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SHIVPAL'S PSPL FORMALLY
CEASES TO EXIST**OPINION 6**
COMMON 'ENEMY'
NO 1' IS CHINA**WORLD 10**
WINTER OF DISCONTENT FOR
RUSSIAN TROOPS

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QUARTERS TODAY
12 SPORT

Pratibha leads HP CM race; Gandhis to decide

Cong won in name of Virbhadra, so it should choose CM from family: Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/SHIMLA

After day-long parleys, a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party in Himachal Pradesh passed a resolution authorising the party high command to pick the CLP leader who will be the next Chief Minister of the State.

Sources indicated the "high command" means Congress' first family Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said views of newly-elected MLAs in Himachal Pradesh are being sought to bring out consensus on who will be their leader.

Sources said front runner for the top job is Pratibha Singh, Congress MP and the wife of former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh.

While interacting with the media, she indicated she is in the race for the top job. Congress workers raised slogans in support of Singh, who is also the State party chief.

Former State chief of the party Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu and outgoing legislature party



Himachal Pradesh Congress President Pratibha Singh being congratulated by supporters after the party's victory in the State Assembly elections, in Shimla on Friday

leader Mukesh Agnihotri are also among the frontrunners for the Chief Minister's post.

"It will be only between Pratibha or her confidant Mukesh," a member involved in the day's proceedings told *The Pioneer* over phone.

Throughout the day Congress observers Chhattisgarh Chief Minister

also part of the Congress delegation which met the Governor. A separate meeting was held between the Congress observers and Pratibha Singh at a hotel. Before the observers went to meet the Governor, their vehicle was surrounded for a few minutes by the supporters of Pratibha. They raised slogans that the Chief Minister should be from the family of Virbhadra.

Similar sloganeering was witnessed outside the Congress office. Pratibha too told a section of media that when the party has won and brought votes in the name of Virbhadra then it cannot shy away from choosing a CM candidate from the family.

"I am not in the race for the top post but my mother is one of the contenders for the post of chief minister," her son and Congress MLA from Shimla Rural Vikramaditya Singh said. He added that "collective will of MLAs will be kept in mind and then observers will convey the same to the high command".

Earlier, Congress observers met Himachal Pradesh Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and shared a list of the party's winning MLAs and "sought time" to formally stake claim to form the Government.

The Congress wrested power from the BJP in the hill State winning 40 of the 68 Assembly seats.

Bhupesh Baghel and former Chief Minister of Haryana Bhopinder Singh Hooda and AICC incharge for Himachal Pradesh Rajeev Shukla conducted several rounds of meeting. They also met the State Governor and also attended the CLP meeting.

Senior Haryana Congress leader Karan Singh Dalal was

Din in RS at private member's Bill on Uniform Civil Code

Bill will destroy social fabric: Opp; RS Chairman calls for division, Bill introduction OK'd with 63 votes in favour, 23 against

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The introduction of a private member Bill by a BJP member for the preparation and implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country resulted in chaos in the Rajya Sabha on Friday. The Opposition members urged BJP MP Kirodi Lal Meena to withdraw the Bill and also asked Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to not accept the legislation as it will destroy the secular fabric of the country.

The controversial private member's Bill seeks to provide for a panel to prepare a UCC. BJP MP Kirodi Lal Meena moved for leave to introduce the Bill to provide for the constitution of the national inspection and investigation committee for preparation of a UCC and its implementation across India and for matters connected therewith during the private member's business.

However, Opposition members from Trinamool Congress (TMC), Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samajwadi Party

(SP), Communist Party of India (CPI), CPI (Marxist), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and Congress protested against the introduction of the Bill saying, if passed, it will "destroy" the social fabric and unity in diversity that is prevalent in the country.

With the Opposition members seeking withdrawal of the Bill, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar called for division and the motion for the introduction of the Bill was passed with 63 votes in favour

In the past, although the Bill was listed for introduction, it was not moved in the Upper House. The Bill envisages a collection of laws to protect the personal rights of all citizens without considering religion.

and 23 against it.

In the past, although the Bill was listed for introduction, it was not moved in the Upper House. The Bill envisages a collection of laws to protect the personal rights of all citizens without considering religion.

"We have a private members' Bill that is totally unconstitutional, unethical, anti-secular. It is being introduced as

a private member's Bill by an indulgent Government to test the waters in a very dangerous game. This is brinkmanship," Jawhar Sircar of the Trinamool Congress said. He further said, "There is still time to refrain from making demonstrations of a temporary majority and inflict one sided opinion on a very secular and plural India."

MDMK MP Vaiko accused the ruling dispensation of "implementing one after another agenda of the RSS and the BJP", and said, "They have finished Kashmir. Now they have come to Common Civil Code." He said it is leading towards "disaster of the country and its disintegration and minority people are terribly hurt".

Similarly, Abdul Wahab of Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) said the Bill has been attempted to be introduced many times in the past and "this is a sort of provocation deliberately the BJP" and asserted that the UCC cannot be implemented in India.

Leader of the House Piyush Goyal objected to the allegations of the Opposition members. "It is a legitimate right of a member to raise an issue, which is a directive principle of the Constitution... Let this subject be debated in the House. At this stage to cast aspersions on the Government, to use the names of the very members of the Constituent Assembly to try to criticise at the introduction stage is uncalled for," he retorted.

Mayor from AAP as it got mandate, says BJP

BJP will play role of strong Opposition, says party Delhi chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking U-turn from their position on the election of the Delhi Mayor after their defeat in the MCD polls, the Delhi BJP on Friday said the next Mayor will be from the



AAP as it got the majority and the BJP will play the role of a "strong Opposition".

"The AAP has got the peoples' mandate, so they can have their mayor. We extend them good wishes," Delhi BJP chief Adarsh Gupta said when asked if his party would contest the mayoral poll. He was addressing a Press conference with Leader of Opposition the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri.

"The vote percentage of the BJP has increased by around three per cent since the last municipal corporation elections of 2017 when the party got 36.08 per cent of the votes," Gupta added. He also said the

BJP secured around 40 per cent of the votes, losing by just over 2 percentage points.

Despite the AAP's overwhelming win in the national Capital, the BJP had suggested that the mayor's election is still an "open game". It noted that Chandigarh, where the Arvind Kejriwal-led party was the largest, has a mayor from the BJP ranks. Several BJP leaders had earlier hinted that the party might go for the Mayor's post despite losing the civic polls.

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya thanked Delhi people for reposing faith in the BJP and for giving more votes in the wards falling under Kejriwal's "corrupt" Ministers' constituencies.

He added in a tweet, "Now over to electing a Mayor for Delhi. It will all depend on who can hold the numbers in a close contest, which way the nominated councillors vote, etc. Chandigarh has a BJP mayor, for instance."

Hints dropped by other party leaders, including Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Tajinder Pal Bagga, also gave rise to speculation that the BJP might go for the mayor's post.

"The AAP has been exposed in these elections due to anti-corruption campaign run by the BJP. The people of the Assembly constituency from Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Minister Satyendra Jain have rejected them due to friendship with liquor mafia and hawala business respectively," claimed Gupta.

However, Leader of Opposition Bidhuri said that the tall claims of Chief Minister Kejriwal that the BJP will shrink to only 20 seats once again turns to dust.

The MCD mayor is elected by all 250 councillors in the House, seven Lok Sabha and three Rajya Sabha members from the city, and 14 MLAs nominated by the Speaker of the Delhi Assembly.

ISRO trials propel India into hypersonic vehicle elite club

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In an effort to develop indigenous niche technology, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) have jointly conducted ambitious hypersonic vehicle trials.

The trials achieved all required parameters and demonstrated hypersonic vehicle capability, the ISRO said on Friday. Russia, China, and the US are the other countries having this sophisticated technology.

A hypersonic vehicle is a vehicle that travels at least 4 times faster than the speed-of-sound, or greater than Mach 4. A hypersonic vehicle can be an airplane, missile, or spacecraft.

These vehicles are highly manoeuvrable and do not follow a predictable arc as they travel and can deliver conventional or nuclear payloads within minutes.



The Indian hypersonic vehicle will take another three to four years to become fully operational.

In 2020, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully demonstrated the hypersonic air-breathing scramjet technology with the flight test of the Hypersonic Technology Demonstration Vehicle (HSTDV).

With this successful demonstration, many critical technologies such as aerodynamic configuration for hypersonic manoeuvres, use of scramjet propulsion for ignition and sustained combustion at hypersonic flow, thermostructural characterisation of high-temperature materials, separation mechanism at hypersonic velocities were proven.

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

For the third year in a row, the number of tiger deaths in the country has crossed the 100-figure mark.

However, much to the relief of wildlife officials and animal lovers, the number of total deaths in the eleven months of the current calendar year at 107, including 22 cubs and ten sub-adults, is less than the 127 deaths recorded last year.

The number of tigresses killed so far this year stands at 17 against 16 last year. In 2021, the number of tiger cub deaths was comparatively less at 15.

In 2020, during a lockdown induced by Covid-pandemic, India saw 106 tigers succumbing to deaths due to various reasons such as natural deaths, poaching, electrocution, infighting, and poisoning.

The wildlife officials are keeping their fingers crossed hoping that the number of tiger deaths this year is lesser or



at least it does not surpass the figure reported last year.

The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), an NGO in the sector, contradicts the Government's data and instead has estimated that in the first eleven months India has already lost 129 tigers, including 35 falling prey to poachers.

According to the wildlife conservation organisation, last year at least 115 died natural

deaths/ in infighting and man-animal conflict while poaching claimed 56 lives.

As per the Government data available from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Madhya Pradesh has reported the highest number of tiger deaths at 32 followed by Maharashtra which has witnessed 25 deaths of the big cats in the first 11 months this year.

Karnataka registered 13 deaths, while Assam, Rajasthan and Kerala lost six and five striped cats each respectively. Three tiger deaths were reported from Andhra Pradesh, while two each died in Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

The detailed analysis of the data showed that at least 62 striped cats died inside their home i.e. in the tiger reserves, most of them fighting to protect their turfs while as many as 45 were killed outside the tiger reserves or on the forest fringes.

Croatia in semifinal, Brazil loses on penalties

AP ■ AL RAYYAN

Croatia knocked Brazil out of the World Cup on Friday, beating the five-time champions 4-2 in a penalty shootout to reach the semifinals for the second straight time.

Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved a penalty attempt by Rodrigo and Marquinhos later hit the post.

The match had finished 1-1 after extra time, with both goals coming in the additional 30 minutes. Neymar scored late in the first half of extra time to give Brazil the lead, but Croatia equalised when Bruno Petkovic scored in the 117th.

Neymar's goal moved him into a tie with Pelé as Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 77 goals.

Croatia will next face either Argentina or the Netherlands to try to return to the World Cup final four years after los-



Brazil's Neymar, centre, kicks the ball besides Croatia's Josko Gvardiol, bottom, Croatia's Dejan Lovren, right, Croatia's Marcelo Brozovic, background, and Croatia's Borna Sosa, left, during the World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Croatia and Brazil, at the Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar, on Friday

ing the title to France.

Five of Croatia's last six matches at World Cups have gone to extra time, including in its penalty shootout win over Japan in the round of 16 in Qatar.

The team has been successful in eight of its last 10 knockout matches at the tournament.

Brazil was trying to return to the semifinals for the first time since 2014. The team hadn't made it to the last four since hosting the tournament eight years ago, when the Selecao was embarrassed by Germany 7-1.

Brazil was trying to defeat a European opponent in the knockout stage of the World Cup for the first time since the 2002 final against Germany, when the team won for the last time.

Neymar moved into a tie with Pelé as Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 77 goals on Friday.

2 auto-lifters land in police net

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police claimed to have arrested two auto-lifters on Friday. They were identified as Ritish Sonkar (20) and Amit Kumar Dixit (35). Four stolen two-



सूचना

मैने अपना नाम Mohammad Anwar Khan से बदलकर Anwar Khan रख लिया है अब मैं इसी नाम से जाना जाता हूँ ANWAR KHAN ग्राम जिगनी फतेहपुर

सूचना

मैने अपना नाम KAUSEN AHMAD से बदलकर KOSHEN AHMED रख लिया है अब मैं इसी नाम से जाना जाता हूँ Koshen Ahmed ग्राम जिगनी फतेहपुर

NOTICE

I Nadeem Ahmad hereby declare that my correct name is 'NADEEM AHMAD' which is wrongly recorded in the ISC/ICSE document of my both the daughters ISMA SIDDIQUI and WARA SIDDIQUI. Please consider my correct name as 'NADEEM AHMAD'.

सूचना

मेरे हाईस्कूल वर्ष 2012 अनु-3194096 के अंकपत्र सहप्रमाणपत्र में मेरे पिता का नाम ASHOK KUMAR RAU व माता का नाम ANITA RAY अंकित है जो गलत है। उनका नाम ASHOK KUMAR RAI व ANITA RAI है जो सही है। आयुतुष राय पुत्र अशोक कुमार राय, ग्राम-कमथरी, पोस्ट -कमरवां, जनपद-मऊ।

NOTICE

I, SANTOSH PRAKASH S/o Sri Prabhu Dayal Sahu R/o 417/527, Satguru Sahai Nigam Road, Niwajganj, Lucknow declare with an oath that my name in State Bank of India accounts (Savings, PPF, Sukanya, insurance) has mistakenly written as SANTOSH PRAKASH SAHU while in my Aadhar Card, Pan No and on other documents my name is written as SANTOSH PRAKASH and this is my correct name.

NOTICE

My name is R. Rekha. My son Pratyush R is student of Sunbeam English School, Bhagwanpur, Lanka, Varanasi with Roll No. 23747128/2021 in class 12th CBSE Board. That in his marksheet my name appears as "Rekha R". I am declaring in Official Gazette in newspaper that my name should be read and written as "R. Rekha" - Pratyush R, S/o R. Rekha, Quarter No. 804/C, B.L.W. Colony, Varanasi-221004.

NOTICE

That my son no. 15706532P Rank Lance Naik Name Sujit Kumar Yadav (Village Mahada Post Singhpur Cholaapur Tahsel Sadar Pin code 221101 Varanasi.) is Serving in Indian Army since 30.10.2006 my date of birth in service document has been Registered 15.08.1956 as per 12th Marksheet of my son my date of birth as per Aadhar Card is 15.08.1961 therefor read my date of birth is 15.08.1961 in the Service documant.

NOTICE

My name is S. Ramachandran. My son Pratyush R is student of Kendriya Vidyalaya, B.L.W. Kanchanpur. Varanasi with Roll No. 5209582/2019 in class 10th CBSE Board. That in his marksheet my name appears as "S. Ram Chandran". I am declaring in Official Gazette in newspaper that my name should be read and written as "S. Ramachandran" - Pratyush R S/o S. Ramachandran Quarter No. 804/C, B.L.W. Colony, Varanasi-221004.

wheelers were recovered from their possession. They were rounded up near the rail overbridge under Krishna Nagar police station late Thursday night. They were said to have been stealing bikes from areas under Alambagh, Krishna Nagar and Sarojini Nagar police stations.

The police were tipped off that the accused were present near the overbridge. The cops swung into action and nabbed the accused. During interrogation, Sonkar disclosed that the stolen bikes were hidden in a semi-constructed house in Alambagh. The police raided the place and recovered the

stolen vehicles.

Meanwhile, the Indira Nagar police claimed to have arrested four persons on the charges of passing lewd remarks on guests at a wedding on Thursday evening. The Indira police said complainant Sumit Kumar Tiwari alleged that four people travelling in a luxury car passed lewd remarks on guests as they got stuck in the baraat procession.

The police nabbed the accused near Fun Republic Mall trisection and claimed that one of the accused was a hardened criminal and a native of Barabanki district. The accused were identified as Pradeep

Kumar, Avi Anand, Ravi Anand and Ashwini Upadhyay.

Meanwhile, a youth, identified as Raj Kumar (20) of Gosainganj, hanged himself to death from a tree. The bereaved father said Raj Kumar mysteriously went missing from the house on Thursday evening. A missing complaint was lodged with the Gosainganj police the same night. However, he was later found hanging.

In other incident, a 35-year old man, identified as Ram Bahadur, hanging himself to death in the Daulat Kheda village of Mohanlalganj. He was found hanging by his mother around 9:30 am on Friday.

Man objects to dog pooping in front of house, attacked

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 60-year-old man was attacked by a dog owner after the former objected to the pet defecating in front of his house on Friday morning. The dog owner, Pratham Sonkar of Jankipuram Extension (Sector-J), attacked Shahi with a stick while the dog also bit him twice.

A complaint in this regard was lodged at the Gudamba police station in which Shahi stated that he came out of his house to drop his son to school in the morning when he saw Sonkar carrying a stick and waiting for the dog to poop. As Shahi objected, Sonkar hit

him with the stick. His dog also attacked Shahi and bit him twice, leaving him injured. Locals converged on the spot and asked Sonkar to take the dog away. Shahi was later rushed to a private nursing home where he was administered first aid. A police spokesman said a case was registered against Sonkar.

Meanwhile, a man, identified as Ankit Yadav, was arrested on the charges of preparing fake documents to purchase a land. He was rounded up near his house close to Chiraiya Jheel late on Thursday night following several complaints lodged with PGI police last month.

Meanwhile, two women, identified as Nazneen Bano and Kulsum, were arrested for preparing fake documents to get benefits of various schemes. They were said to have been underground since 2015 and police had been unsuccessfully searching for them.

Both the women are residents of Meena Bazaar (A Block) under Ghazipur police station. The women had visited their houses for personal work on Thursday morning and were about to leave in the wee hours of Friday. A trap was laid and they were picked up for interrogation on Thursday night.

CITYBRIEFS



TAEKWONDO C'SHIP

Students of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus II — Darshi Gupta and Aarav Gupta — bagged gold and silver medals, respectively, in the Open State Taekwondo Championship. Darshi won gold in the 28-kg girls' category while Aarav won silver in 25-kg boys' category, showcasing

their exemplary martial arts skills. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi expressed happiness on the achievement of these two students and wished them a bright future. The championship was organised under the aegis of UP Taekwondo Association. Students from various noted schools of UP participated in the championship in which Darshi and Aarav dis-

played tremendous stamina and skills and walked away with the medals.

MASS MARRIAGE

It was a day to remember for couples who tied the knot as they received blessings and gifts from Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia at Kalyan Mandap in Aurangabad (Sector P) on Friday. Earlier, preparations were made by Municipal Commissioner Inderjeet Singh for the mass marriage scheme launched by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

ABACUS CONTEST

Arnav Pandey, a class V student of City Montessori School, Aliganj Campus II, brought laurels to the institution by winning the Regional Champion Trophy in the state-level abacus competition. The competition was organised under the aegis of educational institute Brainobrain. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi wished



Samajwadi Party workers celebrating Dimple Yadav's Mainpuri bypoll victory in Lucknow on Friday

Pioneer

2 held for forced religious conversion

Lucknow (PTI): Two men were arrested for allegedly luring a woman to convert to Islam, police said in Fatehpur on Friday.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (CO) Dineshchandra Mishra said about eight months ago, one Ahmed Ansari, a resident of Asothar police station, had lured the woman from the Hariharganj area of Fatehpur Sadar Kotwali and had taken her away with him.

Her mother had filed a missing report in this connection, he said. On Thursday, the mother came to know that Ansari was getting married to her daughter after conversion

in Satonpeet village. She reached the spot and created a ruckus, Mishra said. The police reached the village on receiving information about the uproar and took the mother-daughter to the police station.

On the complaint of the mother, Ahmed Ansari and Maulvi Lallu were arrested, he said. Police have registered a case against 10 people for kidnapping, assault, molestation, Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, abusing and rioting in this case, Mishra said, adding that the police are currently interrogating the Maulvi and Ansari.

Meanwhile in Bahraich,



police seized narcotics substances worth Rs 1.5 crore on the India-Nepal border and arrested two people, an official said on Friday.

Superintendent of Police Prashant Verma said on Thursday night, around 2.5 kg

charas worth Rs 25 lakh was recovered from one Riyaz in Basantpur village under Khairghat police station area.

Apart from this, Rs 5,600 and 5,400 Nepalese rupees were also recovered from him, he said. A case under the Uttar Pradesh Control of Goondas Act and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act is already registered against Riyaz, police said. On Thursday night, Naseem Raini, a resident of Barabanki district, was arrested from Gullabeer railway crossing and 201 gram smack worth Rs 1.25 crore was recovered from his possession, the SP said.

Man booked for bid to rape boy

Ghaziabad (PTI): A 34-year-old man was arrested for allegedly trying to rape a boy who had come here with his family on a visit from Adelaide city of Australia, police said on Friday. The boy's family was staying with his father's friend in Chattarpur area of Delhi and had come here to Akash Nagar colony of Masuri to attend a marriage, police said.

The incident happened Thursday night during the marriage function, when the accused took the nine-year-old boy to a bathroom and tried to rape him, ACP Sadar Nimish Patil said. When the boy shouted for help, his parents reached there and apprehended the culprit, who has been identified as Nishant Sharma of Ganga Nagar colony of Meerut. He was handed over to the police.

2 killed in head-on collision between car, bike in Bareilly

Bareilly (PTI): Two people were killed in a head-on collision between a motorcycle and a vehicle, police said on Friday. The incident took place on Thursday night in Fatehganj west police station area, they said.

Superintendent of Police (rural) Rajkumar Agarwal said Pramod (25) and Bunty (35) were returning to their home in Surlapur village when the accident occurred. Both the injured were rushed to a hospital, where the doctors declared them dead, he said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, police said.

Meanwhile, the body of a missing 10-year-old boy was found hanging from a tree in the Dohra area here on Friday

Pramod (25) and Bunty (35) were returning to their home in Surlapur village when the accident occurred

morning, police said. Divyanshu, who lived with his grandparents, had gone missing on Tuesday while playing outside his house, Superintendent of Police (city) Rahul Bhati said. Police said the family members claimed that the minor was abducted and later killed. The body has been sent for post-mortem and further action will be taken after the report comes, the SP said.

Google Maps, cops help lost woman reunite with kin

PTI ■ NOIDA

A 30-year-old woman with mental health issues who had lost her way to land up at a government facility in Noida nearly two months ago was reunited with her family on Friday, officials said.

An official of the anti-human trafficking unit (AHTU) of the Noida police said the woman hailed from Kanpur but was unable, till two days ago, to recall anything which could help them contact her family.

"The woman was found at the Kaushambi bus stand in Ghaziabad on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border on October 18. We got a call informing us about her condition after which our team went there and she was lodged at the 'Apna Ghar' ashram in Noida Sector 34 according to due procedures," AHTU in-charge Vinod Panwar said.

"At the facility, we have counselling sessions for all residents who are in similar condition and separated from their families. During one counselling session on Wednesday, this woman was able to recall the name of her village, leading us to track her family," Panwar told PTI.

Once the AHTU officials had this clue, they used Google Maps to look up for the village when they came across one in Kanpur district, he said.

"We immediately reached out to the Kanpur police who helped us confirm that this particular village whose name this woman had mentioned falls in their area. The Kanpur police also helped us with the phone number of her village's head after which we could contact her family," Panwar said. He said once the family was contacted over the phone, her brother confirmed that the woman was undergoing mental health issues and had suddenly gone missing from their home in October.

The family said they were also searching for the woman, who is married and has two children, but were unable to locate her, the official said.

"On Friday, her brother and sister-in-law reached the 'Apna Ghar' ashram in Noida and the woman was handed over to them. All of them were happy," he added. The AHTU of the Noida police has this year helped reunite more than 70 people who got separated from their families, according to Panwar.

Over 100 goats go missing from animal shelter

PTI ■ NOIDA

Over a hundred goats that were rescued by the police in Uttar Pradesh's Noida in June 2021 have gone missing from an animal shelter here, prompting a fresh investigation to search the livestock, officials said on Friday.

The police have lodged an FIR under Indian Penal Code section 406 (criminal breach of trust) against the manager of the animal shelter now after the complainant, to whom the goats belonged, approached the local court for

their release, they said. "The case pertains to an incident of cruelty against animal which took place in 2021. A fresh FIR has been lodged at the Sector 20 police station over the matter and the police are now investigating it further," Assistant Commissioner of Police (Noida zone 1) Rajneesh Verma told PTI.

According to the FIR, lodged on the basis of a complaint by Sector 20 police station in-charge Manoj Kumar Singh, the goats – 49 of them male and 61 female – were being transported from Delhi to Auriya in Uttar Pradesh in

a pick-up truck registered in Etawah. The goats, which were badly stuffed inside the truck, were rescued by the Noida Police after they intercepted the vehicle at the Jhandapura border and an FIR lodged under provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals Act, the SHO stated. "After they were rescued, the goats were handed over to an animal shelter in Sector 94 on the condition that the expenses of taking care of the goats would be borne by the man (Santosh Kumar) to whom they belonged. The person agreed

and even remitted the money in the local court here," the FIR stated.

Last year itself, the court had passed an order that the 110 goats be handed over to Kumar, who then approached the animal shelter's manager Yogendra Kumar but till date could not get his livestock back despite multiple reminders and notices, it stated. "This non-compliance of the court order makes it a crime under IPC 406 by the animal shelter's manager," the police station in-charge stated in the complaint.

According to a police official,

Man gets death sentence for raping, killing minor

Mathura (PTI): In a speedy trial, a local court here on Friday awarded a death sentence to a man for the rape and murder of a 10-year-old girl.

Additional District Judge and Special Judge (POCSO) Vipin Kumar, after a 26-day trial, awarded the death sentence to 30-year-old Satish under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and slapped him with a fine of Rs 45,000, special DGC (POCSO court) Alka Upmanyasaid. On October 13, the man lured the minor and took her to a secluded place near PMV

Polytechnic and raped her in the forest area nearby.

After killing her, Satish abandoned the body in the forest area and fled. Following this, a case was registered against him under sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and he was arrested the next day. The charge sheet was filed on November 14. The court sentenced the man to five years' rigorous imprisonment to Satish with a fine of Rs 5,000 with a fine of Rs 20,000 under Section 363 (kidnapping) of the IPC, Upmanyasaid. The accused

will have to undergo additional imprisonment of three months if he fails to pay the fine, she said. The judge also awarded a life sentence to Satish with a fine of Rs 20,000 under Section 376 AB (rape on a woman under 12 years of age) of the IPC, she said. The accused will have to undergo additional imprisonment of three months if he fails to pay the fine, she said. The convict will further undergo a life sentence, with a fine of Rs 20,000 under POCSO Act or an additional sentence of six months in case the accused fails to pay the fine, officials said.

Korean national among 3 held in raid at illegal bar

Noida (PTI): Three men, including a South Korean national, were arrested from a gaming centre in Greater Noida where alcohol was allegedly being served illegally, officials said on Friday.

A team of the Excise Department along with the local police raided the gaming centre located in the Knowledge Park area on Thursday evening, a senior official said. "Excise inspectors Rahul Singh and Chandrashekhar Singh raided the gaming centre - Screen Golf Good Shot - located on the first floor of Signature Tower in Knowledge Park area where the

liquor was being served illegally," District Excise Officer Rakesh Bahadur Singh said. The facility had no license to serve liquor and three workers were arrested from the spot against whom an FIR has been lodged at the local police station, he said.

Those held have been identified as Rahul Pal, Gaurav Singh and Korean national Yang Jin Ko, the officer said. "The raid was held as part of enforcement campaign against illegal liquor trade as per the orders of the regional Excise Commissioner and the Gautam Buddh Nagar District Magistrate," Singh said.

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Yogi's magic charms voters in Gujarat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

When Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started an election campaign in Gujarat, he was given a task of winning back the constituencies which the Bharatiya Janata Party had lost to Congress and therefore out of 25 seats where he campaigned 12 were occupied by opposition leaders.

Yogi's magic worked there too as the party won eight of these seats.

Out of the constituencies in which Yogi Adityanath campaigned, 10 were occupied by the Congress, one by an Independent and one by the Bharatiya Tribal Party. The Bharatiya Janata Party won eight of these seats. BJP's Ritesh Bhai Basava won the Jhagadia seat held by the Bharatiya Tribal Party by a margin of 23,500 votes.

Yogi Adityanath held roadshows in three constituencies and the BJP's lotus bloomed in all of them.

In Viramgam constituency, which was represented by Congress in assembly, people greeted Yogi with chants of Jai Shri Ram, and after Yogi's appeal to vote for BJP, they voted en masse for the party following which Hardik Patel won there by the margin of 51,707 votes.

On the other hand, BJP's Kishore Kumar won by 16,834 votes from Warchha Road and CK Raul from Godhra by 35,198 votes.

BJP won the seats where Yogi Adityanath campaigned, including Mahmedabad, Votrarapar, Sankheda, Sanwarkundla, Varcha Road, Viramgam, Godhra and Dholka.

Australian investors meet Chief Minister



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A delegation of Australian investors met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence here on Friday.

During the meeting, the delegation, led by Australia's Deputy High Commissioner to India Sarah Storey, discussed the possibilities of investment in various sectors in Uttar Pradesh and expressed its enthusiasm for participation in the Global Investors' Summit 2023, the

state government said in a statement.

The chief minister said the UP government was organising a Global Investors' Summit in Lucknow from February 10 to 12 next year.

"With the aim of increasing the per capita income in the state, it is our endeavour that the country and the world can benefit from the immense business opportunities available in the state," he said.

"This Investors' Summit will prove to be useful in providing an integrated platform for the global industrial world to cooperate in economic development. The cooperation of Australian entrepreneurs and investors will be useful in taking this summit to new heights," he added.

Uttar Pradesh, blessed by nature and God, was today creating a new identity as the growth engine of India's economy, Yogi Adityanath said, adding that it is

the fourth largest state in India in terms of size.

"Our state is home to 25 crore people, making it India's largest labour and consumer market. The government of Uttar Pradesh is developing infrastructure at a rapid pace to ensure seamless connectivity through air, water, road and rail networks, which will enhance the accessibility of logistics to enable industries to access global and domestic markets," he said.

"We have the world's most fertile land, and the richest water resources. Uttar Pradesh is working on a plan to promote natural farming in the form of zero-budget chemical-free farming. This will be a very useful effort in increasing the income of the farmers," Yogi Adityanath said.

The chief minister has invited everyone to invest in the state, giving a proper solution to the various queries of the Australian del-

egation. He also said that the state government had been protecting the business interests of its investors, the statement said. Our policies will be encouraging to the global world, he added.

In this meeting, held in a congenial atmosphere, the Australian investor group discussed various sectoral policies of Uttar Pradesh and also expressed their enthusiasm to participate in GIS 2023, the statement said.

UP delegation in Germany to attract investment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To achieve Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's objective of turning the state into a \$ 1 trillion economy, a delegation including UP Industry Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' and PWD Minister Jitin Prasada held a roadshow in Frankfurt, Germany, on Friday.

The Uttar Pradesh government's outreach to the Indian diaspora ahead of the Global Investors' Summit 2023 is evoking a good response.

Earlier on Thursday, the delegation from the state met Indian business leaders in Frankfurt and invited the Indian community to expand their businesses in Uttar Pradesh and participate in successfully organising the UP Global Investors' Summit 2023.

Senior government officials, including Navneet Sehgal, Excise Commissioner, Senthil C Pandian and Pranjal Yadav, Secretary, MSME department, were also present.

The delegation reached Frankfurt on December 8 and met leaders of some eminent Indian business groups during a dinner hosted by the consul general of India in Germany.

Speaking on the occasion, the delegation urged these business leaders to choose Uttar Pradesh as their investment destination. Investment and skill development and exchange of skilled labour in sectors such as logistics, textile, healthcare and pharma, tourism, automotive and electric vehicles (EV) were also discussed on the occasion.

Indian industrialists who remained present included Shantanu Mohan, Senior Vice-President, Trail Blazer Tours India, Vijay Kapoor, Managing



Director, Crystal & Somas, Chitra Agarwal, Managing Partner, CSA Healthcare, Gautam Mehta, Business Development Manager, Skyways Logistics and Dr

THE DELEGATION REACHED FRANKFURT ON DECEMBER 8 AND MET LEADERS OF SOME EMINENT INDIAN BUSINESS GROUPS DURING A DINNER HOSTED BY THE CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA IN GERMANY

Satish K Batra, President, Horizon Industries.

Dr Amit Telang, Consul General of India in Frankfurt, and members of the Consulate General in Frankfurt joined the delegation for dinner on the occasion. Through the road-

show in Germany, the delegation of the Government of Uttar Pradesh will contact German companies like Samson, Continental AG, Innoplexus AG, and Zack

show in Germany, the delegation of the Government of Uttar Pradesh will contact German companies like Samson, Continental AG, Innoplexus AG, and Zack

Technologies GmbH and will prepare investment intentions for Uttar Pradesh.

The government delegation visited Samson AG Headquarters in Frankfurt and invited its Chief Executive Officer Andreas Widl to invest

in the UP GIS 23. Samson AG intends to collaborate with the government in research and development (R&D) and green hydrogen manufacturing.

Andreas Heuser Head, Chairman's Office, Europe Motherson Group, also welcomed the delegation in Bruchkobel.

For the upcoming UP Global Investors' Summit 2023, the Uttar Pradesh government is reaching out to investors through roadshows in 18 countries and seven major cities of the country. Through this, investors will be encouraged to invest in Uttar Pradesh and efforts will be made to know their investment intent. UP-GIS 2023 is scheduled to be held in an initiative to achieve the ambitious target of making the state a \$ 1 trillion economy in the next five years.

Kukrail zoo, night safari to be established by next year end

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh's Minister of State for Environment, Forest, Climate Change and Zoological Gardens (Independent Charge) Arun Kumar Saxena said that a target had been set for establishing Kukrail zoo and night safari by the end of year 2023 and the next foundation day of Lucknow zoo would be celebrated in Kukrail.

"This decision has been taken so that the work of establishing Kukrail zoo and night safari is started as soon as possible," the minister said and added that the work of digital survey of Kukrail zoo and night safari had been completed.

He said work on the camp structure and war room should be completed by the end of February so that the upcoming review meeting in this regard could be held in the war room itself.

Saxena gave these instructions during the departmental review meeting held at Parijat auditorium.

On the lines of One District One Product scheme, he gave instructions to all the divisional forest officers of the state to make available the proposal of One



District, One Wetland in each district of the state.

"Wetlands in each district should be developed under eco-tourism," he said.

On the tree plantation campaign he said that if any plant had dried up during the tree plantation campaign, another plant should be planted immediately in its place. Its monitoring will also be done by a third party. If negligence is found, strict

3 IAS officers transferred

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After a major reshuffle in the Uttar Pradesh Police department, three more IAS officers were transferred on Friday.

The officials transferred include Director Social Welfare Rakesh Kumar who goes as special secretary Revenue, Additional Commissioner Cooperatives Khem Pal Singh who will take over as special secretary, Transport and Special Secretary APC branch, Ram Narayan Singh Yadav, who has been shifted to Secretariat Administration department.

Traders protest GST raids on business establishments

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A delegation of traders led by Sanjay Gupta, state president of Uttar Pradesh Adarsh Vyapar Mandal, met former deputy chief minister Dr Dinesh Sharma at his residence and protested against ongoing raids across the state against traders.

Gupta said that traders were being harassed in the name of goods and services tax (GST) as raids were being conducted in the name of tax evasion.

"Raids on business establishments are not justified; investigations should be done only on receipt of complaint. But the officials are carrying out raids randomly to harass the traders," Gupta said.

"The raids have created a fear psychosis following which many traders have closed their establishments, which is not a good sign," he added.

The former deputy chief minister assured the traders that he would meet Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and try to resolve the issue.

The delegation included Chandrashekhar Gupta, Raman Nigam, Dinesh Sharma, Kanhaiya Lal and Vijay Rastogi.

उत्तर प्रदेश आवास एवं विकास परिषद

विद्युत नगर

अधिलक्षक, विद्युत नगर, लखनऊ-226001

फ़ोन: 226001-802 / M-6 E.D.-1 / 177

ईमेल: upapw@upapw.com

दिनांक: 09.12.2022

अति अत्यवकाश ई-निविदा सूचना

अयोध्यावासी द्वारा मृदापत्र योजना सं-4 लखनऊ के सेक्टर-15 में प्रस्तावित यूएनपी नवीन इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर-2023 के कार्यस्वरूप पर हाई मास्ट फिटिंग एवं निकट नहर के काल में गुजर रही सड़क के आशिक क्षेत्र में दृष्टि लाइटिंग का कार्य हेतु अति अत्यवकाश ई-निविदा दिनांक 20.12.2022 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की गई है जिसकी तकनीकी बिड दिनांक 20.12.2022 को खोली जायेगी। शेष नियम व शर्तें परिषद की वेबसाइट www.upapw.com तथा अधिसूचना अगिन्यात, विद्युत नगर-प्रधान, उपाध्यक्ष आवास एवं विकास परिषद, इन्दिरा नगर, लखनऊ के कार्यालय में देखी जा सकती है।

(श्रीधर सिंह)

अधीक्षक अगिन्यात (वि/सॉ)

Shivpal's PSPL formally ceases to exist

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) founded by Shivpal Singh Yadav has formally ceased to exist as the signboard of the party was taken off from its office at a government bungalow in Raj Bhavan Colony.

The PSPL flag was also removed from the party office. A notice pasted on the gate of the bungalow informs that this is the camp office and residence of Shivpal Yadav.

PSPL founder Shivpal Singh Yadav had on Thursday announced the merger of his party with the Samajwadi Party. The announcement was made by Shivpal Yadav in the presence of his nephew and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Saifai.

Akhilesh Yadav presented a party flag to his uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav in Saifai, indicating the merger of PSPL with SP. An SP flag was also put on Shivpal Singh Yadav's vehicle.



In 2016, Akhilesh had shown the SP exit door to his uncle Shivpal due to family disputes. Shivpal later formed his own party, Pragatisheel

Samajwadi Party (Lohia). However, the PSPL failed to win any seat in the state in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and 2022 UP assembly polls.

"This is a new change of samajwad. There were misunderstandings between the two leaders, which have now been cleared. And from now

on, it will be a fight between Bharatiya Janata Party and Samajwadi Party," said Deepak Mishra, spokesman of PSPL.



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NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002 (HEREINAFTER CALLED 'ACT')

It is to bring to your notice that your loan account has been declared as NPA by secured creditor Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited having its registered office at D-305, Ground Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi - 110017 (herein after called 'SHDFCL') and you are liable to pay total outstanding against your loan to SHDFCL. You are also liable to pay future interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. Therefore, we hereby call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities to SHDFCL within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which SHDFCL will be empowered to exercise the power under Section 13(4) of the ACT. The details of borrowers and secured assets are as under:

S. No.	Loan Account No. Borrower(s) Name	Applicant Address	Demand Notice Amount & Date	Secured Asset
1.	OV/N1911000005024510, Prabhath Singh, Prabha Singh, Rahul Singh	H.No.125, Paramhans Nagar, Near Hanuman Temple, Chitalpur, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh - 221106	Rs. 37,37,794/- & 29-11-2022	Flat No. 404, having municipal No. N. 7/1-E-1-404 on fourth Floor, Akash Ganga Complex, located on S.M. Plot No. 17, Situated in Mauza Nawada, Pargana Dehat Amanat, Ward Nagwa, Distt.-Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh- 221106
2.	OLKW1808000005014483, Mohd Asif, Shaikun	643A/70 Paltan Chawni Sitapur Road Scheme Near Mahadev Hospital Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226021	Rs. 15,07,472/- & 29-11-2022	H No. 643A / 046, Mohalla Paltan Chawni, Ward Nartendri Hareschandra (97), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226021
3.	OLKW1803000005011961, Rakesh Sharma, Shobha Sharma	Village Post Surwari Tehsil- Suhawal, Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh-224188	Rs. 8,85,959/- & 29-11-2022	Plot No. 13, Khasra No - 865, Situated at Salempur Pataura Pargana Kakori, Lucknow, U.P. -227107
4.	OLKO2011000005031123, Mukesh Verma, Meenu Verma	414/133, Sarai Mali Khan, Near Dudh Mandi, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh - 226001	Rs. 4,43,483/- & 29-11-2022	A Residential Plot, Part/ Minjuma of Khasra No. 293, measuring 350 Sq Fts i.e. 32.527 Sq Mts. Situated at Gram Mohalla - Daspur, Ward - Kesari Khara, Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226001
5.	LKW 1408, 025988, Mahendra Kumar, Neelu Jaiswal	Ekta Nagar Kanousli, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226017	Rs. 4,73,982/- & 29-11-2022	Part of Plot over Kh No. 1841, Kanousli Ward- Keshari Kheda Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226011
6.	0ALB1705000005005776, Satyendra Kumar Shukla, Sudha	E.G.- 9, Doorwani Nagar Naini Maharishi Chawraha Allahabad Uttar Pradesh-211008	Rs. 6,90,729/- & 29-11-2022	Arazi No. 589, Mauza Dewarh Upahrah Pargana Arail Tehsil Karchana Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh -210118

PLACE: GURGAON, DATE: 09-12-2022

AUTHORIZED OFFICER, SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.

CM dedicates projects worth ₹387.59 cr

PNS ■ KANPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while dedicating 272 projects worth Rs 387.59 crore at BJP's 'Prabuddhjan Sammelan' at VSSD Degree College on Friday said the 'double engine' government is working for the uplift of Kanpur and the state. The UP government was committed to the development of Kanpur which was once called the Manchester of the East. He said Kanpur at one time was recognised for its world class industries. He said today the UP government is on the threshold of making Kanpur an industrial hub and offer employment to the youth.

He said it would be no exaggeration to state that Kanpur at one time was among the five top cities of the country. The reason for its downfall was rampant corruption, vandalism and extremely poor management. He promised the people that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi the face of Kanpur will be totally transformed through myriad development projects some of which are nearly complete



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveils the foundation stone of new projects on Friday

and some are on the verge of completion.

Yogi said projects like Namami Gange, Metro Rail, Defence Corridor, Smart City and many more are about to bring in a total reform of Kanpur. He said the most encouraging part was that investors were keen to invest in Uttar Pradesh, especially Kanpur, and huge investments soon to come in will be the reason for a major turnaround of this city. He said

pace of development in Kanpur. He said in the supplementary budget of the Uttar Pradesh Government a provision had been made of Rs 8000 crore to build a land bank between Kanpur and Jhansi and over 25,000 poor had been provided houses out of which 14,000 are in city and 11,000 in rural areas. Later the CM laid the foundation stone of 122 mega projects at the cost of Rs 213.47 crore. He

later dedicated 150 projects worth of Rs 174.12 crore to Kanpurites. Later addressing the intelligentsia he appealed to them to lead and support their city so that the dream of Smart City can be materialised. He later participated in the 'Annaprashan' of children and 'Goddh Bharai'. He then handed over sanctions of loans, ODOP scheme and keys to beneficiaries of CM Housing. Top BJP leaders were present on the occasion.

Vietnam PM appreciates parachutes made in India



Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh at the GIL stall

PNS ■ KANPUR

Defence Ministry's DPSU Gliders India Limited (GIL) has made a splash on the strength of its excellent products in the ongoing international exhibition in Vietnam. At the inauguration of the exhibition Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh at the GIL stall saw and appreciated the parachutes made in India. He said that the newly developed products of new Indian DPSU GIL were very good.

The PM stayed for a long time at the GIL stall at the India Pavilion at the exhibition site in Hanoi, Vietnam and got

detailed information from GIL officials about various types of parachutes and rubberised products. During this, he praised GIL products and congratulated them for a bright future.

The delegation of GIL officials included Joint General Manager of GIL Pratiksha Saini, Works Manager Ankur Singh Chauhan and JWM Subroto Chowdhary. This unique partnership of GIL is leading to global branding of a variety of quality parachutes and other products manufactured in the country. The exhibition has stalls of 170 companies from more than 30 lead-

ing defence manufacturing countries. Significantly, this International Defence Exhibition is going on in Vietnam from December 8, which will continue till December 10. In this models of brake parachute Sukhoi-30 (fighter aircraft), brake parachute Hawk are being displayed in the series of products of GIL. There are also miniature models of PTAM, PTAR, parasail, SD parachute, illuminating parachute, KM Float, Boat Gemini Crafts and products like Rain Pancho Convertible Edge Biovo and Pancho Glacier are on display in their original form.

Ex-block pramukh's property may be attached soon

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The administration is keeping an eye on the property of mafia and former block pramukh Dilip Mishra. His property worth about seven crores has been identified by the revenue department, which is being prepared to be attached. The verification work of the property is being done by the department. After this, action will be taken to confiscate the property.

Police said that during the investigation it was confirmed that the mafia had bought land in Karchana in the name of his son Shubham Mishra. The money collected to buy the land is related to the crime. Apart from this, information is also being collected about many other properties. It may

be pointed out here that the mafia Dilip Mishra is lodged in Fatehgarh Jail.

Dilip Mishra, the former block pramukh of Chaka in Prayagraj, was arrested by the police in June 2020. Then the police arrested the shooter with the weapon at Dilip's house in Lawayan. After that the search for Dilip was started. Dilip's son Shubham was also sent to jail and was released on bail.

Several criminal cases are registered against Dileep. A case has also been registered against Dilip Mishra for the fatal attack on Yogi government's current cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi on July 12, 2010 by exploding a remote bomb. Then Nandi was injured in the attack while three people died.

DM inspects SRN Hospital

Prayagraj (PNS): District magistrate Sanjay Kumar Khatri inspected SRN Hospital and sought an explanation from pharmacists for not maintaining registers. The DM also ordered to deduct 5% discount from the bill of the vendor/ agency concerned after finding unhygienic conditions prevailing in and around the hospital campus.

The DM also inspected the trauma center and interacted with patients undergoing treatment there. Khatri also inquired about the daily flow of patients

at the hospital as well as how many patients are being discharged daily. He also asked hospital authorities to make the process of admission and discharge online. After expressing concern over poor sanitation facilities in and around the hospital campus, the DM also asked hospital authorities to ensure a roster duty pattern for sanitary workers. He also asked hospital administration to take better care of patients and further asked to remove loose wiring and defunct sockets.

Six-year-old makes it to Guinness Book

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A six-year-old girl resident of Nagar Panchayat Sirsa made her identity worldwide through YouTube. After this her name was recorded in the World Book of Records. Apart from this, Advita's name has been included in the Guinness Book Record. She has the distinction of being the youngest writer.

Apart from this, Advita has more than one crore followers on her YouTube channel. Rupesh Keshari's six-year-old daughter Advita Keshari runs the channel on YouTube along with her mother Kanchan Keshari. Advita has been working as an English translator, language trainer,

story teller and content creator on social media since the age of just four. She has millions of followers on social media. Mother Kanchan said that the girl showed keenness towards education and started posting her videos.

The little girl wrote her own book 'Morning to Evening Conversations with Eddie'. Through her short videos and book, her name was recorded in the Guinness World Book of Records. She is studying in UKG. Her mother is among the best English teachers in India. After the girl's name was registered in the world record, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has also honored her.

The girl as well as her par-

COPEN12 follows new modality'

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur is organising the International Conference on Precision, Micro, Meso, and Nano Engineering, COPEN12 from December 8 - 10. COPEN is a premiere conference for the manufacturing community in India. COPEN12 is the 12th edition of the conference and for the first time IIT Kanpur is hosting it.

With rapid development in the fields of Precision, Micro, Meso, and Nano Engineering, the future holds growing scope for India to become 'atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) in these domains. These key engineering domains contribute largely to the fields of affordable healthcare, space exploration, defence, aerospace and allied areas. The conference emphasises on seeking deliberations for the advancement of research in these areas.

Organising Chairperson, Professor J Ramkumar from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Kanpur, opened the inaugural session and stated that COPEN12 follows a new modality that is intended to ensure higher quality scientific exchanges.

The conference caters to three broad themes - Precision Engineering, Manufacturing Processes, and Measurements

and Smart Manufacturing. COPEN12's goal is to bring the young Indian manufacturing research community together and one way to do this was to have early career faculty members give talks at the conference. The conference received a total of 215 submissions, out of which, 175 have been accepted. More than 300 delegates from the industry, international community, government R&D labs, faculty and students are attending this edition to present more than 100 papers and around 40 posters at the conference. This includes 15 invited talks from distinguished technical experts from India and abroad, as well as three keynote addresses from key industry personnel, where they would present the problems and deliberate on finding solutions.

There are three different presentation tracks available: an alpha-track for presenting posters that showcase early-stage research and development; a beta-track for presenting four-page papers that showcase research that has reached some maturity and a delta-track for presenting improvements to research that has already been published in reputable international journals within the past year.

Professor Abhay Karandikar, Director IIT Kanpur, was present at the

inaugural session and gave an inspirational talk on the significance of manufacturing in the modern era and the role eminent researchers play in the process. He said, "The manufacturing sector has been witnessing rapid changes with the advent of newer and better technologies in the recent past. The future holds multi-dimensional opportunities in manufacturing where India would play a vital role. With significant research in Precision, Micro, Meso, and Nano Engineering from our researchers, India could be 'atmanirbhar' soon and also a leader in manufacturing technologies. I believe this conference would give a diverse platform for delegates and attendees to deliberate on challenges and solutions to accelerate the objectives of Skill India and Make in India initiatives, especially in the field of manufacturing."

Professor Suhas Joshi, Director IIT Indore, provided some insightful commentary on the development of manufacturing technologies all over the world over the course of the past half century. Professor Sameer Khandekar, Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Kanpur emphasised the importance of precision in the process of designing manufacturing systems.

Most cases of anaemia due to iron deficiency: Dr Pai



The Kanpur Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society holds seminar on anaemia

PNS ■ KANPUR

Dr Rishikant Pai from FOGSI while addressing a seminar on anaemia among women on Thursday said there were many reasons for anaemia, but most cases were due to iron deficiency. He said anaemia was an indication of nutritional deficiencies and poor health. He said other causes of anaemia include malaria, hookworm and other helminths, other nutritional deficiencies, chronic infections and genetic conditions.

He said anaemia affected over 800 million women worldwide and in India, it was classified as a major public health problem as it was estimated that 52 per cent of non-pregnant women of repro-

ductive age are anaemic. He said although the primary cause of anaemia is iron-deficiency, it is seldom present in isolation.

He said more frequently it coexisted with a number of other causes, such as malaria, parasitic infection, nutritional deficiencies, and haemoglobinopathies. Dr Pai said the importance of iron deficiency as cause of anaemia varies by region. While as low as 50 per cent of anaemia may be attributable to iron-deficiency (due to high prevalence of HIV, hookworm, malaria and other infectious diseases) the proportion of anaemia caused by iron deficiency increases to over 70 per cent among premenopausal women in India. He said iron deficiency also had important consequences for the future

generations as iron deficiency anaemia increased the risk for preterm labour, low birth weight, infant mortality and predicted iron-deficiency in infants after four months of age. He said anaemia of which iron deficiency is the major contributor, accounted for 3.7 per cent and 12.8 per cent of maternal deaths during pregnancy and childbirth. He said despite increased national and international awareness and recent governmental intervention programmes, the prevalence of anaemia among Indian women has remained higher than 45 per cent and anaemia trends remain strongly correlated with iron deficiency. Others present on the occasion were Dr Meera Agnihotri, Dr Usha Goenka and Dr Kanchan Sharma.

Bar code, monogram to rein in copying mafia

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad popularly known as UP Board is going to take a big step on copying mafia in the high school and intermediate examinations to be held in the year 2023. In this examination, there is a preparation to put barcodes and monograms of the Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad on the answer sheets (copies) given to the examinees.

This is being done for the first time.

Due to this, the plans of the copying mafia to manipulate the answer books at the examination centers and submit answer books by writing from outside will fail.

The UP Board is taking new steps every day to curb the malpractices done in the previous examinations. During the previous years' examinations, there have been complaints about answer sheets being written outside the centre. Such cases have also been caught earlier outside many centres. Having barcodes and monograms on the answer sheets will eliminate the possibility of submitting copies by writing from outside. Due to this new experiment, there will be no scope for submit-

Having barcodes and monograms on the answer sheets will eliminate the possibility of submitting copies by writing from outside

ting the old answer sheets by writing on them.

Apart from this, scanning of copies will be done after the examination with the help of bar code, so that the board can know whether the answer sheets on which the examination has been conducted have been sent by the board or have reached through any other means.

UP Board Secretary Divyakant Shukla said that putting barcodes and monograms on the answer sheets would not only make the board exams fair, but the copying mafia would also be curbed. The board is engaged in preparing for the successful completion of the examination in every situation. This will end the game of exchange of answer sheets. Random checking of answer sheets will also be done through bar code after the board exam.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
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Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/Northern Railway/Lucknow invites E-Auction for following work.	
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आनुकूल नगर पालिक निगम भिलाई द्वारा एकीकृत पञ्जीन प्रणाली अर्जेंट सखम सेमी से पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों के निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-			
क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	बिस्तर टेंडर क्र एवं जारी दिनांक	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
निविदा दाखल करने की अंतिम तिथि			
1	वार्ड क्र. 67 (पुराना) सेक्टर 06 शिविक बॉयर्स एंजल.डी. लाइट एवं हाई मास्टर लाइट लगाने का कार्य के साथ पत्र 03 पत्र 04 में एवं पालिका निर्माण कार्य।	116505 07.12.2022	147.36
23.12.2022			28.12.2022
2	जोन क्र. 05 अर्जेंट सेक्टर 09 हुदको फुलवॉल स्टेडियम से सीमा चौक तक अमरीकरण कार्य। (द्वितीय निविदा)	116589 07.12.2022	99.18
23.12.2022			23.12.2022
निविदा हेतु प्रमाण पत्र एवं घोरेहर राशि की एक.डी.आर स्वीड पोस्ट अथवा रजिस्टर्ड डाक से स्वीकार किये जावेंगे। निविदा हेतु आवश्यक दस्तावेज तथा कार्य हेतु दी जाने वाली दरें ऑनलाईन (Online) दी जावें। उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, घोरेहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापित, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी नगर पालिक निगम भिलाई की वेबसाइट www.bhilainagarinigam.com , संचालनालय की वेबसाइट www.uad.cg.gov.in एवं सीमा की वेबसाइट के वेबसाइट eproc.cgstate.gov.in से भी डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।			
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Yogi govt gives a big gift to Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Yogi government has given a big gift to the people of Kashi. A large population of the city is now getting the pure water of the Ganga to drink. The special thing is that like the water coming out of Gangotri, this water is also completely clean and pure. For this a polymer dosing plant has been set up in Jalkal campus here at a cost of about ₹50 lakh. After this the city has become the first city in the country where Ganga water is being supplied to homes with quality

on such a large scale.

Secretary of Jalkal department Siddharth Kumar said that the pure water of Ganga has started reaching about 1.5 to 2 lakh houses in Varanasi. He informed that Ganga water is being supplied after purifying it in the Bhelupur Jalkal complex through a pump located at Bhadaini.

“Due to its supply, the people living in the sis-Varuna areas are now getting pure Ganga water as drinking water. After this, the department is preparing to extend the scheme to trans-Varuna areas as well,”

he said. According to him, the use of organic polymers has started for the purification of water, due to which the PPM becomes close to zero.

“Due to this, water soluble impurities, organic compounds, bacteria, soil, sand particles etc. are almost completely cleaned. This does not make the water look cloudy or dirty. The biggest feature of polymer dosing is that by its use, the basic properties and healthy minerals of water remain present in the water itself, which is beneficial for health,” said Jalkal secretary.

According to him, using modern technology for the first time in the world, Ganga water is being directly lifted and treated with polymer dosing method on such a large scale, due to which the quality of water remains in its original form.

He said that so far 120 to 125 MLD water is being treated daily. It will soon be increased to 250 MLD. He also informed that polymer dosing treated water is healthier than RO and mineral water sold in the market whose TDS is around 200.

BHU V-C inspects convocation preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Sudhir K Jain inspected the preparations for university’s convocation at Swatantrata Bhavan here on Friday. The BHU’s 102nd convocation will be held on Saturday after a gap of three years when the same could not be organised due to Covid-19 pandemic.

On the occasion, senior officers including directors of various institutes, deans of faculties and heads of departments were also present and rehearsal of the convocation was also held. During his inspection, the V-C saw decoration and other preparations and reviewed all arrangements.

In the convocation the



V-C Prof Sudhir K Jain inspecting preparations for BHU convocation at Swatantrata Bhavan in Varanasi on Friday.

BHU will award over 37,000 degrees to students and Nikesh Arora, CEO, Palo Alto

Networks will deliver the convocation address. The chief guest Nikesh Arora is also an

alumnus of the university who obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering (1985-1989) from Institute of Technology, BHU (which is now IIT-BHU).

As the convocation could not be organised in recent years, the university will also award degrees to students who passed their respective programmes in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. A total of 91 students will be presented various medals from dais at the main function at Swatantrata Bhavan which include Chancellor’s medals, Late Maharaja Vibhuti Narayan Singh Gold Medal and BHU medals. The other students will receive their degrees from their respective institutes, faculties and colleges.

BLW receives IRIS certificate from UNIFE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) received the International Railway Industry Standard (IRIS) certificate from UNIFE, an important body of European Standards. This certificate is the latest standard of ISO 22163 (IRIS). It is also an extension of the earlier one which is going to expire on December 11. The BLW is the first production unit of the Indian Railways in the country

which manufactures rail locomotives to get this certificate. To meet the criteria of this certificate there is a responsibility to meet 10 standards, which BLW has been able to complete in record time. With the receipt of the certificate the demands of BLW’s electric as well as diesel locomotives will increase in the international market.

To improve the quality of railways, for its monitoring, UNIFE has appointed Bengaluru-based DQS

Certification who audited the BLW for 12 consecutive days and found BLW worthy of this achievement. Later it recommended the name of BLW for certification to UNIFE. Earlier, BLW had received IRIS certificate, which was expiring on Sunday (December 11, 2022), but in record time with new revision 3.1, the BLW has achieved significant success in re-obtaining this certificate, which is valid till November 12, 2025.

Under the guidance of General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal all BLW employees contributed their bit in getting the prestigious certificates in record time. On this achievement Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) SK Srivastava extended best wishes to the BLW personnel. Management representative and Chief Electrical Engineer (Planning) Ran Vijay described this as the result of tireless efforts of all BLW workers.

Chetna School celebrates silver jubilee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The silver jubilee (25th foundation day) of Chetna School, a vocational training centre for mentally retarded and disabled children, run by the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) Women’s Welfare Organisation (WWO), was held here on Friday which was inaugurated by General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal by lighting the lamp. On the occasion an attractive and colourful cultural programme was presented by the children in the school premises. The school was inaugurated on October 10, 1996, in which BLW and its surrounding children are studying. The purpose of the school is to make these students self-dependent by giving them vocational training. In the course of this training, they are given training in making candles, paper bags, herbal guls and soaps, tie and dye, sewing



GM Anjali Goyal being received at the silver jubilee function of Chetna School at BLW in Varanasi on Friday.

etc. Speaking on the occasion, the WWO members suggested that the items made by the students of Chetna School such as brushes, toothpaste pouches, coasters, envelopes, bags etc should be used in the Officers’ Guest House located at BLW. “This will help in making the students studying in the school self-reliant. Along with this, a

stall of these goods should be set up there so that the members who come there, if they need any goods, can get them from there,” they added. On the occasion, the GM on her behalf provided an amount of Rs 1 lakh for the education of the students studying in Chetna School.

Appreciating the contri-

bution of teachers the GM said that Chetna School is doing excellent work in the field of self-reliance of disabled children. The teachers are playing an important role in the education of the children of BLW and the surrounding areas. The effort of BLW WWO to make brand Banaras is dedicated to Prime Minister’s ‘Vocal for Local,’ she said.

Various programmes like dance, slow motion cricket, fancy dress, group dance etc were presented by the students. The function was conducted jointly by Priya Raj, secretary, WWO and Rakhi, principal, Chetna School. The annual report was read by Shruti Pandey, in-charge of Chetna School. During the programme, WWO vice-president Gauri Srivastava, treasurer Anulata, SDGM Vijay, public relations officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar and others were also present.

NER GM conducts inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

General Manager of North Eastern Railway (NER) Chandra Vir Raman conducted window-trailing inspection of Gorakhpur-Banaras rail section on Friday. During the inspection, he also reviewed the progress of ongoing projects relating to doubling the tracks, electrification and other construction works apart from taking stock of various aspects related to safety, operational facilities, maintenance and cleanliness of this railway section. He also reviewed the work being done on the Varanasi division to improve maintenance standards of the track and to remove the scraps lying near tracks apart from the work of pruning of trees and



NER GM Chandra Vir Raman conducting window-trailing inspection on Gorakhpur-Banaras rail section on Friday.

clearing of vegetation around the tracks. Raman directed the accompanying officers to increase progress of works and safety inspections related to train operations. He also instructed the officers to complete various works going on at

the stations in accordance with the standards of quality and safety. Apart from this the GM along with senior officials reached Banaras around 5 pm while conducting the window-trailing inspection of Gorakhpur-Banaras rail sec-

tion. During this, he reviewed the railway track, ballast profile, crossover line, overhead traction, clearance of platforms, railway track maintenance, curvature, bridge culverts, block sections, colour light signals, visibility boards etc on the rail section. He was accompanied by Principal Chief Operations Manager (PCOM) Sanjay Tripathi, Chief Project Manager-3 of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) VK Shukla, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) Administration) Rahul Srivastava, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer (SDSTE) Rajat Priya, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) RN Singh and other senior railway officials.

Jaishankar arriving today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A galaxy of union and state ministers are arriving in the city to attend the ongoing month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month and several senior union ministers, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, had already participated. To continue the process of interaction between visitors from the South, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will arrive here on a two-day visit

on Saturday. During his stay, Jaishankar will attend the KTS and review the preparations for the G-20 conference. Besides, Union Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav already came here on his two-day visit on Friday.

Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya will also be arriving on two-day visit on Saturday and apart from attending KTS, he will also inaugurate the Universal Health Coverage Conclave.

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur will arrive in the city on his two-day visit on December 11 and will distribute prizes to the winners of the T20 match being organised by SAI apart from participating in the KTS at BHU.

Besides, he will also inaugurate the table tennis and other sports programmes being organised by SAI on December 12 at 8.30 am. Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Dr L Murugan will also visit on Sunday to

attend KTS. Meanwhile, the members of ninth team took a holy dip in Ganga at Hanuman Ghat. They worshipped in the ancient temples located near Hanuman Ghat and visited Subrahmanya Bharati’s house in the same locality. Later this group of professionals from Tamil Nadu also participated in the academic programme under KTS in BHU. Besides, they visited Sarnath and saw various temples and heritage associated with Lord Buddha. They also visited Sarnath Museum where the Ashoka Pillar is kept.

Blood donation campaign inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma inaugurated the annual blood donation campaign programme of HDFC Bank at Rathayatra crossing by lighting the lamp here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Sharma encouraged the bank employees who donated blood. He said donating blood is a great donation as it gives lives to many human beings. The DC also highlighted the bene-



fits of blood donation. Appreciating the work, the DC said it is commendable work. Donating the blood by one person can save three lives, Sharma said, emphasising that more and more people should join this cause.

The function was also attended by senior HDFC Bank officers and others.

Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma inaugurating blood donation drive at HDFC Bank, Rathayatra, in Varanasi on Friday.

NABARD signs MoU with Baroda UP Bank



NABARD and Baroda UP Bank organising a programme at Kapsethi in Varanasi on Friday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Deputy Managing Director (DMD) of NABARD PVS Suryakumar visited the city on Friday and in his presence,

NABARD signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Baroda UP Bank for promotion of joint liability groups. CGM of NABARD SK Dora and GM

of Baroda UP Bank Krishna Kumar Kashyap signed the MoU. They also discussed and reviewed the success of the Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) Namami Gange Farmer Producer Company Limited, sponsored and promoted by NABARD.

Namami Gange retail store has been established at Kapsethi in the district for sale of agri-inputs to farmer members and it will also work as procurement centre for food grains apart from establishment of Common Service Centre (CSC) for distribution of essential public utility services in rural areas of Sewapuri block. An approval of loan amount of ₹40.30 lakh to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) under NABARD enhanced projects in collaboration with Baroda UP Bank was also done. About 200 SHG women were made shareholders during

the programme and share certificates were also distributed at the function. The FPO has a membership of over 300 farmers and has a turnover of Rs 4 crore from April 1 this year till date. It also registered achievements, including signing of an MoU with National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for business cooperation under dairy and animal husbandry and setting up of PARAG milk collection centre. Besides, the FPO has also been granted licenses for export and sale of fertiliser, seeds and pesticides etc from ITC India, Dayal Group, Himalaya, Kisan Chara Mills Pvt Ltd and Grameen India Foundation.

The function was also attended by GM of Baroda UP Bank Mrinal Kant Halder, GM of NABARD (UP) Himanshu Mishra, DGM, NABARD UP Damodar Mishra and AGM NABARD Varanasi Anuj Kumar Singh.

Child marriage a curse: Panelists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Child marriage is such a curse, which affects not only the present but also the entire life cycle of any boy or girl. It completely deprives the life of a girl child of her rights to development, protection and participation. These were the views expressed by various panelists in their statements after listening to the stories of some child marriage victims. As many as 11 girls and women of different age groups expressed their pain they experienced due to early marriages at a programme organised by Dr Shambhunath Singh Research Foundation (SRF) in collaboration with Child Rights and You (CRY) at One Stop Centre at Pandeypur here on Friday. The programme was participated by the members from State Child Rights Commission, District Legal Service Authority, police and social organisations associated with women’s welfare and academic field. The coordinator of the programme Dr Roli Singh, explaining each case in detail, apprised the panelists about the actions taken so far and their expectations in each case. Speaking on the occasion, Nirmala Singh Patel, member of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, said child marriage affects the whole life of the child so it is the duty of all of us to keep an eye on this evil practice happening in our society and make efforts to root it out. Ashok Yadav reiterated the commitment of the country, the state and the Commission

for the prevention of child marriage.

Additional District Judge and Secretary of DLSA Pramod Kumar Giri said any boy/girl suffering from child marriage can get free legal help from DLSA to nullify his/her marriage and for maintenance of children born out of child marriage. Assistant Commissioner of Police Priyashree Pal said Varanasi Police is operating women’s help desks at each police station through its women constables. Prof Nimisha Gupta from the department of Social Work, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) said child marriage is a social problem, which can be eradicated not only through law, but also through awareness and sensitivity, by making the society, especially the girl child, educated and prosperous. Deputy Director of Women’s Welfare Department (Varanasi division) and District Probation-cum-Child Marriage Prohibition Officer Sudhakar Sharan Pandey said the division is keeping a close watch on incidents of child marriage and under Mission Vatsalya, child protection is being done in every village and urban ward. “This will be closely monitored by committees and work will be done to provide as much relief as possible under various schemes to the cases that have happened so far,” he added. In the beginning the general secretary of SRF Rajeev Kumar Singh welcomed the participants and also proposed the vote of thanks in the end.

UP men, women show dominance in hockey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP men and women showing their domination in hockey defeated their counterpart teams from Tamil Nadu in a sports event organised under ongoing month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) here on Thursday. UP Minister of State for Sports and Youth Welfare Girish Chandra Yadav inaugurated the sports summit. The UP women defeated Tamil Nadu women team 6-2 while UP Men’s team defeated their rivals 5-1. The hockey matches were played at the BHU Hockey Stadium to mark the beginning of eight-day-long ‘sports summit’ being organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) till December 15. Speaking at the inaugural function, the UP minister said that a total of nine matches will be played on this ground continuously till December 15. “Apart from traditions, culture, art, literature and food events, various sports activities will also be organised during the KTS which will further strengthen the relationship between UP and Tamil Nadu. The enthusiasm of the sports participants from both the states can be seen as it reflects their passion and commitment for sports,” he said. The other dignitaries present at the inauguration ceremony were eminent

educationist Padma Shri Chamu Krishna Shastri, nodal officer of KTS Subhash Chandra Yadav, regional BJP president (Kashi Region) Mahesh Chandra Srivastava and general secretary of University Sports Board Prof Abhimanyu Singh. Later, in the cultural evening at Amphe-theatre grounds in BHU, Dandiya and Garba enthralled the audience at KTS. Audience enjoyed the beautiful and impressive presentations of songs, drama and dance performed by groups of talented guest artists from Tamil Nadu. The artistes were applauded for their sensational performances. The first presentation was sited recital by Dr Prem Kishore Mishra. He played ‘Raag Kirwani’. He was accompanied by Shivan Mishra, Abhishek Mishra (both on sitar), Siddharth Chakraborty and S Mishra (both on tabla). The second performance was devotional Dadra recital by Dr Madhumita Bhattacharya, who sang ‘Saawariya Pyara Re...’ followed by a Shiv Bhajan in ‘Raga Mishra Peelu’. It was followed by Kathak dance by Vandana Jaiswal, in which ‘Vishnu Vandana’ and ‘Bhav Nritya’ were presented along with Thumri on the sidelines. Then the students of Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), BHU, performed Bengali folk dances, Garba and Dandiya, which was choreographed by Prof Leylina Bhatt.

Schemes reviewed

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Divya Mittal reviewed the schemes under top priority of the government at Collectorate on Thursday. The DM expressed discontent with CMO for not posting doctors at newly-constructed buildings of PHCs and wellness centres. She directed the CMO to make all centres operational by deploying doctors in coordination with the CDO. Reviewing the schemes the DM was apprised by ACMO and nodal officer for Ayushman Bharat that ID had been provided already to the panchayat sahayak and now they could issue the golden cards to the beneficiaries. The DM directed the DPPO to intensify distribution of golden cards. About the buildings the DM asked working agencies to hand them over to the departments concerned as soon as possible. For new buildings of government high schools the CDO was directed to ensure handing over process after proper technical checking. In the meeting progress in all schemes, including potable water scheme, mass marriage, different pension schemes, Anganwadi buildings, solid waste management etc were reviewed. The meeting was attended by CDO Srilaxmi VS, CMO Dr Rajendra Prasad, DPRO Arvind Kumar, PD DRDA Anay Kumar Mishra and others.

Meanwhile presiding over the meeting of Zila Ganga Samiti and Paryavarney Samiti DM Divya Mittal directed for verification of all plantation done in the recent months. In the meeting she was apprised by DFO Arvind Raj Mishra that some departments had not conducted the geotagging of the planted saplings for which she directed the officials concerned to do it without delay. EO nagar palika was directed to keep parks as beautiful as possible.

Four arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A joint team of Colonelgani Apolice and Special Operations Group (Trans Ganga) arrested four members of an inter-state gang involved in cheating near Kamlanagar road, Mumfordganj while plotting a crime and seized ₹72,000 cash, eight crude bombs, two knives, six mobiles and one SUV from their possession.

The arrested persons were identified as Arun Tiwari of Jaunpur, Rohit Sharma of Pratapgarh, Vijay Kumar Pandey of Azamgarh and Yohesh Patil of Jalgaon (Maharashtra).

Police said that all arrested were wanted by police of different districts for cheating. The accused had cheated ₹1 lakh cash from a Soraoon based man and following which, a first information report (FIR) under section 420 and 406 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered. The accused used to carry a fake bundle of currency with them and exchange it with the genuine note after cheating the victims.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bad beginning

The Veep should have better avoided criticism of the apex court in his Rajya Sabha speech

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar has begun his tenure as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha with a combative note. In his maiden address in the Upper House, he expressed his displeasure over the fact that the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Bill, unanimously passed by Parliament, was “undone by the Supreme Court.” This was, according to him, a “severe compromise of parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the mandate of the people.” The remark was as uncharacteristic as it was avoidable. Uncharacteristic because when a person enters a high office, they prefer to say nice things and sound accommodative. Platitudes rather than barbed comments are heard on the first day. But it looks like Dhankhar is yet to shed his belligerence that he exhibited in Kolkata as West Bengal Governor. He became a thorn in Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s side, incessantly slating her government and its actions. It is widely believed that he has been rewarded for his bellicosity. At any rate, his elevation may have inspired other Governors to become more aggressive; one example is Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan. But Dhankhar must realise that his statements will now be highlighted and scrutinised much more than they were earlier. He should have avoided criticism of the apex court in such strong words. He must remember that the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary are three integral organs of the system which have to work in tandem, not fight with each other.



This is not to say that the Supreme Court’s decisions cannot or should not be criticised; they can be and must be, for that is how a vibrant democracy functions. But the manner in which criticism is made is very important—more so when the person slamming an apex court verdict holds a Constitutional office, as Dhankhar does. Hinting that the top court of the land disregarded the mandate of the people was not just excessive but also in bad taste. We commented earlier that the Government’s preference for the NJAC was justified. Three or half of the now disbanded NJAC comprised top judges only; two other members were also appointed in a manner in which government representation was in a minority. It looked like a reasonable system but the Supreme Court invalidated it in 2015. So, the collegium system continues. A few weeks ago, Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju described the collegium system as “opaque.” In fact, he claimed that a majority of judges agreed with him: “Judges are not happy with the collegium system today.” He claimed that when judges select judges, there is politics. In fact, “the politics of us politicians is nothing to what goes on in the judiciary.” By echoing the Government’s position on an important issue, Dhankhar has not presented himself as an impartial Chairman of the Rajya Sabha who could hope to enjoy bipartisan support in the House. This is unfortunate.

PICTALK



A fisherman rows across the Hooghly river during sunset, in Nadia district

PTI

The ayurveda circle

Among ancient India’s biggest gifts to the world, we must embrace it emphatically first

Union Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik has rightly advocated the need for giving benefits of ‘Ayurveda’ to the world. The 9th World Ayurveda Congress is being organised by the World Ayurveda Foundation with support of the Union Ministry of AYUSH and Government of Goa. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the valedictory session on December 11. “It (Ayurveda) is not just medicine, it’s our tradition. We need to give benefits of it to the world,” he said. “Ayurveda has been facilitated by the setting up of a separate Ministry of AYUSH, credit of which goes to Modi” Naik added. He also said that the Modi government took Yoga to the world. And that is perhaps where he was off the mark. Indeed the AYUSH ministry was formed to give fillip to the alternative medicines especially Ayurveda but has it achieved its objective is rather questionable. More than 5,000 delegates and 200 delegates from 30 countries are attending the congress. Though conclave like this do help, the minister and the government at large should understand that it takes more than just words to make a system popular. Equating it to Yoga would be wrong as Yoga was already popular in the west and the credit for that certainly does not go to the government.



The Ministry of AYUSH, is responsible for developing education, research and propagation of traditional medicine systems in India. The Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H) was made into a ministry by the Modi Government in 2014. But in its eight years there is hardly anything that AYUSH can be proud of. It started with much fanfare but has delivered nothing. It promised 100 AYUSH hospitals across the country were proposed, an Institute of Naturopathy in Pune at the cost of Rs 1,000 crore and posting 4,000 AYUSH practitioners across the country. Perhaps the AYUSH ministry can throw some light on the progress made. Somewhere the ministry lost its sense of direction and got embroiled in unnecessary controversies with its advisories which were not backed by scientific research. It failed to provide an infrastructure for alternative medicine and create awareness about the alternative medicines. The minister would do well to come up with a viable plan to provide facilities for the alternative medicines. Before that happens it would be just lip service to a great cause by the union ministers, nothing more.

Common ‘enemy’ No 1’ is China

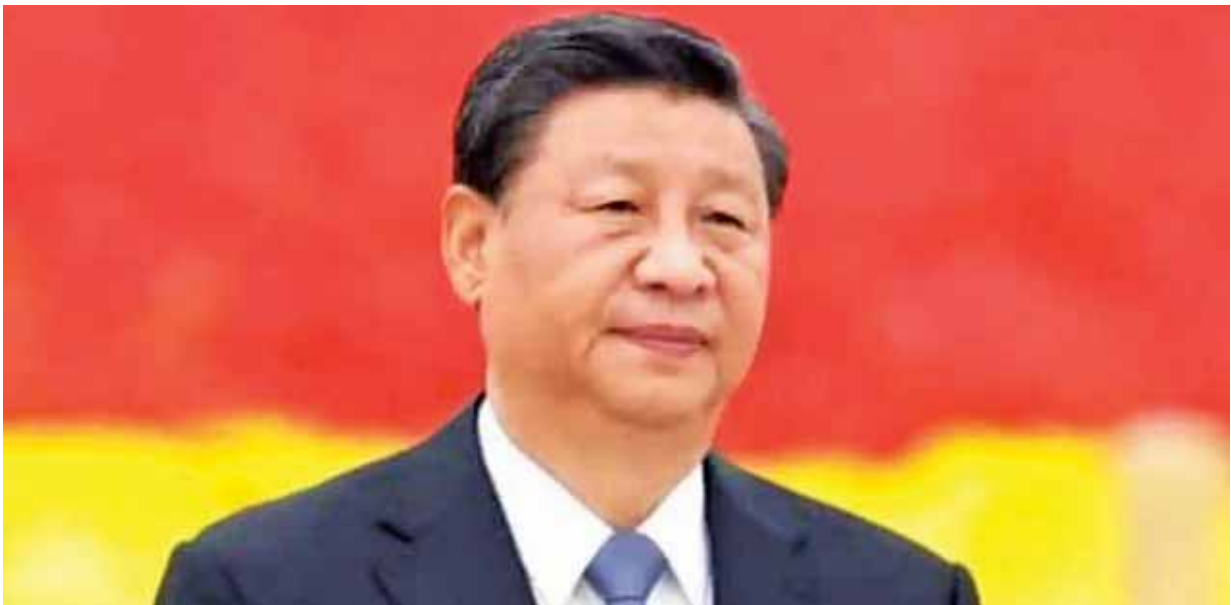
Our Asian neighbour, riding on the might of its economic muscle, doesn’t mind being brazenly expansionist even at the cost of global peace



BHOPINDER SINGH

George Fernandes was perhaps the first Indian politician to call out the Chinese as ‘enemy number one’. It had raised hackles, piqued debate and seen as a tad bit alarmist and premature, as the hyphenated relation with Pakistan was still consuming emotions. However, it didn’t take long for the neologism of *Zhongguo shiji* or Chinese Century, to confirm George Fernandes’s forewarning. The advent of Xi Jinping as the President of China in 2013 accelerated the portents of an expansionist and authoritarian Dragon that would threaten the peace of established global order.

Back in the United States, the erstwhile Soviet Union was the centrepiece of its military strategy till its implosion with the *Revolutions of 1989*. A brief run of the US as the solo hegemonic power in the 90s ensued. However, it was the George Bush administration which recognised the emerging realities with the Pacific Ocean emerging as the theatre of tensions and focus of deployment in *Cold War 1.0.2*, with China having supplanted the Soviet Union/Russia, as the primary enemy. Given the physical distance between the mainland of US and China, constraints of a viable and sustainable ‘long-range power projection’ became inevitable, and therefore the urgency for establishing credible and strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific realm. This doctrinal evolution was the progenitor to the strategic conceptualisation of *Sino-centric ‘blocs’* like *QUAD* (Quadrilateral – Japan, India, Australia and US) and *AUKUS* (Australia, UK and US), as indeed the *‘Pivot to Asia’* policy by the subsequent Obama Administration. Barack Obama was believed to have been sworn into the Oval Office as the ‘first Pacific President’. But it was Donald Trump who transformed the US-China narrative into open hostility – Trump spoke of Chinese expansionism in the geopolitical and geo-economic realm that needed to be checked, bluntly. From person-



ally calling Xi an ‘enemy’, escalating trade-wars, threatening Chinese allies like Pakistan and North Korea to even calling the Covid-19 virus as ‘Chinese Virus’, Trump opened the floodgates to China.

Incumbent Joe Biden administration has stayed the course on China and Biden himself described his conversation with Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Group 20 summit at Bali as, ‘very blunt with one another’. Even though it is the traditional *cold war* nemesis i.e., Russia, which is in a bloody conflict with the US-supported Ukraine, and is doing so in the midst of the earlier imagined theatre of Eastern Europe – US remains firm in holding the strategic view that it is China and not Russia (hence, Indo-Pacific theatre and not the European or the Middle Eastern region) that is going to be the ‘enemy number one’, going forward. Even the recently released 2022 *China Military Power Report* by the US Defense Department confirms China as, ‘the most consequential and systemic challenge to the US national security and a free and open international system’. It went on to add



BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, THE ERSTWHILE SOVIET UNION WAS THE CENTREPIECE OF ITS MILITARY STRATEGY TILL ITS IMPLOSION WITH THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989

that Beijing was, ‘the only competitor with the intent, and increasingly, the capacity to shape the international order’. The dragon’s intent is underscored by the fact that despite the crippling financial implications of the Covid pandemic, China has managed to double its nuclear arsenal to 400 from 200 warheads in 2020. Even their ballistic missile testing in 2021 has been more than the sum total testing done by the rest of the world!

Months earlier, the US Defense Department had released the 2022 *National Defense Strategy* where it had explicitly noted, ‘The most comprehensive and serious challenge to US national security is the PRC’s coercive and increasingly aggressive endeavor to refashion the Indo-Pacific region to suit its interests and authoritarian preferences’. Importantly for India, it had specifically covered the Indian concerns as the conflict on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Summer of 2020 was one of the three specifically mentioned regions of concern, ‘a broader pattern of destabilizing and coercive PRC behavior that stretches across the East China Sea, the South

China Sea, and along the Line of Actual Control’.

Today, the haunting commonality of China underwrites the brewing Indo-US equation, and they feel mutually comfortable and impelled enough to do joint Military Exercise *la Yudh Abhyas* (literally, War Practice) in the near vicinity of the exact flashpoints which were wounded in the Indo-Chinese standoff, recently. Even differing responses on Ukraine, Pakistan or even unsettled trade issues between US and India have not stopped Joe Biden from describing India as ‘indispensable partners’ – and the indispensability of the said relationship is essentially cemented and predicated on the perceived threat perception from China. Towards the same, leniency of overlooking Delhi’s legacy purchase of arms and oil from Russia, is par for course. Russia is a pale shadow of its past and China is the proverbial Dragon in the room for both Delhi and Washington DC to tame.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GUJARAT VOTE BELONGS TO MODI

Sir — The BJP’s victory in Gujarat by record-breaking 156 seats, 86 per cent of the 182 seats grabbing 52.5 per cent votes has surprised thousands. But the credit must go to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was leading the campaign all the way for the BJP and his popularity, which was unlinked to the performance of the State Government, helped power the BJP to a historic victory. Beside Modi, the entry of AAP (which played spoiler on many seats to the Congress) and the defection of 19 Congress MLAs to the BJP (not only pushing the BJP’s tally to 111 in the last Assembly but also a majority of Congress turncoats or their family members fielded by BJP emerged victors), created confusion in the Opposition space. In Gujarat, Modi is more popular than his party, and the Opposition is unable to create the politics or programmes that can challenge it. But in Himachal Pradesh, Modi’s extensive campaigning was not enough. Why did the BJP’s double engine Government run out of steam in Himachal; was not there any public welfare and development? Narendra Modi’s development model is only for Modi’s home State?

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

MUMBAI BREATHE HEAVY

Sir — India’s financial capital Mumbai has been detecting ‘very poor’ air quality for the past few days. While it is India’s capital, Delhi, that makes headlines for having dangerous levels of air pollution during the winter months, Mumbai is considered to have better air quality due to its vast coastline. However, Mumbai overtook Delhi’s pollution levels several times this week, the *BBC* reported. Mumbai has joined a growing list of Indian cities that have bad air. As per experts, rapid construction, adverse weather conditions and increasing pollution from vehicle emissions are a few of the main factors responsible for the deteriorating air quality.

The level of PM 2.5 — a fine particulate matter that can clog lungs and cause

Not all’s hunky-dory in Qatar



There’s a lot more happening behind the scenes than meets the eye! The world is glued to the football World Cup matches currently going on in Qatar, with the final slated to be played on December 18. Statistics show how the Government of Qatar, since the day their country was allotted to hosting of the 2022 World Cup, started a period of brutal torture on migrant workers. Harassment of labourers, keeping them in inhumane conditions, salaries not being disbursed in time, confiscating their pass-

ports to make them work 12-18 hours under severe heat conditions: All these were normal conditions and widely reported. According to confirmed reports, data from India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka showed that there were 5,927 deaths of migrant workers in Qatar during 2011-2020.

Besides, data from Pakistan’s embassy in Qatar has confirmed 824 more deaths of their workers between 2010 and 2020. Instead of showing sympathy to the families of the deceased, the Qatari Government continues to ridicule the charges even today. Just recently, in an interview, tournament owner Nasser Al Khater said ‘death is a natural part of life’ in response to a question asked by journalists on the workers who died. This answer has spread anger among human rights organisations and activists around the world. Does FIFA still feel that awarding the host to Qatar was the right decision?.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

a host of diseases — was 308 in Mumbai on Friday at 8:30 am, compared to Delhi’s reading of 259, according to Government data. Many Indian cities often report PM 2.5 levels well above the safe limit. Meanwhile, local hospitals in Mumbai have reported an increase in the number of people coming in with breathing difficulties and other ailments related to the poor air quality. Doctors have advised people to wear masks and avoid going out when not necessary.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

A MULTI-FACETED PERSONALITY

Sir — It is saddening to know that Yoginder K Alagh, former Union Minister, eminent economist and academician, who brought out the best in those who collaborated with him, is no more with us. Born in Punjab of undivided Punjab in 1939, he studied at the University of Rajasthan and pursued his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. He joined the IIM,

Calcutta, in the late 60s. In 1979, he chaired a Planning Commission Task Force which used nutritional requirements to formulate poverty lines for rural and urban areas. Several anecdotes about his simplicity and handling of real life situations make his persona even bigger. One such incident relates to his unique methodology in solving complex matters. He was then the JNU VC, and the students were on a hunger strike. He too went on a satyagraha to support their cause. Whatever may be the motive, it cannot be denied that he adopted a wider world view. From 1996-98, he served as the Minister of Power, Planning and Programme, as a member of the Planning Commission implemented programmes at the Centre, attained greater heights by virtue of his balanced and meticulous economic acumen and foresight.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Congress’ Bharat Jodo Yatra was attracting the attention of the whole world and the youth associated with it would prove to be an asset for Rahul Gandhi.

Rajasthan CM — Ashok Gehlot

The opportunity for India to buy Russian oil at a cheap price comes from the fact that Ukrainians are suffering from Russian aggression and dying every day.

Ukraine Foreign Minister — Dmytro Kuleba

I’ve chosen consciously to put at risk the thing that is most dear to me, and that is my work. And the cost has been huge and it’s been personal and emotional in the sense that I don’t get to do the thing that I love doing, which is acting. I don’t get to do it often.

Actor — Swara Bhaskar

I will only decide who is going to be the captain when I reach the stadium. I don’t know the line-up. What I have always done is focus on the immediate match.

Portugal team manager — Fernando Santos

Like Hindus and Muslims, Christians also have their own festival so they should get the chance to celebrate these festivals.

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury — Congress MP

FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL NOMADISM: AN INSPIRATIONAL TREND

Organisations should enter into agreements with nomads



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Businesses have witnessed unprecedented trends during Covid times. One area that has seen a major revamp is the place of work for employees. The pandemic gave wings to an already fledgling idea of digital nomadism and changed employees' workstations forever.

Apart from the office, a digital nomad can work remotely from any place like a beach, a library or even a foreign country while traveling. According to a survey conducted by MBO Partners, this trend is fast rising. In the US alone, the number of digital nomads increased by 50 per cent to 11 million in 2020 and is expected to grow to a massive 35.7 million by 2025. It is interesting to note that the composition of this group changed from freelancers, independent consultants and entrepreneurs to regular, traditional, office goers with 9-5 work hours.

But who are these digital nomads? A research by Harvard Business Review finds that an average digital nomad is a digitally savvy, well-educated and highly skilled individual employed in tech industry, the creative arena, digital marketing and so on. Although digital nomadism became popular during the pandemic, this trend does not show any signs of slowing down. There are some ways in which employers can cater to this demand for flexible remote working facilities.



Firstly, the flexible policies that can provide freedom to employees can help companies attract talent. Many companies like Airbnb, 3M and Lyft have taken cue and have developed and implemented adaptable remote working policies. The second most important requirement to promote digital nomadism is strong technological investments. To allow employees data access, many companies are using cloud-based technologies.

Thirdly, it is easier for companies with open office design concepts to step ahead and transform into a culture of digital nomadism. Although it is difficult for traditional companies with fixed 9-5 working hours and hierarchical seating arrangements to take a leap into remote working, companies which already open work spaces with different and new design elements like lounges, game rooms, project rooms and hotdesks, can help transition from flexible work style to nomadic work style.

So are companies in general ready with their policies to attract digital nomads? It is found that in spite of the growing trend of digital nomadism, only few organisations have formally designed policies for them. Therefore, digital nomads generally travel without their organisations knowing about it. In most cases, the immediate supervisor would have this information, but due to lack of concrete organisational policies would just turn a blind eye. However, this lack of clear policies can leave a firm open to any litigation or regulatory risks.


Generally, a person working in a particular location comes under the jurisdiction of that state/country, and the laws and regulations of the country apply to her irrespective of the location of the employer. So being present in another state or country, there is a possibility that digital nomads unintentionally end up creating the presence of the employer as a permanent establishment exposing it to an array of legal, regulatory, taxation laws and rules. Organisations should realise that the trend of digital nomadism is here to stay. To attract and retain employees, organisations should enter into agreements with digital nomads to clearly specify the terms and conditions of remote working.

Social media is playing an important role in the rise of digital nomadism. Owing to their strong social media presence, digital nomads communicate about their experiences through vlogs, blogs and Instagram accounts, making their lifestyle coveted. Although digital nomadism started out as a choice, it is more of an aspiration now. Organisations must adapt quickly and include the requirements of employees who want to enjoy being free to travel.


(The author is an associate professor at Amity University)

Highlight of COP27 was ‘Loss and Damage Fund’


Increasing climate risk around the globe requires a more strategic and broader approach to incorporate optimisation of consumption



JAIDEEP MUKHERJEE



VAISHALI MISHRA



GAURAV BHATIANI

(Jaideep and Vaishali work with Smart Power-India) and Gaurav is with RTI International (India).

for making significant progress on climate finance, including the delivery of the promised \$100 billion per year to assist developing countries. With collaboration, the UN negotiations stuck to the consensus-based approach, as reaching an agreement will require “inclusive and active participation from all stakeholders”.

Increasing climate risk requires a more strategic and broader approach to incorporate optimisation of consumption. Doing more with less, adopting circular economy principles and removing incentives for inefficient equipment, business models and lifestyles need to be at the forefront and centre of the conversation.

Inspiration needs to be drawn from the words of

Mahatma Gandhi that “the world has enough for everyone’s needs, but not everyone’s greed”. This applies not only to energy, but also conserving water, building materials, transportation, food and textiles. Definitive progress was made on the long-standing carbon market process, but many operational decisions were postponed for future negotiations.

Further, the negotiations remained confined to a relatively narrow agenda on fossil fuels and therefore missed the opportunity to comprehensively address all sources of GHGs.

While COP26 focused on mitigation, the highlight of COP27 was creation of the ‘Loss and Damage Fund’ to support most vulnerable

countries impacted severely by climate disasters. Countries in Asia (India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Philippines), Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Chad, Niger), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati) and Caribbean Islands (Haiti) are amongst the most vulnerable and impacted.

An area of particular attention is the inadequacy of current climate financing models. Global climate finance remains below the third of annual requirements. At COP27, negotiators deliberated on setting a ‘new collective quantified goal on climate finance’ in 2024, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

With millions of people in developing nations lacking access to reliable energy and

Cong, Savarkar and the Karat syndrome



Since the 1980s, Communists have been sneaking into the Congress and allegedly toxifying the minds of the top leadership in the party and the Govt

India's independence movement produced freedom fighters from a kaleidoscope of ideologies, from the radical left to the civilisational right. The freedom that we enjoy today is the result of their cumulative efforts and collective sacrifice. Therefore, every Indian should feel proud of those sons of motherland who gave up the prime of their youth, underwent tremendous hardships, atrocities, and humiliation, with the sole aim to free the motherland from the foreign yoke.

Our current ideological incongruence with theirs should never be a barrier in being grateful and reverential to them. It is, however, understandable that some center-left establishmentarians who came to power immediately after independence could not outgrow their personal animosities. But that is long past. Why should the third generation leaders after independence abhor Hindu-right leaders of the freedom movement who suffered more than the most?

In Hindu thought, except the supreme Brahman even the manifested gods are not perfect, what to speak of humans. And freedom fighters like any human beings had their own follies and defects in their persona. Further, before the might of the State even the strongest break down. Many top leaders of all ideological shades too had at times cozier up to the colonial rulers to avoid adverse personal consequences. And as the British were most brutal to the freedom fighters from the Hindu-right, some of its leaders had to buckle to survive, for you can't fight war unless you are alive. Therefore, maligning them by selectively highlighting certain of their deeds out of context is both unfair and ungrateful.

In any case, what is it that we gain by vilifying those who fought for our freedom? Inexplicably, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is the most prominent Hindu-right freedom fighter who remains the prime target of left-liberals. He was an atheist, a prolific writer, an ideologue, a powerful orator, and a firebrand revolutionary leader. He wrote ‘The Indian War of Independence-1857’ for its 50th anniversary and ‘The Essentials of Hindutva’ among many others. The British banned the former book even before it was published.

For waging war against the colonial government, the British sentenced him to 50 years of imprisonment and transportation for life. He was lodged in the infamous Cellular Jail in the Andamans. The punishment there was inhuman. It ranged from hard labour to extra hours on the grinding mill, to standing handcuffed for a week, to bar-fetters for six months, to confinement in solitary cells, to four days of starvation diet and to cross bars for 10 days, a punishment which compelled the victim to keep his legs apart.

Savarkar endured all that inhuman torture for 11 long years, which others could not even imagine to be for 11 min-



AS OPPOSED TO THE PRAGMATISM OF HIS PREDECESSOR HARKISHEN SINGH SURJEET, PRAKASH KARAT IS EXTRAORDINARILY RIGID IN IDEOLOGY AND VIRULENTLY ANTI-HINDU. NO WONDER, DURING HIS ERA, THE CPI(M) HAD THE SHARPEST DOWNFALL FROM WHICH IT COULD NEVER RECOVER

(The author is a former Director, CBI. The views expressed are personal)



utes. Based on his mercy petitions, which was a legal avenue available for all, he was shifted to Ratnagiri Jail and then released to be confined to only Ratnagiri district for 15 years. Was there any prominent leader of freedom movement from any ideological stream who underwent the kind of inhuman sufferings as did Savarkar?

Indira Gandhi celebrated Savarkar. In 1970, her government issued a commemorative postage stamp on him. In a letter of May 20, 1980 for his birth centenary, she said that Savarkar's daring defiance of the British Government has its own important place in the annals of freedom movement. “I wish success to the plans to celebrate the birth centenary of this remarkable son of India,” she said. In 1983, Indira Gandhi got a documentary film on Savarkar made through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She also gave a grant to the Savarkar memorial in Mumbai. This is a representative example that the old Congress not only did not have any ill-will towards Hindu right or Savarkar but they also celebrated the contribution and sacrifices of the latter.

With the waning of Communism in post 1980s, many leftists sneaked into Congress pastures, bringing their visceral hatred for anything Hindu, including Savarkar, and toxified minds of Congress leadership, including Rahul Gandhi. Their hidden agenda is to transform the Congress into a new Communist party.

For several decades the RSS-BJP used to loathe Gandhi, Nehru, and

several Congress leaders of freedom struggle, but it did not give them any political dividends. As they needed to deepen their political acceptability, they course-corrected and started appropriating leaders from other ideological streams. They built the world's tallest statue of Sardar Patel. They incorporated Gandhi and Ambedkar in their pantheon. They eulogise Indira Gandhi as Maa Durga.

They fete PV Narsimha Rao to gain cross political legitimacy for their own brand of reforms. They installed a statue of Bose under the India Gate canopy. After appropriating Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Jaya Prakash Narayan, they are now even celebrating anti-Hindu Periyar and Jyotiba Phule. Sooner than later, they will also appropriate Nehru. The list is getting longer despite feeble protests of the Congress against BJP stealing their icons.

The results of the general elections, from 1951 to 2019, show that a party (not a coalition) could secure absolute majority only when Hindus consolidate for it. From 1951 to 1971, Hindus were solidly with the Congress for its inclusivity. Emergency distanced them but marginally. The dismal failure of the Janata Party experiment brought them back to the Congress in 1980. The last time Congress secured absolute majority was in 1984 as Hindus hugely consolidated in the wake of tragic assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi.

Thereafter, it secured a near majority in 1991 due to Hindu consolidation in the phases of election

that took place after the terrible assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The UPA rule from 2004 to 2014 badly alienated Hindus from the Congress as it was widely seen for the first time as anti-Hindu. As a result, Hindus massively rallied behind the BJP as never before, giving it absolute majority for the first time in its history in 2014 and repeated it in 2019. More importantly, the election data indicate that historically Hindus reposed faith in the Congress more than in any other party when it was centrist and not anti-Hindu.

Here is a lesson for the Congress. Prakash Karat is a top apparatchik of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and was its national chief from 2005 to 2015. As opposed to the pragmatism of his predecessor Harkishen Singh Surjeet, Prakash Karat is extraordinarily rigid in ideology and virulently anti-Hindu and had no personal skin in the electoral game. No wonder, during his era the CPI(M) had the sharpest downfall from which it could never recover.

To recap, while on the one hand, Congress is losing its icons to the RSS-BJP, on the other its diatribe for no rhyme or reason against Hindu-right and historical personalities like Savarkar is pushing Hindus away from it. Why is the Congress in self-destructive mode?

Because the Congress leadership is in the intellectual grip of left-liberals, who have no skin in the electoral game. They are doing to the Congress what Prakash Karat did to the CPI(M).

POINT COUNTERPOINT

HE (CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL) IS A ‘NAMOONA’ FROM DELHI WHO IS A SYMPATHISER OF TERRORISTS. — UP CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH



ELECT THE BJP IF YOU WANT ABUSES, HOOLIGANISM, CORRUPTION AND UGLY POLITICS, BUT SUPPORT US IF YOU WANT SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, ELECTRICITY, WATER AND ROADS. — DELHI CM ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Govt refutes India's poor rank in Global Hunger Index

The report does not reflect India's true picture as it is a flawed measure of hunger, says Irani

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

As the Government on Friday in Parliament rejected the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022 report placing India at 107th place, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar urged members to analyse private studies as they can be based on inadequate data or dictated by interests of others.

He made this observation during the Question Hour in the Upper House when Union Minister Piyush Goyal was replying to a query raised by Jose K Mani(KC(M)).

The Chairperson also appealed to members to go through these studies before referring to them while raising any issue. Mani said India's rank was 107 among 121 countries. Neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are ahead of India in the index and only Afghanistan is behind, he noted.

Though the government has continuously questioned the methodology used in the index, the prevalence of hunger and poverty in the country is well seen, he said.

Stating that there were zero starvation deaths in the country, Goyal replied that as regard the hunger index, the name itself is a misnomer.

"Referring to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) under which the government provided five kg grains over and above the National Food Security Act limit, he said, "We have in a way eliminated



hunger or starvation from the country. Every state has written that not a single death occurred due to starvation during the last two years."He said the hunger index is a private index made by some private non-government organisations based on a subject not related to hunger. So, they first have to decide what the nomenclature should be, he said.

The minister also said the statistics are drawn out of data which is unverified and also on measurements "we don't relate to India. I think we must recognise what is official and validated and what is mere propaganda." In a reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani dismissed India's ranking in the GHI, terming it as a "flawed measure of hunger".

"Global Hunger Index (GHI) does not reflect India's true picture as it is a flawed measure of 'Hunger'. It should not be taken at face value as it is neither appropriate nor representative of hunger prevalent in a country," Irani said in reply to Congress MP Karti Chidambaram. Dismissing the

four indicators of GHI, Irani said, "Out of its four indicators, only one indicator, i.e., undernourishment, is directly related to hunger.

"The two indicators, namely, Stunting and Wasting, are outcomes of complex interactions of various other factors like sanitation, genetics, environment, and utilisation of food intake apart from hunger which is taken as the causative/outcome factor for stunting and wasting in the GHI."

Dhankhar said, "In our country iconic status is granted to parameters which are often baffling...Don't have any rationale. This august House is a repository of the wisdom of over 1.3 billion people. Therefore, when we raise an issue in the House...They should not carry much conviction unless the honourable member or minister premises them on our own record. Let's believe in our worth."

He said it will be very difficult and inappropriate to surrender our assessments, achievements to be assessed by those who have either inade-

quate data or whose actions are dictated by their interests, not ours.

"Try to digest what I have said. We must analyse the calibration.... We should not be captive," he said, "Our country cannot be allowed to be hurt by calibration from outside on premise which we don't believe. That doesn't mean that the calibration outside does not have credibility. We have to get into those areas," he said.

Cong raises demonetisation in LS

New Delhi: The issue of demonetisation was raised in the Lok Sabha on Friday by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury who criticized the government's decision on November 2016 to demonetise high-value currency notes, claiming the move did not meet the desired goals as cash in circulation and fake currency have gone up. Congress member's comments were countered by the BJP's Nishikant Dubey who said the Reserve Bank of India took the

Bihar's law & order, compensation to Kheri victims raised in Rajya Sabha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Issues ranging from alleged worsening law and order situation in Bihar, nomination of two Kashmiri Pandits in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and problems faced in withdrawing money from banks by the next of kin of deceased figured prominently in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

Speedy compensation to farmers injured in Lakhimpur Kheri incident last year and hassle free travel to pilgrims to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan through the Kartarpur corridor were also raised by the Elders. Raising the law and

order situation in Bihar, Satish Chandra Dubey (BJP) cited several incidents of crime to allege that the state was moving towards 'jungle raj part two.' He also claimed the public was living in an atmosphere of fear. As he raised the issue, MPs from the RJD, JD(U) and the Congress protested his remarks.

They got support from other parties, including the Samajwadi Party and the Aam Aadmi Party(AAP). Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar pacified the MPs and advised them to ensure decorum in the House. Sushil Kumar Modi (BJP) wanted an amendment to the Jammu and

Kashmir Reorganisation Act to allow for the nomination of two Kashmiri Pandits and one displaced person of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the assembly.

He said the Delimitation Commission has recommended representation for Kashmiri Pandits and displaced people from PoK by way of nomination in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

Raising the issue of compensation to those injured in Lakhimpur Kheri violence, Jayant Chaudhary(RLD) said the Uttar Pradesh(UP) government had promised to give jobs to the kin of the four farmers who lost their lives after a

vehicle mowed them down and Rs 10 lakh compensation to those injured. But the reply given by the chief minister in the Uttar Pradesh assembly this week revealed that no action on the promise has been taken, he said. On October 3, 2021, eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri's Tikunia during a violence that erupted when farmers were protesting against Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.

Raghav Chadha(AAP) elaborated upon the difficulties pilgrims face while visiting Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan through the Kartarpur corridor opened in 2019.

IN SHORT

RAJNATH, BSY APPOINTED GUJARAT OBSERVERS

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda were on Friday appointed as observers for the Gujarat BJP Legislature Party meet.

50 PRIVATE MEMBER BILLS IN LOK SABHA

New Delhi: More than 50 private member bills, including the one seeking to revert to the old system of voting through ballot papers instead of electronic voting machines (EVMs), were introduced in Lok Sabha on Friday. The bill to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951 was introduced by BSP member Danish Ali.

MEASLES IMMINENT THREAT, SAYS WHO

New Delhi: The WHO has declared measles as an 'imminent threat'. According to a WHO report, 9 million people were infected with measles in 2021. The number of people who died from measles that year was as high as 128,000. Moreover, the steady decline of measles vaccination drives due to the pandemic induced lockdowns has led to more children getting diagnosed with measles or dying from it.

DEVELOP 2ND-GENERATION COVID VACCINES: PANEL

New Delhi: There is an urgent need to develop second-generation vaccines in view of the constantly mutating Covid-19 virus, encourage vaccine development on more efficient platforms and evaluate the efficacy of the existing vaccines for the disease, a parliamentary panel has said.

'NOT ENOUGH TAKERS FOR TECHNOLOGY'

New Delhi: Speaking at a programme of Central Electronics Limited (CEL), a PSU under Department of Scientific Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Union Minister Jitendra Kumar on Friday lamented that sometimes best of the R&D institutes tend to follow a downhill course because there are not enough takers for the technologies developed by them.

KERALA GETS THREE ADDITIONAL JUDGES

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Friday approved the proposal for appointment of three Additional Judges, Justices Abdul Rahim Musaliar Badhanudeen, Viju Abraham and Mohammed Nias CP, as Permanent Judges in the Kerala High Court.

SC ASKS BIHAR GOVT TO GIVE INFRA SCHEDULE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Bihar government to specify schedule for construction of infrastructure for special courts which would deal with cases under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act.

SC: ACCOMMODATE UG MEDICAL STUDENTS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday asked Centre, National Medical Commission (NMC) to find out a solution to lodge those undergraduate medical students who have returned from foreign countries like Ukraine and China, saying their career will be left in lurch if no solution is found at this stage.

Daughter belonging to tribals entitled to equal share in dad's property: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Maintaining that a female tribal is entitled to parity with male tribal in intestate succession, the Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre to examine the issue and consider amending the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act so as to make it applicable to the members of the Scheduled Tribes. The apex court said when the daughter belonging to the non-tribal is entitled to equal share in the property of her father, there is no reason to deny such a right to the daughter of tribal communities. As per Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Succession Act will not be applicable to members of the Scheduled Tribes.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and Krishna Murari said there is no justification for denying the right of survivorship (a right of a person to property on the death of another having a joint interest) so far as the female members of Scheduled Tribes are concerned.

"It is directed to examine the question by the Central



Government to consider it just and necessary to withdraw the exemptions provided under the Hindu Succession Act in so far as the applicability of the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act to the Scheduled Tribes and whether to bring a suitable amendment or not. "We hope and trust that the Central Government will look into the matter and take an appropriate decision taking into consideration the right to equality guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India," the bench said. The apex court said a female trib-

al is entitled to parity with male tribal in intestate succession.

"To deny the equal right to the daughter belonging to the tribal even after a period of 70 years of the Constitution of India under which right to equality is guaranteed, it is high time for the Central Government to look into the matter and if required, to amend the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act by which the Hindu Succession Act is not made applicable to the members of the Scheduled Tribe," the bench said.

The top court's observa-

tions came while dismissing a plea on whether a daughter (belonging to Scheduled Tribes) is entitled to the share in the compensation with respect to the land acquired on survivorship basis under the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act.

"Therefore, so long as Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act stands and there is no amendment, the parties shall be governed by the provisions of Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act. "Therefore, though on equity we may be with the appellant being daughter and more than approximately 70 years have passed after the enactment of the Hindu Succession Act and much water has flown thereafter and though we are prima facie of the opinion that not to grant the benefit of survivorship to the daughter in the property of the father can be said to be bad in law and cannot be justified in the present scenario, unless Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act is amended, the parties being member of the Scheduled Tribe are governed by Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act," the bench said.

Bhattacharyya moved bill that aims to regulate procedure to be followed by National Judicial Commission for recommending people for appointment as the Chief Justice of India and other judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices and other judges of High Courts.

The bill, if approved, will also regulate their transfers and to lay down judicial standards and provide for account-

CPI-M tables Judicial Commission Bill in RS amid Collegium row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing Collegium row in the country, the CPI(M)'s Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharyya on Friday introduced a private member Bill in the Rajya Sabha seeking to regulate the appointment of judges through the National Judicial Commission. However, it was opposed by AAP MP Raghav Chadha. The National Judicial Commission Bill, 2022 was introduced after the majority of voice votes were in favour of tabling it in the House.

Bhattacharyya moved bill that aims to regulate procedure to be followed by National Judicial Commission for recommending people for appointment as the Chief Justice of India and other judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices and other judges of High Courts.

The bill, if approved, will also regulate their transfers and to lay down judicial standards and provide for account-

ability of judges, and establish credible and expedient mechanism for investigating into individual complaints for misbehaviour or incapacity of a judge of the apex court or of a high court and to regulate procedure for such investigation.

It also proposes for presentation of an address by parliament to the president in relation to proceeding for removal of a judge and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

AAP member Chadha opposed the bill, saying concept of NJAC has come under consideration of Supreme Court three times in 1993, 1998 and 2016.

"All three times, while giving importance to independence of judiciary, the Supreme Court dismissed framework of NJAC. I have stood to oppose NJAC which my honourable colleague has introduced," Chadha said. "We are attempting to do a constitutional impossibility," Chadha said.

Bacteria in saline water stop chilli fungus: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers from Goa have found that bacteria present in saline water such as salt pans can act as bio-control agents against fungus attacking chilli also known as red/green pepper, an essential component of Indian cuisine.

India is the largest producer of chilli (Capsicum annum) with about 1.7 million tonnes in the world, followed by Thailand and mainland China.

According to M Pawaskar and S. Kerkar from School of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology, Goa University, Goa and KP Krishnan from Department of Arctic Operations, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa, twenty one bacteria from 196 isolates showed an inhibitory effect on the growth of the mycelia of fungi that are common agricultural pathogens. The study is published in Current Science.

These bacteria, from the Brevibacterium and Bacillus genera, did not show any toxicity in preliminary studies. They were also able to survive

and thrive in soil under different ambient conditions, said the study. "The bacteria may serve as biocontrol agents against fungal pathogens in agriculture," the researchers said, suggesting that they can also act as plant growth promoting activity for the chilli.

Percentage wise, today, India contributes to 25 per cent of the world's total production of chillies with Andhra Pradesh being the largest supplier followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Because of its colour, flavour and pungency, chilli, also known as pepper, is an essential spice in Indian cuisine. The phytochemicals of pepper have a remarkable potential in the history of new bioactive compounds and natural ingredients for agro-food, cosmetic and pharma industry.

However, every year, a considerable loss in the yield of chilli is being observed due to factors including fungus. The authors have recommended further field trials to confirm synergistic effect of the bacteria on the environment, ascertaining their use as sustainable BCAs.

CBI files charges against 8 accused in Arunachal PSC exam leak case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday said it has chargesheeted eight accused persons in connection with a case related to alleged leakage of question paper for recruitment examination of Assistant Engineer (Civil) conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC).

The CBI filed the chargesheet against the accused persons before the Court of Special Judge, CBI Cases, Yupia (Arunachal Pradesh), the CBI said in a statement.

Those chargesheeted in the case are Akhilesh Yadav. (teacher of the private coaching institute), Taket Jerang, Tama Saroh, Thomas Gaduk, Tanyang Gaduk, Lohas Ezing, Binam Jomang and Talung Jomang. The CBI had registered the case on October 26 following a request from the Arunachal Pradesh government and further orders by the Centre for transferring the investigation of FIR No.



11/2022 dated September 27 of Special Investigation Cell (Vigilance) Police Station corresponding to Itanagar Police Station Case No. 229 dated September 10. The said case was registered against a private person of a Coaching Institute at Itanagar and unknown officials of APPSC) on a complaint related to the allegations of leakage of question paper before written examination for recruitment to the post of Assistant Engineer (Civil) conducted by APPSC on August 26 and 27.

The complainant (a candidate) had alleged that the accused (a teacher of the institute) was in possession of questions for the said examination disclosing leakage of paper by him in connivance with unknown officials of APPSC.



YSR Telangana Party president YS Sharmila with supporters stages a protest after reportedly denial of permission for her 'padyatra', in Hyderabad on Friday
PTI Photo

HM to meet Maha, K'taka CMs to resolve border row

PNS | PTI ■ NEW DELHI | MUMBAI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will meet the chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka here on December 14 to soothe tempers on the border dispute between the two states, NCP leader Amol Kolhe said here on Friday.

Kolhe was speaking to reporters after a delegation of parliamentarians of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition — met Shah to air their grievances on the border dispute.

The MVA delegation also complained to Shah about the “insulting references” to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari and some other BJP leaders.

“The home minister gave us a patient hearing and assured the MVA parliamentarians that he will call chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka on December 14 and work towards finding a cordial solution to the issue,” Kolhe, the Lok Sabha member from Shirur in Maharashtra, told reporters here.

On Thursday, the MVA parliamentarians had written to Shah warning that the Karnataka-Maharashtra border row had reached a stage where it could erupt into full-blown violence and had sought



his personal intervention.

In a letter to Shah, they claimed that “high-handed” actions by Karnataka had “hurt the sentiments” of the Marathi-speaking people in the border districts at a time the matter was in the Supreme Court.

The Karnataka-Maharashtra border row escalated into violence after vehicles from both states were attacked and damaged in Belgaon and Pune.

Since its creation on May 1, 1960, Maharashtra has claimed that 865 villages, including Belgaon (now Belgavi), Karwar and Nippani, should be merged into Maharashtra. Karnataka, however, has refused to part with its territory.

The meeting came on a day the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) partially resumed bus services to Karnataka from Kolhapur in southern Maharashtra after consulting local police authorities, an official said here.

The state-owned public transport body had suspended 382 out of 1,156 services to Karnataka, mainly between Kolhapur and Belgavi via

Nipani, after protests erupted over the border row between the two states. Some MSRTC buses were defaced in Karnataka. Buses from Karnataka were similarly targeted in Maharashtra. The MSRTC spokesperson said that normal services between Kolhapur and Belgavi via Nipani restarted from Friday afternoon.

Meanwhile, a Lok Sabha member from the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena, an ally of the BJP, on Friday accused the BJP government in Karnataka of resorting to “strong-arm tactics” against the state’s Marathi-speaking areas.

Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, Dhairyasheel Mane, the member from Maharashtra’s Hatkanangle, said the Marathi-speaking parts of Karnataka had been witnessing protests and agitations and there was an “atmosphere of terror” in the region.

“The state government there, the chief minister has made some statement that has caused anxiety among the people there. There is tension along the border. A law and order problem has arisen,” Mane said.

He said Karnataka Police had been resorting to strong-arm tactics in a big way and the Kannada Vedicke organisation was treating Marathi-speaking people in an unjust manner.

Cong slams Guj unit for poor poll results

Asks State leadership to introspect, signals hard decisions in offing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after its worst-ever performance in Gujarat Assembly elections, the Congress on Friday blamed the State leadership for the poor show and said it is time to introspect as well as take “tough decisions”. The grand old party which has been struggling to remove Narendra Modi’s hegemony from Gujarat for about two and half decades now accused the Aam Aadmi Party

and the AIMIM of colluding with the BJP, saying they were “informal alliance partners” of the ruling party.

The party took respite from Himachal Pradesh and appreciated its State leadership and the campaign led by Priyanka Gandhi and said the high decibel campaign by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Himalayan State did not work.

“For us, the Gujarat results show the need for introspection and for taking tough deci-

sions. In Gujarat the election results have been very disappointing and are far below our expectations. It is a very sad reflection on the State’s organisation,” Congress chief spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said at AICC Press briefing.

“For us, the Gujarat results show the need for introspection and for taking tough decisions. In the next election, our vote share would come back to 40 per cent,” the Congress leader claimed.

“The BJP has lost miserably

in Himachal Pradesh, given the fact that the Prime Minister campaigned extensively besides BJP president J P Nadda and Union minister Anurag Thakur, both of who hail from Himachal, the BJP has still lost,” Ramesh alleged.

He also blamed the AAP and the AIMIM for the poor performance of Congress, saying both the parties were BJP’s “informal alliance partners” in Gujarat. The party however avoided to answer anything on the role of Rajasthan Chief

Minister Ashok Gehlot who was in charge of the Gujarat elections and campaigned extensively despite of the impending crisis in his State.

Ramesh also said that an atmosphere of fear was created in Gujarat to ensure that many sections of society who supported the Congress do not come out and vote.

He credited the Congress’ promise to restore the old pension scheme as one of the primary reasons for the party’s success in Himachal.



A fisherman rows his boat across the Hooghly river at sunset, in Nadia district on Friday

PTI

Stalin launches Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin launched the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission on Friday to protect the natural resources in the State besides restore them on a long-term basis. The state will achieve carbon neutrality much ahead of 2070 target set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said while launching the pioneering initiative, which takes the climate agenda on priority with district missions and climate officers already in

place in the state. The state is first to launch its own Climate Change Mission to make Tamil Nadu a climate smart state.

“Let the Dravidian model guide (the nation) not only in social justice but also in ecological justice,” Stalin said in a tweet, after launching the mission at the TN Climate Summit 2022. During the budget for 2021-2022, the state government announced the launch of the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission for an outlay of Rs 500 crore to undertake climate change management.

INS Mormugao to be commissioned in Mumbai ahead of Goa Liberation Day

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day ahead of the Goa Liberation Day on December 19, the Indian Navy’s latest indigenous guided stealth destroyer Mormugao — armed with surface-to-surface BrahMos missiles and Barak-8 long range surface-to-air missiles — will be commissioned in Mumbai on December 18.

Built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDSL) as part of the Project 15B destroyers or the Visakhapatnam-class, Mormugao was delivered to the Indian Navy by the MDL on November 24.

The commissioning of Mormugao a year after the ship sailed for her maiden sortie on December 19, 2021.

The Indian Navy played a pivotal role in Goa’s liberation struggle and dedicating the ship’s name to the maritime state of Goa will not just enhance the bonding between the Indian Navy and the people of Goa, but also link the ship’s identity permanently to the crucial role the Navy played in nation-building.

Mormugao is a seaport city situated in the eponymous Mormugao sub-district of the district of South Goa in the tiny State of Goa along the Arabian Sea on western coast of India.

The indigenous content in P15B class destroyers is 72% which is a notch above their predecessors P15A (59%) and P15 (42%) Class Destroyers, reaffirming the Government’s focus in the ‘Make in India’ programme.

Gokhale’s rearrest in Gujarat BJP misusing EC, settling scores with Opp, says TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after the Gujarat Police rearrested Trinamool Congress national spokesperson Saket Gokhale the Bengal ruling outfit on Friday slammed the BJP Government for misusing the Election Commission to settle scores with the opposition parties.

“The recent development — where our national spokesperson was arrested at a time when model code of conduct was still in vogue in Gujarat — only proves how the Election Commission has surrendered before the BJP Government,” TMC national general secretary Abhihek Banerjee said.

The TMC has sent a five-member team of MPs to Morbi in Gujarat where the Gokhale was taken after his arrest. Among the TMC leaders who were sent to Gujarat were Dola Sen, Shantanu Sen, Sunil Mondal and AsitMal.

Gokhale was first arrested on December 6 from Jaipur airport for tweeting against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Later he was granted bail and then rearrested on December 8 leading the TMC leadership to cry vendetta.

“The party (TMC) demands unconditional release of our national spokesperson,” Banerjee said even as sources said that he had again been granted bail.

Gokhale was earlier arrested after he tweeted on the Prime Minister’s visit to Morbi post the collapse of a hanging bridge that led to 135 deaths. In the tweet he said that the expenditure incurred by the Prime Minister’s visit to Morbi was far more than the compensation provided to the kin of the victims.

Subsequently he was arrested on December 6 by the Gujarat Police for peddling false reports. He was released on December 8, but hours after his release he was once again arrested by the police.

Reacting to Gokhale’s arrest senior TMC parliamentarian Sukhendu

Shekhar Roy wondered why the police would not arrest Mumbai actor and BJP leader Paresh Rawal for making derogatory remarks about the Bengalis.

“They (police) were silent on a Mumbai film actor’s comment on the Bengalis but they arrested Gokhale for writing a tweet ... we all know that model code of conduct is still in vogue in Gujarat ... if so then how the Election Commission could order his arrest ... did he break any electoral law ... it is nothing but a witch hunt ... clearly and act of political vendetta,” Roy said.

A team of senior TMC leaders are scheduled to take up the matter with the EC on Monday, sources said.

Ministries seized of duty structure issue: Niti VC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog Vice Chairperson Suman Bery on Friday said the Finance and Commerce Ministries are seized of the matter related to inverted duty structure, but did not elaborate pointing out that the next Union Budget was round the corner.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will announce the tax proposals in the Union Budget 2023-24 which is scheduled to be presented to the Lok Sabha on February 1.

Replying to queries during the CII Global Economic Policy Summit 2022 here, Bery said Niti Aayog has been doing “some internal work” on the issue of inverted duty structures. Also, both the finance ministry and the commerce ministry are seized of the issue, he added. “But you know, since we are approaching budget time, I don’t want a headline that promises that this is going to be, you know, on the agenda. So I just say I hear you and I will take it back,” the Niti Aayog Vice Chairperson said. Inverted duty structure refers to taxation of inputs at higher rates than finished products that results in build-up of credits and cascading costs.

Earlier Bery said country’s G-20 presidency is an event for all of India with states and



Centre combined.

“We are here at an important moment in terms of India’s climb up the size of economy ladder, with the eyes of the world being on India and with the mandate given to us by the prime minister to think through Viksit Bharat (Developed India),” he said.

He was in a conversation session on Indian Economy @2030 with Sanjiv Bajaj, President, CII, and Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Limited. The Niti Aayog Vice Chairman also

observed that India has an innate resilience, and despite the many criticisms that are made of both the Indian policy establishment and the Indian private sector, whenever there is a challenge, the system seems to work. “Our watchword going forward should be ‘if ain’t broke, don’t fix it,’” he said. Bajaj noted that India is at a very interesting place at a time when “we have been a resilient economy that is still exposed as the world is going through a period of uncertainty”.

Inflows via mutual funds SIP hit fresh high at ₹13,306 cr in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Flows in the mutual fund industry through systematic investment plans or SIPs route rose to an all-time high of ₹13,306 crore in November, reflecting the growing maturity and confidence of investors.

However, inflows in equity mutual fund schemes plunged 76 per cent to ₹2,258 crore in November from Rs 9,390 crore in the preceding month, data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed on Friday.

This was also the 21st straight month of inflows into equity schemes.

As per the data, flows through SIP was ₹13,306 crore in November, surpassing the previous high of ₹13,041 crore in October.

The inflows through SIPs have been above the ₹12,000-crore mark since May. It was ₹12,976 crore in September, ₹12,693 crore in August, ₹12,140 crore in July, ₹12,276 crore in June and ₹12,286 crore in May. Before that, it stood at ₹11,863 crore in April.

With this, the total inflow has reached ₹87,275 crore in the first eight months of the current fiscal. This came following an inflow of over ₹1.24 lakh crore in the 2021-22 financial year.



“The healthiest trend in the Indian equity market now is the steady increase in SIPs, which have touched a new record of ₹13,307 crore in November. It is a proven fact that SIPs are the most successful mode of investment for retail investors,” VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Increasing SIPs shows that Indian equity investors are maturing, Vijayakumar said and suggested that SIP investors should not discontinue their investment when markets correct sharply. S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities, noted that foreign investors have been booking profits but domestic flows through SIPs are at lifetime highs, which

reflects the growing maturity and confidence of the domestic investors.

Also, mutual funds added 11.27 lakh SIP accounts during the month under review, taking the total to about 6.04 crore.

SIP is an investment methodology offered by mutual funds wherein an individual can invest a fixed amount in a chosen scheme periodically at fixed intervals, say once a month, instead of making a lump sum investment. The SIP instalment amount can be as small as ₹500 per month.

NS Venkatesh, Chief Executive, AMFI, said that mutual fund investors have shown resilience and continue to invest in SIPs, with consistent contributions month-on-month.

Overall, the mutual fund industry registered a net inflow of ₹13,263 crore in November, slightly lower from ₹14,045 crore in the previous month, data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

“Market continues to react to global headwinds. Rate hikes will continue to impact global markets but not for long, irrespective of whether the mutual fund industry has performed well.

Forex kitty soars \$11 billion to \$561.16 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India’s foreign exchange reserves soared by \$11.02 billion to reach \$561.162 billion for the week ended December 2, Reserve Bank data showed on Friday.

This is the fourth consecutive week of rise in the reserves. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had grown by \$2.9 billion to \$550.14 billion. For the week ended November 11, the forex kitty had jumped by \$14.72 billion in its second fastest weekly acceleration ever.

In October 2021, the country’s foreign exchange kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

Foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, increased by \$9.694 billion to \$496.984 billion during the week to December 2, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. The gold reserves increased by \$1.086 billion to \$41.025 billion.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$164 million to \$18.04 billion, the apex bank said.

The country’s reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also down by \$75 million to \$5.108 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

Gold falls ₹30; silver jumps ₹558

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell ₹30 to ₹54,305 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid appreciation in rupee, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹54,335 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, jumped ₹558 per kg to ₹67,365 per kilo-gram.

The rupee appreciated 19 paise to 82.19 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday on broad dollar weakness and a firm trend in domestic equities.

Shraddha’s father meets Fadnavis, seeks Aftab’s hanging, slams Palghar police

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A month after the ghastly murder of his daughter Shraddha Walker came to light, her father Vikas Walker met Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, castigated the Palghar police for their failure to “save” his daughter and rooted strongly for the hanging of Shraddha’s live-in partner and alleged killer Aftab Poonawala.

Talking to media persons after meeting the Deputy Chief Minister, Walker said, “Had the Vasai Police and Nala Sopara Police in Palghar district taken timely action in the matter, my daughter could have been saved from being murdered by Poonawala”.

Walker also demanded a thorough investigation against the Poonawalla family members so as to establish their role



Vikas Walker, father of Shraddha Walker, addresses the media after meeting with Dy. CM Devendra Fadnavis, in Mumbai on Friday

PTI

in the circumstances leading to the murder of Shraddha.

Maintaining that justice would be done to his daughter only if Poonawala was hanged to death, Walker said: “There should be proper investigation into the murder and he should be hanged to death,

Earlier in the day, Fadnavis — who holds the State Home Portfolio — assured Walker

that justice would be given to his family and his daughter Shraddha, and appropriate punishment shall be given to the accused.

Walker — who was accompanied by senior BJP leader Kirit Somaiya, when he met Fadnavis — said: “There should be investigations against Aftab’s family members, relatives and all others involved in the incident”.

“As of now, the case is being investigated by the Delhi Police and Vasai police. It is going well. But, in the initial stages, the Vasai and Nala Sopara had bungled up the case leading to the murder of my daughter,” Walker said.

The Delhi Police have assured us that we will get justice. The Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister (Fadnavis) has also assured us of the same,” he said.

Winter of discontent for Russian troops

THE CONVERSATION/AP ■ WEST POINT (US)

With Russian troops digging trenches to prepare for an expected winter standoff, it would be easy to conclude that fighting will slow in Ukraine until after the ground thaws in the spring. But evidence from the Ukrainian battlefields point to a different trajectory.

As a career US special forces officer who conducted field research on the 2008 and 2014 wars in Georgia and Ukraine, it is my view that this war has demonstrated that only one side, the Ukrainians, can execute effective combat maneuvers.

I believe that the Ukrainians will attempt to launch a large-scale counteroffensive in late winter when the ground is still frozen.

WINTER'S IMPACT ON WAR

Historically, the pace of fighting does slow in the winter. Weapons and other equipment can freeze up in extreme cold, and it's much more difficult to shoot a weapon while wearing thick gloves.

Shorter days are a factor. Despite technological advances, most of the fighting during this war has occurred during the day.

But this winter may be different for the Ukrainian military.

First, Ukrainian winters are

not nearly as cold and snowy as many believe.

Donetsk, for example, has an average temperature of nearly 25 degrees Fahrenheit (-4 degrees Celsius) in January and February.

Its snowiest month, January, averages only 4.9 inches of snow, or .12 metres. Both January and February average just as many rainy days as snowy days – roughly two days of each.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ATTACK

Since the invasion began in February 2022, Russia made most of its gains in the first month of the war when it seized Kherson, surrounded Mariupol, and was on the doorsteps of Kyiv and Kharkiv.

But Russia soon gave up on Kyiv and withdrew all its forces from the north.

Failing to achieve quick victory, Russia instead settled on making incremental gains in the east and south.

Over the next five months, Russia captured Mariupol, but little else of tactical or strategic value.

During this time, Ukraine built up its combat power with new weaponry from the West and planned a large counteroffensive, which it initiated on August 28, 2022.

In the first week of the counteroffensive, Ukraine lib-



erated more territory than Russia had captured in the previous five months.

The success of the counteroffensive showed that Ukraine's military was superior to Russia's in every category with the exception of size.

It had better doctrine, leaders, strategy, culture and will – and it had just proved that it could effectively fight battles with a combination of artillery, tanks, soldiers and air attacks.

By September 12, 2022, Ukraine had liberated much of Kharkiv Oblast as Russian troops routinely fled from their positions.

After liberating the entirety of Kharkiv Oblast in early October 2022, Ukraine turned its attention to Kherson in the south.

This was a different fight, and in some ways Ukraine's military followed Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu's axiom of

“winning without fighting.”

The Ukrainians were able to conquer much of the territory without using many troops on the ground.

Instead, Ukraine used long-range rockets supplied by the US and NATO allies to bombard Russian bases and supply lines that were previously unreachable.

These attacks left Russian forces west of the Dnipro River in an untenable position.

Realizing this, Russia shockingly announced on November 9, 2022, that it was withdrawing from Kherson.

Two days later, Russia had completed its withdrawal from the west bank of the river.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM RUSSIA

Over the course of the war, Russia has demonstrated little ability to conduct effective combat operations.

This is not something that Russia can change overnight or over the course of the winter.

Russia's best forces have been decimated throughout the conflict, and it is now increasingly relying on untrained conscripts. Likewise, Russia is exhausting much of its weaponry as international sanctions against them are limiting Russia's wartime production. Aside from Iran, few nations are providing military aid to Russia.

Russia's military is now less trained, has lower morale, and has significantly fewer weapons and less ammunition than it had at the beginning of the current war.

As a result, Russia lacks the ability to conduct large-scale attacks, and it is left with little option but to continue what it has been doing: conducting missile strikes against targets that are either defenceless or offer little strategic value.

Limiting Russia's options further, these strikes have been less effective as the war has progressed.

Early in the war, most of Russia's missiles made it through Ukraine's limited air defences.

With the help of western air defence systems, Ukraine was shooting down 50 per cent of Russian missiles in October and is now intercepting over 80 per cent of them. Winter should not affect these types of combat operations.

But snow will have an impact on Russia's already stressed and under-performing logistical system, and the cold will further lower – if that is possible – the already low morale of Russia's poorly outfitted and undertrained soldiers.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM UKRAINE

As the smaller military, Ukraine cannot afford to take heavy losses.

Thus far, it has used a strategy of defending territory when it could, retreating when it should to preserve combat power, and attacking when the opportunities have presented themselves.

Ukraine effectively employed this strategy to defend Kyiv in the first month of the war and during the September 2022 counteroffensive to reclaim the Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts.

An important question must be asked. Why did it take six months for Ukraine to launch its counteroffensive?

One reason is that Ukraine had to wait several months for promised Western aid to arrive at its bases.

In my view, a significant factor is the lengthy amount of time it takes to plan large counteroffensives and to position supplies, equipment and forces.

The fact that Ukraine conducted the counterattacks in succession suggests that Ukraine lacks the combat power to conduct two large-scale counterattacks at the same time.

Ukraine is going to need time to regroup, refit and plan for its next large-scale operation.

Thus, it seems reasonable that Ukraine will have to wait at least 30 to 45 days – maybe more – before it is ready to execute its next counteroffensive, which would be in the heart of winter.

While conducting an attack in winter may be difficult, off-road movement in the spring could become impossible, as the Russians discovered during their initial invasion in muddy and wet terrain.

It seems reasonable to conclude that Ukraine may wish to initiate its next counteroffensive while the ground is still frozen – and Russian troop morale is at its lowest point since the invasion.

US keeps eye on China's space activities

AP ■ BEIJING

The US is closely monitoring Chinese activities that potentially threaten American assets in space as debris rapidly accumulates in low Earth orbit, the head of United States military operations in space said Friday.

Commander of US Space Command Army Gen. James Dickinson also cheered the overwhelming passage in the United Nations of a resolution that countries not conduct direct-ascending antisatellite tests that create vast fields of space debris, which endanger satellites and space stations. Of the four countries that have conducted such ASAT tests, the United States was the only one that voted in favour, while China and Russia voted no and India abstained.

“We can't continue to contribute to the debris that we find in the space domain,” Dickinson said in a telephone news conference with reporters in Asia. Most of that debris lies in crucial low Earth orbit, which has become “congested, competitive and contested,” he said.

Even tiny shards of metal can pose a danger and the number of objects is growing rampantly.

Space Command is now tracking more than 48,000 in near Earth orbit, including satellites, telescopes, space stations and pieces of debris of all sizes, up from 25,000 just three years

ago, Dickinson said.

China in 2003 became the third government to send an astronaut into orbit on its own after the former Soviet Union and the United States. Its program has advanced steadily since.

The Chinese space program drew rare international criticism after it conducted an unannounced test in 2007 in which it used a missile to blow up a defunct Chinese satellite, creating debris that continues to pose a hazard. Beijing believes that “space is a very important piece to not only their economic or the global economic environment, but also the military environment, so we continue to watch that very closely as they continue to increase capabilities,” Dickinson said.

The secretive Chinese program is run by the ruling Communist Party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, precluding it from participating in the International Space Station or engaging in most forms of cooperation with NASA.

Proceeding with little outside help, China last month launched the last of three modules for its own space station, which briefly hosted six Chinese astronauts in space during a turnover of the three-person crew.

It also has rovers on the moon and Mars and is planning a crewed lunar mission sometime in the future.



FM: Helping Ukraine self-preservation

AP ■ FRANKFURT

Ukraine's finance minister says crucial Western financial support is “not charity” but “self-preservation” in the fight to defend democracy as his country deals with growing costs to repair electrical and heating infrastructure wrecked by Russian attacks.

Serhiy Marchenko also told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday from Kyiv that he believes European Union officials will sort out a dispute with Hungary that has blocked a key 18 billion-euro (USD 18.97 billion) aid package and would cover much of Ukraine's looming budget gap.

Marchenko said financial support for Ukraine is tiny compared to what developed countries spent to combat emergencies like the global financial crisis of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic. And that the money bolsters freedom and security far

beyond his country's struggle, he added.

“It's not charity to support Ukraine,” Marchenko said. “We are trying to protect freedom and democracy of all (the) civilized world.”

He said the damage from Russian missile attacks on civilian infrastructure such as power stations would cost 0.5% of annual economic output next year, adding to the burden as Ukraine tries to cover a budget deficit equivalent to USD 38 billion. The World Bank put Ukraine's gross domestic product at just over USD 200 billion in 2021, so the damage could amount to roughly USD 1 billion.

Ukraine needs outside financing to cover the budget deficit caused by the war. Cash or loans help it avoid printing money at the central bank to cover basic needs like paying people's pensions, a practice that risks fueling already painful inflation.

Bulgarian parliament OK's military aid to Ukraine

AP ■ SOFIA, BULGARIA

Bulgarian lawmakers on Friday approved the country's first military assistance package to Ukraine involving a classified list of weapons prepared by the government.

The National Assembly voted 148-46 with one abstention in favor of the weapons to Kyiv following months of political squabbling on the issue in the Balkan NATO member state.

Bulgaria previously agreed to repair Ukrainian military equipment at its factories but refused to send weapons directly due to opposition from President Rumen Radev and the country's Moscow-friendly political parties. Along with Hungary, Bulgaria was the only European Union member country to initially refuse to give Ukraine weapons following Russia's invasion.

While the full list of weapons remains classified, cabinet members told reporters ahead of the vote that the package included small arms and ammunition. Defense Minister Dimitar Stoyanov said in a TV interview that the aid “is fully aligned with Ukraine's priorities” but added that Bulgaria will neither provide S-300 missile systems nor MiG-29s fighter jets.



US sending \$275 million in military aid to Ukraine

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US is sending an additional USD 275 million in military aid to Ukraine, including large amounts of ammunition and high-tech systems that can be used to detect and counter drones in its ongoing war with Russia, according to US officials.

The total aid amount is smaller than most of the recent packages the US has delivered, and it comes as many military officials and experts predict a reduction in attacks during the winter. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Russia appears to be slowing its military activities to regroup and launch a new offensive when the weather warms.

The officials said the latest

package of aid includes 80,000 rounds of ammunition for howitzers and an undisclosed amount of ammunition for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, known as HIMARS. It also includes systems to counter drones and air defences, along with more HUMVEEs, generators and other combat equipment. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the aid package prior to its public release, which is expected Friday.

Drone attacks by both sides have been increasing, making detection of the unmanned explosives critical for Ukrainian forces. Russia bought hundreds of attack drones from Iran over the summer, and officials said this week that Moscow is looking to do more of the same.

Russian forces have increasingly targeted Ukraine's civilian infrastructure including power plants, leaving thousands without heat and electricity as the winter months set in.

In addition, several recent drone attacks struck two strategic Russian air bases more than 500 kilometers from the Ukraine border early this week. Moscow blamed Ukraine, which didn't claim responsibility.

Including the latest aid, the US has now committed more than USD 19.3 billion in weapons and other equipment to Ukraine since Russia attacked on February 24. The aid will be provided through presidential drawdown authority, which allows the Pentagon to take weapons from its own stocks and quickly ship them to Ukraine.

Lanka shuts schools as extreme weather brings pollution

AP ■ COLOMBO

Schools across Sri Lanka were closed on Friday as health and environment officials said the air quality in most parts of the island nation was unhealthy partly due to extreme weather conditions.

Polluted air from neighbouring India was aggravating the problem, authorities said, as a storm in the Bay of Bengal triggered heavy rains and winds across Sri Lanka in

recent days.

A haze hung over the capital, Colombo, and other parts of the country, with the level of fine particles in the air reaching unhealthy levels.

“The current pollution has arisen due to the combination of local air pollutants and transboundary air pollution,” said the National Building Research Organisation, a state agency involved in environmental monitoring and risk man-

agement.

“This condition can be seen in all parts of Sri Lanka and it has a tendency to cause health problems,” it added.

Director General of Health Services Asela Gunawardena said the condition would continue for the next two weeks and he advised people to limit the amount of time they spend outdoors and to wear a face mask when they are outside to minimize their

health risk.

At least two people were killed and another two were injured as heavy rains and winds lashed many parts of Sri Lanka the past two days. Dozens of houses were damaged by falling trees and several roads were blocked.

The Department of Meteorology said Friday that a severe cyclonic storm was in the Bay of Bengal, about 230 kilometres (143 miles) north-east of Sri Lanka, and likely to move toward India.

Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia for Chinese leader Xi's visit

AP ■ DUBAI

Gulf Arab leaders and others in the Mideast met Friday in Saudi Arabia as part of a state visit by Chinese leader Xi Jinping, seeking to firm up their relations with Beijing as decades of US attention on the region wanes. Before a joint meeting with Xi, representatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council met in a summit helmed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, further signalling his control of a kingdom still overseen by his father, the 86-year-old King Salman.

Among them was Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, whose country now hosts the FIFA World Cup and has largely restored ties to its Arab neighbours after a yearslong boycott. Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa,



whose island nation still has strained relations with Qatar, also attended.

Prince Mohammed made a point in his opening remarks, aired on state television, to applaud Qatar for its hosting of the World Cup. He also could be seen warmly greeting Sheikh Tamim before the meeting,

Emirates. The leader of the Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, did not attend, instead sending the ruler of the emirate of Fujairah, Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi. Kuwait's crown prince and a representative of Oman's sultan also attended.

Xi's visit comes as China

something unthinkable only two years earlier amid the boycott.

The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

relies on the Gulf Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, for billions of dollars in crude oil imports to power his country's economy. While the US still maintains bases across the region and stations tens of thousands of troops, Gulf Arab nations feel Washington's attention has shifted elsewhere after the end of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. They also want to maintain relations with China even as US officials believe they face a growing threat from China in Asia and Russia as Moscow wages its monthslong war on Ukraine.

During Xi's visit, Saudi officials have said deals had been signed between Riyadh and Beijing, including some involving Chinese technology company Huawei on cloud-computing, data centres and other high-tech ventures.



AP ■ SAN ANTONIO

American basketball star Brittney Griner returned to the United States early Friday after being freed in a high-profile prisoner exchange following nearly 10 months in detention in Russia. The deal, which saw her swapped for notorious arms dealer Viktor Bout, secured the release of the most prominent American detained abroad and achieved a top goal for President Joe Biden. But the US failed to win freedom for another American, Paul Whelan, who has been jailed for nearly four years.

Griner is a two-time Olympic gold medalist, Baylor University All-American and Phoenix Mercury pro basketball star.

Her status as an openly gay Black woman, locked up in a country where authorities have been hostile to the LBGTQ community, injected racial, gen-

der and social dynamics into her legal saga and brought unprecedented attention to the population of wrongful detainees.

Biden's authorisation to release Bout, the Russian felon once nicknamed “the Merchant of Death,” underscored the heightened urgency that his administration faced to get Griner home, particularly after the recent resolution of her criminal case on drug charges and her subsequent transfer to a penal colony.

Griner was seen getting off a plane that landed Friday at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas.

The athlete, who also played pro basketball in Russia, was arrested at an airport there in February after Russian authorities said she was carrying vape canisters with cannabis oil.

Before her conviction, the US State Department declared Griner to be “wrongfully detained” — a charge that Russia has

sharply rejected.

The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed Thursday's swap, saying in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the exchange took place in Abu Dhabi and Bout had been flown home.

Biden spoke by phone with Griner. US officials said she would be offered specialised medical services and counselling.

In releasing Bout, the US freed a former Soviet Army lieutenant colonel whom the Justice Department once described as one of the world's most prolific arms dealers. He was arrested in Thailand in 2008 and extradited to the US in 2010. Bout was serving a 25-year sentence on charges that he conspired to sell tens of millions of dollars in weapons that US officials said were to be used against Americans.

Following Griner's arrest at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport in February, she pleaded guilty in July but still faced trial because admitting guilt in Russia's judicial system does not automatically end a case.

She acknowledged in court that she possessed canisters with cannabis oil but said she had no criminal intent and she accidentally packed them.

Her defence team presented written statements that she had been prescribed cannabis to treat pain.



Putin must face tribunal: Ukrainian Nobel Prize winner

AP ■ MOSCOW

A representative of one the organisations sharing this year's Nobel Peace Prize said Friday that she thinks Russian President Vladimir Putin must face an international tribunal for the fighting in Ukraine.

Oleksandra Matviichuk of Ukraine's Centre for Civil Liberties said during a news conference in Oslo, Norway, that “We must establish an international tribunal to hold Putin, (Belarusian President Alexander) Lukashenko and other war criminals accountable.”

In October, the Ukrainian group was named a co-winner of the 2022 peace prize along with Russian human rights group Memorial and Ales Bialatski, head of the Belarusian human rights group Viasna.

Bialatski is jailed in Belarus and was unable to travel to receive the prize, which is due to be formally presented on Saturday.

INDIA STARE AT CLEAN SWEEP

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

A struggling Indian team, severely depleted by a spate of on-field injuries and fitness-related problems, will be determined to avoid the ignominy of a clean sweep against Bangladesh in the final ODI of the three-match series here on Saturday.

Bangladesh, riding on two contrasting yet brilliant knocks from Mehidy Hasan Miraz, have already sealed the series after winning the first two matches but if Litton Das' men can blank the 'Men in Blue' 3-0, it will be a historic first in the country's cricket.

Not only will it be an icing on the cake for the hosts but also significantly dent the visiting team's confidence ahead of the Test series, starting at this very venue in less than a week's time (December 14).

For India, there were 20 cricketers originally available for this series since there was a very short turnaround time between the first ODI in Bangladesh and the last game in New Zealand as some players in both squads were common.

But call it a cruel twist of fate as within a week things have gone from bad to worse and they only have 14 fit and available players to choose from for the final game.

Such has been the plight that Kuldeep Yadav has been flown into Chattogram on SOS basis as the Indian bowling attack looks thin on experience. The left-arm wrist spinner with 118 wickets from 72 ODIs will be the most experienced bowler in the line-up.

Regular skipper Rohit Sharma sustained a left thumb dislocation and has flown back home. Up and coming pacer Kuldeep Sen suffered a back injury after playing his first international game. Seamer Deepak Chahar continued his saga of breaking down in almost all the series he has played since his comeback



from a long lay-off.

Add to this, Axar Patel suffered a hit in the ribs and missed the first game while Rishabh Pant, who flew all the way from New Zealand, reportedly had a niggle and had to be rested for excessive workload prior to this series. In fact, there will be two forced changes in the playing eleven with Rohit and Chahar already unavailable.

It is there to be seen whether India bring in Ishan Kishan into the playing XI as an opener or stand-in skipper KL Rahul, who is now a

designated middle-order batter-keeper in this format, decides to promote himself just like during the tour of South Africa.

The other option is continuing with Virat Kohli-Shikhar Dhawan combination and get someone like Rahul Tripathi, who can also bowl some cutters at mid 120 clicks, in the playing XI. If the team management goes for a pure batter rather than a utility player, then the stylish Rajat Patidar could get his first game for India.

In case of Chahar's replace-

ment, there isn't a back-up pacer available and the team might not have an option but to fall back to all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed, who could be the sixth bowling option.

India's five-pronged bowling attack will be Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umran Malik, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel.

With no Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja, the Indian bowling unit's performance at the back-end has been far from impressive.

While a full-strength Bangla-

desh will start as favourites in the final game, the bigger worry will be KL Rahul, the skipper.

His record, save in the ODI series win against a below-par Zimbabwe, has been dismal and the last thing he would need is another clean sweep defeat against his name after the tour of South Africa.

Till now, there has been little or no indication that Rahul is a long-time future India captain, not having displayed any above average leadership acumen in the matches that he has captained so far.

I've been working on my power-hitting: Sundar

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

He is not the quintessential power-hitter. But, keeping in mind the Indian team's requirements ahead of next year's World Cup, Washington Sundar is working "specifically" on how to hit the ball long and hard.

Known to rely more on timing and placement, Washington has also played a few blunders, the most recent coming in the tour of New Zealand. And who can forget his 14-ball 40 against Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, representing Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"That's the role I have been getting in the last few years or so. That's what that particular position demands, and I have working quite specifically that way."

"Whatever positions demand me to do, I have been practising that way. I have been working in those specific manners," Washington said on the eve of the third ODI against Bangladesh.

Washington is happy that his hard work is reaping dividends.

"I am glad that all the hard work has been coming good in the last few months or so. Hopefully, I will continue to do really well in the coming months and years as well."

The all-rounder, who has picked up five wickets in the two preceding matches of the series which India have already lost, is looking to be the player for all situations and positions.

"It was a great opportunity for me in last game. With the World Cup next year, I want to be the player who could play in any situation, in any sort of combinations, and wherever the team needs. To win games, wherever they ask me to play, I will play. That's the kind of player I want to be."

"I want to be able to contribute to my potential, contribute in a way that the team gets to win most of the games, and eventually, be very, very successful in the World Cup. I just want to be in the present and keep doing well,



keep getting better in every aspect of the game."

India lost both their matches in Bangladesh from winning positions, having the hosts at 136 for nine in a chase of 187 in the opener and then reducing them to 69 for six before letting them off the hook to make 271 for seven in the second match.

"To be honest, we had our opportunities in both the games. First game, they needed about 50 runs to win with one wicket and we had a good opportunity. And even the last game, we had a good opportunity."

"In the first innings, they were 70 for six and with the way Shreyas and Axar were batting, we were going to win quite convincingly and Rohit bhai, the kind of knock he played, it was unreal."

"It was just about winning those critical moments, probably doing one or two things better here and there. We will look to end the one-day series on a high."



India 'A' crush B'desh 'A' by an innings & 123 runs

PTI ■ SYLHET

Left-arm orthodox spinner Saurabh Kumar ran through Bangladesh 'A' batting line-up as India 'A' clinched the two 'Test' series with a commanding innings and 123-run victory in the second and final game here on Friday.

With his performance, Saurabh has staked a strong claim to replace an injured Ravindra Jadeja in the Indian Test squad for the upcoming series against Bangladesh, starting December 14.

Having conceded a mammoth 310-run first innings lead, Bangladesh 'A' performed even worse in their second innings, being shot out for a paltry 187 in 79.5 overs.

In the first innings, Bangladesh were a shade better, scoring 252 and India replied with a massive 562, riding on skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran's superb 157.

Saurabh, who also had a five-wicket haul in the second innings of the drawn first 'Test', took 6 for 74 in 30 overs to become one of the architects of the series win.

The Uttar Pradesh spinner also finished with a haul of 15

scalps in two games to emerge as the top wicket-taker in the series. Bangladesh 'A', with seasoned former skipper Mominul Haque in their ranks, were expecting to bat it out for three sessions and eke out a draw.

However, Mominul (6) was smartly snapped up behind stumps by keeper Kona Bharat in the fifth over of the morning and there was no looking back for India 'A'.

Opener Shadman Islam (93 not out) did fight it out and also had a 54-run fourth wicket stand with Shahadat Hossain (29) but Saurabh broke that stand with Yash Dhull taking a catch.

Navdeep Saini (2/54 in 16 overs), who was given an extended spell because of his possible call-up to the senior squad, then got two wickets in three deliveries to send half of the home side packing. He first trapped Jaker Ali leg-before and then had Yashasvi Jaiswal pouch Mohammed Mithun in the slips to reduce Bangladesh 'A' to 145 for 6.

Saurabh then quickly polished off the tail to set up a nice win as Umesh Yadav (2/34 in 15.5) completed the proceedings.

Call on Rohit's availability for Test series to be taken later: Shah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A call on injured India captain Rohit Sharma's participation in the upcoming two-match Test series against Bangladesh, starting December 14, will be taken later, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Friday.

Rohit had suffered a blow to his thumb while fielding in the slips during the second ODI against Bangladesh in Mirpur on December 7.

"The BCCI Medical Team assessed him and he underwent scans at a local hospital in Dhaka. He has flown to Mumbai for specialist consultation and will miss the final ODI. A call on his availability for the upcoming Test

series will be taken later," Shah stated in a press release.

While the BCCI will wait for an update on Indian skipper's availability, it can be safely concluded that with a dislocation as well as stitches, it will be near impossible for Rohit to train and then play a five-day match starting Wednesday. It is also not just about batting but also fielding.

With India having a packed schedule of white-ball games throughout January, whether the risk will be taken in a Test series against Bangladesh is there to be seen.

The BCCI has also instructed injury-prone pacer Deepak Chahar and rookie Kuldeep Sen to report to



National Cricket Academy (NCA) for assessment of their hamstring and back injuries respectively, informed Shah.

"Fast bowler Kuldeep Sen complained of stiffness in his back after the first ODI. The BCCI Medical Team assessed him and he was advised rest from the 2nd ODI. Kuldeep has been diagnosed with a stress injury and is ruled out of the series."

"Fellow fast bowler Deepak Chahar sustained a left hamstring strain during the 2nd ODI and is also ruled out of the series. Both Kuldeep and Deepak will now report to NCA for further management of their injuries," Shah stated.

Australia thrash India in 1st Women's T20I

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Opener Beth Mooney made short work of a 173-run target with a belligerent 57-ball 89 to power the Australian women's team to a convincing nine-wicket victory over India in the first T20 International here on Friday.

Mooney smashed 16 fours during her stay in the middle, and was helped by Tahlia McGrath's unbeaten 29-ball 40, which included four boundaries and two sixes. Australia thus took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, the experienced Deepti Sharma blazed away to an unbeaten 15-ball 36 to power India to 172 for five.

Sharma smashed four successive boundaries in the final over, bowled by Megan Schutt to boost India's run rate after Richa Ghosh (36 off 20 balls) and the returning Devika Vaidya (25 off 24) added 56 runs for the fifth wicket.

Chasing a stiff target, the formidable Australian opening pair of skipper Alyssa Healy and Mooney gave Australia the start it needed,



adding 73 runs in just under nine overs.

Healy and Mooney played some wonderful shots during their scintillating partnership to put the Indian bowlers under pressure.

Making matters worse was a dropped catch by Radha Yadav at backward point off Renuka Singh, giving Mooney a life when the batter was on 4. Medium pacer Renuka was then hit for three successive fours by Mooney, even as her captain struck the first six of the Australian innings.

If the dropped catch was

not enough, India's fielding overall was poor.

Vaidya, playing her first T20I since her debut in 2014, effected the first breakthrough when she had Healy caught by Harmanpreet.

The loss of the skipper, for a 23-ball 37, failed to disturb Australia's momentum as Mooney found an able ally in Tahlia McGrath.

It was as good as over for India after Mooney took 18 runs in the 15th over to bring the equation down from 55 runs off 36 balls to only 37 runs in the last five overs.

Ahmed's 7-114 on Test debut helps Pak rein in Poms

AP ■ MULTAN

Unheralded Abrar Ahmed bagged a rich haul of seven wickets in a dream debut as Pakistan's spinners kept England's aggression in check on the first day of the second Test on Friday.

The 24-year-old mystery spinner grabbed 7-114 and got plenty of help from the dry wicket at Multan Cricket Stadium to dismiss England for 281 inside the first two sessions.

England got rid of both Pakistan openers — Imam-ul-Haq and Abdullah Shafique — early before captain Babar Azam's unbeaten 61 carried the home team to 107-2 at stumps when bad light stopped play with 10 overs still remaining in the day.

Saud Shakeel, who scored a gritty half century in Pakistan's 74-run defeat in the first Test at Rawalpindi, was not out on 32.

Ahmed was surprisingly left out from the first Test despite picking up 43 wickets in this season's first class tournament. He mystified England with his sharp googlies and car-



rom balls with only Ben Duckett (63) and Ollie Pope (60) scoring rapid half centuries.

Leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood made a forgetful Test debut at Rawalpindi, but finished off the tail just before tea to end up with 3-63 after Ahmed's brilliance constantly posed challenges to England's aggression.

Duckett and Pope both

scored half centuries in the first session before falling to Ahmed as the legspinner became only the second bowler in the history to pick up five wickets before lunch in his debut Test and England reached 180-5.

Left-arm spinner Alf Valentine of the West Indies was the other bowler to do so when he debuted against England at Manchester in 1950.

BWF World Tour Finals: Prannoy stuns world No.1 Axelsen

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Already out of reckoning, top Indian shuttler HS Prannoy stunned world number one and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in three games to end his BWF World Tour Finals campaign with a memorable win here on Friday.

The tie was already inconsequential for Prannoy, seeded third in the tournament, as he had lost his earlier two Group A matches but the Indian pulled



off a shock 14-21, 21-17, 21-18 win over the top seed Dane in 51 minutes to at least end his campaign on a high. This was Prannoy's second career win over Axelsen, whom he had beaten during the Indonesia

Masters last year. The career head-to-head record is, however, in favour of Axelsen at 5-2.

On Thursday, Prannoy had lost to China's Lu Guang Zu in his second Group A match to bow out of the semi-final race. The 30-year-old from Kerala had lost 21-23, 21-17, 19-21 in a gruelling 84-minute contest.

The top two players in each group will make it to the knockout stage. Prannoy is the lone Indian competing in the season-ending tournament.

Head, Labuschagne tons put Oz on top

ADELAIDE: Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne posted big hundreds in a 297-run partnership to set Australia on course for a declaration in the second Test on Friday before Michael Nesar took two wickets under lights to consolidate the home team's dominance in the day-night match against West Indies.

Head's 175 and Labuschagne's 163 helped Australia to 511-7 before stand-in skipper Steve Smith declared the innings just before the second interval

on Day 2. Opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul resisted the Australian bowling attack for 98 deliveries, scoring a defiant unbeaten 47 as West Indies struggled to 102-4 at stumps. Paceman Nesar (2-20) had West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite (19) and No. 3 Shamarh Brooks (8) caught behind and Nathan Lyon took a return catch to dismiss Jermaine Blackwood (3) and become the leading all-time wicket-taker at the Adelaide Oval, surpassing the great Shane Warne's career haul of 56.

LOCAL EVENTS

MAHARASHTRA, HARYANA ADVANCE



Maharashtra, Haryana and Chattisgarh won their respective first round matches to advance into second round on the opening day of the 17th Junior National Soft Tennis Championship at Vijyant Khand stadium on Friday. Maharashtra edged past Bihar 2-1 while

Chattisgarh and Haryana defeated Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand respectively. In the last match, Kerala blanked Odisha 2-0. Earlier, Transport minister Dayashankar Singh and BJP state head Bhupendra Chaudhary inaugurated the championship.

KAJAL SHINES IN SAI 'A' WIN

Kajal scored four goals to help Sports Authority of India 'A' thrash Odisha Naval Tata Hockey 8-0 in a pool A match of Khelo India Women's Hockey League on Friday. In another pool A match, Smart Hockey Academy blanked Citizen XI Hockey Academy 3-0. In the three pool B matches played on Friday, Pritam Hockey Academy, SAI 'B' and Salute Hockey Academy won their matches against Sports Hostel Odisha, Bhai Bhelo Hockey Academy and Sports Authority of Bhopal respectively.

STUFF OF DREAMS

Croatia shoot-out Brazil, enter FIFA World Cup semifinals



Morocco chasing WC history against Portugal

AP ■ DOHA

Morocco head into Saturday's last-eight clash with Portugal knowing they are only one step away from making history as Africa's first World Cup semi-finalists, but they face a buoyant opposition fresh from scoring six goals against Switzerland.

Walid Regragui's Moroccans are in uncharted territory after a surprise run which saw them finish top of Group F after beating Belgium and Canada before a stunning victory over Spain on penalties in the last 16.

The Atlas Lions are only the fourth African side to reach the quarter-finals — after Cameroon in 1990, Senegal in 2002 and Ghana in 2010.

Morocco have enjoyed the vast majority of support from the crowds at all their games in Qatar and that is likely to be the case again at Al Thumama Stadium. "I think it's impossible for us to do this without the fans," said coach Regragui after knocking out Spain.

"A lot of fans came to Qatar from a lot of countries — America, Europe, Morocco. They love their country and what I can tell them is this — we can do nothing without them, I need them for the quarters and, hopefully, we'll make history."

There has still never been a country from outside Europe or South America in a World Cup



final, but Morocco want to put that right.

"Why not aim for the sky? We needed to change and we needed to change our mentality," Regragui said after the group stage.

"We're not going to stop here. We're going to respect every opponent. But we are going to be very difficult opponents. So why not dream about lifting that trophy?"

Morocco are unbeaten in seven matches since Regragui took over from the sacked Vahid Halilhodzic in August.

Centre-back Nayef Aguerd hobbled off injured against Spain, while captain Romain Saïss soldiered on despite pick-

ing up an injury during extra time.

"Since the start of the competition, we've been playing with a team that's not 100 percent, that's why it's even more extraordinary," said Regragui.

"We've managed to create a family, and we feel that we have a people behind us."

Spain struggled to create any clear-cut chances against the dogged North Africans but Portugal will be a different proposition after a fluid attacking display against the Swiss.

Coach Fernando Santos took the big decision to drop Cristiano Ronaldo to the bench, but it paid dividends as the superstar striker's replacement Goncalo Ramos scored a hat-trick in the 6-1 rout.

Portugal are in the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time since 2006, when they beat England on penalties before being knocked out by France.

They beat Ghana and Uruguay in the group stage before losing to South Korea, but without Ronaldo in the lineup, Portugal's attacking players appeared freer against Switzerland.

The 21-year-old Ramos stole the headlines, while Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and Joao Felix all impressed.

The prize for the winners is a semi-final against England or France and the chance to reach the World Cup final for the first time.

Santos calls for line to be drawn under Ronaldo affair



AP ■ DOHA

after he was told he was not in the starting line-up.

The Portuguese football federation denied the report and Ronaldo himself took to social media to state that the squad was "too united to be broken by outside forces".

Santos, speaking on the eve of Portugal's quarter-final against Morocco, said he had spoken to Ronaldo on the day of the game against Switzerland.

"I invited him to my office, and told him 'you will not be one of the starters', so it would not

be a surprise," he said.

"I told him he would be important (but) in terms of the strategy, I told him 'it's better for you not to play'. I saved him for the second half."

Santos said five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo never threatened to leave the team camp, although he was upset about being dropped.

"Cristiano, for obvious reasons, was not very happy about it," said Santos. "He's always been a starting player except for one or two games on the bench -- obviously he was not happy."

"He told me 'do you really think it's a good idea?' But we had a normal conversation in which I explained my viewpoints."

"Of course, he accepted. We had a frank and normal conversation, he has never told me he wanted to leave our national team."

Santos said Ronaldo showed his commitment to the team by celebrating Portugal's goals and leading the players to applaud the fans.

"It's high time we stop with this conversation, stop the controversies," said the coach, trying to draw a line under the affair.

"It's high time for you to leave Ronaldo alone, in acknowledgement for what he's done for Portuguese football."

Deschamps warns England of Mbappe threat

AP ■ DOHA

France coach Didier Deschamps is confident Kylian Mbappe can still make the difference in Saturday's World Cup quarter-final showdown with England even if the opposition put their focus on stopping the superstar forward.

Mbappe is the top scorer at the tournament with five goals in four games, including a brace in the 3-1 win over Poland in the last 16, and England will need to find a way of countering the Paris Saint-Germain striker.

But the holders have formidable quality around Mbappe, with Olivier Giroud, Ousmane Dembele and Antoine Griezmann all impressing in Qatar too.

"I imagine England will take measures like our four previous opponents did but Kylian has the ability to make the difference," Deschamps told reporters on Friday.

"Even in the last game, when he wasn't at his best like



in the first two, he was still decisive, but if we can share around the danger that stops too many precautions being taken against Kylian.

"But Kylian will always be Kylian, with the ability to be decisive at any moment."

The pressure is intensifying for both sides, but Deschamps has won the World Cup as a

player and a coach and the 54-year-old encouraged France not to let the occasion get the better of them.

"As is the case for us and all teams who reach the knockouts, you don't have a second chance," he admitted.

"The further on you go the greater the quality, but the demands are higher too and so is the excitement."

"This is the next stage but there is no stress, no need to hold back. It is magnificent to play a World Cup quarter-final."

While France are the defending champions, England appear to be growing as a team on the back of their run to the semi-finals in Russia four years ago and the final of Euro 2020.

France goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris — who has spent nearly a decade in the Premier League with Tottenham -- was full of praise for Gareth Southgate's England.

"If you look at the English squad they have more players here who were in Russia than France do," said the 35-year-old, who is set to win his 143rd cap and overtake Lilian Thuram as his country's all-time record appearance maker.

"They were semi-finalists at the World Cup, runners-up at the Euro. There is a real progression and I believe this team is getting more mature. They are here to win."

Southgate vows front foot approach

AP ■ DOHA

England manager Gareth Southgate has urged the Three Lions to take the game to defending champions France in a blockbuster World Cup quarter-final clash on Saturday.

Southgate's men are the joint top scorers in the tournament with 12 goals in their four games in Qatar so far but will come up against the firepower of the tournament's top scorer in Kylian Mbappe.

The threat of the Paris Saint-Germain forward has led to suggestions Southgate could change his formation with an extra defender added to deal with France's front four of Mbappe, Olivier Giroud, Antoine Griezmann and Ousmane Dembele.

But Southgate has hinted he intends to force France into worrying more about how to stop England's array of attacking talent.

"There is no point going into a game like this and just covering up and sitting on the ropes. We believe we can cause problems with the ball and we intend to do that," Southgate told ITV.



England reached the semi-finals four years ago as France went onto claim their second World Cup in Russia.

The Three Lions then got to a first major tournament final in 55 years at Euro 2020 before losing on penalties to Italy on home soil at Wembley.

But Southgate is hopeful that those experiences will help his side end the wait for a major trophy that stretches back to the 1966 World Cup.

"We've beaten some big teams. We know we have the experience of high pressure nights behind us and as a team we've been resilient through a lot of situations, but they all prepare you for nights like this," added Southgate.

"We got to the semi-final for 55 years. We've won a first final and been to a semi-final of the World Cup before."

"But, of course, it is a big game against a high quality opponent. Everything that has happened in the past is history, it all comes down to Saturday night."