement policy as the main reasons for people repeatedly reposing faith in the BJP over the last 27 years.

"The BJP will register an unprecedented victory in Gujarat. People have full faith in our party and our leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said Shah, who has been crisscrossing the State and addressing five rallies a day in the run-up to the two-phase polls on December 1



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his election campaign roadshow ahead of the Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad.

PTI

and 5. On the question of AAP entering Gujarat Assembly elections, the BJP leader said, "Every party has a right to contest elections, but it is up to people whether they accept the party or not. AAP is nowhere in the mind of the people of Gujarat. Wait for election results, maybe AAP's name would not figure in the list of successful candidates."

While the Congress has been the BJP's principal rival in Gujarat, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led APP has

undertaken an aggressive campaign in Modi's home State.

On the Congress, Shah said, "It is still the main Opposition party, but the party is going through a crisis, and its impact is visible in Gujarat as well."

Asked about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, Shah said sustained efforts are a must in politics. "I have always been of the view that politicians need to be hard working and it is good when someone works hard," he said.

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China warns US not to interfere in ties with India

Beijing wants to stop border tensions from causing India to partner with US: Pentagon report

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI / WASHINGTON

With tension still persisting at the border in Ladakh, China has warned the US and asked it to refrain from interfering in its ties with India. It sought to pre-empt India from partnering more closely with the US in view of the border tensions. Underlining this point in its latest report on Chinese military build-up, Pentagon has said that throughout the face-offs, Chinese officials sought to downplay the severity of the crisis, emphasising Beijing's intent to preserve border stability and prevent the

stand-off from harming other areas of its bilateral relationship with India. The report was presented to the Congress late on Tuesday.

"The PRC (People's Republic of China) seeks to prevent border tensions from causing India to partner more closely with the United States. PRC officials warned US officials to not interfere with the PRC's relationship with India," the report said.

"In a section on the China-India border, throughout 2021, the PLA sustained the deployment of forces and continued infrastructure build-up along the LAC," the Pentagon said. Negotiation made 'minimal progress' as both sides resisted losing perceived advantages on the border, it said.

The eastern Ladakh border face-off erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. "Each country demanded the withdrawal of the other's forces and a return to pre-standoff conditions, but neither China nor India agreed on those con-

ditions," the Pentagon report said. "The PRC blamed the stand-off on Indian infrastructure construction, which it perceived as encroaching on PRC territory, while India accused China of launching aggressive incursions into India's territory," it added.

Since the 2020 clash, the PLA has maintained a continuous force presence and continued infrastructure build-up along the LAC. The 2020 Galwan Valley incident was the deadliest clash between the two nations in the past 46 years, the report said.

On June 15, 2020, patrols violently clashed in Galwan Valley resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and four PLA soldiers, according to the PRC officials, it said.

China has previously criticised the US for commenting on its border dispute with India. In June this year, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian termed the critical remarks by a top US General on its infrastructure build-up at the China-India border as a "despi-

cable act" and criticised the attempts of some American officials to "add fuel to the fire", emphasising that Beijing and New Delhi have the "will and capability" to properly resolve their differences through talks.

Responding to US Army's Pacific Commanding General Charles A Flynn who termed the situation in eastern Ladakh as "alarming", spokesman Zhao had said, "The China-India boundary question is a matter between the two countries. Both sides have the will and capability of resolving the question through dialogue and consultation." Contd on Page 9

China objects to Indo-US exercise

Beijing: China on Wednesday said it opposed the joint Indo-US military exercises being held near the Line of Actual Control asserting that it violates the spirit of the two border agreements signed between New Delhi and Beijing.

Bilkis Bano moves SC against remission to rape convicts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bilkis Bano, who was gang-raped and seven members of her family slaughtered during the 2002 Gujarat riots, on Wednesday filed a plea before the Supreme Court challenging the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the case by the State Government. The top court said it will consider listing the matter for hearing.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha took note of the submissions of lawyer Shobha Gupta that the victim herself has challenged the grant of remission and release of the convicts.

"The review has to be heard first. Let it come before Justice Rastogi," the CJI said. When the counsel for Bano asked for the matter to be heard in open court, the Bench said, "Only the court concerned can decide that."

The CJI said he would take a call on the issue in the evening.

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CAPSULE

CHINA'S EX-PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN DEAD

Beijing: Jiang Zemin, China's first head of state to have visited India in 1996 and heralded a new era of constructive cooperation between the two countries passed away on Wednesday due to leukemia and multiple organ failure in Shanghai at the age of 96.

TERROR GROUP ISIS SAYS LEADER QURASHI KILLED

Beirut: The Islamic State jihadist group said Wednesday that its leader Abu Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi has been killed in battle and announced a replacement. A spokesman said Hashimi, an Iraqi, was killed "in combat with enemies of God", without elaborating on the date of death.

India's GDP growth fell to 6.3% in July-Sept quarter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's economic growth slowed down to 6.3 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal, dragged down mainly by the poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors, official data showed on Wednesday.

However, India remained the fastest-growing major economy as China registered an economic growth of 3.9 per cent in July-September 2022.

The Indian economy grew by 8.4 per cent in July-September, 2021-22, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office

(NSO). The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 13.5 per cent in the April-June quarter this fiscal.

The second quarter GDP growth is almost at par with the RBI's projection of 6.1 per cent to 6.3 per cent released earlier this month in one of the articles published in its bulletin.

"Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q2 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 38.17 lakh crore, as against Rs 35.89 lakh crore in Q2 2021-22, showing a growth of 6.3 per cent as compared to 8.4 per cent in Q2 2021-22," the NSO statement said.

The real GDP in absolute terms stood at Rs 33.10 lakh crore in the July-September quarter of 2020. It had contracted by 6.6 per cent in the second quarter of 2020-21 on account of the staggering impact of lockdown restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus.

As per the data, Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by 5.6 per cent to Rs 35.05 lakh crore in July-September this year.

The GVA growth in the farm sector is 4.6 per cent in the second quarter compared to 3.2 per cent a year ago.

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Rainbow items allowed at stadiums: FIFA

AP ■ DOHA

One day after Iran and Wales were eliminated at the World Cup, FIFA finally gave a public assurance on Wednesday that rainbow items and banners supporting protests in Iran will be allowed into stadiums. Stadium security staff organized by Qatari authorities had seized items with rainbow colours and slogans such as "Women. Life. Freedom" to stop them from getting inside stadiums.

In the first week of the tournament, seven European teams including Wales lost the fight to wear multi-colored "One Love" armbands during World Cup matches and some fans complained they weren't allowed to bring items with

rainbow colours, a symbol of LGBTQ rights, into the stadiums of the conservative Islamic emirate. The match between Iran and the United States on Tuesday was charged with emotion among Iranian fans, some of whom had come to Qatar not only to support their team, but the protest movement back home with banners and flags.

"FIFA is aware of some incidents where permitted items were not allowed to be displayed at stadiums," soccer's world body said in a statement on Wednesday, more than a week after some incidents were reported at World Cup stadiums. "FIFA has received assurances by authorities that venue commanders have been contacted in relation to the agreed



England and Wales players took a knee before their final World Cup group game to show solidarity with the fight against discrimination of all kind.

rules and regulations for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022." FIFA's assurances that have seemed to be overridden by Qatari authorities.

Wales and Iran will not

play any more games at the World Cup after results late Tuesday sent England and the United States from their Group B into the knockout rounds.

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Timely training, rescue & awareness to minimise damage during disasters: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Timely training of personnel, rescue measures and awareness programmes implemented and conducted with right intent, dedication and concerted efforts can bring down the impact of damage caused by disasters to the least, said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday.

Addressing the two-day 3rd Regional Conference on Disaster Management, organised under the aegis of National Disaster Management Authority, Yogi Adityanath said, "Strict vigilance and prior awareness are essential to control the impact of disasters. Timely training of personnel and rescue measures implemented and conducted with right intent only can bring down the impact of damage caused by disasters."

Emphasising the inclusion of disaster management and road safety in school curriculum, the chief minister said that if people knew what precautions they should take during floods, earthquakes, lightning, and fire mishaps, the loss of lives and property can be prevented.

On the occasion, Yogi also called for implementing an 'Early Warning System' to control deaths due to lightning strikes, particularly in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra districts. While appreciating the role of Aapda Mitras in the prevention of disasters, the chief minister also



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurating the 3rd Regional Conference on Disaster Management in Lucknow on Wednesday

Pioneer

stressed on involving gram panchayats in this work and increasing the number of Aapda Mitras.

A 'flood atlas' developed by National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad was also unveiled by the chief minister on the occasion.

In the inaugural session of the two-day conference, referring to the three types of calamities (adi daivik, adi bhautik and adi dahik) mentioned in Bhartiya Manisha, the chief minister also discussed the efforts being made by the state government in relation to all three.

Referring to the special

geographical conditions of Uttar Pradesh, the chief minister also apprised everyone about the ongoing efforts for a permanent solution to curb floods, which have been causing huge loss of life and property in the state every year. The chief minister said that till a few years ago, 38 districts of UP were affected by floods every year and today their number had been reduced to only four districts.

Sharing the efforts behind this success, the chief minister said that when the government was formed in 2017, he received a file of Rs 100 crore related to Elgin Bridge regard-

ing flood protection. Such a huge amount was spent at one place every year. In such a situation, he himself inspected the site and decided to channelise the river by dredging it. As a result, Bahraich, Gonda and Barabanki were saved from floods, and instead of spending Rs100 crore, only Rs 5 crore was spent.

Expressing the need to stop road accidents, the chief minister said, "Nearly 30,000 people die due to road accidents.

This needs to stop. Awareness must be raised."

Extending best wishes for the two-day regional confer-

ence, the chief minister said that there were nine such states of North India which were frequently affected by disasters and to minimise these, this two-day event organised in UP, a state with the largest population of the country, would prove to be very important. Representatives of the states of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Chandigarh and Madhya Pradesh, representatives of various agencies related to disaster management and subject experts also participated in the conference organised at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan here.

Woman attempts suicide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Depressed by the death of her son, a woman attempted to commit suicide by setting herself on fire at her house in Hasanganj on Tuesday.

The woman, identified as Kaushalya of Daliganj, was admitted to the Trauma Centre of KGMU and is undergoing treatment.

Reports said some of her neighbours spotted her engulfed in flames and doused the fire to save her. They later rushed to the hospital.

A police spokesman said the woman's elder son had died recently and she was under depression.

REVELRY FIRING

A viral video showed a youth firing in the air during a wedding reception in Jankipuram in the night on November 28. The video came to the notice on Tuesday evening but the police could collect its details only on Wednesday.

A police spokesman said the youth seen in the video was a resident of Chinhat and he had been identified. "The video is of a reception party organised at the house of one Shivam in Rasoolpur village on the night of November 28," he said. He said the police were

searching for the weapon used in the firing.

CASE REGISTERED

The Hussainganj police registered a case against Sub-Inspector Tej Kumar Shukla and three constables for fracturing the leg of a local youth during interrogation. The case was registered on the order of court on Tuesday.

ADCP (Central) Rajesh Srivastava confirmed the registration of the case and said the police would investigate the allegation.

It was alleged that the SI and the constables rounded up the youth, Shani Singh of Naka Hindola, in the night on March 16, 2022 on charges of indulging in a brawl near a model shop. The victim alleged that he was innocent and was opposing three youths who attempted to snatch his wallet on the fateful day.

"A constable reached the scene and he took the side of the wallet snatchers. I was brought to the Chitwapur police outpost where I was thrashed and my mobile phone and my wallet containing Rs 4,200 was snatched from me," he alleged.

The youth further alleged that he suffered a fracture in his leg and submitted an X-ray report in the court. He also

alleged that the SI threatened him with dire consequences for lodging a complaint against him and asked him to take back the case.

BEATEN

Some workers of Bharatiya Kisan Union were beaten up by a gram pradhan, his sons and panchayat secretary. A case was registered in this connection.

In their complaint, the victims said they were beaten up for complaining about the dysfunctional hand pumps in their village. They said they filed the complaint at the CM Helpline and the panchayat secretary disposed of the case without getting the hand pumps repaired. "Following this we complained to the CDO during the Samadhan Diwas and the officials concerned were punished for laxity. On November 26, panchayat secretary Sandeep Yadav along with ADO panchayat Kausal reached the village and made unbecoming comments. Gram pradhan Ram Khelwan and his sons Umesh and Akhilesh also reached the spot and they beat BKU worker Siamam. I was making a video of their act when the attackers caught me and attempted to choke my throat with gamcha," another BKU worker Mahesh said.

Liquor sellers demand hike in margin money

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Liquor Sellers Welfare Association (LDWA) has demanded a hike in the margin money the liquor sellers are presently getting to make up for their losses and renewal of their licences.

A delegation of the association met the excise commissioner and handed him a memorandum of their six-point demands.

Media incharge of the association, Devesh Jaiswal, said the demand to increase the margin money was the need of the hour.

"In the last 10 years, quota and licence fees have nearly doubled but the margin on IMFL has decreased from 18 per cent to 11 per cent and from 14 per cent to 8 per cent on the sale of desi liquor.

On the other hand, the expenses on running a shop (rent, salary of salesmen, cost of contract deed, installation of CCTV cameras, LMC fees increased by 500 per cent, food licence, freight charges, damage of goods and other counts) have increased nearly threefold," he pointed out.

Jaiswal said liquor sellers were facing a lot of hardship in running their business and were

also facing losses in the business due to increased expense on running the shops.

The LSWA leader demanded management of the shops on the basis of renewal policy. "A licensee invests a huge sum of money in running a shop and it is practically difficult for him or her to reach a breakeven point in a financial year.

Besides, the liquor sellers suffered huge losses for two years during the novel coronavirus times. So the government should increase the margin money and allow renewal of shops," he said.

He said the Excise department should allot a high standard scanner as the point of sale (PoS) machines were not working properly.

Jaiswal said the department should not increase the MRP of low brand desi, IMFL and beer because the revenue earning was high on such brands.

The delegation also demanded an increase in shop opening time to 11 pm from 10 pm to prevent illegal sale of liquor and to provide adequate quantities of highly popular brands of desi liquors and beers on CL-2 and FL-2 grade shops.

Youth held in Budaun for insulting national flag

Lucknow (PNS): A youth was arrested for allegedly insulting the national flag and cleaning his face with it in Budaun district, police said on Wednesday.

A purported video of the act had earlier surfaced on social media and caught local people's eye and they reported the matter to the police.

Shahrulk, a resident of Dhel village in Zarif Nagar, was booked for insulting the national flag and sent to jail, Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Siddharth Verma said.

In the video, Shahrulk is allegedly seen cleaning his face with the national flag and then trampling the flag

under his foot.

Meanwhile, in yet another major crackdown, nine people were arrested by police in Azamgarh for allegedly trying to illegally convert Hindus to Christianity under the garb of exorcism.

The nine accused were arrested from Azamgarh's Sarameer neighbourhood.

Police said that they got a tip-off from a Bajrang Dal member and raided a house in the Ambedkar Nagar colony. Upon searching the house, police found religious books inside the house and detained around a dozen people.

Later, among the 12 detained peo-

ple, nine were arrested by police.

The police also said that the nine arrested accused had been booked for carrying out illegal conversions.

It may be mentioned that on Monday, the Supreme Court observed that there cannot be any forced religious conversions. Justice Shah was hearing an affidavit filed by the Centre regarding legislation against forced religious conversion.

However, due to paucity of time, the hearing could not be completed and it has been adjourned to December 5. Advocate Sanjay Hegde opposed the public interest litigation (PIL) and said that the petitioner had a political face.

Advocate Hegde said, "He had earlier filed the same petition in the Delhi High Court and both times it was withdrawn. This is a political interest litigation."

To this, Justice Shah replied and asked, "Do you mean to say that we must allow forced conversion?"

Following this Justice Shah observed that there cannot be any forced religious conversion. The Centre told the Supreme Court on Monday that the legislation against forced religious conversion was necessary to protect vulnerable sections of society, including socially and economically backward classes.

BJP making inroads in Mainpuri

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The by-elections in Uttar Pradesh after the March 2022 state assembly polls have given a fresh opportunity to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to not only expand its outreach among the Other Backward Classes but also the Muslims, particularly the Pasmanda or backward caste Muslims.

The BJP is aggressively pursuing the caste outreach in the Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency and has spared no effort in honouring Mulayam Singh Yadav after his death. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing an election meeting at Karhal recently, recalled the blessing of Mulayam Singh Yadav to the BJP.

The BJP, since the 2014 Lok Sabha election, has aggressively pursued the outreach programme to woo the non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits castes in the state. The outreach programme has paid rich dividends to the BJP, enabling it to win the 2017 UP assembly election and grab 65 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls despite Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal joining hands to take on the BJP.

Despite non-Yadav OBC leaders like Swami Prasad Maurya and a few others abandoning the party ahead of this year's UP assembly election, the BJP retained its support base among the Scheduled Castes and OBCs.

Samajwadi Party, rattled by the BJP's attempt to make inroads in

Mainpuri by invoking the memories of Mulayam Singh Yadav, is focusing its campaign almost entirely on the persona of Mulayam Singh Yadav. SP president Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple Yadav, the candidate from Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat, are telling the voters of Mainpuri to pick the SP on December 5 as "a real tribute to Netaji".

"Yeh samvedna ka chunav hai (this is a sympathy election)," said a local SP leader.

Dimple Yadav almost daily starts her campaign from OBC dominated villages in the five assembly segments which constitute the Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency.

Akhilesh was elected as MLA from Karhal in the March 2022 UP assembly election. Shakyas are the second-largest group among the OBCs in the Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency after the Yadavs, and the BJP has fielded Raghuraj Singh Shakyas against Dimple Yadav.

SP supporters welcome Dimple with slogans of "Dimple bhabhi zindabad", "Akhilesh bhaiya zindabad" and "Netaji amar rahen". Women and workers greet her on the stage with flowers, as youths touch her feet.

During the campaign, Dimple starts addressing the crowd in villages without losing time. In her short speeches she mentions "Netaji" over a dozen times. She reminds the voters that "this is the first election when 'Netaji is not with us'...., Netaji always followed ideals and principles, Netaji touched your life and you all held him in high

regard...., I am the daughter-in-law of Netaji but I am also a sister and daughter to all of you... I am sure you will honour Netaji on December 5."

In her attack on the BJP government, she focuses on lack of jobs and says that Netaji and SP governments had brought development to Mainpuri.

Calling Mainpuri a "samajwadi garh (SP bastion)", Dimple repeats that every "samajwadi garh" can be assured of development. Dubbing the new Agniveer scheme for army recruitments "painful", she says past SP governments, in contrast, had ensured laptops for youths.

Dimple Yadav is telling the voters that the Mainpuri bypoll result will give "a direction to the country". Dimple has also issued a written appeal to the voters of Mainpuri, which is being distributed across the constituency in the form of pamphlets. These say Dimple will follow in the footsteps of Netaji and is committed to fulfilling his dreams of development in Mainpuri.

If Mulayam Singh Yadav is a constant presence in the SP campaign, as is Akhilesh, one notable absentee at Dimple's meetings, in slogans and material, is Shivalp Singh Yadav. Mulayam's brother, who recently buried the hatchet with Akhilesh, has for now announced his support to Dimple.

However, to put an end to uncertainties on his role, Shivalp Yadav on Wednesday campaigned along with Akhilesh Yadav and addressed several meetings.

LDA Manchitra Samadhan Diwas on first Thursdays

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) Vice Chairman Dr Indramani Tripathi said on Wednesday that 'Manchitra Samadhan Diwas' would be held on the first Thursday of each month starting from November 1, The Manchitra Samadhan Diwas will be held from 10:30 am to 2 pm in the main hall of LDA head office in Gomti Nagar. The LDA vice chairman will preside over it. All senior officials and engineers of LDA will also be present in the Manchitra Samadhan Diwas so that the problem regarding blueprints and layout maps are resolved on the spot. LDA secretary Pawan Gangwar said the people should file their complaints or grievances on the development authority's online building approval

system. Meanwhile, the anti-encroachment squad of LDA sealed several semi-finished structures in Gomti Nagar Extension. The in-charge of Zone 1, Arun Kumar Singh supervised the exercise. The squad had to retreat when they went to Vinay Khand to pull down some portions of a residential place which was not in the original blueprint. They were stopped by the group of guards from entering the house.

The anti-encroachment squad reached Vijay Khand at 11 am and sealed a residential accommodation under construction. The squad also sealed a semi-finished structure at Vishwas Khand as the basement was not part of the original blueprint.

Youth held for selling Paytm wallet-activated SIMs

Lucknow (PNS): A Thakurganj resident was arrested for selling Paytm wallet-activated SIM cards to cyber thugs of Jamtara, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Veerbhumi by a cyber crime police station team on Tuesday.

The accused was identified as Arbaz Khan of Campwell Road locality in Thakurganj. The arrest came in connection with a case of cyber fraud in which the miscreants had used Paytm wallet-activated SIM card using fake KYC and duped head constable Ajay Pratap Singh of over Rs 1.58 lakh.

During investigation it came to light that the gang had used SIMs issued from the shops in Lakhimpur and Sitapur districts.

The team investigating the case found that the miscreants had used mobile phone numbers on which Paytm-wallets were inactive and they had reactivated the Paytm wallets by filling the KYC forms and after getting the money transferred to the Paytm wallet opted for ATM cards which they received at different addresses in West Bengal and withdrew the money.

Explaining the modus operandi, the police said the accused used to procure the data of a telecommunication company using Smart Connect App and then they used to check the mobile numbers on which Paytm wallet was activated and reactivated the Paytm wallet. After transferring the money in these wallets to banks they used to get ATM issued and sold these ATMs to cyber thugs in West Bengal and other states.

The police recovered two mobile phones from the accused who are being interrogated.

THRASHED

A group of youths thrashed a worker who repaired punctures in tyres and tubes of motorcycles in Aliganj police station area in the evening on Monday.

Reports said the victim, Wakil Ahmad of Madeyganj, who repaired the tyre puncture of the motorcycle of one Ali around 7 pm on Monday, was thrashed when he demanded the charges. "Ali lost cool when I asked him to pay the charges. He called his

friends and all of them attacked me. During the brawl I lost Rs 16,000 which I had in my pocket," Wakil said.

CASE REGISTERED

A woman, Rita Giri of Hazratganj, lodged a report of forgery and threats against a staff member of a showroom located in Ghazipur police station area and selling two-wheelers and an insurance agent. In her complaint, she said her scooter was damaged after a speeding SUV hit it in June 2022 and she approached the two-wheeler showroom to get it repaired as the showroom had sold her an insurance policy. She alleged that an official of the showroom demanded Rs 17,582 for the repair and refused to hand her back her scooter until the payment was cleared. The woman said she argued that the showroom should realise the payment from the insurance company as she had paid the premium of the insurance.

As the police did not register a case, the woman moved the court which ordered the police to register a case.

DEFAUDED

A miscreant and his aide duped several jobseekers of several lakh of rupees in the name of facilitating job in Railways. One of the victims, Bal Govind of Kanpur, met the prime accused Sanjay Kumar Verma of Sector E LDA Colony in Krishna Nagar through their common acquaintance Ram Prakash of Uttarakhnad at a hotel in Naka and gave Rs 2 lakh for getting a job in the Railways.

"Like me there are several jobseekers who paid Rs 2 lakh to Sanjay for jobs in the Railways. We were taken to Asansol in West Bengal and later sent for the medical test in Durgapur. We were lodged in a hotel for 10 days and were promised to be given the appointment letter soon. Later the gang asked us to meet them outside Rail Bhawan in New Delhi and the appointment letters given by them turned out to be fake.

When Sanjay and his accomplices failed to fulfill their promise of a job in Railways, we demanded our money and were threatened," he said. Police registered a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

COURT NOTICE CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT) (Chapter XXX, Rule-21) IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 101 OF 2022 IN THE MATTER OF THE GOODS OF Late Raghubeer Singh Yadav S/o Kedar Nath Yadav R/o Village Rajapur Chaubara Post Mukundpur Soran District AllahabadDeceased. Smt. Lalita Devi W/o Late Raghubeer Singh YadavPetitioner. WHEREAS an application has been made by Smt. Lalita Devi W/o Late Raghubeer Singh Yadav R/o Village Rajapur Chaubara Post Mukundpur Soran District Allahabad, for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Raghubeer Singh Yadav Deceased, Who died at 67, Jhawani Ka Pura, Rajpur Chaubara, Hoshangabad, Prayagraj, on 24.11.2019 AND WHEREAS, the 10th day of January, 2023 has been fixed for hearing of the said application, THIS CITATION is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest come and see the proceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration). Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 16 th day of November, 2022. DEPUTY REGISTRAR HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD Balbir Yadav Advocate Counsel for the Petitioner.
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COURT NOTICE CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT) (Chapter XXX, Rule-21) IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 98 OF 2022 IN THE MATTER OF THE GOODS OF Late Pradeep Kumar Tiwari Son of Late Ram Chhabila Tiwari Resident of Village-55 A Chak Mundera, Begum Sarai, Gayaadindpur, Uttar, Allahabad District- Allahabad (Now Prayagraj).....Deceased. Akanksha Tiwari.....Petitioner. WHEREAS an application has been made by Akanksha Tiwari Daughter of Late Pradeep Kumar Tiwari Resident of Village- 55 A Chak Mundera, Begum Sarai, Gayaadindpur, Uttar, Allahabad District- Allahabad (Now Prayagraj), for the probate (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Pradeep Kumar Tiwari Deceased, Who died at Heartlite Cardiac Care Hospital, Prayagraj, on 12.01.2021 AND WHEREAS, the 10th day of January, 2023 has been fixed for hearing of the said application, THIS CITATION is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the proceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration). Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 21 st day of November, 2022. DEPUTY REGISTRAR HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD Shri Uday Bhan Mishra, Advocate Counsel for the Petitioner.

CM: Criminals, those patronising them biggest hurdles in way of investment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Reiterating his stance of zero tolerance towards crime and mafia elements, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said that criminals and those who 'patronise' them were the biggest hurdles in the way of investment in the state.

"Rule of law under Bharatiya Janata Party has transformed Uttar Pradesh into an investment-friendly destination," he added.

Addressing the foundation day ceremony of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA) in Gorakhpur, the chief minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 133 investment projects worth Rs 504 crore, launched about 49 development works worth Rs 260 crore and presented land allotment certificates to 24 investors of investment projects worth Rs 1,200 crore.

Addressing the entrepreneurs and the public on the occasion, the chief minister said that earlier no one wanted to visit Uttar Pradesh.

"UP was all about hooliganism, anarchy, chaos and criminalisation of politics, however, today, the state has the safest atmosphere. The government not only curbed crime but also has developed an environment free from corruption for the investors. Over 340 services are available to investors on Nivesh Mitra portal," he said.

Yogi said, "The government has identified 25 sectors for investors. Incentives related to these sectors will also continue to be received by the investors through the portal. Uttar Pradesh ranks second in the country in Ease of Doing Business and a campaign has been started to bring it to number one."

Yogi Adityanath also called upon the investors of Gorakhpur to participate in the Global Investors' Summit to be held from February 10 to 12, 2023. "Entrepreneurs here can gener-

ate employment opportunities by starting schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, medical colleges, engineering colleges, hotels, restaurants. The government will extend every support," he said.

The chief minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a vision to make the country's economy 5-trillion dollars in the next five years. "UP holds immense possibilities in the readymade garment sector here and women could also earn Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per month.

The chief minister said that efforts should be made for export promotion. "If readymade garments are encouraged, the products here will spread from South East Asia to Europe. Due to this, lakhs of youth and women will also get employment," he said.

Highlighting the development of Gorakhpur, Yogi said, "Post 2017, Gorakhpur has vastly improved. New paradigms of development are being created daily in Gorakhpur and eastern Uttar Pradesh. In place of the closed fertiliser factory, the new factory is producing fertiliser at the rate of 105 per cent. A new mill has started in place of the closed sugar mill in Pipraich. Due to the strong road connectivity, the distance from Gorakhpur to Lucknow can be completed in three and a half hours and to Varanasi in two and a half hours. Due to excellent air connectivity, Gorakhpur has 14 flights connecting to major cities."

Along with this, he told the entrepreneurs that if the problems were not resolved even in these meetings, they should not hesitate to write letters or reach out to the government.

Congratulating all the people present, the chief minister said that the development journey of GIDA in the last five years had been wonderful.

On this occasion, he said that the land bank of GIDA should be increased for more progress. "Better connectivity should be given by expanding till Dhuriyapur," he said.

From the point of view of investors, Yogi said that skill development centres should also be set up as per the requirement of the industries. "For Skill Development Centre, GIDA should make efforts on its own and together with the entrepreneurs," he said.

Yogi said that in today's era, designing and packaging of any product was also very important as without good designing and packaging, the product does not get the expected importance. He directed GIDA to prepare for opening a packaging institute.

The chief minister said that the double-engine government was making women self-reliant by connecting them with self-help groups.

Referring to the flatted factory being set up in GIDA, the chief minister said that this factory with 80 units could become a major basis for the self-reliance of women. He said there were immense possibilities in the readymade garment sector here and women could also earn Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per month.

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The chief minister said that the new area of industrial development would be from GIDA to Dhuriyapur. "For this, the work of Gorakhpur Link Expressway is being carried forward rapidly. Lakhs of jobs will be created after its completion and industrial development will get a new shape," he added.

On this occasion, the chief minister pointed out that the amount of investment that had been made in GIDA in the last five years was more than that made in the previous 27 years.

'Development shaping Meerut's new identity'



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said that Meerut was advancing in the race for development at a new rate, and that the city would soon be known for its first sports university, state-of-the-art development, and skill development.

While inaugurating/laying the foundation stones of 376 development projects worth Rs 517 crore and addressing a Prabuddhjan Sammelan, Yogi said, "Meerut and its surrounding areas are getting the world's latest facilities."

He said Meerut's sports items marked under the One District One Product scheme were becoming the identity of Meerut."

The chief minister also gave keys of houses and cheques to the beneficiaries of various government schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said that Meerut had a mythological identity of its own. "India's history was created in Hastinapur of Meerut 5,000 years ago. Here, the handicraftsmen and artists

have transformed Meerut into a sports city. All sporting goods are produced in Meerut," he said.

The chief minister said that keeping these qualities of Meerut in mind, the double-engine government was working tirelessly for the development of Meerut and western Uttar Pradesh.

Highlighting the development of Meerut, the chief minister said that the 12-lane expressway had reduced the time to travel between Delhi and Meerut. He pointed out that the trip from Meerut to Delhi used to take three to four hours, but it could now be made in 45 minutes.

"Similar efforts are being made to shorten the distances between Meerut and Baghpat and Meerut and Bulandshahr. Given that the Ganga Expressway, which will cover the distance from Meerut to Lucknow in just 4.5 hours, is being developed, the distance to the state capital would also decrease the distance to Delhi," he said.

The country's first rapid rail was also being built between Delhi-Meerut, the chief minister said, and added, "I am congratulating Meerut in advance for this. If you choose good

people, good results will come. When good governments come, development also comes along with them."

Chief Minister Yogi further said that after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over the reins of the country in 2014, terrorism and Naxalism had completely ended in the country. "It is because of the double-engine government in Uttar Pradesh that the law and order situation in the state is providing a better security environment. The state has become riot free, curfew free, while respecting faith and guaranteeing security to every citizen," he added.

"Earlier mafias, goons and criminals used to stop girls from going to school. The traders and entrepreneurs had to pay goonda tax. Nobody wanted to invest. The situation has changed as our government is providing security to women and businessmen in the state," Yogi pointed out.

He remarked: "The mafia is wandering the streets with placards hanging around their necks pleading for their lives."

Yogi said that Meerut was developing as a smart city and the govern-

ment was connecting ITMS with Safe City in Smart City. "Whether it is the sisters and daughters, a businessman, or a regular person, if someone dares to compromise their security, the police will punish them. We are developing ITMS as Integrated Command and Control in Smart City," the chief minister said.

Yogi said that a favourable investment environment had been created in the state. He said Uttar Pradesh had the potential to become the growth engine of the country's economy and keeping this potential in mind, as per the vision of Prime Minister Modi, to make Uttar Pradesh's economy a 1-trillion dollar economy, massive investment needed to be attracted. He appealed to the intellectuals to contribute in achieving the goal of the government.

Union Minister Dr Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, UP's Minister of State for Jal Shakti Dinesh Khatic, Minister of State for Energy and Alternative Energy Dr Somendra Tomar, MP Rajendra Agarwal, Dr Satyapal Singh, Dr Laxmikant Bajpai and Vijaypal Singh participated in the programme.

Muzaffarnagar safe and peaceful because of BJP govt in state: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Wednesday that Muzaffarnagar was safe and peaceful today only because of the presence of the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttar Pradesh, and warned people against Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal combine's conspiracy to create a "Taliban rule" in the state.

"Farmers could not go to their lands as their tubewell connections were disconnected, machines were

stolen and their throats slit. Besides, girls could not go to school and women to markets because of safety issues. And people were forced to flee Kairana and Kandala during SP and RLD rule. People can never forget the cruelty meted out to Sachin and Gaurav during SP's rule", Yogi remarked.

Urging people not to allow professional criminals of SP to enter the realms of power and to vote for the BJP in much larger numbers, while campaigning for BJP candidate Rajkumari Saini, wife of former BJP

MLA Vikram Saini, Yogi said that the "Kawal ka bawal" was a curse of SP, adding that strictness was necessary to restore rule of law in UP and that was what his government did after taking over - 'dealing with such elements in the language they understood the best'.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that strangely RLD that stood for farmers' interest and never supported criminals during late Chaudhary Charan Singh's time also became SP's partner in crime later on, serving as "daal mein tadka"

even though farmers never received a fair deal during the SP government.

The chief minister added: "Vikram Singh Saini lost his membership not because of some family issue but because of trying to protect Muzaffarnagar's dignity and self-respect. It was a politically motivated and fabricated case."

Yogi pointed out that the double-engine government of the BJP in UP was following the mantra of 'Sabka Saath aur Sabka Vikas' to benefit the entire population, irre-

spective of caste or creed, with the development taking place and was extending the benefits of government welfare schemes to everyone without discriminating against, or appealing anyone.

"We provided the benefits of Prime Minister Awas Yojana and Chief Minister Awas Yojana to every poor, toilets to every needy, in addition to electricity connections under Saubhagya Yojana and gas cylinders under Ujjwala Yojana to crores of deserving people. We are also providing an annual pension of

Rs 12,000 to the elderly, to destitute women and widows and the differently-abled", he added.

Yogi said: "It's a land of religion and sends the message of peace. But when religion is in crisis, it has revolted also.

Kanwar yatra, which could not take place during SP rule, was being taken out with much fanfare now and would be even grander once Gang Nahar is allowed to be built by the Forest department. Khalauli also boasts of having the biggest sugar mill today."

"Ram temple is being built in Ayodhya while Kashi and Mathura have been renovated and beautified. Mahendra Pratap Singh University is being built in Aligarh whereas Dhyanchand Sports University is also being constructed," he added.

Meanwhile, Yogi Adityanath thanked independent candidates Ravindra and Pradeep Thakur as well as Chaudhary Yashveer Singh, Abhishek Chaudhary, Bhopal Singh Gurjar for announcing their support for the BJP candidate.

Half a dozen passengers die in mishap in Bahraich

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Half a dozen people were killed and 15 others were injured when a UP Roadways bus was hit by a truck on Lucknow-Bahraich highway on the Jarwal road, police said on Wednesday.

The accident took place at about 4:30 am when a speeding truck broadsided a Lucknow depot bus, District Magistrate Dinesh Chandra Singh said.

Six people died on the spot and 15 others who were injured were rushed to hospital, where the condition of four was said to be critical.

The bus was going from Lucknow to Rupaidiha, while the truck was on its way from Bahraich to Lucknow, the district magistrate said.

The truck driver managed to flee with the vehicle. Police are searching for the absconding driver with the help of CCTV footage from nearby areas.

As soon as the information about the incident was received, the police reached the spot and admitted all the injured to the hospital, where their treatment is going on. Those killed in the mishap include 27-year-old Ajit Vishwas of Ur village in Bardhaman district of West Bengal, 21-year-old Vipin Shukla of Dokri in Bondi police station area, Mohit Kumar (35) of Visheshwarganj. Efforts are on to identify the other dead.

Among the injured, 32-year-old Durga from Nepal, 25-year-old Kanhaiya Lal from Shravasti, 40-year-old Dhaniram from Nepal, 48-year-old Prem from Nepal and 26-year-old Om Prakash from Bahraich have been referred to district hospital. The others injured included Shiva, Vishal, Shakuntala of Bahraich, Abrar, Chhepali, Ram Prakash, all of Sitapur, Karishma of Kanpur Dehat, Sandeep Kumar of Etawah.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the road accident in Bahraich.

SIX CHARRED

As many as six members of a family, including three children, were killed and three suffered burn injuries on Tuesday night after a fire gutted a building in Firozabad district.

According to police, the deceased Raman Kumar, an electronics and jewellery shop owner, used to live in the building that caught fire along with nine members of his family.

Prima facie the cause of the fire that broke out in the building in Padham town of Jasrana area of Firozabad district is believed to be an electric short-circuit. "Around 18 fire tenders of Agra, Etah, Mainpuri and Firozabad and police personnel of 12 stations were immediately pressed into the service after receiving an intimation of the fire, Ashish Tiwari, Superintendent of Police in Firozabad

said. The injured were rushed to hospital and are undergoing treatment.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the loss of lives and directed officials to provide immediate assistance of Rs 2 lakh to the kin of the deceased. According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), praying for peace to the departed souls, the Chief Minister expressed his condolences to the bereaved families.

ROAD MISHAP

In another accident reported from Hardoi, a girl along with two brothers were killed and four people were injured when a luxury car went out of control and overturned in a ditch at Mastipur on Shahjahanpur road. They were returning home after a tilak ceremony.

Reports said that Himmat of Pindari village of Sandi along with his brother Patte, nephew Ashok, his daughter Neha, Himanshu, Ramdevi,

Dinesh and some others had gone by car to village Behtadheera of Behtagokul on Tuesday evening to offer tilak. While returning home, the car overturned in a ditch near village Mastipur on Hardoi-Shahjahanpur road.

There were nine people, including driver Raju, in the car and all were injured. The police rushed the injured to the district hospital where the doctor pronounced Himmat, Patte and Neha dead.

In Sultanpur, a woman was killed and her husband, a regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party, was injured when an unidentified vehicle hit them in Dhanpatganj area, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place on Tuesday when BJP leader Ramjash Yadav (62) and his wife Savitri (60) were waiting for a passenger vehicle and were hit by an unidentified vehicle.

UP govt asks banks to enhance credit flow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the objective of boosting the inflow of credit in the state's economy, the Uttar Pradesh government is working with the public sector undertaking banks to enhance the credit flow and increase the credit-deposit (CD) ratio in the state.

The increase in credit flow will enable the government to achieve the target of a 1-trillion dollar economy by 2027.

The overall CD ratio in Uttar Pradesh is about 52 per cent, the average CD ratio stands at 40 per cent in comparatively backward regions of eastern, central UP, and districts of Bundelkhand region.

The officials and institutions working for the expansion of UP's economy are of the firm

opinion that unless the credit flow is equitable across different regions, the goal of a 1-trillion dollar economy would remain elusive.

The PSU banks have been asked to hike the CD ratio in the three regions from 40 per cent to 60 per cent in the next four months.

Official sources said that apart from increasing the CD ratio, there is a need to focus on the aspirational districts, blocks and towns, while spurring insurance schemes such as crop insurance in the laggard districts.

The sources said the state government had prepared short- and long-term action plans for the composite development of the state.

UP Chief Secretary DS Mishra, during the recent

meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) here, had said that the role of banks would be crucial for the credit flow in the state. He said that concurrent with the pace of development, big industries would be attracted to UP and job opportunities would be created.

Earlier this year, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had asked banks to take steps to increase the state CD ratio. There has been a 9 per cent increase in bank deposits from Rs 13.13 lakh crore in the quarter ended September 2021 to Rs 14.31 lakh crore in September 2022. Similarly, the credit flow jumped from Rs 6.67 lakh crore to Rs 7.51 lakh crore in the corresponding period, a surge of 12.6 per cent.

'One stop centres' to be launched in 5 cities on World AIDS Day today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to facilitate tests for multiple diseases at one place, the Uttar Pradesh government will launch 'one stop centres' in five cities on World AIDS Day on Thursday.

These centres will provide tests for HIV, TB and other non-communicable diseases. Kanpur and Varanasi will have two centres each while Moradabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Meerut will have one centre each.

Additional Project Director of UP AIDS Control Society, Heera Lal, said that these centres would also provide counseling facilities on mental

health.

At present, the one stop centres are running in 25 states.

The centre in Kanpur will also focus upon transgender and migrant workers while in Varanasi, special focus will be towards injectable drug users and transgender.

"One stop centres will educate people and help in removing social stigma. With counseling, the myths will also be removed," said Dr Abhishek Shukla, secretary general, Association of International Doctors.

The centres will have a doctor and Auxiliary Nursing Midwife (ANM) to screen patients on the basis of symptoms and tests.



भारतीय स्टेट बैंक

State Bank of India

POSSESSION NOTICE

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Branch- Sandila
Distt. Hardoi

Whereas,

[Under Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002]

The under signed being the authorised officer of the State Bank of India Sandila Branch, Distt. Hardoi U.P. under the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (No. 3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (2) read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notices, Calling upon the respective borrowers to repay the amount as mentioned in notice been loan amount plus interest and other expenses within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the under signed has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act read rule under 8 of the said rules, on the date mentioned. The Borrower/Guaranter in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with property will be subject to charge of the State Bank of India Sandila Branch, Distt. Hardoi U.P. for an amount and interest and other charges thereon mentioned against each account here in below.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower / Guarantor	Description of Mortgaged Property and Boundary	Over due Amount
1	M/s Haji Kirana Store, Proprietor: Shri Murtaza Hussain, Begumganj, Pargana & Tehsil Sandila, Distt. Hardoi Details of Documents: Registered sale Deed on 15-09-2011, Book No. 1, Khand No. 3165, Page No. 161-188, Serial No. 6262 in the sub-Registrar Office Sandila, Tehsil Sandila, Distt. Hardoi.	Property Situated at Begumganj, Pargana and Tehsil Sandila Distt. Hardoi in the name of Shri Murtaza Hussain, Area: 2685 Sq. Ft. Boundaries : East: Drain & Kachcha Rasta, West: House of Babu, North: Rasta Kachcha, South: Plot of Shri Ashok Kumar Gupta	Rs. 4,98,565.54 + Interest + Other Charges Date of Notice 06.09.2022 Possession Date : 25.11.2022

Date: 30.11.2022

Authorised Officer, State Bank of India, Branch Sandila, Distt. Hardoi

मोहिनी बी० मनवाणी गर्ल्स डिग्री कालेज (अल्पसंख्यक संस्थान)

सम्बद्ध-सी०एस०जे०एन० विश्वविद्यालय, कानपुर

आवास विकास न०-3, पनकी कल्यानपुर रोड, कल्यानपुर, कानपुर-208017

सूचना

अल्पसंख्यक संस्थान में अल्पसंख्यक प्रबन्धकीय कोटे के अन्तर्गत बी०एड० सत्र 2022-24 में प्रवेश हेतु दिनांक 29/०8/2022 को होने वाली प्रवेश परीक्षा जो आगामी तिथि तक स्थगित थी, नोट- प्रवेश परीक्षा दिनांक 07.12.2022 को कालेज परिसर में होगी। अर्हता, नियम, शर्तें व मेरिट परीयता पूर्ववत् ही लागू होगी, अधिक जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट www.bmbngdc.in जायें।

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TJMT/TL22/ENG

Woman kills son, ends life

PNS ■ KANPUR

A woman, after killing her two-year old son, committed suicide by hanging herself in Maswanpur under Rawatpur police station area late on Tuesday evening. SHO Sanjay Shukla along with ACP Kalyanpur Vikas Kumar Pandey and forensic team rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. Alleging involvement of her husband and in-laws in the killing of their daughter and hanging the body to make it look like a suicide case, kin of the deceased have lodged an FIR with the police. Sources said the couple had exchanged heated arguments over his dancing with a lady dancer at a function four days ago. Seema (22), daughter of Vijay of Rania (Kanpur Dehat) was married to Vishal of Purana Gattewali Gali, Maswanpur, about three years ago. She had a two-year old son Manan. Vijay alleged that after marriage Seema's in-laws had started humiliating her. She was held hostage and beaten up by them. Vishal is employed as salesman in a food spice company. Vijay said when Vishal's younger brother Vivek reached home late on Tuesday night and knocked on the door he failed to get any response from inside. Suspecting something wrong, he informed the police control room when SHO Sanjay Shukla immediately rushed to the spot and found Seema hanging on the first floor. Manan was lying dead on the sofa. On complaint of her elder sister Soni, police have lodged a case of unintentional murder and took three persons, including father-in-law and mother-in-law of Seema, into custody. Raids were on to nab her husband Vishal.



Seema and her two-year-old son Manan (File photo)

TRADER ROBBED OF CASH, BIKE

A vegetable trader was robbed of cash and bike by four armed miscreants under the railway overbridge (ROB) on the outskirts of Imlipur village in Koriya outpost area of Vidhnu police station early on Wednesday morning. The incident took place around 3 am when armed miscreants brutally beat up the trader with stick and after he fell unconscious, looted Rs 25,000 cash and bike. On seeing the injured trader, passersby after informing the police control room, took him to Vidhnu community health centre (CHC) from where doctors referred him to LLR Hospital, Kanpur. Police rushed there and during investigation recovered the looted bike on sewer treatment plant road, 500 metres away from the spot of the incident. Hari Kishan Sahu alias Chinni (45) of Kumhupur village was going to buy vegetable from Naubasta sabzi mandi on bike around 3 am. After crossing Imlipur village when he was passing through the new railway overbridge, four armed miscreants attacked on him with stick. After he fell unconscious on the street, they looted his cash and bike and

escaped from there. SHO Yogesh Kumar Singh said investigation was on and claimed that the miscreants will be caught soon.

MOBILE PHONES, CASH LOOTED

Three bike-borne masked miscreants looted two mobile phones and Rs 5,000 from a medical store owner at knife-point in Dwivedi Nagar under Vidhnu police station area late on Tuesday night. Tying his limbs with a dupatta, they escaped from there. The medical store is situated about 200 metres away from the Paharpur Sen outpost help desk. Victim Raj Kumar Verma's son Rishabh of Arya Nagar said around 8 pm, miscreants asked for a medicine for fever. When he was taking it out they entered the shop and held him at knife point, looted Rs 5000 from the cash box and two mobile phones. ACP Ghatampur Dinesh Kumar Shukla said as per sales register there was a sale of only Rs 1,700 during past five days while the victim informed about loot of Rs 5,000. He suspected the occurrence of incident and said to have taken some suspects into custody for investigation.

KDA gets land worth ₹1 crore vacated

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) got its land worth Rs 1 crore vacated from illegal occupiers in Bairi Akbarpur Banger on Tuesday. On protest police chased the mob with sticks. Thereafter, the pucca construction works were demolished with the help of backhoe loader. Earlier on the directives of Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh, executive engineer RK Pandey and junior engineer JN Pandey along with the squad reached Bairi Akbarpur Banger where people

had illegally carried out pucca construction on 250 square metre land of KDA's Arazi No 995 worth Rs 1 crore. Besides, KDA team also reached Kidwai Nagar and resealed some shops there. A few days ago KDA had sealed these shops for carrying out illegal construction beyond prescribed norms. But thereafter the shopowners had opened the shop by removing the seals. Executive engineer RK Pandey ordered to reseat the illegally constructed shops and lodge FIR against the guilty shopowners.



KDA squad got its land worth Rs 1 crore vacated from illegal possession in Bairi Akbarpur Banger village.

IIT-Kanpur gets prestigious award

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur has been recognised for its relentless efforts in developing and transferring technologies that may impact the lives of many. The institute has been awarded the prestigious STEM Impact Awards 2022 for engaging in impactful technology transfer activities at an award ceremony held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi during the annual summit of STEM (Society for Technology Management). The STEM Impact Award is a first-of-its-kind initiative in India that celebrates the impact of technology transfer activities in Indian academic and research institutions. IIT Kanpur has been awarded this year for socio-economic impact the institute created with the impactful technology transfer of the invention - portable soil testing

device, named 'Bhu-Parikshak'. On behalf of IIT Kanpur, Ravi Pandey, Research Establishment Officer (Innovation and Incubation), IPR Cell, IIT Kanpur, received the award from Nis Kjaer Weibel, Head Business Development, Technology Transfer Office, Aarhus University. This is the second time the institute has been awarded this prestigious award. Prof Abhay Karandikar, Director IIT Kanpur said, "As a multi-disciplinary institute, our efforts are rooted in developing innovations that can have a lasting impact on the masses. Our continued work on key areas of national interest and grassroots utility have broadened our scope of reach and impact in recent years. This award bears testimony to the growing R&D ecosystem at IIT Kanpur. We're delighted to have

received this recognition and I congratulate all associated with the revolutionary invention of the Bhu-Parikshak soil-testing device." The Bhu-Parikshak soil-testing device was developed last year and was launched in market in May this year. The device is a revolutionary hand-held invention that can detect soil health in just 90 seconds. It can detect six important soil parameters namely - nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, organic carbon, clay contents and cation ion exchange capacity, with the use of only five grams of dry soil sample. Soil health report is also generated which can be easily accessed on the Bhu Parikshak mobile application with unique ID. This not only cuts down time and hassle for farmers but also offers them more accurate information at the

tip of their hand. The award recognised this revolutionary effort by Prof Jayant Kumar Singh and his team from the Department of Chemical Engineering. IIT Kanpur and complemented the major lag in agriculture activities the device addresses. The invention was also lauded for its potential to bring a revolutionary change in the Indian agriculture ecosystem. The Technology Transfer Cell is headed by Prof Ankush Sharma under the Start-up Incubation & Innovation Centre at IIT Kanpur. It is a major accomplishment for the IP & Technology Transfer team for the successful technology transfer wherein the technology had been one among the few to be launched as a product for large scale commercialisation within such a short span.

VMC opens 12 shelter homes

Varanasi (PNS): In view of the cold, the Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC) has opened 12 shelter homes at various places in the city to facilitate the homeless and helpless people. The District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam has directed the officials to apprise the needy persons about this so that they could use these shelter homes to save themselves from the cold. The facility of shelter homes is free of cost. The VMC has opened the shelter homes in front of Varanasi city railway station in Alaiapur, Chungi Bhavan at Golgadda tri-junction in Golgadda, sanitation outpost before Kashi railway station, in front of Benia Bagh, building in Town Hall gymnasium, near Harishchandra PG College, in front of Cantt railway station at Jawahar Nagar in Englishialine, Boulia tri-junction in Shivaspur, in front of petrol pump on Sankat Mochan Mandir and Gurudwara on Central jail road.

‘Most paediatric HIV infections result from vertical transmission’

PNS ■ KANPUR

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection in pregnant women had an important role in its spread to the paediatric population through vertical transmission. Effective utilisation of Prevention of Parent to Child

Transmission services can reduce this spread. Most paediatric HIV infections resulted from vertical transmission of HIV, which can occur during pregnancy at delivery or postdelivery through breastfeeding. Although vertical transmission of HIV in resource-rich settings was rare,

it continued to occur in resource-limited settings. Efforts to increase the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and access to comprehensive HIV and pregnancy care services had led to a marked decrease in vertical HIV transmission rates in resource-limited settings. This was stated by Dr V Shashidharan, Bengaluru, while addressing a press conference at Wellness Hospital on the eve of World AIDS Day. He said much had been done to prevent the spread of vertical transmission of the disease and taking anti-HIV drugs during pregnancy, making a careful choice between Caesarean section and vaginal delivery and giving the new born baby an anti-HIV drug for a few weeks. Informing about perinatal transmission of HIV he said it was when HIV is passed from a woman with HIV to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding and was also called mother-to-child transmission of HIV. He said the

use of HIV medicines and other strategies had helped to lower the rate of perinatal transmission of HIV to one per cent or less in a few countries. He said National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) had recommended that all women get tested for HIV before they become pregnant or as early as possible during each pregnancy and the earlier HIV was detected, the sooner HIV medicines can be started. Dr Shashidharan said all women who were pregnant or trying to get pregnant should encourage their partners also to get tested for HIV and if possible screened for other sexually transmitted diseases which can increase viral loads in people with HIV. He said if any partner had HIV that partner should take HIV medicine as prescribed to stay healthy and prevent transmission. He advised that pregnant women with HIV should take HIV medicines to reduce the risk of perinatal transmission of HIV.

Essay writing contest organised

PNS ■ KANPUR

Principal of SN Sen Degree College, Dr Suman while addressing a essay writing contest organised by Sakhi Kendra and National Alliance of Women at the college auditorium said gender discrimination cannot be ended without concerted effort that too only through women. She said it was high time women stood up to their rights and fought the bias rampant in the society. She said prevention—addressing the structural causes, as well as the risk and protective factors associated with violence was pivotal to eliminating violence against women and girls completely, especially in India. She said prevention was the only way to stop violence before it even occurred as it required political commitment, implementing laws that promoted gender equality, investing in women's organisations, and addressing multiple forms of discrimination women face every day. She said evidence about prevention had evolved considerably over the past decade. She said government can contribute



Sakhi Kendra and National Alliance of Women jointly organised a seminar and essay writing contest at SN Sen Degree College

show violent behavior towards their partners after consumption of alcohol. She said there was no doubt that alcohol was ultimately seen as a factor for violence against women, be it domestic violence or other forms of sexual assault against women. She said men have responded to feminist movements in very different ways, some supportive, some antagonistic but most gender equality advocates now realise that solidarity and understanding of intersectionality were essential to achieve shared objectives. She added that men often fear that empowerment of girls and women will mean losing out but equality benefits all. She advised men that just not displaying male superiority was not enough. Archana Pandey, Pushpa Tiwari, Mamta Gupta, Kanchan Sharma, Meena Pratap and several others spoke on the occasion. In essay writing first prize was given to Yaseem Bano, second to Amreen and third to Mahima Bajpai while the consolation prize was given to Anjali Savita.

UJJAIN SMART CITY LIMITED

Mela Office, Kothi Road, Ujjain (M.P.) 456001 Ph. 0734-2525856

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No. USCL/175 Tender ID: 2022_UAD_235319_1

Date:- 30.11.2022

Ujjain Smart City Limited Invites Interested parties for "Emergency Entry Exit Block & Koti Teerth Development at Mahakal Temple, Ujjain Second Call". Interested bidders may purchase and submit their proposals online at www.mptenders.gov.in.

Earnest Money Deposit	8,72,900/-
Cost of Document	20000/-
Pre Bid Meeting Date	09.12.2022
Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid (Online)	14.12.2022 up to 17:00 hrs.

For more details, please visit <https://www.mptenders.gov.in>. Any Corrigendum or amendments shall be published on this website only.

For, Ujjain Smart City Limited

Zonal Office : 75/4, Siddhi Sadan, Halsey Road
Near Badshahi Naka Police Station, Kanpur - 208001
E-mail : zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

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UCO BANK

सम्मान आपके विश्वास का

Honours your trust

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [See proviso to Rule – 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to UCO Bank, Armapur Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of UCO Bank, Armapur Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 20-01-2023, for recovery of Bank's Dues from Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) to UCO Bank, Armapur Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date / Possession Notice Date	Description of Immovable Property(ies) with known encumbrances, if any	Bank's Dues	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit
1.	Borrower(s): M/s Shakti Gramodyog Sansthan, (Secretary: Mr. Anil Kumar Mishra S/o Bajrang Bali Mishra) Regd. Office: B-21. World Bank Colony, Barra Kanpur Factory: Plot No. 46, Govt. Industrial Area, Rania, Kanpur Guarantor(s): Mr. Anil Kumar Mishra S/o Bajrang Bali Mishra Address: 1. Flat No. 502, Fifth Floor Indraprasth ShriRam Vatika Barra, Kanpur 2. B-21. World Bank Colony, Barra Kanpur 3. Plot No. 46, Govt. Industrial Area, Rania, Kanpur 4. 411/9, Shastri Nagar, Kanpur Nagar Branch Name: Armapur Estate, Kanpur (0384)	07.03.2018 08.08.2018 (Symbolic Possession)	Equitable Mortgage of Factory Land & Building, Plant and Machinery on Plot No. 46, Govt. Industrial Estate Rania, Kanpur Dehat owned by Mr. Anil Kumar Mishra (Secretary, M/s, Shakti Gramodyog Sansthan) Lease Deed No. 2288 Dated 19.11.1995, Plot No 46, measuring area 600 sq. yard. situated at Industrial Estate Rania Tehsil Akbarpur District, Kanpur Dehat Details of Boundaries (As per Deed) East: Plot No. 55, West: Road, North: Plot No. 47, South: Plot No. 45 Known Encumbrances, if any - Nil	Rs. 45,48,099.34 (Rupees Forty Five Lakh Forty Eight Thousand Nine Ninety Nine and Paise Thirty Four Only) as on 30.09.2017 (inclusive of interest upto 30.09.2017) with further interest and incidental expenses, costs etc. till date of payment.	Rs. 31,00,000/- Rs. 3,10,000/-

Last Date for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for Bid : 19.01.2023 upto 4:00 PM as per (IST)
Date & Time of E-auction :- 20.01.2023 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM as per (IST) with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each with Bid Incremental Amount of Rs. 10,000/-

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the websites <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp> & <https://www.ibapi.in>
The Borrower's and/or Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section 8 of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.
Note:- Hindi & English versions of this Notice are being published in Hindi & English Newspapers respectively. It is clarified that in case of any contradiction in Hindi and English version of the Notice, the English version of the Notice will prevail.

Date :- 01.12.2022 Place :- Kanpur Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)

Science Leader Award conferred on Dr Singh

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Birsra Agricultural University, Ranchi, Jharkhand conferred Science Leader Award 2022 on Dr SP Singh of Genetics and Plant Breeding Science, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology in a grand function at the university during an international seminar. The seminar was attended by top scientists from not only India but across the world. He read his research paper on "Seed Production Technique". V-C, CSAUA&T, Dr DR Singh, extended his wishes on the big achievement. Addressing presspersons on Wednesday, Dr SP Singh said seed quality was vital to sustainable crop production and food security. He said it included physical, physiological and biological treatments to overcome germination constraints by uniform stands, earlier crop development and better yields. He said improved germination rates and seedling vigour were due to reduced emergence time by earlier start of metabolic activities of hydrolytic enzymes and resource mobilisation. He said ion uptake, hormonal regulation, activation of antioxidant defence system, reduced lipid accumulation of compatible solutes were some mechanisms conferring biotic and abiotic stress tolerance. He said knowledge of molecular pathways elucidating mode of action of these effects, reduced longevity of primed or other physical and biological agents for seed treatments and market availability of high-quality seeds were some of the challenges for scientists and seed industry. He said umpteen areas of seed technology were important for

Birsra Agricultural University, Ranchi, Jharkhand conferred Science Leader Award 2022 on Dr SP Singh of Genetics and Plant Breeding Science, CSAUA&T.

optimal agricultural yield, including release and evaluation of superior crop plant varieties, seed certification and quality control and seed research. Dr Singh said as seeds protect the embryo from harsh environmental conditions they provide nourishment and parental care to developing embryo. He said dispersal of seeds to far-off places prevented competition among members of same species, thus pre-

venting their extinction. The main objective of seed production was rapid multiplication of the newly released or commercially available varieties by maintaining the varietal identity and genetic purity that represented plant population created through breeding and characterised by certain heritable morphological, biological and agronomics.

DC for improvement in road infrastructure in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma stressed the need for overall improvement in road infrastructure and traffic management system in view of seeing the frequent traffic jams in the city. He was speaking at a joint meeting while presiding over it in which senior officers of district administration, Setu Nigam (Bridge Corporation), Traffic Police and others were present here on Wednesday. The officers discussed ways to help the city rid of the traffic jam problem. Under the leadership of ADM (City), a joint team of Municipal Corporation, Jalkal, PWD, Setu Nigam, Traffic Police and RTO was formed and the DC instructed all the committee members to visit the identified sites which frequently face traffic jams and report within a week.

During the meeting, the DC also discussed the proposals of elevated corridor from Sunderpur to Assi, railway underpass at Nakkhi Ghat, construction of pathways on both sides of river Varuna, widening of roads from Rathayatra to Shankuldihara via Bhelupur water tank and from Teliabagh to Loha Mandi etc. During the discussion on all the suggestions, the DC directed the officers to form a team and make a spot inspection within a week and submit the report.



DC KR Sharma holding a meeting of officers in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

Sharma suggested that a flyover on the route leading to TFC Bada Lalpur should be constructed so that people do not face any difficulty in reaching there. He asked the concerned officers to make Maidagin-Godowlia and Ramkatora-Maidagin roads one-way. He also asked the concerned officers to hold a joint meeting with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to reduce the traffic jam from Mohansarai to Daffi toll plaza and to identify those trucks and transporters who cause unnecessary traffic jams there.

In the meeting, the District Magistrate (DM) was asked to

identify the crowded places and inspect the sites for the bridges, corridors etc to be built there so that the public can get relief from the traffic jams. DM S Rajalingam, VDA Secretary Sunil Verma, SP Traffic and senior officers of Setu Nigam were present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, the meeting of Chandauli Polytechnic was held under the chairmanship of the DC in which there was a discussion regarding the confirmation of Vinay Pathak, working as a lecturer for the Electrical Engineering department, to the post of assistant lecturer. The DC said that there is no provision to make an ad hoc teacher permanent.

It was informed by the Principal in the meeting that a total of 73 educational and non-educational posts are sanctioned in the institution, out of which 58 posts are vacant and the process to fill them has been started from June last. The DC insisted on adopting the process of selecting people from any selection body of the government.

He said that he would visit the institution soon and take appropriate decisions regarding the renovation and disposal of the buildings of the academic block, hostel etc

Senior officers of Polytechnic were also present in the meeting.

Urban local bodies polls: BJP woos disgruntled rival camp leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With a view to ensuring party's victory in all 100 wards of the city, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership has launched a silent campaign to bring into party fold disgruntled leaders of rival camps like Congress, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

BJP leaders claim that they have prepared a ward wise list of such influential leaders whose induction in the party may help it in upcoming urban civic body polls. Apart from targeting 'key

voters' in every ward, BJP leadership is not leaving any stone unturned to dent the strongholds of rival camps and targeting particularly those 30 wards which the party had never won.

BJP spokesman Rajesh Kesarwani said many disgruntled rival leaders are in touch with the party leadership.

"There are many influential leaders with grassroots support in the rival camps, but they have been feeling neglected for a long time. If these leaders join BJP, their presence would surely

improve the party's performance in upcoming urban civic body polls." Senior BJP leader Ashish Gupta said: "Party has laid emphasis on strengthening booth structure and management plan and aims to connect with voters at grassroots level."

He added groups of active workers are being assigned different tasks to connect maximum voters through both online and offline modes.

At every booth, 20 active working committee members, five members from IT and social media wing and

five members for rallies are being inducted to strengthen every booth.

The party is going all out to ensure a big win in the upcoming urban civic polls this year by focusing on specific strategy for every ward in terms of its social equations, highest number of voters of particular community/ caste as well as weaknesses and strengths.

In 2017 urban municipal polls, the BJP had won 22 of the 80 wards and later, 15 more corporators from other camps joined the saffron party.

BJP leaders call for boycott of Richa Chadha's films

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Activists of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) burnt the posters of Indian actress Richa Chadha near Mutthiganj area over her recent Galwan tweet and called up residents to boycott her movies.

BJP spokesman Rajesh Kesarwani said: "Richa Chadha had insulted our brave Indian soldiers and our countrymen would never tolerate such activities. We are proud of our soldiers who are the real heroes of the country. Many soldiers had laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

Kesarwani said: "The tweet of the Indian actress was a shameful act and hurt the sentiments of the countrymen. We have been appealing to all countrymen to boycott the movies of Richa Chadha."

Other leaders like Ajay Agrahari, Satya Jaiswal, Ashish Jaiswal, Gopal Ji Pathak, Luvkush Kesarwani, Ravi Kumar, Ishan Pathak and others were present on the occasion.

KESHARI DEVI TO INAUGURATE RASHTRIYA SHILP MELA TODAY: The 12-day Rashtriya Shilp Mela, organised by North Central

Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC) Prayagraj will be inaugurated by MP Keshari Devi Patel on December 1 at 5.00 pm. Star attraction of the inaugural day cultural programmes will be celebrated singer Maithili Thakur.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday NCZCC director, Prof Suresh Sharma said that it would be the 29th edition of Shilp Mela, which invites artisan from 22 states to display and sell their hand made products. The mela visitors will also enjoy mouth watering eatables from different states.

Around 150 stalls of different handicraft will attract people for 12 days in Shilp Haat premises, and this include stalls of national awardee artisan.

As many as 450 artistes have been invited to perform in the open stage during mela in the evening. They include folk singers Maithili Thakur, Chandan Tiwari, Kishor Chaturvedi, ghazal singer Rajab Ali, Tambura Bhajan performer Manish Agrawal and Mohini Attam dancer Jaya Prabha besides hundreds of artists from UP and other states.

Ramp construction at Nakkhi Ghat, Purana Pul in progress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Ramp construction work at Nakkhi Ghat and Purana Pul is in progress so that e-rickshaws and two-wheelers can easily use pathways on both sides of river Varuna under Varuna Corridor Project for movement. The construction work of about 10 feet wide pathways has been done by the Irrigation department on the banks of river Varuna. In view of the traffic pressure of the city and for the smooth movement of e-rickshaws and two-wheelers on these Varuna pathways, the construction of down ramp

on Shastri bridge and Nakkhi Ghat and up ramp on Purana Pul (old bridge) was done by the Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) under the first phase.

According to VDA, under the second phase, the construction work of the down ramp at Nakkhi Ghat and Purana Pul is in progress. As the pathways have been constructed by the Irrigation department so it is its responsibility to repair its damaged parts.

At present, e-rickshaws and two wheelers can reach the Purana Pul on the said corri-

dor by getting down from the Shastri bridge. After the completion of the remaining under-construction ramps, the movement of two-wheelers between Nakkhighat and Purana Pul will start.

Meanwhile, in view of increasing traffic pressure due to visits to a large number of different states apart from foreign tourists and VIPs, the Transport department is planning to shift the e-rickshaws to different localities from the main roads.

In connection with the removal of e-rickshaws from the main roads by the district

administration, zone-wise routes have been decided by the committee constituted for the operation of e-rickshaws except the main roads.

Giving this information, the assistant regional transport officer (ARTO) said that the process of removing e-rickshaws from the main roads is in progress by the Transport and Traffic departments and soon e-rickshaws will be removed from the main roads. A time period of three months has been proposed by the State Road Safety Council to replace e-rickshaws from main roads to feeder routes.

Parents shot at by son over domestic discord

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a bizarre incident, a man Resident of Mama-Bhanja Talab in Prayagraj's Naini area shot at his father and mother with a licensed revolver after a feud took place between them on Wednesday afternoon. The bullet hit his mother's chest and father's hand. Both were immediately rushed to the SRN Hospital for treatment.

The police reached after getting the news and took them both to the hospital. Ritesh (the accused) locked

himself in the room after shooting his parents. People were trying to open the door but he kept threatening to kill himself by shooting. Police are present on the spot. After about an hour, the SSP reached the spot and then on his orders, the police force entered through the roof of another house and nabbed Ritesh in the room and interrogated him.

It has been learned from the family members that Ritesh, the younger of the two brothers, had an argument

with the family a few days ago. Since then the domestic discord had deepened. There was a lot of tension and Ritesh was quarrelling on every issue. He was even talking about killing but no one had imagined that he could do such a heinous incident. That too the act of trying to kill his parents, which has shocked everyone. He executed the incident this afternoon using his licensed revolver for the incident.

It is a matter of great relief that the condition of the injured father is out of danger

and the mother is also undergoing treatment. After the incident, the police tried hard to get Ritesh locked in the room but he was not opening the door. Then on the arrival of the SSP on the spot, the police force caught Ritesh by going to the room from the roof of the other house. On the other hand, Kotwali police and CO first Satyendra Tiwari at SRN Hospital took information about the incident from the injured father Lalchand Jaiswal. Many relatives also came to the hospital after getting the news.

Man dies while rescuing cattle

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

While crossing the railway track, people often fall prey to death due to haste or carelessness, but here a man lost his life trying to save his pet cattle. This incident took place in the Industrial Police Station area of Yamuna Paar area of Prayagraj.

A cattle rearer died after being hit by a train while rescuing cattle near Rampur police outpost on Wednesday afternoon.

During this, two of his buffaloes came on the railway track. Seeing the train coming from the front, Manik Yadav tried to remove the buffaloes, but in a few moments he and

both the cattle came under the grip of the train. Cattleman Manik Yadav and a buffalo died on the spot. After some time the family members reached there and lifted the deceased from the railway track.

On getting the information, Sanjeev Choubey, in-charge of Karchhana police station reached the spot along with the police force and filled the panchnama of the dead body. There is mourning in the family due and people are shocked to know that Manik lost his life while trying to save a buffalo.

IIIT-A TO ORGANISE UPCON-2022: A three day 9th IEEE UP Section

International Conference on "Electrical, Computer and Electronics Engineering" (UPCON 2022) organised by Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad will be held at Jhalwa campus from December 2, 2022.

The opening remarks will be given by Prof. Seichi Ozawa, President of Asia Pacific Neural Network Society (APNNS). Besides eminent experts including Prof. Suhass R. Joshi, Director - IIT Indore, Prof. R.S. Verma, Director - IIIT Allahabad will grace the occasion.

Prof. Pavan Chakraborty and Prof. Vrijendra Singh will also address the conference.

Mahanirvana Diwas observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The two days long 30th Aghoreshwar Mahanirvana Diwas programme concluded at Parao Ashram here on Wednesday. Ashtayam Akhand Sankirtan which started from 1.30 pm a day ago ended during the day at Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu's Samadhi Sthal near river Ganga at Parao with aarti and parikarma by the chief of the ashram Baba Gurupad Sambhav Ram. On both the days, the programme began after offering shrandaan in the sprawling premises of the ashram to make it clean. Later, Gurupad Sambhav Ram offered flowers and performed aarti in front of the statue of Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu. Prithvipal recited Safalyoni Path. Thereafter, the programme concluded with a havan ritual.

A workshop was also organised for the office-bearers of all the branches of Shree Sarveshwari Group. The workshop will continue on Thursday. The purpose of the workshop is to inspire all the office-bearers to conduct the public welfare programmes properly and speed it up by following the guidelines of the government rules and regulations.

Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu alias Avadhoot Bhagwan Ram popularised Aghor tradition to the masses in a simple, easy and beautiful form. Earlier, various programmes were also held at Baba Keenaram Sthal (Krim-Kund) in Ravindrapuri Colony. The devotees from all over the country and abroad offered tributes to Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu. Later, a grand bhandara was organised till late evening on Tuesday. The programmes



Gurupad Sambhav Ram offering aarti to Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Pioneer

were organised under the guidance of Baba Siddharth Gautam Ram. Arun Singh, Anoop Singh, Rajendra Singh, CN Ojha, DK Singh, Vinay Singh and many others were also present.

671 CANDIDATES DECLARED SUCCESSFUL: A total of 671 candidates qualified the physical test of the first phase of the 21-day long recruitment process of Agniveer under the Agniveer Recruitment on the tenth day on Wednesday at Rambankura Stadium of 39 GTC in Cantonment area here. The first phase of Agniveer Recruitment will conclude on December 6. The Army Recruitment Office is conducting the recruitment.

A total of 7,587 candidates from Sevrai Tehsil of Ghazipur, Bhadohi, Gyanpur and Aurai of Sant Ravidas

Nagar and Mughalsarai of Chandauli district were invited to appear at physical tests for various posts in the army. But a total of 4,825 candidates appeared and out of them, 671 candidates succeeded. Under the guidance of senior army officers, the physical and medical tests of candidates were conducted under the first phase of the recruitment.

It is learnt that a total of 1,43,286 applicants of 12 districts including Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Mau, Ballia, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Chandauli, Mirzapur, Bhadohi and Sonbhadra have applied for the tests of the first phase of the recruitment. Maximum 11,8,136 youths have applied for the post of Agniveer General Duty while a total of 11,259, 10,623 and 3,268 youths have applied for the post of Agniveer Technical

Store Keeper, Agniveer Tradesman and Agniveer Technical respectively.

Traffic restriction was imposed on some routes which approach to the Cantonment area and under which, no vehicle was allowed to ply towards Cantonment Board from Valmiki tri-junction and Sharda motor training school tri-junction. No vehicle was also allowed to ply towards Cantonment Board from Nehru Park tri-junction, JHV Mall and Phulwaria over-bridge. The police personnel were deployed at various places to ensure the smooth traffic.

A total of 7,328 candidates from Chakia, Sakaldiha, Navgarh & Chandauli Tehsils of Chandauli district and Lalganj Tehsil of Mirzapur will appear for the physical test on Thursday.

‘Dispose of matters related to investment on priority’

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Divya Mittal while presiding over the meeting of Zila Udyog Bandhu at Collectorate on Tuesday directed officials concerned to dispose of matters related to investment on top priority. The entrepreneurs raised the issue of a post office for industrial estate located at Patharahia, repair of roads connecting different industrial estates along with sanitation in all such areas. For new industrial estates the DM asked the officials concerned to remove all hurdles in establishing them without delay. Industrialist Bhola Nath Pandey suggested to declare Padara Hanuman village for the industries and on the issue the development authority was asked to start the process.

TAKES CHARGE: Muthukumar Swami B took over charge as the new commissioner of Vindhyachal division on Tuesday. An IAS officer of 2007 batch he has worked as DM Mahoba, Farrukhabad and Ballia and was posted at present as MD

UP Medical Supplies Corporation in Lucknow. Regarding priorities he said emphasis will be given on health, animal husbandry, education and tourism besides providing justice to the destitute. He said he will try his best to control illegal mining and overloading. After taking charge he inspected all counters of office and issued necessary directions. The DC inspected the hall constructed for lawyers. During the inspection of office he was accompanied by JDC Suresh Chandra Mishra, Additional Commissioner Ramesh Chandra and others.

Prior to joining the DC paid obeisance to Goddess Vindhyavasini. At the time of joining the DC was welcomed by ADM Shiv Pratap Shukla, City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh and other officials.

ARRESTED: The GRP arrested two persons and recovered 13 mobile phones from their possession on Tuesday. The cops during patrolling on the platform spotted two suspects. The GRP personnel caught them and during frisking recovered 13 mobile

phones from their possession. After completing the legal formalities the accused were sent to jail. The accused were identified as Shivdev Singh alias Deepak of Kolna village under Adalhaat police station and Awadh Narain of Jogini village under Karma police station Sonbhadra.

Besides, under the joint operation of Adalhaat police, SWAT/surveillance team and SOG an accused carrying a reward of Rs 50,000 was arrested on Tuesday. The body of a girl was found on November 26 at the hillocks of Gothaura village under Adalhaat police station and on the named FIR lodged by Munna, father of the girl, three teams were formed under the leadership of ASP (Operation) and DIG declared a reward of Rs 50,000 for the arrest of the accused. During investigation one more name also came to light. On being informed that the accused was hiding in Adalhaat area police raided the place on Monday night. However, the accused tried to flee from the spot by firing at police. In self-defence police also opened fire and the

accused fell down after being shot in the leg and was nabbed. During interrogation the accused, identified as Vikas Kumar of Muskipur under Gogari police station, Khagaria, Bihar, said the girl was known to him and he had called her to the hillock. He said that during conversation a dispute took place between them and he stabbed her to death. The SP awarded police team with cash reward of Rs 25,000.

Meanwhile Rajgarh police on Tuesday arrested an accused of raping a minor girl. Two sisters of a village had gone to attend the call of nature in the field on Monday when the accused caught one of them and raped her.

The victim was brought to a hospital but was referred to another hospital due to her serious condition.

The father of the girl lodged a named complaint and police registered a case under POCSO Act.

The police started the investigation on the direction of SHO Arun Kumar Dubey and arrested the accused on Tuesday.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Nicely placed

With G20 presidency, India is in a position to resolve the biggest issues, including the war in Ukraine

With India assuming the G20 presidency today, chances of resolution of global conflicts and major issues increase. Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi said, "India is showing its might and transforming the world with its civilisational values." This may be a bit over the top, but there is no denying the fact that New Delhi, with its reasonably cordial ties with the nations like Russia and Iran, is nicely placed to play the role of an honest broker in various quarrels. The war in Ukraine is perhaps the biggest crisis the world faces today, its ramifications being economic, political, military, and cultural. Russian President Vladimir Putin, like almost everyone else, was convinced that there would hardly be any war. Ukraine is too small and weak to take on the might of the Russian military whose capabilities even the American generals acknowledge. The Russian bear, so went the received wisdom, will smother whatever army Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been able to cobble together. But it increasingly became a David-versus-Goliath contest, with Putin's forces suffering setbacks; they even had to evacuate the territories they had grabbed in the initial momentum of the offensive. At present, there is a kind of stalemate—not just military but also political. Putin may like to end the hostilities but for that he would need a face-saving armistice. The United States is unable to do that, primarily because of President Joe Biden's ineptitude. Last year, he had called Putin a "killer," incensing not just the Russian leader but also people.

European leaders, who have been extremely critical of Moscow because of the war it unleashed, are also not the folks Putin and his coterie would be comfortable with. Chinese President Xi Jinping too is known for beligerence rather than peace-making. In such a geopolitical milieu, India can initiate or boost proposals that could be viewed by the warring countries with an open mind. It is true that Ukraine is unhappy with India's refusal to condemn the Russian attack, but it is equally true that the Zelenskyy Government doesn't hold that grudge too strongly. Besides, Kiev couldn't be unaware of the fact that India has been following the policy of non-alignment for decades. At any rate, New Delhi's refusal to take sides also means that Moscow would be more inclined to listen to the ceasefire plan the former proposes. Three other things will also help India exercise authority. First, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never badmouthed other leaders and countries; even during the crises of Balakot and Galwan, he did not use rough language. Secondly, he has experience in improving relations between countries. It is primarily because of his interventions that today we have excellent relations with Arab nations, despite the misdeeds of some saffron zealots. And, finally, in general India and Indians have a good image all over the world. All these factors are likely to help Modi have a successful G20 presidency.

PICTALK



Taj Mahal with the setting sun, in Agra.

PTI

Covid protests in China

The ongoing Covid protests in major cities across China are indeed unprecedented as well as surprising

Protests against strict Covid measures in China have now spread to the big cities. Demonstrators took to streets in the capital Beijing and the financial centre Shanghai. Many held up blank pieces of paper to express their discontent and acknowledge the censorship. What is surprising is how the protests have grown in their scope in matter of days. What started as a protest against the death of 10 people who died of fire in Urumqi where rescue wasn't allowed due to Covid protocols, quickly became an expression of anger and disapproval of the policies of the communist party. The protesters have called for President Xi Jinping to step down. Interestingly Xi awarded himself another term and there were no protests then. But at the core of the protests is people's hardships caused by arbitrary and stringent anti covid measures adopted by the Chinese government. Millions have suffered nearly three years of mass testing, quarantines, and strict lockdowns. People suffered in silence without raising their voice or at least not making it loud enough to cross Chinese borders.

It is very unusual for people to publicly criticize Communist Party leaders in China. Any anti government activity is severely dealt with by the government. So far the government has not tried to crush the rallies though some people were arrested in Shanghai and parts of the city cordoned off. To look politically correct people gathered on the banks of a river in the capital Beijing and sang the national anthem. The protests are now spreading to universities which must set off alarm bells for the Communist government. During Saturday night's protest people shouted slogans such as "Xi Jinping, step down" and "Communist party, step down," something unheard of in China. Such demands are highly unusual in China. China has a history of suppressing protests with an iron fist - both online and offline. Such a large-scale defiance has not been witnessed since the 1989 Tiananmen movement. The protests are growing and getting bolder by the day, it is not that the Communist party is oblivious to it but maybe it wants to gauge how far it would go and then crack a whip, the only way it knows to deal with the protests and dissent. But then it could also underestimate the spark which sometimes is enough to burn a forest.

'One Earth, One Family, One Future'



NARENDRA MODI

India's G20 presidency commences today. Here is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reflection on the occasion.

The previous 17 Presidencies of the G20 delivered significant results - for ensuring macro-economic stability, rationalising international taxation, relieving debt-burden on countries, among many other outcomes. We will benefit from these achievements, and build further upon them.

However, as India assumes this important mantle, I ask myself - can the G20 go further still? Can we catalyse a fundamental mindset shift, to benefit humanity as a whole? I believe we can.

Our mindsets are shaped by our circumstances. Through all of history, humanity lived in scarcity. We fought for limited resources, because our survival depended on denying them to others. Confrontation and competition - between ideas, ideologies and identities - became the norm.

Unfortunately, we remain trapped in the same zero-sum mindset even today. We see it when countries fight over territory or resources. We see it when supplies of essential goods are weaponised. We see it when vaccines are hoarded by a few, even as billions remain vulnerable.

Some may argue that confrontation and greed are just human nature. I disagree. If humans were inherently selfish, what would explain the lasting appeal of so many spiritual traditions that advocate the fundamental one-ness of us all?

One such tradition, popular in India, sees all living beings, and even inanimate things, as composed of the same five basic elements - the panchtatva of earth, water, fire, air and space. Harmony among these elements - within us and between us - is essential for our physical, social and environmental well-being.

India's G20 Presidency will work to promote this universal sense of one-ness. Hence our theme - 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'.

This is not just a slogan. It takes into account recent changes in human circumstances, which we have collectively failed to appreciate.

Today, we have the means to



produce enough to meet the basic needs of all people in the world.

Today, we do not need to fight for our survival - our era need not be one of war. Indeed, it must not be one!

Today, the greatest challenges we face - climate change, terrorism, and pandemics - can be solved not by fighting each other, but only by acting together.

Fortunately, today's technology also gives us the means to address problems on a humanity-wide scale. The massive virtual worlds that we inhabit today demonstrate the scalability of digital technologies.

Housing one-sixth of humanity, and with its immense diversity of languages, religions, customs and beliefs, India is a microcosm of the world.

With the oldest-known traditions of collective decision-making, India contributes to the foundational DNA of democracy. As the mother of democracy, India's national consensus is forged not by dictat, but by blending millions of free voices into one harmonious melody.

Today, India is the fastest



DURING OUR G20 PRESIDENCY, WE SHALL PRESENT INDIA'S EXPERIENCES, LEARNINGS AND MODELS AS POSSIBLE TEMPLATES FOR OTHERS, PARTICULARLY THE DEVELOPING WORLD

growing large economy. Our citizen-centric governance model takes care of even our most marginalised citizens, while nurturing the creative genius of our talented youth.

We have tried to make national development not an exercise in top-down governance, but rather a citizen-led 'people's movement'.

We have leveraged technology to create digital public goods that are open, inclusive and inter-operable. These have delivered revolutionary progress in fields as varied as social protection, financial inclusion, and electronic payments.

For all these reasons, India's experiences can provide insights for possible global solutions.

During our G20 Presidency, we shall present India's experiences, learnings and models as possible templates for others, particularly the developing world.

Our G20 priorities will be shaped in consultation with not just our G20 partners, but also our fellow-travellers in the global South, whose voice often goes unheard.

Our priorities will focus on healing our 'One Earth',

creating harmony within our 'One Family' and giving hope for our 'One Future'.

For healing our planet, we will encourage sustainable and environment-friendly lifestyles, based on India's tradition of trusteeship towards nature.

For promoting harmony within the human family, we will seek to depoliticise the global supply of food, fertilizers and medical products, so that geo-political tensions do not lead to humanitarian crises. As in our own families, those whose needs are the greatest must always be our first concern.

For imbuing hope in our future generations, we will encourage an honest conversation among the most powerful countries - on mitigating risks posed by weapons of mass destruction and enhancing global security.

India's G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive.

Let us join together to make India's G20 Presidency a Presidency of healing, harmony and hope.

Let us work together to shape a new paradigm - of human-centric globalisation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

Sir — Calling the sermons about the appointment of judges as the "law of the land", the Supreme Court is on a serious fault line because the very concept of collegium is not only undemocratic and unconstitutional but immoral also. While the current Minister of Law has dutifully tried to defy the dictates of such collegium being a part of the democratically elected Union Government, the judges who reached the position through the collegium have no moral authority to preach about the law of the land. The people of India elect their representatives to make or amend the laws of the land, and the Supreme Court ought to be the custodian of the constitution. But just because of the prejudices and selfish motives the supreme court judges have no right to press their malicious dictates on the people of this country, which the highest court has been doing not only as appointments of judges but through various judgments and comments against some individuals or the state also, especially after the present BJP Govt took over in 2014. The erstwhile spokesperson of BJP Nupur Sharma is one of them whose life threat was raised manifold due to the comments of SC. The SC must realise that democratic institutions thrive on mutual respect and independence and that Making Laws is the prerogative of the parliament, not the SC. The Supreme Court should be responsible enough in making comments which are taken note of by the people and the government alike. It is therefore important that the SC judges behave more responsibly in their conduct.

Let the better sense prevail upon the SC judges to make way for NJAC which was quashed by it. That only can be some hope for transparency and justice in the Courtrooms.

Dr Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

SEVEN SIXES IN AN OVER

Sir — Records are there to be broken. All we witnessed is 6 sixes in an over by Indian Ravi Shastri and Yuvraj Singh in competitive games in the past. But a

Peace in Gujarat



Union Home Minister Amit Shah was spilling the beans when he claimed in an election rally in Gujarat that the State returned to permanent peace only after the "perpetrators of violence" - read Muslims - were "taught a lesson" in 2002. Sabarmati Express in flames at

the Godhra station, which killed as many as 59 people, allowed teaching. Riots that followed left 1,044 dead, 223 missing and 2,500 wounded. The Concerned Citizens Tribunal Report put the toll at 1,926. Mass violence included the Naroda Patiya massacre and the Gulbarg Society massacre, in which Ehsan Jafri, a former member of the Lok Sabha, was killed along with others.

Though the events of 2002 were officially classified as a communal riot, many scholars described it as a pogrom, with some commentators referring to them as state-sponsored terrorism or ethnic cleansing. The Home Minister's statement is worryingly close to what scholars have called the events of 2002. BJP won the 2002 Gujarat assembly election handsomely riding on the "communal riots," and twenty years later, it aims at repeating the feat in the 2022 Gujarat assembly election, painting the riots as an act to establish peace. Strangely, peace through pogrom is a new paradigm.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

youngster Ruturaj Gaikwad broke all records by scoring a six off a no-ball and thus creating a new record of 7 sixes in an over. Thus, the opener hit 43 runs in an over to set a list A world record in Vijay Hazare Trophy, matching the joint effort of Brett Hampton and Joe Carter off William Ludik for Northern Districts against Central Districts in a Ford Trophy game in 2018.

Gaikwad rewrote the record in the penultimate over of his team's Vijay Hazare Trophy Quarter Final match against Uttar Pradesh at Ahmedabad. Shiva Singh was the bowler to suffer the fate. However, the record for most sixes in an over, in all, is held by Lee German of New Zealand, who clubbed 8 over the fence during a Shell Trophy match at Wellington.

CK Ramaniam | Mumbai

SC DOESN'T WANT MORE JUDGES

Sir — On Tuesday, November 29 the

SOUND BITE

Diamond businessmen and jewellers in Surat city in Gujarat should be conferred Bharat Ratna for their contribution to the country's economy.



Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal

NATO will reinforce its presence from the Black to the Baltic Sea.

US Secretary of State — Antony Blinken

The people on this team have done some of the best work of their entire careers, and my deepest hope is that my actions don't penalize my team.

Actor — Will Smith

I'm donating my match fees from this Test series to the Pakistan Flood appeal.

English skipper — Ben Stokes

The Congress in the state is united and determined to ensure that it will be an outstanding success. And indeed it will be!

Congress leader — Jairam Ramesh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

GENDER STEREOTYPES MUST BE QUESTIONED

This is how incidents like Shraddha murder can be checked



RUCHI SAINI

Live-in relationships are a wrong practice. These are leading to crime. These 'educated' girls are paying for this. It should be completely banned—these were the thoughts of a Minister of State about the murder of 27-year-old Shraddha Walker.

Shraddha was allegedly strangled by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawala after a heated argument in their Delhi flat, who then chopped her body and kept it in the refrigerator. According to the Minister of Panchayati Raj, the murder is a part of “a well-planned conspiracy taking place in the country to target Hindu girls through love jihad. Lakhs of Shraddhas become victims.”

A ghastly case of violence against women has yet again been appropriated by right-wing and patriarchal apologists to further their parochial views around women, religion, and modernity. The aim is to send a clear message to the modern, independent, and educated Indian woman: “Transgress the codes of Hindu society, and risk becoming a victim of gender crime.” These codes include the importance of the heterosexual institution of marriage, and the prohibition of inter-religious marriage as a safeguard for women from violence.

Unsurprisingly, none of these claims stand their ground when verified. According to the latest round of the National Family Health Survey in India (NFHS 2019-21), approximately 30 per cent of married Indian



women faced domestic and sexual violence, and no significant difference was observed in violence reported by Hindu and non-Hindu married women. Additionally, out of the respondents who reported experiencing physical abuse, the vast majority belonged to poor and uneducated backgrounds. Clearly, being married or less educated does not protect women from violent crimes in India, and neither does the perpetrators' religious affiliation.

Instead of asking what could Shraddha have done to prevent her murder, we need to ask what is it that empowered Aftab to gruesomely murder a woman who left her family for him. Also, what is it that disempowered Shraddha, despite her independence and education, to suffer the abuse inflicted by Aftab before her murder?

Answers may rectify existing gendered and sexist social structures that facilitate such abuse. It is not the female victim's lifestyle choices, but rather the norms, beliefs, and motivations of the male perpetrator that are the source of gender violence. Society is quick to assign blame to victims – on clothes, marital status, or religious affiliation. For those wondering why Shraddha did not lean on personal and professional networks to escape the abusive relationship, I suggest that they take a cursory look at the Islamophobia, victim-blaming, and slut-shaming unleashed on social and print media post her murder.

In my current research study with female students at a public university in India, many shared how the personal and professional support systems available to victim-survivors of gender violence are plagued with rampant sexism, misogyny, and prejudice.


Rage should not exclusively be for fatal victims of gender violence, or those with visible marks of physical assaults, but also for the wife who endures verbal abuse from her husband to keep the family together, the daughter-in-law who endures economic deprivation because of social conditioning, and the trans friend disowned by their family because of the prioritization of social mores over the child's happiness.

What aspects of a heteronormative and patriarchal society help sustain these horrific acts? The extent of our complicity in sustaining psychological or verbal violence in our families, workplaces, or interpersonal relationships be also questioned. That can help build a truly egalitarian nation to allow a safe space for women and gender minorities to thrive, prosper, and contribute to national success.

(The author is a research scholar at the University of Maryland, College Park)

Ensuring a clean world is best business investment

It is high time that we move forward in a planned and systematic manner initiating futuristic investments



KAMAL NARAYAN OMER

Every year December 2 is observed as the National Pollution Control Day to honour those who lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy on this day in 1984. It was one of the biggest industrial pollution disasters in history. The leakage of the poisonous methyl isocyanate from an insecticide plant of the Union Carbide Corporation created havoc in the residential neighbourhood and the impact of that disaster is still witnessed in the flora and fauna of the area.

According to many estimates more than 400 tons of the industrial waste is still present on the site, not surprisingly the pollution in soil and water is even blained

(The author is CEO, IHW Council)

G20 can create value chains led by farmers



Initiatives by government and civil society have seen emergence of collectives of small and marginal farmers

Since time immemorial, foodgrains have been crossing continents for centuries. From the silk and spice routes to the current operations run by various alliances and agencies, humanity has witnessed acceleration of the commodity trading and intensifying as a constituent derivative of globalisation.

Throughout 2023, G20, which consists of countries accounting for 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population, will discuss a range of plans, which will reflect ambition and engagement of the member countries. The spectrum to create the global value chains encompasses some that are actively regulating a very diverse collection of interests of market forces and of a few individuals. The spectrum also includes a span of expected outcomes, with some looking for a detailed strategy for involvement of farmers collectively.

With the active participation and interwoven participation of state and non-state actors, new horizons have emerged. Therefore, this year might be remembered as a year of new-alliances to create a democratic and India-led global value chain. There is an opportunity to link Indian agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and address global food and nutritional security in the Indian way.

Agriculture at this juncture can provide huge support to the diplomatic community. It will not only help to localize the efforts undertaken to achieve the SDG targets but also benefit to democratize the value chains.

Moreover, the upcoming G20 meeting may open a new chapter on food diplomacy. For example, Kala Namak Rice of Uttar Pradesh, Chikori of Etah and Kasganj of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabadi Surkh Guava, Malihabadi Dasherri of Uttar Pradesh, and Malbhog Banana of Hajipur are a few items awaiting the attention of Indian diplomats.

Initiatives undertaken by various government departments and civil society institutions have seen an emergence of collectives of small and marginal farmers with robust financial transactions. The Government of India's consistent and concerted endeavors to usher into reforms for boosting agricultural exports have created a background of this diplomatic exercise.

Further, the execution of agriculture export policy with subsequent waves of change in the cooperative sector after the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation and credit support have created a phenomenal change in the trade capacity of these collectives. For example, there is a ready-made six clusters in Maharashtra through collectives for grapes, mango, pomegranate, banana, oranges and onion.

The active participation and active involvement of jumbo states like Uttar Pradesh with their own export policy in consonance with national policies has created a boon for this sector. Much awaited Warehousing and Logistic Policy 2018 and UP Food Processing Policy 2017 has not



LINKING FARMERS' COLLECTIVES TO THE OVERSEAS MARKET IS RELEVANT AS AGRO VALUE CHAINS ARE BUYER-DRIVEN. WE HAVE AN ARMY OF FPOs/COOPERATIVES WHICH ARE ORGANISED, COORDINATED, AND CAN REACH THE GLOBAL CONSUMER MARKET

(The author is member, Pradhan Mantri-MSP Committee)



only created a robust supply chain but also has given ample opportunity to enable the FPOs with overseas markets.

In India, agriculture and horticulture production is around 600 million tonnes per year. Industrialists can also venture into agriculture as this will benefit farmers and will increase their earnings. Not only aromatic Spices but also Indian shrimps, basmati and non-basmati rice, grapes, bananas, pomegranate, vegetables, including potatoes, processed/value-added products, cashew, plant parts/medicinal herbs in value added form, including herbal medicines, food based nutraceuticals, aromatics, spices (cumin, turmeric, pepper), ethnic and organic food are a few potential winning sectors key to securing nutrition and food security to the global population.

The value chain here covers the entire network of actors involved in input supply, production, processing, marketing, and consumption, whilst operating inside an institutional environment that facilitates or hinders its performance. In this neo-system of agricultural value chain, farmers' collectives will participate at all the three main levels.

Firstly, as they deal directly with the products by producing, processing, or trading. Next through the Startups/FPO/Cooperatives they act also as supporters and deal indirectly with the product, but their services add value to it in their way of innovation and subsequent supply chain. Lastly, where they need support for this festival of G20 diplomats to network with global contacts and long-standing relationships with international groups.

This yearlong diplomatic festival through G20 is going to bring

new agribusiness value chain actors contains services of pre-farm production, like fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, tools and agricultural machinery; on-farm production, such as primary food processing and products, plus by-products; and post-farm production, related to secondary food processing, packaging and preservation.

To make the global agro value chains democratic, the international linkages have to do with the interdependencies of national and international markets, in which the agroindustry functions. The GVC has the specific condition that the market outlets negotiate with the foreign market, the latter comprising global wholesalers and retailers to reach out to international consumers. The retail sector of the Indian cooperative and support given through virtual platforms a new chapter can be written.

Laws, regulations, policies, international trade agreements, social norms, and public goods, all contribute to the agribusiness' milieu. Consequently, our diplomats will negotiate every bit of this with their counterparts of the global north. There is an environment that comprises economic, political, cultural, and demographic factors that shape the development goals and strategies of India at this juncture by democratizing the value chain.

In accordance with the policies, there are also institutional linkages. These relationships, among the different types of organizations that operate and interact with the agroindustry production chain, tend to affect the dynamics of the production chain, the access to international markets.

The farmers' collectives would be the ones which ultimately gain

more benefit from these negotiations, instead of the fragmented farmers. Linking farmers' collectives to the overseas market is also relevant as agro value chains are buyer-driven. We have an army of FPOs/cooperatives which are organised, coordinated, and can control the activities that reach the global consumer market through their core competencies of local products which have huge demand.

Therefore, in the context of a GVC, with support of G-20 negotiations our collectives may become the ones who define the “rules of the game” and appropriate the largest shares of the gains derived from agricultural production with collaborative effort of state and civil society.



Economic activity of these collectives is gaining a lot of public interest; for that the United Nations General Assembly declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Farmers-led GVC will serve as a means for linking local producers from developing countries to international markets. However, it is relevant to discuss the opportunities and challenges that come across this engagement, to analyze if it is beneficial for small farmers, lead firms or even public institutions. Many countries are intending to embrace a wide and diverse range of stakeholders in their design.

It is early to determine how widespread this will be. It is also not yet clear how inclusive this process will turn out to be. The participation of the relevant civil society actors may normally be vital to enable the farmers' collective voices to be fully expressed and heard. This takes thought and planning of this momentous period to rejig the phrase “the Wonder that was the farming system of India.”

POINT COUNTERPOINT


ALL OF US WERE DISTURBED AND SHOCKED BY THE MOVIE 'THE KASHMIR FILES'. IT FELT TO US LIKE A PROPAGANDA AND VULGAR MOVIE.

— ISRAELI FILMMAKER NADAV LAPID



HE HAS NO RIGHT TO CALL IT 'VULGAR PROPAGANDA', (HE) HAS TO BE A VULGAR OR MENTALLY SICK PERSON. HE'S A MEMBER OF THE 'TOOLKIT GANG.'

— ACTOR ANUPAM KHER



KAMAL NARAYAN OMER

Every year December 2 is observed as the National Pollution Control Day to honour those who lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy on this day in 1984. It was one of the biggest industrial pollution disasters in history. The leakage of the poisonous methyl isocyanate from an insecticide plant of the Union Carbide Corporation created havoc in the residential neighbourhood and the impact of that disaster is still witnessed in the flora and fauna of the area.

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(The author is CEO, IHW Council)

Pak drones major challenge: BSF DG

'We don't have fool-proof system to counter menace. Govt OK's ₹30 cr for cameras, gadgets at Pak, Bangla borders'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Border Security Force (BSF) Director General Pankaj Kumar Singh on Wednesday said the illegal activity of drones along the western front (Pakistan) remains a "major challenge" as the force "does not" have a fool-proof system to counter the menace.

He, however, said the Government has sanctioned a fund of ₹30 crore to procure surveillance cameras, drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other monitoring gadgets for the BSF deployed to guard Indian frontiers along Pakistan and Bangladesh even as it is deploying 5,500 security cameras in the front areas.

"... we will find solutions in the times to come and we are increasingly detecting and killing the drones," Singh said while addressing media on the eve of 58th Raising Day of BSF.

"We have launched to enhance the surveillance in border areas on a very big scale. This entails use of surveillance cameras and drones on the western and eastern theatres (Pakistan and Bangladesh fronts respectively). We have got around 5,500 CCTV surveillance cameras and some other gadgets and the Union Home Ministry has



BSF DG Pankaj Kumar Singh addresses the Annual Press Meet on the eve of the 58th BSF Raising Day on Wednesday

PTI

sanctioned a ₹30 crore fund for this procurement," he said.

The BSF has also developed some "low-cost technology solutions" that help us to mount effective surveillance in the border areas. Similar tools provided by foreign vendors were found very costly and hence we have now developed locally low-cost sensors and surveillance devices, he said.

The DG said the troops were getting "more and more" efficient in detecting and shooting down drones that fly from across Pakistan into India. The BSF has shot down 16 drones along the Pakistan front this year, he said. According to the BSF, 114 drone sightings were made by its troops along the Pakistan front (both IB and LoC) last year

while the numbers this year till November 10 have risen to almost double at 218.

The BSF chief said ensuring robust cyber security was also a "major challenge" before security agencies like the BSF as he cited the recent example of the Ransomware attack on the servers of the AIIMS here.

"Now with 5G technology coming up, we need to be prepared to ensure that our systems are safe," he said.

The BSF secures the India-Pakistan international border running from Jammu to Punjab and further up to Rajasthan and Gujarat. It works under the operational command of the Army at the Line of Control. It also guards the frontiers with Bangladesh.

JKSSB job scam: 20 booked, 14 places raided



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at 14 locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with alleged irregularities in the Accounts Assistant recruitment examination conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB).

The agency has booked 20 persons, including members of the JKSSB, in connection with the alleged manipulation of the examination. Premises of former member of JKSSB Neelam Khajuria were also being searched, officials said.

A case was registered against 20 accused including then member (JKAS) of JKSSB; then Medical officer of BSF Frontier Headquarters, Paloura; private persons; private company & unknown others on the allegations of irregularities in the examination conducted by Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for posts of Accounts Assistant, Finance Department.

The written test for said recruitment was conducted by JKSSB on March 6. The results were declared on April 21.

There were allegations of malpractices in the examination and the Jammu and Kashmir Government constituted an Inquiry Committee to look into the matter.

The report of the Committee revealed alleged conspiracy amongst officials of JKSSB, private company based at Bangalore, beneficiaries candidates and others causing gross irregularities in the conduct of said examination.

Certain allegations including high percentage of selected candidates from the districts of Jammu, Kathua and Reasi, leakage of question paper, violation of rules by JKSSB in assigning the task of setting question paper to a Bengaluru-based private company and forgery were found.

Those named accused in the case are Dr Karnail Singh, then Medical Officer, BSF Frontier Headquarters, Paloura; Ashok Kumar, then ASI in the J&K Police, Roshan Bral working as teacher, MeritTrac Services Private Limited, Bengaluru, Neelam Khajuria, JK Administrative Service and then Member, JKSSB, Anju Raina.

Then Section Officer, JKSSB, Mukta Devi; Lakshmi Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Shubam Patyar, Manisha Kumari, Avinash Sharma, Bandana Sharma, Gurjeet Kour, Bandana Choudhary, Rajinder Makhnotra, Gurpreet Singh, Kulwinder Singh, Harpal Singh and unknown officials and others have also been named as accused in the case.

Notices to TRS Min, RS MP for link with imposter CBI officer

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday served notices to Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) Minister Gangula Kamalakar and Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra after they were found to be allegedly associated with a fake CBI officer arrested from Tamil Nadu Bhawan in New Delhi.

A senior CBI official confirmed that a CBI team arrived at Kamalakar's residence in Karimnagar and served notices to the Minister. Another CBI team served notice to Ravichandra.

"They have been called to join the investigation at CBI Delhi headquarters on Thursday morning. They will be questioned in a case of fake CBI officer arrested a few days back in Delhi who claimed himself a senior IPS officer and accepting undue pecuniary advantage from various persons in lieu of their work done," he said.

On November 28, CBI arrested Kovvi Reddy Srinivas Rao of Chinnawaltair in Vishakhapatnam for impersonating a CBI Joint Director.

In a statement, CBI mentioned that they had registered a case against a private person, a resident of Chinnawaltair, Vishakhapatnam on the allegations of impersonating a senior IPS officer of CBI.

The accused was staying at Tamil Nadu House allegedly impersonating himself as Additional Director General of Police (ADGP).

"He has been impersonating himself as an IPS officer and Joint Director of CBI in lieu of undue advantage from unknown private persons for lobbying with unknown public servants for getting a favourable response in various matters which include the cases registered by different central investigative agencies," the CBI had said.

ED attaches properties worth ₹22.10 crore in BS-IV vehicle scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached properties worth ₹22.10 crore of firms connected to Diwakar Road Lines and Jatadhara Industries Pvt Ltd, (controlled by former MLA JC Prabhakar Reddy) and others in an ongoing money laundering investigation in the case relating to the BS-IV vehicles scam.

The attached properties also belong to C Gopal Reddy and Company (belonging to MLAs close associate Gopal Reddy, a Civil contractor of Tadipatri, Ananthapur District of Andhra Pradesh) and family members of JC Prabhakar Reddy. The Supreme Court in its order dated March 29, 2017, had ordered that vehicles that were not compliant to BS IV emission norms should not be sold in India by any manufacturer or dealer from April 1, 2017 and that the registering authorities were also prohibited from registering such vehicles from the cut off date.

However, Jatadhara Industries Pvt Ltd (JIPL) and C Gopal Reddy and Company in contravention to the SC Order purchased BS-III vehicles from Ashok Leyland Ltd. at discount and fraudulently registered the same as BS-IV vehicles by fabricating the invoice copies. Investigation revealed that some of the registrations were done in Nagaland, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the ED said in a statement.

The ED has gathered evidence in the form of fabricated invoices from RTO authorities in Nagaland and original invoices issued by Ashok Leyland as scrap for these vehicles and established the crime. The crime proceeds generated by owning/plying and/or selling these vehicles have been quantified as ₹38.36 crore, the agency said.

As a result of the probe, movable properties of ₹6.31 crore and 68 immovable properties of ₹15.79 crore belonging to JC Prabhakar Reddy and his family member and C Gopal Reddy and his family members have been attached, it said.

People's health affected by hospitals, medical stores run by fake pharmacists: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said that running hospitals, dispensaries and medical stores in the absence of any registered pharmacist or by fake unregistered chemists will ultimately affect the health of citizens.

A bench of justices MR Shah and MM Sundresh set aside a Patna High Court order passed on a plea by pharmacist Mukesh Kumar seeking direction to authorities concerned to not allow any person other than a registered pharmacist to compound, prepare, mix or dispense any medicine on the prescription of any medical practitioner. The bench said that without going into details of the grievances raised, the high court had disposed of the writ petition in a "most casual manner" by taking note of the fact



that the Bihar State Pharmacy Council has submitted that the fact-finding committee was constituted and they forwarded its report to the state government.

"The high court has disposed of the said public interest litigation - writ petition by observing that the appellant, after verifying each case individually may invite the attention to such illegality either to the Bihar State Pharmacy Council or the State of Bihar," the bench said.

'Plants of GM Mustard must be uprooted for environment'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The seeds of GM mustard have started germinating after their environmental release and before the plants start flowering in few weeks they must be uprooted to prevent the environment from getting irreversibly contaminated, campaigners against genetically modified crops told the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Union environment ministry approved the environmental release of transgenic mustard hybrid DMH-11 and the parental lines containing barnase, barstar and bar genes to be used for developing new hybrids.

Ahead of assuming UNSC chair, India's UN representative meets General Assembly Prez

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI | UNITED NATIONS

With India set to preside over the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month of December, its envoy in the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj has discussed priorities and issues before the body with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and President of the UN General Assembly Csaba Korosi.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit New York to preside over "signature events" in the UN Security Council on renewed orienta-

tion for reformed multilateralism on December 14 and on countering terrorism on December 15.

India assumes the monthly rotating Presidency of the Security Council from December 1, the second time after August 2021 that India will preside over the Council during its two-year tenure as an elected UNSC member.

"Today, delighted to call on Secretary-General @antonioguterres. Discussed the priorities and programme of work ahead of India's December Presidency in the @UN Security Council," Kamboj tweeted late Tuesday.



On Monday, Kamboj met Korosi, who tweeted: "Always a great pleasure to meet with India's PR @ruchirakamboj. Today's discussions focused on India's presidency of the Security Council, which begins on Thursday. I look forward to the month ahead."

India's 2021-2022 term on the Council ends December 31, with Kamboj, India's first woman Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York sitting in the President's seat at the powerful horseshoe table for the month. India will also take over the year-long G20 Presidency from December 1.

Countering terrorism and reformed multilateralism will be among the key priorities for India during its UNSC presidency that will culminate in the completion of its two-year tenure as non-permanent member of the 15-nation powerful body.

PM shrugging away from responsibility: Cong on post Covid vax deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Government told the Supreme Court that it cannot be held liable to compensate for the deaths post administration of Covid vaccines, the Congress on Wednesday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "shrugging away" from its responsibility.

"First: No deaths due to oxygen shortage. Then: No aid to Covid victims. Now: No accountability for vaccine-related deaths. Prime Minister Modi really knows how to shrug away responsibility. A true event manager!" the Congress said on its Twitter handle.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate also took a

dig, saying this government is never responsible for anything. "If there is death due to the side effects of Covid vaccine anywhere in the country, then the government is not responsible for it - people are getting it as per their wish. This is Modi government's affidavit in the Supreme Court. (Well this government is never responsible for anything)," she said in a tweet message.

In another tweet, she said, "Thank you Modi ji for quickly traversing the journey from photo on every vaccine certificate to no responsibility."

The Government cannot be held liable to compensate for the deaths due to an adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) post administration of Covid-19 vaccines, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

ICG holds meet to deal with oil spills in coastal areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to hone preparedness to deal with oil spill disaster in coastal areas, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Wednesday conducted the 24th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP) and Preparedness Meeting in Chennai.

Presently, as the third largest importer of crude, India receives a large volume of oil through ships. Similarly, it stands sixth in the world as major chemical importer country.

Both oil and chemicals if spilled pose inherent risks to the maritime zones of India and the connected coastlines housing large coastal popula-

tion, marine ecosystem, industries and various installations along with supporting tourism industry. Therefore, preventive measures by the Central Coordinating Agency, Ports, Ship Owners, Oil Handling Facilities, Coastal States and other concerned stakeholders are required to be taken to prepare for any likely marine spill.

In this backdrop, ICG Director General IV S Pathania, who is the Chairman of NOS-DCP, chaired the meeting. About 100 delegates, including representatives of various Ministries, Central and State Government departments and agencies, State Pollution Control Board, Ports and Oil Handling Companies participated.



Indian Navy personnel during a rehearsal at the Gateway of India for the Navy Day celebrations in Mumbai on Wednesday

PTI

5 arrested after rare tokay gecko lizard, cough syrup seized in Bihar

PTI ■ PURNEA

Five people were arrested after a rare tokay gecko lizard and intoxicating cough syrups were seized from a medical store in Bihar's Purnea district on Wednesday, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, the store in Baisi division was raided and the items were seized, said acting Superintendent of Police Surendra Kumar Saroj. "The owner of the shop managed to flee from the spot. Based on information gathered during the search, an alleged smuggler and his four associ-



ates were arrested in the case," he said.

Police, however, refused to reveal the identity of those arrested.

"The grey market value of the lizard would be around Rs 1.5 crore. Forest officials were informed about it. The Forest

Department will also initiate legal proceedings against the suspected smugglers," the officer said.

Tokay geckos are listed in Schedule III of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 as highly endangered.

It is suspected that the accused brought the lizard from West Bengal and they were planning to take it to Delhi, said Aditya Kumar, the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Baisi.

The seized cough syrups, 50 packs, were laced with the intoxicating banned substance codeine, he said.

Events galore as India to chair G-20

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With India ready to assume the Presidency of the prestigious G-20 grouping on Thursday for one year, the country will witness a series of events throughout the year including lighting up of 100 monuments with the G-20 logo, a lotus, and other such spectacles.

Besides the cultural extravaganza, India will host nearly 200 meetings of ministers and officials of the G-20 nations at more than 50 places in various parts of the country. The high-profile G-20 summit will be held in New Delhi for two days starting September nine,

next year, sources said here on Wednesday.

Delegates from the G-20 nations will also interact with 75 educational institutions besides showcasing G-20 at the Hornbill festival in Nagaland, and sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik etching the 20-nation global forum's logo on Puri beach.

The government is keen to showcase unique diversity of India and the foreign delegates will be flown to some places so far not frequented much by tourists and others, they said.

The officials' meetings including at the ministerial level and those at official and non-governmental levels will take place between December

1, 2022, and November 30, 2023.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to connect all districts and blocks of the country with the G-20, sources said the important meetings will be held in remote parts of the country.

Moreover, as part of the government's initiative to showcase the 'One District One Product' initiative, G20 delegates will be gifted with local products. Products unique to these particular regions and districts will be promoted during those G20 meetings. Also, plans are afoot to include the youth through events such as quiz competitions and talks, cultural pro-

grammes and competitions revolving around the G20 summit and its theme.

The Prime Minister on November eight unveiled the logo, theme and website of India's G-20 Presidency via video conferencing. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said from 1st December 2022, India will preside over the G-20 Summit and said it is a historic opportunity for the country.

He said the G-20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation representing around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the worldwide trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

Calling this a momentous occasion, the Prime Minister said the Presidency of G-20 during the year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a matter of pride for every Indian. The Prime Minister expressed happiness over the growing interest and activities about the G-20 and related events.

Remarking that the G-20 logo is not just any logo, the Prime Minister said it is a message, a feeling that runs in India's veins. He said, "It is a resolve that has been omnipresent in our thoughts through 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. He added that the thought of universal brotherhood is being reflected via the G-20 logo.

IN SHORT

R-DAY: BSF WOMEN CAMEL CONTINGENT TO TAKE PART

New Delhi: The Republic Day parade on January 26 next year will witness the BSF's first-ever women contingent riding camels along with their male counterparts, a top officer said on Wednesday. The famed camel contingent of the BSF has been a part of the Republic Day celebrations since 1976 after it replaced a similar squad of the Army which had been participating in the annual parade since it was first held in 1950.

EX-BABU APPROACHES EC OVER SHAH'S REMARK

New Delhi: Former bureaucrat EAS Sharma has approached the Election Commission over Home Minister Amit Shah's speech at an election rally in Gujarat in which he said that perpetrators of violence were "taught a lesson" in 2002. He asked the poll watchdog to ascertain the veracity of the remarks and take action if true.

'REGISTER AS COMPANY TO BROADCAST LOCAL NEWS'

New Delhi: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Wednesday asked multi-system operators to apply to register as a "company" within the next three months if they wish to provide local news and current affairs programmes on their networks as platform services. MSOs can then transmit their own programming service, either directly to their own subscribers or through one or more Local Cable Operators.

DEF MIN EXTENDS PENSION PAYMENT

New Delhi: The Ministry of Defence has approved the extension of pension payment for three months for banks' pensioners, who migrated to SPARSH, System for Pension Administration (Raksha) and whose identification was due in November 2022. All defence pensioners are urged to complete their annual identification/life certification by February 2023, defence ministry officials said here on Wednesday.

All set for 1st phase of Guj Assembly polls in 89 seats

788 candidates in election race

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Voting will be held on Thursday for the first phase of Gujarat Assembly elections in 89 seats spread across 19 districts in Saurashtra-Kutch and southern parts of the state where 788 candidates are in the fray. Campaigning for the first phase of the elections in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled state ended at 5 pm on Tuesday.

Voting will be held between 8 am and 5 pm on Thursday across 14,382 polling stations, the office of the state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said in a release. Out of the 89 seats going to polls in the first phase, the BJP won 48 in the 2017 election, the Congress had won 40, while one seat was bagged by an independent candidate. Apart



Polling officials collect EVMs and other election equipment at a distribution centre before leaving for their respective polling stations ahead of the first phase of Gujarat Assembly elections, in Rajkot on Wednesday PTI Photo

from the BJP, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), 36 other political outfits, including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) have also fielded candidates in various seats which will go to polls in

the first phase. The BJP and Congress are contesting in all the 89 seats. The new poll entrant AAP is contesting in 88 seats. Its candidate from Surat East constituency had withdrawn his candidature, leaving the party with one less seat to contest in the first phase. Among other parties, the BSP

has fielded 57 candidates, BTP 14 and CPI-M four candidates. As many as 339 independents are also in the fray in the first phase of polls. Out of the total 788 candidates, 70 are women including nine fielded by the BJP, six by the Congress and five by the AAP. AAP's chief ministerial candidate Isudan Gadhvi is contesting from Khambhaliya seat in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Saurashtra region that goes to polls on Thursday. AAP state unit president Gopal Italia is contesting from Katargam in Surat.

Among other prominent candidates in the first phase are Rivaba Jadeja, the wife of cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, who is contesting from Jamnagar (North), and BJP MLAs Harsh Sanghavi and Purnesh Modi from different seats in Surat and five-time MLA Parshottam Solanki from Bhavnagar (Rural). Sitting Congress MLAs like Lalit Kagathara, Lalit Vasoya, Rutvik Makwana and Mohammad Javed Pirzada are

among the candidates in fray in the first phase from seats in Saurashtra region. Seven-time MLA and veteran tribal leader Chhotu Vasava is contesting from Jhagadia in Bharuch. With 54 seats, the Saurashtra-Kutch region will be crucial for the Congress as it seeks to better its performance.

In the region, the Congress won 30 seats in 2017 compared to 16 in the 2012 election. The BJP, on the other hand, was reduced to 23 seats in 2017 as against 35 won by it in the previous election.

In south Gujarat, the Congress in 2017 bettered its tally to 10 compared to six in the previous polls, while the BJPs tally dropped to 25 in the last election from 28 earlier. South Gujarat also comprises Surat city with 12 seats which have remained the BJP's bastion since a long time.

The BJP has this time found a challenger in the AAP which has fielded some of its senior state leaders from Surat and hopes to win seven-eight seats in the city, as declared by its national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

Gujarat AAP's state president Gopal Italia is the candidate from Katargam, general secretary Manoj Sorathiya from Karanj and Patidar community leader Alpesh Kathiriyva from Varachha Road in Surat. Out of the total 4,91,35,400 registered voters in Gujarat, 2,39,76,670 are eligible to cast their votes in first phase of elections.

BJP leaders slam Cong for using 'abusive' words against Modi

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

On the eve of the Gujarat Assembly polls' first phase, the BJP on Wednesday intensified its attack on the Congress over its president Mallikarjun Kharge's 'Ravan' jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said people will give a befitting reply to the opposition party.

During a roadshow, BJP president J P Nadda said Kharge's barb and another Congress leader Madhusudan Mistry's 'aukaat' remark at Modi expose the party's mindset and betray its frustration as the party stands nowhere while the BJP is getting one-sided support across the state.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told reporters that the people of Gujarat will give a befitting reply to those using abusive words for the prime minister who, he asserted, is Gujarat's 'honour and pride'.

Nadda alleged that Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have been unable to reconcile themselves to accepting Modi as prime minister and often used objectionable comments against him. Their party's leaders have taken cue from them in targeting Modi, he said. "Any



leader using such a language in democracy should be ashamed. People of India love and trust Modi," the BJP chief said.

Addressing a poll rally in Gujarat on Monday, Kharge had said the prime minister asks people to vote "looking at his face" in all elections. "Are you 100-headed like Ravan?" he had asked.

The BJP dubbed Kharge's remarks an insult to the people of Gujarat. Kharge's 'Ravan' remark against Modi reflects the mentality of the "entire Congress leadership", Singh said. "Modi is Gujarat's honour and pride in the 21st Century. And today, foul language is being used by the Congress for our prime minister," he said. Voting for 89 of 182 assembly constituencies in Gujarat will be held on

Thursday in the first phase. Singh said other opposition parties are also trying to level baseless allegations against the prime minister.

Using abusive words for anyone does not reflect a healthy democracy, he said.

"The prime minister's post is not just a person, it is an institution. I am confident the people of Gujarat will give a befitting reply to those who had used abusive words for the prime minister, who is Gujarat's honour and pride," Singh added.

The BJP also posted on social media a collage of various controversial comments made by Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi's "maut ke saudagar" remark in 2007, targeting Prime Minister Modi.

Take strict action against 'sponsored' opinion polls, Cong urges EC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has urged the Election Commission to take strict action against the alleged airing of "sponsored" opinion polls on the Gujarat Assembly election ahead of voting in the first phase on Thursday and claimed it was a brazen attempt to influence the electorate.

A delegation of Congress leaders led by AICC legal cell head Vivek Tankha met the Election Commission and apprised the poll body of the "violations by media". The opposition party urged the EC to take action against news

channels violating directions issued by it in respect of programmes related to the dissemination of election results.

They alleged that the media channels were predicting the poll outcome in a bid to influence the voters and this was a serious issue.

Tankha also claimed that they have information concerning the "safety of the ballot boxes" and urged the Commission to ensure there is no tampering. The Congress said it has observed that certain news channels have been publishing/publicising programmes related to the dissemination of results for the 2022 Gujarat Legislative

Assembly. "These programmes are publishing 'opinion polls' favouring one particular party over the other.

The programmes and their result prediction about the prospects of the various political parties in the Gujarat elections clearly aim to influence the electors of the constituencies going to polls," the memorandum said.

"The Commission must enforce what it commands. We request this Commission to utilise its powers under Article 324 of Constitution of India to address issue by passing immediate directions to news channels," memorandum also said. The Congress leaders urged

the EC to act with urgency as these violations undermine the sanctity of electoral laws and the authority of the Commission. "We all went to Election Commission and told it that level playing field is being disturbed by the media. Ahead of polling tomorrow, they are giving results methodically, as if result has come beforehand," Tankha said.

He said the exit polls are banned and predictions are banned, but still this is being done. "There is no fear of Election Commission. The EC was worried about this issue and has assured us it will look into it as it was a serious matter.

FROM PAGE 1

DRUGS WORTH ₹478 CR SEIZED ON GUJARAT ASSEMBLY POLL EVE

AAP state unit president Gopal Italia is contesting from Katargam in Surat.

Among other prominent candidates in the first phase are Rivaba Jadeja, the wife of cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, who is contesting from Jamnagar (North), and BJP MLAs Harsh Sanghavi and Purnesh Modi from different seats in Surat and five-time MLA Parshottam Solanki from Bhavnagar (Rural).

Sitting Congress MLAs like Lalit Kagathara, Lalit Vasoya, Rutvik Makwana and Mohammad Javed Pirzada are among the candidates in fray in the first phase from seats in Saurashtra region.

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With 54 seats, the Saurashtra-Kutch region will be crucial for the Congress as it seeks to better its performance. In the region, the Congress won 30 seats in 2017 compared to 16 in the 2012 election. The BJP, on the other hand, was reduced to 23 seats in 2017 as against 35 won by it in the previous election.

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SOMEBODY HAS TO SPEAK UP, SAYS DEFIANT LAPID

"It's a very subjective way," he added.

Lapid even apologised if people got hurt because of his remarks. He also added that other jury members felt the same way, but refrained from speaking openly," he said. "The Kashmir Files" was screened at the film festival alongside 14 other films.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of 53rd edition of the International Film Festival of India, Lapid had said, "All of us are disturbed. It felt to us like a propaganda, vulgar movie inappropriate for an artistic competitive section of such a prestigious competition. I feel totally comfortable in sharing these feelings openly on stage, since the spirit of the festival truly accepts critical discussion which is essential for art and life."

Claiming that his statements and opinions were shared by all the jury members, Lapid said, "All of us were sitting in the screening room and had the same feelings after the screening. Everyone was aware of what was

going to be said. I have emails and WhatsApp to prove it. I understand that under pressure or fear or anxiety, people can suddenly change their statements."

AAP MAY NOT EVEN OPEN ACCOUNT IN GUJARAT: SHAH

"But in politics only sustained efforts show results. So let's wait and see," he said.

Shah, who has been talking about issues of national security in the campaign for the state election, said they are important in every assembly poll.

The Opposition has accused the BJP of raising national issues like terrorism in state elections to divert the people's attention from governance-related concerns.

"Is the security of Gujarat associated with national security or not?"

"Security of Gujarat and national security are not different issues. And if the country is not secure, how can Gujarat be secure? Therefore, national security is a major issue in all state assembly polls.

"Being a border state, the people of Gujarat are sensitive about national security. We cannot afford to have national security impacted at any one location in the country," he said while replying to a question.

With the Opposition often accusing the government of misusing investigation agencies against its political rivals, Shah said there is an independent and neutral judiciary in the country, and "if there is any misuse of investigation agencies, then they can approach the judiciary". Shah, who has been raising law and order issues in his campaign speeches, described ending lawlessness as one of the achievements of the BJP government in Gujarat.

The former BJP president described the party's poll promise to set up an anti-radicalisation cell as a good initiative and said any organisation like PFI that pushes youths towards terrorism will not be tolerated.

He said the Popular Front of India (PFI) was banned after due diligence and several states had demanded it.

"The Modi government decided to ban PFI after gathering a lot of information and proof related to their anti-national activities, especially their activities to push youth towards terrorism by radicalising them.

"And several states have demanded to ban PFI. Such activities of any organisation will not be tolerated in the Modi government," Shah told PTI.

On whether BJP's announcement in manifesto on setting up an anti-radicalisation cell in Gujarat will be implemented in other states also, Shah said, "It is a good initiative. Let it be implemented (here) first. It will be given a legal shape and its working mechanism will be decided."

He said radicalisation should be checked not only in Gujarat but in the entire country.

"And it (anti-radicalisation cell) can be considered at the national level and in other states," Shah said, adding the entire world is concerned about radicalisation.

BILKIS BANO MOVES SC AGAINST REMISSION TO RAPE CONVICTS

Earlier, a bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and CT Ravikumar had said it would hear a fresh plea moved by a women's organisation, National Federation of Indian Women, challenging the remission of sentence and the release of convicts in the case.

The top court had issued notice to State and Central Governments on the batch of petitions challenging the remission. As per the affidavit filed by Union Home Ministry, trial court and CBI objected to the remission, while the Gujarat Government and Union Home Ministry supported the early release.

Bano was 21 years old and five months pregnant when she was gang-raped while fleeing the riots that broke out after the Godhra train burning incident. Her three-year-old daughter was among the seven family members killed.

The 11 men convicted in the case walked out of the Godhra sub-jail on August 15 after the Gujarat Government allowed their release under its remission policy. They had completed more than 15 years in jail.

INDIA'S GDP GROWTH FELL TO 6.3% IN JULY-SEPT QUARTER

However, the GVA in the manufacturing sector contracted 4.3 per cent during the quarter from 5.6 per cent growth during the year-ago period.

GVA in mining also declined by 2.8 per cent in the quarter compared to 14.5 per cent growth. The GVA growth in the construction sector also decelerated to 6.6 per cent in the quarter from 8.1 per cent.

The electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services segment grew by 5.6 per cent in the quarter compared to 8.5 per cent a year ago. GVA growth in the services sector — trade, hotel, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting — was 14.7 per cent during the second quarter against 9.6 per cent.

Financial, real estate and professional services grew by 7.2 per cent in the first quarter over 6.1 per cent earlier. Public administration, defence and other services posted 6.5 per cent growth against 19.4 per cent in the second quarter of the last fiscal.

The NSO stated that Nominal

GDP or GDP at Current Prices in Q2 2022-23 is estimated at Rs 65.31 lakh crore, as against Rs 56.20 lakh crore in Q2 2021-22, showing a growth of 16.2 per cent as compared to 19.0 per cent in Q2 2021-22.

CHINA WARNS US

"Some US officials have pointed fingers and sought to fe flames and drive a wedge between the two countries. This is disgraceful. We hope the US could do more things that contribute to regional peace and stability," Zhao made the remarks during a media briefing in Beijing on June 9.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488 km long LAC. While China claims Arunachal Pradesh as Southern Tibet, India asserts that the dispute covered the Aksai Chin area which was occupied by China during the 1962 war.

India has consistently maintained that peace and tranquility along the LAC are important for the overall development of bilateral ties. The Indian and Chinese militaries have held 16 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the border standoff.

RAINBOW ITEMS ALLOWED

"FIFA continues to work closely with the Host Country to ensure the full implementation of related regulations and agreed protocols," FIFA said.

Interestingly, the players for both England and Wales took a knee before their final World Cup group game. The teams made the gesture on Tuesday as a sign of solidarity in the fight against discrimination.

England and Wales were among seven European nations that had intended to have their captains wear "One Love" armbands in support of inclusivity at the tournament in Qatar. But they had to abandon those plans after FIFA threatened sporting sanctions for any captain that wore them. England coach Gareth Southgate said his players would take a knee at the start of the tournament. The team did it at all three Group B matches in Qatar. Wales only did it Tuesday.

"We feel this is the biggest and we think it's a strong statement that will go around the world for young people, in particular, to see that inclusivity is very important," Southgate said. Additionally, the UK's first openly gay Sports Minister attended the game and wore the armband. Stuart Andrew said he decided to wear it in support of inclusivity at sporting events.

"Sport has the power to unite, inspire," Andrew wrote on Twitter, adding it was "vital" that all sporting events are open and inclusive.

Punjab CM steps up AAP's free power pitch, brings bunch of 25K 'zero' electricity bills

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday brought a bunch of 25,000 "zero" electricity bills from his state and added the people of Gujarat will get similar bills if Aam Aadmi Party is voted to power in the Assembly polls.

Providing free electricity up to 300 units per month is one of the main election "guarantees" of AAP in Gujarat.

Voting for 182 Assembly seats will be held in two phases on December 1 and 5. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. The campaigning for the first phase ended on Tuesday evening.

Addressing a press conference here, Mann said the zero electricity bills were received by 61 lakh households in Punjab, which is a testimony of AAP's commitment that it walks the talk.

"I have brought 25,000 zero electricity bills with the names



and addresses which you can check. To date, there are around 75 lakh electric metres in Punjab. As many as 61 lakh households have received zero electricity bills.

"The number of such bills for December will be 67 lakh because of low consumption in winter. The same will increase to 71 lakh in January. We do what we say, and we say what we can do. The same can happen in Gujarat. We have made a promise and will deliver," he said.

Mann said the Punjab government has set up 100 mohalla clinics till August 15 and

plans to establish more than 500 more such clinics by January 26. The AAP government in Punjab had also guaranteed to revert to the old pension scheme (OPS) and the notification for the same has been issued, Mann said.

"Not just that, our government also stopped the pension to legislatures that saved crores of rupees of public exchequer," he added. Mann was referring to the amendment bill passed in June this year by the Legislative Assembly putting an end to multiple pensions to ex-MLAs for every term served.

"The government's work is to collect tax and give it back to the people in the form of free electricity, infrastructure, roads, colleges, and mohalla clinics. We are setting up 16 medical colleges," he said.

Mann took potshots at the "so-called Gujarat model", saying when one goes off the highways in the state, "roads exist in potholes rather than potholes in roads".

EMU trains graze in Sealdah, no injury reported

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The passengers of a Kolkata local train had a providential escape when the EMU train they were travelling in grazed past another train on Wednesday afternoon at the entry point of the Sealdah station supposedly the busiest train terminus in the country.

The accident that led to no injuries resulted in the entire train services from Sealdah North station getting choked for several hours, Railway authorities said.

The accident occurred when the driver of one of the EMU trains bound for the carshed overshot the signal by a few metres and stopped barely a couple of feet ahead of a level junction of two tracks.

The other EMU train going to Ranaghat grazed past the driver's cabin of the first train leading to the first train getting derailed.

As the second train was at a very low speed a major accident was averted, E Chakrabarty the Eastern Railway CPRO said.

952 illegal appointments so far in schools, CBI tells HC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation has so far been able to dig out the names of 952 people who obtained illegal appointments in Bengal school services. The CBI probing the TET and school level appointment scam has told the Calcutta High Court that it has so far been able to find out 952 people who secured forged recommendations of appointment to various schools.

After getting the CBI report the Court stayed its own order directing the SSC to publish in its website the names of 183 fake candidates who had obtained appointments via illegal means.

The Court had also asked the Commission to get the names of the illegal appointees in newspapers. The Court decision had come after the SSC had told it that 183 people had been illegally appointed. However after the CBI's submission that it had dug out the names of 952 illegal appointees thus far, the Court stayed the earlier order and directed the

investigation to be carried further.

The Court also made a passing remark which could further embarrass Trinamool Congress Government when the single Bench rued tendency of the State to rush to the Supreme Court to get stays against High Court orders disqualifying illegally appointed school employees — instead of helping the judiciary in disposing of such cases.

A section of higher judiciary had recently come under severe attack from TMC leadership who have questioned impartiality of some judges. "Some judges are grinding their political so that after retirement they can get plum posts or nominations in Parliament," Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said.

ED and CBI raids in the recent past over orders passed by Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay in SSC and TET cases have seen a number of senior TMC politicians including ministers, MLAs and other senior officials going to jail.

SUICIDE BLAST TARGETING POLICE KILLS 4 IN PAK

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/KARACHI

A suicide bomber from the banned Pakistani Taliban blew himself up near a patrolling police truck carrying security personnel to protect polio workers in the restive Balochistan province on Wednesday, killing at least four people and injuring 26 others, including 23 policemen.

The attacker targeted the paramilitary Constabulary truck in Quetta's Baleli area, which was going to provide security to polio workers at the ongoing drive. Quetta Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) Ghulam Azfar Mahesar confirmed the attack and said that a total of three vehicles were hit in the blast.

"Looking at the crime scene and given that the truck toppled, it is estimated that 25 kilograms of explosives were used," he said.

The death toll from the targeted suicide attack in Quetta rose further as another child died during treatment, Geo News reported. The attack killed a cop and a child on the spot, and reportedly left 26 including 23 cops wounded, it said.

The death toll climbed to 4 after a woman and her child injured in the bombing suc-



cumbed to their injuries later in the day, the report quoted the hospital administration as saying. Earlier, the hospital administration had said that most of the injured are out of danger.

The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group claimed responsibility for the attack which came just two days after the group announced to call off its ceasefire.

It said the attack was in retaliation for the killing of Abdul Wali also known as Omar Khalid Khurrassni killed in Afghanistan in August.

Mahesar said that the explosion was a suicide attack as they have found the remains of a suicide bomber near the crime

scene. Preliminary police investigations showed that a rickshaw hit the police truck. Authorities have declared an emergency in the hospitals of Quetta to treat the victims.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the incident and directed the authorities to initiate an investigation into the attack.

According to the state-run Radio Pakistan, the premier expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of life.

He also said that polio workers across the country were fulfilling their responsibilities without caring for their lives. "Eliminating polio virus

from the country is amongst the top priorities of the government and we will not rest until polio is completely eradicated," he said, asserting that "evil elements" would always fail to harm the anti-polio campaign in the country.

President Dr Arif Alvi also condemned the attack and prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased and the recovery of the injured. He said that children were Pakistan's most valuable asset and the government was determined to protect them from diseases such as polio.

"The State will not allow anti-social elements to interfere in the mission of complete eradication of polio," he said.



Taliban: 10 killed in bombing of Afghan religious school

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

A Taliban official says at least 10 students were killed Wednesday when a bomb blast hit a religious school in northern Afghanistan.

Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor says several others were wounded in the blast at the madrasa in Aybak, capital of the northern Samangan province.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But the

Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State group has been waging a campaign of violence that escalated since the Taliban took power in August 2021.

IS has carried out bombings targeting in particular Afghanistan's Shiite Muslim minority but has also targeted Sunni mosques and madrassas, especially ones connected to the Taliban. The Taliban and the Islamic State group both adhere to a hard-line ideology but are bitter rivals.

Former President Jiang Zemin, who guided China's rise, dies

AP ■ BEIJING

Former President Jiang Zemin, who led China out of isolation after the army crushed the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests in 1989 and supported economic reforms that led to a decade of explosive growth, died Wednesday. He was 96.

Jiang died of leukemia and multiple organ failure in Shanghai, where he was a former mayor and Communist Party secretary, state TV and the official Xinhua News Agency reported. A surprise choice to lead a divided Communist Party after the 1989 turmoil, Jiang saw China through history-making changes including a revival of market-oriented reforms, the return of Hong Kong from British rule in 1997 and Beijing's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Even as China opened to the outside, Jiang's government was stamped out dissent. It jailed human rights, labor and pro-democracy activists and banned the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which the ruling party saw as a threat to its monopoly on power.

Jiang gave up his last official title in 2004 but remained a force behind the scenes in the wran-



gling that led to the rise of current President Xi Jinping, who took power in 2012. Xi has tightened political control, crushed China's little remaining dissent and reasserted the dominance of state industry.

Rumors that Jiang might be in declining health spread after he missed a ruling party congress in October at which Xi, China's most powerful figure since at least the 1980s, broke with tradition and awarded himself a third five-year term as leader.

Jiang was on the verge of retirement as Shanghai party leader in 1989 when he was drafted by then-paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to pull together the party and nation. He succeeded Zhao Ziyang, who was dismissed by Deng due to his sympathy for the student-led Tiananmen Square protesters and was held under house arrest until his 2005 death.



Landmark same-sex marriage Bill wins Senate passage

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Senate passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to protect same-sex marriages, an extraordinary sign of shifting national politics on the issue and a measure of relief for the hundreds of thousands of same-sex couples who have married since the Supreme Court's 2015 decision that legalized gay marriage nationwide.

The bill, which would ensure that same-sex and interracial marriages are enshrined in federal law, was approved 61-36 on Tuesday, including support from 12 Republicans. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the legislation was "a long time coming" and part of America's "difficult but inexorable march towards greater equality."

Democrats are moving quickly, while the party still holds the majority in both chambers of Congress. The legislation now moves to the House for a final vote.

President Joe Biden praised the bipartisan vote and said he will sign the bill "promptly and proudly" if it is passed by the House. He said it will ensure that LGBTQ youth "will grow up knowing that they, too, can lead full, happy lives and build families of their own."

The bill has gained steady momentum since the Supreme Court's June decision that overturned the federal right to an abortion, a ruling that included a concurring opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas that suggested same-sex marriage could also come under threat. Bipartisan Senate negotiations got a kick-start this summer when 47 Republicans unexpectedly voted for a House bill and gave supporters new optimism.

Australia steps up calls for US to drop WikiLeaks charges

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he recently told US President Joe Biden's administration to bring WikiLeaks founder and Australian citizen Julian Assange's prosecution to a close.

Albanese's comments Wednesday to Parliament appear to be an escalation of Australia's diplomatic pressure on the United States to drop spying charges against the 51-year-old who is resisting extradition from Britain.

"I have raised this personally with representatives of the United States government. My position is clear and has been made clear to the US administration: That it is time that this matter be brought to a close," Albanese told Parliament.

"This is an Australian citizen," Albanese added. "I don't have sympathy for Mr Assange's actions on a whole range of matters, but...You have to reach a point whereby what is the point of...Continuing this legal action which could be caught up now for many years into the future?"

Albanese did not say whether he discussed Assange directly with Biden when the



pair held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines a Cambodian summit two weeks ago. But Albanese said he had advocated for Assange "recently in meetings". Albanese compared Assange's treatment to that of former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, who the prime minister said was "now able to participate freely in US society".

US prosecutors allege Assange helped Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk. Then-US President Barack Obama commuted Manning's 35-year sentence to seven years, which allowed her release in 2017.

International news outlets that cooperated with WikiLeaks to publish confidential US State

Department cables in 2010 — The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais and DER SPIEGEL — published an open letter this week calling for Assange's prosecution to be dropped.

Albanese spoke in response to independent lawmaker Monique Ryan's question if the Australian government would intervene to bring Assange home.

Albanese's government has been circumspect about Assange's prosecution since it was elected in May. Ministers' criticisms have been restrained to phrases such as the case had "dragged on for too long".

Turkey: More steps needed for nod to Nordic States' NATO bid

AP ■ BUCHAREST

Sweden and Finland have made some progress in meeting Ankara's security concerns but still need to undertake "concrete steps" to win Turkey's approval for their NATO membership bids, the Turkish foreign minister said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg underlined that "it is time to welcome them as full fledged members of the alliance."

The military alliance is eager to add the two Nordic

nations to its ranks.

Sweden and Finland abandoned their longstanding policies of military nonalignment and applied for membership in the alliance after Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February, amid concerns that Russia might target them next.

Turkey, which has accused the Nordic countries of ignoring threats to Turkey from Kurdish militants and other groups that it considers as terrorists, has not endorsed their accession.

The parliaments of Turkey and Hungary have yet to rati-

fy their applications. The 28 other NATO states have already done so.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met with his Swedish and Finnish counterparts in the sidelines of a NATO meeting in Bucharest on Tuesday.

"These two countries have taken some steps to fulfill their obligations. We do not ignore the steps that were taken," Cavusoglu told Turkish journalists on Wednesday. "However, there is no concrete development yet on some issues such as the extradition

(of suspects wanted by Turkey) and the freezing of terrorist assets."

"We reminded (them) that in the end, it's the Turkish people and the Turkish parliament that needs to be convinced," he said.

The minister of Sweden and Finland sounded more upbeat.

Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström told Sweden broadcaster SVT that "progress was being made" regarding NATO membership, and that he would soon travel to Turkey.

Ukraine welcomes arms offers

AP ■ BUCHAREST

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned Russia's weeks-long assault on Ukraine's power grid, saying as NATO scrambled on Wednesday to scrape up replacement electrical gear that Russia had turned its war machine to strikes aiming to "turn off the heat...so that civilians suffer."

Blinken spoke at a NATO foreign ministers meeting in Bucharest, Romania devoted in part to coordinating aid to keep the lights — and furnaces — on in Ukraine, where Russian strikes have damaged an estimated third of that country's electrical infrastructure.

"Because President (Vladimir) Putin is failing to defeat Ukraine militarily, he is now prosecuting war against civilians," Blinken said.

"And he's doing that by trying to destroy Ukraine's energy infrastructure, to turn off the light, to turn off the heat, to turn off the water so that civilians suffer. "What is very clear to me... is that support remains strong, resolute, determined" on the behalf of NATO foreign ministers to continue supporting Ukraine as Russia's invasion moves toward a February anniversary, Blinken said.

NATO estimates that Russian strikes have damaged one-third of Ukraine's electrical infrastructure. It says the missiles



appear to be particularly targeting vulnerable transmission networks, leaving Ukrainians dealing with darkness and cold.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has underscored that his country's biggest needs now are electrical gear and more advanced air-defense systems than it has gotten from the US and other allies so far, to deal with the Russian missile strikes.

"In a nutshell, Patriots and (electricity) transformers is what Ukraine needs the most," Kuleba declared on Tuesday.

Heading into a one-on-one session with Blinken on the sidelines of the NATO gathering, Kuleba said that Ukraine at the session had received "a number of commitments, new commit-

ments, from various NATO members with regard to providing Ukraine with more defensive weapons and energy equipment."

But Kuleba declined to answer questions about whether that included promises of badly wanted Patriot missile batteries, from the US or any other ally.

Ukraine is seeking US-made Patriot missile batteries or other more advanced air defense systems than it has gotten so far from the United States and other allies to block Russian air strikes. Kuleba did not respond to repeated questions from a reporter ahead of a meeting with Blinken about whether he had gotten any commitments on Patriots.

The provision of Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Ukraine would mark a major advance in the kinds of air defense systems the West is sending to help the war-torn country defend itself from Russian aerial attack.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed that deliveries of such sophisticated surface-to-air missiles systems are under consideration among some allies. The military organization does not possess any weapons, only its member countries do.

A senior US defense official who briefed Pentagon reporters on Tuesday, on condition of anonymity, said that the United States is open to providing

Patriots. While Ukraine has asked for the system for months, the US and its allies have been hesitant to provide it to avoid further provoking Russia.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Tuesday that his country's offer to send Patriots to Poland remains on the table, despite Warsaw's suggestion that they should go to Ukraine instead.

Ukraine does not have personnel trained to used Patriots — a complicated air defense system of which there are three main types, with varying ranges and altitudes. Germany has lent them to Slovakia and Turkey but sent its own technicians to operate the missiles.

Egyptians call on British Museum to return Rosetta stone

AP ■ CAIRO

The debate over who owns ancient artifacts has been an increasing challenge to museums across Europe and America, and the spotlight has fallen on the most visited piece in the British Museum: The Rosetta stone.

The inscriptions on the dark grey granite slab became the seminal breakthrough in deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics after it was taken from Egypt by forces of the British



empire in 1801.

Now, as Britain's largest museum marks the 200-year anniversary of the decipher-

ment of hieroglyphics, thousands of Egyptians are demanding the stone's return.

"The British Museum's holding of the stone is a symbol of Western cultural violence against Egypt," said Monica Hanna, dean at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, and organizer of one of two petitions calling for the stone's return.

The acquisition of the Rosetta Stone was tied up in the imperial battles between Britain and France.

China is expanding its nuclear arsenal and is likely to have a stockpile of about 1,500 warheads by 2035, up from the current estimated number of 400, the Pentagon has said, with Beijing focusing on accelerating its nuclear capabilities as it seeks to challenge America's global dominance.

In its annual report to Congress on China's ambitious military build-up, the Pentagon said on Tuesday that over the next decade, Beijing aims to mod-

ernise, diversify, and expand its nuclear forces.

China's current nuclear modernisation exercise has exceeded the previous modernisation attempts in both scale and complexity, it said.

China is investing in and expanding the number of its land, sea, and air-based nuclear delivery platforms and constructing the infrastructure necessary to support this major expansion of its nuclear forces, the report said.

China is also supporting this expansion by increasing its capacity to produce and separate

plutonium by constructing fast breeder reactors and reprocessing facilities. In 2021, Beijing probably accelerated its nuclear expansion, it said. The Pentagon said it estimates that China's operational nuclear warheads stockpile has surpassed 400.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) plans to "basically complete modernisation" of its national defence and armed forces by 2035, said the report.

"If China continues the pace of its nuclear expansion, it will likely field a stockpile of about 1,500 warheads by its 2035 time-

line," it said.

The Chinese strategy is a determined pursuit to amass and expand its national power to transform, at least, aspects of the international system to make it more favourable to its political system and its national interests as they define them, said a senior defense official.

"They aim to expand their national power through both domestic and foreign policy initiatives. So, the global security initiative that President Xi Jinping laid out at... is one of these in which the PRC seeks to kind of

paint itself as a provider of global public goods," the official said.

There have been more coercive and aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region, including some of which the US would highlight as being dangerous, the official noted. "So PLA vessels and aircraft have exhibited an increase in unsafe and unprofessional behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region, including for the aircraft aerobatics, discharging chaff and other activities that could make it dangerous for nearby aircraft to maneuver safely," the official noted.

NEW ZEALAND WIN ODI SERIES AGAINST INDIA

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

A sloppy India lost the three-match ODI series against New Zealand 0-1 after rain washed out the third and final game here on Wednesday.

Chasing 220, New Zealand were cruising at 104/1 in 18 overs, 50 runs ahead of the Duckworth-Lewis par score, when rain interrupted the game yet again in the white-ball series.

Kane Williamson and Co, needing just 116 runs from as many as 32 overs, though had to be content with a 'no result' as the game was two overs short to be technically called complete.

Having won the first ODI in Auckland by seven wickets, New Zealand thus sealed the series 1-0.

The second match in Hamilton, too, was abandoned after two stoppages.

Overall, only two matches in the six-ball white-ball series produced result, exposing the poor planning on part of the concerned authorities. The series was organised less than a week after the T20 World Cup in neighbouring Australia.

As for India, the series exposed their flawed selection policy.

It all began with an inspiring bowling show by the Kiwi pacers with comeback man Adam Milne (3/57) and Daryl Mitchell (7-0-25-3) bundling out India for 219 in 47.3 overs after Kane Williamson won a good toss at an overcast Hagley Oval.

The likes of Rishabh Pant (10 off 16 balls), Suryakumar Yadav (6; 10b) and Deepak Hooda (12; 25b) were the biggest failures as they lacked application and failed to bide time after Milne rocked the top-order.

Seeking to save the series, India found themselves in a spot of bother, losing half of the side in 25.3 overs.

But thanks to the efforts by Washington Sundar (51 off 64 balls; 5x4s, 1x6) and Shreyas Iyer



(49; 59b) India managed to get past the 200-run mark.

Milne, who sat out the second ODI, took the opening duo of Shubman Gill (13; 22b) and Shikhar Dhawan (28; 45b) after Matt Henry stifled them with a tidy bowling display (10-2-29-0), before Mitchell and Tim Southee (8.3-1-36-2) wrapped up the issue.

Dhawan and his men were further disappointed by an inexperienced bowling attack as they struggled to get a breakthrough.

Finn Allen (57 from 54 balls; 8x4, 1x6) smashed his fourth ODI fifty and his 97-run opening partnership with Devon Conway (38) set the tone.

After a sedate start — 28 for no loss in 7 overs — they switched gears with Conway smashing Chahar for four boundaries in an over, before Allen took the attack to rookie pacer Umran Malik.

Dhawan struggled with his limited bowling options as the Kiwis shone in their own conditions.

The Indian batters showed a lack of application as Milne and Mitchell led New Zealand's fine bowling show.

The spin bowling all-rounder, who showed his mettle with the bat with a 37 not out from 16 balls in India's 306 for 7 in the first ODI, anchored the show with his maiden ODI fifty after Iyer failed to convert a promising start.

Among the designated batters, only Iyer looked in control and played some delectable shots before being dismissed by

a well-judged forward-running catch by Devon Conway off Lockie Ferguson's bowling.

Iyer hit eight fluent boundaries during his 59-ball knock but fell one run short of fifty as India looked in deep trouble, losing half of their side for 121 runs.

Williamson stood out with his captaincy and cleverly rotated his bowlers. Asked to bat under overcast conditions, India had a slow and cautious start.

Gill, who looked fluent in the first two ODIs, curbed his stroke-making instinct and was five off 18 balls, while his senior partner Dhawan looked to attack.

Dhawan stepped out to Southee with disdain in the third over but the bowler bounced back with a maiden in his next over. Henry, on the other end, was at his tidy best.

The Indian openers began to break free towards the end of

powerplay.

Gill began scoring with successive fours off Milne, but soon lost his patience and chipped one to the square leg for a soft dismissal.

Desperate to step up the run-rate, Dhawan played on to become Milne's second victim.

Having taken T20 cricket by storm, Suryakumar failed to spend time in the middle and became Milne's third scalp.

Hooda, who retained his spot despite criticism surrounding Sanju Samson's axe in the second ODI, failed to impress yet again and got out for 12.

After Iyer failed to convert his start, India were in desperate need of a partnership with Sundar and Hooda in the middle.

But Hooda never looked in control and fell to a rising Southee delivery down the leg side.

A lot of positives came from this ODI series: Shastri

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

India may have lost the rain-marred ODI series in New Zealand but former coach Ravi Shastri feels the visitors can still take a lot of positives from the three outings in Shubman Gill's batting and Umran Malik's bowling.

"I think a lot of positives came from this one-day series. Shreyas Iyer getting runs in a couple of matches, willing to stay there and willing to go through the tough period. Suryakumar of course has the potential, has the talent, and he will deliver," Shastri said during Prime Video's post-match coverage.

Opening up on the young Indian players in the current squad, he added, "Washington Sundar, I thought was very good. And even Umran Malik, I like the way he bowled.



There's potential there. If he can persevere, it will be very good.

"All around, there was very positive Shubman Gill at the start of the innings. These conditions are tough, you don't get these conditions often, and you don't travel to New Zealand that often.

"So I think for young cricketers to come here and get this kind of exposure is excellent. The weather and the ground dimensions need to be taken into account."

Rishabh Pant match-winner, Samson has to wait: Dhawan



PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

India's stand-in skipper Shikhar Dhawan on Wednesday said Rishabh Pant is a proven 'match-winner' and deserves full backing from the team management while he endures a difficult phase.

Dhawan also asked Sanju Samson to wait for his chances.

Known for his flamboyance, the left-handed Pant once again failed after miscuing a rising delivery to get out for a 16-ball 10 as India folded for 219 in

the third and final ODI against New Zealand here on Wednesday.

"Overall you have to see the larger picture and who is your match winner. You analyse and your decisions are based on that," Dhawan said at the post-match interaction.

Pant's scores in his last nine innings across the two white-ball formats read 10, 15, 11, 6, 6, 3, 9, 9 and 27.

Samson, on the other hand, shone in the limited opportunities and was impressive in the

IYER, GILL RISE IN ODI RANKINGS

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian batters Shreyas Iyer and Shubman Gill were rewarded for their superb show in the three-match ODI series against New Zealand in the latest ICC player rankings issued on Wednesday.

Iyer and Gill jumped six and three places to climb to No.27 and No.34 spot, respectively, after scoring half-centuries in the series, which India lost 0-1 after the second and third games were washed out.

Shikhar Dhawan, however, slipped two places, despite scoring a half century in the opening game. Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who were rested for the series, slipped one place each to 8th and 9th respectively.

New Zealand batters Tom Latham and Kane Williamson also moved up in the charts.

Latham scored a stunning century in the series opener.

His 145 not out off 104 balls was followed by a 10-place rise to No.18. Skipper Williamson, who played the perfect second fiddle with an unbeaten 98-ball 94 in Auckland, broke into the top 10 after gaining one place.

ODOS to make UP number one in country in sports

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In his mission to promote sports and sportspersons of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched the One District One Sport (ODOS) scheme on the lines of the highly successful One District One Product (ODOP) scheme of the government.

The scheme serves the two interrelated objectives of the government -- promoting sports culture and keeping the younger generation healthy in the state and providing a platform for sportspersons to nurture their talents and skills in order to take part in prestigious national and international championships and win medals. Under ODOS scheme, one sport will be identified in each of the 75 districts of UP and necessary steps will be taken to find district-wise sport-specific talents and hone their skills in order to enable them to represent in the district, state, national and international level tournaments and championships.

Since Deoria, Maharajganj, Azamgarh, Chandauli and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's

ODOS SCHEME (SPORTS & DISTRICT)

- **WRESTLING:** Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Chandauli, Baghpat, Azamgarh, Deoria, Maharajganj.
- **ATHLETICS:** Mainpuri, Firozabad, Jaunpur, Bhadohi, Sambhal, Sitapur, Kasganj, Unnao, Ayodhya, Kaushambi, Etah, Amethi, Rampur, Siddharthnagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, Chitrakoot, Basti, Hamirpur, Hapur, Meerut, Ghazipur, Shamli, Ballia and Muzaffarnagar.
- **HOCKEY:** Pratapgarh, Mau, Bareilly, Lucknow, Rae Bareli, Hardoi, Farrukhabad, Moradabad, Balrampur, Etawah and Ghaziabad.
- **TABLE TENNIS:** Agra, Kanpur Nagar.
- **Badminton:** Aligarh and Gautam Buddha Nagar.
- **Weightlifting:** Mirzapur and Bijnor.
- **Boxing:** Bulandshahr and Kushinagar.
- **Archery:** Sonbhadra and Lalitpur.
- **Football:** Hathras.
- **Swimming:** Pilibhit.
- **Shooting:** Banda.
- **Kabaddi:** Kannauj.
- **Lawn Tennis:** Prayagraj.

hometown Gorakhpur in Purvanchal have a golden history in wrestling, the government has made it the ODOS here. Many wrestlers from here have even hoisted the tricolour at national and international championships.

Even in this era of cricket, many of the akhadas here still remain nurseries of wrestlers. Nagpanchami is a big day for wrestlers to try their best in the sport. Under the patronage of Yogi Adityanath, a large wrestling event has been taking

LOCAL EVENTS

TOI, DD/AIR ENTER SEMIS

Times of India defeated Dainik Jagran by seven wickets to enter the semi-final of the 2nd Subhash Mishra Memorial Inter-Media Cricket Tournament at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium on Wednesday. Batting first, DJ scored 138 runs for the loss of seven wickets in the stipulated 20 overs, with Saurabh Gangwar (37) and Prahlad Singh (30) being the main contributors. In reply, ToI achieved the target in 16.4 overs for the loss of three wickets. In another match, DD/AIR edged past Amar Ujala by 4 runs to book the semi-final spot.

BRIEF SCORES:

DJ: 138 (Saurabh 37, Prahlad 30; Anish 1/9, Rajeev 2/33)
TOI: Abbas 69, Zuhaib 19; Saurabh 1/17)

DD/AIR: 136 (Wadd 43, Ram Balak 29; Rajeev 21/1)
AU: 132 (Rajeev 50, Anurag 50; Wadd 18/1)

MAHENDRA, KOMAL BEST ATHLETES



Mahendra Kumar and Komal Maurya were emerged best athletes in men's and women's respectively in the 52nd Annual Athletics Championship on Wednesday. Mahendra bagged the gold in long jump, 200m, 400m and 4x100m while Komal won the yellow metal in long jump, 100m and sack race. MLC Pawan Singh Chauhan gave away the prizes to the winners.

SPS PLAYERS SHINE

Shivani Public School emerged winner in the kabaddi event in the Mini Olympiad organised at Vardaan International School. Meanwhile, SPS kho-kho team finished second at SDSN Public School.

JUDO TRIALS

UP Judo Association is organising the junior open state judo selection trials is at Indian Para Judo Academy on Wednesday. All interested registered players may contact Ghanshyam Maurya on 809055520 or Jaya Sahu on 9807500430. The selected players will represent Uttar Pradesh in the forthcoming Junior National Judo Championships to be held at Ranchi from December 16 to 20.

DIVYANSH WINS U-13 TITLE

Divyansh Pandey played a draw with Pranav Rastogi in the last round to emerge winner in the Lucknow district Under-13 chess championship on Tuesday. Divyansh and Anirudh finished with 4 points each but the former decalred winner on the basis of better tie-breaker. In the girl's category, Saanvi Agarwal remained undefeated to take the title. In the Under-9 category, Pranav Rastogi and Aja Thapliyal bagged the boy's and girl's title respectively.

vision of skilled coaches. The rest will be done with the implementation of the new sports policy in near future.

The 10 districts whose sports have been changed include Mathura (wrestling instead of judo), Ballia, Ambedkar Nagar, Kanpur Dehat and Fatehpur (athletics instead of badminton), Bahraich (football instead of badminton), Shravasti (kabaddi instead of badminton), and Jhansi, Gonda and Lakhimpur Kheri (hockey instead of badminton). Meanwhile, selection and training of sports talents is going on. Navneet Sehgal, Additional Chief Secretary (Sports), remarked: "There is a universal rule to nurture sporting talents -- catch them young. The department will ensure identification of the talents related to popular sports in different areas at the right age and provide them the best training possible at the district, state and national levels to enhance their performances. This is also the purpose of the ODOS scheme. It will be our endeavour that according to the intention of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in the coming few years, according to the population, Uttar Pradesh leads the country in sports."

Sharath Kamal bestowed with Khel Ratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Table tennis legend Achara Sharath Kamal was on Wednesday bestowed with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting honour, by President Droupadi Murmu in a glittering National Sports Awards ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Wednesday.

While Sharath is the lone Khel Ratna award recipient, 25 sportspersons, including shuttlers Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, woman boxer Nikhat Zareen, track and field athletes Eldhose Paul and Avinash Sable, were conferred with the Arjuna Award. The creme de la creme of Indian sports were recognised for their achievements in the past few years at a specially organised ceremony.

The event is traditionally held every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand on August 29. But last year also, the event was held on another date.

The star attraction of the ceremony was Sharath, who received his Khel Ratna award amid thunderous applause from the select dignitaries present at the Durbar Hall.

The Khel Ratna is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performances by a sportsperson over a period of previous four years. It carries a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh, a medal and a scroll of honour.

The 40-year-old Sharath had returned from Birmingham Commonwealth Games as the most-decorated Indian athlete with four medals. He is the second table tennis player after Manika Batra to get the Khel Ratna. Besides a yellow metal in the mixed doubles, Sharath also pocketed his singles gold after 16 years, the first having won at the 2006 Melbourne CWG.

The lanky paddler has claimed a whopping 13 medals from the CWG overall. He also won two bronze medals at the



2018 Asian Games, and is now in search of an elusive Olympic glory at the 2024 Paris Games.

While Sharath took away the spotlight, the star attractions among Arjuna awardees were shuttler Sen, world champion boxer Zareen, boxer Amit Panghal and triple jumper Eldhose Paul, all gold medallists at Birmingham Games.

The Khel Ratna was the first award to given by the President, followed by the Dronacharya award in the lifetime category, won by Rohit Sharma's coach Dinesh Jawahar Lad, football coach Bimal Prabala Ghosh and wrestling mentor Raj Singh.

The Dronacharya Award is the regular category were handed to Jiwant Singh Teja (archery), Mohammad Ali Qamar (boxing), Suma Siddharth Shirur (para shooting) and Sujat Maan (wrestling).

Discus thrower Seema Punia was the first to receive the Arjuna award from the President, followed by Paul, Sable, Sen, Prannoy and Panghal, among others.

India register first victory against Australia in 6 yrs

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Fighting India scored a last-minute goal to stun Australia 4-3 in the third hockey Test for their first win in six years against the world number one side here on Wednesday.

It was a rare win for world number five India against Australia, who had thrashed them 7-0 in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games final earlier this year. India had last beaten Australia 3-2 in regulation time on November 29, 2016 in the first outing of the two-match bilateral Test tour in Bendigo, Victoria.

Since then, the two sides have played 13 matches with Australia winning outright on 10 occasions while two games were decided via penalty shootout.

India won one penalty shootout out of the two. One match (during the men's Hockey World League Finals in Bhubaneswar in 2017) was



drawn 1-1 and no shootout was applied.

The shootout, which was introduced in 2011, is applied to decide which team gets additional bonus point (apart from one point each) after a drawn match in regulation time.

Wednesday's famous win also kept the five-match series alive with Australia leading 2-1. India had lost 4-5 and 4-7 in the

first two Tests. The fourth match will be played here on Saturday and the final one on Sunday.

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh (12th minute), Abhishek (47th), Shamsher Singh (57th) and Akashdeep Singh (60th) scored for India.

Australia's goals came from the sticks of Jack Welch (25th), skipper Aran Zalewski (32nd) and Nathan Ephraums (59th).

