

CITY 3

INDIA SETTING NEW PARADIGMS OF
DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: CM

OPINION 6

G-20 LEADERSHIP IS
GODSEND FOR INDIA

WORLD 10

IRAN MORALITY POLICE STATUS
UNCLEAR AFTER 'CLOSURE' COMMENT

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY DECEMBER 6, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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SHAFALI TO
LEAD INDIA IN
U-19 W CUP
11 SPORTBJP set to retain Guj;
Himachal cliffhangerExit polls predict
AAP won't live
up to hype in
both the StatesPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Multiple exit poll results released on Monday predicted that the BJP will return for a seventh straight term in Gujarat with a big majority. However, another BJP-ruled state Himachal Pradesh is likely to see a tough contest with one of the pollsters giving the Congress the edge to form the next Government and a couple of others showing BJP retaining the power.

The AAP is not living up to the hype it created, as per the exit polls, which showed it faring badly in both the States.

About half-a-dozen exit polls were unanimous on the BJP sweep in Gujarat, with seats in the range of 117-151.

Except one, other exit polls projected that the long-held tradition of Himachal Pradesh not repeating a party twice in the State will break as they showed the ruling BJP returning to power. However, the India-Today-Axis exit poll predicted that the Congress will gain a majority by bagging a maximum of 40 seats.

The AAP, which had

GUJARAT			
Seats : 182; Majority : 92			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG+NCP	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	129-151	16-30	9-21
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	117-140	34-51	6-13
TIMES NOW-ETG	135-145	24-34	6-16
ZEE NEWS-BARC	110-125	45-60	1-5
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	132 (+33)	38 (-40)	8 (+8)

HIMACHAL PRADESH			
Seats : 68; Majority : 35			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	24-34	30-40	0
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	32-40	27-34	0
TIMES NOW-ETG	34-42	24-32	0
ZEE NEWS-BARC	35-40	20-25	0-3
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	35 (-9)	30 (+9)	0

indulged in a high-voltage campaign and projected itself as the principal challenger to the BJP, was shown to bag a maximum of 13 seats in Gujarat and just 1 seat in Himachal Pradesh by different pollsters.

The counting of votes in both States will take place on December 8. Elections for the Himachal Pradesh Assembly took place on November 12, while polling in Gujarat happened in two phases on December 1 and 5.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed over 31 rallies and led three big road shows in Gujarat wrapping up on Friday his hectic campaign for the BJP in the Assembly polls.

The BJP sees the outcome

of the Gujarat poll in the PM's home State a curtain raiser to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls which are barely 16 months away.

The party looks to maintain its uninterrupted winning streak there since 1995 in a triangular contest involving the Congress and the AAP.

One of the roadshows of Modi was cancelled on October 31 in the State due to the Morbi Bridge collapse that claimed 130 lives.

The keenly contested Gujarat poll witnessed Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge throwing "Ravan jibe" at Modi with the latter asking voters to "teach a lesson" to the party which "insulted" Gujarat.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who did not cam-

paign in Himachal addressed two public rallies in Gujarat, breaking away from his "Bharat jodo yatra".

Most exit polls predicted a big mandate for the BJP in Gujarat in the range of 117-148 seats in the 182-member Assembly, while the Congress was predicted to bag seats in the range of 30-51 seats.

India Today-Axis My India predicted a landslide victory for the BJP in Gujarat, with the saffron party likely to win from 129-151 seats.

It gives the Congress only 16 to 30 and the AAP 9 to 21 seats in Gujarat.

According to the News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll on Gujarat elections, the BJP was likely to get 117-140 seats, the Congress-NCP 34-51, the AAP 6-13 and others 1-2.

Republic TV P-MARQ predicted 128-148 seats for the BJP, 30-42 for the Congress-NCP, 2-10 for the AAP and 0-3 for others.

TV9 Gujarati forecast that the BJP would get 125-130 seats, the Congress-NCP 40-50, the AAP 3-5 and others 3-7.

For Himachal Pradesh, Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted a close contest between the Congress and the BJP. It said the BJP would get 24-34 seats and the Congress 30-40 seats.

India TV predicted that the BJP would bag 35-40 seats, the Congress 26-31 and the AAP zero.

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Supplementary budget
tabled by Yogi govt

Tributes paid to Mulayam in Assembly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the first day of the winter session of Uttar Pradesh legislature, Finance Minister Suresh Khanna presented a supplementary budget of Rs 33,789 crore in the assembly.

UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya presented the supplementary budget in the legislative council.

The government has sought Rs 14,000 crore for new schemes in the supplementary budget of the fiscal 2022-23.

The supplementary budget also proposes Rs 296 crore for organising the upcoming Global Investors' Summit to be held in Uttar Pradesh in February, 2023 and Rs 899 crore for Smart City project.

A provision of Rs 200 crore has been made for the Pradhan Mantri Gatishakti Yojana and Rs 100 crore for startups and incubators.

The budget makes the highest provision of Rs 8,000 crore for industrial development authorities to develop private industrial parks and hubs.

Besides, the supplementary budget proposes Rs 521 crore for organising Prayagraj Kumbh on a grand note and Rs 400 crore for the construction of court complexes in 10 districts under a pilot project.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's ambitious CM fellowship scheme has also been taken care of in the supplementary budget, while financial proposals have been made for

furthering Swachh Bharat Mission, Amrit Yojana, Smart City project and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Moreover, the budget provides Rs 2,000 crore for widening and strengthening of roads and Rs 300 crore for distribution of free tablets and smartphones to the youth. The budget proposes Rs 5 crore for the establishment of a music college at Hariharpur in Azamgarh.

Apart from this, the general budget for the financial year 2022-23 passed earlier was of Rs 6,15,518.97 lakh

crore. Including the supplementary budget, it will be around 6,70,000 crore, which is a record in itself.

While presenting the general budget, the finance minister had said in the House that the total revenue receipts were estimated at Rs 5,90,951 crore.

Of the total receipts, Rs 4,99,212 crore would come from revenue and include capital receipts of Rs 91,739 crore.

The chief minister later inaugurated the ruling party and opposition lobbies in the mandap of UP assembly, in addition to the new corridor in Vidhan Bhawan. Proper seating arrangements have been made in both the lobbies while pictures of former MLAs along with ruling party and opposition MLAs are displayed on its walls.

Meanwhile, the members of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, paid tributes to Mulayam Singh Yadav on the first day of the winter session.

Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav, who served as chief minister for three consecutive terms, passed away on October 10 at the age of 83.

With Mulayam Singh Yadav's death, an era in Indian politics has come to an end, Yogi Adityanath said.

"Mulayam Singh Yadav came from a humble background, was down to earth and had vast experience and contributions to Indian politics.

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Lalu's kidney
transplant
successful

PTI ■ PATNA

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who underwent a "successful" kidney transplant surgery at Singapore on Monday, is conscious and responding, from his hospital bed, to greetings of near and dear ones, family members said.

Lalu went under the knife along with daughter Rohini Acharya, who donated one of her kidneys to her septuagenarian father.

Will never be
caught alive:
Goldy Brar

PNS/AGENCIES ■ CHANDIGARH

Goldy Brar, who has claimed responsibility for the murder of Sidhu Moosewala on May 29, appeared in an interview and refuted reports of his detention in the US as "fake" days after Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann made this claim.

Brar told a YouTube channel that he had long left Canada and USA and was "currently in Europe". He said he will "never be caught alive" and that in case he lands in a situation where he could be arrested, he always carries a weapon and would "shoot self dead".

CAPSULE

COURT: UMAR, SAIPI FACE
BIG CONSPIRACY CHARGE

New Delhi: The charges against Umar Khalid and United Against Hate founder Khalid Saifi pertained to the "umbrella conspiracy" or the larger conspiracy of the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, a court here has said while discharging them in case linked to riots.

MUSLIMS BOYCOTT
POLLS IN GUJ VILLAGE

Khedra: 1,400 Muslim voters from Undhela village in Gujarat's Kheda district on Monday boycotted voting during the second phase of Assembly polls in protest against the public flogging of some men from the community by police two months ago, community leaders said. Cops denied the claim.

J'KHAND MAN BEHEADS
COUSIN OVER LAND ROW

Khunti (Jharkhand): A 20-year-old tribal man beheaded his 24-year-old cousin over a land dispute and the accused's friends took a selfie with the severed head in Khunti district, police said on Monday.

Chhawla rape-murder
victim's family seeks
review of SC acquittalPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The parents of the 19-year-old Uttarakhand girl who was gangraped and killed in Delhi's Chhawla area ten years ago filed a review petition on Monday in the Supreme Court against its judgment that acquitted all the three accused persons. Their petition was also backed by the Uttarakhand Bachao Movement.

Delhi LG VK Saxena had cleared the files for filing review petition by the Delhi Police against the gruesome murder of the girl, whose body was found at Chhawla in 2012.

"This Hon'ble Court erred in holding that the entire prosecution case falls flat because the accused were neither identified in the depositions nor any Test Identification Parade was conducted on the accused.

"It is submitted that the instant is a case of circumstantial evidence and not direct evidence, and the circumstances in the instant case conclusively prove that the offences of kidnapping, rape and murder of the victim were done by the accused only," said the review petition filed by advocate Pranav Sachdev.

"The court erred in coming to the conclusion that the non-examination of the beat constables created serious doubts about circumstances under which the accused were arrested and the car was seized," the petition said.

The trial court and the High Court had convicted the accused with the death sentence. But the Supreme Court acquitted them citing lack of evidence and glaring faults from prosecution and investigation.

Modi chairs all-party meet, seeks
suggestions for G-20 summitMamata, Naveen
Shinde, Kejriwal,
Stalin among CMs
attend meeting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired an all-party meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan with Central Ministers, Chief Ministers of several States and other leaders to solicit suggestions for the G-20 Summit scheduled for September 9 and 10 next year in New Delhi.

Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik, Sikkim's Prem Singh Tamang, Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde, and Delhi's Arvind Kejriwal attended the meeting.

Other Chief Ministers who attended the meeting were Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the all-party meeting on G20 summit in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

Reddy and Tamil Nadu's MK Stalin.

BJP president JP Nadda, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury,

CPI general secretary D Raja and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Chandrababu Naidu too were in attendance at the high level meet at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Minister Piyush Goyal represented the Government at the meeting.

India assumed the G20 presidency on December 1. The country is expected to host over 200 preparatory meetings across the country beginning this month.

Modi has announced a domestic political campaign programme around the theme "One Earth-One Family-One Future".

England, Croatia reach
World Cup quarterfinals

AP ■ QATAR

England captain Harry Kane scored his first goal of this year's World Cup, helping his team beat Senegal 3-0 Sunday and setting up a match against France in the quarterfinals.

While Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved three penalty kicks in his team's 3-1 win over Japan in a shootout at the World Cup on Monday, securing a return to the quarterfinals for the runner-up in the 2018 tournament. Mario Pasalic converted the clinching penalty for Croatia after the teams were tied at 1-1 after extra time.

England's Kane scored for the 52nd time for his country to move within one of Wayne Rooney's England record. He



Japan players are dejected after Croatia's win in the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Japan and Croatia on Monday

AP

also overtook Gary Lineker as his country's leading scorer in major tournaments with 11 goals.

"The ball just sat up nicely and the connection was perfect," Kane said. "I had one just before that I should have done

better with so it was nice to see that one go in."

Jordan Henderson and Bukayo Saka also scored at Al Bayt Stadium while Jude Bellingham played a key role in the opening two goals and Phil Foden had two assists.

City of Joy
creator dies

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The winter sun had just set on Sunday when Asha Bhavan Centre got to know about the demise of celebrated French author Dominique Lapierre, who had donated much of the royalties he received from his 1985 novel "City of Joy" to establish the Howrah NGO and fund several other humanitarian causes in Bengal.

Mourning the loss, John Mary Barui, the director of the centre, said a prayer meet was arranged as soon as its members came to know about his death.

Asha Bhavan Centre, with the support of Lapierre, set up multiple schools in Bengal over



30.7.1931 - 4.12.2022

the years, stated Barui. Lapierre would often say India was his second home, he recalled.

The French author, who was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2008, breathed his last on December 4. "At 91, he died of old age," his wife Dominique Conchon-Lapierre told French newspaper Var-Matin.

Continued on Page 9

Centre to set up 500 theaters
to spread word on governanceDEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

In a mega push for infotainment infrastructure for rural India, the Centre would open 500 cinema halls by the end of March 2023 with each having a seating capacity of around 150 audience.

To be initiated by the Ministry of Information Technology's digital arm Common Service Centre (CSC), the CSC Rural Cinema will be for the entertainment of villagers in remote areas and has a target of opening about one lakh cinema theatres across the villages of the country, said the sources. The sources also said that the platform will also be used to "propagate" the governance, development and several awareness programmes.



The CSC on Monday announced that it would open 500 cinema halls in rural areas by March 2023 and 1,500 by December 2023 and by the fiscal end of 2024 it would be able to develop 10,000 such CSC Rural Cinema.

In this regard, CSC e-Governance Services India Limited signed an MoU with October Cinemas to take the entertainment through CSC Rural Cinema to rural areas.

The MoU was signed between CSC, an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT and October Cinemas aiming to open around one lakh small movie theatres in rural areas during the next couple of years.

"India is the world's largest entertainment market in terms of movie consumption. Our venture will have features to control piracy of films. We will provide all hardware and software equipment to Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) who run the CSC. An investment of around ₹15 lakh is needed to run these cinema halls which will have video parlour cinema licence. We have already got over 5,000 expressions of interest," said CSC Managing Director Sanjay Kumar Rakesh.

Continued on Page 9

Government to run select ITIs, polytechnics on PPP model



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath chairing the cabinet meeting at his official residence in Lucknow on Monday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to improve the quality of education in technical institutions, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to operate select state polytechnics and industrial training institutes (ITIs) under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting held here on Monday. As per the proposal, it has been decided to operate 15 state polytechnics and 16 state ITIs on the private participation model in the first phase.

As these institutions will be run with private participation, there will be no financial burden on the state government.

“The selection of institutions will be through tenders,” a government official said here.

This decision will provide quality technical education to the students of the state. They will also get training as per industrial requirement. This will also reduce pressure on the state exchequer.

In another decision, the cabinet approved a proposal to transfer land to the Tourism department free of cost for the construction of a tourist facility in Nandgaon in Mathura district. The chief minister has been authorised by the council of ministers to take a decision in the case as required.

As per the proposal, 2.424 hectares of land in Nandgaon

village of Mathura district will be transferred to the Tourism department to develop tourist facilities for the devotees and tourists coming to Nandgaon.

The state cabinet has also approved a proposal to repeal 36 state Acts (5 basic Acts and 31 amendment Acts) and introduce a new bill in the on-going state legislature.

A government official said that the majority of the Acts were archaic and were introduced in British raj or during the President's rule. As these Acts are obsolete and unusable, the state cabinet has given approval to repeal them. Since 2017, over 813 Acts have been repealed. With an aim to bring uniformity in the

Fire Services Act across India, the state cabinet has approved a proposal to bring Uttar Pradesh Fire Services and Emergency Service Ordinance, 2022. The proposal says that due to increasing industrial development, urbanisation, disaster and possible fire accidents, the current Uttar Pradesh Fire Service Act, 1944 (Uttar Pradesh Act No. 3/1944, dated 26.07.1944) and Uttar Pradesh Fire Prevention Act the Fire Safety Act, 2005 (Uttar Pradesh Act No. 5/2005, dated 17.03.2005) will not be able to meet future expectations.

Thus, it was thought prudent to bring changes in the present Fire Services Act.

BDC ex-member shot to avenge public shaming

Lucknow (PNS): The incident in which a former BDC member and presently a MGNREGA worker, who was peppered with bullets in Kakori police station area on Saturday afternoon, turned out to be a revenge killing. Police made this claim following the arrest of the prime accused, Shamsher Singh Yadav aka Shiva Yadav of Kakori, on Monday.

The police said the victim Ram Jeewan Lodhi and Shiva were sworn enemies and Shiva's family members, including women, were publicly shamed by Lodhi during his hey days. Lodhi was a Block Development Council member and an MGNREGA worker in Gurdeen Khera (Kakori). Yadav is a contractor who provides labourers to construction companies. They were neighbours and their paths crossed in several ways. Shamsher confessed that the motive for murder was an enmity with Lodhi.

They fell apart over a property dispute in 2017 and Lodhi and his supporters had allegedly mortified Shiva and his family members. Shiva owned up to his crime and disclosed that he had been planning to bump off Lodhi for a long time.

Lodhi was attacked while returning home from the Town area close to Chaudhary Mohalla Ward near Sharda Canal. The police had recovered bullet shells and Lodhi's bike from the crime scene. He was shot three times. He was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre where he was pronounced dead.

Elderly woman, her friend duped of ornaments, cash

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An elderly woman and her friend were duped by a man of their ornaments, cash and other belongings kept in a bag in Alambagh market. The incident was reported on November 26 but a case was registered in this connection on Sunday.

As per reports, the elderly woman, Kripal Kaur, along with her friend Neelam of Prem Nagar, had gone to Alambagh market where they came across the man in question. According to Kripal Kaur, the man who was wearing a mask introduced himself as her distant relative, Pankaj. As she could not identify her, she asked him to take the mask off, and he did that.

The elderly woman denied having relation with him and said that her relative Pankaj is fair complexioned. The man told her that he suffered a tanned skin since he was staying in Mumbai.

He then said that the government had decided to give Rs 6 lakh as monetary help to elderly people. He also told her that he had dropped a cheque of Rs 6 lakh at her house and reached the market on being informed that she had gone shopping.

“Your elder son is waiting for you at the LIC office and you should reach there soon,”



he was quoted as saying by Kripal. The elderly woman doubted his credentials and asked him why was he taking pains for her.

“You people helped me in getting me a bank job and this is my way of returning the favour,” he said and asked Kripal and her friend to take their ornaments off as they should not look rich.

He also took Rs 1,100 from Kripal and Rs 600 from Neelam. “We took the ornaments off and kept them in a bag. He tried to take the bag from me but I gave it to Neelam,” Kripal said.

She said the man walked hurriedly towards the LIC office and asked them to follow him. However, he tricked Neelam and took the bag from her before disappearing from the scene in no time. She said she had a hunch that the man would dupe her and that she turned towards Neelam to ask her not to give the bag to him. “However, he had already

tricked her and escaped with the bag consisting of ornaments worth Rs 1 lakh and cash,” Kripal said.

Her son Harkeerat said he came to know about the incident around 4 pm on November 26 and lodged a complaint with police. “However, the police registered a case on Sunday,” he added.

He further said his mother is very old and has issues like blood pressure fluctuation, so she walks slowly. “My mother and her friend went to the LIC office and were told that the office had been shifted several years ago,” he said.

CYBER FRAUD

A woman constable deployed with MCR Police Lines of over Rs 73,000 in the name of correcting her reporting date in the general diary (at the time of joining the duty) in Mahanagar on December 2.

As per reports, constable Priyanka Paswan got a call from an unknown number and the caller told her that he was a staff member of treasury department and that her entry date was mentioned incorrectly. He asked her to download an application called Q5 to get the date corrected. As Priyanka downloaded the app, her Google Pay account and credit card were debited with a sum of Rs 73,083.

2 killed in separate mishaps

Lucknow (PNS): Two persons were killed in separate road mishaps in the city during the last 24 hours.

In Sarojini Nagar, a 55-year-old man was knocked down by a speeding car coming from Kanpur on Kanpur road on Sunday morning. Reports said Ram Lakhan of Gauri Bazaar locality was crossing the road when the tragedy struck. He sustained grievous injuries and was pronounced dead at Lok Bandhu Hospital. Police identified the errant car driver as Rishu Gautam of Naveen Gauri locality. A case was registered in this connection and the body was sent for autopsy.

Meanwhile in Banthra, a 42-year-old truck driver was killed when his vehicle collided with another truck on

Saturday. A case was registered in this connection on Monday. As per reports, Pushpendra Singh of Kannauj was going towards Bangarmau from Lucknow when the mishap occurred. He died on the spot.

Meanwhile, a 33-year-old woman ended her life at her house in Nigoha some time on Sunday night. She was found hanging in her house on Monday morning. Report said Ashish Kumari was spotted hanging in the courtyard by her daughter Arpita. Her husband owns a shop selling electronic goods.

In another incident in Banthra, a 42-year-old tractor-trolley driver was found dead in his house under mysterious circumstances on Monday.

Reports said Guru Prasad of Hamirpur village was found unresponsive when his wife Geeta tried to wake him up. As she raised an alarm, neighbours reached the scene. Guru Prasad's mother Ram Pyari and his brother Brijesh alleged that he was smothered to death by Geeta. On being informed, a team of police, led by ACP (Krishna Nagar) reached the

scene. The police sent the body for autopsy and started further probe investigation. Geeta told the police that Guru Prasad woke up for a morning walk around 5 am and went to sleep in a room after he returning.

ARRESTED

A Bihar native, named in a case of molestation registered at Ghazipur police station in Lucknow, allegedly threatened the victim and her family in a bid to forced them to withdraw the case. After the victim's family petitioned their case to senior officers, the police expedited the case and arrested the accused from his village in Gopalganj district of Bihar on Sunday.

The accused, identified as Mohammed Tufail Hussain, was named in the case some time back and he fled the city taking advantage of sluggish investigation. After reaching his home in Gopalganj, he started making phone calls to the victim and her parents and asked them to withdraw the case. A spokesman said the police arrested the accused from his home in Gopalganj on Sunday.

VC carries out surprise inspection at LDA head office

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Development Authority Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi and Secretary Pawan Gangwar on Monday inspected the head office in Gomti Nagar. They were accompanied by senior officers and engineers. The VC detected several anomalies in the office building and found the staffers as non-serious in their approach.

The inspection was said to be pre-planned but kept under wraps. An executive engineer said on the condition of anonymity that the VC, secretary and others who accompanied them first assembled at a place and then headed to the

office in their official vehicles around 10 am. All the doors were locked from outside by the security guards.

The VC first inspected the computer department and had a word with the officers and staffers. He said the software engineers and others should put in more efforts to make the functioning more efficient. He warned them of stern action if they were not regular in feeding details of the schemes, public lands grabbed in an unauthorised, details of ongoing projects as well as others to come up.

Interestingly, 40 per cent of the staff members were either late or played tru-

ant without applying for a leave. Sounding a warning to them, the VC said they must apply for a leave before next time.

The VC also expressed displeasure over the misuse of electricity and said conventional source of power should be replaced by solar power energy. The VC also sought to know why was there no solar power project even though the development authority had applied for it four years ago.

However, the VC was satisfied with cleanliness in the establishment department. The VC also inspected the record room and interacted with the staffers.

SP legislators hold dharna against govt

Lucknow (PTI): Allying misuse of official machinery during bypolls, price rise and poor law and order in the state, Samajwadi Party legislators on Monday sat on a dharna in the Uttar Pradesh assembly premises. Before the start of the Winter Session, the SP MLAs sat near the Chowdhury Charan Singh statue with placards that read,

“Janta ka paisa khate hain, ghablebaaj sarkaar chalte hain” (They swindle people's money, scammers run the government) and “BJP viral hai apne kaamo se, janta trast hai badhte daamo se” (The BJP has failed in its works and people are fed up with inflation).

SP chief spokesperson Rajendra Chowdhury said,

“Our legislators sat on a dharna to point out misuse of official machinery by the BJP in bypolls. They were preventing people from casting votes.”

“In the BJP regime, price rise is at its peak, youth are not getting employment and law and order has broken down in the state. The BJP has failed on all fronts. We are here to point

out the government's failures,” he said. The Winter Session of Uttar Pradesh assembly commenced from Monday in which a supplementary budget is to be tabled.

Meanwhile, SP MLA Nahid Hasan, who was recently released from jail, on Monday took oath as a legislator in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.



NOTICE

I have change my name from Manisha Kukreja, to Kanak Shamnani, W/o Surendra Kumar Shamnani, R/o, 125/79, K-Block Govind Nagar Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

It is publically declared that Yashwant Singh Yadav or Yashwant Yadav and Lalita Devi or Lalita Yadav both are same person and parents of Akanksha Yadav resident of Village - Barahara, Post - Turna, District- Ghazipur

NOTICE

General public is informed that the original allotment letter and original possession letter of house no.3/558, Sector-3, Vikas Nagar, Lucknow, which is registered in the name of Smt. Kulsuma W/o Late Moinuddin is lost & it is not mortgage or sale anywhere.

NOTICE

Original sale deed no 3071 dtd 24.05.2011 in favour of Sri Deepak Ranjan Naik of my property flat no 1069 on first floor group housing plot no 7 in township known as Crosslink Republic situated in Sector 11 Dundahera Ghaziabad has been lost. Any use of it will be illegal. Dr Shweta Chandra H.no.38 Shanti enclave jaraur phase 2 Vaidehi vihar kanpur

CITYBRIEFS

DRAMA CONTEST



The third day of the five-day International Youth Fest-2022, organised by City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus II, at Kanpur Road auditorium was heart-warming for the audience who watched the drama competition staged by students from Nepal and various states of India. The drama competition was based on the topic ‘Role of youth in nation-building’.

ANNUAL FUNCTION



The annual function of Spring Dale College was held at KD Singh ‘Babu’ Stadium on Monday. The changing seasons were represented by beautifully co-ordinated drills. The flowers representing the summers, the umbrella showing monsoon season and peppy drill in red & white along with the jingle of Santa Claus depicted the advent of another new year and the continuity thereafter.

ATM INAUGURATED

Indian Bank, Lucknow region, opened a new ATM at Lari Cardiology on Monday. The ATM was inaugurated by bank's executive director Amin Siddiqui and KGMU VC Dr Bipin Puri.



Lucknow (PTI): A woman gave birth to a baby boy in a state roadways bus in Bulandshahr, after which the driver drove to a hospital where doctors took care of the mother and the newborn. “We were moving from Delhi to Chhibramau (in Uttar Pradesh's Kannauj district) when a passenger developed labour pain and gave birth,” co-driver of the bus Alok Kumar said. The incident took place on Sunday. The woman's husband Somesh

Kumar, who was travelling along, said they were going to their village in Etah district in Uttar Pradesh from Delhi. The bus driver stopped the vehicle when the woman complained of labour pain. He later drove to nearby a private hospital, Somesh Kumar said. “The doctors said both the mother and the child are safe,” the co-driver said.

Meanwhile, police on Monday released a sketch of a man accused of abducting, raping and killing a six-year-old girl in Ghaziabad. The child had gone missing while playing outside her house. Her body was recovered 30 metres from the house, police said.

Post-mortem confirmed that the child was raped before being killed. Following this, a case was registered under relevant sections of the IPC and the POCSO Act, police said. After gathering inputs from the neighbours and monitoring CCTV footage, a sketch of the accused has been released.

NR GM: Focus on safety on tracks, speed enhancement

Lucknow (PNS): General Manager of Northern Railway Ashutosh Gangal held a performance review meeting with the department heads and DRMs on Monday. Amongst many issues, deliberations were held on safety on tracks, enhancement of speed, freight (BDU) and train operations.

Apart from performance review, the GM also presented ‘Safety Awards’ to four vigilant employees for their contribution towards maintaining high standards for safety and security of passengers and railway property. He congratulated the winners and appealed to railwaymen to give their hundred percent to ensure the safety of passengers and railway assets.

The GM emphasised on improving the maintenance standards of tracks, level crossings and construction of boundary walls along the track in high-speed sections. He also

took a serious note of trespassing. He advised the divisions and security department to book the trespassers under different Railway Acts and penalise and jail them, if need be. He also asked the officials to clear encroachment near railway tracks. On improving the infrastructure, the GM said greater focus should be on timely completion of projects. The GM also stressed on the optimum utilisation of assets like locos, wagons and coaches. He said that punctuality should be maintained without compromising with safety.

On freight business development, the GM said railways is making all-out efforts to provide freight services to all types of clients, from small traders to large FMCG and e-commerce giants.

Meanwhile, due to renovation work of washable apron at the platform number 4 of

Charbagh railway station from December 6 to January 20 next year, some of the trains will be temporarily cancelled, short-terminated, diverted.

0 4 3 2 0 / 0 4 3 1 9 Shahjahanpur-Lucknow-Shahjahanpur and 04356/04355 Lucknow-Balamau-Lucknow special trains will remain cancelled while 01823/01824 Lucknow-Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi-Lucknow Special JCO will be short terminated/short-originated at Kanpur Central.

Besides, 19321 Indore-Patna Express JCO on December 10, 17, 24, 31, January 7 % 14 (2023) will be diverted via Manak Nagar-Aishbagh-Malhour-Barabanki. 19322 Patna-Indore Express JCO on December 12, 19, 26, January 2, 9 & 16 (2023) will be diverted via Barabanki-Malhour- Aishbagh Manak Nagar.



उत्तराखण्ड साहित्यिक शिक्षा परिषद्
शोध विकास एवं प्रशिक्षण संस्थान, आमवाला देहरादून

निविदा सूचना
शोध विकास एवं प्रशिक्षण संस्थान, आमवाला, देहरादून प्रशिक्षणार्थियों की भोजन व्यवस्था हेतु प्रतियुक्ति सेवा प्रदाताओं से दो-बिड प्रणाली (Technical & Financial Bid) के आधार पर अतिअल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रित करता है। निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 06 दिसम्बर 2022 से 12 दिसम्बर 2022 अपराह्न 01:00 बजे तक 'संयुक्त सचिव, शोध विकास एवं प्रशिक्षण संस्थान, आमवाला देहरादून' के कार्यालय से निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य रु 590/- (18% GST सहित) नगद में जमाकर प्राप्त की जा सकती है। निविदा जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि 12 दिसम्बर 2022 की अपराह्न 03:00 बजे है। शोध शर्तें निविदा-प्रपत्र पर उपलब्ध हैं।
निविदा रु - 819 /आठ-आसठ-बीस/-
(अंशनीलकण्ठ) / 2022-23 दिनांक: 2022

संयुक्त सचिव

APPENDIX IV A
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]
Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property
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) and Rule 9(1) 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 mortgaged to **Indiabulls Commercial Credit Ltd. [CIN: U65923DL2006PLC150632] ("Secured Creditor")**, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on **23.12.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M.**, for recovery of **Rs. 2,24,60,261/- (Rupees Two Crore Twenty Four Lakh Sixty Thousand and Two Hundred Sixty One only)** pending towards Loan Account No. **HLLAAGR00354962** by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till **24.11.2022** with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. **25.11.2022** along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from **Dharam Prakash (Proprietor, D.B.Footwear), Meera Devi, Asha Prakash and Udaiveer Singh**.
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be **Rs. 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore only)** and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be **Rs. 20,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh only)** i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
Plot No. 5 (measuring East 73 Feet, West 61 Feet, North 16 Feet and South 47 Feet) equivalent to 177.44 Square Metres, Khet No. 68 situated in Mauza Lashkarpur, Mughal Road, Agra - 282004, Uttar Pradesh and which is bounded as follows:-
East : Road
West : Property of Meera Devi
North : Road
South : Other's Property
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullscorporate.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in
Date : 28.11.2022
Place : AGRA
Sd/
Authorized Officer
Indiabulls Commercial Credit Ltd.

Three-year old girl dies in mishap

PNS ■ KANPUR

A three-year old girl was killed while her mother and aunt were seriously injured when an uncontrolled tractor-trolley knocked down their e-rickshaw in Chakeri police station area late on Sunday night. The incident took place when, after knocking down a scooter, the tractor-trolley driver accelerated speed to escape from the spot. Ram Prasad of Sanjay Nagar, Jajmau, Chakeri, is a tannery worker. Apart from wife Sunita and son Aditya there was daughter Shalu (3) in the family. All the family members had gone attend a marriage ceremony in Kashiram Colony, Phase-1, Sanigwa, on Sunday. When they along with sisters-in-law Laxmi and Soni were returning home on e-rickshaw, a tractor-trolley knocked them down near Bhabha Nagar gate. In the incident Sunita fell on the floor with her daughter Shalu (3) while sister-in-law Laxmi also sustained injury. All the injured were immediately taken to a nearby private hospital where Shalu was declared dead by the doctors. The condition of Sunita was also stated to be critical. SHO Anjan Kumar said on receipt of complaint from the victim family, penal action against the guilty tractor-trolley driver would be initiated.

Meanwhile a 12-year old girl was killed while six other family members were seriously injured when their car collided head on with a tractor and overturned near Udaipur village in Sachendi police station area on Saturday night. The girl succumbed to her injury during treatment at the Vidhnu community health centre. The incident took place



The Kakwan police arrested two auto-lifters with two stolen motorcycles on Monday.

when they were going to attend a marriage ceremony in Ghatampur. Sudhir Yadav of Singhpur village, Sachendi, along with wife Rekha, daughter Muskan (12), son Rishi, neighbour Rakesh with his daughters Anuradha and Radhika was going to Ghatampur by a SUV to attend the marriage ceremony. A speeding bricks-laden tractor coming from opposite direction collided with the SUV between Udaipur and Sidhi villages. After the incident, tractor driver escaped from the spot. Police took all the injured to Vidhnu CHC where Muskan succumbed to her injury during treatment. SHO Pradumha Singh said efforts were on to ascertain information about the tractor driver. On the basis of complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said.

In another incident bike-borne miscreants looted a chain from a youth standing in front of his house in Gandhi Gram, Chakeri, late on Saturday evening. The incident was recorded in the CCTV

cameras installed in the locality. Victim Munidra Thakur of Gandhi Gram, Chakeri, said late on Saturday evening when he was talking to people in front of neighbour Bhola Pandey's house, two Apache bike-borne youths passed from there. They returned after few minutes when the pillion rider snatched his chain and both immediately escaped from there. SHO said from the CCTV footages it appears as if this and the earlier loot from a MES woman employee were committed by same robbers. The accused are residents of Chakeri police station area and were recently released from the jail. They were also wanted by the police, he said.

TWO AUTO-LIFTERS ARRESTED

The Kakwan police have arrested two auto-lifters along with two stolen motorcycles from Ahmampur Tiraha, Nadia Road, on Monday. Police team comprised sub-inspectors (S-Is) Vinit Singh Yadav, Pradip and constables Vinay Kumar

Patel and Manish Kumar. The accused were identified as Alok (22) and Pankaj (19), of Gajaffarpur, Kakwan. After lodging an FIR, both the accused were sent to Mati (Kanpur Dehat) court for further action. The accused were also found involved in criminal cases lodged against them in the past at the Kakwan police station.

Meanwhile, the Barra police have also arrested an auto-lifter along with one looted mobile phone and a motorcycle on Monday. He was identified as Virendra Saini (26) of House No.24, New Azad Nagar, Vidhnu. During investigation on the complaint of Riya Tewari of 1396, Hanumant Vihar, Naubasta, police have recovered the looted mobile phone and motorcycle from the criminal. SHO Manvendra Singh said the accused was also found involved in criminal cases lodged against him at the Barra police station in the past. The accused was being sent to jail after lodging an FIR against him, he said.

International Art Summit held

PNS ■ KANPUR

Pavaki Kala Stotra (PKS) in collaboration with IIT Kanpur organised the International Art Summit 'Pavaki 2.0' with the sole mission of uplift of underprivileged artists and vision of honouring our past, responding to our present and inspiring our future with a common language i.e. art.

Pavaki Kala Stotra is a joint venture between a student organisation headed by Jayesh Gupta (President) and People's Life Society.

Jayesh Gupta on Monday said PKS worked actively to represent internationally recognised artists and provide a platform for upcoming talents to showcase

their exceptional artworks. He said this summit was graced by renowned celebrity artists like Vasudeo Kamath, Bijay Biswaal, Suchitra Bhosle, Milind Mullick, Rajesh Sawant, Amit Kapoor, Pramod Kurlekar, Aditya Chari, NB Gurung and other such world recognised artists whose expression of unexpressed emotions through paints and brushes spoke louder than words.

He said the two days ended on a positive note and more such events will be hosted by the organisation with the active support of IIT-K. He said this event was linked with the campaign of Kanpur @ 2047 so that along with local artists of Kanpur, those artists of the state and country can get better opportunities and plat-

form. He said this programme was not possible without the co-operation of district administration and Smart City. He added in this programme prominent organisations had extended full support like JK Group, Rama University, RSPL, SBI and PNB. He said artists of national and international level had come for this Art Festival 2022.

The two-day summit included display of paintings, sketches and sculptures in an art gallery along with folk music as one of the cultural attractions. The event witnessed on the spot painting and sketching, live demonstrations of art and talk sessions like 'Jazbat-e-Art' graced by guest keynote speakers like Vineeta Nair and Lavanya Rastogi.

Workshop on soil degradation

PNS ■ KANPUR

World Soil Day is observed every year on December 5 and this year the theme was "Soils: Where food begins". The primary objective of the day was to raise awareness about soil degradation which can cause serious environmental problems, including erosion, loss of organic matter and decline in soil fertility. The condition of soil worsened due to industrialisation or poor management of agricultural land. Soil contamination is another problem that goes hand in hand with industrialisation and lead was the most common form of soil contamination but other heavy metals and toxic chemicals can also leach into the soil and in turn contaminate any crops that grow there.

This was stated by noted soil scientist, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T), Dr Khalil Khan while addressing a workshop on 'Soil Degradation and Soil Health'.

He said soil degradation in India was estimated to be occurring on 147 million hectares (Mha) of land, including 94 Mha from water erosion, 16 Mha from acidification, 14 Mha from flooding, 9 Mha from wind erosion, 6 Mha from salinity and 7 Mha from a combination of factors.

He said causes of soil degradation were both natural and human induced. He said natural causes included earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, avalanches, landslides, volcanic eruptions, floods, tornadoes and wildfires.

He said while human-induced soil degradation resulted from land clearing and deforestation, inappropriate agricultural practices, improper management of industrial effluents and wastes were a few other reasons. He said inappropriate agricultural practices included excessive tillage and use of heavy machinery, excessive and unbalanced use of inorganic fertilisers, poor irrigation and

water management techniques. Dr Khan said industrial pollution contributes a startling amount of air pollution to the atmosphere and water sources near factories typically had higher levels of pollution than bodies of water in rural areas. He said inadequately treated waste water from factories can release pollutants into rivers. He said it was also true that about 70 per cent of industrial waste generated in developing countries was dumped untreated into waterways.

He said soil becomes contaminated when toxic industrial emissions fell as precipitation. Dr Khan said reduced species biodiversity can occur when ecosystem was disrupted by urban expansion and industrialisation.

He said global warming can render an area inhospitable to certain species of flora or fauna and added that risk of species extinction from global warming may be even greater than the risk of extinction from deforestation.

Cultural event organised

Varanasi (PNS): Under the joint auspices of cultural organisation Subah-e-Banaras and the office of Development Commissioner for Handicraft, Union Textile Ministry, a cultural event was organised at the cultural complex in Chowka Ghat here late Sunday evening.

The artist from Bangalore Snigdha Sinha presented the Bharatnatyam dance and received appreciation from the music lovers. She started her presentation with Vishnu Vandana and delighted the audience by presenting dance on the hymn Shri Ram Chandra Kripala Bhajan and received applause from the audience by presenting dance on the bhajan of Meira.

But she received a highly appreciation from the music lovers by presenting a dance on thumri. Earlier, the head of the museum of the complex Ajay Srivastava inaugurated the musical evening while Lalita Sharma conducted the entire proceedings.

Over 600 candidates declared successful

PNS ■ VARANASI

A total of 612 candidates qualified the physical test of the first phase of the 21-day long recruitment process of Agniveer under the Agniveer Recruitment on Monday at Ranbankura Stadium of 39 GTC in Cantonment area here. The first phase of Agniveer Recruitment will conclude on Tuesday.

The Army Recruitment Office is conducting the

recruitment. A total of 7,347 candidates from Sadar Tehsil of Varanasi and Shahganj Tehsil of Jaunpur were invited to appear in the race after the physical test for various posts in the army.

But a total of 5,123 candidates appeared in the race after the physical tests and out of them, 612 candidates qualified. Under the guidance of senior army officers, the physical 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.

The maximum 1,18,136 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.

The 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 Vaidmiki tri-junction and Shalma 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 1,382 candidates from all 12 districts including Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Mau, Ballia, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Chandauli, Mirzapur, Bhadohi and Sonbhadra will appear for the physical test on Tuesday

Vishal Yadav wins gold

PNS ■ KANPUR

Vishal Yadav of the city won the gold medal in 73 kg weight category in the East Zone Taekwondo Championship 2022 organised by the CBSE Board at Sunbeam School, Varanasi from December 1 to 4.

He brought pride to his school DD Vidya Niketan Education Centre, Chakeri, and the city. School manager Mohan Tewari, Shubham Tewari, Sanjay Singhal, principal Renu Srivastava and Satyendra Singh Yadav congratulated Vishal Yadav for winning the gold medal.



Vishal Yadav (left) with the gold medal

Power employees meet PVVNL MD

PNS ■ VARANASI

A delegation of the Vidyut Karmachari Sanjukt Sangharsh Samiti met the Managing Director (MD) of Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (PVVNL) on Monday and urged the latter to withdraw all the actions taken against the employees during the agitation period in accordance with the agreement made with the UP Energy Minister. During the meeting, the MD emphasised on maximum revenue realisation and in reply, joint action committee members assured the MD of working hard to do the same. In connection with the recent boycott of work by engineers and employees from November 29 to December 3, a meeting was also held at the MD's office in which the employees were informed about the 15-point demands being raised by the joint action committee (JAC).

Apart from meeting with MD, the representative of JAC also met the directors (Personnel and Administration). Later, the MD assured the power staff of withdrawing action taken against some during the boy-



Power employees holding a talk with PVVNL MD in Varanasi on Monday. Pioneer

cott of work and appealed to the employees to meet the target of revenue collection. The JAC members said that in the manner after the withdrawal of agitation, all the closed lines were re-started within two hours, similarly, the power employees would work hard with full confi-

dence to increase revenue collection. In the delegation, Chandrashekhar Chaurasia, RK Wahi, Dr RB Singh, Sanjay Bharti, Rajendra Singh, Ramashankar Pal, Anil Kumar, Ramkumar Jha, Birendra Singh, Vijay Singh, Jitlall, Ankur Pandey etc were present.

Course on computer concepts launched

PNS ■ KANPUR

Principal of Armapore Degree College, Dr Mukesh Kumar Singh, while launching the Course on Computer Concepts on Monday said having basic computer literacy skills can help student move onto more advanced skills like programming. He said communication today was mostly digital and students needed to understand how to communicate with others safely, appropriately and effectively through various communication tools. He said among broader skills knowledge of computer science (CS) was increasingly relevant. CS was defined as study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their principles, their hardware and software designs, their impact on society. He said CS skills enabled individuals to understand how technology worked and how best to harness its potential to improve lives. Dr Singh said goal of CS education was to develop computational thinking skills which referred to thought processes involved in expressing solutions as computational steps or algorithms that can be carried out by a computer.



Principal Armapore Degree College Dr MK Singh inaugurates Course on Computer Concepts at the college on Monday

He said CS education was also distinct from computer or digital literacy in that it was more concerned with computer design than with computer use. He said coding was a skill one would learn in a CS course while creating a document or slideshow presentation using an existing programme was a skill one would learn in a computer or digital literacy

course.

He said research had shown that students benefitted from CS education by increasing college enrolment rates and developing problem solving abilities. He said it also showed that lessons in computational thinking improved student response inhibition, planning and coding skills. He said CS skills paid off in

labour market through higher likelihood of employment and better wages.

He said as these skills took preeminence in the rapidly changing 21st century, CS education promised to significantly enhance student preparedness for the future of work and active citizenship.

Dr Singh said benefits of CS education extended beyond economic motivations and given the increasing integration of technology into many aspects of daily life in the 21st century, a functional knowledge of how computers work—beyond the simple use of applications—will help all students.

DEMANDED: Labour Association Joint Front official spokesperson Rajesh Shukla on Monday claimed that new labour laws were 'forcibly' imposed upon labourers.

He said this will not be taken lying down and the organisations were gearing up to give further momentum to their agitation.

He said main demands were immediate scraping of all anti-labour laws and ensuring implementation of minimum support price (MSP) for crops for farmers and to hike minimum wages to Rs 1,000 per

day. He alleged the government was forcibly retiring employees and said it needs to be stopped immediately as there is massive resentment over it.

Shukla said the Central Government had proposed to replace 29 existing labour laws with four labour codes on wages, social security, occupational safety and industrial relations.

He said since the issue of labour came under the Concurrent List of the Constitution, there were over 100 state and 40 central laws regulating various aspects to it. He said as these laws were found to be complex with archaic provisions and inconsistent definitions it was advised that laws be clubbed together to improve ease of compliance and ensure uniformity.

He said while the code on wages dealt with setting a national-level floor wage for all workers was subsequently passed, the other three bills were referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, which later submitted its report.

He said these three Bills were replaced with new Bills by the government on September 19, 2020.

BHU students stage demonstration

PNS ■ VARANASI

The students of the Hindi department, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Monday staged a demonstration at the department in protest against the delay by an inquiry committee to submit its report.

An inquiry committee has been constituted by the varsity administration to probe into the irregularities in the admission process in Ph D, the agitated students informed and blamed that but the committee is mak-

ing delay in submitting its report. The students had earlier demonstrated demanding the submission of the report by the committee and the students had at that time been assured that the report would soon be submitted, they said and alleged that but the report was not submitted till date even. The students demanded that the report of the committee should be furnished before them and threatened to continue their agitation till the report is not submitted and also hand-

ed over to them. Umesh Yadav led the demonstration.

BHU TO BE ILLUMINATED WITH LAMPS TODAY

Karthigai Deepam will be celebrated in the city here on Tuesday and on the occasion Banaras Hindu University (BHU) campus will be illuminated with thousands of lamps in the evening under the ongoing month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS). The purpose of this programme is to help the local south Indians to

celebrate the festival with great pomp and enthusiasm. The people of the South Indian community, wherever they live in the world, celebrate this festival in a very special way. This year the Karthigai Deepam festival is falling on December 6. The entire venue of KTS will be decorated with lamps by the students of BHU and guests from Tamil Nadu. According to mythology, Lord Shiva appeared as a flame of light before Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma, who each believed himself to be

supreme. To assert his supremacy, Lord Shiva challenged him to find either his head or his feet. Vishnu took the form of Varaha (Varaha) and went into the depths of the earth but could not be found. Brahma assumed the form of a swan and told that he had identified Lord Shiva with the help of Tajhampur flower. Lord Shiva sensed the lie and cursed that there would be no temple of Brahma in the world and Thazhampoor flower would not be used while worshipping him.

Commissionerate system: Prayagraj may be divided into two zones

Prayagraj (PNS): After the implementation of the commissionerate system, there was a discussion about creation of three zones each in the newly formed commissionerate. But now preparations are on to change this system as well. If everything goes according to the planning, then the district will be divided into four zones. Two of these zones will be in the city. The old city will come in

one zone and the remaining part in the other zone. While two other zones will be in Gangapur and Yamunapur. Similarly, it was discussed till now that three circles will be increased in the district. But now there is a discussion on whether the number of circles should be increased to 15.

That is, four more circles should be increased in the existing system. Out of these,

discussions are on to increase two circles in the city while one circle each in the rural areas. Similarly, the plan to establish another police station by dividing some police stations which are very big geographically is under consideration. The areas where the issue of setting up police stations is being discussed at the preliminary level include Dhoomanganj, Colonelganj and Meja.

Triple engine govt will boost growth further, says Ojha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

State co-in-charge of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sunil Ojha said that with the victory of the party in upcoming civic elections, the pace of development process in the state would be boosted further with the triple engine government. He was addressing the regional (Kashi) meeting of the party at its Rohania office here on Sunday. In the meeting, Kashi region office-bearers, coordinators, co-convenors, district presidents, in-charges, other party unit office-bearers and convenors of Nagar Nigam (Varanasi and Prayagraj), 19 Nagar Palikas coordinators and 73 Nagar Panchayat coordinators and in-charges of all the 16 districts of the region were present.

Addressing the meeting while reviewing the preparations for the civic (urban bodies) elections, Ojha said that the municipal elections are going to be held soon in UP. He said that after thumping victories in Lok Sabha elections in 2014 and 2019 and Vidhan Sabha polls in 2017 and 2022, the pace of development in the state has boosted remarkably under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. "UP is developing at a rapid pace under the double engine government and this speed would be faster with the triple engine government, if the BJP does well in the forthcoming civic polls. He further said that the triple engine government would be able to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the



State co-in-charge of BJP Sunil Ojha addressing a party's meeting in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

people.

Speaking on the occasion, regional president Mahesh Chand Srivastava, while presenting a detailed outline of the preparations for the civic elections, said that five meetings have to be held after planning in each ward and stressed the need for making lists of key voters at ward level. He said that to make the lists, the party workers belonging to the groups of women, youth, minorities, scheduled tribes, backward classes etc have to be enlisted. "In all the districts, the task of hoisting the party's flag in every house by making the locality and street chiefs has to be done. A small conference of the local and street leaders is to be held. A list has to be prepared on the basis of caste equation in the wards," he said,

adding that a three three-day mass contact campaign is to be conducted in the wards.

He also said that by creating offices in each ward, making heads of such wards, holding 30 minutes meeting of ward steering committees every third day, identifying fake voters through software, preparing the lists of maths and temples in each ward, making people aware through street plays, enlisting self-help groups and polling agents and fixing two names for each booth etc, the campaign will be given a boost. Giving guidelines on many such subjects, he said that contacting voters during the campaign, getting the voter identification form filled, making contact with the house-to-house by taking the leaflets of the achievements of the central

and state governments will be the tasks of party workers. "It is necessary to re-contact voters by taking voter slips the day before polling," he said.

Regional general secretary Sushil Tripathi conducted the meeting while the vote of thanks was done by regional general secretary Ashok Chaurasia.

The meeting was also attended by state secretary Shankar Giri, Meena Choubey, Anamika Chowdhary, Santosh Kumar Patel, city chief Vidyasagar Rai, district president Hansraj Vishwakarma, Nagendra Raghuvanshi, Kaushalendra Singh, Rakesh Sharma, regional spokesman Navratan Rathi and many others from all the 16 districts of the region.

Prayagraj airport may get more flights before Maha Kumbh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj airport may be gifted with more flights before Maha Kumbh 2025. This was discussed at length here at a meeting of advisory committee.

Member of Parliament from Phulpur Keshari Devi Patel expressed concern over lowering of frequency of existing flights from here and asked as to why daily flights have been put under alternate day

schedule?

The members of the advisory committee raised the issue of increasing fare and said that it was against the wish of the prime minister who wanted to see the poor travelling in aeroplanes.

The MP, who presided over the meeting asked the authorities to get prepared for Maha Kumbh 2025, and asked about Krishi Udaan Yojana, and expansion of airport.

The director RR Pandey

informed that Nagpur and Patna route flights will soon be launched, while for Maha Kumbh plans are being chalked out for connecting Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Guwahati, and Jammu from Prayagraj by air. The MP assured of discussing the issue with the Civil Aviation Minister.

MLA Siddharth Nath Singh focussed his suggestions on expansion of airport and facilities to the passengers.

Suggestions came for starting electric buses from the airport for the city at regular intervals for the convenience of the passengers. Airport Authority had to get 75.62 acre of land for Prayagraj airport, but 25 acres are yet to be handed over.

To ensure proper smooth connectivity of airport from city, a four-lane road is proposed with a fly-over at Subedarganj. This is also to be completed before Maha Kumbh.

Girl alleges rape by RPF jawan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A girl from Holagarh area has lodged a case of rape and molestation against an RPF jawan and his brother. In the written complaint given to the police on behalf of the victim, it has been alleged that the RPF jawan took her to Odisha on the pretext of marriage where he outraged her modesty.

After returning, the girl forced him to marry her when she became pregnant then she was threatened with dire consequences. The police have started investigating the matter by registering reports against the real brothers under various sections.

A girl from Holagarh area alleged that a young man from

Pratapgarh, who is a soldier in the RPF, took her to Odisha on the pretext of marriage. He forcibly raped her there, the girl alleged. Shortly after her return, she became pregnant and she insisted on getting married. On this, the young man called her to his home and tried to give her abortion medicine.

Meanwhile, the jawan's brother molested her and threatened to kill her if she protested. After this, the victim reached Holagarh police station and gave the named written complaint narrating her ordeal to the police.

On which the police have started looking for the accused by registering a case against RPF jawan Shambhunath for rape and his brother Sonu, resident of

Shinhagi, Raniganj, Pratapgarh for molestation under relevant sections.

SHO Holagarh Amit Kumar Singh said that on the complaint of the victim, a case has been registered against two real brothers under relevant sections. Further action will be taken on the basis of investigations, added the SHO.

MAHABHARAT REDUX IN PRATAPGARH: If the husband's complaint is true, the Mahabharat episode has been repeated here in Pratapgarh, but with a slight difference. A woman lost herself in a gamble, and is not being released by the winners.

A husband, who lives out of station, lodged a complaint with the police, stating that her wife used to gamble through

ludo or cards with the landlord of the rented house. She first lost all cash and ornaments, and then put herself on stake and lost the game.

She informed the husband that she was not being released by the landlord, and if he comes for her rescue, he will be killed.

When the police started investigating, the woman termed the whole story as concocted, and said that her husband did not send any money to her and she had to work as a domestic aid at different houses to earn bread and butter for her children. He used to beat her.

The husband now says that when she lost it all in gamble and asked for more money, he refused to send the same.

Artistes mesmerise audience at KTS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A group of talented guest artists from Tamil Nadu and others mesmerised the audience including dignitaries like Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at ongoing Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) at Amphitheatre ground in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Sunday evening. It was the last programme participated by the Union Minister as the chief guest during her three days stay in the city. Besides, as a special guest UP Minister of State for Higher Education Rajni Tiwari, Chairman of Mission 'Karma Yogi Bharat' and former Skill Advisor to the Prime Minister S Ramadurai, Prof Harish Rathore, BHU Vice Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain, District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and others were also present. The cultural evening was organised by the North Central Zone Cultural Centre (NCZCC), Prayagraj and South Zone Cultural Centre and union ministries of Culture and Education. The cultural programme began with a musical presentation by Prof Virendra Nath Shukla, followed by a singing presentation given by Dr Shiwani Mishra and her students. The third presentation of



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attending cultural event at KTS at BHU in Varanasi on Sunday evening.

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folk songs was of Dr Vinarmata Vani Sudha and her fellow artists. Then the students of Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), BHU graced the stage with Gandhari Natya Rupam. This presentation was staged by Gandhari Swappa Drisya (inspired by Dharamveer Bhartiya Krit Andhayug) in which Vikas Yadav and a group of students were present. Later, giving the audience an experience of the confluence of the North and South, Vilupattu was presented by Kalaimamani, a Velkani group, followed by Therukkuthu by Kuppasamy, Uthangarai and Krishnagiri. Then Bharatnatyam was presented by Kalaimamani Binesh Mahadevan and it was followed by folk music by Veera Shankara and artistes from

Thanjavur and the final performance was based on historical drama (Shiva Puranam, Ramayanam and Mahabharatam) which was presented by N Sathyaraj, Kanai and Viluppuram. All these artistes were honoured by Chammu Krishna Shastri.

SPORTS FESTIVAL TO BE ORGANISED: Along with culture, civilisation and religious journey in Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS), players from North and South will also meet. An eight-day sports festival will also be held in this grand programme being organised in Banaras Hindu University (BHU). A total of eight events of sports will be conducted by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) from December 8 to 15.

Hockey competition will be held on December 8 at BHU's hockey stadium while football event in the football stadium on December 9 and basketball on December 19 at MP Hall. A cricket match will be held on December 11 in which players from North and South will play the match at IIT Cricket Stadium of BHU. Table tennis and badminton will be organised on December 12 at MP Hall while volleyball on December 13, Kho Kho on December 14 and Kabaddi on December 15 at different grounds in BHU. For the event, women's and men's teams have been formed from both sides in this entire sports event, in which players from North and South will participate in all these matches.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Holding employees' contribution to Provident Fund, ESI etc, will now be treated as income where these payments are made after the due date. Dr Navin C Agrawal, practicing Senior Chartered Accountant has opined that the recent decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Checkmate Services Pvt. Ltd. has resulted in genuine hardship by holding that the contribution of employees PF, ESI, etc is liable to be treated as income where such payment has been made after the due date under the concerned law.

Further, in consequence, it has denied the deduction for such payment forever. This position of the provision of the Income Tax Act, 1961 will result in the dismissal of all pending appeals of the assessee before the Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals), Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, and the High Courts.

Although due to difference of opinion amongst the High Courts, a clarification amendment to tax such amounts has already been made in the Act w.e.f. 01.04.2022.

However, such an amendment and the decision calls upon various Associations and Chambers of Commerce to make representation to the Central Government through the Union Finance Minister for suitable modification in the Act for these reasons. Firstly, the assessee has to face the rigors of the concerned law for the

delay as well. Secondly, the deduction is denied forever which is contrary to the principles of natural justice. Thirdly, the amount put to tax has never been the income of the assessee as understood in the commercial sense. And fourthly, some leverage must be allowed for technological glitches in the payment when facilities are available 24*7 in specific circumstances.

MAYOR LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF INTERLOCKING ROAD: Mayor Abhilasha Gupta Nandi laid foundation stone of interlocking road adjoining Jeevan Jyoti Hospital, Bai Ka Bagh in the presence of Hospital Director and Eminent Gynecologist and IVF Expert Dr Vandana Bansal, Advanced Laparoscopy and Cancer Surgeon Dr

Arpit Bansal, besides local corporators and leaders on Monday. Approved under MLA Fund of Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, Mayor Abhilasha Gupta Nandi said it is an initiative for the beautification of the city under which tree plantation, railings etc work is also proposed.

On the occasion Dr Vandana Bansal said it is a good initiative for the beautification of the city. "We appreciate that the Mayor is always willing to work for the development of Prayagraj," she said.

Hospital employees, staff members and paramedical students also presented bouquets to the Mayor and accorded her a warm welcome in the hospital premises.



Siberian birds flying over Yamuna river in foggy weather in Prayagraj

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DM suspends 4 during inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam did a surprise inspection of Primary School (Sikraul No 1) in the city area here on Monday. During the inspection, he found four including Shikshamitra, Anganwadi worker and Sahayika absent without prior notice or permission. He instructed the officer concerned to sack Shikshamitra Pushpa Rai, Anganwadi workers Bina Devi and Mamta Choubey and Sahayika Pinky Yadav as they all were found absent without prior information.

The DM expressed great displeasure over the lack of cleanliness in the school. He tested the quality of education by questioning the children and looked satisfied with the answers of the children. Some children expressed displeasure over not having books. He asked the children whether they were getting the money or not and expressed his anguish over the fact that 12 children had not received money under DBT (direct benefit transfer). Out of 103 children, 45 chil-



DM S Rajalingam inspecting a primary school in Varanasi on Monday.

Pioneer

dren were found present on the spot.

Rajalingam said that there are so many children missing in the school and it is the responsibility of the teachers here to bring them to the school and find out why the children are not coming. He

said that children will do better in future if they get better education from the primary level and that's why the standard of education should be made better. "Better learning environment should be created by solving every problem. All teachers should come to

school on time and discharge their duties with full honesty and integrity," he instructed the teachers. He also asked them to always maintain contact with the parents of the children and keep motivating them regarding the education of the children.

Mass marriage programme organised

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Under the banner of 'Share and Care' Daffodils Public School organised a mass marriage programme on Sunday. Extending best wishes to 11 couples who tied the nuptial knot school chairperson Dr T Bhatia said it was a matter of contentment that the school was not only performing well in the field of education but was dedicated to social cause with committed spirit and thanked directors, Amardeep Singh and Aparajita Singh, for holding the event and guardians of couples

who accepted offer of organisers and became a part of the programme. Amidst chanting of Vedic shlokas by team of pandits led by Ram Lal Tripathi the marriages were solemnised in a traditional way. Relatives graced the function to bless newly married couples.

WRESTLING COMPETITION: Chairman Nagar Palika Parishad Mirzapur Manoj Jaiswal inaugurated the wrestling competition on Sunday. He said wrestling has been the traditional game of the district since long and its

wrestlers had earned laurels several times in the past. He said under the spirit of 'Khelo India' beautification work of the ring was carried out and modern facilities were made available to enable the successful holding of the competition. He appreciated the dedication of organisers towards wrestling and added that wrestlers from not only adjacent districts but from Nepal, Bihar and Delhi were participating in the competition and paid tribute to late Komal Pahlwan in whose memory the competition was organised. He extended his

best wishes to the upcoming wrestlers. The vote of thanks was proposed by convener Lavkush.

ARRESTED: Lalganj police arrested an accused of raping a minor girl on Sunday. A woman on Saturday had lodged a named FIR at Lalganj police station alleging that the accused had enticed her minor daughter away and raped her.

After registering the case police arrested the accused and after recovering the girl sent her for a medical examination.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Iran waking up

The notorious morality police, which was crushing the anti-hijab protests, have been disbanded

Have the Ayatollahs blinked on hijab in Iran? Perhaps, if Attorney General Mohammad Javad Montazeri's statement is anything to go by. The morality police, he said, "was abolished by the same authorities who installed it." State media reports suggest that he said this on Saturday during a meeting at which officials were discussing the anti-hijab unrest; the morality police have been violently trying to suppress for months. The theocratic Government, however, has neither confirmed nor denied the abolition. In fact, there are conflicting signals from the powers that be. The state-owned Arabic television channel, Al Alam, has claimed that Montazeri's statement has been taken out of context; other state channels also maintain that the Government remains firm on mandatory hijab law. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, however, says something else. At a press conference in Belgrade, Serbia, when asked about the morality police, he did not deny the abolition. He said, "In Iran, everything is moving forward well in the framework of democracy and freedom." Not very unequivocal, but the allusion was for all to notice. Even if the morality police have not been removed, it is indubitable that the protests, which began months ago after a young woman was beaten to death by moral cops for not wearing the hijab properly, have rattled the top authorities in Tehran. Around 450 people, including children, have died in the demonstrations across the country, and yet there are few signs of the movement subsiding.

As in the case of protests in China over Beijing's stupid zero-Covid policy which have exhibited anti-Xi Jinping feelings, the campaign against the Islamic headscarf too may be becoming anti-theocracy. The people of Iran have suffered a lot of depredations at the hands of Islamist hotheads who, Amnesty's 2021 report says, "heavily suppress the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. They banned independent political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, censored the media and jammed satellite television channels." Security and intelligence officials arbitrarily arrest those whose social media postings they find "counter-revolutionary" or "un-Islamic"—which could be practically anything. For instance, women not covering their heads are un-Islamic, as also are men who wear ties with suits. Several thousand men, women and children were interrogated, unfairly prosecuted and/or arbitrarily detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, the human rights body reported. Protesters, journalists, dissidents, artists, writers, teachers and dual nationals were among them. Also among them were human rights activists, women's rights defenders, votaries of LGBTI people's rights, labour rights and minority rights, environmentalists, etc. Hopefully, the anti-hijab movement becomes a watershed moment in Iran's history—between an Orwellian state with Islamist characteristics and a liberal democracy.

PICTALK



Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock visits Kinari Bazaar, at Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi PTI

Rail Project scrapped

Kerala Govt bowing to the people's pressure scraps the rail project averting an environmental disaster

The Rs 1.2 lakh crore Silver Line Semi Speed Rail project linking Kasaragod with Thiruvananthapuram has been scrapped by the Government of Kerala following widespread agitation by the people who would have been thrown to the streets and lost their precious lands. Though experts like E Sreedharan, the legendary Railway Engineer and Alok Kumar Verma, former chief engineer of Indian Railways warned the Kerala Government about the environmental and ecological damages the stand-alone project would inflict on the State in addition to the thousands who would be displaced as a result of land acquisition, an intransigent CPI(M)-led administration went ahead with installing survey stones along the proposed path. A hitherto unseen mass agitation forced the government to do a vault face and call off the project.

This is not the first time Kerala is seeing such a protest. Way back in the 1980s, the then Rajiv Gandhi led Congress Government had decided to set up a nuclear power plant to be built in the High Ranges of eastern Kerala with technical and financial aid offered by the then Soviet Union. This would have resulted in the destruction of hundreds of hectares of lush, verdant rain forests and wild lives. The protests launched under the leadership of M A Varghese, a frail looking professor and his battle cry that the reactor could be built only over his dead body made the Centre see the writing on the wall and spiked the project. Latest developments show that the CPI(M) Government has not learnt anything from these two incidents. The new ill-conceived project is the Sabari Rail to facilitate pilgrims from reaching the holy shrine of Lord Ayyappa atop the Western Ghats. The fact that Sabarimala shrine is opened only for three months every year has not been taken seriously by the proponents of the project. Pilgrims themselves have not demanded for such a rail connectivity because their trip to Sabarimala would not be complete without paying obeisance at more than a dozen temples along the route. This will be better served by the existing road network in the State. The claim by a section of politicians that the rail route would help transporting hill-produce from Idukki district to Cochin Port is nothing but bunkum as plantations that yield tea, coffee, cardamom are getting shut down by the day. Kerala should get its existing rail tracks doubled so that travel time could be brought down to less than half of the present journey. Another separate rail line means more agitations and bloodshed.



G-20 leadership is godsend for India

The India's leadership of G20 can catapult the country to prominence but more importantly give it a chance to work for lasting world peace



PRAFULL GORADIA

India is now the chairman of the G-20, which was formally handed to it at Bali by the previous incumbent Indonesia. The presidency of the G-20 has the potential to catapult India to the degree of prominence the country has not experienced before. However, G-20 leadership would be for only one year. Thereafter, the dividend earned from the capital gained during this one year should accrue. Would not the most handsome divide be an ongoing world peace?

The spontaneous conviction of most countries might well be that the peace will be, let us say, eternal. The "non-era of war" would endure indefinitely, to borrow somewhat from Prime Minister Modi's statement to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Thereafter, whether India becomes the world's number one power or not would be less important; the country would enjoy diplomatic dominance at least as long as the peace lasts.

Every thinking person in the world today would be aware that the use of a thermonuclear weapon means widespread death and destruction. Yet, weaker or less responsible nations with nuclear weapons in their hands do not hesitate to threaten those countries of whom they are afraid, have ongoing issues or simply have scores to settle. It is not impossible that irresponsible leaders of such nations could well be tempted to use this weapon of mass destruction. Criminals realize their folly only after they are punished; otherwise, they are incorrigible.

One hears much that is spoken and written in favour of diplomacy and statesmanship. However, it is essential that one recognizes the historical fact that neither diplomacy nor strategy has prevented war. The proud Maginot Line of France failed to even obstruct the German invasion in the summer of 1940. The only factor that defeated but did not deter either the Swedish army in 1708, Napoleon's invading army nor Hitler in 1941—the invasion of Russia—nature's intervention in the form of snowfall on the Russian steppes. What



else then can prevent war in the absolute?

Something reminiscent of dharma, its inspiration as well as its deterrence could perhaps help to keep nations away from thinking of war and destruction in this age, thinking nuclear. That the use of nuclear weapons is not merely destructive but also an evil, needs to be driven into the vast masses of people all over the world. How Hiroshima and Nagasaki were rendered burning hells in 1945 needs to be captured in record and displayed to all coming generations, especially in countries boasting of their nuclear arsenals. How murdering innocent human beings in such a manner is the worst dushkarma (misdeed) anyone, group or nation can perpetrate, must be driven into the minds of people. How effective this conviction can be, has been demonstrated through history in India.

The subcontinent was invaded via the Hindu Kush down the Khyber Pass and across the seas for no less than a millennium. There have been innumerable episodes of retaliation in justifiable defence by the Hindus. Yet, they suffered enormously in these invasions by an alien ideology and way of life, bled badly;



SOMETHING REMINISCENT OF DHARMA, ITS INSPIRATION AS WELL AS ITS DETERRENCE COULD PERHAPS HELP TO KEEP NATIONS AWAY FROM THINKING OF WAR AND DESTRUCTION IN THIS AGE, THINKING NUCLEAR

their temples were destroyed but they fought on and hoped that "it is darkest before dawn", and that the morning wouldn't be long in breaking. There are cultures that do not distinguish between killing the guilty and the innocent, but butchering human beings and animals; between destroying the sacred or the profane. Imagine desecrating a church or destroying cattle in an abattoir. Imagine inducing the birth of a baby lamb, feeding and fattening it merely to slaughter it for feasting on its meat. The spread of dharma and awakening the perpetrators to the consequences of dushkarma would be the call that an international body can give to the comity of nations.

The world has also toyed with organizations and blocs, all for the stated purpose of achieving world peace and preventing war, but all such attempts have proved mirages, as the history of the world shows. The League of Nations following the end of WWI and the United Nations Organization after WWII are examples that foremost come to the mind. Then there are organizations like the European Union, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and various regional blocs around the world, whose stated purpose

is to influence geopolitics and geoeconomics by proactively promoting the interests of the regions these blocs represent. Global peace is ostensibly sought to be achieved through trade and economics.

The G-20 being essentially an economic forum, it would be its primary duty to also awaken, as many nations as possible, to the crime of destruction and not merely killing. For example, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which was destroyed in a fire in 2020; the magnificent Temple of Somnath of the era of Bhimdev Solanki can never be brought back, as are many a rare factories or centres of manufacturing, which are irreplaceable. India under its current Prime Minister has a truly unprecedented opportunity to lead the world towards a lasting if not perennial peace. The country has already become the world's fifth largest economy and is one of the world's leading powers, though India does not seek to dominate others. Unless the hearts and minds of people are metamorphosed, the darkest chapters of history would be written again and again.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILO WARNING ON WAGES

Sir — All is not well and is bad news as the warning by the Global Wage Report 2022-23 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of rising inflation that has caused a striking decline in real monthly wages highlighting the urgent need for policies to prevent further poverty, inequality, and social unrest, and the November data by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data, which shows a rise in unemployment in India for the third consecutive month since September 2022 that reached 8 per cent.

The CMIE data of December 2, 2022, shows an even higher unemployment rate of 8.1 per cent in the country. The urban unemployment rate was 9 per cent while the rural unemployment rate was 7.7 per cent, showing comparatively more hardship for the urban unemployed compared to the rural areas. The ILO global report on wages across the world said that the global monthly wages fell in real terms to -0.9 per cent in the first half of the year marking the first instance of negative growth this century. As a result, the purchasing power of middle-class families has been reduced, while low-income households have been hit particularly hard.

The jobless growth is indeed a worrisome trend. We cannot be happy as a nation which is high on GDP but low on per capita income. The per capita income is of course directly related to the employment the people get in the country at all levels. Besides, the fear of recession is also very real as no income in the hands of the people means low demand and thus goes the vicious cycle of lesser and lesser jobs. Hope the government is mindful of this.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

INDIA AT HELM OF AFFAIRS

Sir — Excellent that India, a peace loving suave nation, assumes the presidency of G20 (from Dec 1st for a year) and of UNSC (by rotation on December month). India has all-round goodwill. It has grown tremendously on all fronts in

Save our soil



Once you take the life out of the soil, it will become an inert sand - Sadhguru. Every year December 5th is witnessed as World Soil Day to raise awareness about the importance of soil and our lives and its campaign

"Soils: Where food begins" aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems. Like us, soils need a balanced and varied supply of nutrients in appropriate amounts to be healthy. Agricultural systems lose nutrients with each harvest, and if soils are not managed sustainably, fertility is progressively lost, and soils will produce nutrient-deficient plants. Over the past years the nutrients and vitamins in plants have gradually decreased. Almost 74 Nations around the world have pledged concrete actions to save soil in their countries. It is high time we understand the importance of saving soil and saving climate.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

NAGARJUNA SAGAR LIES IN A LIMBO

Sir — As bifurcation differences over water sharing between the two Telugu states simmer after the earlier meetings failed to break the deadlock, the latest meeting called by KRMB to address the issues relating to water sharing after the two states giving their consent for rule curve relating only to Srisailem reservoir is heartening but at the same time remaining elusive on Sagar rule curve and Nagarjunasagar is surprising.

Notwithstanding the bone of contention existing for long over the water sharing between the two states, one hopes, Central Water Commission intervenes and resolves Sagar rule curve amicably because time is ripe for both the states to come to a reasonable understanding and resolve the differences in a give and take policy by prioritizing growth and development instead of bickering and prolonging the matter because water been an elixir of life need to be shared and not allowed to be flown down to join the sea.

KR Srinivasan | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Madhu PV | Secunderabad

SOUND BITE

The moment I raised the question of land and the moment I started to defend the right of poor people on their land, is when this whole media tamasha starts.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

Iran's parliament and judiciary are reviewing the country's mandatory hijab law.

Iran's Attorney General — Mohammad Jafar Montazeri

I think we have to try much harder than we used to do earlier, we have to try harder to get them out.

Actor — Akshay Kumar

He (Shakib Al Hasan) is definitely one of the best (all-rounders). It's just so unfortunate that he plays for Bangladesh and doesn't get the same kind of recognition.

Indian cricketer — Wasim Jaffer


You are all included in my being. Your love is my wealth. Everyone has to fight against the slavery of Godi media.

Journalist/anchor — Ravish Kumar

FIRST COLUMN

CREATING A ROBUST FUTURE FOR PLANET

Euro-centric view of human evolution needs a revisit



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

In modern times, there are certain critical points of change that get flagged. The French Revolution, the American War of Independence, and the Bolshevik Revolution stand out. Each of these defines a critical point in human history. Whether the list of the important events is complete or not is a matter of perception. That it espouses a euro-centric view of human evolution is obvious. There is nothing wrong in such a narrative, except for its incompleteness.

There are substantial parts of the world across which the European races spread. This covered the world from Latin America to Australia. The approach from the African world, Western Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, Australia – all went by default. Australia for example has had human habitation running into multiple centuries, almost from the Palaeolithic age onwards. Yet very little connected narrative is available about Australia before the Europeans arrived there.

The present dominance of the euro-centric view of learning perpetuates this approach. It has been institutionalised through the curriculum of educational institutions. The trouble is deeper, as there is little or no institutional attempt to modify and evolve this perspective to completeness. The current international bodies of the United Nations and more only perpetuate this bias.



Newly emergent nations follow the Euro American pattern of curriculum planning and seek eminence through conformity. Through a serious study of anthropology and an extension of its approach much of this can be countered. Also, studying human evolution from the vantage point of identification and utilisation of energy resources may serve a purpose. The human evolution from using human muscle power for energy purposes to the present status of using atomic energy may help in settling right many of the aberrations in the periodization of human history. India has a narrative, of its present level of evolution, generally taken to be of about 15,000 years of antiquity. Evidence exists of human presence on this subcontinent even prior to those 15,000 years or so. It is just that the history of the times before that is not amenable to the tools used for writing the narrative of what is termed as 'history' in the current values of the academic world.

A gradualist approach would help. A general awareness has to emerge about recognition of the assumptions, governing action of the people whose history is being written. In India, for example, thinking about the so-called other world of spirituality and 'abstraction' is central from the Rig Vedic times. This kind of orientation is not present in many parts of the world such as Europe, Americas, etc.

What could work is talking of 'alternate approach' to human evolution and history. This 'alternate approach' need not require a negation of the present attempts of history writing. It would require emphasis on the elements which emphasise a spiritual or a more than material approach to human evolution.

The Indian approach is about the conventional mind that looks at plants, animals, nature and more. A cursory recall of the richas of Rig Veda or the writings of Kalidas reveal sensitivity in depiction of plants and animals, which is missing in the writing of the text of those times in European languages.

Steps need to be taken towards understanding the alternate assumptions of human actions in different parts of the globe for real understanding of the evolution of human species, which may set a more realistic direction to compass human development. It will be real, rooted in local traditions and helping to create a robust global future.

(The author is an internationally acclaimed management consultant)

We must think differently for the differently abled

From Agatha Christie to Steven Spielberg, from John Lennon to Boman Irani, dyslexics have powered our imagination



NOOPUR JHUNJHUNWALA

Let's begin with a quick game of 'Take a Step Forward'. So, take a step forward if you have helped someone with a disability. Another step ahead if you have donated to support a disability. One more step forward if you have liked an awareness campaign for a disability. Another step if you believe that inclusion of a person with a disability is important.

And the last step forward if a person with a disability has made life easier for you. Taken aback? Can't think of anything? How about electricity? Maybe cars? What about telephones and computers? Relaxing seeing animated cartoons? Well, this entire list of inventors—from Benjamin Franklin, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Steve

Jobs to Walt Disney—is mapped to persons with dyslexia, a learning disability. Sounds impossible, right? How can our lives revolve around inventions of the differently abled? Aren't dyslexics the ones who are not able to read, who confuse their b's and d's, have terrible spellings and are not able to do math? Yes, that's right! Dyslexia is a learning disability that impacts processing language.

So, how is it possible that someone who struggles with basic language and math skills, is able to change the world? The simple answer is that the narrative around disabilities and inclusion is so focused on things the differently abled cannot do, and how we need to uplift them because of their inabilities, that somewhere

amidst pushing them forward, we have pushed them away from owning their strengths. In doing so, we often cease to think of the flipside—the magical potential and strengths of these people.

In this case we forget that individuals with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence but their brain functions, processes and grasps information differently. This ability to think differently has been coined as dyslexic thinking.

Global studies indicate that the strengths associated with dyslexic thinking are critical skills of the future.

Dyslexia is more common than we realise. While official figures are not available, research indicates that between 15 and 20 crore Indians have

a learning disability, of which 3.5 crore are students.

There is no way to determine whether a person has a specific learning disability by merely looking at them.

Let's rewind a bit. Let's try a quick activity to help you understand a dyslexic individual's experience with language and text. Read this, as quickly as you have read the piece so far. I am flipping the sand clock now: 'I way out de adle to reag, dut I snre cau thiuk bifently.'

Lost and frustrated? This is how a person with Dyslexia struggles with reading simple texts like,

'I may not be able to read, but I sure can think differently.' Beyond language, learning disabilities impact executive functioning. So it's common

for them to also confuse left from right, mix up instructions, struggle with time management and be forgetful. This disability, nonetheless, is the reason behind the world's most indispensable inventions.

And that's not where it stops.

Dyslexics—from Agatha Christie to Steven Spielberg, from John Lennon to Cher, from Boman Irani to Whoopi Goldberg—are powering our imagination. They are also driving employment and growth. In fact, 40 per cent of self-made millionaires are dyslexics. While the list is endless, I am hoping that you are catching on with the importance of what disabilities offer our civilisation. And yet, all their journeys started as a child who was dismissed as being a "duffer", not good

enough to succeed in anything.

In India, we find success stories of dyslexics that have transcended barriers and emerged as educators, civil servants, leading investors, tech leaders, artists and CEOs. The Government has made significant strides in creating an ecosystem of support for people with specific learning disabilities. The first critical step was the 2016 amendment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act to recognise it as a disability.

Next is the emphasis that the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020, lays on inclusion of children with special needs as one of its goals, calling out inclusion of those with learning disabilities in the classroom. The higher education regulatory bodies like All India

Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) have both worked on comprehensive guidelines on provisions to include students with special learning disabilities. But policies alone can't make it happen. Strong efforts are needed to accelerate screening for early identification of children. We need to strengthen the capacities of our educators to teach inclusive classrooms, especially with the focus on improving learning outcomes. Beyond educational institutions, workplaces need to provide inclusive and enabling environments. Lastly, but most importantly, we need to work together to break the social stigma, look beyond the disabilities and celebrate their abilities.

Twitter can benefit from Musk's ideas

Musk will be the star in the history of social media platforms, especially in moments of change

What started as a data-heavy world wide web is no more just about the internet and data. Since Twitter's launch in 2006, social media platforms have been on a roller-coaster ride.

No more sense is palpable in data content and how much it is. Instead, the focus is on privacy and security shackles entangled in data transmission. It is the Web3 era where the fundamental right of equality also has a digital interpretation. Users on the internet seek democracy in the digital world with their share of rights and duties.

While content and publishing were the triggers for a long time, the platform's health and hygiene are much more critical than any other aspect. Today, it is more about building sustainable digital and social media platforms than the age-old aggression-driven conversation platforms. While excitement and real-time content pull from the users still prevail, the time now is for social media barons to pause and look at the NexGen Social Verse.

A scrutiny of the rules for social media players reveals a great deal. Social media episodes are presently rife with controversies, harassment, fake information, privacy attacks, and other disturbing trends. This infiltration of the mischief-oriented environment has led to an excessive loss of trust by users from diverse platforms. It is time that the backend innovators restore this trust by bringing in content moderation and AI-driven default rules that debar users from crossing the line.

Given that what's visible on the platform defines the level and quality of the information being perused, whether or not it's used, platforms must consider all possible solutions to flush out junk, spam, bots, and other secondary data points. This will keep the focus on first-hand data, which can lead to impressive engagement levels for users and advertisers to rely on and spend more time on the platform.

Platforms now need to move towards more innovation-driven monetisation models, which are economically more viable than the current ones. Elon Musk's announcement addressing a new high for advertising on Twitter is an effort in the right direction to monetise better. Setting standards being his goal, he says: "Twitter aspires to be the most respected advertising platform in the world that strengthens your brand and grows your enterprise".

While the bird app's fall after a series of failures has been criticized worldwide, it must be appreciated that both Musk and Twitter have joined hands to take on the challenge ahead, which is a reboot of all operating mechanisms: from its workforce to policies, product environment, revenue models, and so on. Elon Musk will be the star in the history of social media platforms, especially in moments of change.



WHETHER THE FEVERISH SALE OF EACH OFFICIAL BLUE TICK AT \$8 OR MANY OTHER SUCH TOOLS IN THE MAKING, MUSK IS ALL OUT TO CREATE CASH-RINGING MODELS FOR THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM TO REGISTER PROFITS

(The Author is an M&A Partner, JSA, Advocates & Solicitors)



His takeover of Twitter may prove to be one of the most important benchmarks for the social media champions of the future. Hence, it is befitting to embrace this chaos-driven journey that Elon has started and hope to see online more stable, sustainable, human, and socially-driven media platforms.

Musk's competence for being an efficient change agent but not the right fit for leadership has been the topic of speculation. However, enough examples from the past prove that the owner-cum-CEO formats of running entities are barely successful.

Notwithstanding the constructive criticism that Musk has been facing for his failed leadership and unreliable management decisions, his ideas on the kind of innovation and change that would benefit Twitter have received support and appreciation. These innovative ideas can create a historical transition point for the bird app if coupled with the appointment of inspired leadership officers.

Elon Musk is a lawyer's nightmare is a proven fact. Tesla's turning three legal heads within two years speaks volumes about Musk's penchant for an experiment. Keeping aside Musk's dramatic brushes with the law, it is relevant to look at how the legal battery was at work for Elon Musk to make the Twitter deal happen the way he wanted it and how he continues to grapple with the issues arising out of layoffs.

Then, in July 2022, Musk and his legal team got another jolt when Twitter sued him as he tried to escape the deal. He was pushed to adhere to the contract he had signed and follow through along with Twitter.

Musk was never short of options. While the Twitter Board struggled to stop the deal, Musk and his advisors always held the trump card. Upon the Board's denial, Musk approached the shareholders. It made an offer sweet enough for the Board to consider it seriously in the interests of the shareholders, given that Musk had made it clear that if the Board denied it, he would strive to remain a shareholder with the power to harm the tank further. During this contentious period, Musk was engaged in arranging funds that he was short of.

Buyback, stock repurchase, and sale of assets are other powerful options that could have made Musk's hostile bid less lucrative, ultimately dealing a death blow to the takeover.

After the bloodbath of strategies to take over the bird app, Elon Musk is not enjoying a beach side vacation. Having laid off nearly half of the company staff, he faces many challenges in turning a socially-free platform into a profitable one. But his taste for haste has not gone down well with critical stakeholders – advertisers, regulators, and of course, the tweeters.

Whether the feverish sale of

each official blue tick at \$8 or many other such tools in the making, Musk is all out to create cash-ring models for the social media platform to register profits.

Regardless of the diatribe around the Twitter-Elon Musk saga, it's time to look at essential numbers and stop relating everything to Musk's takeover of Twitter. As per Sensor Tower's data, during the days Musk announced his plan to terminate the agreement to buy Twitter amidst spambot and fake account debates, the mean average weekly advertising spending in the US had touched \$945,800. Come September, this dropped to \$944,200, when tensions were building up further over Twitter's deposition in the lawsuit filed in Delaware Court of Chancery. Despite the looming law, the deal seal was expected to be postponed for a while.

By October, before the deal went through, the mean dropped to \$877,200 and plunged to \$589,100 a week after Musk's takeover. Such figures beg further scrutiny.

As much as social media users may criticise the entire Twitter takeover, the sheer number of installs on App Store and Google Play Store is testimony to the world's choice of Tweeting on the app. The 6.3 million worldwide installs through October 15-26 jumped to a staggering 7.6 million between October 27 and November 7, which is when the takeover saga started.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

A MASSIVE FRAUD OF THIS TYPE AND MAGNITUDE ALLOWS FOR THE TERMINATION OF ALL RULES, REGULATIONS, AND ARTICLES, EVEN THOSE FOUND IN THE CONSTITUTION.

— FORMER US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



ATTACKING THE CONSTITUTION AND ALL IT STANDS FOR IS ANATHEMA TO THE SOUL OF OUR NATION. YOU CANNOT ONLY LOVE AMERICA WHEN YOU WIN.

— WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY ANDREW BATES

Modi, BJP brass deliberate upon State, LS polls strategy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Highlighting India's presidency of the G-20 as a matter of "pride" for all citizens and an opportunity to establish global Indianness and its culture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday deliberated with BJP leaders the strategies and planning for coming Assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections barely 16 months away.

The PM arrived in the national capital after casting his vote in the Assembly elections of Gujarat and was welcomed by party president JP Nadda at the BJP headquarters where he inaugurated the party's national office-bearers meeting.

Addressing a key closed-door meeting of BJP leaders from across the country, Modi asked party members to maintain a direct connect with border villagers and said they should be developed as places that draw visitors.

Besides its national office-bearers, presidents and general secretaries (organisation) of the BJP's state units are also part of the meeting chaired by the party's national president J P Nadda.

Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh briefed reporters on the meeting and Modi's address in the meeting which would conclude on Tuesday.



Photo: Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

The prime minister said there is an acknowledgement worldwide of the country's emergence as an economic power amid global challenges like the Ukraine war and the Covid pandemic. He spoke about G-20 meet which India is hosting for the first time saying the event gives India an opportunity to project itself in the world community.

According to sources, the meeting took up the slew of State elections lined-up next year including Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, besides Tripura and Chhattisgarh ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, and detailed preparations for the big challenge of 2024 Lokk Sabha poll.

Modi lauded the "Kashi Tamil Sangamam", a month-long event going on in Varanasi that celebrates ancient cultural ties between the two places. Modi said "sneh milan"

programmes, an idea he had first voiced during the party's national executive meeting in Hyderabad, should be promoting for cultural exchanges as being seen in Kashi, an ancient name of Varanasi.

Singh said the two-day meeting will be discussing various topical issues and also upcoming state elections. Party leaders are deliberating on further strengthening its presence at booths.

Besides its national office-bearers, presidents and general secretaries (organisation) of the BJP's state units are also part of the meeting chaired by the party's national president J P N

Various groups of leaders, including Union ministers, have also been roped in to strengthen the party's presence, especially in places where it lost in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and is eying victory in 2024.

G-20: India pitches for hope, healing, harmony to deal with global issues

Accelerating progress on health, edu, climate finance, tech transformation, digital public infrastructure on the plate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With India assuming G-20 presidency earlier this month, its G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Monday made a strong pitch for working together through hope, harmony and healing to deal with the global challenges, with a focus on developing countries and the Global South whose voice is often unheard.

Kickstarting the first meeting of the G-20 Sherpas in Udaipur, Kant also highlighted India's initiatives such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and direct benefit transfer that have helped lift a vast population above the poverty line.

Kant said the issue notes on 13 working groups have already been circulated among the participants. The notes address concerns such as accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth; accelerating progress on sustainable development goals, particularly health and educa-

tion, climate finance, technological transformation and digital public infrastructure. "We will be in the listening mode as you guide us and as we get your perspective," he said.

On Sunday, he had flagged rising global debt, inflation and slowdown in growth, sharp differences over the Ukraine conflict as key challenges facing the world.

Kant stressed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said India's Presidency would like to be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented and decisive.

"The challenges that we face today can be solved only by working together through hope, harmony and healing and our first concern should be towards those whose need is greatest," he said at the opening session of the deliberations focusing on technological transformation in the digital economy.

Kant said India's G-20 Presidency will seek to advocate the priorities of the developing countries and the Global

South in addition to that of the G-20 partners.

"Our perspective is that we should have a win-win collaboration between all of us, developing countries, Global South, and advanced economies. We need to build new approaches, this is a unique form of both the developed world and emerging economies. We need to build approaches to benefit the world on key global issues," he said.

The first session of discussions on Monday focussed on technological transformation in the digital economy, health and education, while the second will be on green development and India's Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative.

There will be three more sessions on Tuesday that will focus on accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth, multilateralism and food, fuel and fertilisers, women-led development, tourism and culture.

India formally assumed the G-20 Presidency on December 1.

Govt to set agenda for Parl Winter Session, all-party meet today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has convened an all-party meet of floor leaders on Tuesday to discuss the legislative agenda and important issues likely to be discussed in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning December 7.

For his part, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will also on Tuesday chair a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee ahead of the session. This time, he has decided to call a BAC meet instead of the customary all-party meet on the eve of the session, sources said.

The BAC discusses the legislative agenda of the House as well as issues on which parties would like to have discussion. Last week, the government had listed 16 new bills for introduction in the Winter Session.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahad Joshi had recently sent out invites to floor leaders of various parties to attend the all-party meet.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to be present.

The session begins a day before the votes of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, along with those of six assembly and one Lok Sabha bypolls, are counted. The government has also sought the cooperation of party leaders to ensure smooth functioning of both the Houses. The Winter Session of Parliament will commence on December 7 and continue till December 29, having 17 sittings spread over 23 days.

IN SHORT

AKHILESH PRASAD BIHAR CONG COMMITTEE PREZ

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh was on Monday appointed president of the Bihar Congress Committee with immediate effect. Singh has been a part of the G23 grouping which has been critical of the party leadership in the past.

SC QUASHES TAJ MAHAL RELATED HISTORY PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking removal of alleged wrong historical facts related to the construction of the Taj Mahal from history books and find the age of the monument. The 17th century monument is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

SC TO HEAR CBI REPORT ON MULAYAM, AKHILESH PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said on Monday it will hear the submissions on whether the petitioner can be given the copy of a CBI report on closure of its preliminary enquiry into allegations of amassing disproportionate assets against former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister late Mulayam Singh Yadav and his son Akhilesh Yadav.

31% FALL IN CROP BURNING IN PUNJAB, HARYANA

New Delhi: The total number of paddy crop residue burning events during September 15-October 30 period in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and NCR districts of UP and Rajasthan have come down to 53,792 this year, a reduction of over 31 per cent, compared to the corresponding period in 2021, according to data shared by authorities on Monday. The total active fire counts (for 'kharif' season) in Punjab, Haryana, and NCR districts of UP and Rajasthan, and Delhi for 2021 had stood at 78,550 in 2021.

REPORT ON ASHAS, ANMIS' ROLE IN COVID RELEASED

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandavdya and Melinda French Gates, Co-Chair, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Monday jointly released a report "Grassroot Soldiers: Role of ASHAs and ANMIs in the Covid-19 Pandemic Management in India," here detailing the key role of ASHAs and ANMIs in India's pandemic response strategy.

‘Oil import from Russia driven by market forces’

India reiterates its stand on Ukraine with Germany, says EU bought more oil

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday strongly defended importing oil from Russia during the ongoing Ukraine conflict and said it is largely driven by market forces. Moreover, European Union (EU) has bought more oil from Russia than India during the last few months, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

This assertion in the backdrop of some European nations and the US criticizing India for procuring fuel from Russia came during talks here with his visiting German counterpart Annalena Baerbock. She arrived on Monday for a two-day visit to India.

Enunciating New Delhi's position on the war, Jaishankar also said India's position on the Ukraine issue is clear that this is not an era of war and that the conflict should be resolved through dialogue.

As regards the issue of oil, he said, "The European Union from February to November has imported more fossil fuel from Russia than the next 10 countries combined. The oil import in European Union is six times what India has imported, gas is infinite times because we don't



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock during a meeting, in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

import it."

Addressing a joint press meet with the German minister after talks, Jaishankar also said "I would urge you to look at these figures. There is a website called 'Russia Fossil Fuel Tracker' it would give you country-by-country data of who is really importing what and I suspect that might be very very helpful." Russian war in Ukraine brought difficulty for Indian energy supply, the German Minister said.

Jaishankar said there is a finite amount of energy resources and Europe cannot make choices to prioritise its energy needs while asking India to do something else. Jaishankar said the situation in Afghanistan and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan figured in talks with his German counterpart. He said there cannot be talks with Pakistan if it continues cross-border terrorism.

On the signing of the mobility pact between India and Germany, he said it is a strong signal of basis for a more contemporary bilateral partnership. The agreement will make it easier for people to study, do research and work in each other's country. On trade ties, Jaishankar said Germany is India's largest partner in the EU. India also flagged the issue of delay in visas by Germany.

The visiting German minister described India as a role model for many countries and noted that Berlin wants to bolster its security cooperation with New Delhi. Asked about challenges facing the region from China, Baerbock said there is a need to assess the threats while describing Beijing as a competitor and rival in many ways.

Have filed plea for larger Bench in suit on Centre-Delhi control over services: Govt to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday told the Supreme Court that it has filed a fresh plea seeking reference to a larger bench a matter involving a Constitutional issue related to the control of services in the national Capital.

The Delhi Government, represented by senior advocate A M Singhvi, opposed the Centre's plea before a bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha, saying, "This will only delay and such tactics cannot be allowed."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said, "There are no facts to be controverted. But, I have filed an IA (interim application) stating that this matter (Delhi-Centre case) may have to be referred to a larger bench". Singhvi opposed the



submission, saying it amounted to seeking a review of the apex court order which had said the matter did not require reference to a larger bench and the only issue remaining between the parties was the dispute pertaining to control over services in Delhi.

"What action has to be taken on IA can be decided when the Constitution bench assembles to hear it," the CJI said, adding that it can be raised at the time of hearing. The CJI also informed the lawyers that one of the judges of the five-judge Constitution bench, Justice Krishna Murari,

was unwell, indicating that the proposed hearing on December 6 may get postponed.

On November 11, the top court had said it will step back from the "actual arena of political conflict" between the Delhi government and the Centre and only deal with the Constitutional issue related to the control of services in the national capital. The observations had come when Singhvi wanted to bring to the notice of the bench an affidavit by Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who alleged that there was "paralysis in administration" as no bureaucrats was responding to ministers' calls.

The Centre had vehemently opposed Sisodia's affidavit, saying it was filed when the case was already fixed for hearing. A five-judge Constitution bench is scheduled to hear on December 6 the legal issue.

SC asks Centre to draw uniform rules for cadaveric organ transplant in States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to consider as representation a plea which has sought uniformity of rules governing cadaveric organ transplant in all the States. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha, which was hearing a PIL filed by an organisation named 'Gift of Life Adventure Foundation', was apprised about the lack of uniformity in rules relating to organ transplantation.

The plea said the imposition of the mandate of producing a domicile certificate for getting registered as an organ recipient in a state in case of cadaveric organ transplant was "arbitrary". Due to the lack of uniformity, some states imposed conditions such as a recipient will have to produce a domicile certificate of a period of 10 to 15 years to be eligible for cadaver organ transplant. The bench, which refused to entertain the PIL, however, agreed to ask the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to consider examining the plea as a representation on the issue of lack of uniform rules.

Report: People living near traffic hotspots at higher cardiovascular, respiratory, mental disorder risk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If you are an adult and happen to live near traffic areas emitting high air-pollution—fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2)—then most chances are that you face the higher risk of having at least neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular and common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.

Published in journal Frontiers in Public Health, a largest study worldwide said that those participants exposed to higher concentrations (above 10µg/m3) of fine particulate matter had a 21 per cent increased risk of two or more co-occurring conditions compared to those exposed to concentrations below 10µg/m3.

For participants exposed to



above 30µg/m3 of NO2 the research showed a 20 per cent increased risk of having two or more co-occurring conditions compared to those participants that were exposed to concentrations of NO2 below 20µg/m3.

The study was conducted on more than 364,000 people. "The strongest associations were observed for co-occurring neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular and common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety," said the study led by researchers from Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London.

ED attaches ₹30.70 cr assets of Karuvannur co-operative bank agent in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth ₹30.70 crore of Bijoy AK, Commission Agent of Karuvannur Service Co-Operative Bank Ltd. under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in fraud and cheating cases.

The attached assets include 20 immovable properties consisting of land and building in Kerala, two vehicles (Innova and Audi), cash seized from his house (₹3,40,000 and Foreign Currency equivalent to ₹2,08,12) totaling ₹5,48,124, balances in 57 bank accounts and his firms to the tune of ₹35,86,990.

Bijoy was illegally sanctioned and disbursed loan to the tune of ₹26.60 crore in cash without any collateral due to

systematic conspiracy hatched and perpetuated by the Secretary and Committee Members of the Bank since 2010.

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of FIRs registered by Kerala Police under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section relating to cheating.

Kerala Police (Crime Branch) has registered more than 16 FIRs in Thrissur district regarding fraud in Karuvannur Service Co-Operative Bank Ltd.

"The money laundering investigation carried out so far has revealed that multiple bogus loans were sanctioned by the bank on the same property without the knowledge of members of the Society," the ED said in a statement.

Indian Navy to don new Prez standard, colour, crest, do away with colonial design

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy will now have a new design of the President's Standard and Colour and the Indian Navy crest. It was unveiled at Visakhapatnam on Navy Day on December 4. It is a change from the colonial past.

Giving details here on Monday, navy officials said President Droupadi Murmu has approved the introduction of a new design for the President's Standard and Colour and Indian Navy Crest.

Resonant to the ongoing national endeavour to move away from the colonial past, the Naval Ensign was amended to a new Design that draws inspiration from our history wherein the Red Horizontal and Vertical Lines on the White Ensign were replaced with an Blue Octagon with Twin Golden Borders encompassing the National Emblem atop

a clear anchor and 'National Emblem 'Satyamev Jayate' inscribed on the stock of the Anchor. Further, the National Flag was retained on the upper left canton.

The erstwhile design of the President's Standard and Colour for the Indian Navy was instituted on September 6, 2017. The design comprised one each horizontal and vertical red bands intersecting at the centre and the National Emblem inserted at their intersection.

The National Flag was at the upper left canton adjacent to the staff and a Golden Elephant was at the lower right canton on the fly side. This design was inspired from the erstwhile Naval Ensign.

The Indian Navy adopted a new Naval Ensign on September two this year and the new design of the President's Standard and President's Colour awarded to the Indian Navy incorporates this change.

The new design of the President's



Standard and Colour comprises three main constituents - the National Flag in the upper left canton adjacent to the staff, the State Emblem underscribed with 'Satyamev Jayate' in Golden Colour on the upper right canton on the fly side, and a Navy Blue - Gold Octagon below the Golden State Emblem.

The Octagon has twin golden octagonal borders, encompassing the golden National Emblem (Lion Capital of Ashoka - underscribed with 'Satyamev Jayate' in blue Devnagri script) resting atop an anchor; and superimposed on a shield.

Below the shield, within the octagon, in a golden bordered ribbon, on a Navy Blue background, is inscribed the motto of the Indian Navy 'Sam No Varunah' in golden Devnagri script.

The Golden State Emblem signifies 'Power, Courage, Confidence and Pride' whilst the Navy Blue - Golden Octagon

shape draws inspiration from Shivaji Maharaj Rajmudra or the Seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and represents the eight directions (four cardinal and four inter cardinal), symbolising the Indian Navy's maritime outreach.

The new design of President's Standard and Colour highlights India's glorious maritime heritage and also symbolises a powerful, courageous, confident and proud Indian Navy. The Indian Navy Crest has been amended to replace the foul anchor with a Clear Anchor. The clear anchor depicts steadfastness of the Indian Navy to deter any challenge in maritime domain, and represents clarity in vision, mission and aspirations of its sailors.

The Clear Anchor also depicts Indian Navy's commitment towards securing the Coast and Maritime Interest of India. The change would imply removal of the symbolic nautical rope in the Crest Designs.

The New Naval Crest has a traditional naval clear anchor below the Ashoka Lion Head with an invocation from the Vedas meaning 'May the Ocean God be Auspicious unto us'.

The phrase was adopted as the motto of the Indian Navy on the suggestion of Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first Indian Governor General of Independent India. The National Motto 'Satyamev Jayate' meaning 'Truth Always Triumphs' is inscribed on the Stock of the Clear Anchor.

The President's Standard and President's Colour are awarded to static and mobile formations of the Indian Navy respectively, to acknowledge their distinguished and meritorious service to the Nation. The Indian Navy was the first among the three Services to be awarded the President's Colour on 27 May 1951 by then President Rajendra Prasad.

J&K's secessionist groups congratulate Pak's Gen Munir

RAKESH K SINGH ■
NEW DELHI

Post the change of guard in Pakistan Army with Gen Syed Asim Munir taking charge of the top post from outgoing chief Gen Qamar Jawed Bajwa on Tuesday, the secessionist groups from Jammu and Kashmir have started congratulating him in their bid to project their loyalties and in return get financial help from the ISI.

The desperation to show loyalty to the new army chief is such that notorious terrorist and separatist leader, Masarat Alam Butt, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail here, organized a meeting in the prison premises with fellow Kashmiri inmates and congratulated Munir for being appointed as Army chief.

Tihar jail has recently been embroiled in unsavoury controversy for alleged 'facilitation' to Delhi Minister Satyender



Jain, also an inmate, with massage facility in the prison premises. Officials have not ruled out Jain's role in facilitating Alam for conducting a meeting inside the jail and releasing his congratulatory statement through an emissary.

Alam's statement was released by the Kashmir Media Service, a media outlet and a channel partner of Kashmiri terrorist groups, in Secunderabad of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Other groups from the Valley have expressed similar sentiments in congratulating Munir.

Butt welcomed the appointment of Munir as the Pak army chief.

Likewise, the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Political Party welcomed Munir's appointment and demanded resolution of the Kashmir issue through relevant UN resolutions.

APHC Chief of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement in Islamabad denounced the Modi government for "confiscating" hundreds of properties of Jamat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre has banned the JeI Jammu and Kashmir for involvement in terrorist activities. The outfit is also facing cases for terrorism and is being probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Another outfit Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir also congratulated Munir. These outfits are lobbying

at the international level to show relevance so that the media reports reach the new Pak army chief and he directs the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) boss under him to transfer money to them for fomenting trouble in the Valley.

In a letter to the European Union (EU), Chairman of the Kashmir Council Ali Raza Sayyad urged the European body to press for release of thousands of Kashmiris arrested by India before the G-20 meeting.

While the US considers Jammu and Kashmir to be a disputed territory, a number of AAP leaders are close to the American embassy here.

The separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir are organized into two groups, one that seeks to project allegiance to the Pak army and the other seeks to portray proximity to the ruling democratic political parties.

Farooq re-elected NC chief

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Dr Farooq Abdullah was unanimously re-elected the president of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference for another term on Monday.

The 85-year-old sitting Parliamentarian from Srinagar and former J&K Chief Minister is set to lead the party's aggressive poll campaign in the coming months. No other party leader had filed papers to contest the elections paving way for the 'unanimous' election of Dr Abdullah without facing any contest.

"Dr. Farooq Abdullah has been re-elected as JKNC President in today's delegate session at Dargah Hazratbal (in Srinagar). The party delegates from both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir unani-

mously nominated only one name, Dr. Farooq Sb, to continue as party president," NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar said.

Dr Abdullah had earlier created a flutter by suddenly announcing his decision to step down from the post of party president on November 18.

Soon after getting re-elected at the special delegate session at Hazratbal, marking the 117th birth anniversary of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, Dr Abdullah directed his own son and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to join the poll arena.

Dr Abdullah said, "As party president, I am telling you (Omar Abdullah) that you have to contest the election.". "Because if we have to fight



them then we all have to jump into the fray and contest elections," he added.

The former Union minister said the BJP "will do anything, even make attempts to buy your loyalties, but God will fail all their designs". Omar has been consistently saying for a long time that he will not contest the Assembly election until J&K's statehood is restored

Referring to the 2018 Panchayat polls Dr Abdullah publicly admitted boycotting the panchayat polls in 2018 was "a huge mistake" and the party must contest every future election in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I want to tell the party that boycotting the panchayat elections (in 2018) was a huge mistake. Remember this, we will not boycott any coming election. Instead (we will) contest and win them."

Recruitment to 21,000 posts rigged: CBI to HC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

In a major revelation the Central Bureau of Investigation on Monday told the Calcutta High Court how large scale rigging took place in the appointment to Group D posts in the State.

The revelations further smear the face of the Mamata Banerjee Government which has seen a number of senior ruling Trinamool Congress politicians including Ministers, MLAs and top officials including a sitting Vice-Chancellor going to jail in connection with the school level recruitment tests conducted by the School Services Commission. The CBI which is also investigating the SSC scam—involving the recruitment of teachers and Group C employees — told the High Court how a massive rigging had taken place in the appointments to 21,000 posts.

The central Agency has found in its investigation that the recruiters had tampered with 9,000 OMR sheets most of which have been destroyed.

The CBI also told that there was imprint of large-scale bungling in the entire appointment process --- from appointment panel to waiting



list to the merit list, lawyers present in the court said adding the single Bench of Justice V Basu told the CBI to go ahead with its work and the Court would see that no single culprit in the scam was spared.

The Agency informed the Court that in order to hide the massive

irregularities the hard disk of the original computer of the SSC through which the appointments were made had been kept hidden at Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. The recovery and analysis of the hidden data had revealed many shocking information about the scam, the Agency told the Court.

In a related development the CBI is likely to submit a second chargesheet in the teacher recruitment scam, sources said adding the chargesheet would contain more explosive information about the scam.

72 hours on, SP forensic team yet to visit blast site



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
KOLKATA

Almost 72 hours have elapsed since a massive explosion on Friday night took down a partly built two-storey house and caused three deaths and several injuries at Bhupatinagar village in East Midnapore district but neither the Superintendent of Police nor the district forensic team have visited the area, locals on Monday rued.

This even after the Bengal Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari on Sunday wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to order an NIA investigation into the case.

With the incident giving further impetus to the raging controversy over the deteriorating law and order situation in the State that has seen more than a dozen people including chil-



dren falling to bomb blasts and gun fights in the past one month the BJP and the ruling Trinamool cadres clashed in the village after the former went to register their protests in the area.

"Neither the SP has come nor a forensic team has been sent to the area ... this shows complacency of the administration ... the men who died in the blast were all TMC men who were manufacturing bombs," said a local BJP leader adding the local people have been forced to keep their mouths shut.

The impact of the blas was so much that the entire housed caved in and two craters were created on the floor, sources said adding a big stockpile of bombs that had been kept in the house of local TMC leader Rafikumar Manna had gone off leading to

ITBP concludes 60th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 60th "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear" Course at "National Institute for Training in Search, Rescue and Disaster Response", Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force, Ramgarh, Panchkula (Haryana) concluded on Monday

Inspector General, Basic Training Centre, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Ishwar Singh Duhan, who was the chief guest for the closing ceremony said a total of 30 officers from different units of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force participated in this course which was conducted from November 9 to December 5.

NITSRDR is an important national level disaster training institute in North India, which trains not only IAF but also NDRF, SDRF, Army, NCC and IAF Academy trainees in the domain of disaster.

The purpose of this course is to impart an insight to the force personnel to recognize the injured person in disasters like chemical, nuclear, biological and nuclear.

PM roadshow during polling violated MCC; EC afraid: Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of violating the model code by taking out a roadshow before casting his vote in the second phase of polling in Gujarat and alleged that the Election Commission is "afraid" and is "under pressure" not to act against him.

Congress head of media and publicity Pawan Khera said the Congress has seen that over the last several weeks, inaction on the part of the Election Commission is evident from the watchdog of our democracy, the watchdog of our elections.

"We have been making representations to the Election Commission at various levels. Every second or third day we have made some representations or the other in Gujarat, in Delhi, but, I am afraid the Election Commission looks like it is willingly under pressure," he told reporters. The Congress leader said the party is deliberating on taking necessary legal measures on the issue. Khera said the value of

the vote of the prime minister or that of any common man is the same. "But how is it that the PM holds a roadshow for 2.5 hours when he goes to vote," he said.

"What are the compulsions of the Election Commission that it cannot see any violations by the prime minister," he said.

He said in the second and the last round of polling in Gujarat, Prime Minister Modi while voting in Ahmedabad decided to do a roadshow of two and half hours which was covered live by all channels free of cost.

"Is this not an advertisement? Shouldn't you be charging the BJP, why you are doing it for free," he asked.

"We will take necessary steps, and prevail upon the Election Commission of India through whatever means possible, legal means possible, to ensure that such publicity comes under the purview of election expenditure of the party, which undertakes this publicity, which forces you to run these roadshows live, especially when the election is under way," he also said.

FROM PAGE 1

BJP SET TO RETAIN GUJ; HIMACHAL CLIFFHANGER

News X-Jan Ki Baat survey said the BJP was likely to get 32-40 seats in the hill State, the Congress 27-34 and the AAP zero.

While Republic TV P-MARQ predicted that the BJP would get 34-39, the Congress 28-33 and the AAP 0-1.

Times Now-ETG said the average seats BJP was likely to get was 38 and the Congress 28.

Unlike Gujarat, the Assembly election in Himachal Pradesh was held in a single phase on November 12, while voting for Gujarat was held in two phases on December 1 and December 5.

CENTRE TO SET UP 500 THEATERS TO SPREAD WORD ON GOVERNANCE

Commenting on the new initiative, Rakesh said the concept of cinema halls in villages is still new and the aim is to start small cinema halls with around 100 seats. As per the project CSC cinema halls, will also work as a commercial hub, will make the digital India services more accessible to the people in rural areas."

"We are launching CSC Rural Cinema for the entertainment of villagers in remote areas. India is the world's largest entertainment market in terms of movie consumption. Our venture will have features to control piracy of films. We will provide all hardware and software equipment to VLEs who run the CSC. An investment of around Rs 15 lakh is needed to run these cinema halls which will have video parlour cinema licence. We have already got over 5,000 express of interest requests from VLEs. We hope to make around 10,000 cinema halls operational in rural areas by the end of 2024," said Punit Desai, Managing Director, October Cinemas.

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET TABLED BY YOGI GOVT

His achievements in the social and political fields have been extraordinary," he said. The SP patriarch's son and party president Akhilesh Yadav as well as party MLA Shivpal Singh Yadav were not present in

the House due to voting in the Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll on Monday.

SP chief whip Manoj Pandey said, "An era of socialism has come to an end with the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav. Netaji's personality was multifaceted, extraordinary and vast. He worked to take forward and strengthen the socialist thinking and politics laid by the great leaders of socialist ideology. Mulayam Singh Yadav worked for the welfare of the people and the development of the state as a sensitive public representative," he said.

Paying tribute to the former chief minister, Apna Dal (Sonelal) leader Ashish Patel said that his death had created a void in Indian politics and socialist ideology.

Rashtriya Lok Dal leader Ajay Kumar said Mulayam Singh Yadav took forward the fight for socialism.

NISHAD Party member Sanjay Nishad, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party leader Om Prakash Rajbhar, Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Mishra, Jansatta Dal Loktantrik leader Raghuraj Pratap Singh alias Raja Bhaiya, Bahujan Samaj Party member Umashankar Singh, former assembly speaker Mata Prasad Pandey and SP member Mehboob Ali also paid tributes to Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Mulayam Singh Yadav was a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly 10 times and an MP on seven occasions. He was also the defence minister of the country.

CITY OF JOY CREATOR DIES

'City of Joy', his novel on the underprivileged of Kolkata, had received acclaim from far and wide. It was adapted into a film, starring Patrick Swayze, in 1992.

In an interview with PTI in 2013, Lapierre had said the novel was like his "song of love for India, the place where I have been coming very regularly since the last 50 years. It has been an emotional journey for me where I have got a lot of love and support from the people".

Lapierre, following the success of his novel, had supported many humanitarian projects in Kolkata, including refuge centres for children affected with polio, schools, NGOs and rehabilitation workshops, Asha Bhavan Centre being one of them.

"As and when he visited India, Lapierre would always find time to spend with children of the schools and destitute homes that he helped set up with the centre in Kolkata and other districts, including South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Purba Medinipur, Murshidabad and Birbhum," said Barui.

All such schools held a condolence meet for the author on Monday, he added. Born on July 30, 1931, at Chateilaillon in France, Lapierre had begun his career as a journalist. His other well-known works include 'Is Paris Burning?' and 'Freedom at Midnight, both of which he had co-written with Larry Collins.

SC: PURPOSE OF CHARITY MUSTN'T BE CONVERSION

"It is a very serious issue. Ultimately it is against our Constitution. When everyone stays in India, they have to act per the culture of India," the bench observed. The court had earlier warned a "very difficult situation" will emerge if proselytisation through deception, allurements and intimidation is not stopped.

Earlier, the Gujarat Government had told the top court that freedom of religion did not include the right to convert others, and requested the top court to vacate a high court stay on the provision of a state law that mandates prior permission of the district magistrate for conversion through marriage.

Upadhyay in his plea said that forced religious conversion is a nationwide problem which needs to be tackled immediately.

"The injury caused to the citizens is extremely large because there is not even one district which is free of religious conversion by 'hook and crook'" the plea submitted. "Incidents are reported every week throughout the country where conversion is done by intimidating, threatening, deceptively luring through gifts and monetary benefits and also by using black magic, superstition, miracles but Centre and States have not taken stringent steps to stop this menace," said the plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey.

The plea has also sought directions to the Law Commission of India to prepare a report as well as a Bill to control religious conversion by intimidation and through monetary benefits.

AAP likely to sweep MCD polls

BJP, Cong reject polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is set to sweep the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) polls, according to multiple exit polls.

The exit poll findings are in tune with AAP supremo and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's oft-repeated claims that the voters in the national Capital are going to turf out the ruling BJP from the seat of power in one of the largest municipal bodies in the world providing civic services to an estimated population of more than 1.46 crore people.

Without exception every single exit poll predicted a thumping win for the AAP in the MCD polls held on Sunday.

An exit poll done by Aaj Tak-Axis My India gave the AAP between 149 and 171 wards and BJP 69-91 wards. Another exit poll by Times Now-ETG predicted that Kejriwal's party getting anywhere between 146 and 156

MCD EXIT POLLS			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	69-91	3-7	149-171
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	70-92	04-07	159-175
TIMES NOW-ETG	84-94	6-10	146-156
ZEE NEWS-BARC	82-94	8-14	134-146
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	84 (-84)	6 (-22)	154 (+11)

wards and the BJP between 89-94 seats. News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll gives the AAP 159-175 wards and the BJP 70-92. All the three channels' exit polls have the Congress getting 10 or less wards.

Both the BJP and the Congress, however, rejected the projections of the exit polls.

"We will wait for the final results, and we will accept the decision taken by the people of the Capital. According to us, it is a very tough fight and we should wait till the final outcome," said BJP MP Manoj Tiwari. Congress leader Surendra Rajput said the party conducted a silent campaign and the same is likely to pay dividends.

The Congress has been projected to shrink to just three to seven seats, less than even independent candidates who may walk away with five

to nine seats, as per the exit polls. AAP leader Jasmine Shah said his party's Government in the national Capital is supported by the people of the country everywhere.

Buoyed by the exit polls findings, Shah asserted the slated win of the party is victory of the Government that works to make the lives of the citizens better.

The AAP's performance — if the exit polls turn out correct on results day — would be a big setback for the BJP, which has been controlling the MCD for the past 15 years and which had mobilised dozens of Chief Ministers, Union Ministers and MPs for campaigning in Delhi.

On the other hand, the AAP found itself overstretched finding manpower and resources to simultaneously contest polls in Gujarat and Delhi.

The MCD polls will also take the sting out of BJP's aggressive corruption pitch against the Kejriwal Government and alleged involvement of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the scam. The BJP had also devoted a great deal of time targeting Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain, who is incarcerated in the Tihar jail in a money-laundering case.

A decisive victory in the MCD polls will give better bargaining chips to Kejriwal in his dealings with Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena. The AAP and the Delhi LG are engaged in a day-to-day war of words, and Saxena has ordered a series of inquiries in several crucial decisions taken by the Delhi Government.

The BJP's strategy of connecting the Delhi local election with national issues and bringing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development for all" message to the doorsteps of Delhi residents has seemingly failed to counter the AAP's narrative that the "corrupt MCD" has destroyed Delhi's civic amenities and turned the national capital into a garbage heap.

Raj leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Against the factionalism in Rajasthan Congress, the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by former party chief Rahul Gandhi began its State sojourn from Jhalawar district on Monday, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his arch rival, former deputy Sachin Pilot, in attendance. The 89th day of the yatra started from Kali Talai in Jhalrapatan, a rural area on the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh border. But this started not before some fireworks between

the Gehlot and Pilot supporters with their respective cadre scrambling to put posters across and section defacing Pilot's posters in the Congress ruled state. The other notable leaders who accompanied Rahul Gandhi were AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasra, senior leader Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas.

Addressing a Press conference, Gehlot lashed out at the

mainstream national media, claiming they have "boycotted" the yatra as editors and owners were under pressure. Gehlot claimed the media has completely failed to fulfil their responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy, and history will not forgive them for that.

"Kaan khol kar sun lo...national media wale bhi. state media wale bhi. Itiha aapko maaf nahi karega!" he said. ("Listen afeefully...national and state media, history will not forgive you").

As the Rajasthan chief minister launched his tirade

against the media, AICC general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh intervened to defend the journalists present there, saying they should not be blamed as they have been doing their job properly. However, he also lamented the coverage of the yatra in the mainstream was not as per their expectations.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ramesh charged that the possibility of India's division has increased due to his policies and that "political dictatorship" is becoming a reality.

US SC taking up clash of religion, gay rights

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Supreme Court is hearing the case Monday of a Christian graphic artist who objects to designing wedding websites for gay couples, a dispute that's the latest clash of religion and gay rights to land at the highest court.

Democracy is the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. The designer and her supporters say that ruling against her would force artists — from painters and photographers to writers and musicians — to do work that is against their faith.

Her opponents, meanwhile, say that if she wins, a range of businesses will be able to discriminate, refusing to serve Black customers, Jewish or Muslim people, interracial or interfaith couples or immigrants, among others.

The case comes at a time when the court is dominated 6-3 by conservatives and following a series of cases in which the justices have sided with religious plaintiffs. It also comes as, across the street from the court, lawmakers in Congress are finalizing a landmark bill protecting same-sex marriage.

The bill, which also protects interracial marriage, steadily gained momentum following the high court's decision



earlier this year to end constitutional protections for abortion.

That decision to overturn the 1973 Roe v. Wade case prompted questions about whether the court — now that it is more conservative — might also overturn its 2015 decision declaring a nationwide right to same-sex marriage. Justice Clarence Thomas explicitly said that decision should also be reconsidered.

The case being argued before the high court Monday involves Lorie Smith, a graphic artist and website designer in

Colorado who wants to begin offering wedding websites.

Smith says her Christian faith prevents her from creating websites celebrating same-sex marriages. But that could get her in trouble with state law. Colorado, like most other states, has what's called a public accommodation law that says if Smith offers wedding websites to the public, she must provide them to all customers. Businesses that violate the law can be fined, among other things.

Five years ago, the Supreme Court heard a different challenge involving Colorado's law

and a baker, Jack Phillips, who objected to designing a wedding cake for a gay couple. That case ended with a limited decision, however, and set up a return of the issue to the high court. Phillips' lawyer, Kristen Waggoner of the Alliance Defending Freedom, is now representing Smith.

Like Phillips, Smith says her objection is not to working with gay people. She says she'd work with a gay client who needed help with graphics for an animal rescue shelter, for example, or to promote an organisation serving children with disabilities. But she objects to creating messages supporting same-sex marriage, she says, just as she won't take jobs that would require her to create content promoting atheism or gambling or supporting abortion.

Smith says Colorado's law violates her free speech rights. Her opponents, including the Biden administration and groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, disagree.

Twenty mostly liberal states, including California and New York, are supporting Colorado while another 20 mostly Republican states, including Arizona, Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee, are supporting Smith.

ISIS suspect held in Pakistan Embassy attack in Kabul

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

A member of the militant Islamic State group has been arrested in last week's shooting attack targeting the Pakistani Embassy in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, the spokesman of the Taliban government said.

The attack, in which shots were fired at the embassy from a nearby building, triggered anger in Pakistan, and increased tensions between the two South Asian neighbours.

Pakistan's top diplomat in Kabul was walking across the lawn inside the embassy compound at the time of the attack. He was unharmed but one of his Pakistani guards was wounded. The regional affiliate of the Islamic State group, known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province and a rival of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, has claimed responsibility for Friday's attack.

The Islamic State group said two of its fighters attacked "the renegade Pakistani ambassador and his guards" while they were inside the embassy's yard. The statement gave no further details. The chief spokesman for the Taliban government, Zabihullah Mujahid, announced the arrest of a suspect in a tweet Monday.

Mujahid said the suspect is a foreign national and that the attack was organised jointly by IS and "rebels", apparently a reference to anti-Taliban groups in Afghanistan.

North Korea fired artillery rounds near border: S Korea

APV ■ SEOUL

South Korea's military said North Korea fired about 130 suspected artillery rounds on Monday into the water near their western and eastern sea borders, the latest military action contributing to worsening relations between the neighbours.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons, fired Monday afternoon from North Korea's western and eastern coastal areas, fell within the northern side of buffer zones created under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement to reduce military tensions. There were no immediate reports of shells falling inside South Korean territorial waters.

South Korea's military said it communicated a verbal warning to North Korea over the firings and urged it to abide by the agreement. The South Korean and US militaries were closely monitoring North Korea's military activities while strengthening their readiness to respond to any "potential contingency", the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The North Korean firings were possibly a response to South Korean artillery exercises scheduled from Monday to Wednesday near the inland border town of Cheorwon.

The firings also came days after Washington, Seoul and Tokyo announced largely symbolic sanctions on some North Korean people and institutions accused of illicit activities to finance the country's nuclear



weapons and missile programmes.

It was the first time North Korea has fired weapons into the maritime buffer zones since Nov 3, when around 80 artillery shells landed within North Korea's side of the zone off its eastern coast.

North Korea has fired dozens of missiles as it increased its weapons demonstrations to a record pace this year, including multiple tests of an inter-continental ballistic missile system potentially capable of reaching deep into the US mainland, and an intermediate-range missile launched over Japan.

North Korea has also conducted a series of short-range launches it described as simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean and US targets in an angry reaction to an expansion of joint US-South Korea military exercises which North Korea views as rehearsals for a potential invasion.

Experts say North Korea hopes to negotiate economic

and security concessions from a position of strength and force the United States to accept it as a nuclear power. South Korean officials have said North Korea might up the ante soon by conducting its first nuclear test since 2017.

North Korean state media said last week that leader Kim Jong Un has called for a major political conference before the end of the year at which he is expected to address increasingly tense relations with Washington and Seoul over the expansion of North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.

The inter-Korean military agreement that established the buffer zones is one of the few tangible remnants of the countries' short-lived diplomacy of 2018. Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un three times that year while also helping to set up Kim's first summit with former US President Donald Trump.

Iran morality police status unclear after 'closure' comment

AP ■ CAIRO

An Iranian lawmaker said Sunday that Iran's government is "paying attention to the people's real demands", state media reported, a day after a top official suggested that the country's morality police whose conduct helped trigger months of protests has been shut down. The role of the morality police, which enforces veiling laws, came under scrutiny after a detainee, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, died in its custody in mid-September.

Amini had been held for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress codes. Her death unleashed a wave of unrest that has grown into calls for the downfall of Iran's clerical rulers.

Iran's chief prosecutor Mohamed Jafar Montazeri said on Saturday the morality police "had been closed", the semi-official news agency ISNA reported. The agency did not provide details, and state media hasn't reported such a purported decision.

In a report carried by ISNA on Sunday, lawmaker Nezamoddin Mousavi signalled



a less confrontational approach toward the protests.

"Both the administration and parliament insisted that paying attention to the people's demand that is mainly economic is the best way for achieving stability and confronting the riots," he said, following a closed meeting with several senior Iranian officials,

including President Ebrahim Raisi.

Mousavi did not address the reported closure of the morality police.

The Associated Press has been unable to confirm the current status of the force, established in 2005 with the task of arresting people who violate the country's Islamic dress code.

Since September, there has been a reported decline in the number of morality police officers across Iranian cities and an increase in women walking in public without headscarves, contrary to Iranian law.

Montazeri, the chief prosecutor, provided no further details about the future of the morality police or if its closure was nationwide and permanent. However he added that Iran's judiciary will continue to monitor behavior at the community level.

In a report by ISNA on Friday, Montazeri was quoted as saying that the government was reviewing the mandatory hijab law. "We are working fast on the issue of hijab and we are doing our best to come up with a thoughtful solution to deal

with this phenomenon that hurts everyone's heart," said Montazeri, without offering details.

Saturday's announcement could signal an attempt to appease the public and find a way to end the protests in which, according to rights groups, at least 470 people were killed. More than 18,000 people have been arrested in the protests and the violent security force crackdown that followed, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group monitoring the demonstrations. Ali Alfoneh, a senior fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, said Montazeri's statement about closing the morality police could be an attempt to pacify domestic unrest without making real concessions to protesters.

The secular middle class loathes the organization (morality police) for restricting personal freedoms," said Alfoneh. On the other hand, the "underprivileged and socially conservative class resents how they conveniently keep away from enforcing the hijab legislation" in wealthier areas of Iran's cities.

Russian media report blasts at 2 military bases

AP ■ KYIV

Explosions rocked two air bases in Russia on Monday, Russian media reported. One of the explosions reportedly happened at a base that houses nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes against Ukraine.

Neither Ukrainian nor Russian authorities immediately commented on the possible cause of the blasts.

Russian state RIA Novosti news agency said three servicemen were killed and six others injured, and a plane was damaged, early Monday when a fuel truck exploded at an air base in Ryazan, in western Russia. The base houses long-range flight tankers that serve to refuel bombers in the air.

Separately, authorities in the Saratov region along the Volga River said they were checking reports about an explosion in the area of the Engels air base, which houses

Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes on Ukraine. Those bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Saratov regional governor Roman Busargin said there was no damage to civilian facilities and added that the authorities are checking whether there have been any incidents at military facilities. Regional media reported sounds of a powerful explosion near the Engels base, and some residents were quoted as saying they saw a flash of light coming from the area.

Asked whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed about the Engels base explosion, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said simply that the president was being regularly informed about ongoing developments.

In Ukraine on Monday, the office of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said three rocket strikes hit his hometown of Kryvyi Rih in south-central

Ukraine, killing a factory worker and injuring three others. In the northeastern region of Kharkiv, a person was killed in strikes by S-300 missiles on civilian infrastructure in the town of Kupiansk, it said.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured an untold number of civilians, and shaken the world economy — notably through the fallout on the prices and availability of foodstuffs, fertiliser and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia. Western countries on Monday began imposing a \$60-per-barrel price cap and a ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure against Moscow over the war.

The move has prompted a rejection from the Kremlin and also criticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — whose government wants the cap to be half as high.

China's former president Jiang cremated in Beijing



PTI ■ BEIJING

China's former president Jiang Zemin was cremated here on Monday in the presence of the top leaders of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) including President Xi Jinping.

He was the President and General Secretary of the CPC from 1989 to 2002.

Jiang, who had leukemia, died of multiple organ failure on November 30 in

Shanghai at the age of 96. His body was flown here by a special flight last week from Shanghai. Xi and other leaders received the body in Beijing.

The remains of Jiang were cremated at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery in western Beijing on Monday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

President Xi and other leaders of the Communist Party of China and the state paid their respects to Comrade Jiang at the Chinese PLA General Hospital before escorting Jiang's body to the cemetery for cremation, the report said.

A memorial meeting to commemorate his life and achievements will be held at the Great Hall of People, the iconic building overlooking the sprawling Tiananmen square here on December 6 at 10 am local time.

Ukrainians hid orphaned kids from Russian deportation

AP ■ KHERSON

Hours after Russia invaded Ukraine in February, health staff at a children's hospital in the south started secretly planning how to save the babies.

Russians were suspected of seizing orphan children and sending them to Russia, so staff at the children's regional hospital in Kherson city began fabricating orphans' medical records to make it appear like they were too ill to move.

"We deliberately wrote false information that the children were sick and could not be transported," said Dr. Olga Pilyarska, head of intensive care. "We were scared that (the Russians) would find out ... (but) we decided that we would save the children at any cost." Throughout the war Russians

have been accused of deporting Ukrainian children to Russia or Russian-held territories to raise them as their own. At least 1,000 children were seized from schools and orphanages in the Kherson region during Russia's eight-month occupation of the area, say local authorities. Their whereabouts are still unknown. But residents say even more children would have gone missing had it not been for the efforts of some in the community who risked their lives to hide as many children as they could.

At the hospital in Kherson, staff invented diseases for 11 abandoned babies under their care, so they wouldn't have to give them to the orphanage where they knew they'd be given Russian documents and potentially taken away. One baby had "pulmonary bleed-

ing", another "uncontrollable convulsions" and another needed "artificial ventilation," said Pilyarska of the fake records.

On the outskirts of Kherson in the village of Stepanivka, Volodymyr Sahaidak the director of a center for social and psychological rehabilitation, was also falsifying paperwork to hide 52 orphaned and vulnerable children.

The 61-year-old placed some of the children with seven of his staff, others were taken to distant relatives and some of the older ones remained with him, he said. "It seemed that if I did not hide my children they would simply be taken away from me," he said.

But moving them around wasn't easy. After Russia occupied Kherson and much of the region in March, they started separating

orphans at checkpoints, forcing Sahaidak to get creative about how to transport them. In one instance he faked records saying that a group of kids had received treatment in the hospital and were being taken by their aunt to be reunited with their mother who was nine months pregnant and waiting for them on the other side of the river, he said.

While Sahaidak managed to save off the Russians, not all children were as lucky. In the orphanage in Kherson — where the hospital would have sent the 11 babies — some 50 children were evacuated in October and allegedly taken to Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014, a security guard at the institution and neighbors told The Associated Press.

"A bus came with the inscription Z (a symbol painted on

Russian vehicles) and they were taken away," said Anastasiia Kovalenko, who lives nearby.

At the start of the invasion, a local aid group tried to hide the children in a church but the Russians found them several months later, returned them to the orphanage and then evacuated them, said locals.

Earlier this year, The Associated Press reported that Russia is trying to give thousands of Ukrainian children to Russian families for foster care or adoption. The AP found that officials have deported Ukrainian children to Russia or Russian-held territories without consent, lied to them that they weren't wanted by their parents, used them for propaganda, and given them Russian families and citizenship.

Ruling Nepali Cong emerges as largest party, wins 57 seats under direct voting in Nepal's HoR polls

PTI ■ KATHIMANDU

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress emerged as the largest party by winning 57 seats in Nepal's parliamentary election as the counting of votes under the direct system concluded here on Monday, brightening the party's chances of forming the new government.

Elections to the House of

Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held on November 20 to end the prolonged political instability that has plagued the Himalayan nation.

The counting of votes started a day later.

In the 275-member HoR, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system. A party or a coalition needs 138 seats for a clear majority.

Russian oil cap begins, trying to pressure Putin on Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Western countries on Monday began imposing a \$60-per-barrel price cap and ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure against Moscow over its war on Ukraine.

The European Union, along with Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States agreed to the price cap on Friday.

The move has prompted a rejection from Kremlin and also criticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — whose

government wants the cap to be half as high. The 27-country European bloc also imposed an embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea. Questions have arisen about just how the Western measures will affect market prices.

On Monday, U.S. Benchmark crude traded up 90 cents to \$80.88.

Many other factors, including COVID-19 prevention measures in China that have crimped its manufacturing, are also having an impact on demand for crude and thus prices.

They are far down from a peak earlier during the war.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who is in charge of energy issues, warned in televised comments on Sunday that Russia won't sell its oil to countries that would try to use the cap. "We will only sell oil and oil products to the countries that will work with us on market terms, even if we have to reduce output to some extent," Novak said in televised remarks hours before the price cap came into effect.

The Ukrainian government demanded over the weekend a lower price cap, to \$30 per barrel, insisting that at the \$60 level

Russia would still reap annual oil revenues of \$100 billion — money that can be used to finance its war machine.

Russia, the world's No.2 oil producer, relies on the sale of oil and gas to underpin its economy, which has already come under sweeping international sanctions over President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

In recent weeks, Russia has been pounding Ukrainian infrastructure — including power plants — with military strikes and keeping an offensive going in the east, notably in and around the

town of Bakhmut.

Russian forces have also been digging in near the southern city of Kherson, which was recaptured by Ukrainian forces last month after an 8-month occupation.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured an untold number of civilians, and shaken the world economy — notably through the fallout on the prices and availability of foodstuffs, fertiliser and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia.

‘WOMEN’S IPL WILL BRIDGE GAP B/W INT’L & DOMESTIC CRICKET’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stars such as Harmanpreet Kaur and Smriti Mandhana feel the women's IPL could help newcomers in making a seamless transition from domestic to international cricket.

The inaugural women's IPL is set to be held in March and some of the country's top players, from national team captain Harmanpreet to senior opener Mandhana, are looking forward to the event that will also see participation from overseas stars.

Speaking on Star Sports show 'Follow the Blues', Harmanpreet said, "The IPL will be a great platform for players that are really good, but you know for them, international cricket is still something that they cannot change their approach and mind-set overnight."

"But in the IPL, when they get a chance to play against overseas players, it will give them a platform, they can play well, they can understand what is international cricket."

"So, when they are playing for the Indian team, they will not face any extra pressure, because right now, the players that are selected from the domestic teams, sometimes I can see that they are blank, they are not able to understand how to change their game plan."

"To cut that gap, the tournament will play a major role. So, the coming years, with the girls who play in the IPL, we will definitely see some major changes in their performances."

The Women in Blue have made a lot of progress in the past year, but have not been able to win championships. The team made it to the semi-finals of the ODI World Cup, beat Sri Lanka in a T20I and ODI bilateral series, won a Commonwealth Games silver medal and bagged a historic 3-0 win in England.

The, they won the Asia Cup for a record seventh time.

Talking further about the IPL, Harmanpreet said, "The IPL is a huge step forward for women's cricket,



Shafali Verma to lead India in women's U-19 WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Talented opening batter Shafali Verma was on Monday named captain of India's 15-member squad for the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup to be held in South Africa from January 14 to 29.

The All-India Women's Selection Committee picked the team for the maiden edition of the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup, as well as for the upcoming bilateral away T20 series against South Africa U-19 beginning from December 17.

The 18-year-old Shafali, who has played two Tests, 21 ODIs and 46 T20Is after making her debut in the senior national team in 2019, will also lead the 18-member Indian squad in the



Africa, UAE and Scotland.

The top three teams from each group will progress to the Super Six round, where the sides will be pooled into two groups of six each.

The top two teams from each group will then progress to the semi-finals, which will be played on January 27 at JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom. The final will take place at the same venue on January 29.

India U-19 Women's team for SA T20s: Shafali Verma (captain), Shweta Sehrawat (vice-captain), Richa Ghosh (wk), G Trisha, Soumya Tiwari, Sonia Mehdiya, Hurley Gala, Hrishita Basu (wk), Sonam Yadav, Mannat Kashyap, Archana Devi, Parshavi Chopra, Titas Sadhu, Falak Naz, Shabnam MD, Shikha, Najla CMC, Yashashree.

Specialist players & split coaching make lot of sense for bigger teams: Andy Flower



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One of the shrewdest minds in world cricket, Andy Flower, feels having different coaches and specialist players for red and white-ball cricket make a "lot of sense" for bigger teams like India, England and Australia amid a punishing international calendar.

Reigning T20 and ODI World Cup champions England are the only major side to adopt the split coaching formula and have a totally different set-up for the five-day and shorter formats.

Flower, who now coaches T20 franchises around the world after spending 12 years in English cricket set-up, feels the mental health of players and coaches is bound to be affected with so much cricket going on. "For some countries it is not needed. For bigger countries who are playing tons of cricket, players specialising makes sense. It would also make sense from a coaching point of view and a lifestyle and health point of view."

"Being on the road, living in hotels for two or three quarters in a year, that is not a healthy thing for families and relationships," the former Zimbabwe captain said.

Commenting on the roaring success of England in the shorter formats, Flower said a lot of credit must go to former captain Eoin Morgan and coach Trevor Bayliss, who engineered the side's remarkable transformation after a dismal 2015 World Cup.

"The biggest catalyst of change was Eoin Morgan and Trevor Bayliss. They encouraged an uber attacking style of play and they had freedom to do this as they had a poor World Cup in 2015," said the 54-year-old.

Flower coaches the Lucknow franchise in the IPL and has coached in T20 leagues around the world since 2019. He was with Delhi Bulls for the T10 League in Abu Dhabi.

His captain at Lucknow, KL Rahul, has copped a fair bit of criticism of late for his strike rate. Asked to comment on his recent performances, Flower said: "I don't agree with you that he has not been able to deliver."

"He has proved time and time again that he is able to deliver. He is an amazing cricketer and so beautiful to watch but also he has got an amazing record, especially in the IPL, and a ridiculously good average. I rate him very highly."



The Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur addressing at the International volunteer day, in New Delhi on December 05, 2022

Gill strong contender to open for India in 2023 ODI WC: Yuvi

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

The highly rated Shubman Gill is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 ODI World Cup at home, feels World Cup winner Yuvraj Singh.

Gill is not a part of the ODI series in Bangladesh but was part of the second string India squad in New Zealand.

"I think Shubman is doing very well and is performing consistently. I believe he is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 World Cup," Yuvraj said.

Yuvraj, who retired from all forms of the game in 2019, has been mentor to some of the young cricketers from his state including Shubman.

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Shubman stayed with Yuvraj and trained under him alongside current Punjab skipper and Sunrisers Hyderabad all rounder Abhishek Sharma.

"Shubman is very hard-working and is doing all the right things. I believe he is destined for greatness in the next 10 years," Yuvraj said.

Yuvraj declined to comment on India's show in the T20 World Cup or the sacking of national selectors.

On a different note, Yuvraj said that he is open to work as a sports/cricket administrator.

"I can't say what will happen in future but if I can help in growth of sports in the country, I wouldn't mind. But it is not just cricket but I will like to help in growth of sports in this country."



INDIAN FINED 80% OF MATCH FEE FOR SLOW OVER-RATE

PTI ■ MIRPUR

India were on Monday penalised for slow over-rate in the first ODI against Bangladesh here, with the players coughing up 80 per cent of their match fee.

India lost the opening game of the three-match series by one wicket on Sunday. ICC elite panel match referee Ranjan Madugalle imposed the sanction for India were ruled to be four overs short of the target after time allowances were taken

into consideration.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time.

India captain Rohit Sharma pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing, the ICC said in a statement.

AP ■ RAWALPINDI

England showcased its masterful approach of aggression in Test cricket with a superb 74-run victory over Pakistan in the final session of the first Test on Sunday.

Needing 263 runs with eight wickets in hand on Day 5, Pakistan was dismissed for 268 against the reverse swing of James Anderson (4-36) and Ollie Robinson (4-50) — losing its last five wickets for just 11 runs after tea.

Jack Leach wrapped up the game by having the last wicket of Naseem Shah, trapped leg before wicket, after England delayed the second new ball for well over an hour with Anderson and Robinson doing the damage with the old ball.

Pakistan also succumbed to the relentless attacking field settings of England captain Ben Stokes throughout the final day before Robinson and veteran Anderson sliced through the lower order with the host needing 86 runs.

"What we've had to deal with coming in makes this win even better," Stokes said, referring to a virus that hit half of his teammates on the eve of the match before they recovered in time for England's first test in Pakistan in 17 years.



"We wanted to come here and carry on with our mantra of exciting cricket and giving ourselves an opportunity to win. We've no interest in drawing."

The win on a docile Pindi Cricket Stadium wicket firmly underlined England's fearless aggressive approach under new coach Brendon McCullum,

which saw them win six of the seven Test matches back home this summer. Robinson exposed Pakistan's long tail soon after tea when he had Agha Salman (30) trapped leg before and then Azhar Ali (40) fell in the fielding trap when Joe Root grabbed a low two-handed catch in the leg slip.

Robinson had earlier ended the nearly four-hour defiance of one of the four Pakistan debutants — Saud Shakeel — in the second session to a brilliant diving catch by Keaton Jennings as the left-hander top-scored with 76.

Anderson broke the 87-run stand by having Mohammad Rizwan caught behind off a

‘Indian team has everything to become world champion’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan hockey captain Tahir Zaman believes India can reclaim the World Cup title after a hiatus of 47 years if they can handle the pressure of being the hosts and play consistent game. Zaman, an integral part of Pakistan's 1994 World Cup-winning team, said playing the marquee event at home has its pros and cons.

"I would say India has a good chance this time. To be honest, home ground, home crowd advantage, but they should not forget that it can also be a disadvantage. The pressure of the home crowd and local media is something they have to be careful of," Zaman said.

"Apart from that, playing disciplined hockey, and not getting emotional will help. I would say the consistency I have noticed in the Indian team's per-



formance shows that they have everything that can make them the world champions this time."

The FIH World Cup will be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela from January 13 to 29. Zaman, a lively forward in his playing days, expects a highly competitive tournament.

"France and South Africa are the kinds of teams that can make any kind of upsets. But, on

the other hand, Australia, Belgium, Germany, and perhaps Argentina are big teams to watch out for.

"I would rate Australia and the Netherlands higher than Belgium this time. But, let's see how it goes. May the best team win the World Cup," said Zaman, who has 252 international caps and 134 goals to his name.

McDonald worried about Green's workload ahead of 2023 IPL

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald is concerned about Cameron Green's workload leading up to next year's IPL and said a decision on the all-rounder's participation in the lucrative T20 tournament will be taken closer to the event.

Australia all-format player Green is expected to garner huge interest from IPL franchises in this month's player auction after the 23-year-old recently nominated his name for the event.

"His (Green) overall load in the next 12 months of cricket, is it a concern? Yeah, I think it's a concern for every player," McDonald told Australian Associated Press (AAP).

"We've spoken about it several times. It's hypothetical to see how he's feeling come the end of March. He's got a lot of cricket before the IPL and I'm sure his decision won't be made right now, it will be made later on down the track leading into the

IPL. "You never know what your body is going to feel like in three months' time on the back of nine Test matches plus some white ball cricket of the back end of that Indian series," he added.

The 2023 IPL will be held in between the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (February-March) in India and the Ashes (June-July) in England. Australia opener David Warner has already warned Green about the challenge of managing his workload.

Australia Test captain Pat Cummins had already opted out of next year's IPL due to a busy international schedule.

Of late, Green has been troubled by back injuries, which limited his bowling.

"We're lucky and fortunate enough that the quality in front of him (Green) doesn't mean that he has to bowl excessive amounts of overs," McDonald said. "He bats in the top six, he's holding his own as a batter. So I could say that he's pretty much unrestricted at the moment."

