

CITY 3

YOGI: BUNDELKHAND HAS REACHED NEW HEIGHTS OF DEVELOPMENT

OPINION 6

CLIMATE FINANCE IS THE PIVOT OF COP27

WORLD 10

KIM'S SISTER MAKES INSULTING THREATS TO SEOUL

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What's tearing hurry in picking Goel as EC: SC

AG objects to SC's observation: Arun's profile more vital than his voluntary retirement for new job appointment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned the "haste" and "tearing hurry" in appointing Arun Goel as the Election Commissioner.

Goel's appointment file showed the entire process to place him as the Election Commissioner took less than 24 hours after the 1985 batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service.

The SC went through the original file of Goel's appointment as an EC. The Centre placed the file before the bench in pursuance of Wednesday's direction given by the SC.

The Centre vehemently resisted the observations, with Attorney General R Venkataramani saying the whole issue pertaining to the appointment of Goel be looked into its entirety. The SC reserved the matter for judgment.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph perused the Centre's original file pertaining to Goel's



appointment as EC. "What kind of evaluation is this? Although, we are not questioning the merits of Goel's credentials but the process," asked the judge pursuing the files.

"This was moved on November 18. Then the names are examined. Then the Prime Minister comes in ... Is it (usually) done in such haste, with such tearing urgency," Justice Joseph asked Attorney General R Venkataramani, who was appearing for the Central Government.

"You did it in one day," Justice Joseph said. "On November 18. The file shows it," he added.

"According to your first page, this vacancy has been since May 15. Can you show us that from May to November, what was it that weighed on the Government that everything must be done superfast in November. We know that where there is a will there is a way," Justice Ajay Rastogi said.

He also said the notification of appointment was issued the very same day, November 18.

As the bench questioned the "lightning speed" with

which Goel was appointed as an EC and also that his file did not even move within departments for 24 hours, the Centre through Venkataramani vehemently urged the bench not to make observations without looking into the entire issue pertaining to the appointment process.

During the hearing, lawyer Prashant Bhushan attempted to make submissions before the bench when the Attorney General was arguing. "Please hold your mouth for while," the top-most law officer told Bhushan.

The top court reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of ECs and the Chief Election Commissioner and asked the parties to file written submissions in five days. Justice Ajay Rastogi, who is also a part of the bench, told Venkataramani, "You have to listen to the court carefully and answer the questions. We are not on individual candidates but on the process."

The Attorney General said he

is bound to answer the questions of the court.

The top court said the 1985-batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service in a single day, his file was cleared by the Law Ministry in a single day, a panel of four names was put up before the Prime Minister and Goel's name got the nod from the President within 24 hours. The bench, which also comprised Justices Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar, said none of the four names in the panel were "carefully hand-picked" by the Law Minister so that they could complete a six-year tenure.

Venkataramani responded that there is a mechanism and criteria for selection and there cannot be a scenario where the Government has to look back at every officer's track record and ensure that he completes the six-year tenure.

Referring to Goel's appointment, the Attorney General said his profile is important and not the voluntary retirement which is being made an issue.

The bench said the 1991 Act says the EC's tenure is of six years and the Government has to ensure that the person who holds the post completes the stipulated period.

The top court said it is

"struggling" to find the reasons and objects on how the Law Minister selected a panel of four names who were not going to complete the stipulated six-year tenure.

Pilot 'gaddar', took money from BJP to topple my Govt: Gehlot

Raj CM's attack widens fissures in Cong ahead of poll next year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

On a day when former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot joined Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in their ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday made a shocking claim that he has enough proof that the BJP paid Pilot and his few associates MLAs ₹10 crore each to stage a rebellion against his Government two and half years ago.

In an interview to NDTV, Gehlot termed Pilot a "gaddar" (traitor) and said he did not know when the high command indicated to make Pilot Chief Minister since he is the only point man of high command in the State. "I do not have any indication. I am with the high command," he said.

On the question of the Gehlot camp not accepting Pilot, he said, "How will they accept the man who has committed betrayal? Our MLAs and I myself have suffered because of him."

This is the second time in a month that Gehlot vented his anger against Pilot in public. But today he virtually challenged the high command by indicating he would not accept Pilot as his replacement at any



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his sister and the party's general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and party leader Sachin Pilot during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday PTI

cost. Gehlot's next move will be keenly watched now. His relation with Gandhis, in particular, all but ended after he refused to relinquish the post of CM for Pilot and head the Congress as his president.

Gehlot's scathing attack on Pilot has further widened the fissures in the Congress party in Rajasthan, where Assembly polls are slated next year. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is also set to enter Rajasthan next weekend.

Pilot chose not to react directly and attack Gehlot, but he said it was unbecoming of him to make such completely false and baseless allegations. It

an experienced person like him to use such language and the priority should be to fight to defeat the BJP as well as strengthen Rahul's hand.

Pilot said, "Gehlot has been calling me 'nikamma, naakara, gaddar and so on' but it was not part of his upbringing to use such language."

"I have seen Gehlot's statements today aimed against me. Someone who is so experienced, senior and whom party has given so much, it is unbecoming of someone with such experience to use this language, make such completely false and baseless allegations. It

serves no purpose when we have to fight BJP unitedly... Previously also Ashok Gehlot ji has been making such allegations against me for a long time," the former Union Minister said.

The priority right now is to win the Assembly elections in Gujarat where Gehlot is the senior observer of the party and it is also important to strengthen the hand of Rahul, who has spent the last three months walking 2,000 km in the Bharat Jodo Yatra to challenge divisive forces, and that of the party, Pilot said.

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Jama Masjid revokes ban on women's entry after L-G's call

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After his diktat banning the entry of a lone girl or a group of girls into the Jama Masjid created a furore and saw Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinal Kumar Saxena's intervention, Shahi Imam Ahmed Bukhari on Thursday revoked the order.

The order barring the entry of women "who come alone" and use it as a place to "meet boys for dating" led to widespread outrage with National Commission for Women and the Delhi Commission for Women condemning the decision as "repressive" and "unacceptable."

Saxena spoke to Bukhari and requested him to rescind the order. The Shahi Imam agreed with the condition that the visitors respect and maintain the sanctity of the mosque.

Earlier, the Jama Masjid



A woman leaves the Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Thursday. The administration of Jama Masjid had put up notices outside the main gates banning the entry of 'girls', whether alone or in groups

PTI

mosque notifying tourists that girls are not allowed inside.

"Jama Masjid mein ladki ya ladkiyon ka akele daakha mana hai (the entry of a girl, or girls is not permitted to enter in Jama Masjid alone); reads the notice by the administration.

However, the order said,

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mosques will be permitted to enter the mosque with their husbands or families. The notices, which have no date, came up a few days ago outside the three main entry gates, sources in the famed mosque's administration said.

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According to the sources in

Poonawala undergoes polygraph test, cops seize knives from flat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has seized five knives from the flat of Mebrauli murder accused Aaftab Amin Poonawala, who underwent a marathon polygraph test of nearly eight hours on Thursday at the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) here, officials said.

However, police said the saw allegedly used by Poonawala to cut his live-in partner Shraddha Walker's body is yet to be recovered.

The incident also took a political turn with Union Home Minister Amit Shah assuring strict punishment to the accused in minimal possible time while the CPI-M alleged that the murder and dismemberment of Walker by her Muslim boyfriend was being used for communal propaganda.

Sources said Poonawala cooperated during his examination but some of the recording was not clear as he was sneezing. The test could not be conducted on Wednesday as Poonawala was down with fever and cold.

During the session, Poonawala was asked details about the case, what triggered

the police department, the recovered knives were sent to FSL for examination to ascertain if these were used in commission of the crime.

If these knives were used during commission of the crime, will be ascertained only after forensic examination which takes time, said a source.

The second session of the polygraph test of Poonawala which started around 12 pm at the FSL Rohini went on for nearly eight hours. He was asked about 40 questions.

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Pulwama-famed ISI head named Pak Army chief

Lt Gen Asim Munir crossed swords with Imran Khan

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD

Lt General Asim Munir, a former Inter Intelligence Services (ISI) chief on Thursday was named as the new chief of the all powerful Pakistan Army. He was the spy agency head during the Pulwama fidayeen attack in Kashmir in 2019 where 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed.

Given the Pakistan Army has dominated the country's politics for more than 50 years and greatly influenced its foreign policy, especially concerning India, the security establishment here will take a guarded approach and wait and watch how things unfold in the next few months after Munir takes over, sources said.

Incidentally, Munir was all set to retire on November 27, two days before Bajwa before the announcement was made on Thursday. Reports indicated Pakistan Prime Minister

two neighbours, sources said.

Munir will take over from incumbent General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is set to retire on November 29 after a three-year extension. He declined another extension. Munir, a Frontier Force Regiment officer, is reported to be close to the outgoing chief, sources said.

Incidentally, Munir was all set to retire on November 27, two days before Bajwa before the announcement was made on Thursday. Reports indicated Pakistan Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif followed the principle of appointing the senior most officer as the Army chief. He will be the 17th Army chief of Pakistan.

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CAPSULE

INDIA UPSET AT MENTION OF MODI BY US OFFICIAL

New Delhi: India is upset at a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a US State Department official while defending the immunity it had extended to Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Sultan, who is facing allegations of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

RONALDO MAKES WORLD CUP HISTORY IN 3-2 WIN

Doha: Cristiano Ronaldo closed his eyes, took in a deep breath and then made World Cup history. The Portugal striker became the first male player to score at five World Cups with his 65th-minute penalty in a 3-2 win over Ghana on Thursday. Andre Ayew equalised for Ghana eight minutes later, but Joao Felix regained the lead for Portugal in the 78th and Rafael Leao added a third.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict catches up with Qatar World Cup

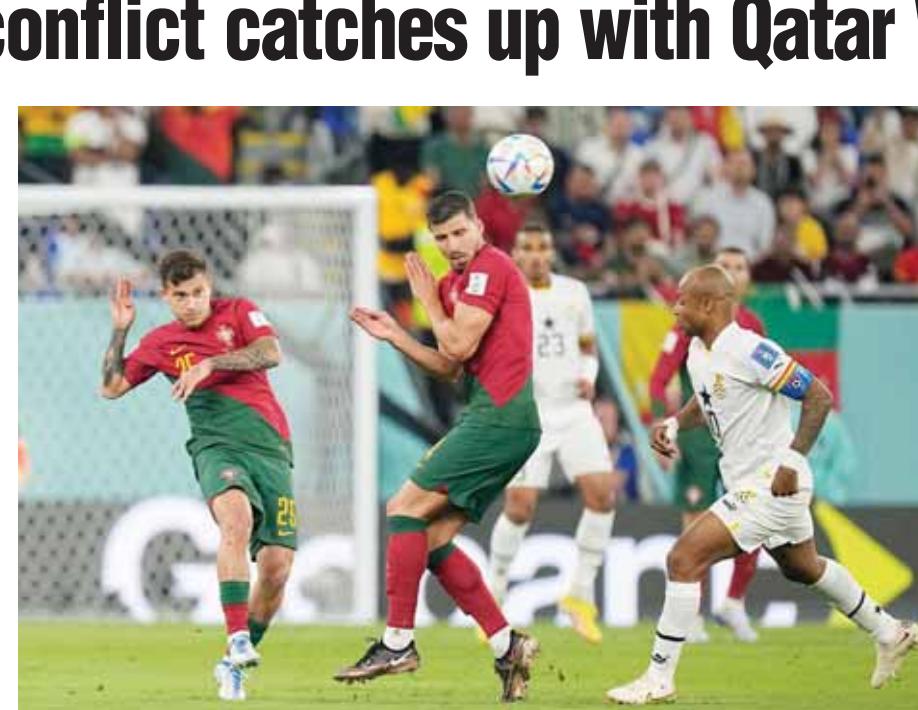
AP ■ DOHA

It was uncharted territory for the Israeli journalist. Wandering through the rustic outdoor marketplace in Doha before the start of the World Cup, he zeroed in on a Qatari man in his traditional head-dress and white flowing robe and asked for an interview.

"Which channel?" the Qatari asked. The journalist replied he was from Kan, Israel's public broadcaster. The Qatari was stunned. "Where?"

"Israel," the journalist repeated. A split-second later, the interview was over. The exchange ricocheted around social media, reflecting the latest political flash point at the first World Cup in the Arab world — never mind that neither Israeli nor Palestinian national teams are competing in the tournament.

Controversy has followed



Portugal's Otavio, left, chases the ball during the World Cup group H soccer match between Portugal and Ghana, at the Stadium 974 in Doha on Thursday AP

Govt fixes ₹7,409 cr for 'The Ashok' hotel under National Monetisation plan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has fixed an indicative value for Delhi's iconic "The Ashok" hotel at ₹7,409 crore under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last year.

The sources said investor consultation has already been undertaken and a Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs note for the sale of the sprawling 25-acre property in the heart of Delhi is under consideration.

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Speeding car mows down 2 men engaged in road construction

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Locals took to streets in Mahanagar protesting a hit-and-run case in which a speeding car without registration number fatally knocked down two workers who were constructing the road at Papermill trisection under Mahanagar police station area on Wednesday night. Both the victims, identified as Surendra of Nishatganj and Sandeep of Rae Bareli, were rushed to a hospital where they succumbed later. The errant driver and other occupants of the jeep fled the scene, abandoning the vehicle which was impounded by police.

As per reports, the victims were hired by a contractor for the road construction work under the Smart City project. The work is done in the night hours in view of less traffic. Around midnight, the speeding jeep (Mahindra Thar) knocked down the workers at the

Papermill trisection. Both were rushed to Civil Hospital where they died during treatment on Thursday morning.

Surendra's kin assembled at his residence and later took to streets in protest against the incident. They alleged that the police deliberately hid details of the incident from the bereaved families. Later, the protesters took Surendra's body to Nishatganj crossing and blocked the road, throwing the traffic out of gear. They demanded immediate arrest of the errant driver and compensation to the family of the deceased besides a government job to Surendra's widow.

The police took time in mollifying the protesters even as the crowd surged, leading to traffic snarls. Senior officers later reached the scene and assured the protesters that their demands would be forwarded to the officials concerned.

The police also succeeded

in convincing the protesters to perform the last rites in the evening. Police teams were scanning the CCTV footage to track down the errant driver and other occupants. A police spokesman said a case was registered in this connection.

Meanwhile, a youth was brutally attacked and hit by one of the rivals with his motorcycle in Vikas Nagar on Wednesday night. The victim, identified as Himanshu Tiwari of Sheikhpura Colony in the area, sustained grievous injuries and was admitted to KGMU Trauma Centre.

Himanshu, along with his friends, was at a tea shop in the corporate lane in Vishnu Puri when his rivals — Amir Ghazi, Yasin, Shoeb and Kaif (all of Sector-6 in Vikas Nagar) — reached the scene. In her complaint, victim's sister Shalini said the attackers picked a fight with him without any provocation and abused him.

"Himanshu tried to flee the scene to avoid a showdown. However, Shoeb knocked him with his motorcycle. As Himanshu fell unconscious, his friends took him to a private hospital from where he was referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre," Shalini stated in her complaint. She said the attackers also threatened to kill Himanshu if he reported the matter to police.

MOLESTED

A 22-year-old girl was molested on the way to a gym in Thakurganj. The victim is a resident of Peer Bukhara area in Thakurganj. As per reports, the girl said she was going to the gym around 8:30 am when a bike-borne man molested her. He also passed lewd remarks and sped off the scene after the girl confronted him and raised an alarm. Police said an FIR was registered and further probe was on.



Students of Unity College paying tributes to founder Dr Kalbe Sadiq at a programme organised on his second death anniversary on Thursday

Pioneer

STF busts gang buying drugs from KGMU shops using fake documents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

This is to inform that before marriage my name was Ashika Krishan Pal Bind but after marriage it has been Ashika Bind W/o Naveen Kumar R/o Flat No. 708, Shree Sailam Heights, S.N. Road, Prayagraj. Both names are of same person.

With the arrest of three accused on Thursday, a team of STF claimed to have busted a gang involved in fraudulently purchasing medicines, provided by the state government to poor patients registered with KGMU and other government hospitals, on discounted rates and then

selling the same to different medical stores across the city to mint money. Those arrested were identified as Rajneesh Kumar of Triveni Nagar, and Nitin Bajpai & Priyanshu Mishra of Madijan. All of them are natives of Sitapur district and had been involved in this crime for the past 3-4 years.

They were arrested from Chowk flyover on a tip off. The team recovered a huge quantity of medicines, three mobile phones, a KGMU's identity card, a scooter, Rs 3,860 in cash and other documents.

The medicines which were recovered bore the For KGMU and HRF only stamp but the accused would sell the same by erasing the stamp's impression as per reports, the STF team was tipped off that a gang was selling medicines, available at the pharma shops at KGMU and meant for poor patients, in the open market. The team was also informed that the gang used to procure these medicines by producing fake documents. On Thursday, the team was again tipped off that the gang was going to sell the medicines to some people near Nimbu Park and the trio were nabbed. They confessed to their crime.

Prime accused Rajneesh told the police that he worked as a salesman on contract courtesy outsourcing at a pharmacy inside the KGMU premises and it is run by the 'revolving fund'. These shops are popular-

ly known as HRF-run pharmacies. The registered patients get a rebate of 50-60 per cent on the purchase of medicines from these shops.

He said he and his aides, who work at other pharmacies inside KGMU, would purchase the medicines on discount by using the UHID registration numbers of patients and then sell the same to medical stores in the open market on a 30 per cent discount.

He disclosed the names of his aides as Nitin Bajpai, Priyanshu Mishra, Sooraj Mishra and Sugreever Verma.

The accused said their aides work at the pharmacies of Trauma Centre and other departments, including Gandhi Ward, and plastic surgery.

LDA to construct flats on outskirts

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) has been asked to construct flats under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (Rural). These flats will come up on the outskirts of the city in areas that have recently come into the jurisdiction of the LDA. PMAY is a national scheme sponsored by the Union Urban and Housing Development Ministry.

The Government of India has not yet fixed the number of flats to be built under the new

scheme. The estimated cost of the proposed project is said to be Rs 1,000 crore. It is expected that work on the scheme would start by April next year.

The LDA is searching for land for this project. An executive engineer requesting anonymity said that the LDA administration had an immense land bank especially after the rural land was acquired recently and added that suitable land would be available soon.

The PMAY flats are jointly funded by the Union government and the state government and the beneficiary has to pay only 50 per cent of the total cost of the flat. The flats under the proposed scheme would be a boon for the rural folks as they are still living in huts and kutchha houses.

The special feature of these flats will be that they will run on solar energy which is much cheaper than the conventional power and is within the reach of the rural folks.

Protesters make LDA squad beat a hasty retreat

Lucknow (PNS): The anti-encroachment squad of the Lucknow Development Authority had to beat a hasty retreat from the premises of the mini-shopping mall adjacent to the Janeshwar Mishra Park for the second day in a row on Thursday. The developer is alleged to have built the shopping complex on the land meant for residential purpose.

The anti-encroachment squad first reached there to pull down the three-storeyed shopping complex, said to have been constructed in violation of land use, on Wednesday but they had to come back due to the stiff protest by over 600 locals despite police presence.

A developer claimed that the owners have applied for change in land use and were expected to get a positive response by the authorities concerned.

The squad in charge later apprised Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob and LDA Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi after returning from the site. The strategy was revised by the senior officers and fresh instructions were issued to the incharge to do the job on Thursday. The LDA team again went to the site on Thursday morning but the protesters were at it again. The team members had a heated exchange with the protesters, especially the elderly, who had assembled there.

Woman held from IT office part of big job racket based in Bihar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A probe into the Direct Tax Bhawan case in which a woman, Priyanka Mishra, was arrested for giving fake appointment letters to job-seekers, revealed that she was in contact with a big job racket being operated from Bihar.

Sources claimed that Priyanka was posted in the IT cell of the Income Tax office in Noida on a contract basis but she distributed sweets among her colleagues, claiming that she had cleared the civil services examination.

"She worked as a data operator at the IT cell in Noida. She is an engineering graduate presently pursuing LLB from a

college in Lucknow. She was in contact with fraudsters from Bihar. The gang has also spread its network in Haryana and Delhi. She had a good rapport with several bigwigs in the Income Tax department. The police had recovered a huge number of documents and database from her possession at the time of her arrest from the Direct Tax Bhawan on Tuesday," one source said.

Meanwhile, fraudsters duped a youth of Rs 63,000 by impersonating CBI officers in Ghazipur police station area. They intimidated the youth using an obscene video clip (screen recording) which they secured during a WhatsApp video call. However, the victim

contacted police after the fraudsters continued harassing him demanding more money.

As per reports, the youth got a video call a week back. As soon as he answered the call, a woman on the other end started removing her clothes. The youth disconnected the call but the fraudsters had secured the screen recording which they used to intimidate him. The victim got a call and a man on the other end introduced himself as a CBI officer and threatened him with dire consequences. He was forced to deposit Rs 63,000 in a bank account, as told by them, if he wanted the video deleted. However, the fraudsters continued to harass him demanding more money.

1 killed, 14 hurt in group clash

Lucknow (PTI): A 25-year-old man was killed and at least 14 others were injured after a clash broke out between two groups over a land dispute in Muzaffarnagar, police said on Thursday. The incident took place at Atali village under the Budhiana police station area limits. DSP Viney Gautam said trouble started after a confrontation that broke out between two men — Ramsawroop and Brahmaji — turned violent.

The fight escalated and both the groups, belonging to different castes, attacked each other with sticks and sharp weapons, leaving 14 injured. Another man identified as Amit Kumar was killed in the incident, the senior police official said. The injured are undergoing treatment at a hospital, he said, adding that three people have been taken into custody and a probe has been initiated.

Meanwhile in Barabanki,

four children were taken seriously ill after consuming a wild fruit in Jaidpur Purva village, police said on Thursday. Eight others, including women and children, who had also consumed the wild fruit, were treated at home and are stable, they said. The children had gone to the jungle on Wednesday to pick vegetables when they found the wild fruit which they consumed and also brought home for others, police said.

CITYBRIEFS

SCHOLARSHIP FOR 3 CMS STUDENTS

Three students of City Montessori School, Chowk campus — Devang Agarwal, Prerak Agarwal and Shriyansh Bajpai — have received Rs 4 lakh scholarship each from the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. This scholarship will be provided to these students for higher education in science, under which each will be provided Rs 80,000 for five years. These students secured this scholarship by figuring on the top 1% merit list in the country based on their ISC (class XII) percentage marks this year. Apart from the support and motivation of their parents and teachers, these students of CMS credited the educational atmosphere of the school for their achievement. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated these students and wished them a bright future.



MEAT SHOPS TO REMAIN CLOSED TODAY

Meat shops across the city will remain closed on account of Sadhu TL Wasnavi Jayanti on Friday. In a directive issued by the principal secretary, Urban Development, no meat would be sold in the municipal limits on Friday and the meat shops and slaughterhouses would remain closed.

VOICE AGAINST TERRORISM

Maulana Yasoob Abbas and Maulana Saif Abbas will address a joint press conference under the aegis of All-India Shia Husaini Fund in November 26. It was alleged that Shias in Iran, Iraq and other countries were being victimised by terrorists sponsored by Pakistan. Both the clerics will raise this issue before mediapersons in the joint press conference.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that share certificates No. (S) 035906118 for 440 shares standing in the name (S) of Kumkum Pandey in the books of M/s Reliance Industries Ltd. has been lost / misplaced / destroyed and the advertiser has / have applied in the company for the issue of duplicate share certificate (S) in lieu thereof. Any Person (S) who has / have claim (S) on the said shares should lodge such claim (S) with the company's registrars and transfer agents viz Kfin Technologies Private Limited, Selenium Tower B, Plot No - 31-32, Gachibowli, Financial District Nanakramguda, Hyderabad - 500032 within 15 days from the date of this notice failing which the company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificates (S) in respect of said shares.

Dt.: 24.11.2022

Place : Kanpur

Kumkum Pandey

15/256 A,Civil Lines, Kanpur (U.P.)

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CM: Bundelkhand has reached new heights of development

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Bundelkhand, which was formerly known for drought, misery and anarchy, had reached new heights of development.

While launching 102 development projects worth Rs 328 crore in Jhansi, Chief Minister Yogi said, "Natural resources were abundant in Bundelkhand but they were previously looted. The prime minister wanted Bundelkhand to emerge from this situation."

He added: "The Bundelkhand Expressway was constructed, and the prime minister dedicated it to the nation this year, as a result of which Bundelkhand is now seeing unprecedented growth. Now the distance from Bundelkhand to Delhi can be covered in five hours."

Addressing the Prabuddhjan Sammelan, the chief minister expressed gratitude towards the people for



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing a gathering at the launch of 102 development projects worth Rs 328 crore in Jhansi

bringing Bharatiya Janata Party back to power during the assembly elections.

"As per the vision of the prime minister, we implemented the Jal Jeevan Mission, and now water is reaching every

house. Very soon, each and every house in Bundelkhand will have pure drinking water, which itself will cure half of the diseases," the chief minister said.

He added that access to

clean drinking water made it simpler to achieve the objective of "Ease of Living."

Stating that two important units of the defence manufacturing corridor were being built in Jhansi and Chitrakoot,

the chief minister said, "Development works are continuously going on in Bundelkhand. Today, the connectivity of Bundelkhand has improved a lot. The youth of Bundelkhand are getting jobs and employment."

Bundelkhand is becoming free of dacoits, Yogi said, adding, "The influence of mafia and criminals has come to an end here. The mafias used to grab the properties of the poor

State Medical Faculty to evaluate nursing, paramedical institutes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP State Medical Faculty has now decided to carry out annual evaluation of nursing and paramedical institutes as part of 'Mission Niramayah', which has been launched by the Yogi Adityanath government to improve Uttar Pradesh's health infrastructure and prepare more workforce for the future.

As per the plan, the selected institutes will be evaluated on their teaching, pedagogy, availability of infrastructure and behavioural skills of the students.

AS PER THE PLAN, THE SELECTED INSTITUTES WILL BE EVALUATED ON THEIR TEACHING, PEDAGOGY, AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND BEHAVIOURAL SKILLS OF THE STUDENTS

tive nursing and paramedical students can choose a quality institute with the help of the ratings of the institutions. Additionally, it will aid in identifying the areas where these institutions need to strengthen," Kumar added.

According to Kumar, in order to improve the standard of institutes throughout the state, the institutes that are doing below average would be mentored by the institutes performing better. "Any institution that wants to re-evaluate itself once rectification is made may do so whenever it wants for a maximum of three years at its own expense."

Special Secretary (Medical Education) Durga Shakti Nagpal said that this step would go a long way in creating an institutional framework for continuous quality improvement among nursing and paramedical institutions.

"We will continue our initiatives and efforts under Mission Niramayah to create such an environment and system where these institutions will be able to improve as well as raise their standards. The complete process of rating is registered in the form of rating guidelines which can be downloaded from the official website of the UP Medical Faculty," she remarked.

'Hatred' over adultery, drug addiction behind Sitapur killing

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the Shraddha Walkar murder case in Delhi already making headlines in the national media, it transpires that not just love jihad, hatred too is pushing men to brutal killings. This emerges from the confession made by the man arrested for chopping his wife into pieces in Sitapur.

"My wife was addicted to drugs and she left home to stay with different people. This disturbed me as I could not tolerate her sleeping with other men so after all my attempts failed to check her behavior, I decided to get rid of her," confessed Pankaj Maurya, the husband arrested for brutally killing his wife Jyoti alias Sneha in Sitapur.

"With the help of my friends, I chopped my wife into pieces and disposed of them in different localities," he said, adding that his act was governed by "hatred" and his attempt to conceal the crime.

The police recovered the body parts of Jyoti alias Sneha on November 8 from

Gularia area. Jyoti's husband Pankaj Maurya and his friend Durjan Pasi -- the two main accused in the case -- were arrested after a probe into the incident.

The police in a statement said Maurya's friend "has also been arrested for helping him in the crime". The police said that Maurya made the plan to murder Jyoti after he suspected that she was cheating on him. The two were married for over 10 years.

This sensational killing came close on heels to the brutal murder of Shraddha Walker by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawalla who allegedly sawed her body into 35 pieces in Delhi.

Besides Sitapur, another such brutal killing over 'hatred' came to light last week in Azamgarh, where a lover beheaded a girl, chopped her body into six pieces and threw them in a well. The accused, Prince Yadav, arrested by the police earlier this week, also confessed to have developed 'hatred' for his lover Aradhana Prajapati (24), as she married another youth when he went to Dubai for a job. Prince confessed that after returning last month, he

tried to pressure Aradhana to leave her husband and marry him but as she refused, he decided to eliminate her and chopped off her body into pieces and threw them in a well and dumped the head several kilometers away.

In the first week of this month, a youth had brutally hacked her lover to death, crushed her face with a blunt object before throwing the body near a railway track in Barabanki. In this case also, the police claimed that hatred for the girl, as she had ditched the accused, led to the brutal killing.

Not just lovers, several parents are also

brutally killing their daughters in the name of saving "family honour". The hatred they develop for their own kin for establishing relations against their wish forces them to chose "brutal" ways of killing and glaring example surfaced this week where a father shot his daughter dead and later with the help of his wife, stuffed her body in a trolley bag and dumped it on Yamuna Expressway in Mathura. This sensational fact came to light when the police arrested the parents two days back.

Remove name of Vikram Saini from voters' list: RLD

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) demanded removal of the name of disqualified Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Vikram Saini from the voters' list while apprehending that he may disrupt the peaceful conduct of the election.

RLD national spokesman Anil Dubey said the party's Muzaffarnagar unit had sent a letter to this effect to the state electoral officer.

In the letter sent to the electoral officer, the Muzaffarnagar unit of RLD said the MLA from Khatauli constituency, Vikram Saini, was convicted for Muzaffarnagar riots by a court and he was disqualified later from the assembly.

"We will continue our initiatives and efforts under Mission Niramayah to create such an environment and system where these institutions will be able to improve as well as raise their standards. The complete process of rating is registered in the form of rating guidelines which can be downloaded from the official website of the UP Medical Faculty," she remarked.

legally his right to vote should be freezed. Saini earlier had disturbed the peace and harmony in the constituency and this time also he is working with the same intention," the RLD said.

The party said Saini's wife Rajkumari Saini had been fielded in the by-election and he may go to any extent to ensure her victory in the by-election and may disturb the peaceful conduct of election.

"We therefore request to remove Saini's name from the voters' list to freeze his right to franchise in the election and oust him from the election region or ban him from election campaign," the party said in the letter.

The RLD spokesman said the Election Commission of India had removed the name of Mohammad Azam Khan from the voters' list. "By opting to the same measure, the Election Commission of India should also remove the name of Saini from the voters' list," he argued.

Probe ordered after arrest of fake army recruit

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An internal probe has been ordered into an alleged security breach at the 108 Infantry Battalion TA (Territorial Army) 'Mahar' in Pathankot 272 Transit Camp, where a fake recruit was deployed from July to October this year.

Army officials said that the inquiry would focus on the lapses that led to the security breach, how salary of Rs 12,500 per month was disbursed to the fake recruit, how he remained undetected for such a long time in the high security zone, and how he got access to INSAS rifle.

The probe will also look into the possibility of other personnel within the ranks being involved in the racket.

The development comes a day after inputs from Military Intelligence (MI) led to the arrest of a former sentry of 108 Infantry Battalion TA, Rahul Singh, and one of his two accomplices, Bittu Singh, from Meerut. Rahul had allegedly taken Rs 16 lakh from the Ghaziabad-based army aspi-

rant Manoj Kumar by promising to help him get a job in the army.

The accused, who was 'posted' as a sentry in the Pathankot-based 272 Transit Camp, got Manoj inside the centre, gave him a uniform and tasked him with various functions, including that of a follower, a cook and a sentry for which Rahul went to the extent of handing over the INSAS rifle issued to him to do duty by proxy so as to convince Manoj that he was indeed recruited.

Rahul's accomplice Bittu used to present himself before Manoj as a senior army officer, mostly on video call in full army uniform, complete with medals. It was Bittu who confirmed Manoj's recruitment'. Superintendent of Police (City) Piyush Singh said: "We recovered the uniform, all fake documents, a few stamps and also a country-made pistol from the arrested men. The third accused, Raja Singh, is still at large. All the three accused have been booked based on an FIR lodged by Manoj Kumar at Daurala police station in Meerut."

Meanwhile in Bareilly, an army jawan, who was pushed off a slowly moving train by a TTE (travelling ticket examiner) last Thursday following a heated argument finally succumbed to his injuries.

The incident happened when the train was moving out of the Bareilly railway station on November 18. The jawan, identified as Sonu Singh of 24 Rajputana Rifles, initially lost both his legs after he was pushed off the Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express. A badly injured Sonu was taken to a military hospital. His leg was amputated on Monday but he did not regain consciousness till Wednesday.

TTE Kupan Bore has been absconding since the incident. Government Railway Police Inspector Ajit Pratap Singh said, "Police registered a case against TTE Kupan Bore based on the complaint given by the army. A case under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code for attempt to murder has been registered against Bore." Ajit further said, "Kupan Bore is still on the run, and the search for him is on."

'Ramdev should stop using Patanjali as brand name'

Gonda (PTI): BJP leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh alleged on Thursday that Patanjali founder Ramdev set up a business empire by using the name of Maharsi Patanjali, who is considered the father of modern yoga.

Singh demanded that Ramdev and Patanjali managing director Balakrishna should stop using the Patanjali name in their brand, alleging that they did nothing for the maharishi's birthplace in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district. "Stop using this name in your brand. Build your brand with your own name," the Kaiserganj MP told the media at Maharsi Patanjali's birthplace in the Kondra gram panchayat, around 140 km east of Lucknow. Singh, who has hit headlines for his statements often, warned that he would start a mass movement and legal action would also be taken if the name was not changed. The parliamentarian said Ramdev and Balakrishna built a "huge business empire in the country and the world by following the path shown by Maharsi Patanjali".

and businessmen earlier. Now the government has started the recovery along with interest. Now, the process of building houses for the poor on their property has been started."

"Before 2017, even the police used to find themselves helpless. Today, the police in UP are ensuring that mafias are destroyed," the chief minister said.

The chief minister assured the people that Bundelkhand would no longer be in poor condition. "The development is continuously being carried out by the government here. The government is working to give the poor access to homes, water, toilets, cooking gas and electricity connections, among other things," he said.

The chief minister said that CCTV cameras had been

installed at several locations. He said that the BJP government's responsibility was to create a sense of security among the people. "Security environment is excellent right now; there are no riots, hooliganism, or chaos in the state," he added.

The chief minister went on to say that the government's top priority was to execute the prime minister's schemes. He said the government was working to give pension to every widow, every disabled, shelter to every poor person, and a job to every unemployed person.

He added that in Mann Ki Baat, the prime minister had lauded the Jhansi woman's daughter for cultivating strawberries under one roof.

Informing the people that the Global Investors' Summit would be held in Lucknow from February 10 to 12, 2023, in which there would be discussions on investing widely in the state, the chief minister asked people to join the state in making Uttar Pradesh a one-trillion-US dollar economy.

India Post

Office of The Chief Postmaster General, UP Circle, Lucknow-226001

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Four hurt in mishap

PNS ■ KANPUR

Four persons, including a PRV head constable, were injured when their car rammed into a stationary PRV at a dhaba in Kisan Nagar of Sachendi police station area late on Wednesday night. Car-borne youths were returning from Achhalda (Etawah) after attending a marriage ceremony there. All the injured were admitted to a private hospital where condition of PRV head constable was stated to be critical. Dev, Chhotu and Sahil of Barra-2 along with his three other friends had gone to Achhalda (Etawah) to attend a marriage ceremony on Wednesday. Late at night when they were returning from there, their uncontrolled car rammed into a stationary PRV 457 on the service lane at a dhaba. In the incident PRV head constable Lal Bahadur and car-borne youths Dev, Chhotu and Sahil, were injured. They



The PRV which overturned after being hit by the speeding car in Sachendi police station area late on Wednesday night.

were admitted to a private hospital in Barra, Sachendi SHO Pradumna Singh said according to information as the high speed of the car its driver lost control over it which suddenly rammed into the stationary PRV.

After informing the kin of the injured, all of them had been admitted to a private hospital. As PRV driver HCP Rajvir Singh and constable

Ajay had gone to have tea at the dhaba they had a narrow escape along with three youths sitting on the back seat of the car. Before hitting the PRV the car due to its high speed also knocked down two bikes parked at the dhaba and they flew apart 20 feet away from the spot.

Efforts were on to ascertain the owner of damaged bikes, SHO said.

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Naubasta police have arrested the employee of former state minister of Uttarakhand and national president of Bhartiya Sarv Samaj Mahasangh Ram Kumar Walia along with stolen cash and jewellery from his house here on Thursday. He had escaped with Rs 50 lakh cash and around seven 'tola' gold jewellery from former minister's Safdarjung, Delhi, flat.

After tracing his location through electronic surveillance, Safdarjung police along with Naubasta police raided his house here on Thursday and arrested him with the stolen cash and jewellery. SSI of Naubasta police station Jamal Ahmad said during a function organised in the flat of Ram Kumar Walia in Arjun Nagar, Bara Gurdwara, Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi, on November 12, a bag containing cash and jewellery was stolen. When Walia failed to trace the bag in his flat, he

lodged a complaint at the Safdarjung police station suspecting the involvement of his employee Jai Prakash Gupta, a resident of Avas Vikas Colony, Naubasta. Jai Prakash was found absconding after the incident. On November 22 night police got the location of Jai Prakash in Naubasta police station area and soon his mobile phone was found to be switched off. His mobile phone opened again on Wednesday and switched off after some time.

The Safdarjung police then arrived at his location here early on Thursday morning and arrested him. Police also recovered stolen cash and jewellery from his house.

DUPED: A woman was duped of Rs 1.20 lakh on the pretext of providing employment to her husband at a salary of Rs 45,000 per month in Saudi Arabia. But instead of sending him to Saudi Arabia on a regular visa, tricksters sent him to Bangkok on visit visa. With the intervention of legislator

and police officials tricksters brought him back to Delhi and held him hostage for several days. On woman's complaint to Delhi police, she got her husband freed from tricksters' custody.

On the basis of court orders she has now lodged a case at the Babupurwa police station and investigation is on in it.

Farha Parveen of Munshipurwa said she had come to know about six months ago that one of the relatives of her friend was going to Saudi Arabia for a job and getting his visa prepared by someone.

She asked her friend to arrange a job for her husband Ahmad there as well. She was then given mobile number of Samir of Mankapur (Gonda) who called her to Lucknow and assured to provide a job to Ahmad at a salary of Rs 45,000 per month in Saudi Arabia against payment of Rs 1.20 lakh. Trusting Samir, she paid Rs 30,000 cash and Rs 90,000 online to him.

Later, Samir gave her the mobile numbers of Farhan, manager of KT International Company, Hetram House, New Friends Colony, New Delhi, and Raj Kaushal. In August they arranged her husband's boarding on a flight to Kolkata for onward journey to Saudi Arabia but sent him to Bangkok from there.

On reaching Bangkok Ahmad came to know about having a visit visa with him and the fraud.

The woman then brought the issue to the notice of Samajwadi Party legislator Mohammad Hassan Roomi and APC.

When the legislator asked tricksters Samir and Farhan to immediately bring back Ahmad to India, they brought him to Delhi.

SHO Babupurwa said an FIR had been lodged against all the three accused for fraud, breach of trust and threatening under relevant sections of IPC and investigation was on in the matter.

Poshan Pathshala to be held today

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Child Development Services and Nutrition Department will organise 'Poshan Pathshala' on Friday at all the Anganwadi Centres and NIC of the district to liberate people from malnutrition. The Child Development Services and Nutrition department is extending the benefits of Poshan Schemes to the children, adolescent and pregnant & lactating women including the schemes to liberate from the malnutrition,

The District Programme Officer (DPO) DK Singh informed, adding that in this order, the 'Poshan Pathshala' would be organised on Friday at all the Anganwadi Centres and NIC on the pattern of 'Kisan Pathshala'. The experts will discuss the nutrition management and measures to be taken to liberate from the malnutrition besides the services being provided by the department, he informed, adding that the 'Poshan Pathshala' would be organised through video conferencing.

Traders stage protest

PNS ■ KANPUR

Dozens of traders staged a protest when Telangana police raided the shop of a grain trader and took him into custody in Nayaganj Bazar under Badshahinaka police station area on Thursday morning. Police rushed to the spot and took all the protesting traders to the police station. The grain trader is alleged to have purchased stolen jewellery from a youth of Delhi and on whose behalf Telangana police arrested him.

GRP inspector Nares and Sub-Inspector Suresh Yadav of Manchhireyala police station, Telangana, along with Alam of Delhi reached Nayaganj Bazar on Thursday morning and

took grain trader Gopal Agarwal of Bangali Mohal into custody. Telangana cops alleged that the grain trader had purchased huge quantity of stolen jewellery from Alam. On getting information dozens of local traders gathered at the spot and staged a protest under the leadership of Vinod Kumar Gupta. Badshahinaka police also rushed to the spot and took all the protesting traders to the police station where Alam informed that he knew Gopal Agarwal for a long time and used to sell stolen jewellery to him. Badshahinaka SHO Suresh Chandra said the accused was being quizzed and on the basis of investigations further action will be initiated against him.

Union Muskan Yojana launched

PNS ■ VARANASI

Union Bank of India (UBI) has launched 'Union Muskan Yojana' for the children. This scheme is a multi-purpose scheme to develop the habit of saving among the children and it is a new scheme of the banking field, the Zonal Head, Varanasi Zone and Regional General Manager of Union Bank of India (UBI) Girish Joshi informed.

The account will be opened under this scheme with zero balance saving under the patronage of parents/guardians and the account holder will also be provided free ATM card and cheque book on the basis of investigations further action will be initiated against him.

Zonal Manager of UBI Girish Joshi said of minimum amount in the account, he informed, adding that the minimum from Rs 500 to Rs 5000 per month could be deposited as cumulative deposit for the period of

minimum one year to maximum 10 years. Free term insurance will be provided to the account holder on starting the cumulative deposit under the scheme and the beneficiary would be provided the amount equal to the difference between the amount in the cumulative deposit and maturity amount of cumulative deposit on the death of parent/guardian, he informed, adding that the beneficiary would also be given 0.25 per cent concession on loan education in future.

The Union Muskan Yojana is a complete banking solution scheme for the minor which is available at all the branches of the bank, Joshi informed further.

IIT-K hosts BIS-Academia workshop

Kanpur (PNS): The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)

Kanpur hosted a day-long BIS-Academia workshop on standardisation of mechanical testing and powder metallurgical processes and products under the aegis of the Advanced Centre of Materials Science (ACMS) and Bureau of Indian Standards. The event was attended by about 100 participants that included faculty and staff members, research scholars and students.

In his inaugural address, Sanjiv Maini, head of Metallurgical Division (MTD) described the activities of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and its journey as the national standards body since

independence. He shed light upon how the Bureau had been undertaking the work of formulation of standards on a range of materials (both in raw and finished form), products and processes with specific reference to various recent initiatives taken by BIS for standard formulation, certification and online training on standards. He also pressed upon the need of academia to participate in the standardisation activity. The Advanced Centre for Materials Science was created at IIT Kanpur in 1978 with a view to make major materials preparation and characterisation facilities available under one roof. With state-of-the-art research facil-

ties the Centre has been providing consultancy and testing services to materials community for decades. This workshop was in line with the Centre's relentless efforts in sensitising the materials community and provided detailed deliberations on standardisation processes.

Professor Anish Upadhyaya, head, ACMS and workshop coordinator, in his introductory remarks, outlined the need for academia and industries to appreciate and understand the role of standard formulation for processes and products, whereas, Prof Kallo Mondal, head MSE Department, welcomed the invited speakers from BIS.

Guv dedicates hostel at CSAU&T

PNS ■ KANPUR

Governor Anandiben Patel while dedicating the Vallabhbhai Patel Hostel at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T) on Thursday said it was certainly a matter of pride for the youth to be part of one of the finest agricultural universities of the country and thus they had to achieve their goals. She advised them to be self-reliant and independent. She said it was the research of farm scientists that the country was constantly progressing each day.

She said earlier foodgrain was imported but today under the current leadership India was exporting foodgrains. She said farm scientists are making constant efforts to promote organic farming and this was one of the positive side of Indian farming as indiscreet use of chemical is causing diseases and thus appealed to farmers to avail themselves of the facility and progress in the field of agriculture. She advised farmers to go in for combined farming and add to their profits.

Patel said each day the farm scientists were putting in hard work to carry out



Governor Anandiben Patel addressing students of CSAU&T while dedicating the newly-constructed Vallabhbhai Patel Hostel on Thursday.

research for newer varieties of foodgrains and advised scientists that they need to ensure that the research of the laboratory was taken to fields. She said scientists need to motivate farmers to go in diversification and this could make them independent and financially strong. She said the role of rural women was equally important as they were converting wheat into porridge and this fetched them better return. Sounding a word of caution to farmers, the governor said they should refrain

from stubble burning but convert it into organic manure and this process improved the fertility of the soil.

Addressing the students Patel advised them to keep reading about great leaders of the country. She advised the students to prepare five kinds of foods with their own hands and ensure they shared with others as well and said this will be highly beneficial for their health.

Vice-Chancellor Dr DR Singh informed that the process of admissions had

Awareness programme on ending violence against women

PNS ■ KANPUR

Ex-principal Dr Asha Tripathi while addressing an awareness programme on "Role of current generation in ending violence against women" at Mahila Mahavidyalaya said in India one in three women experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. She said in real sense violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating often resulting in death.

She said violence negatively affected women's general well-being and prevented women from fully participating in society.

She said it impacted their families, their community and the country at large.

She said despite best efforts challenges remain in enforcing these laws, limiting women and girls' access to safety and justice.

She said there was no doubt that a woman's right to live free from violence was upheld by international agreements yet much needed to be done further.

Dr Tripathi said only 40 per cent of women seek help of any sort after experiencing violence and so one advocated for and support, women and girls' access to quality, multi-sectoral services essential for their safety, protection and recovery, especially for those who already suffer multiple forms of discrimination. She said seminars and awareness programmes were meant to prevent violence against women and girls, focusing on early education, respectful relationships and working with men and boys. She said prevention was still the most cost-effective and long-term way to stop violence.

She said mass campaigns about gender equality using community-led performing arts and crafts, such as interactive theatre shows, dance and music, reached more than 6,000 community members and 371 children participated in early intervention programmes focused on preventing violence.

Speaking on the topic Neelam Chaturvedi, secretary of Sakhi Kendra, organiser of the programme, said gender-based violence is such a high

risk that India is globally perceived as the most dangerous place for women according to a poll carried out by a foreign body. She said as per the latest National Family Health Survey (2019-21) nearly 1.5 per cent of young women in India within the age bracket of 18-29 years had experienced sexual violence. She said the report added that at least 29.3 per cent of married women had experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their spouses. She said another report suggested that about 70 per cent of women in India had faced some form of domestic violence at least once in their lifetime. She added that the statistics were alarming and reflected deeply embedded structural and institutional inequalities often supported by patriarchal mindsets and gender misogynistic practices that were the reality for most women in India.

Chaturvedi suggested that there was need for improving education and awareness on the root causes of violence. She said it was also necessary to end sexist and discriminatory language and strongly curb sexual harassment.

Speaking on the topic Neelam Chaturvedi, secretary of Sakhi Kendra, organiser of the programme, said gender-based violence is such a high

ESPERANZA season-4 inaugurated

Prayagraj (PNS): A three days national level cultural fest "ESPERANZA" season-4 was inaugurated at Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Science (SHUATS) which is being organized by Joseph School of Business Studies and Commerce.

On the first day of the inaugural session Dr Abhilasha J Lal, Director, (HRM&R) was the chief guest who emphasised the need of cultural events for students' development. Mr Vinod B Lal, Director, (Administration) was the guest of honour who emphasised the importance of education with extracurricular activity also. The event has various multi-cultural activities such as Jam, Poster making, Dance competition, singing, junkyard war, flower decoration, rangoli making, business plan, Shayari, stand-up comedy, Nukkad Natak, face painting, Rural-Le-Carte and fashion show. The fest comprises various stalls and games stalls. The event was encouraged by Dean Prof (Dr) Stephen Das, Associate Dean Dr Ronald V Mani and Head Dr Enid Masih.

'Updated return cannot be filed during continuance of AY'

PNS ■ KANPUR

Noted chartered accountant and orator Isha Gupta while addressing a seminar organised by the Income Tax Bar Association at its auditorium on Wednesday night said the updated return cannot be filed during the continuance of the

assessment year (AY). She said it can be filed only after the end of the assessment year. She said this facility will be available thereafter up to 24 months only that meant that the updated return can be filed within 24 months from the end of the assessment year. She said under the new Income Tax return filing facil-

ity now known as 'Updated Return' a new subsection 8(A) had been added to section 139 of the Income Tax Act. She said in addition to this a new Rule 12AC had also been inserted in the Income Tax Rules wherein form and manner of filing updated return had been prescribed. She said the updated return is to be

filed in form ITR-U and can be filed for assessment years commencing from the assessment year 2020-21 and subsequent assessment years. Gupta said the updated return facility was an additional return filing facility in addition to the presently available return filing facilities. She said currently in normal course the assessee can file original return within due date under section 139(1) and belated original return under section 139(4) while revised return under section 139(5). She said after introduction of updated return facility, the present facility to file these three type of returns will continue. She said in addition to the three type

of returns, the assessee will be able to file the new updated return also. She said if the assessee had filed original return under section 139(1) then he or she can file updated return and if the assessee had filed belated original return under section 139(4) then also he or she can file updated return while if the assessee had filed

original return under section 139(1) or 139(4) and thereafter he or she had filed revised return under section 139(5) then in such cases also he or she can file updated return and even if the assessee had not filed any return at all then also they can file updated return directly as a first return for that assessment year.

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RAVINDRA KUMAR	RAVINDRA								

CM lays foundation stone of projects worth ₹1,295 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Prayagraj said that during earlier governments rule mafia used to become a barrier in development work, but now the mafias are either lodged in jail or have fled the state. Houses are being built for the poor by confiscating their properties. BJP is the government of the poor, CM said.

Yogi started his address by saluting the land of Prayagraj and told the glory of Tirtharaj and said that Prayagraj Kumbh is famous all over the world. The land of Prayagraj is blessed by Maa Ganga, Maa Yamuna, Maa Saraswati and the Bade Hanuman located at Mundhwa. This city has the ashram of Maharsi Bhadravji. He also talked about the 2025 Prayagraj Kumbh being more grand and divine as compared to 2019 Kumbh.

He said that the life of the people of Prayagraj will become even happier with the inauguration and foundation stone laying of projects worth 1295 crores. The BJP government is working to raise the standard of living of the general public. Before this there were governments in the state and the center but what was there then and today when the BJP government has come, all the schemes including housing, drinking water, food are being made available to the poor with full sincerity. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that UP is developing rapidly under the double engine government. To continue this pace of development it becomes necessary to bring the BJP government once again in power in the Municipal Corporation election. The development work has gained speed due to the BJP government's rule.

He said that strict action is being taken against the mafia in the entire state including Prayagraj. An example of this has been seen by the people here only yesterday. Action will continue against goons, mafia and criminals.

CM Yogi said that the government has started the Abhyudaya Coaching Scheme for coaching of poor students. Its positive results have also come to the fore. Whatever



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath handing over the key of house to a beneficiary under PM Awas Yojana at Parade Ground in Prayagraj on Thursday

problems are there, efforts are being made to remove them.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reached at around 2.15 pm to attend the Prabuddha Varg Sammelan organized at the parade ground. Amidst chants of Jai Jai Shri Ram and conches, the Chief Minister first presented the cheques and the key to the PM's Awas on the dais to the beneficiaries of various schemes.

He ended the address with the slogan of Jai Shri Ram saying that Prayagraj will be continuously taken forward on the path of development. From here, the Chief Minister reached the Prayagraj Fair Auditorium by helicopter at around 2.15 pm. From there, he reached the conference of Prabuddha Varg in the car.

After addressing the enlightened class, he met the local public representatives. After this, he held a meeting regarding preparations for the works of Mahakumbh at the Integrated Control and Command Center (ICCC) located at the headquarters of Prayagraj Fair Authority.

In this meeting, both Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, Public Works Minister Jitin Prasad, Urban Development Minister AK

Kaushambi, who lives in Prayagraj, taunted in his speech, referring to the corruption of the previous BSP and SP government and the highway, express way, etc. under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath in the BJP government, he highlighted other development plans.

CM Yogi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 284 projects worth about ₹ 1295 crore during this program. During this, he also gave acceptance letters to 20 beneficiaries of three schemes. Then the roadmap for Mahakumbh 2025 was decided. Both the Deputy CMs were also present here.

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The CM handed over keys to 20 beneficiaries of Swamidhi Yojana, Awas Yojana. On this occasion Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya, MP Keshari Devi, District Panchayat President Dr. VK Singh, BJP Kashi Prant President Maheshchandra Srivastava, City Unit President Ganesh Keswani, Awadheshchandra Gupta and many MLAs and a large number of people were present.

In this meeting, both Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, Public Works Minister Jitin Prasad, Urban Development Minister AK

Minister for proper treatment of mental diseases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' stressed the need for proper treatment of mental diseases. He was inaugurating the 23rd four-day annual national conference of the Indian Association of Private Psychiatry (IAPP) at Swatantrata Bhawan in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Thursday. Earlier, he lit the lamp and garlanded the bust of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya to mark the inauguration of the conference.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that today the mental problems in the society have increased along with development and fast life and stressed the need for proper diagnosis and treatment of the mental diseases. He said that the conference would definitely help in this direction.

Earlier, conference chairman Dr Venu Gopal Jhanwar welcomed the guests, while Avinash D'Souza conducted the proceedings. A large number of psychiatrists including Dr Anu Kant Mittal, Dr Indira Sharma, Dr Tanu Singh, Dr MM Tripathi and many oth-



UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra inaugurating IAPP conference in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

ers were present on this occasion.

According to Dr Venu Gopal Jhanwar, this year's theme of the conference is 'decoding the field practice of psychiatry...the art of science or the science of art'. He informed that more than 1,000 mental health professionals have registered for the conference and over 25 healthcare companies are participating in the expo.

Over 100 faculty and speakers will present lectures on the lat-

est topics in the field of mental health during the next three days.

The

inaugural session was followed by a lecture delivered by Dr Avinash D'Souza (Mumbai), secretary of IAPP and then Dr Deepak Raheja (Delhi) presented his views.

The session was chaired by Dr Alok Sareen from Delhi. Dr Abhay Matkar (Hubli, Karnataka) and Dr MS Reddy (Hyderabad, Telangana) also spoke on the occasion. In the

next session, Dr Rajeev Tandon, a renowned psychiatrist and health care administrator from the USA, delivered his lecture.

The session was chaired by Dr Smita Deshpande (Delhi).

Dr Jayshukh Parmar (Valsad, Gujarat), Dr Aniruddha Kala,

Dr. Anukant Mittal (Chairman, IAPP, Mumbai, Maharashtra)

and Dr Sunil Mittal, senior psychiatrist, Delhi and many others also shared their views and experiences.

Now, liquor smugglers running pvt buses to push bootlegging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In order to dodge the law enforcement agencies, Haryana-based liquor smugglers have now pushed into private passenger buses to smuggle illegal liquor consignments from Rohtak and Hisar regions to Bihar.

The owner of the bus was offered Rs 1 or 1.5 lakh per trip to smuggle the consignments wherein the racketeers ply their SUVs to escort the buses on route from Haryana to Bihar.

The startling fact came to fore when a team of UP STF arrested six members of the inter-state gang involved in liquor smuggling and seized illegal liquor consignment worth Rs 15 lakh. The racketeers have made special hidden pockets inside buses to hide the consignments. They used to charge less money from passengers.

The seizure of 75 cartons of IMFL worth around Rs 15 lakh in Sultanpur district has exposed a new modus operan-

di followed by interstate liquor smuggling rackets.

Deputy SP (STF) Navendu Kumar conceded the change in modus operandi of liquor smugglers. "Only professional bus services are hired. The private luxury passenger's buses involved have fake registration plates. There are different agents to escort these luxury passenger's buses to different points, almost like a relay race," Kumar said.

DSP also maintained that racket kingpins had stopped travelling in trucks ever since the STF tightened the noose around liquor smugglers in UP. The agents escort the private passenger buses and also maintain a distance of at least three to five kilometres from the buses carrying the consignments. Moreover, the hired agents checked routes beforehand and preferred travelling at night.

Apart from keeping a major chunk of consignment inside hidden buses special cabin boxes, racketeers also

carry small consignment with them in escort vehicles. Interestingly, "From drivers to agents, everyone gets a handsome cut for their role and responsibilities. The drivers are trained to misguide police if caught."

Besides, they are never privy to the entire route plan. Hence, despite their arrests, it is difficult to zero in on the gang leader," admitted a senior cop, but said police were oiling their networking machinery for breaking the networking of liquor racketeers.

DSP, meanwhile, said "racketeers involved in illegal liquor smuggling earn hefty profits to smuggle liquor in different districts of Bihar". He, however, revealed, "Racketeers often opt NCR route i.e. Ghaziabad \ Meerut - Sasaram \ Patna route wherein they get a sizable passengers to board on buses for different towns of Bihar and also charge less fair compared to government buses".

When the STF team inter-

cepted the private Volvo bus near Mujib trisection on Kanpur - Lucknow- Sultanpur highway in Sultanpur district, STF personnel had to make arrangements to shift passengers to other buses heading towards Bihar. A total of six members of an interstate gang including drivers of SUV and bus, conductor and three others were held.

STS ARRESTS TWO FOR DRUG-PEDDLING: A team of special task force (STF) arrested two members of an interstate gang involved in drug peddling near Meja-Manda crossing and seized 55 kg ganja worth Rs 14 lakh along with one SUV, two mobile phones and Rs 150 cash.

Those arrested were Shambhu Kumar Yadav (driver) and Sahab Singh (assistant), both residents of Buxar (Bihar). STF officials claimed that the duo had concealed the drugs inside a special cavity behind the rear seat of the SUV.

PMC now goes e-office, to digitise all records

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): By next year, locals will not have to physically visit the office of the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation (PMC) for their work related to depositing bills, getting papers related to property or lodge complaints related to amenities being provided by the nagaon nigam. These facilities would be just a click away as PMC authorities are digitizing all its records along with moving towards e-office. Apart from this, PMC is also developing an app that would be incorporating the facilities to be provided through an online portal. "We want that

locals should be provided with all facilities at their homes with just a click of the mouse for which we are moving towards cent percent digitalization of the corporation," said municipal commissioner, Chandra Mohan Garg. Along with this, information about all types of property, lands etc of the corporation will also be available on this app. This app can also be used to pay bills or fee to get the services of PMC for which the user needs to pay a nominal amount. Although developing the app would need another six months, PMC has sanctioned an amount of Rs 17

crore from the Smart City Project for the same. Moreover, the app will also be used to track different facilities that are provided by PMC. Apart from this, if there is a problem of cleanliness in any ward, then the public can lodge their complaint through the app. The complainant would be informed about every step that has been taken by the corporation to resolve the issue through message on mobile. Apart from this, people will be able to book and pay for getting water tanks, pay house tax, water tax etc through this app. Facilities like marriage hall

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S. Rajalingam held a public hearing at the Rifle Club here on Thursday. During this, he said that time-bound quality redressal of public grievances received on the IGRS portal is the topmost priority of the government. "If any complaint referring to the Chief Minister or District Magistrate remains pending on the public hearing portal, then it will be consid-

ered against the concerned department that it is not making any change in its working style," he said, adding that action would be taken against such departments. The DM gave strict instructions that no case of any department in case of defaulter and 'C' category should be repeated and if it happens, strict action would be taken against the negligence and laxity and a letter will be sent to the government for action in this connection.

Earlier, on the instructions

of the DM, the ADM (Civil Supply) Jawahar Lal Srivastava reviewed the progress of ration card verification going on in the district. Addressing the meeting, the ADM directed all the supervisory officers to ensure 100 per cent work of ration card verification in each case by November 30. He has taken the concerned officers to task for slow progress in the verification work of ration cards in Kashi Vidyapeeth, Arajilene and Chiragana development blocks as well as in the

municipality area of Rammagar. He also instructed the officers to verify the online applications lying on the departmental portal by November 30. District Supply Officer, regional food officers, supply inspectors, child development project officers, executive engineer (Tube well), tehsildars of Sadar and Rajatalab and zonal officers from Municipal Corporation including Dashashwamedh, Adampur, Varunapar and Bhelpur were also present in the meeting.

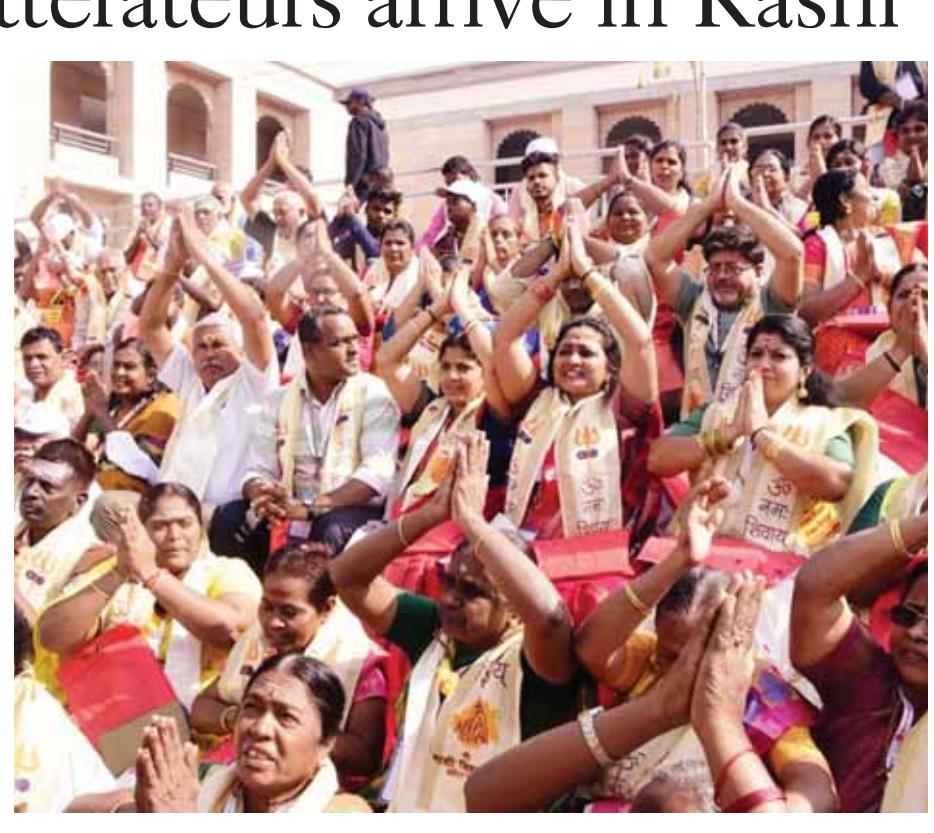
Tamil litterateurs arrive in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Yet another batch of Tamil delegation mostly associated with the field of literature visited Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) here on Thursday morning. After darshan, they visited various ghats of the sacred river Ganga followed by their next visit to Mandir Chowk through the Ganga Dwar, where they were accorded with a ceremonial welcome by representatives of district administration along with other dignitaries. The delegates were euphoric on reaching Kashi Vishwanath corridor and were seen to be elated at the grandeur of the famous temple and expressed their religious zeal by echoing 'Har Har Mahadev' slogan.

The Tamil visitors were provided with complete information about the tour itinerary during their visit to Vishalakshi Mata Shakti Peeth temple where they took the blessings of Gauri Mata. After the darshan, they were guided towards the Bhogshala where they took 'prasad' and enjoyed South Indian cuisines. They also offered prayers at Baba Kal Bhairav and Sankat Mochan temples and visited Ravidas Ghat.

Earlier, the group comprising 216 people arrived in the city on Wednesday night by a train at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Junction railway station where they were



Tamil litterateurs visiting Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

welcomed by District Magistrate of Chandauli Ishan Duhan and others.

The members of the second batch from Tamil Nadu attending the month-long 'Kashi Tamil Sangamam' took a holy dip early in the morning at Hanuman Ghat situated on the banks of the river Ganga. Earlier known as 'Rameswaram Ghat', the Hanuman Ghat is

one of the most visited ghats of Varanasi.

The surrounding areas are thickly populated with South Indian Maths like Kerala Mutt, Kanchi Math, Sankara Math, Sringeri Math etc. Later, the delegation visited Subrahmanyam Bharti's residence at Hanuman Ghat. The batch consisted of a group of artisans and traders who also

visited Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) to get first-hand experience of the museum located in TFC and see the splendor of handloom products from across Purvanchal (eastern UP) region and replicas of the archaeological objects of Sarnath.

A cultural programme was also organised at the TFC for the visiting delegation.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Undead

The National Anti-profiteering Authority will live on as a part of Competition Commission of India

The Government has given the Competition Commission of India (CCI) the mandate that the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) enjoys. The reason is that the NAA will cease to exist by the end of this month. The NAA has a mandate to ensure that reductions in goods and services tax (GST) are passed on to consumers. It was meant to check any profiteering by businesses; hence the name. The decision is reportedly in accordance with a recommendation by the GST Council, which has representation from the Centre as well as state governments. So now, even as the NAA will cease to exist, its work will be carried out by the CCI mandarins. Right from the beginning—that is, 2017 when the NAA came into being—it was an affront to the business class. In fact, the very word 'profiteering' has a ring of dirigisme around it; this is the reason that Leftists use it quite often. It presupposes that all businesspersons are unconscionable, blood-sucking villains who exploit their employees and fleece their customers. Added to the malice is the erroneous notion that government can control or check prices by coercive means. Right from the brutal regime of Alauddin Khilji to the pre-1991 days of Nehruvian socialism, such controls were put in place; they never brought any relief to the man on the street; invariably they led to shortages, black-marketing, and corruption. One of the most anti-business decisions in the last few years has been the setting up of the NAA.

It was supposed to complete its work of monitoring GST rollout in two years, so it was given a two-year term. But that was not to be. As the famous economist Milton Friedman said, nothing is so permanent as a temporary government programme. The NAA kept getting extensions; what was supposed to die in 2019 is still alive—and will remain so. It needs to be mentioned here that it is not just the Narendra Modi Government that is responsible for the perpetuation of a price control mechanism; the entire political class is involved in it, for the GST Council includes various states. The NAA perpetuation highlights a disturbing fact: our political masters have little faith in economic reforms. What liberalisation they have carried out in our country, they have done under compulsion, not by choice. This is not surprising, for liberalisation is essentially the process of the retreat of the State from the processes of economy; it involves less regulation, less intervention in the market. While all this is good for the economy and the people at large, it is not so good for politicians and a section of intellectuals who are ideologically wedded to the theories which are predicated upon the big State. Besides, there are a lot of people—bureaucrats, economists, technocrats, et al—who grew up reading and internalising Leftwing books. This is the reason that Leviathan marches on and abominations like NAA never die.

PIC TALK



People light earthen lamps on 400th birth anniversary of Ahom Commander Lachit Borphukan in Nagaon PTI

demonetization woes

The People have the right to know if demonetisation was a masterstroke or a blunder.

As the hearing on the demonetization gets underway in the Supreme Court, new facts and new arguments might tumble out after six years when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced demonetization on November 8, 2016; banning high-denomination currency notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 and replacing them with the new currency notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 denomination. The standard argument at that time was that it would be a big blow to the black money and the economy would be purged in one stroke. The government sticks to its argument in the affidavit submitted to the apex court saying that it was a 'well-considered decision' taken after duly consulting the Reserve bank of India. The Union government filed the affidavit in response to a batch of 58 petitions that had challenged demonetisation. A five-judge constitution bench comprising Justices S.A. Nazeer, B.R. Gavai, A.S. Bopanna, V. Ramasubramanian, and B.V. Nagarathna is now hearing the matter again.

The new facts that have come to light through an RTI give a very different picture than what the govt would have us believe. The RBI was not in favour of demonetization as it maintained that black money in the country was not in the form of currency notes but its opinion was brushed aside. The govt submitted that demonetisation was executed on the specific recommendation of the RBI's Central Board. However, according to RTI activist Venkatesh Nayak, who accessed the minutes of the 561st Meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI through a RTI application, Para 4.4 of the minutes seems to indicate that the Board was simply not aware of this planning before the tabling of the Deputy Governor's memorandum on the subject at its meeting less than six hours before the Prime Minister announced the decision to the country. The minutes provide that the Board was only "assured" that the matter had been under discussion between the Central government and the RBI. Nayak noted that the RBI's directors had – contrary to the government's stand – opined that most of the black money is not held as cash but in the form of real estate, jewelry etc. The matter is subjudice and it is for the court to decide upon the validity of the claims made by both sides but one thing is clear; there is more to demonetization than meets the eye. Apart from bringing hardships to people, it did not succeed in either curbing the black money or ending terrorist funding. Will people ever know the truth?



CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Sir — The climate emergency is a direct consequence of heavy land use and agriculture, transport, buildings, industrial processes and use of polluting energy sources. Without profound changes to these sectors and a drastic cut to carbon footprints, there is little hope of protecting the planet from the worst effects of a warmer world.

The UN environment programme (UNEP) stands at the core of the action in the fight against climate change. We call for greater responsibility from countries and recognition of the benefits of integrating natural systems into concrete climate action. A global fund for 'loss and damage', providing financial assistance to poor nations stricken by climate disaster is a solution. The deal was far from perfect, with several key elements flawed or lacking. Some countries on limiting temperatures to 1.5C represented progress on the Cop26 conference in Glasgow last year, but efforts for phasing out fossil fuels was weak. Countries have now agreed to finalise the details of the fund by 2024. Let's hope for the best.

Mithlesh Panwar | Ujjain

MANAGING LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Sir — Despite the best advances in technology and drug research, the modern medicine is yet to find successful curative management of not only disorders like diabetes, hypertension, chronic gastrointestinal disorders etc but almost all neurological diseases and the psychiatric illnesses also, what to talk of the recent covid19 pandemic across the world. Even the best invention and abuse of antibiotics or hormonal interception and other drugs for neurological or psychiatric drugs have caused havoc of dangerous side effects rather than providing sustained relief to the patients. On the other hand Ayurveda along with Yoga offers drugs along with procedures such as Panchkarma and Yoga provides hope towards a healthy and happy life.

The need of the hour is to acknowledge the handicaps of modern medicine

Traffic congestion in Bengaluru



In light of exponential expansion of Bengaluru horizontally and the setting up of a large number of Information Technology parks (IT), increasing the number of vehicles and more so after Corona-19 people have started going to offices physically. I would like to give some suggestions to ease out the traffic congestion in Bangalore, which can be examined. Though in these trying circumstances, Bengaluru traffic is doing good work.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

in the management of certain diseases and syndromes to join hands with the scholars of Ayurveda to overcome the most disgusting conclusions in the management of such disorders where Ayurveda presents the hope towards a better life. Not only India but the entire world population also can be benefitted by the encouraging results that the integrated research may conclusively offer curative management of certain diseases such as Parkinsonism et al. The super specialist medical institutions shall have to initiate with or without government's support to reach the wisdom of Ayurveda to begin integrated research for certain diseases where Allopathy has limited approach with hazardous side effects.

Dr Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

ELECTIONS PROVIDING JOBS

Sir — After struggling for two years with no work due to the COVID-19 pandemic

the Assembly elections in Gujarat have become money-spinner for a large number of powerloom workers in Surat. Over a lakh workers are engaged in weaving, dyeing and stitching the election material and tricolour for the last month to meet the high demand from the political parties.

Workers are busy round the clock for stitching saffron colour caps for the BJP at a factory in Surat, Gujarat ahead of Gujarat Assembly Election and it is a make or break situation at present. Again, for 32 years BJP has had a stronghold as Modi and Amit Shah both hail from the same state and work in tandem to achieve a dream of winning again. The BJP IT section is also busy making the dream come true. The elections are indeed a boon to workers.

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

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SOUND BITE

The current challenge is to save the law and the democracy and we will do anything to save it.



What happened was everybody – Germans, French, Italians, everybody, (US President) Joe Biden – saw that there was simply no option. Because you couldn't negotiate with this guy (Putin). That's the key point.

Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson

I have had people wanting to jeopardise my career, take away from my work, make sure I wasn't cast just because I was doing well in what I was doing. In India, very few of us are happy for somebody else's success.

Actor Priyanka Chopra

One-day cricket was probably my best format in international cricket, so it's nice to be playing some white ball and Ford Trophy. I'm really looking forward to it.

New Zealand cricketer Ross Taylor

I am sure India took it up and will take it up. But the point is he is a Malaysian national and if he is invited somewhere... whether they knew, I have no knowledge of that.

Union Minister Hardeep Puri

Climate finance is the pivot of COP27

The fight against climate change is not developing nations vs. developed ones. It's against the fatal fallout of climate change vs the existence of humanity.



The global mean temperature of the planet is 1.15 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial average and we have been having the conference of parties (COP) every year since 1995, wherein world leaders come together to think of solutions to fight the looming dangers of climate change. This year the summit at Sharm El-Sheikh was attended by world leaders arriving in their respective private jets, close to 400 of them, contributing significantly to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. One would think what a great way to kickstart the discourse around climate change.

Over the last decade or so, green washing has become a norm and we all have assumed that someone else would take care of the problem of climate change. The corporations have used the issue of climate change to fill in their coffers and the global leaders have done little to help either. Lip service has been the norm as far as climate change is concerned. Every year, these conferences signal hope. Eminent leaders from different parts of the world make pledges, talk of achieving net zero emissions by so and so year, promise aid to emerging economies and so on. But when it comes to progress on ground, the results are invariably dismal. They paint a sorry picture of our fight towards climate change. It is demoralizing and one can't help but give in to the gnawing cynicism around these summits.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, "A third of Pakistan got flooded. We have seen Europe's hottest summer in 500 years. The Philippines got hammered. The whole of Cuba was in blackout. And ... in the United States, Hurricane Ian has delivered a brutal reminder that no country and no economy is immune from the climate crisis." All these events serve as brutal reminder for entire humanity to get its act together.

The COP27 summit did set its agenda right with focus on mainly four focus aspects of mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration. What needs to be seen is how many countries significantly contribute to the said areas in all earnestness. One of the major themes of COP27 has been loss and damage. It is only this year that the developed nations agreed to put the subject into the formal agenda. An important issue for the group of developing nations, called G77, their leaders underscored how they need aid from the wealthy nations to mitigate the causes of climate change and prepare against the fallouts of it in future. A positive headway has been made at the summit in this direction with respect to the creation of a 'loss and damage' fund. The fund may help the emerging economies to address the harmful effects of natural disasters like droughts, floods and cyclones etc. However, the details of how it will be used to stop climate change and who the list of donors would be is still unclear.

Back in 2009, the developed nations had made a pledge to supply \$100 billion every year by 2020 to less wealthy nations to help bring down further rises in temperature. But what happened to that? Wealthy nations have

clearly not delivered on the promise to date. The \$100 billion won't even make the cut, as developing nations have clearly outlined that they would need \$6 trillion to \$11 trillion to meet climate targets. It is crucial for aid to come through to developing nations, without which they won't be able to make much progress on reducing greenhouse emissions.

Speaking at a press conference at COP27, John Kerry, the U.S. presidential envoy on climate, asserted that the negotiations won't end with rich countries signing up for open-ended liabilities. The emerging nations rallied against making a 'loss and damage fund', but the wealthy nations shrugged off the idea by saying they favoured existing financial channels.

This year's COP was called the COP for implementation, because pledges alone don't make the cut. One needs a detailed road map and more transparency with respect to climate finance. A case in point: The US president, Joe Biden, gave an assurance at the summit that the US would hit its climate targets by 2030 and apologized for pulling out of the Paris agreement. However,

he and other world leaders hardly explained why the promises made earlier were not met to date. Biden rightly said that the world faced a 'pivot moment' in the fight against the climate crisis. But failed to lay out the steps that humanity should take.

With the COP27 having come to an end, some inspiration has been rekindled. What global leaders do in the coming years will be watched carefully, but at the same time, the citizenry all across the world must also do what they can at individual level. We need more people actively raising clamour around this subject. Young climate warriors need to come about and for that, introducing climate change as a subject in school curriculum will prove to be a step in the right direction.

Hope is clearly not a good strategy to adopt in view of climate change. Therefore, one must strive to surpass all hurdles, shun inhibition, deliberate and make a sincere endeavour to avert the global catastrophe awaiting us. We owe this to our collective future generations.

(The author writes on news pertaining to women rights, and social and environmental issues. Views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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FIRST COLUMN**INDIA-UAE TRADE PACT:
PATH TO PROSPERITY**

India is close to starting free trade negotiations with GCC



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Qatar was in news, not just for dazzling the world with billions of dollars of investments for showcasing and hosting one of the largest sports events of all time, the FIFA world cup, but also for pulling off one of its kind supply deals with China. Qatar signed a 27-year natural gas supply deal with China, which is being touted as one of the longest in the history of hydrocarbons.

The agreement according to Chinese government officials would also provide access to the strategic North Field South Project (NFS) in Qatar. The NFS expansion project is a mega LNG transport train which promises to make Qatar one of the largest natural gas traders in the world in a decade. The expansion project allows international enterprises participation and so far all western big names from Total, Shell, Exxon Mobil, etc., are partners for helping Qatar reach its stated target. In comes China, with a long agreement with Qatar and it also wants to have full access and share in the hydrocarbon-led geopolitical rubric playing out. This agreement with China comes at a time when the European Union is scrambling for securing natural gas supplies from sources other than Russia.

The traditional European inertia to get into long term binding contracts is one of the other reasons such agreements between the West and Qatar are not maturing. In the middle of all this, India is close to starting Free Trade Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of which Qatar is an important member. The GCC is an intergovernmen-



tal, political, economic union consisting of six Arab nations. India has had a framework agreement with the GCC since 2004. The framework, according to the commerce ministry, provides for exploring ways and means for extending and liberalizing trade relations and initiating dialogue towards a free trade agreement.

However, despite two formal dialogues in 2006 and 2008 the GCC, according to the Government of India, could not persuade its member countries to move further to a Free Trade Agreement level negotiation. Regional economic issues among the Arab states, their bilateral relations with India played a significant role in the delay.

The recent pandemic has made Gulf countries willing to expand their economic clout beyond hydrocarbons; this has led to a change in the mindset. India signed a CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) with one of the most influential GCC countries, the UAE, earlier this year. This CEPA allows India's goods to have preferential access for 97 per cent tariff lines, which accounts for 99 per cent of India's exports to the UAE. India primarily exports gems and jewellery, textiles, leather footwear, sports goods, plastics, furniture, wood products, engineering products, pharma and medical devices to the UAE.

India's major import from UAE is primarily energy. The CEPA, one of the first off the block, agreed by India after it has been dragging its feet on getting into binding trade agreements for more than a decade aims to achieve \$115 billion bilateral trade of goods and services in just five years. India had earlier walked out of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, one of the largest economic partnerships, citing a China dictated framework.

India now realises the importance of trade as a significant contributor to the national GDP. India realises that trade in goods and services will be a key contributor towards the economy reaching \$40 trillion in the next two decades. India signed a Free Trade Agreement with Australia earlier. Similarly, a free trade agreement negotiation with the UK has been progressing for more than six months now. FTA negotiations with GCC, if concluded successfully, could be another milestone in India's multi-trillion-dollar economic path.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

BJP aims record haul in a three-way poll



DEEPAK K UPRETI

The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery

After 27 years in the saddle in Gujarat, the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to do it again. And when one says it is 'the BJP contesting the poll' in Gujarat, it actually translates into Prime Minister Narendra Modi who may have vacated Gandhinagar in 2014 but it is he who is seeking mandate for the seventh time in the western Indian state in 2022 and in turn in his decisive run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Another win for the saffron party tiding over almost three-decade anti-incumbency would possibly press a 'delete' button on the Congress and allow the 'third-factor' Aam Aadmi party (AAP) to rise in the western shores.

Ironical as it may sound for the BJP backers, the Congress despite the BJP's 'double-engine' domination over the power, in last 2017 state elections not only increased its Assembly seats tally but also improved upon its vote share. In contrast, there has been a steady decline in the number of seats collected by the BJP since 2002.

The BJP's seats at 99 went downwards in 2017 from 116 of 2012 Assembly results, but its vote share at 49.1 increased by 1.25 per cent. The Congress, which had won 60 seats in 2012 Gujarat assembly elections, had gained significantly in 2017 by winning 77 seats. The main opposition party had thus not only improved its position by 17 seats but also collected 41.5 per cent vote share, a jump of 2.57 per cent from 2012 Gujarat Assembly polls.

The Congress could not gather enough steam in 2017 to beat the BJP, which had the formidable advantage of its well-oiled organisational machinery and Modi's 'realpolitik' checks and balances to keep the voters interest in the party vis-a-vis a faceless Gujarat Congress and its unimaginative central leadership.

As the stage is set for 2022 December one and five poll for the 15th Gujarat assembly polls, the dynamics of Gujarat elections can be read as 'waveless' which could be won by technical management which is: 'right selection of candidates coupled with 'right booth handling' that is ensuring good turnout of the support base.

Palpably anxious of declining number of seats in successive assembly polls, the BJP has denied tickets to 40 of its sitting MLAs and given place to the fresh and young, not loaded with the burden of anti-incumbency. With winnability being the prime factor for all political parties vis-a-vis the 'ideology', the BJP too has, so far, blessed 10 out of 19 Congress MLAs who resigned and joined the BJP after the 2017 elections with its tickets.

In contrast, Congress has, 'understandably', retained most of its sitting MLAs as party candidates. It is indeed a game of reshuffling of the available players on the ground for both the parties and creating a 'new rainbow' before the voters.

To defend its Gujarat fort and make



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it 'unbreachable', the BJP has selected the Congress turncoat Patidar Hardik Patel, 29, who crossed-over to the saffron party in July from 'Viramgram', his 'home town', which had been twice won by the Congress. The roping in of the leader of 2015 OBC reservation stir would further consolidate the BJP's hold over the influential Patel community.

Among other young and new faces also include Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba, 28, who is the BJP candidate from Jamnagar North seat. Before joining the BJP, she served as the leader of the Rajput Community's throwback organisation 'karni Sena'.

The choice of Kantilal Amrutiya, 60, for the Morbi assembly seat, which witnessed a bridge collapse disaster, killing over 135 people, is another reflection of the BJP's 'careful micro-management' of seat distribution. Following the tragedy, the saffron party denied ticket to the sitting MLA of Morbi and selected Atruvi after videos showed him jumping into the river to save lives. A former MLA, Amrutiya had lost in 2017 assembly polls.

Apart from the main rivals of the past – Congress and the BJP -- the entry of AAP has introduced an X factor in the Gujarat polls, leaving political players wondering which way it would impact the elections and to whose advantage. The freebie announcements by AAP's mercurial leader Arvind Kejriwal has prompted many to anticipate that it may nibble into the urban votes of the BJP and may do less

harm to Congress which is rather strong in rural pockets of Gujarat.

The BJP's state president CR Patil thinks otherwise, saying the AAP would cut into Congress votes and thus help BJP's prospects. The AAP has banked heavily on the Patidar community and fielded its Gujarat president Gopal Italia from Katargam in Surat as well as former Patidar agitation leader Alpesh Kathiary from Varachha in Surat city.

Currently, campaigning most aggressively, the AAP is now banking on its success in Gujarat in 2021 civic polls when it ousted congress from the Surat municipal corporation, winning over Patidar votes. The AAP also won one seat in Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation.

In the 2022 Gujarat poll, the AAP is not without some resonance and digging deep to create its place as against the well-entrenched BJP and Congress. The AAP's approach to Patidars and fielding of backward community member Isudan Gadhwai as the chief Ministerial candidate indicates its calculated long-term planning after scoring victory in Punjab.

The 'Hindutava' card of Kejriwal, however, may not pay its dividend against the BJP which has its master key with itself.

The main challenger to the ruling BJP, the Congress is currently on its door-to-door silent campaigning, bridging the connection it left uncovered in 2917.

As for the BJP, its 'guarav yatra' apart, the Prime Minister has laid out a slew of mega projects in

Gujarat, two of which shifted from Maharashtra to convince voters that continuity in its governance would ensure uninterrupted 'development' in the state with the guarantee of funds from the central government. The hair-splitting analysis of television anchors notwithstanding, the election match in Gujarat, in a way, seem to be dominated by 'turncoats', including the likes of Hardik Patel and Alpesh Thakor.

Italia, one-time Patidar agitation spearhead and close associate of Hardik, who is famous for hurling a shoe at a BJP minister Pradip Singh Jadeja outside the legislative assembly 2017, is now an AAP nominee. The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery.

The 'facts' laid-out can, however, be deceptive at times. In 1985 Congress in Gujarat returned to power with 149 seats and 55 per cent votes and in the 2002 assembly poll BJP won 127 seats and gained 49.8 per cent of the votes and cycles are slowly reversing again.

If journalism is said to be 'history written in a hurry', it would not be irrelevant to quote historian EH Carr from his noted book 'What is History?' to put elections in a perspective.

"It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context... a fact is like a sack—it won't stand up till you have put something in it...". Please, take your pick from Gujarat!

The main challenger to the ruling BJP, the Congress is currently on its door-to-door silent campaigning, bridging the connection it left uncovered in 2917.

As for the BJP, its 'guarav yatra'

POINT COUNTER POINT

VOTES FROM SOME MACHINES SHOULD BE
"INVALIDATED."
— OUTGOING BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT
JAIR BOLSONARO



NO MORE PROCRASTINATION, IRRESPONSIBILITY,
INSULTS TO INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY. THE
ELECTION WAS DECIDED IN THE VOTE AND BRAZIL
NEEDS PEACE TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.
— THE PRESIDENT OF LULA'S WORKERS PARTY
GLEISI HOFFMANN

RBI must opt for alternatives to digital currency

Many transactions can be made compulsory through digital mode and there can be limits on cash payments

The Reserve Bank of India on October 7 released a concept note on Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The purpose behind the issue, as claimed by the RBI, is to create awareness about CBDCs in general and the planned features of the Digital Rupee (?), in particular. It explains the objectives, choices, benefits, and risks of issuing a CBDC in India. The Note also seeks to explain Reserve Bank's approach towards introduction of the CBDC, which has been launched on a pilot basis now.

As explained by the RBI the ? will provide an additional option to the currently available forms of money. It is substantially not different from banknotes, but

being digital it is likely to be easier, faster and cheaper. It also has all the transactional benefits of other forms of digital money.

The RBI claims that its approach is governed by two basic considerations – to create a digital Rupee that is as close as possible to a paper currency and to manage the process of introducing digital Rupee in a seamless manner.

The concept paper lists out the following as features of CBDC:

- CBDC is sovereign currency issued by Central Banks in alignment with their monetary policy
- It appears as a liability on the central bank's balance sheet
- Must be accepted as a medium of payment, legal

tender, and a safe store of value by all citizens, enterprises, and government agencies.

Hence the question arises why there should be a digital currency from the RBI now? If the aim is to completely wipe out the physical currency, it is a different matter. Not only is our country, no other country in the world is aiming for any such proposition.

Our bank accounts provide seamless digital transactions by means of debit cards, credit cards, NEFT, RTGS, IMPS, UPI etc. Now in this concept paper RBI broadly defines CBDC as the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is akin to sovereign paper currency but takes a different form, exchangeable at par with the existing currency and shall be accepted as a

medium of payment, legal tender and a safe store of value.

Hence, it is almost identical to the digital transactions provided by banks except the sovereignty.

The RBI says that the key motivations for exploring the issuance of CBDC in India among others include reduction in operational costs involved in physical cash management, fostering financial inclusion, bringing resilience, efficiency, and innovation in payments system, adding efficiency to the settlement system, boosting innovation in cross-border payments space and providing public with uses that any private virtual currencies can provide, without the associated risks. Again, these are already available for digital

transactions through bank accounts.

The RBI claims that CBDCs have some clear advantages over other digital payments systems, as it being a sovereign currency, ensures settlement finality and thus reduces settlement risk in the financial system. This may be theoretically and conceptually true. But then this undermines the banking system we have under the same RBI regulation. If any bank fails in any settlement system, then it will speak about RBI's supervision.

As per the scheme, the CBDC issued will be the liability of the RBI and whoever wants to have this will have to pay to RBI to acquire this CBDC. Hence it is similar to deposits obtained by com-

mercial banks. But the RBI has decided not to pay any interest on this. As it is primarily introduced as a method of payments like cash, it would not bear interest.

Instead of going in for CBDC, the RBI can further improve penetration of digital transactions by making many transactions compulsory through digital mode. There can be limits on cash payments. There can even be restricted use of cheques. This will reduce cost for the economy as well as arrest illegal and unaccounted transactions.

Irrespective of the form of money, in any economy, money performs three primary functions—medium of exchange, a unit of account and a store of value.

Shah: Do research to highlight correct history

Country just cannot progress and take a leap into future without taking pride in its past, says HM at function to honour Ahom general Lachit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday exhorted historians and research scholars to identify 30 kingdoms that ruled for over 150 years besides 300 historical personalities, and conduct research in order to bring out correct history and relegate distorted history to the place it deserves.

Speaking at the plenary function to mark the 400th birth anniversary of iconic Ahom General Lachit Barphukan who defeated Mughals in a war in Assam, Shah said, "I have also been a student of history. We have been hearing that history has been distorted, it does not reflect the true past. But who is stopping you from recording correct history and all the other distorted accounts will then fade away as the truth has its own power. The time has come to rewrite history."

Asserting that a country just cannot progress and take leap into the future without taking pride in the past, the Home Minister recalled the contribution of Assamese General Lachit Barphukan who checked the onslaught of the Islamist Mughal armies.

"Had it not been for the



Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma as Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal looks on, during the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of Ahom commander Lachit Barphukan, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday.

contributions of valiant warrior, true nationalist and the love for the motherland of Ahom General Lachit Barphukan, the history of the Northeast would have been different, the Northeast would not have been a part of the country," he said.

He outlined that the Ahom kings ruled the region for six centuries and faced 22 invasions from the Mughal armies but even when there were spells of defeat, the victory of the enemies could not last led to the recapture of the lost territories.

He highlighted that when the Rajput king Ram Singh, son of Raja Jai Singh of Amber, a strong general himself holding significant sway from Kandahar to Bengal, when defeated by army of Lachit Barphukan, admitted that every soldier of Barphukan was trained not just in cavalry,

'Right to regulate issue of bank notes entirely with RBI'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



posal relating to currency notes. It can only be on the central board's recommendation.

This decision making process should be struck down... This is the most outrageous decision making process which makes a mockery of the rule of law. This process must be struck down for being deeply flawed," Chidambaram told the bench which also comprised Justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian, and BV Nagarathna.

Noting that demonetisation was a major economic decision which impacted every citizen of the country, the senior lawyer questioned the power of central government to invoke Section 26 of the Reserve Bank of India Act to demonetise currency notes and submitted that Section 26(2) gives power to Centre to cancel only certain series of cur-

rency notes and not the entire notes of a denomination.

Chidambaram, who argued for the whole day, alleged the possible "horrendous consequences" of demonetisation were not assessed, researched or documented. "Over 2,300 crore currency notes were demonetised while the government's printing presses could only print 300 crore notes per month. This gross mismatch meant it would take several months to print notes.

The Government did not even consider that over 2,15,000 ATMs would have to be recalibrated. In fact, in initial days ATMs did not take the Rs 2,000 note. The government did not take into account that two-third of bank branches were located in metros and only a third were in rural areas," he said.

SC to set up 5-Judge Bench to hear constitutional validity of Nikah Halala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will set up a new five-judge Constitution bench to hear the pleas challenging the constitutional validity of polygamy and 'nikah halala' among Muslims.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hima Kohli and J B Pardiwala was urged by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, who has also filed a PIL on the issue, that a fresh five-judge bench was needed to be constituted as two judges of the previous bench have demitted office.

SC Collegium recommends transfer of 7 HC judges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Thursday recommended transfer of seven high court judges to different High Courts in the country.

The list of High Court judges, who have been recommended for transfer, does not include Justice Nikhil S Kariel of the Gujarat High Court. Media reports on Justice Kariel's proposed transfer to Patna High

Court had triggered protests by lawyers in the Gujarat High Court and later a delegation of bar leaders had met the CJI who was claimed to have assured them that the matter will be looked into.

The resolutions of the Collegium, which also comprises Justices S K Kaul and S A Nazeer, were uploaded on the apex court website. Seven judges, who have been sought to be transferred, included Justice V M Velumani, a judge in the Madras High Court. He would be

joining Calcutta High Court. Justice Battu Devanand has been sent from Andhra Pradesh High Court to Madras High Court. Justice D Ramesh has been transferred from Andhra Pradesh High Court to Allahabad High Court, while Justice Lalitha Kanneganti has been sent from Telangana High Court to Karnataka High Court. Justice D Nagarjun has been shifted from Telangana High Court to Madras High Court, while Justice T Raja has been sent from Madras High Court to

40mn kids missed measles jabs: WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid a spike in measles cases in pockets of States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and Jharkhand, the WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have set off an alarm pointing out that globally a record high of nearly 40 million kids have missed a dose of the measles vaccine last year due to hurdles created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is likely to result in the spiraling of cases given that the air-borne viral disease is highly contagious. In India, as preventive measures, the Centre has already asked all the States to consider administering one additional dose of Measles and Rubella vaccines to all children, aged 9 months to 5 years, in vulnerable areas.

So far, a high number of cases has been reported from certain districts of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala and Maharashtra where the contagious disease has claimed 11 kids and infected



over 223. However, to prevent the disease from spreading and to achieve herd immunity, the Government will have to ensure that at least 95 per cent of children need to receive the vaccine as also suggested by the WHO and the CDC in their joint report released recently.

As per the US CDC, India has the highest number of cases in the world between April and September 2022. Pakistan is seventh on the list

with 3,635 cases, while the US has 33 cases so far.

Terming Measles, an "imminent threat" around the world, the top health bodies noted that despite a two-dose vaccine that is more than 97 per cent effective at preventing infection being available for decades, gains made at beating back the potentially dangerous childhood disease have been lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To prevent the disease from

Some facts about measles

Just 81 per cent of children globally have received 1st dose & 71 percent received 2nd dose, the lowest coverage seen worldwide since 2008.

There were 9 million cases of measles and 128,000 deaths around the world with at least 22 countries experiencing "large and disruptive outbreaks."

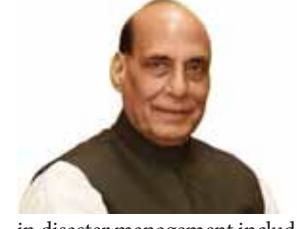
No region of the world has achieved and sustained measles elimination. Since 2016, at least 10 countries that had previously eliminated measles reported outbreaks – including the US.

One infected patient can infect at least 10 close contacts, not protected either through masking or vaccination.

routine immunization programs were badly disrupted, and millions of kids missed out on life-saving vaccinations against deadly diseases like measles," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, in a statement.

"Getting immunization programs back on track is absolutely critical. Behind every statistic in this report is a child at risk of a preventable disease," the statement continued.

IAF to hold joint humanitarian assistance & disaster relief exercise with ASEAN countries

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

in disaster management including the civil administration, the Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDM), National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) besides others.

This multi agency engagement is expected to contribute in the evolution of institutional frameworks for effective communication, interoperability, cooperation and their application for successful conduct of HADR.

The exercise also aims to provide a unique platform for exchange of domain knowledge, experience and best practices with the participating ASEAN member countries.

India slams US report on rights, religious freedom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Taking exception to a US report claiming that religious freedom and related human rights are under threat here, India on Thursday termed them as "biased and inaccurate."

Making this observation here, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said the US Commission for International Religious Freedom's latest observations continues to be guided by its prejudices and pursues a motivated agenda.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is a Congressional-appointed body.

Its recommendations are, however, not mandatory to be implemented by the US State Department.

Religious freedom and related human rights in India are under ongoing threat, the USCIRF alleged on Tuesday in an unusual year-end update of the status of its assessment of religious freedom in the country.

Asked about the report at a media briefing, Bagchi said,

by the International Religious Freedom Act. The US State Department has refused to incorporate the commission's recommendations so far.

India upset at 'unnecessary' reference to Modi by American official

New Delhi: India is upset at a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a US State Department official while defending the immunity it had extended to Saudi Arabian ruler Mohammad bin Sultan, who is facing allegations of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

"Frankly, I fail to understand how the comment on Prime Minister Modi was either relevant, necessary or contextual," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said responding to questions about a US official referring to Modi while explaining the reasons for granting immunity to the Saudi ruler.

In its 2022 Annual Report earlier this year, the USCIRF had recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a "country of particular concern" for engaging in or tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as set forth

PNS



Centre joins hands with Microsoft to digitise 36 Eklavya model schools

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



In a bid to digitally transform Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and impart quality education to its tribal students, the Centre has joined hands with Microsoft. In the first phase, 36 EMRS have been selected for the digital transformation.

"Digital Transformation of EMRSs can play a key role in improving the learning experience for both students and teachers, where focus shall be on integration of digital technologies to improve teaching and learning."

Access to technology can lead the way forward for access to knowledge," said Asit Gopal, Commissioner, National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization established under the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry. He was speaking at an online workshop organized for EMRS principals and school heads on

application. The Union Tribal Ministry hopes to enroll 3.5 lakh students and recruit 36,000 teachers in its 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) for tribal students targeted to be functional by 2026 across the country.

Presently, a total of 688 EMRSs have been sanctioned, of which 392 are functional where around 10543 students are enrolled.

The current workshop on EMRSs digitization was first in its journey of transformation, other components include professional development of teachers using Microsoft Technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) applications; building exposure of students to AI and Coding; sharing of Coding Curriculum for Grade 6 to 12th & AI curriculum for Grade 8 to 12th; workshop on Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) program etc.

Gopal asserted that in the first phase, 36 EMRSs have been selected which shall walk their way forward to digitally transform schools and enhance the technological skills by use of Microsoft software and

Ministry on May 17 had inked a pact with Microsoft to help Tribal schools such as EMRS and Ashram Schools have digital transformation. As per the MoU, Microsoft is preparing bi-lingual Artificial Intelligence (AI) curriculum for tribal students in English and Hindi languages that will be taught at all EMRS schools to upskill both educators and students in next-gen technologies.

The project could not take off last year in full swing owing to the restrictions posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the official said.

He explained that as part of the MoU, the teachers will also be trained in using productivity technologies like Office 365 and AI applications in teaching in a phased manner, where they can earn certificates from Microsoft Education Centre. Microsoft will also mentor students from EMRS on AI projects to help pursue the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Qatar denies extending an invitation to Naik

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India has raised the issue regarding the issue of its wanted fugitive Zakir Naik's extradition with Qatar and will continue with its efforts to make him face legal procedures here.

This assertion by the ministry of external affairs here on Thursday came following reports of Naik, now a Malaysian national, being invited to Qatar, where he is scheduled to deliver religious lectures

said deliberate disinformation was being spread by third countries to damage relations between the two countries.

The reported denial came after India informed Qatar that Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar's visit for World Cup inauguration on November 20 will be called off if Naik was invited for the event. Explaining India's stance, ministry of external affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Thursday "He [Zakir Naik] is an accused in India, under Indian law."

Slugfest over K'taka-Maha boundary dispute escalates

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The political heat over the inter-state border row has escalated with Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai hitting back at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis terming his statement on the issue "provocative".

"No village in Maharashtra will go to Karnataka! The state government will fight strongly in the Supreme Court to get Marathi speaking villages in Karnataka including Belgaum-Karwar-Nipani!", said Fadnavis.

In a retort, Bommai, terming it a provocative statement, said: "His (Fadnavis') dream will never come true. Our government is committed to protecting our state's land, water and borders."

He further said that there was no question of giving up any space in the border districts of Karnataka.

In fact, he said: "Our demand is that the Kannada speaking areas of Maharashtra

like Solapur and Akkalkot should join Karnataka."

The dispute over Belagavi dates back to the 1960s after the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines.

Earlier this week, the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra appointed two ministers to coordinate with the legal team regarding the court case on the dispute set to come up in the Supreme Court.

Bommai said soon after that the State has deployed a battery of top lawyers, including Mukul Rohatgi and Shyam Diwan, to fight its case.

Bommai said since 2004, the Maharashtra government has filed a case in the Apex court over the border issue. "So far they have not succeeded and they will not succeed in future as well. We are geared up to strengthen our legal battle."

The Karnataka CM had claimed that the Panchayats in Jath Taluka in Sangli district of Maharashtra had passed a resolution in the past to merge with Karnataka when there was a severe drought situation



and acute drinking water crisis, and his government has evolved schemes to help them by providing water.

Responding to this, Fadnavis told reporters in Nagpur on Wednesday: "These villages (in Jath Taluk) had introduced a resolution on the issue of water scarcity in 2012. Presently, none of the villages have introduced any resolution."

Karnataka has repeatedly maintained that the Mahajan Commission report on the border issue is final, and "there is no question of letting go even an inch of Karnataka's border".



Modi, who was electioneering in Modasa in Aravalli district in North Gujarat, made reference to free electricity to hit out at AAP which has for the second-time entered into the assembly poll fray and promised free electricity besides Rs 1000 to all women above age of 18 saying "it is not revadi - freebie- but their rights".

Shinde said earlier this week: "Late Balasaheb Thackeray was always a staunch supporter of the state's demand to make Belgaum (Belagavi) a part of Maharashtra. We have concentrated our focus on solving the issue. If required, the number of lawyers would be increased".

Time to generate income from electricity instead of getting it free: Modi in Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the controversy over the efficacy of political freebies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, while campaigning in Gujarat, said it was time to generate income from electricity instead of getting it for "free".

Modi, who was electioneering in Modasa in Aravalli district in North Gujarat, made reference to free electricity to hit out at AAP which has for the second-time entered into the assembly poll fray and promised free electricity besides Rs 1000 to all women above age of 18 saying "it is not revadi - freebie- but their rights".

Modi said only he knows the art through which people will be able to earn money from electricity. The Prime Minister also slammed the Congress, saying it believes in the formula of "divide and rule" and focusses only on how to be in power.

AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has said his party would provide free electricity up to 300 units per month if voted to power in Gujarat.

On Thursday, Modi said he wants to see people across Gujarat earning money from excess electricity generated from solar rooftop systems instead of just getting it for free.

"You must have seen how the entire Modhera village (in Mehsana district) is now running on rooftop solar power. They are using electricity as per their need and sell excess power (to the government). I want to replicate this system across Gujarat," he said.

"Under this system, you can earn money by selling excess electricity generated from solar panels. Only Modi knows this art wherein people will be able to earn from electricity," said the PM.

He told the audience that a woman from Modhera is now planning to buy a refrigerator



and an air-conditioner as electricity has become affordable after the installation of rooftop solar power.

"She told me that though her family was able to afford the appliances earlier, they refrained because they could not bear the running cost. Now, they can afford it because electricity is free. I am working to bring this revolution at the doorstep of each and every household in Gujarat," the Prime Minister said.

Modi also slammed the Congress, saying the opposition party only believes in the formula of "divide and rule".

"Rajasthan is near your border, have you seen any development in that state? Have you seen any good news coming out of that state? The Congress cannot do development," he said.

In another public rally at Palanpur in Banaskantha district in North-East Gujarat, Modi said the upcoming Assembly election in Gujarat is all about deciding the state's destiny for the next 25 years.

Voting in Banaskantha district will be held in the second phase on December 5.

PM package: Pandits seeking relocation hope Modi will address safety concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Thousands of PM package Kashmiri Pandit employees, currently sitting on a dharna for 197 days in support of their single point demand of relocation to a safer area outside the Kashmir Valley, are pinning their hopes on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to understand their pain and address safety concerns raised by them in the wake of targeted killings in the recent months.

The PM package employees on Thursday organised a sit in dharna outside the Press Club in Jammu where representatives of the Kashmiri Pandit employees while raising serious concerns over the indifferent attitude of the Union Territory administration made a passionate appeal to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter before it is too late.

The Kashmiri pandit package employees staged a massive



protest demonstration under the banner of All Migrant (Displaced) Employees Association, Kashmir to press their demand of relocation /attachment to Jammu.

They were also demanding that the government should frame a committee to look into their matter seriously. The agitating employees also wanted the government to frame a committee to initiate a process of dialogue with the employees on which it has failed, they also said.

factory solution would be found on this vital issue.

Expressing their anguish over the callous attitude of the government towards them, the protesting employees said that the administration must understand that the issue of package employees is purely a security concern which they would not compromise at any cost. It was the duty of the government to ensure security of employees on which it has failed, they also said.

Pak handlers continue to rely on drones to airdrop arms, IED, cash in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Pakistan-based handlers of different terrorist outfits continue to rely on drones to airdrop arms and ammunition consignment for ferrying them to different parts of the Kashmir Valley via the International Border districts of Jammu. On Thursday, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police along with the special operations group recovered one suspicious package, possibly dropped by a drone from Pakistan, in the Vijaypur area of Samba district.

The J&K Police recovered one steel Improvised Explosive Device (IED), two pistols, 4 magazines, several batteries and a watch from the package. They also recovered cash of around Rs 5 lakh from the package. Briefing media persons in the border area, Additional SP

Samba, Surinder Chaudhary said, "Police team from Vijaypur Police Station recovered one suspicious sealed packet today in the field near Chhani Manhasan in Samba, following reliable inputs. The spot is undisturbed and intact."

According to the preliminary information, this is a case of a drone dropping from Pakistan's side attempting to smuggle in weapons and cash to the Indian side for carrying out terror-related activities in J&K.

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Opp stalling appointments in court: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With her Government having suffered a massive loss of face in the wake of the school-level recruitment scam that saw a number of TMC leaders, including Ministers, legislators and senior functionaries going to jail, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday hit back at the Opposition for spiking her efforts to make fresh appointments in schools by filing "politically motivated cases".

Speaking in the State Assembly the Chief Minister said, "whenever we go to make fresh appointments some people with ulterior motive move the court to stall the recruitment process... consequently a lot of public money is wasted in contesting the law suits... this is very unfortunate."

The Chief Minister also appealed to the (High) Court to consider the situation while giving its orders. "From the floor of the State Assembly I would like to make an appeal to the (High) court to take cognizance of the predicament we are while passing its judgments," she said.

Banerjee's statement came almost in tandem with a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Thursday turning down the State's appeal to set aside a single Bench order seeking the appearance of the State Education Secretary regarding a particular case.

Earlier the Bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had directed the senior IAS officer to appear before it and reveal the name of the persons who had asked the School Service Commission to seek the Court's direction to make fresh appointments in schools by filing "politically motivated cases".

The Opposition BJP and the Left had for long been alleging that the topmost leadership of the Bengal ruling outfit had masterminded all the scams that Bengal had witnessed in the past more than one decade.

In fact Opposition Leader Suvenandi Adhikari on Wednesday said that in December the "biggest thief in the government and the Trinamool Congress will go to jail".



ineligible teachers who had purchased their posts for lakhs of rupees.

The scam involving thousands of illegal appointments saw senior TMC leader and Education Minister Partha Chatterjee and MLA Manik Bhattacharya going to jail.

The Division Bench pre-served the single Bench order directing the Central Bureau of Investigation to find out who had directed the SSC to seek the Court's direction to regularise the ineligible candidates which the Judge said would go a distance in identifying the kingpin behind the multi-crore SSC scam.

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In fact Opposition Leader Suvenandi Adhikari on Wednesday said that in December the "biggest thief in the government and the Trinamool Congress will go to jail".

PILOT 'GADDAR', TOOK MONEY FROM BJP TO TOPPLE MY GOVT: GEHLOT

"It is time for us to work together to defeat the BJP because only the Congress can defeat the BJP. I think this name-calling, mud-slinging and accusations that are going around are serving little purpose," he said.

The Congress said Gehlot-Pilot differences would be resolved in a manner that strengthens the party and asserted that the focus right now should be on the success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Gehlot is a senior and experienced political leader. Whatever differences he has expressed with his younger colleague Pilot will be resolved in a manner that strengthens the Congress party," AICC general secretary communications Jairam Ramesh said in a statement. Gehlot also alleged that Home Minister Amit Shah was involved in Pilot's rebellion, when some Congress MLAs loyal to him were holed up in a Gurukram resort for more than a month and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited them often, claiming that he has proof that an amount of Rs 10 crore was paid to each of those legislators, including Pilot.

Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Punia has, however, denied the charge that the saffron party was involved in paying money to Congress legislators in 2020 to defect.

Gehlot also said the Congress can replace him with any of its 102 MLAs in Rajasthan except Pilot if the top leadership feels that the prospects of the party would improve in next year's Assembly polls.

He said one will never find an example where a party president "tries to topple his own government". Gehlot said if Pilot had apologised to the MLAs and won them over, things would have been different.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, along with her husband and son joined, the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by her brother former party chief Rahul in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday.

Priyanka her husband Robert Vadra and son Rithi matched steps with Rahul for the first time since the yatra started on September 7 from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Their mother and former party chief Sonia Gandhi had joined the yatra last month when it was crossing Karnataka and was joined by a large number of general

people on the way.

Priyanka, who is the general secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Congress and recently campaigned extensively in Himachal Pradesh assembly polls in absence of Rahul in the campaigning, will walk for two days including Friday. Clad in a white salwar kameez and a brown puffer coat, this is the first time that she was seen being part of the yatra. Posting a picture of the two, the Congress said on Twitter: "The steps will be strong, when we walk together." A party worker said with Rahul and Priyanka with her family joining, the Connect India campaign and the grand old party's resolution to unite India has been energised further.

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, Leader of Opposition in the MP Assembly Govind Singh, former Union Ministers Suresh Pachouri, Arun Yadav and Pilot were also present on the occasion. The yatra will enter Rajasthan from Madhya Pradesh on December 4, after covering a distance of 380 km.

JAMA MASJID REVOLES BAN ON WOMEN'S ENTRY AFTER L-G'S CALL

However, it has come to attention only now.

Clarifying the stand, Jama Masjid PRO Sabiullah Khan said there is no restriction on the entry of women. "The restriction is for women who come here alone, give time to men, do wrong things, make videos." He clarified that women would be permitted to come with their spouses or families.

As the controversy escalated, Bukhari said the decision was taken after some "incidents" were reported on the premises of the heritage structure. "Jama Masjid is a place of worship and people are welcome for that. But girls coming alone and waiting for their dates... This is not what this place is meant for. The restriction is on that," Bukhari said. "Any such place, be it a mosque, temple or gurudwara is a place of worship (ibadat ki jagah hai) and there is no restriction on anyone coming for that purpose. Just today, a group of 20-25 girls visited and they were allowed to enter," Bukhari added.

In the past, music video shoots by visitors were prohibited. An old board outside the entry gate facing the busy Matia Mahal area bears the message: "Music video shoot is strictly prohibited inside the mosque."

Earlier, the DCW chief issued a notice to the Imam of Jama Masjid and said "no one has the right to ban the entry of women like this."

The DCW chief said in a Twitter post, "The decision to stop the entry of women in Jama Masjid is absolutely wrong. As much as a man has the right to worship, so also a woman. I am issuing notice to the Imam of Jama Masjid."

The National Commission for Women (NCW) asked the Centre and the Delhi Government to take appropriate action against the Jama Masjid administration, calling it gender-biased and a violation of fundamental rights of women worshippers.

The VHP too jumped in the controversy and demanded that authorities take swift action to "tighten noose" around those involved in putting up such notices outside the main gates of the mosque. "It's an anti-woman, anti-Constitution move. The notices banning the entry of girls into Jama Masjid should immediately be withdrawn," VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal demanded.

PULWAMA-FAMED ISI HEAD NAMED PAK ARMY CHIEF

Reputed to be a stickler for rules and a no-nonsense officer preferring by-the-book approach, he was selected for the top job for these qualities. He was also described as an "outstanding officer" and as "a straight arrow".

Reports from Islamabad said, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced on Twitter that Prime Minister Sharif has named Munir as Pakistan's new Army chief. Lt General Sahil Shamshad Mirza had been picked as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC). "The summary about (appointments) has been sent to the President," Marriyum Aurangzeb tweeted.

Munir graduated from the Officers Training School and has been a close aide of General Bajwa ever since he commanded troops in the Force Command Northern Areas as a brigadier under the outgoing army chief, who was then Commander X Corps.

Lt General Munir was later appointed Military Intelligence director general in early 2017, and in October next year was made the ISI chief.

However, his stint as the top intelligence officer turned out to be the shortest ever, as he was replaced by Lt General

Faiz Hamid within eight months, on the insistence of then Prime Minister Imran Khan.

He was posted as Gujranwala Corps commander, a position he held for two years, before being moved to the General Headquarters as the Quartermaster general.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told the media after the appointments that the "advice" had been forwarded to President Arif Alvi, adding that all matters had been settled according to the law and the Constitution.

He called on citizens to refrain from viewing it through a "political lens". Dawn newspaper reported. He hoped that the President would not make the appointments "controversial" and would endorse the advice of the premier.

The defence minister reiterated that the President should endorse the premier's advice so that a "controversy may not arise. This will also help our country and the economy to get on track. Currently, everything is at a standstill."

There has been extraordinary interest in the appointment of Bajwa's successor as many believe ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan's long march is linked to the change of command in the Army. He has asked his supporters to gather in Rawalpindi on November 26, two days before Bajwa hands over the baton to the new Army chief. Pakistani Army's headquarters are in Rawalpindi.

A section of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaj (PML-N) party favoured his

Philippines asks China for explanation over latest sea feud

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippines has sought an explanation from China after a Filipino military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris' in the possession of Filipino navy personnel in the disputed South China Sea, officials said on Thursday.

Sunday's incident off Philippine-occupied Thitu island is the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China has denied its coast guard forcibly seized the debris from the Filipino sailors.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson in Manila, Maria Theresa Daza, said without elaborating that a diplomatic note was relayed to China for "clarification from the Chinese side over the incident."

Vice Adm. Alberto Carlos, who heads the military's Western Command, said the Filipino sailors, using a long-range camera, spotted the debris drifting in strong waves near a sandbar about 800 yards (540 metres) offshore.

The sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos



retrieved the floating object and started to tow it back to Thitu Island. As they were travelling back to the island, "they noticed that a China coast guard vessel with bow number 5203 was approaching their location and subsequently blocked their pre-plotted course twice," Carlos said in a statement.

The Chinese coast guard vessel then deployed an inflatable boat with personnel who "forcefully retrieved said floating object by cutting the towing line" attached to the Filipino sailors' rubber boat.

The sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos

said, without detailing what happened.

Chinese coast guard ships have blocked Philippine supply boats, delivering supplies to Filipino forces in the disputed waters in the past but seizing objects in the possession of another nation's military constitutes a more brazen act.

China's Foreign Ministry in Beijing has denied that the debris was seized forcibly.

The Philippine side salvaged and towed the object first. After friendly consultation at the site, the Philippine side returned the object to China, and China expressed appreciation for that,

ministry spokeswoman Mao

Ning said on Monday. "There was no such thing as interception or forcible seizure at the scene."

Responding to China's denial, top Philippine defense official Jose Faustino Jr. Stood by the accounts of the Filipino navy personnel and said the debris was "rudely" taken from them by the Chinese coast guard. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Said he would also seek clarification when he visits Beijing in January to meet China's leader Xi Jinping.

Faustino said a separate Philippine investigation was underway after Filipino villagers on Thitu reported hearing unexplained explosions on Sunday.

It was not clear where the thunder-like blasts, which caused slight tremors on the ground, came from and what were their nature. Villagers on the island were alarmed, officials said, adding they prepared an evacuation plan in case there would be a need for it.

Thitu, which Filipinos call Pagasa, or hope, hosts a fishing community and Filipino forces and lies near Subi, one of seven disputed reefs that China has turned into missile-protected islands in the disputed waters.

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Janata Samajwadi Party have won two and one seats respectively.

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress (NC)-led ruling coalition was on Thursday on its way to winning Nepal's parliamentary elections and has bagged 40 seats out of 65 declared so far.

Out of the 275 Members of Parliament, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system.

Till now, the Nepali Congress has won 25 seats and is leading in 31 more.

The CPN-Maoist Centre has bagged 7 seats, CPN-Unified Socialist 6 and Rastriya Janamorcha and Loktantrik Samajwadi Party one each.

They all are part of the ruling coalition.

The Maoist Centre and CPN-Unified Socialist have been leading in 10 and 5 seats respectively.

The main Opposition CPN-UML led by former premier K P Sharma Oli has won 15 seats and is leading in 29 others.

The CPN-UML partners -



NEPAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Deuba's NC-led ruling coalition leads in counting

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

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The CPN-UML partners -



However, the CPN-UML has secured the highest number of votes under the proportional voting system, which gives it an advantage.

Under the proportionate system, the CPN-UML has so far received 3,65,505 votes whereas the NC and Maoist Centre received 3,37,328 and 1,61,069 votes respectively.

In Nepal's capital city Kathmandu, the CPN-UML could bag just one seat, down from the six it had bagged in 2017.

Out of the 10 seats in the district, the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) has secured five and Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) bagged four.



Long-time reformist leader Anwar sworn in as Malaysia PM

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Long-time opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in as Malaysia's prime minister Thursday in a victory for political reformers locked in a battle with Malay nationalists for days after the divisive general election produced a hung Parliament.

Broadcast live on national television, Anwar took his oath of office Thursday evening in a simple ceremony at the national palace.

Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, named Anwar, 75, as the nation's 10th leader after saying he was satisfied that Anwar was the candidate who is likely to have majority support.

Anwar's Alliance of Hope led Saturday's election with 82 seats, short of the 112 needed for a majority.

An unexpected surge of ethnic Malay support propelled Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's right-leaning National Alliance to win 73 seats, with its ally Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party emerging as the biggest single party with 49 seats.

Kim's sister makes insulting threats to Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attacked South Korea with a string of insults on Thursday for considering new unilateral sanctions against the North, calling its president and his government "idiots" and a "running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the US."

Kim Yo Jong's diatribe came two days after South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was considering additional sanctions on North Korea over its recent barrage of missile tests.

The ministry said it would also consider taking action against alleged cyber attacks by North Korea — believed to be a key new source of funding



for its weapons program — if the North conducts a major provocation like a nuclear test.

"I wonder what sanctions' the South Korean group, no more than a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the US, impudently will impose on North Korea," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media. "What a spectacle sight!"

Body of Israeli teen, taken by militants, is returned

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The body of an Israeli teen that was taken by Palestinian militants from a West Bank hospital was returned to his family on Thursday, the Israeli military said. Relatives of Tiran Fero, 17, said Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin entered the hospital where Fero was seeking treatment after a car crash. They disconnected him from hospital equipment while still alive, according to his father, and removed him from the hospital.

The Israeli military said Fero was already dead when he was snatched and that the circumstances of the teenager's death remained under probe. Incident threatened to ratchet up already boiling tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, but the body's return appeared to defuse that for now.

Ousted Lanka Prez summoned in court over presidential pardon to murder convict

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's ousted President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was issued a notice by the Supreme Court on Thursday over a presidential pardon granted by him to a former lawmaker of his party who was convicted in a murder of a party colleague in 2011.

Rajapaksa, who pardoned Duminda Silva—a former parliamentarian from his Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party, has been issued a second summons since he left office in July this year.

Silva was sentenced to death in 2017 for involvement in the 2011 murder of a party colleague and ex-MP, Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra, and four others, was freed in June 2021 after Rajapaksa granted him a presidential pardon.

However, the Supreme Court in May this year quashed the pardoning and



ordered Silva to be arrested again. He is expected to appear as a respondent before the Supreme Court on December 16 for the hearing of a fundamental rights petition filed by Premachandra's wife and daughter.

At the time, he was accused of overseeing abduction squads that whisked away rebel suspects, critical journalists, and activists, many of them never to be seen again.

He has previously denied any wrongdoing.

Rajapaksa, 73, was ousted in a popular uprising against him in July this year following months of street protests that called for his resignation.

Similarly, in mid-October, the highest court issued a summons to him to appear in court over the 2011 disappearance of two rights activists Lalith Weeraraj and Kugan

Murugananthan from the northern province.

The disappearances took place 12 years ago soon after the end of the country's long civil war when Rajapaksa was a powerful official at the Defence Ministry under the presidency of his elder brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa.

At the time, he was accused of overseeing abduction squads that whisked away rebel suspects, critical journalists, and activists, many of them never to be seen again.

He has previously denied any wrongdoing.

Rajapaksa, 73, was ousted in a popular uprising against him in July this year following months of street protests that called for his resignation.

He fled to the Maldives in mid-July and announced his resignation from Singapore.

In early September, he returned to the country from Thailand.

Writer who accused Trump of 1990s rape files new lawsuit

AP ■ NEW YORK

A writer who accused former President Donald Trump of rape filed an upgraded lawsuit against him on Thursday in New York, minutes after a new state law took effect allowing victims of sexual violence to sue over attacks that occurred decades ago.

Jean Carroll's lawyer filed the legal papers electronically as the Adult Survivor's Act temporarily lifted the state's usual deadlines for suing over sexual assault. She sought unspecified compensatory and punitive damages for pain and suffering, psychological harms, dignity loss and reputation damage.

Carroll, longtime advice columnist for Elle magazine, first made the claim in a 2019 book, saying Trump raped her in the dressing room of a Manhattan luxury department



store in 1995 or 1996.

Trump responded to the book's allegations by saying it could never have happened because Carroll was "not my type." His remarks led Carroll to file a defamation lawsuit against him, but that lawsuit has been tied up in appeals courts as judges decide whether he is protected from legal claims for comments made while he was

president.

Previously, Carroll had been barred by state law from suing over the alleged rape because too many years had passed since the incident.

New York's new law, however, gives sex crime victims who missed deadlines associated with statute of limitations a second chance to file a lawsuit.

A window for such suits will open for one year, after which the usual time limits will be reinstated.

If the courts ultimately hold that Trump's original disparaging comments about Carroll's rape allegation were part of his job duties, as president, she would be barred from suing him over those remarks, as federal employees are protected from defamation claims. No such protection would cover things he did prior to becoming president.

Trump said in his statement that Carroll "completely made up a story that I met her at the doors of this crowded New York City Department Store and, within minutes, swooned" her.

It is a Hoax and a lie, just like all the other Hoaxes that have been played on me for the past seven years."

Carroll's new ability to sue Trump for rape could help her sidestep a potentially fatal legal flaw in her original defamation case.

If the courts ultimately hold that Trump's original disparaging comments about Carroll's rape allegation were part of his job duties, as president, she would be barred from suing him over those remarks, as federal employees are protected from defamation claims. No such protection would cover things he did prior to becoming president.

"It is important to us that Poland can rely on allies to stand by each other, even in difficult times, and especially Poland in its exposed position," Lambrecht told reporters in Berlin. "That's why we have offered to support air policing and Patriots, but that effort needs to be agreed by all member states."

"If they are used outside the NATO area, then it has to be agreed with NATO and with the allies beforehand."

In Poland, critics of the populist ruling party accused it of sacrificing the country's security with a war next door in Ukraine for the sake of a domestic political struggle which exploits anti-German sentiment for short-term gain.

The Rzecznopolska daily called the new proposal by Poland's leaders "shocking," arguing that it would require sending German soldiers operating the system to Ukraine, and "that, in turn, would involve NATO in a direct clash with Russia, something the alliance has been trying to avoid from the beginning."

"This proposal affects Poland's credibility and, worst of all, its security. The Germans get a clear signal that we do not want their help, so the defence potential of the Polish sky will be lower," deputy editor Michal Szuldrzynski wrote.

"In the worst war in Europe since 1945, this is an unforgivable mistake."

Poland's populist ruling party, facing elections next fall with its popularity dented by 18 per cent inflation, has been ratcheting up its anti-German messaging, long a staple of the party's campaign rhetoric.

Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski has also been trying to link his domestic opponents, particularly Donald Tusk, a former European Union leader, to Germany, saying on Sunday that if Tusk's party wins next year, Poland would find itself "under the German boot."

When Germany recently

offered Warsaw Eurofighter planes and Patriot air defence missile batteries, Poland's Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszcak initially said it was an offer he would accept with "satisfaction."

The offer came after two men were killed when an apparently stray Ukrainian defence projectile fell in Poland near the border with Ukraine on November 15.

But Poland's tune changed after Kaczynski gave an interview to the state news agency PAP on Wednesday, saying that the offer is "interesting" but that "it would be best for Poland's security if Germany handed the equipment to the Ukrainians."

Since then, both Blaszcak and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki have repeated the position of Kaczynski, the country's most powerful leader.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, NATO beefed up its defences along its eastern flank, including Poland, while Warsaw has worked to strengthen the nation's own military with massive armaments purchases.

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INDIA START 50 OVER AUDITIONS UNDER DHAWAN

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Copping a lot of flak for its archaic approach in T20Is, the Indian cricket team is expected to turn a new leaf in a different format as it takes on New Zealand in a three-match ODI series, which will mark the start of preparations for next year's World Cup.

India had endured a nightmare back in 2020 in New Zealand when Virat Kohli's side was blanked 0-3 in one of the most lopsided series where the bowling effort was below par.

Exactly 11 months are left for the marquee event in India and the series starting on Friday will give the team an initial idea about some of the middle-order slots and also the bowling arsenal in India's armoury.

With five seniors -- skipper Rohit Sharma, the talismanic Virat Kohli, team management's favourite KL Rahul, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and No.1 ODI all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja not part of this series, the management can only get a rough idea in which direction the team would move.

All these big guns will now play a lot of ODI cricket, starting with the Bangladesh series, and the team combination will undergo a sea change once they all come back in due course.

Just like the dilemmas of T20Is, Indian coach Rahul Dravid will have a lot on his plate but for now, his understudy VVS Laxman also needs to do a tight rope walking as far as this series is concerned.

Dhawan will be close to 38 during next year's World Cup and in ODIs in the last two years, he has scored nearly 1000 runs.



This is the only international format he plays. Since T20 got more precedence, his appearances has been pretty sporadic.

But to put things in perspective, both Kohli and Rohit have played one third of the ODIs that Dhawan played as they concentrated more on Tests and T20Is than World Test Championship and back-to-back T20 World Cups lined up.

In the meantime, Shubman Gill has shown his prowess as an ODI opener in a dozen of games he has played so far with an average of 57 plus and a strike-rate

of 100 plus.

But even in this format, Dhawan has been a cautious starter in Powerplays and then picked up pace. Team's philosophy will be the main thing along with a decision whether the Delhi southpaw would be preferred for next one year with Rohit, Rahul and Gill also there.

Rahul, in ODIs, has started batting down the order at times and Shreyas Iyer has been one of India's consistent ODI players despite his problems with short ball. Suryakumar Yadav, who is in the form of his life can't

Rahul, in ODIs, has started batting down the order at times and Shreyas Iyer has been one of India's consistent ODI players despite his problems with short ball.

be dropped from the middle-order if he is fit to play.

Sanju Samson, the phenomenal talent from Kerala, with his wide range of strokes can't be ignored for a long time either and Deepak Hooda brings his all-round skills to the table.

BOWLING ATTACK

Coming back to the series, there are three 50-over games in a space of five days and fast bowlers' recovery period will be paramount.

Deepak Chahar is expect-

ed to start and is likely to have the seasoned Shardul Thakur for company since both offer decent batting option lower down the order.

Arshdeep Singh is likely to be the third option but he has been constantly playing so there could be a chance to check out a Kuldeep Sen or an Umran Malik. The flip side is short ground. There is every chance that their pace could become a disadvantage.

Washington Sundar is also likely to be in playing XI and due to the short dimensions of Eden Park ground, with its awkward angles, Dhawan might prefer an extra pacer instead of an extra spinner.

New Zealand's core for the series is more or less same like the T20s. With swing bowler Tim Southee, tearaway quicks Adam Milne, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry and spinner Mitchell Santner in its ranks, the home teams' attack looks formidable on paper.

SQUADS

India: Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Deepak Hooda, Shahbaz Ahmed, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Deepak Chahar, Arshdeep Singh, Shardul Thakur, Kuldeep Sen, Umran Malik.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (captain), Finn Allen, Devin Conway, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Jimmy Neesham, Mitchell Santner, Lockie Ferguson.

Not hurt that captaincy was taken away from me for Zimbabwe tour: Dhawan

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Shikhar Dhawan has a lot of faith in God's plans and purely for that reason it "didn't hurt him" when he was asked to hand back the India captaincy to KL Rahul during the tour of Zimbabwe.

Dhawan, who leads the India ODI team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, was named captain for the three-match ODI tour of Zimbabwe in August this year but later was demoted by the former national selection committee once KL Rahul was declared fit and available.

"I wasn't hurt as I believe certain things are pre-destined and whatever happens is for our own good," said Dhawan, who is back in the captain's saddle for the ODI leg of New Zealand tour.

"And if you look at it, after Zimbabwe, I again captained against SA at home and the same selection committee handed me the leadership reins. So I am not at all hurt by what transpired in Zimbabwe."

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (captain), Finn Allen, Devin Conway, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Jimmy Neesham, Mitchell Santner, Lockie Ferguson.

"I am very fortunate that



at this juncture of my career, I have got a chance to lead India," he said.

He also explained how he rationalised Rahul's elevation in Zimbabwe and he was kept as his deputy. "Look in Zimbabwe, KL was made the captain because he is the vice-captain of the main team. And since he was going to Asia Cup (after that series) and in case Rohit got injured over there (in UAE) and Rahul had to captain, it was better that he captained in Zimbabwe and remained ready on leadership front.



Hardik's leadership skills can immensely help India in T20s: Miller

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

South Africa's go-to man in pressure situations, David Miller believes that as captain Hardik Pandya can infuse much needed fearlessness into India's T20 set-up with his exemplary clarity of mind and work ethic.

Hardik is seen as the leader of the Indian team at the 2024 T20 World Cup with current skipper Rohit Sharma not expected to carry on in the shortest format for another two years.

Miller, who has finally realised his rich potential and became one of the best finishers in the game over the last couple of years, said Hardik had played a crucial role in steering Gujarat Titans to the title on their IPL debut. "Just playing under him

in the IPL, I feel he is a natural leader. People follow him. He allows you to play the way that you feel like you can. He is very inclusive as a leader, he wants everyone to be close to each other," the South African said.

"At the same time, he is clear with discipline. He has got a lot of good attributes of a leader."

"In IPL he got better and better as the season progressed and I see him doing that (with the Indian team as well)," Miller said.

India are in desperate need for a change in mindset, especially in the powerplay. Can Hardik effect that change and let the players not worry about fear of failure?

"Yes. He will make the players a lot better in the mindset. 100 percent."

Bilateral series require more context: Williamson

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson says increasing volume of cricket could be a reason for low attendance during the recent England-Australia series and going forward, bilateral series would require "more context" for attracting fans to the stadiums.

A sparse crowd witnessed the recent ODI series between the Ashes rivals Down Under. Only a handful of fans gathered at the MCG for the final match.

The series had started less than four days after England's T20 World Cup triumph Down Under.

"It was unfortunate to see, but it also shows the volume of cricket that's being held. Because no doubt the ICC tournaments are incredibly popular and there has been a lot of cricket on. They (Australia) also had a World Cup on. So, there was a lot on in their country too."

"So, we must ensure there is a lot more context as possible in games, especially the bilateral series," Williamson said on the eve of New Zealand's opening ODI against India.

The proliferation of T20 leagues around the world and a hectic international calendar has led to a debate over the existence of 50-over cricket.



Asked if ODI cricket is slowly dying, Williamson said, "It's tough."

"But yeah, it will settle somewhere. I don't know what it will look like. A lot of teams now have two teams at the moment."

"I don't know where it will settle, but there are always conversations about trying to make it more appealing in any context like rule change etc..."

England's T20 World Cup triumph has intensified the debate on split coaching and picking different players for different formats and the Kiwi skipper feels the packed schedule also has a part to play with players needing rest.

"Yes, it appears to be happening more and more and you can understand why. There is so much on and you can't do everything. That's why you see a lot of teams with those sort of make up."

A modern-day batting great, Williamson's credentials as a T20 player has come under scrutiny after his underwhelming performance at the T20 World Cup and the 52-ball 61 in the second T20I against India.

"I still love playing all three formats, and enjoy changing between the three, as a player I'm looking to keep improving and I certainly have the motivation."

HI to give complimentary tickets to Olympians and former players for men's WC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

All the country's hockey Olympians and former international players will be given complimentary tickets to watch the upcoming men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, Hockey India announced on Thursday.

The 16-team men's showpiece is scheduled to be held from January 13-29.

The matches will be held simultaneously at the Kalinga Stadium here and the newly-built Birsa Munda International Stadium in Rourkela.

HI secretary general Bholanath Singh said it would be

a privilege for the national federation to invite all Indian stalwarts of the game, including the Olympians. "The presence of former Indian hockey players will certainly boost the morale of the Indian men's team in the men's World Cup," Singh said in a release.

"Keeping in mind the

immense contribution of former hockey stalwarts, Hockey India continues to recognise their efforts and welcome them in Odisha to watch the matches, inspire and cheer all the teams."

Earlier on Thursday, HI marked the 50-day countdown for the prestigious event by opening the ticket sales online.

LOCAL EVENTS

MECHANICAL MAVERICKS EMERGE WINNERS



Defending champion Mechanical Mavericks defeated Operating Observers 1-0 to clinch the NER Inter-departmental Futsal tournament at NER stadium on Thursday. Prashant scored the sole goal of the match. Divisional Railway Manager (NER) Aditya Kumar gave away the trophy to the winner. Others present were Ambar Pratap Singh, Sishir Somvanshi, Sanjay Yadav, Raghvendra Kumar, Ranvijay Singh, Faninder Kumar, Anup Kumar Singh, Balendra Kumar and BR Varun.

TEAM ANNOUNCED

Lucknow region team for Under-19 Junior Girl's State Football Championship has been announced on Thursday. The championship will be played in Barabanki.

THE TEAM: Ritika Gupta, Sargam, Uma, Khushi, Surabhi, Soni, MAriyam, Draksha, Sarita, Ayushi, Ananya, Shruti, Shilpa, Shoa, Aashi. Reserve: Drishti. Coach: Jayna.

MEDIA CUP

Hindustan Times will take on Electronic Media in the opening match of Subhash Mishra Memorial Inter-Media T20 Cricket Tournament at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium on Sunday. Nine teams are taking part in the tournament, which will be played on a knockout basis. The final will be played on December 4.

TEAMS: (POOL A) Amar Ujala, Photographers XI, Doordarshan XI (POOL B) Hindustan Times, Electronic Media, Combined Media XI (POOL C) Manyata Prapt Patrakar, Times of India, Dainik Jagran.

KHELO INDIA ARCHERY

Around 330 participants will be competing in the 3rd phase of the Khelo India National Ranking Women's Archery Tournament to be held in Mathura from November 27. The tournament is being organised by the Archery Association of India (AAI) in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh Archery Association and the competition will take place across the recurve and compound categories in the senior, junior and cadet age groups.

7 Indians enter finals at Youth World Championships



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers continued their dominance at the youth men's and women's World Championships as seven of them stormed into the finals after stunning victories in La Nucia, Spain.

Youth Asian champions Vanshaj and Vishwanath Suresh marched into the summit clash along with Ashish to maintain all-win record for

thrilling semifinal bouts. Women boxers, on the other hand, recorded comfortable wins apart from Kirti's 3-2 victory against Kazakhstan's Assel Toktassyn.

Ravina and Bhawna out-punched their Kazakh opponents Assem Tanatar and Gulnaz Buribayeva respectively by unanimous decision. Devika got the better of USA's Aameedah Joy with a 4-1 margin.

Meanwhile, four other Indian women in action -- Tamanna (50kg), Kunjanri Devi Thongam (60kg), Muskan (75kg) and Lashu Yadav (70kg) -- signed off with bronze medals after defeats in their respective semifinal bouts.

Indian boxers asserted their supremacy at the prestigious championships as 11 out of 17 finalists went on to confirm medals -- highest for any country at the ongoing edition, wherein close to 600 boxers have participated from 73 countries.



World team chess: India edges out France, reaches last four

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

India defeated France in a thrilling tie-breaker to enter the semifinals of the FIDE World Team Chess Championship here. After the two sets of matches were shared by the teams by a 3-1 margin, the Indians won the blitz tie-break 2.5-1.5. Nihal Sarin and S L Narayanan did the star turn with victories over Jules Moussard and Laurent Fressinet respectively early on Thursday.

Vidit Gujrathi, India's top player, held the top French star Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to a draw in 45 moves while the experienced K Sasikiran was beaten by Maxime Lagarde in 55 moves but the wins by Sarin and Narayanan did the trick. India will take on Uzbekistan in the semifinals.

Earlier in the first of the two matches, Gujrathi pulled off a win over Lagarde and Narayanan defeated Fressinet, win.

Sreenidi Deccan beat TRAU FC 1-0 in I-League



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Sreenidi Deccan registered a 1-0 win against TRAU FC in their I-League match at the newly-inaugurated Deccan Arena here on Thursday.

Playing their first match at the new home venue, Sreenidi Deccan took the lead in the 41st minute through David Castaneda Munoz, which ultimately proved to be the difference between the two teams.

It was Sreenidi's second win on the bounce after their loss in the first round. On the other hand, TRAU suffered their first defeat of the season.



SOUTH KOREA HOLDS URUGUAY TO 0-0 DRAW

South Korea holds Uruguay to 0-0 draw at World Cup The returning Son Heung-min could not inspire South Korea as the Tigers of Asia started their World Cup Group H campaign with a 0-0 draw against Uruguay in Qatar on Thursday

AP ■ QATAR

This time it was South Korea holding South American power Uruguay to a 0-0 draw on Thursday, a result that probably favors the Asian team.

The draw at Education City Stadium was yet another early World Cup match with a surprising result. Argentina and Germany both lost their opening matches in major upsets.

South Korea, with forward Son Heung-min wearing a mask to protect a broken left eye socket, always looked the more likely to score against the more experienced Uruguayans. The South Koreans were quicker, pressing from the

opening whistle.

Some South Korean fans wore Batman-like masks in solidarity with Son.

However, in a match with few clear scoring chances, Uruguay had the best chances: Diego Godin hit the post with a header in the 43rd minute and Federico Valverde hit it in the 89th.

Uruguay will next face Portugal in Group H while South Korea plays Ghana.

South Korea attacked from the start and Son excited the crowd every time he touched the ball. He managed only one threatening attack in the first half, however, and did less in the second.

South Korea always looked

SOUTH KOREA ATTACKED FROM THE START AND SON EXCITED THE CROWD EVERY TIME HE TOUCHED THE BALL. HE MANAGED ONE THREATENING ATTACK IN THE FIRST HALF, HOWEVER, AND DID LESS IN THE SECOND

quicker than Uruguay, but not necessarily the more dangerous. The team's best chance came in the 34th minute when Hwang Ui-jo sailed a close-range attempt over the crossbar.

As the half wore on, Uruguay began to take more possession but always seemed more cautious, taking less initiative despite having the more experienced players.

Son went down in a heap early in the second half with Martin Caceres getting the first yellow card of the match.

Uruguay coach Diego Alonso sent in Edinson Cavani for Luis Suarez in 64th minute as the pace of the match slowed until Valverde hit the post in the final minutes.



Ronaldo makes WC history, Portugal beat Ghana 3-2

DOHA: Cristiano Ronaldo closed his eyes, took in a deep breath and then made World Cup history.

The Portugal striker became the first male player to score at five World Cups with his 65th-minute penalty in a 3-2 win over Ghana on Thursday. Ayew equalised for Ghana eight minutes later, but Joao Felix regained the lead for Portugal in the 78th and Rafael Leao added a third. Osman Bukari reduced Ghana's deficit in the 89th.

The 37-year-old Ronaldo was looking to showcase his talents to potential new clubs after

having his contract terminated at Manchester United this week. After wasting two good chances in the first half, he tumbled under a challenge by Ghana defender Mohammed Salisu to earn a penalty.

Wheeling away after the ball struck the back of the net, a smiling Ronaldo performed his usual leap and swivel in the air - the crowd roared his trademark "SI- UUU" as he did the piouette before getting mobbed by teammates.

He has now scored in every World Cup since his first in 2006 and has a record 118 international goals.

Canada coach backs Davies after penalty woe

AP ■ DOHA

"Was it technically our 'worst game'?

Yes, when you measure the performance," admitted Belgium coach Roberto Martinez.

"Was it the 'worst game', no, because we won."

"We defended well and we needed our goalkeeper."

Canada will head into their game against Croatia on Sunday still full of confidence after more than matching the team ranked second in the world, who next face Morocco.

The North Americans, matching Belgium in formation by playing three at the back, made a bright start and Jonathan David's low effort was deflected wide.

From the resulting corner, Tajon Buchanan's strike was blocked by Yannick Carrasco with his arm and a penalty was awarded after a VAR check in the 11th minute.

But Davies produced a weak effort which was saved low to his right by Courtois.

It was before David lashed the rebound over the crossbar.

Canada coach backs Davies after penalty woe

AP ■ DOHA

Canada coach John Herdman backed the decision to let Alphonso Davies take a crucial missed penalty against Belgium.

The Bayern Munich star has little experience of spot-kicks, and saw his tame ninth-minute effort comfortably saved by Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

A disappointed Davies did not stop to speak to reporters after the defeat.

Herdman said the Canadian team's "brotherhood" had trusted Davies to take the kick in what was Canada's first World Cup game since 1986.

"When you've got an 85 million dollar player with that sort of swagger, let him pick up the ball and take it," Herdman told reporters. "It was a big moment. We were waiting to get that first goal."

Embolo lifts Swiss to win over Cameroon

AP ■ DOHA

Breel Embolo scored against the country of his birth as Switzerland defeated Cameroon 1-0 to make a winning start to their World Cup campaign on Thursday.

Embolo struck three minutes into the second half at Al Janoub Stadium as Switzerland secured a vital three points in a group that includes tournament favourites Brazil and Aboubakar.

African teams had made an encouraging start in Qatar after all five failed to get past the group stage in 2018, but Cameroon will regret not making more of a first half they controlled.

Akanji glanced wide at a



corner as Cameroon switched off on the stroke of half-time but there was no such escape when

they were again caught napping at the start the second half.

Granit Xhaka and Remo

Freuler worked the ball out wide on the right to Xherdan Shaqiri whose low cross into the area was swept home by an unmarked Embolo, who chose not to celebrate against his birth country.

Choupo-Moting neatly weaved his way past a couple of defenders in the box but couldn't beat Sommer from a tight angle.

Andre Onana kept Cameroon in the game with a brilliant stop to deny Ruben Vargas who found himself completely free in an almost carbon copy of Embolo's goal.

Only a desperate block prevented Haris Seferovic from adding a late second.

Kane fit to face USA: Southgate

AP ■ DOHA

Gareth Southgate says England captain Harry Kane is fit to face the United States on Friday after his World Cup injury scare.

Kane suffered an ankle injury in the second half of England's 6-2 win against Iran in their Group B opener in Doha on Monday.

Three Lions boss

Southgate on Thursday said Kane would be available for selection against the USA in their group game at the Al Bayt Stadium.

"Harry is fine. He has worked slightly separately from the group but all good for Friday night," Southgate told the BBC.

"He had a scan to make



sure everything is fine."

Southgate also said Harry Maguire was feeling better after the Manchester United centre-back was substituted having become ill in the closing stages of the Iran match.

"He was feeling ill and that was affecting his vision.

No Germany player safe after shock defeat: Flick

AP ■ DOHA

Germany manager Hansi Flick warned on Thursday that no member of his starting XI was safe ahead of their crucial weekend clash with Spain after a shock 2-1 loss to Japan.

Defeat against Spain would almost certainly condemn Germany to a second straight group-stage exit -- an unthinkable outcome for a nation that had reached at least the semi-finals in every World Cup this century before 2018.



Flick promised to "turn the screws" against a Spanish side fresh from thumping Costa Rica 7-0, after which manager Luis Enrique promised to play against Germany in the same way.

Asked if Joshua Kimmich's place in defensive midfield was

in such a way that it's top-notch."

Flick faced criticism over his picks, particularly his decision to name Borussia Dortmund centre-back Niklas Sule, who played Takuma Asano onside for Japan's second goal, at right back.

But the manager instead switched the focus to his team's misfiring attack, saying: "When you have two or three top-class chances, you have to close the game and put a lid on it."

"We lacked efficiency."

The coach confirmed that winger Leroy Sane, who was controversially left out of the squad by former coach Joachim Loew in 2018, could return against Spain after missing the Japan match with a knee injury.

"Leroy is on the pitch right now, he's training on his own," he said. "That's positive."

Enrique backs Spain to stay hungry after historic rout

AP ■ DOHA

Luis Enrique believes Spain's hunger will only increase after they recorded the country's biggest ever World Cup victory in an emphatic 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday.

The 2010 champions dominated their opponents, who did not manage a shot on goal in the whole match, and in their second group game on Sunday face a desperate Germany, who were beaten 2-1 by Japan earlier.

Spain's previous record victory was a 6-1 thrashing of Bulgaria at the 1998 World Cup, a match in which Luis Enrique scored for La Roja.

However, while the Spain coach thinks that too much flatness can weaken a team's resolve, he is confident his side will stay grounded and focused. "I have no doubt that we will play the next game with the same spirit, if not more," Luis Enrique told reporters.



"I have no doubts at all. It's true that praise weakens you, but don't worry about this group of players, I see them every day."

"(It won't happen) because there will be changes in the line-up, because they want to com-

pete, to work hard."

"I doubt that would happen, it's never happened, this is a group of people ready to do things in the right way."

The coach said he was surprised Germany lost their opening Group E game, although he

recognised Japan's threat.

"It was a surprise the way they started off. Germany, against Japan but there are surprises in football, you never know," said the coach.

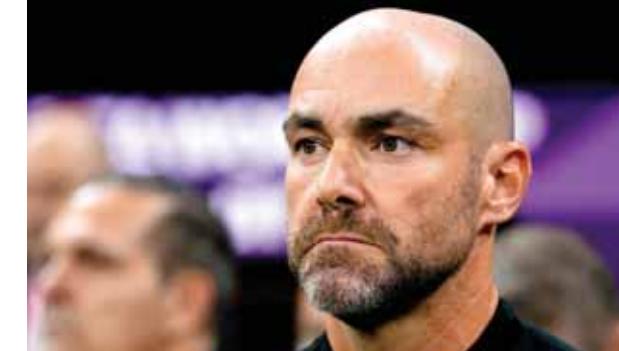
"Japan are a very good team, they're a dynamic team, Gavi.

'Qatar must find 'A Game' to avoid WC embarrassment'

AP ■ DOHA

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez hopes his team can bring their "A Game" against Senegal as the host nation battle to avoid setting an unwanted World Cup record.

Defeat on Friday would mean the earliest-ever exit for a host nation -- South Africa also went out at the group stage in 2010 -- but were still alive heading into their third match.



and bring our 'A Game' and show that we can be more competitive than we were the other day."

"We are playing a very high-level team so we need to prove ourselves, play our game and see what happens."

Defender Ismail Mohamad urged Qatar fans not to write them off after only one game.

"The last match is history now," he said. "I think we are

starting a fresh page with the team and preparing for the next match."

"I do think that the team is on the right path. I think that in the next match we will be better prepared and we will give it our all."

Mohamad said Qatar had taken inspiration from shock wins for Saudi Arabia, who beat Argentina, and Japan, who beat Germany.