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OPINION 6

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WORLD 10

IRAN EXECUTES FIRST KNOWN
PRISONER HELD IN PROTESTS

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY DECEMBER 9, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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12 SPORT

BJP RETAINS GUJ FOR 7TH TERM, LOSES HP

Party wins 156 of 182 seats
with 52.5% votes; Congress
reduced to 17 in worst-ever
show in Guj; AAP gets 5

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Riding on a pro-incumbency vote despite helming the State for 27 long years, the BJP delivered its "best-ever" performance on Thursday by storming back to power in Gujarat for the seventh straight time bagging 156 of the 182 Assembly seats and garnering 52.5 per cent of the votes.

In a stupendous performance in the home State of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP restricted its main challenger, the Congress, to its worst-ever tally of 17 seats as the emerging third force, the AAP, made a major dent into the latter's votebank but could win only 5 seats as against its tall claims of forming the Government.

At 27.3 per cent, the vote share of the Congress, which had bagged 149 seats in 1985, is almost half of BJP while the AAP cornered a decent 12.9 per cent. But even put together, their vote share does not surpass that of the BJP's, reflecting the enormity of the BJP's landslide win.

The ruling BJP surpassed its record of 127 seats which it won under Modi as Chief

Minister in 2002 and achieved the 150-seat target set for 2022 by its chief strategist Amit Shah. Before the BJP, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was the only party to have won seven straight Assembly elections but that it did with a front of coalition parties.

BJP's Chief Ministerial candidate Bhupendra Patel, who will take oath on December 12, cornered over 80 per cent of the vote share in his Ghatlodia constituency winning the seat by a margin of about 1.92 lakh votes. Modi and Shah will participate in the oath-taking ceremony, said State BJP chief CR Patil. Another big winner was BJP's Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi, who won the Majura seat in Surat by a margin of over 1.16 lakh votes.

The huge victory of the BJP is electorally significant as bagging over 50 per cent votes is rare in State polls. With the seventh consecutive and emphatic win in Gujarat, the BJP could now showcase it as a curtain raiser to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls which are barely 16 months away.

Continued on Page 9



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, flanked by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda, during the celebrations of the party's victory in the Gujarat polls, at BJP HQ in New Delhi on Thursday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Voters rejected dynasty, revadi politics: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of a landslide win in Assembly polls in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said he is overcome with a lot of emotions on the "phenomenal election results" and dedicated win to party workers.

Apparently taking a swipe at the dwindling stakes of the Congress in Gujarat, Modi said the support for the BJP is an indicator that the anger against dynasty rule and corruption are rising. Debunking the politics

of AAP's freebies, the PM asserted, "Country understands the harms of shortcut politics, if a country is prosperous, everyone's prosperity is guaranteed."

"People blessed politics of development and at the same time expressed a desire that they want this momentum to continue at a greater pace. I bow to Gujarat's Jan Shakti," he said in a tweet.

Modi also lauded party workers in the State, saying each of them is a champion.

Continued on Page 9

HP follows 'change' trend, votes Cong in

Cong wins 40, BJP 25, AAP zero in
68-member House

AMITABH SHUKLA ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh voted for a change as the ballot boxes were opened on Thursday with the Congress romping home comfortably and demolishing the BJP's hope of returning to power once again in the hill State.

Dev Bhoomi, as Himachal is called, did not spring any surprise as it has been throwing incumbent Governments out of power for the last four decades and it continued with this tradition by giving the Congress 40 seats and the BJP 25.

The Independents won 3 in the 68-member Assembly. Apart from other factors, what helped the Congress was the complete demolition of the AAP, which failed to eat into the Congress vote bank or get the anti-incumbency votes, failing to open its account in the State.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur conceded the party's defeat later in the afternoon and submitted his resignation to the Governor but only after a see-saw battle that took a decisive turn towards the Congress.

The State president of the



Congress supporters celebrate the party's victory in Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, at AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday
PTI

Himachal win face saver for Congress

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Though the hill State never repeats the incumbent Government, the Congress' win in Himachal Pradesh has come as a face saver for the grand old party whose worst-ever performance in Gujarat, remains a major worry.

More so since the AAP is gradually eating into its vote bank and occupying its space. Coming just a day after its

route in the MCD polls, the credit for the Himachal win goes to the likes of Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, general secretary Priyanka Gandhi and State leadership, including party chief Pratibha Singh.

With the party's tallest leader Rahul Gandhi staying away from campaigning, busy as he is in Bharat Jodo Yatra, the win in Himachal is the first under the watch of Priyanka.

Continued on Page 9

BJP grabs Cong's ST vote bank in Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP's extensive tribal outreach over the last one year helped it sweep Gujarat's tribal belt — traditionally Congress bastions — winning 24 of the 27 seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.

The Congress, which had won 15 ST seats in Gujarat in 2017, was confined to just two seats — Danta and Khedbrahma. And, if the AAP could corner a near 13 per cent overall vote share in the State then it could do so based on its performance in the tribal belt as it severely cut into the Congress vote bank to corner over 25 per cent votes in many seats like Bhiloda, Vyara, Chota Udaipur and Kaprada.

In fact, it won its lone seat, Dediapada, cornering a whopping 58 per cent votes. The seat was won by AAP's Chaitar Vasava, a former aide of BJP founder and 7-time MLA Chotu Vasava, who himself

Rebels bite dust in Gujarat, spoil BJP's chance in Himachal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP rebels in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh lost their elections but had a difference in their impact. In Gujarat, the rebels could not impact the party negatively, but they spoiled the BJP's party in Himachal Pradesh playing the role of vote-cutters. Politician, actor and producer Madhu Shrivastav and the Waghodia MLA since 1995, lost the poll badly. He had issued an open threat to the BJP after being denied ticket. Similarly, Kuldeep Singh Raulji lost from Savli.

was trounced from Jhagadia by the BJP candidate Ritesh Vasava.

Continued on Page 9

Guj refuses Kejriwal's bait, but helps AAP get 'national party' tag

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP has come a cropper in Himachal Pradesh but its spirited performance in Gujarat will help it get the "national party" tag, one that will not only increase its standing among the Opposition ranks but also go a long way in building its credentials for taking on the BJP replacing the Congress as the principal challenger.

The AAP bagged 13 per cent of the vote share in Gujarat riding on its showing in the rural and tribal belts of Gujarat.

But then it could not touch even double digit figures in terms of seats in sharp contrast to its convener Arvind Kejriwal's assertion "in writing" that his party would form the next Government unseating the BJP.

The results clearly suggest that Gujaratis didn't fall for the AAP's promises of freebies and sops and that it has a long way to go to win over the people in a State which has always seen a bipolar fight between the BJP and the Congress.

Continued on Page 9

Dec 8 lucky in AAP's journey

New Delhi: December 8 seems to be lucky for the AAP in electoral politics. The AAP had bagged 28 of the 70 seats of the Delhi Assembly in 2013 when it first formed the Government with "unconditional support" from Sheila Dikshit. The result was declared on December 8. This time again, its win on 5 seats in Gujarat has given it a national party tag.

Dimple charms MSY's bastion; BJP captures Azam's citadel Rampur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Late Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law Dimple Yadav won big in the Samajwadi Party bastion of Mainpuri parliamentary constituency riding on the sympathy for the party patriarch whose death necessitated the bypoll.

The SP, however, lost its other stronghold of Rampur Sadar Assembly seat, represented by its biggest Muslim face Azam Khan, to the BJP, which also won the Kurhani Assembly seat in Bihar in a direct fight with the JD(U) post parting of ways with its erstwhile NDA partner.

Overall, of the six Assembly seats that went for bypolls in five States, the BJP and the Congress won two seats each while the RLD and the BJD won a seat apiece.

Continued on Page 9



Shivpal's party merges with SP

Lucknow/Etawah: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday presented his party's flag to his uncle and Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) founder Shiyopal Singh Yadav in Saifai, indicating a merger of the two parties.

Day after VP's NJAC rap, SC asks AG to stop Mins from picking on collegium

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The tussle between the Supreme Court and the Government over the appointment of judges intensified on Thursday with the apex court asserting that the collegium system is "law of land" and asking the Attorney General to advise the Union Ministers to desist from talking in public against the collegium system.

It comes a day after Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar termed the SC striking down the NJAC Act as "glaring instance" of "severe compromise" of Parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the "mandate of the people".

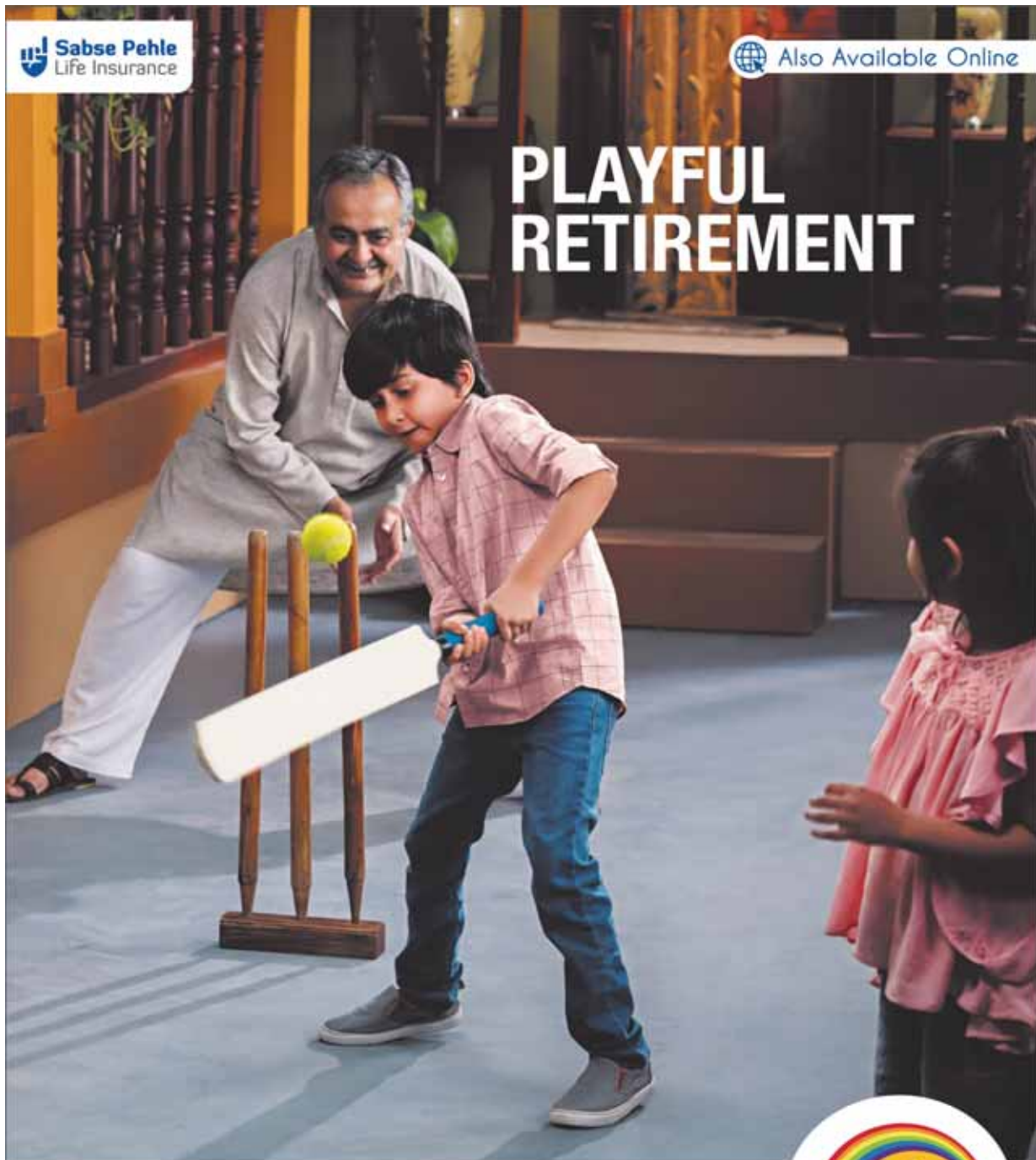
Meanwhile, in the Lok Sabha, TMC MP Saugata Roy alleged the Central Government is "using a high dignitary" to run down the collegium system of appointing



Supreme Court and high court judges as it wants to extend its powers everywhere, including the judiciary.

Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul-headed bench told the Attorney General that the collegium system of appointment of judges is the law of the land and comments against it are "not well taken" and any law declared by it is "binding" on all stakeholders and the collegium system must be followed. The SC was hearing a matter relating to delay by the Centre in clearing the names recommended by the collegium for appointment as judges to constitutional courts.

Continued on Page 9



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Dalit man made to run from pillar to post for FIR over land row

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an abject disregard for the state government's instructions to promptly deal with cases involving women and people belonging to lower castes, a Dalit man could not get an FIR registered more than four months after he and his brother were threatened by two youths and their aides over a piece of land in Indira Nagar.

The victim, Laxman of Rasoolpur Sadat village in the area, has a dispute with Abhishek Yadav and Shailendra Yadav, both of the same village. It was alleged that Laxman and his brother Sukhram were being forced by the Yadavs to register their land in their name. The brother duo were abused and thrashed on two occasions (on June 20 and July 1) over the same issue and they filed a police complaint. However, no FIR was registered by the police.

On July 20, Laxman and his brother were attacked near Picnic Spot when they were going to visit their ailing mother to a hospital on Kursi Road.

"Shailendra, Abhishek and their aides were standing near CIMAP and they forcibly stopped us. Both Shailendra and Abhishek asked us to get the land registered in their names. We told them that our mother was sick and hospitalised, and that we would discuss these things post her recovery. However, they blew their top and started abusing and thrashing us. They threatened to kill us if we did not get the land registered in their names. As commuters started

converging on the scene, they fled the scene," Laxman alleged.

He said he had complained to the police on several occasions but no help came their way. It was only when he gave a complaint to the office of Lucknow police commissioner that a case was registered in this regard. A police spokesman said the accused had been booked for rioting, beating and abusing Laxman and his brother. They were also booked under SC/ST Act, he added.

Meanwhile, three officials of a real estate company were on Thursday accused of criminal breach of trust, forgery and tampering with official documents besides threatening and abusing a customer who had booked two flats with a project launched by the company in Ghazipur police station area. The incident happened in 2011-12. The victim, Amit Sharma of Triveni Nagar in Aliganj, had booked two plots under a scheme launched by Suyash Builders and Developers (Samridhi Group) at Devpuri Plaza in Ghazipur (current address is TS Towers, Hazratganj) and deposited Rs 1.35 lakh.

Amit said the company did not do any development work at the site they showed him for the flat in the last ten years. "I kept talking to an authorised representative of the company, Sudhanshu Srivastava, for the last 2-3 years and he later asked me to contact Sanjay Srivastava aka Mausa, who is the director of the company. Sanjay kept playing dilly-dallying tactics and then asked me to talk to the managing director, who also used the same tactics. They later threatened me and refused to give me the plot or refund the money," he alleged. He said the company had duped several people like him.



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NOTICE

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NOTICE

Original Freehold Deed No 8395 dtd 28.06.2003 of my house 5/241, Viram Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow has been laminated due to security reasons. Arvind Kr Srivastava & Rajni Srivastava 5/241, Viram Khand 5, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

NOTICE

Notify that I have changed my daughter's name from Aradhya Gupta to Anika Gupta for all purposes & records. Manish Kumar Yadav S/o Ram Chandra Yadav 456/29 Daulatganj, Thana Thakurganj, Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh

सूचना

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Man beaten to death over parking issue

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two youths beat a 55-year-old man to death following a dispute over parking a motorcycle at the gate of his house in Kaiserbagh on Wednesday night. Police registered a case in this connection and arrested the accused.

Those arrested were identified as Shera Siddiqui of Pattharwali Gali in Model House and Mohammed Shafi aka Babli of Odeon slope in Kaiserbagh. The deceased was identified as Peer Gulam aka Siraj of Pattharwali Gali.

As per reports, the accused parked their motorcycle at the gate of Siraj's house before going to attend a function. As Siraj objected, it led to a verbal spat. The accused thrashed Siraj till the victim collapsed. Locals took Siraj to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The Kaiserbagh SHO said

a team was formed soon after the news reached police and the accused were tracked down seven hours later.

Meanwhile, a group of men thrashed a woman of their village for opposing the raucous and abusive behaviour of one of them in Nagram on Wednesday night. Reports said accused Sanoj, who was said to be in a drunken state, started abusing Hemlata of Chhoti Khara locality and her family members around 7 pm on Tuesday without any provocation. Hemlata was not present in the house and it was her daughter-in-law who objected to Sanoj's behaviour. The accused charged at her with a brick in his hand.

After Hemlata came to know about it, she reached Sanoj's house to seek an explanation. However, Sanoj and his aides, identified as Balakram and Dheeraaj, attacked her with sticks.

STUDENT THRASHED BY PRINCIPAL

A principal of a school in Mohanlalganj was accused of beating a student and humiliating him publicly as he failed to show the school diary.

The incident took place on November 18 but a case was registered only on Thursday. Reports said the student was asked to show the school diary which he had already submitted at the school. As he tried to reason with the principal, he was thrashed in the presence of fellow students. "My son was thrashed by the principal and his shirt was torn when he returned home," his father said.

He said his son was humiliated during the assembly. "My son is suffering from diabetes and he needs to go to toilet more often than others do. The principal jeered at my son for this issue. When I complained to police, my son was turned out of the school," he alleged.

Big turnout at week-long camp for registration of flats under PMAY

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A special week-long camp, organised by Lucknow Development Authority for registration of flats constructed under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) at Sharda Nagar Extension on Sultanpur Road, evoked encouraging response on the first day on Thursday. As many as 105 people turned up at the main hall of the LDA head office in Gomti Nagar. It will continue till December 13.

The registration procedure was done in the presence of Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob.

LDA Vice-Chairman Dr Indramani Tripathi said that there was encouraging response by people who turned up in large numbers. To ensure transparency, elaborate arrangements were made in and around the main hall to prevent any untoward incident or nuisance by touts.

Additional secretary, LDA, Gyanendra Verma said 2,200 flats have been built under the scheme in Sharda Nagar

Extension while 2,300 flats in Vasant Kunj. He said only finishing touches are left in Vasant Kunj flats.

Interestingly, 150 out of the total number of flats in Sharda Nagar Extension were found to

be unfit for registration. Registration for these flats will open after they are in completely livable condition. The decision was taken during a joint inspection carried out by the divisional commissioner and



One of the two buildings sealed by LDA on Thursday

Pioneer

Presentation made to CM on integrated court complexes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



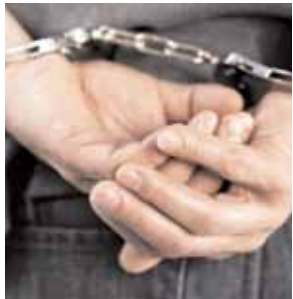
buildings and advocates' chambers and auditorium as well as residential colony, parking and food plaza for judges and judicial officers and employees.

The chief minister said the design of the court premises should be such that the common man gets his work done easily. He said the design should be such that it reduces the cost of construction and maintenance. He said special care should be taken that the voice of one court does not go

to another court. The chief minister said that India had an ancient tradition of judicial system based on democratic values. He said a special corridor should be constructed in all the court premises where the common man may become familiar with the ancient specialties of India. He said effective presentation of the specialties, fundamental rights, duties, and various Articles of the Indian Constitution should be shown in the corridor.

Nephew held for theft at woman's house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



In a major breakthrough, the Saadatganj police arrested the nephew of Shabana Khan in Moazzam Nagar locality in the area on Thursday and recovered Rs 5.68 lakh in cash and ornaments worth Rs 22 lakh which the accused had stolen from her house to repay the loan which taken from his friend.

Shabana and her son had gone to attend a wedding on December 3 and found their house burgled when they returned the next day. However, the police were puzzled as there were no signs of forced entry in the house, and it was suspected that the thief was present in the house when Shabana and her son left the house after locking the doors and main gate. The police then prepared a complete list of visitors to the house.

ADCP CN Sinha said the accused, Abdullah Iqbal, committed the theft in a dramatic way often seen in movies. As per the ADCP, Shabana and her son had gone to the house of a relative in Balaganj on December 3. When she returned, she found ornaments

and cash stolen. Abdullah confessed that he had visited the house of his aunt on December 3 and came to know about her plan to attend a wedding. He pretended to leave the house but hid in a room. After Shabana left the house, he collected the cash and ornaments before fleeing the scene. He said he knew that Shabana had a huge sum of money and ornaments as her husband works in Dubai. Shabana treated Abdullah as her son and never imagined that he would commit theft at her house. That was the reason why she was displeased when the police had initially suspected his involvement in the crime. Abdullah worked with a private company before being laid off.

Four die in road mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Four persons were killed in separate road accidents in the state in last 24 hours

Two men were killed and another injured in a collision between a motorcycle and a public carrier on the Kanchanpur-Pathardeva Road in Tarkulwa police station limits of Deoria on Thursday, police said.

Prince Singh (22) and Ritik Singh (24) were killed when their motorcycle collid-

ed with a public carrier near Gopalpur village, police said.

The driver of the public carrier was injured and is undergoing treatment in the district hospital.

The bodies of the deceased were sent for autopsy and further action was being taken.

According to a report from Gorakhpur, two motorcycle-borne youths were killed after they were hit by an unidentified vehicle.

The accident occurred on

the Mainsir-Molnapur road in Sant Kabir Nagar, killing Neeraj (24) and Vishal (18) on the spot. The duo, who worked in Khalilabad district hospital, were returning home after attending a friend's wedding function in Pachouri village, police said.

A case was registered against the driver of the unidentified vehicle who fled the spot after the accident, Station House Officer Santosh Mishra said. The bodies were sent for autopsy.

Woman killed by brothers over love affair

Gorakhpur: A 22-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her brothers over a love affair here, police said on Thursday. The accused, identified as Naushad Ansari and Amjad Ali, were arrested near the Singhapatti area in Kushinagar district on Thursday, they said.

A rope and a shawl used in the murder have been seized from their possession along with a motorcycle, they said. The woman was in love with one Mobin Ansari of her village and they wanted to marry. Although the couple was of the same religion and caste, the woman's family was against their marriage and her brothers often harassed and thrashed her, they said. On Tuesday, the accused thrashed the girl with a stick and then strangled her to death with a rope. Later, they wrapped the body in a shawl, carried it on a motorcycle to an agricultural field and dumped it there, police said. **PTI**

NBW against BJP ex-MLA

Ballia (PTI): A local court here has issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former BJP MLA Sanjay Yadav and nine other party leaders for failing to appear before it in a case pertaining to holding a public meeting without permission. The case dates back to 2017. The then SHO at Sikandarpur police station here Ashok Kumar had registered an FIR against Yadav and nine other local BJP leaders for also blocking a road in addition to holding the rally with-

out permission during assembly election. Advocate Tribhuvan Nath Yadav on Thursday said MP MLA Special Court Judge Tapasya Tripathi issued the arrest warrants against all the ten accused on Wednesday as they did not appear before the court on Wednesday despite instructions. The court has asked the Ballia Superintendent of Police to ensure that the arrest warrant is served before December 15.

Boundary wall of madrasa razed

Barabanki (PTI): The district administration here demolished the boundary wall of a madrasa built on government land, officials said on Thursday.

According to officials, the boundary wall of the madrasa, constructed under Safdarganj police station limits, was encroaching on the land of the sub-station of the electricity department. Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Vijay Trivedi said the wall of madrasa Jamia Madintul Uloom was constructed on land allotted to the electricity department.

"A notice regarding the same was issued earlier. Acting on the same notice, the boundary wall was bulldozed on Wednesday," he said. The manager of the madrasa Hafiz Ayas is also the district president of Samajwadi Party.

CITYBRIEFS

SCHOLARSHIP



Three students of City Montessori School, Rajendra Nagar Campus 1 — Rohan Chaturvedi, Prakarsh Manohar and Daniya Khan — have secured a Rs 4-lakh scholarship each from the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. The scholarship will be provided to these students for higher education in science, under which each will be getting Rs 80,000 for five years. These students secured this scholarship by figuring on the top 1% merit list in the country based on their ISC (Class 12) percentage marks earlier this year. Apart from the support and motivation of their parents and teachers, the meritorious students of CMS credited the

educational atmosphere in the school for their achievement. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated these students and wished them a bright future.

SEMINAR

An international seminar on 'Issues and challenges of water resource management and sanitation in Uttar Pradesh' was organised by the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University. The seminar was inaugurated by Prof Walter Den, director of the Institute of Water Resources Science & Technology, Texas A & M

University, USA. He addressed issues related to potable water and lining of pit toilets using breathable laminate liners for mitigation of groundwater contamination in the Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh. Research scholar Puneet Srivastava demonstrated the breathable laminate liners, elucidated its functioning and practical utility. Dean, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Prof Abhishek Saxena highlighted the various water management issues related to water scarcity and quality of Agra, Firozabad, Kanpur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Pratapgarh, Barabanki, Gorakhpur, Gonda, Bahraich, Lakhimpur, Ballia etc. He also demonstrated the practical solutions to these problems using groundwater modeling techniques.



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Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.

M.P. Madhyam/107621/2022

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Yogi greets BJP workers on victory in Gujarat



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Greeting the Bharatiya Janata Party workers on the grand victory of the party in the Gujarat assembly elections and in Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the victories represented public admiration towards good governance, security and the development taking place under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He also expressed gratitude to the people for supporting the BJP. Taking to Twitter on Thursday after the announcement of the election results, Yogi Adityanath said, "The huge victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Gujarat legislative assembly elections is an expression of immense affection of the people for respected prime minister owing to his good governance as well as development and security provided by him to the citizens. Thanks to the prime minister and Gujarat for this tremendous victory. Hearty congratulations to all BJP workers and janata-janardan."

He termed the BJP's victory as the victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies.

Yogi Adityanath also congratulated the winners in the bypolls to Khatauli and Rampur assembly and the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seats.

"Bharatiya Janata Party has won the Rampur seat for the first time; for this, congratulations to all the workers of Rampur, including Shri Akash Saxena, and gratitude to janata-janardan," he said.

Akhilesh thanks people for 'historic' win in Mainpuri bypoll

PTI ■ MAINPURI

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday termed his party's 'historic win' in the Mainpuri bypoll as a true tribute to SP founder and his father Mulayam Singh Yadav and asserted that the results have energised partymen for the 2024 parliamentary elections.

Interacting with media-persons after the results were announced, the SP president said he was happy to declare that "respected uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav and his party (PSPL) have come together with the SP and now, all will work together under one flag."

Shivpal Yadav, who had floated his own party after his relationship with nephew Akhilesh Yadav turned sour, campaigned vigorously in the bypoll in favour of Dimple Yadav.

Shivpal Yadav's assembly seat Jaswantnagar is part of the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat.

Akhilesh's wife Dimple Yadav won the Mainpuri parliamentary seat, defeating her nearest rival BJP candidate Raghuraj Singh Shakya by margin of over 2,88,461 votes. She thanked all party workers



Samajwadi Party workers celebrating the win of Dimple Yadav in the Mainpuri bypoll on Thursday

Pioneer

and dedicated the win to 'Netaji'.

The bypoll on the seat was necessitated following

Mulayam Singh Yadav's death.

"The victory has opened a new path and given energy to the leaders and workers of the

Samajwadi Party and the people for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"People have assured the

workers for 2024 through this result and given a reply to those who are increasing inflation and unemployment, whose

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) merges with SP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The day Samajwadi Party scored an emphatic win in Mainpuri by-election, Shivpal Singh Yadav merged his Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) with Akhilesh Yadav's SP, indicating that both the parties will contest the next Lok Sabha elections together.

"We have merged Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) with Samajwadi Party. In 2024, we will fight the elections together. From today, there will be a Samajwadi Party flag (on my car)," Shivpal Yadav said in Saifai.

Taking to their official Twitter handle, the SP also shared a picture of the pair of uncle Shivpal Yadav-nephew Akhilesh Yadav holding a Samajwadi Party flag, indicating

their merger.

The indications of thaw between chacha and bhatija were palpable when Akhilesh met Shivpal Yadav at his residence after declaring Dimple Yadav as the party's candidate from Saifai. The election to Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat was necessitated following the death of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. Shivpal was also present when Dimple Yadav filed her nomination papers and ahead of the Mainpuri bypoll, Shivpal Yadav had promised his support to SP and asked his party workers to ensure Dimple Yadav's victory in the election. After the victory of Dimple Yadav, Shivpal wrote in a tweet in Hindi, which roughly says:

"Gratitude to well-wishers, friends and hardworking workers for their blessings, love and immense public

support received from the voters of Mainpuri parliamentary constituency. Heartfelt thanks to the residents of Jaswantnagar for the blessings given to Dimple Yadav."

Shivpal Yadav had formed the PSPL in 2018, two years after his rift with nephew Akhilesh. He contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election separately but joined hands with SP as an ally for the 2022 assembly polls. After the election, chacha rued his decision to contest on SP ticket and said he made a political blunder by joining hands with Akhilesh.

After the demise of Mulayam Singh Yadav in October, the family made efforts to bring the two leaders closer and finally succeeded. Grieved with grief, they were also seen jointly paying respects to Mulayam Singh Yadav, fondly called

Family unitedly contested bypoll: Shivpal

Lucknow (PTI): As SP candidate Dimple Yadav took a comfortable lead in Mainpuri, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) founder Shivpal Singh Yadav on Thursday said the party is heading for a big victory as the entire family contested the bypoll unitedly.

Soon after Dimple Yadav, the wife of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, took a lead of over one lakh votes over her BJP rival, Shivpal Yadav visited his brother and SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav's memorial in Mainpuri and paid floral tributes to him.

"The entire family unitedly contested the bypoll due to which we are heading for a big victory. In all future elections, the family (Yadav family)

will remain united and contest together," he told reporters in Mainpuri. Shivpal Yadav said his Jaswant Nagar constituency, which lies in Mainpuri parliamentary constituency, has broken the past record when it gave over 90,000 lead to 'netaji' (Mulayam). He said this is the victory of the "ideals of netaji" and development works carried out by him. "Netaji's 'jalwa' (influence) is still continuing," he said, adding, "The victory margin here (Mainpuri) will be over two lakh".

Alleging that on the directions of the BJP government, officers resorted to atrocities on party workers, he said they accepted the challenge and faced the situation.

"Netaji".

Shivpal had also extensively campaigned for Dimple after her candidature was announced for the constituency. This had also brought attacks from the Bharatiya Janata Party, especially Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who called Shivpal a "pendulum", suggesting that he had been swinging sides.

Downgrading of Shivpal's security had also triggered a retort by Akhilesh Yadav against the BJP and the Yogi Adityanath government.

The BJP fielded former Shivpal aide Raghuraj Singh Shakya against Dimple Yadav, and Shivpal Yadav criticised him for challenging his "daughter-in-law" in the election.

Jaswantnagar is Shivpal Yadav's stronghold and it gave Dimple Yadav the most number of votes.

Minister warns cos against employing goons, miscreants



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh said that if any company employed goons or miscreants and harassed people then the company concerned would be blacklisted and action would be taken against it.

These instructions were given by Singh in a meeting with the heads of the companies working under the Jal Jeevan Mission here on Thursday. "I will not allow companies to exploit small contractors. If they try to play games the consequences will be dire. There is no place for corruption in the government," he said.

Singh said that companies should not compromise on quality of work. He questioned the delay in the government work and said that the officials should ensure that work was completed

within the stipulated time.

Talking tough, Singh said, "I have received complaints that you are selling the tender and in some cases not paying to the poor contractor. Work in a transparent manner because if you work with honesty the stature of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also increase."

Principal Secretary (Namami Gange and Rural Water Supply) Anurag Srivastava was also present in the meeting. He said private agencies, local administration and departmental officers should work together.

"The government is determined to provide tap water to every household in rural areas and therefore we need to work together," he said.

The official said that Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Amroha, and Chitrakoot districts were making good progress.

Medical colleges to be opened in six dists on PPP model

Lucknow (PNS): Taking forward the One District, One Medical College scheme, the Yogi Adityanath government has issued tenders for opening medical colleges on public-private partnership (PPP) model in six districts where investors will be selected through a tender process to start medical colleges.

The districts where medical colleges will open in PPP model are Mahoba, Mainpuri, Baghpat, Hamirpur, Hathras and Kasganj.

Principal Secretary (Medical Education) Alok Kumar said that Uttar Pradesh was the first state which had issued tenders for opening medical colleges on PPP model.

He said the details of the tender had also been uploaded on the GeN portal.

The Union Ministry of Economic Affairs has given permission to open medical colleges in six districts on PPP model under the Viability Gap Funding

(VGF) scheme. It will cost about Rs 1,525 crore and the Central government will provide a subsidy of about Rs 1,012 crore.

On an average, a college will get a subsidy of Rs 160 crore.

"Under this, the work has started after selecting the investors to open medical colleges in Maharajganj and Shamli. Treatment is also likely to start in Maharajganj by next year," Kumar said.

He said that this was a big step in the direction of providing better and accessible medical services to the common people as by accepting the proposal of the Central government, the money of the state government will be saved.

The state government will give the district hospital and land on lease for 33 years. After this the investor will return the medical college to the government and it will be the property of the state government.

RLD upbeat over Khatauli victory

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rashtriya Lok Dal candidate Anupam Mishra snatched victory from the Bharatiya Janata Party in its pocket borough, much to the embarrassment to the ruling party.

With this win the RLD strength in Uttar Pradesh assembly has reached nine.

The Khatauli assembly seat was won by BJP's Vikram Saini in the 2022 poll. But he was disqualified from the House after a court convicted him in the Muzaffarnagar riot case. The BJP had fielded Saini's wife, Rajkumari as its candidate in the by-election but she was defeated by Madan Bhaiya by 22,160 votes.

The win in Khatauli boosted the morale of RLD cadre and leaders and they were seen celebrating the victory at the party office on Thursday. Their faces were gleaming and they were cheerful as the final results were announced.

Team-RLD national coordinator Anupam Mishra said poetically, "It is a different matter if luck defeats you, a hawk does not die from slingshots".

Mishra attributed the RLD victory in the Khatauli by-election to the hard work of party workers and the strategy of party's national president Jayant Chaudhary. He said the Khatauli bypoll result would have a far-reaching consequences on the politics of Uttar Pradesh. Mishra said that the people were contesting this election on behalf of RLD and that was why when Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unsuccessfully tried to give the election a Hindu-Muslim religious colour, the people there showed brotherhood and mutual religious harmony and gave a befitting reply and also gave a message that now they could not be divided on the basis of religion. The RLD leader said that now the party would register its presence in the House with lucky number 9, and raise the problems of the people more assertively. RLD national spokesman Anil Dubey said the party leaders and workers were upbeat over the victory of the RLD candidate in the Khatauli by-election.

AAP thanks Gujarat voters for making it a national party

Lucknow (PNS): Aam Aadmi Party leader Sabahjeet Singh thanked the Gujarat public for paving the party's way to assembly by giving it five seats and thus making it attain the status of a national party. Speaking to reporters in Lucknow on Thursday, Singh said the AAP breached the fort of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in its first attempt and polled over 12 per cent of votes.

"The entire country is praising Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for his model of governance. The AAP had trounced Bharatiya Janata Party in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) election where the saffron party was holding the fort for the last 15 years. In Gujarat, we got public support and blessings and we have become a national party now," he said.

Singh said December 8, 2022 was a great day for the party as the 10-year-old AAP had attained the status of a national party.

Master plan prepared to develop Naimisharanya as a Vedic city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has prepared a master plan to develop Naimisharanya as a Vedic city and a global centre of spiritual, religious and eco-tourism.

The master plan prepared by the Tourism department is part of the ongoing mission of the state government to develop all religio-cultural and spiritual centres of the state as attractive tourist destinations.

The master plan also includes rejuvenation of Misrikh-Neemsar of Sitapur, along with Naimisharanya. Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra has given directions in this regard to top officials of the Tourism department.

In a cabinet meeting held recently, the government had decided to develop Naimisharanya as a spiritual tourism centre in view of its mythological significance. In the meeting, the cabinet also decided to form the Naimisharanya Teerth Vikas Parishad.

A presentation was made in this regard by the architecture and planning faculty of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow, on behalf of the Tourism department,

before the chief secretary, explaining the complete master plan for the development of Naimisharanya.

According to the master plan, Naimisharanya has been divided into four tourism zones due to its diverse natural and man-made attractions.

During the meeting, Principal Secretary (Tourism) Mukesh Meshram talked about the problem of traffic congestion due to the presence of several gates in the Maa Lalita Devi temple and a variety of shops in the front and said that necessary work would be done to ease the situation.

Meshram further pointed out that the artificial lake (kund), which is currently not in use, would be restored, while attention would also be paid to the facilities and their maintenance necessary for the comfort of the common citizens.

Besides, from the entrance to the Chakra Teerth to the changing and toilet block all structures will be renovated. The master plan will also include cleaning and renovation of Chakra Teerth Kund, Gaukund, Satsang Bhawan, meeting place and waiting area, Godavari Kund and Brahma Kund. Similarly, Dadhichi Kund will also be renovated.

Along with religious places, the city as a whole will be developed. Transit nodes will be developed along with the gateways of the city. Apart from this, dedicated parking lots will be built in the city. Similarly, charging points for electric vehicles as well as common civic amenities like tourist facilitation centre, dharamshala and food court will be provided.

In addition, dedicated footpaths will also be built for the safety of lakhs of pilgrims visiting the place and common facilities will be made available to the citizens in 84 Kosi Parikrama area.

Moreover, tourist facilitation centres will be set up according to the cultural and historical background of the city. Waiting area, cafeteria, changing room and rest rooms will be provided and ghats will be widened.

Meshram added further that non-motorised transport (NMT), whose objective is to reduce the carbon footprint, will also be provided. According to him, since Sitapur is majorly dependent on groundwater resources, an alternative source needs to be developed to avoid groundwater depletion. In this context, the government is planning to encourage people to adopt the rainwater harvesting system.

He said that a rainwater harvesting system should be provided in new and all public buildings. A rainwater system is required to be provided for the development of more than 5,000 square metres.

The rejuvenation of Naimisharanya has been planned in three ways. Under the first plan, all the religious places will be rejuvenated by the Tourism department.

These include Chakra Teerth temple, Maa Lalita Devi temple, Dadhichi Kund, transit nodes at the entrance of cities, common civic amenities, development of 84 Kosi Parikrama path and tourism based infrastructure.

The second plan is for developing the place through grants from the Central and state governments. This will include strengthening of the water supply network, laying underground sewer lines and setting up sewage treatment plants, building roads and parking lots, providing facilities for solid waste management, fire stations and installing street lights.

The third plan focuses on developing hotels, electric vehicle charging points, transportation facilities and commercial spaces in a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

उत्तर प्रदेश आवास एवं विकास परिषद
विद्युत नगर
आवास कम्प्लेक्स, (पवन लो) सेक्टर-9, पुनर्वास योजना, लखनऊ
ईमेल: upavp@rediffmail.com
फोन नं०-797 / M-6 E.D.-1/174
दिनांक: 08.12.2022
ई-निविदा सूचना
अयोध्यासाहस्री द्वारा विद्युत खण्ड-प्रथम, इन्दिरा नगर लखनऊ के कार्य क्षेत्र की गोष्ठा-फौजवाड मार्ग पर विकसित की जा रही भूमि विकास एवं गृहस्थान योजना गोष्ठा में 02 नम नलक्या के छिद्रण एवं तलस्थानित विकास कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा दिनांक 27.12.2022 को सुबह 11:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की गई है, जिसकी तकनीकी बिड दिनांक 27.12.2022 को खोली जायेगी। शेष नियम व शर्त परिषद की वेबसाइट www.upavp.com तथा अधिसूची अभिगम्यता, विद्युत खण्ड-प्रथम, उद्योग आवास एवं विकास परिषद, इन्दिरा नगर, लखनऊ के कार्यालय में देखी जा सकती है।
(सीपीओ सिई)
अधीक्षक अभियन्ता (वि/सीओ)

PUBLIC NOTICE
G.A. No. 554 of 2020
E.C. NO. 636 OF 2015
IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION
Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited Petitioner/Award Holder
-Versus-
Devendra Kumar & Anr. Respondents/Judgement Debtors
To
1. Devendra Kumar S/o, Om Prakash
Gunja, Kaitha, Kanpur, Pin code- 209206.
2. Nenaka Singh W/o Devendra Kumar
Gunja, Kaitha, Kanpur, Pin code- 209206.
This is to put to your notice that an Execution application has been filed against the above named Addressees, wherein the award holder has sought for execution of the arbitral award dated 25th February 2015. In the said execution application the award holder has filed an application wherein the following prayers have been asked for in brief :
a) Warrant of Arrest be issued against the Judgment debtors;
b) Judgment Debtors be detained in civil prison;
c) Jurisdictional Superintendent of Police and officer-in-charge of the concerned police station be directed to execute the warrant of arrest;
Please note that the matter will appear on 17th February 2023 when you should be present in Court or be duly represented by your respective advocates.
SINHA AND COMPANY
ADVOCATES
5, KIRAN SHANKAR ROY ROAD
KOLKATA – 700001.
Contact: +9133-2210-1617/1625

Gang of auto-lifters busted

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Rawatpur police busted a gang of auto-lifters and arrested six persons during vehicle checking drive carried out at namak factory chauraha on Wednesday night. The police recovered a Brezza, five number plates of stolen cars, two keys, one illicit countrymade pistol with a cartridge, four mobile phones, body parts of Zen car, equipment used in stealing four-wheelers, two Aadhar cards, one driving licence and Rs 7,145 cash from the accused. They were identified as Anmol Katiyar (29) of Saraimira, Kotwali, Kannauj, Pravin Katiyar alias Bharat Kaliya (25) of Dalelpurwa, Bilhaur, Vijay alias Nanhe (24) of Dalelpur, Bilhaur, Rahul (27) of Balpurwa, Thathia, Kannauj, Mukesh Katiyar alias Sumit Katiyar of 102/3 Shivam Colony, Ismailpur Extension, Amar Nagar, Faridabad (Haryana) presently living in Karome village, Sheoli (Kanpur Dehat) and Tajdar Husain (35) of Makanpur, Bilhaur. SHO Sanjay Shukla said accused Anmol, Pravin and Vijay alias Nanhe used to travel in their Brezza at night in search of old cars in running condition. After Sumit and Rahul unlocked them these stolen cars were sold to Tajdar Husain for dismantling them and selling their parts out of Kanpur. Accused Pravin Katiyar alias Bharat Kaliya



A gang of auto-lifters busted by Rawatpur police

used to provide security to gang members with the help of his illicit country-made pistol. All the accused had a long criminal history and were found involved in dozens of cases lodged against them at different police stations in the past, he said.

Meanwhile, Sachendi police have arrested father-son duo involved in drug smuggling near BRL factory, near service lane, Chakarpur, on early Thursday morning and recovered 8.963 kg illicit charas from them. The recovered drugs were smuggled from Motihari (Bihar) for sale in the city. The accused were identified as Irshad Ahmad (58) and his son Faizan Ahmad of 92/11, Hiranman Ka Purwa,

Beconganj, Kanpur.

BOY DIES WHILE PLAYING CRICKET: An adolescent boy died while playing cricket in a ground in Bilhaur police station area on Wednesday afternoon. While running to score runs he suddenly fell unconscious on the floor. His kin immediately took him to the community health centre (CHC) where he was declared dead by the doctors. Dr Ganesh Prasad of CHC suspected that Anuj may have died of heart attack. His kin refused to get autopsy conducted and performed the funeral in the evening. Amit Kumar Pandey of Triveniganj Bazar is employed in a seed agency. His family consisted of wife Sunita and sons Sumit besides

Anuj (16) who was a student of class X at a nearby school. Amit said on Wednesday noon Anuj had gone to play cricket with friends at the Bilhaur Inter College ground. According to friends, when Anuj was running to score run he suddenly fell unconscious on the floor. On the information of his friends, his kin rushed to spot and took Anuj to a private hospital. From there they took him to the CHC where he was declared dead by the doctors. SHO Kamal Singh said he was aware of Anuj's death. Kin refused to get autopsy conducted and took body to home from CHC. Thereafter the funeral was performed at the Nanamau ghat in the evening.

Kanpur Development Authority implementing novel technique

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) has been selected for the implementation of novel technique of blockchain-based trading portal for capturing TDR (transferable development rights) status in the state. Among the seven states shortlisted for the best practices by the Union Ministry for Finance and Economic Affairs, KDA has been adjudged the first organisation in Uttar Pradesh to introduce the novel work of blockchain-based trading portal. The other six states selected for best practices were Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh,

Delhi, Odisha, Kerala and Bihar. For discussion on the best practices, KDA Vice-Chairman Arvind Singh was invited to highlight the merits of this novel work before the chief secretary, in presence of the principal secretary (Housing & Urban Planning), UP government, a few days ago.

He was accompanied by the KDA's Additional Secretary Dr Gudakesh Sharma, Prof Rajan Mishra and Tanima Hazra of IIT Kanpur who also took part in the discussion. During the discussion V-C Arvind Singh informed that after implementation of the scheme a certificate will be

issued to small farmers owning a land of public utility. According to their convenience, they can also transfer the land to any other person at prescribed prices or instead buy FAR (Floor Area Ratio) from the Authority for another land. The sale-purchase of the land would be like a share market transaction. The technology would prove to be a milestone in future, he said. The principal secretary (Housing & Urban Planning), UP government, while appreciating the efforts of KDA has issued a notification stating that such a technology be implemented by all the development authorities of the state.



The Union Bank of India organised a loan distribution camp at Unnao on Thursday where around Rs 4.50 crore was distributed.

Registration camps to be conducted

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Development Officer (DDO) RK Chaudhary informed that Commandant Regional Training Centre, Uttar Pradesh, has directed that in a collaboration with Indian Security Efficiency Council, New Delhi and SIS, registration camps will be conducted in blocks of the district. He said the objective was to identify eligible unemployed candidates and provide them proper skill training and then they be given employment in the rural areas. He said thus all the officials concerned were directed to ensure that proper hype be created and then camps be held in all the blocks of the district. He said the list of dates for the camp in different districts has already been issued and thus the camps need to be held as per the directive.

He said this special training was aimed at imparting skill-based training to rural youth on agri-based vocational areas in agriculture and allied areas to promote employment in rural areas and for creation of skilled manpower to perform farm and non-farm operations.

He said rural youth often do not get the employment they aspire for and were either underemployed or in jobs not to their liking. He said in such situations they usually left their jobs and returned to their villages, unemployed or move to agriculture which offered only seasonal employment.

Chaudhary said skill development then became essential as it focused on enabling the youth with employable skills driven by industry needs. He said each skill training programme will continue for 3-4 months. He said the comprehensive education provided helped them secure entry level jobs comfortably in a salary band of Rs 8000-10,000 which can go up to Rs 12,000. He said this level of income enabled the entire household to emerge from poverty. He said a training assessment study was done to understand aspirations of youth and opportunities for employment in the region. He said finding optimal infrastructure to conduct trainings can also be challenging at times in rural regions. He advised the youth to avail themselves of the benefit provided by the government.

Thalassemia awareness camp organised

PNS ■ KANPUR

India had a huge burden with an estimated 1,00,000 patients with thalassemia but few among them were optimally managed and allogeneic stem cell transplant was unaffordable for majority of families. A feasible option for control was to promote education and awareness programmes, intensify screening in all states with micromapping to assess the true burden and develop adequate facilities for genetic counselling and prenatal diagnosis in public sector institutions. Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that affected body's ability to produce haemoglobin and healthy red blood cells the two types included alpha and beta thalassemia.

This was stated by Dr Nupur Agarwal while addressing thalassemia awareness camp organised by Rotary Club of Kanpur Vishal on Thursday. She said gene mutations that caused thalassemia arose in humanity as partial protections against malaria and thus thalassemia affected people who had ancestral links to parts of the world where malaria was prevalent, especially India.

She said haemoglobin consisted of four protein chains, two alpha globin chains and two beta globin chains and each chain — both alpha and beta — contained genetic information or genes passed down parents.

Dr Agarwal said one defective

or missing alpha gene meant that one won't experience symptoms and another name for this condition was alpha thalassemia minima. She said the two defective or missing alpha genes meant that if one experienced symptoms, they'll likely be mild and another name was alpha thalassemia minor. She said three defective or missing alpha genes means that you'll experience moderate to severe symptoms and it was known as Haemoglobin H (Hb H) disease.

She said the four major health problems faced were growth problems, delayed puberty, bone abnormalities, such as osteoporosis, and an enlarged spleen. She said other symptoms were poor appetite, pale or yellowish skin (jaundice), urine that was dark or tea coloured and irregular bone structure on face. She said moderate and severe thalassemia were often diagnosed in childhood because symptoms usually appear within the first two years of child's life. She said studies of iron will indicate whether the cause of anaemia was an iron deficiency or thalassemia. She said inheritance pattern both alpha and beta-thalassemia were generally inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern and males and females were affected equally by thalassemia as it does not involve the sex chromosome.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Prabhat Mathur. A large number of parents took part in the camp.

Massive tree plantation drive at CSAUA&T

PNS ■ KANPUR

A massive tree plantation drive was carried out at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) on Thursday where senior students along with freshers of the Agriculture Business Management Department planted fruit and ornamental trees of various kinds all over the campus. Under the drive each student of the department was made to plant fruit or ornamental trees on the campus. The students enthusiastically took part in the drive and later took oath to ensure that such drives every month on the campus.

Head of department Dr Vijay Kumar Yadav addressing the students said the rapid technological advancement had increased pressure on our environment. He said plantation drives were a practical and effective way of engaging students early and making them aware of challenges they will have to address in order to conserve the environment for future generations.



Students of CSAUA&T taking part in a massive tree plantation drive on the campus on Thursday.

He said the farm universities need to be a role model for others as they were strongly linked to soil and plants and benefitted the masses in various ways.

He said trees promote a strong economy and can provide numerous

resources to people that needed them.

He said urban areas were getting hotter and thus trees can reduce urban temperatures. He said they provided habitat and food for animals. He said trees were valuable green infrastructure to manage

stormwater as well. He added trees had umpteen benefits to everything on earth and planting a tree not only benefited those who lived locally around it but to the whole population such as by removing carbon from the atmosphere. He said people who live near trees experienced many benefits such as improvement in their quality of life. He said trees had a positive impact on mental health by reducing stress and encouraging outdoor activities. Dr Yadav said trees were among the irreplaceable resources on the planet that provided oxygen.

He said through a process called photosynthesis trees take in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen as a by-product. He said creatures on earth cannot survive without oxygen and by planting more trees we are creating more oxygen to breathe and sustain our lives. He said apart from all this trees absorbed odours and other harmful gases like ammonia, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and ozone and filter out dust and particulates from air by trapping them in leaves and barks.

Falak from Prayagraj selected for World Cup under-19 team

Prayagraj (PNS): Setting an example for the youths of her age, 18-year old Falak, daughter of a peon, has shown as to when one is determined, dearth of money or the facilities cannot act a stumbling block. Making the city proud, this 18-year old girl has been selected for the Indian under 19 women's world cup Cricket team, starting from January 2023 in South Africa. Falak Naz, right arm fast bowler and batsman, also becomes the first girl from the city to be selected for the Indian team and that too which would be playing the Women World Cup (under 19) is the perfect icing on the cake.

But the journey from a 13-year old girl to making her debut in the World Cup was not a smooth sail for the young Falak. "My father

works as a peon in a private school and we live in a makeshift arrangement on a small piece of land which is not ours. Despite facing acute shortage of money, my father Naseer Ahamad and mother Noori Jinnat did what was best for me and those hardships made me what I am today," said Falak while talking to reporters on her arrival in the Sangam city after playing in the India 11 in the recently concluded T-20 series against New Zealand. Coached by Ajay Yadav, she made her debut this year in Visakhapatnam in the four-nation series and performed well. "Be it my poor monetary condition or the orthodox views of some of the relatives, nothing stopped me from supporting my daughter and fulfilling her dreams", said Naseer, her father.

MGKV students union poll on Jan 17

PNS ■ VARANASI

The election for the four posts of students union and seven faculty representatives of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth (MGKV) will be conducted on January 17.

The administration of MGKV has issued notification for the election of students union and as per the notification, the election process would begin with the submission of nomination papers on January 7, the election officer Prof Pitambar Das informed, adding that the election for the four posts of president, vice-president, general secretary & library secretary and representatives of seven facilities would be conducted on January 17. The counting will be held after the voting and the result would also be declared the same day. The detailed information

about the election will be announced later, he informed further.

The students doing graduation and want to contest the election should be in the age group between 17 and 22 years, while the students in post graduation and doing research should not be above the age of 24 and 28 respectively, the election officer informed, adding that the students interested in contesting election should have 75 per cent attendance in the classes. After the issuance of notification for the election of the students by the varsity administration, the students' leaders started their campaigning in the premises of the university. They started holding individual talks with the students to woo them in their favour but most of the students were seen not interested in talking about the election.

6 DAV students to get gold medals

Varanasi (PNS): As many as six students of DAV PG College will get gold medals in the 102nd convocation ceremony to be held at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) soon. Surendra Gupta who passed MA in History in 2020 will get Prof Heeralal Singh Memorial Gold Medal and BHU Medal while for the year 2021, Amit Kumar, a student of MA History of DAV itself, will be awarded gold medal while for year 2022 Suraj Madheshiya, a student of MA (History) will also receive Prof Heeralal Singh Memorial Gold Medal and BHU Medal.

Besides, Shreya Raj, a student of MA (Political Science) session 2021, will be awarded five gold medals. She will be awarded Dr Karan Singh Gold Medal, Narsinghgarh Maharaja Bhanu Prakash Singh and Maharani Laxmi Kumari Gold Medal, Suryamukhi Devi Gold Medal, Ramashankar Shukla Gold Medal and BHU Medal.

Mayor's poll: Nomination papers to be submitted in ADM (Admn) court

PNS ■ VARANASI

Though the State Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for the election of Mayor but despite this, the district administration has identified the court of Additional District Magistrate (ADM-Administration) as the place to submit the nomination papers for this prestigious post of urban local body. The district administration has started preparations for the forthcoming election of urban local body and in this order, it has identified the court of ADM-Administration in the Collectorate premises here to submit the nomination papers for the mayoral post of Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC), the District Magistrate/District Electoral Officer (DM/DEO) S Rajalingam informed, adding that the counting

would take place at Pahadia Mandi. Though, the Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for this prestigious post of the urban local body.

The nomination of the candidates of councilors for the wards of Trans-Varuna Zone of VMC will be held in the office of Trans-Varuna Zone in Nadesar and the nomination of the wards of Kotwali Zone will be held in Town Hall in Maidagin, while the nomination of Adampur Zone will be held in the office of Adampur Zone in Kajjakupura, the DM/DEO informed. Similarly, the candidates of councilors of wards of Dashashwamedh Zone will be held in the office of Dashashwamedh Zone in Benia Bagh and the nomination of the wards of Bhelupur Zone will be held in the office of Bhelupur Zone in Durgakund.

‘Osteoporosis a silent killer’

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Osteoporosis is a silent killer that affects both men and women, said Dr. Rupesh Srivastava - Associate Prof., Department of Biotechnology, AIIMS, New Delhi. According to the AIIMS doctor, one in every five men and one in every three women is suffering from osteoporosis disease.

"Today we usually see people talking about COVID-19, Cancer, Malaria and Dengue. Very few are concerned about osteoporosis - a silent killer. There is very little research on this subject," said Dr. Srivastava while speaking at the special session organised by the Research Centre of Nehru Gram Bharati (Deemed to be University) on "Bone Immunology". Dr. Srivastava said that a case of bone fracture is reported every 30 seconds globally and the numbers are more worrying in terms of India.

IIT-K alumnus, wife contribute ₹2 cr

PNS ■ KANPUR

IIT Kanpur alumnus Ajay Dubey and his wife Rooma Dubey contributed US \$ 2,50,000 (Rs 2 crore) for seeding health technology innovations. An MoU was signed between Prof Abhay Karandikar, Director, IIT Kanpur, and Ajay Dubey on December 6 at IIT Kanpur. The Dubey couple generously contributed towards instituting the 'Rooma & Ajay Dubey Healthcare Innovation & Ideation Programme' (HII Programme) with an aim to fund and nurture innovations in health technology and build an ecosystem to nurture startups founded by students in the HealthTech domain.

The programme will expose students to various problem statements and motivate them to come up with technology solutions and develop technological ideas for betterment of the healthcare system. Under the umbrella of Startup Incubation & Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur,



Prof Amitabha Bandyopadhyay, Prof Abhay Karandikar, Ajay Dubey and Prof Kandeshe Balani during the MoU signing function at IIT-K.

students will get funding and networking opportunities to fast-track their growth and build a culture of entrepreneurship.

Prof Karandikar said, "Health-tech innovations under the R&D ecosystem of IIT Kanpur have grown manifold in last few years. We also have a growing number of incubated startups working in healthcare. On behalf of the institute, I gratefully acknowledge Ajay Dubey and Rooma Dubey's contribution towards supporting more robust tech-

nological advancements in healthcare to make India self-reliant. This generous endeavour would surely encourage more young people to develop affordable technologies for India's health-tech sector."

After signing the MoU, Ajay Dubey said, "The aim of instituting HII programme is to find solutions that have been designed, developed and manufactured in India. Affordable healthcare is already a huge challenge. The only way forward is for India to create its own solutions,

designing, developing and innovating here to come out with equipment, processes that work in India and at a scale that we need it."

Dean of Resources and Alumni Relations, Prof Kantesh Balani said, "IIT Kanpur extends sincere gratitude to Ajay Dubey and Rooma Dubey for their generous contribution. This HII programme through this MoU signing will encourage young student innovators of tomorrow to make an evident impact in the domain of HealthTech."

Ajay Dubey, a 1980 graduate student of the Chemical Engineering department at IIT Kanpur, had over 30 years of industry experience. He has served as the vice-president at Infosys and head of Infosys Pune Development Center. He has also served as the COO of Persistent Systems and as an Angel Investor at Uniken. Dubey had also contributed towards instituting scholarships for under and post graduate students at IIT Kanpur.

BJP workers celebrate party's win in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

It was a rare election time when the results of different assemblies, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and by-polls have brought jubilations among the camps of various parties. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) celebrated the thumping victory of the party in Gujarat, once again, its rival Congress, forgetting its debacle in Gujarat, was also seen jubilant over the party's return to power in Himachal Pradesh. Samajwadi Party (SP) workers were also happy over the win of party candidate Dimple Yadav in Mainpuri Lok Sabha by-election which had fallen vacant with the demise of party's founder Mulayam Singh Yadav. Though the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) could not perform well in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh despite its tall claims, its local workers were in jubilation with the result of MCD elections.

Though the BJP's official celebration programme has yet not been declared, some party's workers came on the roads to express their happiness over the party's thumping victory in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. A group of party workers led by district secretary Shivanand Rai reached near Circuit House carrying party's flags and expressed their happiness. They also distributed sweets among the party workers. Similarly, some Congress workers expressed happiness over the party's victory in Himachal Pradesh by distributing sweets among the people.

The SP workers were very jubilant over the party's prestigious win over Mainpuri by-polls where party chief and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav worked hard to ensure win of his wife Dimple Yadav. It was a traditional stronghold seat of SP which had fallen vacant with the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav. As soon as the SP candidate started



BJP workers distributing sweets among each other in Varanasi on Thursday over party's win in Gujarat.

Pioneer



SP workers celebrating party's win in Mainpuri in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

establishing a good lead over her opponent and BJP candidate, the party workers assembled at the party's Orderly Bazar office where former city chief Vishnu Sharma and many others were also present. The SP workers used crackers and fireworks and distributed sweets among the party workers. They were also happy over the party's good performance in some assembly by-polls in the state including one of Rampur district.

Reacting on party's win in Mainpuri by-poll, Vishnu Sharma said that that the BJP had misused its government machinery to influence the elections but the SP did well in all the places including Mainpuri, Khatauli and Rampur. He said that by supporting the SP, the voters of Mainpuri have also paid tributes to the party's founder president. He said that it has now become clear from Mainpuri's resounding victory

that BJP's false unrestrained words and politics of hatred in the name of castes and religion would not work long. Senior leaders like Vijay Jaiswal, Dilip Kashyap, Shamim Ansari, Ajay Chaudhary, Deepchand Gupta, Gopal Pandey, Jiyalal Rajbhar, Sanjay Pehalwan, Rajkumar Yadav and many others were also present.

Meanwhile, AAP workers continued their celebrations over the party's historic victory in the MCD elections. The party workers said that it was a victory of good over evil. Amidst the beat of dhols and nagaras, the party workers led by the party's co-incharge of Gangapur Nagar Panchayat Manoj Kumar.

They also took out the party's victory procession there and distributed sweets among the people. The party's victory in Delhi has inspired the party workers to do well in the forthcoming civic elections in state, especially in Varanasi district where apart from Gangapur Nagar Panchayat, Varanasi Nagar Nigam and Ramnagar Nagar Palika will also go to the polls.

Call to work in official language

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A meeting of the Regional Official Language Implementation Committee was organized at North Central Railway Headquarters under the chairmanship of General Manager Satish Kumar. Addressing all the officers present in the meeting, Kumar said that it is our constitutional, national and moral responsibility to execute official work in official language.

Therefore, work should be done with full commitment in all the items of official language implementation and according to the official language policy and instructions of the government, continuous efforts should be made to increase the use of Hindi and to fulfill the set targets.

Kumar said that new changes are constantly taking place in our functioning. We have to maintain the progress of the official language while imbibing these changes and ensure its use and dissemination in all our works. Emphasizing this, he said that in addition to the routine works, original and innovative efforts are also the biggest need of the hour for the use and dissemination of the official language, so that with a new energy, we speed up the use of Hindi in our official work. For this purpose, training programmes related to the use of Hindi in new systems and computer applications should be included in the training programs run at all levels, along with the traditional subjects of the official language, and from the point of view of uniformity, Unicode Only font should be used.

The GM, NCR said that the provisions of the Official



General Manager of North Central Railway holding a meeting with officials concerned at its headquarters.

Languages Act, especially Section 3(3), the progress achieved in the use of Hindi or Hindi-English bilingual form in all types of correspondence, notes, dictation, inspection reports etc. should be maintained and Efforts should be made to meet the expected target. Giving special emphasis on this, Kumar instructed all concerned member officers that all orders and guidelines related to safety and rail operations should be issued in Hindi and these should be simple, easy and simple.

Intelligible language should be used, as well as all station operation rules and gate operation instructions and amendments to these should be made in Hindi-English bilingual. He instructed all officers to make their inspection reports in Hindi, so that the employees could understand them properly and ensure their proper

compliance. All notices, time table, fare list, electronic display boards etc. at stations should compulsorily use both Hindi and English languages and it should be ensured in advance that such notices are put up for the convenience and information of rail passengers and users. All the new electronic display boards, signages, information boards etc. should have the facility of displaying information in both Hindi and English languages. At the beginning of the meeting, General Manager Satish Kumar released the commercial department's special issue of the headquarters' quarterly official language magazine 'Rail Sangam'. At the beginning of the meeting, Chief Official Language Officer and Principal Chief Commercial Manager S.K. in informing all the members of the committee about the work done to increase the use

of official language, Singh said that since the last meeting, many Hindi workshops were organized and practical training was also given to the employees to do more and more work in Hindi. In the tradition of organizing programs of literary, cultural and folk genres, a poetry symposium was organized at Wagon Repair Factory, Jhansi. Bundeli folk song Alha singing program was organized by famous artists in the headquarters. As per the instructions of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee, with the aim of ensuring the use and dissemination of official language Hindi, an exhibition of the work being done in the official language in the departments and divisions in the headquarters was organized every month and the work done in official language was reviewed.

Drone cameras to review Magh Mela preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Preparations for Magh Mela 2022-23 have been intensified. It has been decided to review the quality and progress of preparations with drone cameras. On Thursday, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Amrit Abhijat reviewed the preparations being done by the fair administration through video conferencing.

During the review meeting, he instructed not to compromise on the quality of the material being used in the fair and the work being done. Also, he ordered to monitor the work of vendors at the magistrate level.

Principal Secretary Urban Development has given a December 20 deadline to the officers in the review meeting. After this there will be a review of the work done. He asked to prepare a matrix for allotment of land, so that the possibility of conflict between organisations could be reduced. Apart from this, instructions have been given to verify the various works being done in the mela area through drones. Under

which every 2 to 3 days how much progress has been made in the works can be ascertained.

In order to make the Mela area polythene free, instructions have been given to promote Pattal as an alternative. Amrit Abhijat also said that if people are not given the option, it will not be possible to make the Mela polythene free. He also emphasized on conducting surveys of Magh Mela area for Swachh Bharat Award under Swachh Bharat Mission, which would be a unique initiative in itself.

In the meeting, the Mela administration prepared to make an attractive vending zone. There will be uniformity across all vendors. Apart from this, a 500-bed dormitory will be ready. Even after the Magh Mela is over, arrangements for toilets and electricity will be made there. It was also told about this.

NBPGR, SHUATS sign MoU: Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), Prayagraj has been making unprecedented contribution in the field of agricul-

tural education, research and extension since last 112 years. The farmers of the state and the country are getting the benefit of the new techniques and innovations in agriculture developed by SHUATS scientists.

ICAR's National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) and SHUATS signed an MoU to exchange germplasm of different crops, DNA fingerprinting of varieties developed by SHUATS and promote joint research for the welfare of farmers.

SHUATS scientists under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Rajendra B Lal, has done conservation of seeds of major crops in the last two decades. Improved varieties of wheat, paddy, maize and linseed developed by SHUATS are becoming popular.

Director Research Dr. Shailesh Markar said that the old indigenous seeds have good quality, whose protection is very important so that they can face any future calamity. Traditional farming has been done in the Vindhyachal region for the last many years, in which native seeds have been

used by the farmers. Keeping in view the availability of indigenous seeds of various crops in this region, the collection, characterization, purification, multiplication of seeds of 200 indigenous varieties has been done by Director Research Dr. Shailesh Markar and his colleagues in the last 5 years and their germplasm has been preserved in the office of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi.

On the initiative of the Head of Department GPB Dr. Vaidurya Pratap Shahi, Director NBPGR Dr. Gyanendra Pratap Singh visited SHUATS and got information about the research done by SHUATS and conservation of traditional seeds. Overwhelmed by the efforts made by SHUATS for the welfare of farmers, Dr. Gyanendra Pratap Singh signed MoU between SHUATS and NBPGR so that exchange of germplasm of various crops between the two institutes, DNA of varieties developed by SHUATS fingerprinting and joint research can be promoted.

Over 37K degrees to be awarded at BHU convocation tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) will award over 37,000 degrees to the students during its 102nd convocation scheduled to be held at Swatantrata Bhawan here on December 10. Nikesh Arora, CEO, Palo Alto Networks will deliver the convocation address. Addressing a press conference at the Committee Room No 1 of the Central Office here on Thursday, Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain said the university fraternity is excited and delighted for the convocation which is being organised after a gap of almost three years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said that the university would be awarding degrees to the students who passed their respective programmes in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.



V-C Prof Sudhir K. Jain addressing a press conference at BHU in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

"BHU is a very unique institution and is known for the special bond it has with its students and alumni. The convocation is an opportunity to rediscover, recollect and further strengthen this bond," said Prof Jain, adding that at BHU, we not only equip students with theoretical and professional knowledge to excel in their careers but also inculcate in

them human values, ethos and life skills that transform them into good human beings and ready to be change makers.

Prof Jain said that the university is committed to create new opportunities for students to enable them to get ready for the future challenges. He listed several new initiatives taken by the university during the course of the past one year. Prof

Jain informed that a total of 91 students would be presented various medals from dais at the main function. These include Chancellor's medals, Late Maharaja Vibhuti Narayan Singh Gold Medal and BHU medals.

He said that the students and alumni are the most important stakeholders for any educational institution. He added that BHU is uniquely placed when it comes to the strength and diversity of its alumni. He called upon the students getting degrees in convocation 2022 to join the efforts of taking the institution forward.

The chief guest Nikesh Arora is also an alumnus who obtained his Bachelor's degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering (1985 - 1989) from Institute of Technology, BHU (which is now IIT-BHU).

Details of all UP Board schools available online

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Now, all information regarding around 28,000 government-run, government-aided and unaided schools recognised by UP Board in the state is just a click away.

Following the instructions of the state government, webpages of these schools have been uploaded under the link 'Pehchan' at the official website of the board, <https://upmsp.edu.in>. "The board working under the Madhyamik Vidyalaya Navinikaran Mission (Secondary Schools Renovation Mission) has now uploaded webpages of these schools under the link 'Pehchan' on its official website," said secretary, UP Board, Divyakant Shukla.

Among different benefits, the initiative would help people to know about the details of the schools of their area so that they can make their choices

regarding admission of their wards. The work of making school webpages available was part of the Chief Minister's 100-day action plan.

Officials said on the left side of the homepage of the official website of UP Board, a link has been given with the name "Pehchan". On clicking, the new page asks for district, tehsil, block and type of school and then click on the option "school", names of all schools matching the sought criterion gets displayed and on selecting any one of them, the webpage containing detailed information about the school along with its photo gets displayed.

The information includes the year the school was granted recognition by UP Board, Google map of the school, its distance from district headquarters, available facilities, number of enrolled students and teachers, past five years board exam statistics, past 10

years results and registration graph, school's achievements, option for alumni to get registered as well as information about important infrastructure facilities, important hyperlinks etc too have been made available.

The special thing is that the "Pehchan report card" of each school made available on the portal. In this, along with the ranking of the school at the state and district level, rating out of seven stars, grading of the school on a six-point chart, etc too have been given.

RAGINI ENTHRALS AUDIENCE WITH BHARAT NATYAM: The society for the promotion of Indian classical music and culture among youngsters also well-known as SPIC MACAY brought Ragini Chandrashekhra and her craft of Bharatanatyam dance on the campus of DPS Prayagraj on Thursday.

Chandrashekhra is a recipient of the highly prestigious Ustaad

Bismillah Khan Yuva Puruskar and also a trainer at 'Kalangan Centre for Classical Arts, New Delhi.

The programme commenced with the welcome of the artist Ragini Chandrashekhra, followed by the lamp lighting in the benign presence of state co-ordinator of SPIC MACAY Madhu Shukla, the school President Ms. Sonu Singh, Principal Dr. Sujata Singh, teachers, parents, students, and other staff members.

After this Chndrashekhra enlightened the audience on the Mudras of Bharatanatyam and gave a mesmerizing performance.

The program came to its closure with the Principal's address acknowledging the importance of the installation of art and culture amongst the youth.

It was indeed an incredible and enriching experience for the entire DPS family.

Tamil professionals offer prayers at KV temple

VARANASI (PNS): A 'professional group' from Tamil Nadu which arrived at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) railway station during the late night hours to attend the ongoing month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS), offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple here on Thursday. The Tamil-speaking were welcomed when they reached Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham as per the tradition by showering petals amid playing of damrus. They were also welcomed with angavastram. The devotees offered sacred Gangajol to Baba. Later, the devotees reached Mandir Chowk where they presented their folk dances and songs in Baba Darbar. Tamil-speaking visitors danced and sang to a rhythm without

any instruments, as a large number of other devotees gathered there to watch the event. The half-an-hour performance drew a lot of applause. Then they reached the banks of the Ganga ghats and offered prayers to Maa Ganga. They also visited Maa Vishalakshi and Maa Annapurna temples and offered prayers there and the visitors reached Annapurna Bhavan to receive Baba's prasad. Earlier, at Amphitheatre pandal in Banaras Hindu University (BHU), a group of talented guest artists from Tamil Nadu participated in the cultural evening organised by the North Central Zone Cultural Centre (Prayagraj) and South Zone Cultural Centre and union ministries of Culture and

Education. The cultural evening started with the presentation of sitar by Anjali Sharma and Shobhit Nahar of the Music department of Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), BHU, enthraling the audience. The second presentation of the programme was given by Prof Richa and her group in which they presented Sohar and Bhajan through folk songs. The third presentation was of local artist Rajshree who also presented a folk song. It was followed by the presentation by EN Murthy and his wife Chitra Murthy based on the story of Arunagirinathar and Thiruppugazh, the famous song of South India. Then Karthikeyan from Tamil Nadu mesmerised the audience by playing Raga Sindhu Bhairavi

on nadaswaram and Mahatma Gandhi's favorite bhajan 'Vaishnav Jan...'. The sixth presentation was of folk music from Tamil Nadu by Rajeev Gandhi Mannargudi and group, in which the intensity of rhythm was displayed. It was followed by Tamil Nadu's folk drama Therukoothu which was presented by Partibha and group and it was based on the story of Amba Ambika Ambalika, the daughter of Kahirar, part of the Mahabharata legend, who was brought to life on stage. In the eighth presentation, folk dance of Tamil Nadu Thappattam and Shilabattam were performed by J Chandru and group followed by dummy horse bull and peacock dance by M Gurumurthy and group.

Every problem has a solution

Our attempts to resolve any number of socio-economic and political problems have to focus on behavioural changes and social engineering



Any effective reform in the electoral process has to take into account many factors including legal and legislative ones. The steps are discussed so as to bring a holistic change with an inclusive approach. Any change in the behavioural aspect of people solicits an endeavour for awareness building. Art 324 (1) of the constitution India vests the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections in the Election Commission of India. As such ECI is the most important constitutional body having Superintendence, direction and control over the election process. This vesting of such large power also generates responsibility for ECI for smooth conduct of free and fair elections.

As a first step, ECI should also try to create awareness among people delineating the role(voting) power of citizens to choose their representatives. Frequent publicity over print and visual media about dos and don'ts for the voters would create some awareness Collectors as the agents of ECI also may be directed to carry and convey the voice and messages of the Commission in the nook and corner of the districts and also in the interior pockets.

The vulnerable groups (tribals etc.) should be guarded heavily against exploitation and intimidation. Frequent visits to these areas, especially the day/night before the election would foil the prank of the unethical elements to win by the force of money. Any violation of code of conduct in case of the candidates or followers should warrant disqualification. District and police administration's alertness, swiftness and sincerity can nip the criminal activities in the bud. The erring and non-performing district administration officials should be taken to task by the ECI. A strong ECI, effective district administration and strong police force can make the process smooth.

The fact that about one third of the population lives below the poverty line, makes the voters vulnerable and prone to the influence of money for unethical voting.

The first and foremost task for the government should be eradication of poverty. But it is not plausible to eradicate poverty overnight. But if abject poverty conditions are addressed properly, a major task would be accomplished. The distribution of freebies with taxpayers money (in my opinion) be stopped forthwith and the party indulging in such activities may be severely dealt with.

In any democratic set up criminality has no role to play as being anathematic. Hon'ble Apex Court has taken a very laudable step in regard to criminalization of politics – disqualifying a candidate on conviction. Revealing criminal antecedents at the time of filing nomination and disqualification on conviction have set the ball rolling. A strict vigil and strong implementation of stringent law would silence criminality.

Cleavage based politics – politics utilizing the divisive factors like caste, religion, language, gender and tradition, etc. should be discouraged strongly. Though it is easier said and done and the society is divided on many diverse points yet any beginning and approach to minimize would go a long way to

purify the process. Other spatial points should be cogitated and analyzed by ECI to introduce fairness into the process.

Do we need legislation for bringing up laws to ensure free and fair elections? Generally deterrent law has three major components such as severity (severe degree of punishment), Certainty (punishment follows as a certainty wherever there is occurrence of a criminal act) and Celerity (swiftness is essential). Crime would be deterred if punishment is awarded quickly and rapidly. In the opinion of Hobbes, people are driven due to their self interest and further he stressed the importance of deterrence to make the people law abiding Cesare Beccaria stated that crime and punishment should both have a proportional deterring and deterrence value.

These three components not only attract people's faith and confidence in the system but are also most effective in electoral process and dynamics. As any strong prophylactic or curative medicine has side effects, any harsh law runs the risk of abuse. The most terrifying factor for a politician is disqualification and ban on contesting elections. If the deterrent law would address this entailing disqualification then the success rate would still be higher and so it would deter other candidates from venturing into abuse of money power and criminality.

Strict implementation and prompt investigation and certainty of the punishment for the unscrupulous elements can bring back everything on a fair path. Electoral malpractices (Abuse of money power, intimidation of voters, post poll violence, offer of freebies, criminal use of caste card etc) should be associated with disqualification, fines and other penal provisions and that would go a long way for introducing fresh air into the system.

The role of bureaucracy is very important here. Impartiality, effectiveness, sincerity and honesty should be maintained at any cost under strict vigil of Election Commission of India. As stated previously, it is a herculean task. But search for solution for every difficult task should start at the earliest and sincerity and it can achieve the most complicated task.

(The author is a superannuated senior IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)

AS A FIRST STEP, ECI SHOULD ALSO TRY TO CREATE AWARENESS AMONG PEOPLE DELINEATING THE VOTING POWER OF CITIZENS TO CHOOSE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES



PICTALK



Devotees cover the Yamuna with sarees during the Chunari Manorath festival, in Mathura

PTI

Pak army chief

Gen Asim Munir, who is the new Army chief of Pakistan, has to battle its falling credibility

A new army chief has taken over from General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The new army chief is General Asim Munir. In Pakistan popularity of army Generals is as important as the popularity of politicians in their careers. General Qamar Javed Bajwa, had become quite unpopular during his last months in office. The reason of course is the role he played in the ouster of the former prime minister of Pakistan Imran Khan. Imran had fallen off from the General and criticized him for orchestrating his ouster through a no-confidence vote in April on the behest of foreign powers. After the assassination bid on Imran Khan People turned rather sympathetic to the former Pakistan captain and little skeptic of General Bajwa who had overshot his tenure several times and continued in the office for the power he wielded in the army and the political circles of the country. However, it going to be quite a challenging job for General Munir. One of the biggest challenges he faces is the credibility of the army and his position.

After the ouster of Imran Khan, the Pakistan army is being seen as bad boys who dance to the tunes of Uncle Sam for all the monetary support they get from him. Besides, Imran has played his victim card rather well and painted the army as the culprit for his ouster. His scathing remarks have damaged the reputation of the army in a big way. Genberal Munir must restore credibility to the army which has taken major popularity hit from Khan's large and growing support base. Another major task he has at hand is to bring some semblance of political order to the country. The present government in place right now is courtesy Pakistan army but it faces a huge trust deficit. General Munir would have to opt for early elections before he is also branded as an anti-democratic person happy to have a proxy army rule. But before that, he will have to devise a formula that both the government and Imran Khan can agree upon. This is not going to be easy as Imran Khan has emerged stronger and is in no mood to give concessions to the present government. Besides what makes his task even more daunting is that he doesn't have a good rapport with Khan who fired Munir as Pakistan's spy chief. The given scenario leaves not many choices for the new General and how he maneuvers would decide the future of Pakistan.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DOWNSIDE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Sir — Ever since the outbreak of the Coronavirus three years ago, while the hygiene measures remained the same as for previous pandemics, the social distancing norms, in particular, made the human experience unique. Notwithstanding the pandemic, social distancing presents the dangers of increasing social desertion, growing impersonality and individualism, and the loss of a sense of society as a whole. It prevents people from effectively socializing, which is a fundamental human need. When the pandemic was at its peak, social distancing measures had created a negative and psychological fear in one's mind to suspect that others were potential carriers of the deadly virus.

It made us worry that this cognitive effect could potentially remain in our society even after the disintegration of the virus. Whether at workplaces, in restaurants, or public spaces, our society has long been characterized by physical interactions between people. As we navigate through life, much of what fulfills us are the bonds we create with people, and more often than not, those bonds materialize through physical interactions. The Covid-19 pandemic is not intensely active these days, and if we still do not find ways to maintain physical and emotional connections in any kind of a situation, sadly it will make it more difficult for us to build and strengthen social bonds, and such an atmosphere apprehensively may lead to an unfortunate future for our society.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

The raging border dispute



In the open war of border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka, activists of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction on Tuesday sprayed black and orange paints on Karnataka state transport buses in the Swargate area of Pune city and wrote "Jai Maharashtra" on these buses. A local leader of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) faction confirmed they painted the buses. Workers of the Shiv Sena, Uddhav Thackeray faction sprayed at least two-

three buses of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) with black paint.

The border issue dates back to 1957 after the reorganization of states on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi, which was part of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency as it has a sizable Marathi-speaking population. It also laid claim to 814 Marathi-speaking villages which are currently part of Karnataka. Belagavi district administration in Karnataka on Monday issued orders barring entry of the two Maharashtra ministers and leaders to the city. Prohibitory orders were issued under section 144 of CrPC, barring their entry, besides that of an MP, who is a member of the Maharashtra High Power Committee on the Border Dispute. With this, the ruling party of Maharashtra is silent on this issue and not taking very strong action.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Assam CM

— Himanta Biswa Sarma



Together the UK and the US will ensure the global price of energy and the security of our national supply can never again be manipulated by the whims of a failing regime.

UK Prime Minister

— Rishi Sunak



You're (Malaika) the Chaiyya Chaiyya girl. But luckily for you, some five heroines had refused to climb on the train. Malaika was nowhere on the radar.

Filmmaker

— Farah Khan



We are very very confident. This is not the first time we have lost the first game in the series. It's quite normal. We know how to bounce back from these situations.

Cricketer

— Shikhar Dhawan



I condemn the allegation that we are ignoring Christmas. There will be a holiday on December 24 & 25.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister

— P Joshi



Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

COMMONALITIES IN G20 PRESIDENCY

Indian PM Narendra Modi has taken a whole-of-Government approach



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

he first round of meeting among G20 members got off to a rather colourful start earlier this week with traditional Rajasthani turbans, scarves and jackets gifted to visiting delegates in the western Indian city of Udaipur. The event kicked off several official dialogues, networking opportunities for the G20 nation sherpas, 14 participating international organisations and nine guest countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a whole-of-government approach to what it has dubbed as one of a kind event in the history of independent India. The narrative is of India finding its rightful place on global agenda setting tables, now being the fifth largest economy, moving quickly to be the third in a few years' time.

The current government has a lot at stake in getting the messages right to a global decision making group who are likely to be part of the 200 plus plenary discussions in the run up to the leaders' summit in New Delhi in September 2023. However, an equal stakeholder in the G20 presidency is the domestic audience, who in turn, will be gearing up for one of the largest exercises in the largest democracy of the world political map, the general elections of 2024.

Prime Minister, therefore, wasted no time after casting his vote in Gujarat assembly elections to rush back to Delhi for an all-party meet on India's G20 presidency. He has urged all key parties to be a stakeholder in India's presidency and showcase the strengths of India. A careful selection of venues dotted across the Indian subcon-



continent from northeast, right into the islands of Andaman has been planned to ensure a full experience of India for the visiting delegates.

The central government offices, state government and every public institution has been requested to start displaying some branding related to India's G 20 presidency and carefully plan regional events, aligning them with proposed plenary meetings. Plenaries have been planned keeping in mind important religious, cultural or social events in the states across India. The message is that the delegates of today are tourists of tomorrow.

One will expect a large amount of G20 branded content in cities /districts hosting these meetings, subtly pushing the message of India taking its "rightful" place on the geopolitical map. The political dividends, at least domestically, have not been overlooked and Modi ensured he held a meeting with key post bearers of the ruling party.

India has been the voice of the global South (an informal alliance of developing nations primarily in Asia and Africa, who may not be aligned with West or Russia, China worldview). This may have looked like India revisiting the cold war non-aligned movement ideology.


However, it may be worth noting that the days of Non-aligned Movement kind of grouping may be over and India, as it champions about reformed multilateralism, could bring a new interpretation to agile diplomacy while it negotiates and finds commonalities with the developed western countries and put across the pressing needs of the developing world. India has highlighted key themes of its presidency earlier this week, including technological transformation, green development and lifestyle for environment, climate financing and associated reform for multilateral finance institutions.

India would highlight its indigenously developed digital public goods stack to the global audience in the coming days. On the domestic front, India has moved the needle to designing the legal framework for the digital ecosystem (a key showcase during its presidency). As of now it is going to be a busy season for all major airports across the country.


(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Volunteerism through Vidyanjali for education

Experiments of volunteers coming out to help in imparting education have been immensely beneficial in strengthening school infra



A SRIJA



ABDUL MOMIN

(A Srija is an Economic Adviser to and Abdul Momin is Consultant in the Ministry of Education)

education. The volunteers could be local individuals, civil societies or corporates, people from the Indian diaspora and NRIs. Vidyanjali seeks community involvement in the efficient functioning of the schools in the neighbourhood, especially government and government aided schools.

Though volunteering for a social cause has been an integral part of Indian culture, the uniqueness of the Vidyanjali initiative is that it provides a tech-enabled smooth platform which connects the schools with the volunteers located in any part of the country. Very often, a common citizen is left wondering how to volunteer for a social cause and schools on the other hand look out for assistance to meet the diverse

yet small needs of the school which does not get covered in through their annual budget allocations.

Many a time, shortage of teachers leaves students deprived of education. Vidyanjali provides an opportunity to address these gaps. Launched in September 2021, with active volunteers participation, the programme is gradually gaining traction among citizens. It has proven its strength by successfully managing to attract a good number of volunteers and onboarded schools on the portal. As on date, there are over 3.87 lakh government and government-aided schools on board and over 102683 volunteers have registered on the Vidyanjali portal. The volunteers under Vidyanjali have

shown great deal of enthusiasm by contributing to the schools in terms of assets as well as services. For instance, there are cases where volunteers have donated about 52122 ceiling fans/water purifiers/drinking water facility and other services to schools in Assam.

Similarly, in Delhi we have volunteers providing subject assistance, mentoring, teaching art & craft and music to the students. Moreover, school girls are getting self-defense training, while volunteers are providing assistance in developing basic civil infrastructure and other classroom needs, including ICT-based learning material and devices such as tablets, mobile phone, LCD, stationary, books, laptop, and flip white board, etc., to the

schools across the country. Almost 9.27 lakh children have benefited from this volunteering programme. The next step is to rope in bulk contributions from corporations, civil societies to schools across the State to strengthen them. The success of the programme rests on the effort put in by the states/UTs in getting the program on board through regular training sessions rendered to district/block level functionaries, as well as heads of schools to onboard the schools on the portal and place their request.

Volunteers could even be common citizens like us. We all have the urge to contribute back to the schools that we

passed out from. People having expertise in sports can impart sports training to the children, doctors can organize medical camps and conduct health/mental wellbeing lectures/workshops.

Companies/groups/organizations can assist schools in building additional classrooms/toilets for girls/ ramps for children with special needs/ICT labs/Smart classroom /residential hostels for students/electricity/water and internet connections etc. As alumni, self-employed or salaried professionals all of us can support our alma-mater in various ways. The exhaustive list on which volunteers can contribute is available on the Vidyanjali portal.

Beneficially, the programme does not minimize

the responsibilities of the Government rather it supplements/complements and strengthens the efforts of the Governments taken for the betterment of the whole education continuum in the country. The people volunteering under Vidyanjali do it selflessly. They cannot claim their services as full-time experience, while the schools cannot treat them as full-time teachers/staff of the school. The programme is fully based on the true spirit of volunteerism and with a very clear intention to tap the resources available with the community for catalyzing the needs of schools and volunteers connected through extensive use of technology and community outreach programs on a single platform.

Development turns an emotive issue

The economic gains registered in Gujarat have translated into a number of improvements in social indicators, including the infant mortality rate

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) can be credited for bringing a tectonic shift in Indian politics. The Gujarat verdict has shown that development is now an emotive issue. The people in Gujarat cannot compromise on development. They rejected anyone who came to Gujarat to challenge the development model of the state. The people in Gujarat have given tight slaps on the faces of Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for questioning the development of Gujarat. The Gujarat verdict may prove to be a touchstone for Indian politics in decades to come.

Indian politics for the past few decades has seen religion and caste identities as emotive issues. The people have voted on caste lines. The people have in the past voted on religious lines. Caste and religious factors also dominated Gujarat politics for decades. Gujarati society was divided on caste and religious lines until the BJP arrived on the political horizon. Since then it has been 27 years of uninterrupted rule of the BJP in Gujarat. The people have again asked the BJP that there is no full stop in the development journey. The people, by giving an unprecedented verdict in favour of the BJP, have said that the development issue is too close to their hearts for them to consider even the moons that Congress and the AAP offered through freebies.

Congress and the AAP tried to trap the people with promises such as unemployment allowances, free electricity and water. But the people of Gujarat told Congress and the AAP to learn the art of development politics. The people don't need crutches to walk, as they have been socially and economically empowered by the development journey of the last 27 years. They stand on their feet with pride. Congress and the AAP tried to challenge the pride of the people of Gujarat. They have been served with tight slaps for trying to enter the homes of the people of Gujarat through backdoors.

In terms of the GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product), Gujarat was the fifth largest state in FY2017. At present the GSDP rank of Gujarat has improved to fourth position. Also, the GSDP grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent to Rs 19.44 lakh crores in FY2022 from Rs 13.29 lakh crore in FY2018, witnessing a growth of 46.47 per cent. The people of Gujarat are well versed with the power of compounding. They know that it creates a powerful force, which multiplies the gains over a time frame. This has yielded unprecedented social and economic gains to the people. This explains why the people in Gujarat showed no interest in the politics of freebies of Congress and the AAP.

The BJP government in Gujarat has kept its fiscal deficit at 1.51 per cent of the GSDP, which is way below the Finance



THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN GUJARAT STANDS AT 2.5 PER CENT WHILE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE STANDS AT 8.2 PER CENT. THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF GUJARAT HAS MAINTAINED THIS RATE AT A LOW LEVEL FOR NEARLY THE PAST 10 YEARS

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)



Commission's prescribed limit of four per cent since 2018. Along with this, low levels of debt have been maintained by switching to the National Pension Scheme (NPS) from Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to reduce financial burden on state exchequer. The financial discipline of Gujarat has been for the benefit of the people only, which Congress and the AAP sought to destroy by promising to revive the Old Pension Scheme and frittering away the gains with freebies.

The Congress and AAP definitely didn't do their homework. If they had been honest about homework they would not have raised the issue of unemployment in the Gujarat Assembly election campaign. The unemployment rate in Gujarat stands at 2.5 per cent, while the national average stands at 8.2 per cent. The state government of Gujarat has maintained this rate at a low level for nearly the past 10 years. Meanwhile, other states have recorded an unemployment rate in double digits. The unemployment rate in Gujarat mirrors the levels seen in advanced economies such as the US and the UK. Yet, Congress and the AAP tried to fool the people of Gujarat by raising the issue of unemployment, which portrayed them as non-serious political entities in the eyes of the people in the state.

Economic gains of Gujarat have also translated into improvements in the social indicators

such as infant mortality rate (25 per 1000 live births), maternal mortality rate, literacy, nutrition, school enrollment and so on. In fact, the Gujarat model of development has essentially been based on utilizing the resources of the state exchequer to create assets which work for the social and economic empowerment of the people. Works done in ensuring availability of water in Gujarat stand out as examples for other states to mobilise their resources for the long term asset creations, which the people reward also in elections.

It must now be accepted that the development model of Gujarat is all inclusive, which has made the past narrative of identity politics irrelevant. This was reflected in the BJP victory from Dariapur Assembly seat in Gujarat, which is dominated by Muslims. The BJP candidate Kaushik Jain won from here, and he must overwhelmingly have got the Muslim votes.

The BJP has also served a warning message to the AAP in the national capital. Even while the BJP lost the MCD elections after 15 years of rule, the party improved its vote share to over 39 per cent. The AAP vote share has come down from 53 per cent two years ago to 42 per cent now. The BJP is now raring to go for the next Assembly elections to overthrow the AAP by building the development plank of the party against the politics of freebies.

What is more important is that

the corruption charges against the AAP government have resonated with the people in the national capital. The BJP won the municipal wards in the Assembly constituencies of the Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, jailed minister Satyendar Jain, transport minister Kailash Gehlot, Amannullah Khan, who is accused of taking money for party tickets, Akhilesh Tripathi, who also allegedly sold the AAP tickets.

This augurs well for Delhi politics, as the people in the national capital have given the message to the BJP to work hard to throw the anarchists out of power in the next Assembly elections, which would be held in 2025. At the same time, the people blessed the BJP with 104 wards in the MCD to keep a check on the AAP in the MCD and the party would not allow the anarchist politicians to fritter away all the gains made by the MCD in the last 15 years. Unlike Delhi Assembly, the AAP will not be able to throw the BJP members from the MCD meetings, and that has been ensured by the people.

The BJP faced reversal in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections on account of the rebel factor. But the BJP's vote share was almost at par with Congress. The BJP may have turned the tide and changed the tradition of Himachal Pradesh of voting out the incumbent government if the candidate selection had been better.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE A STAND AFTER ASSESSING WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE BORDER AREAS. THE SITUATION THERE IS WORRISOME. — NCP LEADER SHARAD PAWAR



I WILL ASK MAHARASHTRA CM EKNATH SHINDE NOT TO SEND HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES TO BELAGAVI AS THEIR VISIT MAY DISRUPT THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN THE BORDER DISTRICT. — KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER BASAVARAJ BOMMAI

Rajya Sabha Chairman not ‘partisan’ but ‘national’: Dhankhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Stressing that Rajya Sabha Schairman is not “partisan” but “national,” Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday said he will give preference to experienced members like former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda to express their views in the House and not go by the rule book.

Giving this assurance on the second day of assuming responsibility of the Upper House during the ongoing Winter Session, he also urged the Elders to rise above political considerations regarding important issues.

While felicitating him as new Rajya Sabha Chairman on Wednesday, it was suggested by some that experienced members should be given adequate time to express views on legislations and issues of national interest.

"Believe in the Chair. The Chair is not partisan. The Chair is national," Dhankhar said while making an observation during the Question Hour on day two of the Winter Session of Parliament.

Rajya Sabha rules provide for the allocation of time during debates as per the strength of a political party - the larger the number of MPs more is time is given to the party. Gowda is the sole member of his party (JDS) in the House and hence is allocated the least time to put forth his views.

Observing that the House has two former prime ministers - H D Deve Gowda and Manmohan Singh - as MPs, the chairman said their views on important matters would serve as an input to the entire nation.

"If on an issue honourable former prime minister H D Deve Gowda would like to speak that will be an input to



the entire nation. I would first look at him, his vision and then the rulebook," said Dhankhar.

He further said senior MPs like Jairam Ramesh (Congress) too would be given time if they want to intervene on the subject of their expertise.

"The chairman is the ultimate custodian and protector," he assured the House.

He also said there is great interest about India after it

assumed G-20 presidency earlier this month as was evident during his two recent visits abroad as the Vice President. Dhankhar invited suggestions from the MPs regarding the year long programmes associated with G-20 in India.

Leader of the House Piyush Goyal said the G-20 presidency was not of one party or the government but of the entire country.

Dhankhar disallows Shiv Sena (UBT) to raise Maha-K'taka border row in House

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday did not allow Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) to raise the Maharashtra-Karnataka border row in the House as the party had not presented it in a proper manner as per rules.

Elders, meanwhile, flagged issues including the recent cyber attack on the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi and Safdarjung Hospital, plight of employees in the information technology sector due to reported lay-offs, Indians languishing in prison in some Gulf

countries and Tamil Nadu fishermen ill-treated by Sri Lankan defence forces.

On the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, when the House met for the day, the Chairman said he has received notices under Rule 267 but was disallowing them as they were not in order and did not specify the Rule. Notices under Rule 267 seek suspension of the business of the day to take up a discussion on the issue being raised.

Priyanka Chaturvedi of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), who had given the notice under rule 267, said the border issue between Karnataka and Maharashtra is an important issue and needs



to be discussed at the national level.

Dhankhar, however, disallowed it, saying the requirements of invoking rule 267 were not met. "Now if the Honourable member seeks to make an issue which is tangential, it will be inappropriate,"

he said, adding the member could speak in respect of rigours of compliance of the rule.

"Come out with a formalised request, it will receive consideration and there will be a structured discussion," he said.

RS passes Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid reservation from Opposition parties, the Rajya Sabha on Thursday passed the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill which claims to seek better management of protected areas and also provides for certain permitted activities like grazing or movement of livestock and bona fide use of drinking and household water by local communities.

Lok Sabha had already cleared the legislation in August during the Monsoon Session.

The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021, which had undergone scrutiny of a parliamentary panel, seeks to conserve and protect wildlife through better management of protected areas and rationalise schedules which list out species under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

According to the statement of objects and reasons of the bill, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, was enacted to provide for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants with a view to ensure the ecological and environmental security of the country.

The bill, which was tabled by Environment Minister Bupender Yadav on Wednesday, also sought to include the aspects of "conservation" and "management" of wildlife which are covered by the Act and make amendments for better management of protected areas.

It proposes to rationalise and amend the schedules, which list out wildlife species, for the purposes of clarity, and ensure better care of seized live animals and disposal of seized wildlife parts and products.

The bill further seeks to

enable control of invasive alien species and allow for transfer or transport of live elephants by person having ownership certificates in accordance with conditions prescribed by the central government.

However, earlier during the discussion on the Bill in the Upper House, Congress member Jairam Ramesh opposed the bill in "its present form" and expressed apprehension over the provision related to transfer or transport of captive live elephant "for any other purpose", saying it could be misused. He asked the minister to specify the purpose in the Act.

"What is this 'any other purpose'? To provide an elephant for captive zoos in Gujarat? to provide for some private amusement parks in some other state?" Ramesh said, while suggesting that it should have been stated for "cultural and religious" pur-



poses, considering the significance of elephants in such events in many parts of India.

Congress Rajya Sabha member Kumar Ketkar also alleged that real estate sharks and corporates were devastating jungles and using their money and muscle power to avoid legal action. In order to protect wildlife, not only should the laws be strict but their implementation should also be equally stringent, he said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi is likely to join the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' again this week in Rajasthan where she is on a four-day scheduled visit and also celebrate her birthday on Friday with her children Rahul Gandhi who is leading the 3,500 km yatra and Priyanka Gandhi who was part of the yatra in Madhya Pradesh.

Sonia reached Sawai Madhopur district of the desert State on Thursday evening and according to a party spokesperson, she will celebrate her 76th birthday with Rahul and Priyanka on Friday. "Sonia Gandhi reached Jaipur in the morning in a routine flight from New Delhi. Thereafter, she took a chopper from Jaipur airport and reached Sawai Madhopur. A few hours later



Rahul and Priyanka joined her at a luxury resort near Ranthambore Tiger Reserve," the spokesperson said.

She may likely participate in the Bharat Jodo Yatra on December 10, a day reserved for women participants, the official said. "It is her personal visit and no leader is called or permitted to meet. There are chances that CM Ashok Gehlot and state party Chief Govind Singh Dotasra may meet on her birthday," the spokesperson said.

Sonia had participated in the Karnataka leg of the yatra last month.

The Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra, which is passing through the Kota district, was paused after the first half of Thursday. It will resume on December 10. The march entered its 93rd day on Thursday in which the Gandhi scion walked a 24 km stretch in one go. Later, he too flew to Ranthambore from Bundi in a chopper.

DCGI approves export of SII-made Ebola vax to Uganda for clinical trials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controllor General of India (DCGI) has approved Ebola vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute for export to Uganda. This is the first ebola vaccine made in India.

The vaccine has been developed by the Pune-based pharma firm in collaboration with Oxford University, UK. According to sources, this vaccine will be used for solidarity clinical trials in Uganda.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) had sought collaboration with man-

ufacturers of ebola vaccines for the prevention of the disease and has selected ChAdOx1 biEBOV as a potential vaccine for participation in a solidarity clinical trial in Uganda.

Oxford University signed an agreement with Serum Institute of India to manufacture ChAdOx1 biEBOV.

The approval for export comes after an application was submitted to the Drugs Controllor General of India by Prakash Kumar Singh, Director, Serum Institute of India, on November 30.

"We, Serum Institute of India, under the visionary leadership of our CEO Dr Adar C



Poonawalla, are committed to making available various world-class life-saving vaccines to our country and the world at large in the line with the clar-

ion call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'Making in India for the World,' the official source quoted Singh as having said in the application.

ED attaches properties worth ₹8 cr of TMC MLA for money laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached movable properties worth Rs 7.93 crore in the form of bank balance in 61 accounts and mutual funds belonging to TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya and his family members in the Primary Teachers Recruitment Scam in West Bengal on money laundering charges.

"Sixty-one bank accounts were kept in the name of friends and relatives of Manik Bhattacharya who were induced by him and his fami-



ly members to open the same to avoid detection by law

enforcement authorities," the ED said in a statement.

"One such account used for money laundering activities was found existing in the name of Satarupa Bhattacharya, wife of Manik Bhattacharya, and late Mrityunjay Chatterjee who had passed away in 2016," it said.

Bhattacharya, former president of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education, was arrested by the ED in October in the teachers' recruitment scam of West Bengal.

The MLA from Palashipara seat in Nadia district is in judicial custody at present.

The ED is tracking the money trail in the scam, while the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is looking into the alleged irregularities committed in the recruitment.

It is alleged that several people who fared poorly in the recruitment examinations were hired as teachers in exchange for lakhs of rupees while the eligible candidates were overlooked.

In July, the ED had arrested former West Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee in the School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment scam.



A member of ASC Tornados motorcycle display team performs a stunt through a fire-wheel during the 11th Reunion and 262nd Corps Day of ASC, at ASC Centre & College, in Bengaluru on Thursday

Master plan prepared to develop Naimisharanya as Vedic city by UP Govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has prepared a master plan to develop Naimisharanya as a Vedic city and a global centre of spiritual, religious and eco-tourism.

The master plan prepared by the Tourism Department is part of the ongoing mission of the State Government to develop all religio-cultural and spiritual centres of the State as attractive tourist destinations.

The master plan also includes rejuvenation of Misrikh-Neemsar of Sitapur, along with Naimisharanya. Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra has given directions in this regard to top officials of the Tourism Department.

In a Cabinet meeting held recently, the Government had decided to develop Naimisharanya as a spiritual tourism centre in view of its mythological significance. In the meeting, the cabinet also decided to form the Naimisharanya Teerth Vikas Parishad.

A presentation was made in this regard by the architecture and planning faculty of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow, on behalf of the Tourism department,

before the chief secretary, explaining the complete master plan for the development of Naimisharanya.

According to the master plan, Naimisharanya has been divided into four tourism zones due to its diverse natural and man-made attractions.

During the meeting, Principal Secretary (Tourism) Mukesh Meshram talked about the problem of traffic congestion due to the presence of several gates in the Maa Lalita Devi temple and a variety of shops in the front and said that necessary work would be done to ease the situation.

Meshram further pointed out that the artificial lake (kund), which is currently not in use, would be restored, while attention would also be paid to the facilities and their maintenance necessary for the comfort of the common citizens.

Besides, from the entrance to the Chakra Teerth to the changing and toilet block all structures will be renovated. The master plan will also include cleaning and renovation of Chakra Teerth Kund, Gaukund, Satsang Bhawan, meeting place and waiting area, Godavari Kund and Brahma Kund. Similarly, Dadhichi Kund will also be renovated.

Nation pays tribute to CDS Rawat on his first death anniversary

Gen Rawat, his wife and 12 other military personnel were killed in helicopter crash near Coonoor.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The nation on Thursday paid tributes to India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) late General Bipin Rawat on the occasion of his first death anniversary. General Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat and 12 other military personnel were killed in a helicopter crash near Coonoor, Tamil Nadu on December 8.

As the first CDS, he was spearheading an initiative to bring convergence in the functioning of the Army, the Navy and the Indian Air Force and bolster the country's overall military prowess. Paying tributes to him National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval said "General Bipin Rawat's demise is a personal loss for the nation. I had a personal equation with him. His focus was always Indian Army and how the nation will shape in future."

"In 2017 when we had tough situation with Chinese. We used to plan and discuss. General Bipin Rawat was resolute. When we said we won't step back and we're going to stay put and make Chinese retreat, they did it after 74-75 days of tough time," Doval said.



Parliamentary panel suggests Centre explore permitting religious activities at ASI-protected monuments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary Standing panel has suggested the Government explore the possibility of permitting pujas/worship/certain religious activities at centrally protected monuments of religious significance, subject to the condition that such activities should not have any detrimental effect on conservation and preservation status of the heritage structure.

The panel which submitted its report in Rajya Sabha on Thursday also suggested a string of steps including adequate security staff at monuments and immediate filling of vacant posts at various levels in the Archeological Survey of



India, assistance from the ISRO to locate the missing monuments as well as regular inspection by the officials to prevent encroachment at heritage buildings for their better conservation and protection measures.

On allowing religious activities, the panel said, "several historical monuments across the country hold immense religious significance to a large number of people and allowing pujas/worship/certain religious activities at such monuments can fulfill legitimate aspirations of the people."

BJP's strategy to change Cabinet, Guj CM, to fight anti-incumbency pays off

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP's victory in Gujarat and earlier in Uttarakhand appears to have vindicated its strategy of changing Chief Ministers and resetting the Cabinet ahead of Assembly polls to thwart anti-incumbency, an exercise not done in Himachal Pradesh where the party suffered defeat.

With the strategy working in its favour, the BJP could be encouraged to undertake similar steps in States, including Karnataka, where elections are due next year, to counter factors that might work against it.

In September last year, the BJP appointed Bhupendra Patel, a first-time MLA as Gujarat Chief Minister to replace Vijay Rupani barely over a year before the state elections.

The party also changed the entire cabinet to reset the overall government.

A senior national-level leader of the BJP said the



Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel being garlanded during a public meeting after BJP's victory in the Gujarat Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad on Thursday. (R) Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jairam Thakur (file photo)

results clearly indicated that the change of Chief Minister in both Uttarakhand and Gujarat played a role in neutralising anti-incumbency. In Gujarat, the caste of the chief minister (Patidar) also came in handy.

While the opposition tar-

geted the BJP for removing its chief ministers, political watchers believe the changes highlighted the leadership's readiness to address feedback from the ground.

Similarly, in Uttarakhand, the BJP had changed chief



PTI

ministers twice before the assembly polls, held earlier this year. However, the party won in the hill state despite its new chief ministerial face, Pushkar Singh Dhami, suffering defeat.

The senior leader also

questioned why the same exercise was not done in Himachal Pradesh, where the party stuck with incumbent Jairam Thakur despite losing last year's bypolls.

Another senior BJP leader said three factors -- delivery on the ground, keeping the organisation in good humour and the leader's popularity -- were behind these changes of chief ministers in the last two-three years.

The recent spate of changes undertaken at the Centre or in states ruled by it has marked a return to more conventional politics with the standard political faultlines of caste identity pushing to the background the urge to experiment.

The BJP has even preferred those leaders who started their careers from other political outfits.

In 2023, assembly elections are due in BJP-ruled Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura, where the party recently changed its chief minister.

TMC presses for strong Opp to take BJP head on

Slams Cong for losing Guj, says only Didi can lead fight against BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bharatiya Janata Party's landslide victory in Gujarat sweeping over the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party has inspired the Trinamool Congress to once again make tall claim of a strong Opposition leadership.

Though the Bengal ruling party would not mince words on AAP, its spokesperson Kunal Ghosh advised the Congress to go for an introspection and examine the causes of its multiple defeats not only in the western States but in other parts of the country as well.

At the same time he said BJP's clean sweep signalled that only TMC and its supreme Mamata Banerjee was

capable of taking head on the saffron outfit on national level the same way she did in the Assembly elections in Bengal in 2021.

"There is no point dreaming of or claiming the pan-Indian leadership against the BJP or the saffron forces... the Congress' comprehensive defeat in Gujarat brings a clear message from the people... it is time for the party to go for self-introspection of why they are losing every political ground in the country... why they are being reduced to a nonentity in most of the States," Ghosh said adding "under such demoralising circumstances it will not be possible for the Congress to lead the opposition nationally or coordinate between them in Parliament."

Promptly interpreting Congress' loss as the Trinamool Congress' gain nationally, Ghosh said that "the Congress' poor show in Gujarat shows that only Trinamool Congress and

Mamata Banerjee can provide an effective leadership against the BJP nationally... the way she did in the last year's Assembly elections in Bengal."

Ghosh would however not speak a word on AAP or its chief Arvind Kejriwal. But when asked about the other aspirants who too were trying to assume national leadership, he said "no one has the same stature as Mamata Banerjee."

Meanwhile, in a related development congratulating the saffron leadership for its stupendous victory in Gujarat BJP's Bengal president Sukanta Majumdar said that the BJP's conquest of India would never be complete till it humbled Bengal.

"No amount of victory in other parts of the country will satisfy the BJP leadership... our national leaders have already made it clear that until we win Bengal the BJP's conquest of India will remain unrealised," Majumdar said.



"I congratulate the BJP and PM Modi for the victory in Gujarat which is record-breaking and historic. The projects which were given away to Gujarat from Maharashtra also helped in the victory"
— Shiv Sena(UBT) chief U Thackeray



"The grand victory of the BJP in Gujarat is an expression of the immense love of the people towards the development, security and good governance of Prime Minister Modi"
— UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath



"The people of Gujarat have massively voted the BJP back to power because of the development efforts by it. People in Tripura should also do so"
— Manik Saha Tripura Chief Minister



"We humbly accept the mandate of the people of Gujarat. We will reorganise, work hard and continue fighting for the ideals of the country as well as the rights of the people of the State"
— Congress leader Rahul Gandhi



"I am thankful to the people of Gujarat for helping us attain the status of national party. Very few parties enjoy the status and now we are one of them. Ours is only a 10-year-old party"
— Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal



"Gujarat Bugle for India! By showering (sic) this historic mandate out of their love and admiration for Hon PM Shri @narendramodi Ji, people have shown the path for 2024"
— Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

FROM PAGE 1

BJP RETAINS GUJ FOR 7TH TIME, LOSES HP

The BJP has won back the entire Patidar voter base it lost to the Congress in 2017 when the latter won its highest number of seats (77) since 1985. The BJP has also won a majority of the State's rural, tribal and OBC seats, and has done reasonably well even in Muslim-dominated seats in the State. For its part, the AAP has made good inroads in the Saurashtra region at the cost of the Congress.

The Modi-powered BJP, this time round, not only reversed the trend of falling seats of the BJP since 2012 elections but reduced the Congress to the margin of Gujarat politics with the AAP in the single digits now 'hoping' to take its space in the state as it did in the Punjab, though still a far cry. It would also be not out of the way to note that BJP's vote share in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls was 37.4 per cent, witnessing an increase from 31.1 in the 2014 general elections.

The pro-incumbency wave in Gujarat swept away the rebel candidates of the BJP (over 40 MLAs denied tickets in 2022) who could not make even a marginal impact on the victory margins of saffron candidates in any part of the state and lost their seats decisively. Congress turncoats who crossed over to the BJP like Patidar leader Hardik Patel, 29, and OBC leader Alpesh Thakor, 47, won on BJP tickets from Viramgam and Gandhi Nagar seats respectively. Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani, 41, who in 2017 also emerged in prominence along with the Hardik and Thakor, has, however, won his Assembly seat on the Congress ticket from Vadgam seat.

It is a miserable show for the Congress which in 1985 under the leadership of Madhavsinh Solanki had won a record 149 of the total 182 seats in the State Assembly. Its vote percentage was then over 55 per cent. In the last Assembly elections of 2017 itself, the Congress had 77 seats and vote share of 41.5 per cent as against BJP's 99 seats and 49.1 per cent vote share.

Besides BJP's visible success in breaking the girdle of anti-incumbency, the entry of AAP in the Assembly polls for the second time in Gujarat with 12.9 per cent vote share bagging five seats has now effectively dented the Congress.

The Gujarat Assembly election is lead and carried through by Modi to an unprecedented success as he sought to remind voters in his home State that a vote for BJP would be strengthening his hands at the Centre in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and in turn ensure continuous development of the coming years of 'Amrit Kaal'. Gujaratis backed Modi with all their might.

HP FOLLOWS CHANGE TREND, VOTES CONG IN

In October last year, after the death of six-time Chief Minister Virbhadr, bye-elections for 4 seats (3 Assembly and 1 Lok Sabha) were held and Congress won all, indicating which way the political wind was blowing.

Dissension in the BJP was evident from the beginning as a couple of Independent candidates who won were denied party tickets. On the other hand, the Congress gave tickets to all its sitting

MLAs-19 and there was no scope for dissension there. In the campaigning too, it was a pleasant surprise to see Congress united like never before and fighting with a single-minded purpose of victory.

Apart from anti-incumbency, the lackluster performance of the Jairam Thakur Government in the last five years was a big drawback of the party. He was made Chief Minister as the then Chief Ministerial candidate Prem Kumar Dhumal lost his seat in the 2017 polls. Since then, Dhumal has been cooling his heels in Hamirpur and despite rebellious supporters, he was not allowed to contest the polls this time round on the excuse of having completed 75 years of age. Though his son and Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur went all out in the campaign, Dhumal's marginalisation had an impact on some of his supporters who either rebelled or simply looked the other way round. Though Thakur had a clean image, he lacked administrative acumen and found it hard to fill in the shoes of Dhumal who had built a support base for himself in all parts of the State.

Moreover, Himachal is a State where Government servants have the ability to swing the mood of voters and their mood too swings from one election to the other. This time, the Congress's promise of bringing back the old pension scheme helped them rally around the party and they played a significant role in the victory. Though Chief Minister Thakur to his credit tried to woo this section desperately in the last six months of his tenure, it was seen merely as a "cosmetic" instead of substantial outreach.

With a decisive victory, Congress might not fear poaching now but there could be differences on the name of the new Chief Minister in the meeting of the legislative party, Congress is likely to convene a meeting either in Chandigarh or Shimla in a day or two. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who played a significant role in the Himachal campaign and who, of late, has emerged as a troubleshooter for the party, has already reached out to the victorious MLAs for a consensus on a name. It is understood that the name of the new Chief Minister would be decided as early as possible to keep any potential trouble away after a discussion between the high command and the newly elected MLAs.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who campaigned, conducted road shows and earlier chose candidates for the polls, is likely to play an important role in the decision-making process. Two names for the top political post are significant at this juncture-PCC President, Mandi MP, and widow of former CM Virbhadr Singh and Leader of Opposition and former journalist and Virbhadr loyalist Mukesh Agnihotri. Former State president Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu too has thrown his hat in the ring, bringing a sense of urgency to the top echelons of the Congress to take a quick decision.

VOTERS REJECTED DYNASTY, REVADI POLITICS: MODI

"This historic win would never be possible without the exceptional hard work of our karyakartas, who are the real strength

of our Party," he said.

Later, in his address at the BJP headquarters here, Modi said Gujarat has broken all records and created history by showering love on the BJP despite the party being in power in the State for 25 years.

"I had told the people of Gujarat that this time Narendra's record should be broken. I promised that Narendra will work hard so that Bhupendra can break Narendra's record. Gujarat has broken all records by giving the biggest mandate to BJP in the history of Gujarat," the Prime Minister said. Modi said people had voted for the BJP as it was taking all facilities to the poor and middle class at the earliest.

"I am thankful to the voters of Himachal also, where our vote share was just less than one per cent below that of the winning party," he said adding, "I bow to people. Their blessings are overwhelming".

"Gujarat's love for BJP despite it being in power for 25 years is unprecedented, they have broken all records, written history. Our Government has worked to empower the poor and also to build modern infrastructure in different sectors like road and rail," Modi said.

"The BJP is getting support from all sections of society, it won 34 of 40 reserved seats for SC, ST in Gujarat polls. No party has done as much as the BJP has for the women and that is why they support us in large numbers," Modi said.

The BJP was on course to win 156 seats in the 182-member State Assembly, its best ever performance in Gujarat in over two and a half decades of being in power.

Reacting to the verdict in Himachal Pradesh where the Congress has wrested power from the BJP, Modi thanked the voters of the hill State for their affection and support to the BJP and said his party will keep working to fulfil the aspirations of the Himalayan State and raise people's issues in the times to come.

BJP's win in Kurhani Assembly bypoll in Bihar is an indication of times to come in State, the PM added.

HIMACHAL WIN FACE SAVER FOR CONGRESS

It is sure to give her leadership credentials a big boost especially after being written off following the Congress' rout under her in Uttar Pradesh in the last Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

The win in Himachal has given the leaders of the party something to cheer about. The party, currently in power on its own only in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh now has the latest addition in HP. It lost Madhya Pradesh mid way after losing one-third of its legislators. It lost Karnataka and Maharashtra subsequently, despite being in power there.

The victory will also be significant for the party especially because its electoral clout in the north has been on a decline for more than a decade now. But then, the Congress will have to fight tooth and nail for the next year Assembly polls in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka since its Opposition leadership remains challenged by parties such as the AAP and the TMC, and the success of the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra's electoral dividends is yet to be ascertained.

With Congress winning the Himachal

Pradesh polls, its leaders credited Priyanka and strategist Baghel, who together had hands on experience in the Assam Assembly polls wherein the party had a decent outing. The duo even partnered for strategising this year's mega Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

But the decimation in Gujarat would not only have a bearing on the morale of the Congress and its workers that has been running high on the back a "successful" rollout of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, but also impact the party's ability to mobilise support and resources for future electoral battles. Rahul had taken a break for a day from his ongoing yatra and did two public rallies and the entire campaign was dependent on State leadership and incharge Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot.

The dismal showing in the Gujarat polls comes as a big jolt for the party as it risks ceding the space of opposition in the State to the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP in a State which has been bi-party over the years. It would also impact its bargaining power vis-a-vis other Opposition parties. Also, losing Gujarat badly could also add to the exodus of leaders that the party has been facing.

In Himachal, Priyanka held several rallies and was also closely involved in strategy planning for the polls in the Himalayan State. Many leaders hailed her leadership in securing the win for the party and defeating the BJP's election machinery. AICC in charge of Himachal Pradesh Rajeev Shukla hailed Priyanka's campaign and leadership, lauding the "hard work" put in by her.

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma, who has on many occasion questioned party leadership also complimented Priyanka for her "spirited" campaign in the State. He was also part of the infamous Group of 23 G-23 of Congress leader who had asked the leadership for immediate overhaul of the party.

This was Priyanka's first electoral success while heading the campaign charge. The party had lost Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls while she spearheaded the canvassing there earlier this year. Based on her feedback, a systematic election campaign was prepared under her and that involved framing of welfare schemes for women, youth, and employees.

During her rallies Priyanka raised the issues of Agnipath, inflation, unemployment and the old pension scheme. The mood of the State was however gauged in October 2021 bypolls when Congress won all the four seats all spearheaded by incumbent State unit chief Pratibha Singh, wife of the Himachal Pradesh tallest Congress leader late Virbhadr Singh.

DIMPLE CHARMS MSY'S BASTION; BJP CAPTURES AZAM'S CITADEL RAMPUR

The Congress continued its dominance in Chhattisgarh winning the Bhanupratappur seat while the BJD bested the BJP in Padampur in Odisha. In Khatauli in UP, the RLD wrested the seat from the BJP with a thumping win.

Dimple Yadav, the wife of SP chief and former Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav, defeated her nearest rival and BJP candidate Raghuraj Singh Shakya by 2,88,461 votes in Mainpuri, a pocket borough of

Mulayam's family. The win provided some solace to Akhilesh after the defeat in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections early this year and the loss of Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats to the BJP in the June bypolls.

SP's ally RLD's Madan Bhैया defeated his BJP rival Rajkumari Saini by a margin of over 22,000 votes in Khatauli. Saini is the wife of former BJP MLA Vikram Singh whose disqualification from the State Assembly following his conviction in a 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots case necessitated the by-election. Bhैया polled 97,071 votes, while Saini received 74,996, according to the Election Commission.

The BJP, however, for the first time won from SP leader Azam Khan's bastion Rampur Sadar which he represented before he was disqualified for his conviction in a hate speech case.

In Bihar, BJP candidate Kedar Prasad Gupta defeated Manoj Singh Kushwaha of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) by 3,645 votes in Kurhani seat. The JD(U) had snapped ties with the BJP four months ago. In the cliffhanger of a contest, Gupta polled 76,653 votes while Kushwaha finished with 73,008 votes.

Congress' Anil Sharma defeated Ashok Kumar Pincha of the BJP by a margin of 26,850 votes in Rajasthan's Sardarshahar assembly, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot describing it as "people's seal of approval" on his government's "good governance and public welfare schemes".

Congress candidate Savitri Mandavi won from Bhanupratappur Assembly a margin of 21,171 votes against her nearest rival Brahmanand Netam of the BJP.

In Odisha's Padampur, ruling BJD's Barsha Singh Bariha won by a margin of 42,679 votes, defeating the BJP's Pradip Purohit. Barsha is the daughter of late MLA Bijay Ranjan Singh Bariha whose death in October necessitated the by-poll. The BJP had recently lost the Dhamnagar bypolls to the BJP.

DAY AFTER VP'S NJAC RAP, SC ASKS AG TO STOP MINS FROM PICKING ON COLLEGIUM

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju had on November 25 launched a fresh attack, saying the collegium system is "alien" to the Constitution. The bench, also comprising Justices AS Oka and Vikram Nath, said it expects the Attorney General to advise the Government so the legal principles laid down by the apex court are followed. The bench noted that 19 names recommended by the collegium were recently sent back by the Government. "How will this ping-pong battle settle?" the bench asked.

"Till the collegium system is there, till it is upheld, we have to enforce it. You want to bring another law, nobody stops you from bringing another law," said Justice SK Kaul, telling the AG to advise Union Ministers, talking publicly against the collegium system.

The apex court said if a section of the society starts deciding which law to follow and which not to follow, then there will be a breakdown. "When you lay down a law, you expect the courts to enforce it unless the law is set aside," the bench said. "We

may at the end say only this that the scheme of the Constitution stipulates the court to be the final arbiter of the position of law. The power to enact a law is with the Parliament. However, that is subject to scrutiny by the courts," it asserted. The bench said it is necessary that all follow the law that has been laid down.

"Any law declared by this court is binding on all stakeholders. That is the only signal I want to send," Justice Kaul observed. The bench said what has "troubled" the court is that there were many names pending for months and years, including some which were reiterated by the collegium.

BJP GRABS CONG'S ST VOTE BANK IN GUJARAT

The hitherto Congress bastions of the State's tribal belt, popularly known as 'Purvpatni' (Eastern Belt), are spread across three regions of Gujarat from Ambaji in the North to Godhra in Central Gujarat to Umbergaon in the South Gujarat.

Besides a number of rallies by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a Gaurav Yatra in the tribal belt, what yielded results was also the Government's outreach activities by way of announcing observance of tribal icon Birsa Munda's birth anniversary as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas every year, setting up of tribal freedom fighters' museums and their statues among others.

In Himachal Pradesh too, despite its loss the BJP did significantly well winning one (Bharmour) of the three ST seats and bagging two of the four seats with considerable population of the Hatti community whom it had accorded the ST status just ahead of the polls accepting their 60 year old demand.

GUJ REFUSES KEJRIWAL'S BAIT

In fact, its Chief Ministerial candidate Isudan Gadhvi and State chief Gopal Italia themselves lost the polls.

Gadhvi, who had bagged the maximum votes during an opinion poll by his party for CM candidate, lost to BJP's Ayar Mulubhai Hardasbhai Bera from Khambhalla seat by a margin of over 18,000 votes while Italia lost to BJP's Vindobhai Moradiya from Katargam seat by a margin of over 64,000 votes. Both the constituencies are in the Surat belt where AAP had expected to perform its best given its performance in the civic polls earlier.

The AAP, which contested the Assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh for the first time drew a blank securing just 1.10 per cent of the total votes cast. The poor performance of AAP dashed its hope of emerging as a strong third force in the State to challenge the hegemony of BJP and Congress, which have been alternately ruling the State for almost four decades.

But AAP's creditable performance in Gujarat will help it become a national party by virtue of getting more than 6 per cent vote share in four States of Delhi, Punjab, Goa, and Gujarat. As per norms prescribed by the Election Commission, to get national status a party requires "State party" status in at least four States.

US appeals ruling that would lift asylum restrictions



AP ■ SANTA FE

The US government said on Wednesday it is appealing a court ruling that would lift asylum restrictions that have become the cornerstone of border enforcement in recent years. But there was no indication that the appeal would scuttle a December 21 deadline set by a federal judge to end asylum restrictions that have been used to expel asylum seekers. The disputed enforcement rule first took effect in March 2020, denying migrants rights to seek asylum under US and international law on grounds of preventing the spread of

COVID-19. The Homeland Security Department said it would file an appeal with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, challenging some aspects of the November ruling by US District Judge Emmet Sullivan that ordered President Joe Biden's administration to lift the asylum restrictions. Biden officials say the Department of Homeland Security continues to prepare for the December 21 deadline set by Sullivan to lift restrictions. The restrictions were put in place under former President Donald Trump at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The practice was autho-

Biden releasing USD 36B to aid pensions of union workers

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Thursday is announcing the infusion of nearly USD 36 billion to shore up a financially troubled union pension plan, preventing severe cuts to the retirement incomes of more than 350,000 Teamster workers and retirees across the United States. The money for the Central States Pension Fund is the largest amount of federal aid provided

for a pension plan, the Biden administration said, and comes from the American Rescue Plan, a USD 1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package that he signed into law in 2021. Many union retirement plans have been under financial pressure because of underfunding and other issues. Without the federal assistance, Teamster members could have seen their benefits reduced by an average of 60 per cent starting within a couple of years.

at the southern US border. The ban has been unevenly enforced by nationality, falling largely on migrants from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador — as well as Mexicans — because Mexico allows them to be returned from the United States. Last month, Mexico began accepting Venezuelans who are expelled from the United States under Title 42, causing a sharp drop in Venezuelans seeking asylum at the US border. The asylum rule has been used by the Biden administration to expel migrant families and single adults, though not children travelling alone.

Iran executes first known prisoner held in protests

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran said on Thursday it executed a prisoner convicted for a crime allegedly committed during the country's ongoing nationwide protests, the first such death penalty carried out by Tehran. The execution comes as other detainees also face possible death penalty for their involvement in the protests, which began first as an outcry against Iran's morality police and have expanded into one of the most serious challenges to Iran's theocracy since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Activists warn others could be put to death as well soon since activists say at least a dozen people so far have received death sentences over their involvement in the demonstrations. The "execution of #Mohsen Shekari must be me with STRONG reactions otherwise we will be facing daily executions of protesters," wrote Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the director of the Oslo-based activist group Iran Human Rights. "This execution must have rapid practical consequences internationally."

Iran's Mizan news agency reported the execution. It accused the man of blocking a street and attacking a security force member with a machete in Tehran. The Mizan news agency, run by the country's judiciary, identified the executed man as Mohsen Shekari. It said he had been convicted in Tehran's Revolutionary Court, which typically holds closed-door cases that have been internationally criticised in other cases for not allowing those on trial to pick their own lawyers or even see the evidence against them. Mizan said Shekari had been arrested September 25, then convicted November 20 on the charge of "moharebeh," a Farsi word meaning "waging war against God." That charge has been levied against others in the decades since 1979 and carries the death penalty. Iran has been rocked by protests since the September 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died after being



determined by the country's morality police. At least 475 people have been killed in the demonstrations amid a heavy-handed security crackdown, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests since they began. Over 18,000 have been detained by authorities. Iran is one of the world's top executioners by hanging. Already, Amnesty International said it obtained a document signed by one senior Iranian police commander asking an execution for one prisoner be "completed in the shortest possible time" and that his death sentence be carried out in public as a heart-warming gesture towards the security forces.



South Korea's truth body to probe foreign adoptions

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission will investigate the cases of dozens of South Korean adoptees in Europe and the United States who suspect their origins were falsified or obscured during a child export frenzy in the mid- to late-1900s. The decision Thursday opens what could be South Korea's most far-reaching inquiry into foreign adoptions yet. Frustration over broken family connections and laundered child statuses and identities grew and demanded government attention. The adopted South Koreans are believed to be the world's largest diaspora of adoptees. In the past six decades, about 200,000 South Koreans — mostly girls — were adopted overseas. Most were placed with white parents in the United States and Europe during the 1970s and '80s. After a meeting Tuesday, the commission decided to investigate 34 adoptees who were sent to Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and the United States from the 1960s to the early 1990s. The adoptees say they were wrongfully removed from their families through falsified documents and corrupt practices. They were among the 51 adoptees who first submitted their applications to the commission in August through the Danish Korean Rights Group, led by adoptee attorney Peter Møller. The applications filed by Møller's group have since grown to over 300, and dozens of adoptees from Sweden and Australia are also expected to file applications on Friday, which is the commission's deadline for investigation requests, Møller said. The investigation will likely expand over the next few months as the commission reviews whether to accept the applications submitted after August. Cases that are seen as similar will likely be fused to speed up the investigations, commission official Park Young-il said.

China begins implementing relaxed anti-Covid measures

AP ■ BEIJING

China began implementing a more relaxed version of its strict "zero COVID" policy on Thursday amid steps to restore normal life, but also trepidation over a possible broader outbreak once controls are eased. The country reported 21,165 new coronavirus cases on Thursday, though it was unclear whether the lower number reflected fewer infections or a reduction in testing. The National Health Commission issued relaxed anti-pandemic regulations on Wednesday, including a loosening of lockdowns and the elimination of a requirement that a recent negative COVID-19 test be shown to enter most public places. The commission said it was due to "positive results" in fighting the virus and because of a recognition that the current omicron variant is less dangerous than earlier versions of the

virus — a fact long embraced by other countries that have reopened their societies. The relaxation also follows street protests — the largest in decades — by people fed up with the draconian controls, which have been blamed for hobbling the economy, upending millions of lives and causing the deaths of some people refused hospital treatment because they lacked proper test results. "This is an inevitable trend. We must let go sooner or later, and we can't always stick to previous measures," said Xin Guijun, a 70-year-old Beijing resident. "However, one thing is that we are on our own to protect ourselves, and we must cultivate our own awareness of personal protection," Xin told The Associated Press. While the relaxation sent a wave of relief through Chinese society, much uncertainty remains and the move was not met with universal acclaim.



Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. Infectious disease expert and a critic of China's reliance on lockdowns, said China risked unleashing a new wave of virus mutations on the world if it

doesn't "mount and implement a proactive vaccination campaign." "Whenever you have a large wave of transmissions of a virus, you give it ample opportunity to

mutate," Fauci said Wednesday at an event organized by the Financial Times newspaper. "And when you give a virus opportunity to mutate, that allows it to form potentially new

variants. And once you get a brand-new variant, that could have an impact on the rest of the world," Fauci said. Fauci and other foreign health officials have urged Beijing to import Western COVID-19 vaccines based on mRNA technology, considered more effective than the inactivated vaccines developed by China. Chinese officials have so far ignored such calls. The changes announced Wednesday include a renewed commitment to vaccinate vulnerable groups and the elderly, whose levels of immunization are far lower than the population as a whole. China has administered 3.4 billion doses to its 1.4 billion people, or about 2.4 doses per person, indicating that large numbers have not received the recommended three shots. China's difficulties are compounded by the fact that only a small number of people have been exposed to the virus under "zero COVID," leaving most

with no natural antibodies. In an editorial on the Wednesday announcement, the official Xinhua News Agency said the changes were "introduced based on the latest epidemic situation and mutation of the virus to contain the epidemic in a more science-based and targeted manner." Xinhua emphasized the need to "rectify oversimplified or one-size-fits-all approaches and excessive policy steps, oppose and curb pointless formalities and bureaucratism." China has not formally abandoned "zero COVID," which seeks to track and eliminate all infections, but its recent steps seem to indicate it is dropping it in all but name. The ruling Communist Party credits the policy with sparing China the large numbers of cases and deaths seen in other countries. China's official death toll is 5,235 since the start of the pandemic, versus a U.



China's Xi at Saudi palace to meet royals

AP ■ DUBAI

Chinese leader Xi Jinping met on Thursday with Saudi Arabia's king and the crown prince while on a visit to the kingdom, solidifying ties with a region crucial to his country's energy supplies as sanctions intensify on Russia over its war on Ukraine. Xi arrived at Al Yamama Palace in Riyadh and was greeted by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the king's assertive son who stands ready to rule the oil-rich kingdom in the decades to come. Xi shook hands with the prince as an honour guard on horseback carried Saudi and Chinese flags. It wasn't immediately clear what the two focused on in their discussions, though Xi in a newspaper column published by Al Riyadh newspaper said "exchanges between China and Arab states date back more than 2,000 years." The column also quoted a saying by Islam's Prophet Muhammad: "Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China." "The Arab people value independence, oppose external

interference, stand up to power politics and high-handedness, and always seek to make progress," Xi's column read. He also noted that the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, serve as "an energy tank for world economy." China, the world's largest crude oil importer, relies heavily on Saudi oil, paying tens of billions of dollars annually to the kingdom. Gulf Arab states are trying to re-calibrate their foreign policy as the United States turns its attention elsewhere in the world. Russia's war on Ukraine — and the West's hardening stance on Moscow — has also left the Arab countries wanting to cement ties with China. For Prince Mohammed, hosting Xi boosts his own international profile after being linked to the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. Beyond China's oil purchases, its construction expertise could be tapped as well for Prince Mohammed's planned USD 500 billion futuristic city of Neom on the Red Sea.

German 'coup' plot spawns dozens of arrests

AP ■ BERLIN

German police rounded up dozens of people including a self-styled prince, a retired paratrooper and a former judge on Wednesday, accusing the suspects of discussing the violent overthrow of the government but leaving unclear how concrete the plans were. A German official and a lawmaker said investigators may have detected real plotting, drunken fantasizing, or both. Regardless, Germany takes any right-wing threat seriously and thousands of police officers carried out pre-dawn raids across much of the country. "We're talking about a group that, according to what we know so far, planned to violently abolish our democratic state of law and an armed attack," on the German parliament building, government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said. Sara Nanni, a lawmaker with the Green party, part of the German government, suggested the group may not have been capable. "More details keep coming to light that raise doubts about whether these people were even clever enough to plan and carry out such a coup," Nanni said in a post on the social network Mastodon. "The fact is: no matter how crude their ideas are and how hopeless their plans, even the attempt is dangerous!" Federal prosecutors said the group is alleged to have believed in a "conglomerate of conspiracy theories consisting of narratives from the so-called Reich Citizens as well as AAnon ideology." Adherents of the Reich Citizens movement reject

Germany's postwar constitution and have called for bringing down the government, while AAnon is a global conspiracy theory with roots in the United States. The Reich Citizens scene has been under observation by Germany's domestic intelligence agency since 2016. Authorities estimate that the loose-knit movement has about 21,000 adherents. Prosecutors said the suspects also believe Germany is ruled by a so-called "deep state." One of the alleged ring-leaders arrested on Wednesday



is Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, a 71-year-old member of the House of Reuss who continues to use the title despite Germany abolishing any formal role for royalty more than a century ago. Federal prosecutors said Reuss, whom the group planned to install as Germany's new leader, had contacted Russian officials with the aim of imposing a new order in the country once the German government was overthrown. There is no indication that the Russians responded positively. Police also detained Birgit Malsack-Winkemann, a judge and former lawmaker with the far-right Alternative for Germany party. Alternative for Germany, which is known by its acronym AfD, has increasingly come under scrutiny by security services due to its ties with extrem-

ists. AfD's co-leaders, Tino Chrupalla and Alice Weidel said they had only learned of the alleged coup plans through the media, and condemned them. "We have full confidence in the authorities involved and demand a swift and comprehensive investigation," they said in a statement. Chief federal prosecutor Peter Frank said some 3,000 officers were involved in the raids conducted at 150 sites in 11 of Germany's 16 states. Officers detained 22 German citizens on suspicion of "membership in a terrorist organisation," prosecutors said. Three other people, including a Russian citizen, were held on suspicion of supporting the organisation, they said. An additional 27 people were under investigation.

Nepali Cong-led coalition intensifies talks with like-minded parties to form Govt

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress-led five-party coalition, which is two seats away from a simple majority after securing 136 seats in the 275-member House of Representatives, has intensified negotiations with like-minded parties to form the new government. Nepali Congress (NC) has emerged as the single largest party with 89 seats after the election commission allocated seats to all the political parties under the proportional voting system on Wednesday. The other partners of the



ruling alliance have together secured 47 seats — CPN-Maoist Centre (32), CPN-Unified Socialist (10), Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (4) and Rashtriya Janamorchha one. The C. K. Raut-led Janamat Party, which secured only one seat in the House of Representatives (HoR) under the first-past-the-post category, got 5 seats under the proportional

representation (PR) category, which means that the party will have a total of six members in the House. Last week, Prime Minister Deuba met Raut at the PM's residence and discussed matters relating to forging cooperation in the days ahead, sources said. If the Janamat Party backs the NC-led coalition, the ruling alliance will have the support of 142 lawmakers - four more than 138 required to form a government. On Sunday, NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel said that the government to be formed now will provide political stability, good governance, development

and employment in the village. Meanwhile, former prime minister K P Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML has received the highest votes under the proportional voting system while the NC and CPN-Maoist Centre have secured second and third positions, respectively. The CPN-UML has secured 34 seats under the proportional voting followed by the NC with 32 seats and CPN-Maoist Centre with 14 seats. Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) has received 13 seats while Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) and Janamat Party have received 7, 5 and 5 seats respectively.

NYT journalists, other workers on 24-hour strike

AP ■ NEW YORK

Hundreds of journalists and other employees at The New York Times began a 24-hour walkout Thursday, the first strike of its kind at the newspaper in more than 40 years. Newsroom employees and other members of The NewsGuild of New York say they are fed up with bargaining that has dragged on since their last contract expired in March 2021. The union announced last week that more than 1,100 employees would stage a 24-hour work stoppage starting at 12:01 a.m. Thursday unless the two sides reach a contract deal. The NewsGuild tweeted



Thursday morning that workers, "are now officially on work stoppage, the first of this scale at the company in 4 decades. It's never an easy decision to refuse to do work you love, but our members are willing to do what it takes to win a better newsroom for all." Negotiations took place Tuesday and some on Wednesday, but the sides remained far apart on issues including wage increases and remote-work policies.

INDIA FACE SOUTHERN STARS IN 1ST T20I

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

The build-up to the series has been far from ideal but the Indian women's cricket team will be keen to give a tough time to the all-conquering Australia in the five-match T20 rubber beginning here at Dr DY Patil sports academy in Navi Mumbai on Friday.

With two months go for the T20 World Cup in South Africa, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side should also exactly know where they stand following the five games.

Head coach Ramesh Powar was suddenly sacked three days before the series opener.

Former India batter Hrishikesh Kanitkar is now in charge of the support staff as the designated batting coach.

India managed to win the Asia Cup in October though they were guilty of experimenting a tad too much which cost them a league game against Pakistan.

In the recent past, India have managed to compete against the mighty Australia but failed to get over the line. One such case was their last meeting in the Commonwealth Games final in August when India threw it away after a blinder from Harmanpreet in the run chase.

The batting has a settled look with star batter Smriti Mandhana expected to score



the bulk of the runs.

Her opening partner Shafali Verma, who will lead in the U-19 World Cup next month, will be put under pressure by the Australian pacers considering her weakness against the short ball.

Jemimah Rodrigues has shown good form ever since returning to the national side. While skipper Harmanpreet too has regained consistency. Harleen Deol and Yastika Bhatia have made a comeback after their prolific run in the Challenger Trophy.

Leg-spin bowling all-rounder Devika Vaidya has made a return to the T20 side after eight years.

Her presence lends variety to the spin attack full of left-armers and offies.

Renuka Thakur has been

the standout pacer for the team over the past six months and she would be hoping for support from uncapped left-arm seamer Anjali Sarvani.

Australia, who will be led by Alyssa Healy in Meg Lanning's absence, too have fresh faces in the line-up. Expectations are high from 19-year-old batter Phoebe Litchfield who is expected to fill the retired Rachael Haynes' shoes.

The southpaw had spent a lot of time with Mandhana during the WBBL last year.

Ex-Ireland pacer Kim Garth and Heather Graham are also expected to make their Australia debut.

Lanning is not part of the touring party as she has taken an indefinite break from the game.

No intensity or passion in this Indian team: Madan Lal



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former coach Madan Lal on Thursday lashed out at India following their ODI series loss in Bangladesh, saying the team lacked "intensity and passion" and was heading in the wrong direction.

India lost to Bangladesh by five runs in the second ODI in Mirpur on Wednesday to concede the series 0-2 after having suffered a one-wicket defeat in the first ODI.

"Definitely the Indian team is not going in the right direction. I have not seen the intensity in the team off late. I have not seen 'Josh' in them in the last couple of years," Lal said.

"They are not looking like an Indian team at all. That passion of playing for the country is missing. Either their bodies are too tired or they are just going through the motions. And this is a serious concern."

Deepak Chahar, who has been bothered by injuries this year, couldn't complete his quota of overs during the second ODI. The Indian players

are dealing with fitness issues with star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja too out of the team owing to injuries.

Highlighting fitness issue of players, skipper Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said that India "can't have guys coming in to play for the country half-fit."

Referring to Rohit's observation, Lal, who is a member of the 1983 World Cup winning team, said: "It is a very sad thing. If the captain is saying this then something is wrong somewhere."

"Who is responsible for this? Are trainers responsible for this? Why are unfit players going? You are playing international cricket and the result is in front of you."

"If they want to take rest they can take rest during IPL matches. Your country comes first. If you are not going to win ICC trophies, your nation's cricket is going to go down."

Lal put the blame on top-order batters for India's not-so-impressive performance in

recent times.

"If you see the record, how many centuries they (seniors) have scored in the last three years? And how many in the last one year? With age factor, your hand-eye coordination slows down."

"But they are experienced players and they should have performed. If your top order does not perform you are not going to win."

The 71-year-old former all-rounder also pulled up the bowlers for their lack of intensity. "Your bowling unit has become very weak suddenly. It looks like they are not going to get any wickets. After 69 for 6, Bangladesh managed to score 271. So what is all this going on?"

Asked if there was a need to have different players for different formats, Lal said: "Every country is playing like that. Must have specialised cricketers for different formats. Why not have different players for different formats? All countries are doing it and India should also do the same."

Labuschagne, Head centuries lift Oz to 330-3

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Marnus Labuschagne and Travis Head posted unbeaten centuries in a 199-run stand to lead Australia to 330-3 against West Indies at stumps on day one Thursday of the second cricket Test. Labuschagne scored his third century in as many innings against West Indies and was 120 not out at Adelaide Oval.

Head was 114 not out after making his first test century on his home ground in the day-night match.

Both teams made injury-enforced changes following Australia's 164-run win in the series-opener in Perth last weekend. Marquino Mindley, one of three changes for the depleted West Indies, left the field with a hamstring strain after bowling just two overs on debut.

The Australians got on top early after stand-in captain Steve Smith won the toss and opted to bat first. Usman Khawaja shared a 34-run opening stand with

David Warner (21) and 95 with Labuschagne for the second wicket before his dismissal for 62 triggered the only slight wobble in Australia's innings.

Part-time seamer Devon Thomas was the unlikely bowler to break the second-wicket stand, trapping Khawaja lbw from around the wicket on the first ball of the 42nd over.

Khawaja was given out and immediately reviewed the decision, but the third umpire confirmed the dismissal and Australia was 129-2.

In the next over, former skipper Jason Holder took a return catch off his own bowling to dismiss Smith for a duck as Australia lost two wickets for two runs in 11 deliveries.

But Labuschagne and Head counter-attacked in quick time, restoring Australia's dominance.

Labuschagne cut Thomas to the point boundary to raise his 10th century in his 30th test, and third in succession in this series following his 204 and 104 not out in Perth.

LOCAL EVENTS

HAR HOCKEY ACADEMY WIN

Har Hockey Academy thrashed Citizen Hockey XI Academy 36-0 in pool A match of the Khelo India Women's Under-16 Hockey League on Thursday. Shashi scored 11 goals while Pooja netted the ball nine times. Khasha and Neeshu scored five and four goals respectively. Earlier, Odisha Naval tata Hockey blanked Smart Hockey Academy 6-0.

QUALIFIED

Indian women's hockey team has qualified for the Asian Games after finishing sixth in the 19th Asian Women's Handball Championship held at South Korea from November 22 to December 4. Handball Association of India executive director Anandeshwar Pandey and secretary Tejraj Singh felicitated the team on their return in New Delhi.

THE TEAM: Jyoti Shukla, Neena Sheel, Menka, Shushma, Deeksha Kumari, Nidhi Sharma, Shalini Thakur, Bhawna, Priyanka Thakur, Mandeep Kaur, Maninder Kaur, Binita Sharma, Rajwant Kaur, Rimpi, Asharani, Priyanka, Sonika, Tejaswini Singh, Sada Rathore. Coach: Sachin Chaudhary, Kartikeyan, Manisha, Sandhya.

ball 133 in a 97-run win in the third ODI in Vadodara.

"It's a great place to travel. For me personally, it's nice to be back here. The place holds nice memories; the maiden hundred will last a lifetime," Healy said on the eve of their five-match T20I series opener here.

For both the teams, the series will start the countdown to the T20 World Cup in South Africa in February next year.

In their last meeting,

Australia defeated India en route to the Commonwealth Games gold medal in Birmingham.

"I'm really excited to play against a quality side. It's great to be back, it's been a long time we have been here. It's exciting to me as the captain," said Healy who has taken over the reins after regular skipper Meg Lanning took an indefinite personal break.

"We are obviously aware of the danger of power they

(India) possess, so it's great for cricket as well. We know we are in for a battle."

Captaincy is an added responsibility but she's relishing every bit of it.

"It's an added challenge, opening, wicket-keeping and captaining. But I love high pressure situations, it's about managing workloads. I'm fortunate to have good leaders, whom I can lean on. I don't have any ego when it comes to leadership."

India A tail wags against Bangladesh A in second unofficial Test

PTI ■ SYLHET

India A put themselves in a commanding position by posting a mammoth first-innings total of 562 and then reducing Bangladesh A to 49 for two at stumps on the third day of the second unofficial Test match here on Thursday.

Still ahead by 261 runs, the visitors will look for an innings victory on the final day. At the close of the penultimate day's play, Shadman Islam was batting on 22, while Mominul Haque was on 4.

Zakir Hasan, who got a maiden call-up in the upcoming first Test against India, was out for 12, while Mahmudul Hasan Joy was dismissed

for 10. Saurabh Kumar (1/10) and Umesh Yadav (1/16) were the wicket takers for India A.

Earlier, resuming their first innings at 324 for five, skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran (157) added 13 runs to his overnight score while Jayant Yadav made 83. Saurabh smashed a 39-ball 55 and Navdeep Saini scored an unbeaten 50 off 68 deliveries as India A tailenders gave a good account of themselves to propel the side to 562 for nine before declaring. Jayant decorated his 150-ball stay with 10 boundaries while Saurabh hit seven fours and two hits over the fence during his entertaining knock.

Saini struck five fours and two sixes during his half-century.

Right-arm pacer Mushfiq Hasan



INDIA-OZ TEST SERIES TO BEGIN AT NAGPUR FROM FEB 9

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nagpur, Delhi, Dharamsala and Ahmedabad have been chosen as the venues for the much awaited four-Test series between India and Australia from February 9 to March 13.

The BCCI on Thursday announced the schedule for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as well as the limited overs home series against Sri Lanka and New Zealand in January-February.

The Test series will be part of the World Test Championship cycle.

"This will also be the last edition of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy which will be a 4-match Test series feature," said the BCCI in a statement with the two teams battling out in a five-match series thereafter.

The VCA Stadium in Jamtha will host the opening Test from February 9-13 before the caravan moves to Delhi for the second Test from February 17-21.

There is a week's gap between the second and third



Test which takes place in Dharamsala from March 1-5.

The final game of the series will be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad from March 9-13.

The two teams will also play a three-match ODI series with the games being played at Mumbai, Vizag and Chennai on March 17, 19 and 22 respectively.

January will see India host

Sri Lanka and New Zealand for limited overs series comprising three ODIs and three T20s each.

Sri Lanka will be the first team to visit with the T20Is scheduled in Mumbai, Pune and Rajkot on January 3, 5 and 7.

The subsequent ODIs will be played in Guwahati, Kolkata and Trivandrum on January 10, 12 and 15.

After a two-day gap, the

hosts take on New Zealand in a three-match ODI series with the games to be played at Hyderabad, Raipur and Indore on January 18, 21 and 24.

The following T20Is will be played in Ranchi, Lucknow and Ahmedabad on January 27, 29 and February 1.

T20Is versus Sri Lanka: 1st T20I (Jan 3, Mumbai); 2nd T20I (Jan 5, Pune); 3rd T20I (Jan 7, Rajkot); **ODIs vs Sri Lanka:** 1st ODI (Jan 10, Guwahati); 2nd ODI (Jan 12, Kolkata); 3rd ODI (Jan 15, Trivandrum).

ODIs versus New Zealand: 1st ODI (Jan 18, Hyderabad); 2nd ODI (Jan 21, Raipur); 3rd ODI (Jan 24, Indore); **T20Is versus NZ:** 1st T20I (Jan 27, Ranchi); 2nd T20I (Jan 29, Lucknow); 3rd T20I (Feb 1, Ahmedabad).

Tests versus Australia: 1st Test (Feb 9-13; Nagpur); 2nd Test (Mar 17-21; Delhi); 3rd Test (Mar 1-5; Dharamsala); 4th Test (Mar 9-13; Ahmedabad); **ODIs vs Australia:** 1st ODI (Mar 17; Mumbai); 2nd ODI (Mar 19; Vizag); 3rd ODI (Mar 22; Chennai).

Zakir Hasan gets maiden call-up for first Test against India



PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

Bangladesh have handed a maiden call-up to top-order batter Zakir Hasan for the first Test against India, beginning here on December 14.

The decision to draft Hasan into the side has been taken as the seasoned Tamim is yet to recover from a groin injury.

Hasan was named player of the match in the first unofficial Test against India A and was the leading run getter in the first-class competition.

"Our physio said he (Tamim) won't be able to play in

the first Test. But we are awaiting the medical report for the second Test. So, we've announced the squad for the opening Test," BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin told Cricbuzz.

Pacer Taskin Ahmed, who is not part of the ongoing ODI series against India due to fitness issues, has been named in the Test squad. The two-match Test series will be part of the World Test Championship. The second Test will be played in Mirpur from December 22.

Bangladesh squad for first Test: Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Najmul Hassan Shanto, Mominul Haque, Yasir Ali Chowdhury, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan (C), Litton Das, Nurul Hasan, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Zakir Hasan, Rejaur Rahman Raja, Anamul Haque Bijoy.

Prannoy loses to Lu in BWF World Tour Finals, out of semifinal race

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's HS Prannoy went down fighting in three games to China's Lu Guang Zu in his second Group A match to bow out of the semifinal race at the BWF World Tour Finals here on Thursday.

The 30-year-old from Kerala, who had lost to the same opponent in his only meeting at the French Open this year, put up a brave effort but couldn't go the distance, losing 21-23, 21-17, 19-21 in a gruelling 84-minute contest.

It was his second loss in



Group A following the opening match defeat to Japan's Kodai Naraoka. The world No. 12 Indian will face world number one and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in his final Group A match on Friday.

Axelsen topped the group after beating Naraoka 21-5, 21-15 in a lop-sided contest. The Dane had also defeated Lu in straight games on Wednesday. With the top two players in the group making it to the knockout stage, it will be either Naraoka or Lu joining Axelsen in the semifinals.

England add pace of Wood for 2nd Test

AP ■ MULTAN

England brought in fast bowler Mark Wood and shrugged off Pakistan's attempt to make the Multan pitch friendlier for spin in the second Test from Friday.

Wood was the only change England made after its landmark, 74-run win in the first Test at Rawalpindi on Monday.

Wood replaced allrounder Liam Livingstone, who returned home after injuring his knee during the first Test.

"Having someone in your squad who can bowl at 150 kph is a massive bonus for any team," England captain Ben Stokes said of Wood on Thursday.

"Having someone of this caliber and what he brings, the way in which he bowls, is going to be massive for us. He



is going to add to our ability to take 20 wickets."

Wood hasn't played a test since March when he sustained an elbow injury. He missed the entire English county season and returned to international cricket during England's seven-match T20 series in Pakistan in September. But a hip injury sidelined him from the climax of the triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in Australia.

Ollie Pope was retained behind the wickets after replacing an ill Ben Foakes for the first Test. Pope scored a century and made six catches and a stumping.

Stokes stressed Foakes remained their prime glovesman but at the moment Pope's role as a batter and wicketkeeper perfectly suited the team com-

bination.

"The performance that Popey put in was outstanding," Stokes said. "To stand behind the stumps for the amount of time that he did after scoring a hundred and then standing in the field . . . Especially as someone who's not used to doing that role."

With Shaheen Afridi injured and out of the entire three-match series, Pakistan's bowling resources were further depleted when paceman Haris Rauf was ruled out of the remaining two Tests after injuring his right thigh during his debut Test at Rawalpindi.

"We are facing injury problems because most of our fast bowlers are playing in all the three formats and that is very tough on them," Pakistan captain Babar Azam said.

