

**CITY 3**  
YOGI HITS OUT AT CONG, AAP  
IN POLL-BOUND GUJARAT**OPINION 6**  
JOINTNESS MANTRA: CDS  
CHAUHAN, PATIENCE**WORLD 10**  
US REJECTS CHINA OBJECTIONS  
TO SOUTH CHINA SEA MISSION

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SENEGAL IN LAST  
16 AT WORLD CUP,  
BEATS ECUADOR  
12 SPORT

# Lapid's jibe at Kashmir Files draws fire, Israel says sorry

## Indonesian Min slams Israeli director's 'propaganda' remark

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Israeli filmmaker and head of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) jury Nadav Lapid's remarks against the film "The Kashmir Files" snowballed into a major controversy with Israel Ambassador to New Delhi Naor Gilon on Tuesday denouncing Lapid and apologising to the hosts.

Visiting Indonesian Minister for political, legal and security affairs Mohammed Mahfud also joined the ongoing controversy and backed the film, saying it definitely not "propaganda".

"I saw the film... it is definitely not propaganda. The voice of the people in Kashmir needs to be heard... We do not accept what was said..." he said.

Actor Anupam Kher, who played the lead role in the film, termed the criticism of the Kashmir Files "pre-planned" and charged Lapid of being insensitive towards the suffering of Kashmiri Pandits.

Director of the film Vivek Agnihotri too spoke about "truth" in a cryptic media post and said, "It is the most dangerous thing as it can make people lie. Who are these people who always stand against India?... I challenge all intellectuals of the world to prove if any scene, dialogue or event shown in the film is false, then I will quit film-making." These sharp reactions

came a day after Lapid called the film a "propaganda" and "vulgar movie" at the closing ceremony of the IFFI in Goa. *The Kashmir Files* revolves around the exodus and killing of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley in 1990s.

The Israeli Ambassador apologised to India in an "open letter" on Twitter. An open letter to #NadavLapid following his criticism of #KashmirFiles. It's not in Hebrew because I wanted our Indian brothers and sisters to be able to understand. It is also relatively long so I'll give you the bottom line first. YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED. Here's why: pic.twitter.com/8YpSQGMXIR — Naor Gilon (@NaorGilon) November 29, 2022

Gilon said Lapid abused the Indian invitation to the judges' panel in the "worst way". "In Indian culture, they say a guest is like God. You have abused in the worst way the Indian invitation to chair the panel of judges at @IFFIIndia as well as the trust, respect, and warm hospitality they have bestowed on you," he added.

This terse message by the envoy was in response to Lapid saying the jurors at the film festival were "disturbed and shocked" by *The Kashmir Files*.

"That felt to us like a propaganda, vulgar movie, inappropriate for an artistic competition section of such a prestigious film festival," he said.

**Continued on Page 9**

Israeli filmmaker and IFFI jury chairperson Nadav Lapid, third left, being honoured at the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India in Goa on Monday

## BJP terms film dig Holocaust denial; Cong says hate gets called out finally

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The row over the Israeli director and IFFI international jury chairperson Nadav Lapid controversial comments on the film "Kashmir files" reverberated across India's political landscape on Tuesday.

The BJP compared Lapid's condemnation of the movie to the denial of the Holocaust while the Congress called it as an "embarrassment" saying hate eventually gets called out.

BJP leader and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa

Sarma slammed criticism of *The Kashmir Files* at IFFI, saying, "Jury members aren't god. We found the film 'The Kashmir Files' to be nice and promoted it."

"We have seen ourselves what happened in Kashmir, what authority do they (jury members) have to slam the movie," news agency ANI quoted Sarma as saying on Tuesday.

BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya compared Lapid's condemnation of "The Kashmir Files" to the denial of the Holocaust.

"For the longest time, peo-

ple even denied the Holocaust and called Schindler's List a propaganda, just like some are doing to the Kashmir Files. Truth eventually triumphs, no matter what," he said.

His colleague, BJP's Goa spokesperson Savio Rodrigues, said Lapid's statement "is an insult to the horrors faced by Kashmir Hindus (in the past)".

"You can critique a film artistically but to term the truth about the brutality faced by the Kashmiri Pandits propaganda is shameful," he added.

**Continued on Page 9**

## Gehlot, Pilot put up united face, address presser jointly

### After Rahul's assets remark following Gehlot 'traitor' barb, two greet each other at party meet

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

A day after former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said both Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot were assets to the party, they presented a united face in public before attending a meeting with senior Congress leaders to review the preparations for Bharat Jodo Yatra which is set to enter the desert State this weekend.

Sources in the meeting said that Gehlot and Pilot exchanged pleasantries in the presence of members of the coordination committee, including AICC general secretary KC Venugopal and Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra.

"This is the Rajasthan Congress," Venugopal said addressing the media jointly with Gehlot and Pilot. Venugopal recalled former party president Rahul Gandhi's remarks in Indore on Monday, when he said both leaders are assets to the party.

"Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot have assured that the Yatra will be the one of the most successful in the country. I am sure that Rajasthan will also be the number 1 State," Venugopal told reporters.

"When Rahul Gandhi has said that our leaders are assets then we are assets... Where is the dispute then," Gehlot said when asked about Rahul's observation.



Congress general secretary KC Venugopal raises his hands with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and party leader Sachin Pilot during the State-level coordination committee meeting on 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' at party headquarters in Jaipur on Tuesday

PTI

Gehlot's remarks were in sharp contrast to his remarks calling Pilot a "traitor". Rahul in an interaction with the media had in Indore on Monday said that both leaders were assets to the party.

"Rahul Gandhi also meant that every party worker is an asset. This is the beauty of our party that after our top leader says anything, there is no scope (for further argument)," Gehlot added. He also reviewed the preparations for the Bharat Jodo Yatra route in the desert State that Rahul will lead into this weekend.

Gehlot stirred a controversy last week in an interview when he said that Pilot is a "gaddar" (traitor) who cannot replace him as he had revolted against the Congress in 2020, and tried to topple the State Government. In response, Pilot said such "mud-slinging" would not help.

Briefing the media, Gehlot also said the main issue before

the party is the 2023 Assembly election, and claimed the mood is in the favour of the Congress.

"We will win the Assembly elections. We have introduced several unique schemes and programmes which are benefiting people across the State. I get an overwhelming response from people when I go on visits. It means that the Government is going to be repeated," he said.

Targeting the BJP, Gehlot said that the party should bother about itself instead of commenting on the Congress.

On reports of NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery's concern over the revival of the Old Pension Scheme, the CM said the NITI Aayog or the Reserve Bank of India should first tell what concerns they had raised at the time of demonetisation.

He said the old scheme for Government employees was revived in the state for social security.

## Feted director Lapid's run-in not one-off case

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

He headed the international jury at IFFI, has been to India earlier and is a much awarded filmmaker. But it was not until his blunt criticism of "The Kashmir Files" that Israeli director Nadav Lapid hit the headlines, and had people scouring the net to find out more about him.

The Tel Aviv born and Paris-based filmmaker's comments describing the movie as vulgar and a propaganda during the closing ceremony of the 53rd International Film Festival of India in Goa on Monday propelled him straight into a raging row.

Lapid, who said he was disturbed and shocked at "The Kashmir Files" being chosen for the Indian Panorama sec-

tion, is clearly a man used to speaking his mind — and doesn't matter if he ruffles a few feathers in the bargain. Doesn't matter either if India's Minister and its top stars might be in the audience.

The 47-year-old director of "Policeman" and "The Kindergarten Teacher", chosen to head the international jury at IFFI 2022, had just a few days ago aired his views on the Indian national anthem being played at the opening ceremony of the festival.

"I completely admire the fierce patriotism, but that was an overwhelming experience for an artist at an international event," the writer-director told *The Peacock*, the flagship publication of the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG), one of the organisers of

the event along with Information and Broadcasting ministry and National Film Development Corporation.

In the interview, published during the November 20-28 festival, he also said he is not participating as an ambassador of Israel but an artist willing to experience different cultures.

"If I wanted to represent Israel, I would have gotten into diplomacy," said the director often viewed as anti-establishment in his country.

Unusual for a man in showbiz, Lapid mostly stays away from social media platforms and shuns the media glare.

Based in France, Lapid is the son of writer Haim Lapid and film editor Era Lapid.

**Continued on Page 9**

## 3-day drive to make UP cleaner, greener

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

To turn Uttar Pradesh into a cleaner and greener state, as envisioned by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a massive cleanliness drive under the 'Swachh Bharat Mission Urban'

will be organised throughout the state covering 750 civic bodies in 75 districts for 75 hours from December 1.

Under the sanitation campaign, there is a plan to convert garbage vulnerable points, the 'sensitive sites' in terms of garbage collection in about 750 civic bodies of the state, into clean places. In order to speed up this campaign, instructions have been issued by the State Mission Directorate, Swachh Bharat Mission, to all the municipal commissioners through a let-

ter to fulfill the objective by undertaking the campaign within the time limit. These places will also be beautified after cleaning while many will be developed as selfie points.

The letter titled 'Pratibadhh 75 districts, 75 hours, 750 civic bodies' gives out all the guidelines related to the campaign. To mark the last month as India celebrates 75 years of independence, the campaign is being started on December 1 by the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).

The campaign also aims at creating awareness about cleanliness among people. For this, necessary resources and work will have to be ensured by identifying the garbage vulnerable points. The officials have also been instructed to ensure that the closing ceremony of the

campaign is organised under the guidance and chairmanship of the district magistrates.

Under the campaign, all the urban bodies are expected to re-mark all the garbage vulnerable points in their respective areas. From December 1 to 3, such sites will be eliminated permanently. The garbage received from the eliminated garbage vulnerable points will be segregated as wet and dry waste, which will further be disposed and treated.

The officials have also been instructed to maintain a record of the collections such as plastic, bottle and glass wastes after assessment.

After the campaign, high-quality and geo-tagged photos of garbage vulnerable points (before and after elimination)

**Continued on Page 9**

## Adani wins bid to redevelop largest slum Dharavi

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

The Adani Group has emerged as the highest bidder for the redevelopment of Dharavi, one of the world's largest slum.

The Adani group's bid of ₹5,069 crore for the 259-hectare Dharavi Redevelopment Project was much higher than second-placed DLF's quote of ₹2,025 crore, said chief executive officer of the project SVR Srinivas.

"We will now be sending the details to the Government, which will consider and give final approval," Srinivas told PTI, adding that the Eknath Shinde Government will approve it in a couple of weeks.

The bid is for the entire

₹20,000-crore project, and the total timeline for the project is seven years to rehabilitate the 6.5 lakh slum dwellers who are spread over a 2.5 sqkm area right now, he said. The project, which will help the winning bidder to book high revenues by selling lakhs of square feet of residential and commercial space in central Mumbai, has been in limbo for many years now because of its complexities.

Eight bidders, including entities from South Korea and the UAE, had attended a pre-bid meeting held in October and three of them actually bid for the project. Naman Group, a city-based developer, was the third whose bid did not qualify.

**Continued on Page 9**

## Vistara to merge into AI; Singapore Airlines to buy 25.1% stake

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Tata group on Tuesday announced the merger of Vistara with Air India under a deal wherein Singapore Airlines will also acquire a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India, marking a major consolidation in India's fast-growing aviation space.

The deal, which will make Air India the country's largest international carrier and second-largest domestic carrier, is expected to be completed by March 2024, subject to regulatory approvals.

Currently, Tata Group owns a 51 per cent stake in Vistara and the rest is with

Singapore Airlines (SIA). Singapore Airlines (SIA) said it would be investing ₹2,058.5 crore in Air India as part of the merger transaction.

Vistara and Air India are the country's second and third largest domestic carriers, respectively. Together, their market share stood at 18.3 per cent in October.

Tata Group has not provided any details about the merged entity such as those pertaining to branding, uniforms and frequent flyer programmes, although it seems likely that Vistara as a brand name might not exist in the long run.

**Continued on Page 9**

## World Cup turns Qatar into melting pot of world affairs

**AP ■ LONDON**

Soccer — or football, to most of the global billions watching the World Cup this month — is not human society itself, with all its thorny issues. But at times, the game is a reflection of the entire planet — of nations, their disputes, their aspirations and those of a multitude of minority communi-

ties. In early November, just weeks before the most heavily scrutinized World Cup in the tournament's history kicked off in Qatar, top FIFA officials sent a letter urging teams to "let football take centre stage."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino followed this up on the eve of the opening match with a one-hour diatribe against all who had criticised the host nation's human rights record, the conditions that led to thousands of migrant workers dying building the nation's glittering new stadiums and its stance on LGBTQ issues.

Fans from around the world have a different idea of what that "centre stage" should show. Many, but not all, Iranians attending matches in Qatar have wanted to express their support for protesters at home. And they've wanted the team to do the same.

Other political issues have been erupting fast and furious on a near-daily basis. And outside the World Cup bubble, the world itself has kept turning in some of its most fractious events, both unsurprising and surprising: Russia's war in Ukraine, mass shootings in the United States and the sudden eruption of protests in China.

Of the sporting spirit, George Orwell wrote: "I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield."

His point stands. Russia was banned from this World Cup after hosting the previous one in 2018, mirroring the isolation the country and its leaders face for the Ukraine invasion. Ukraine itself fell at the last hurdle for qualification, with fans at home likely more concerned about bombardment and survival amid electricity and water shortages than watching matches in Qatar.

Decades of enmity between

the United States and Iran have been seeping into the buildup before the two nations play a critical World Cup match Tuesday that could see one of the countries progress to the knockout stages. The U.S. Soccer Federation briefly displayed Iran's national flag on social media without the emblem of the Islamic Republic, saying the move supported protesters inside Iran. The Tehran government reacted by accusing America of removing the name of God from its national flag.

The century-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including Israel's occupation of lands Palestinians want for a future state, has also featured in Qatar, though neither national team is competing.

The Palestinian flag and pro-Palestinian fans have been

prominent, while Israeli media and fans have been less welcome in an Arab nation that has not normalized relations with Israel.

As Morocco completed a famous victory over the highly-ranked stars of Belgium Sunday, unrest broke out in Belgian cities and also in the Netherlands, where the immigrant North African community has long been marginalized.

"Those are not fans; they are rioters. Moroccan fans are there to celebrate," the mayor of Brussels said.

LGBTQ rights have been at the fore in Qatar as well, with the country under the microscope for its human rights record and laws criminalising homosexuality.

Germany's players covered their mouths for the team

photo before their opening match to protest against FIFA following the governing body's clampdown on the "One Love" armband. Sporting rainbow colors, a symbol of LGBTQ rights, has been a key contentious issue. Some European officials have brought those colors to the stands.

Qatari soccer fans responded to Germany's protest by holding pictures of former Germany playmaker Mesut Özil while covering their mouths. This referenced Özil, a German-born descendant of Turkish immigrants, quitting the national team after becoming a target of racist abuse and a scapegoat for Germany's early World Cup exit in 2018.

"I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose," Özil said at the time.



# Dalit activist shot dead

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, a 30-year-old Dalit activist was shot dead allegedly on the instructions of a local history-sheeter who believed that the activist was a threat to his illegal activities in Thakurdwara



## NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Dhamraj to Dhamraj Sonkar S/o Mahangul for future purpose. Add-Aureni Kaushambi.

## NOTICE

I have change my name from Mukim, to Mukim Ahmad, S/o, Mufeed Ahmad, R/o, E-309, K.D.A. Colony Deheli Sujampur Kanpur Nagar.

## NOTICE

I, Raghvendra Pratap Singh S/o Shri Hawaldar Singh have lost Original Lease deed of Plot No 39 Ganga Nagar Society dated 21/01/1988 in the name of Deepchand Dixit S/o Late Surendra Dixit. Misuse by another person will be illegal.

## NOTICE

I, Raghvendra Pratap Singh S/o Shri Hawaldar Singh, have lost Original Lease deed of Plot No 128 Ganga Nagar Society dated 31/07/1981 in the name of Smt Shashikant Sahay W/o Shri Mahendra Sahay. Misuse by another person will be illegal.

## NOTICE

I, Raghvendra Pratap Singh S/o Shri Hawaldar Singh have lost Original Lease deed of Plot No 79 Ganga Nagar Society dated 21/10/1987 in the name of Vishan Singh S/o Late Kishan Bahadur. Misuse by another person will be illegal.

## NOTICE

I, Army No:JC-704142-F, SUB/AA Umesh Kumar Pandey, R/o-DT-2217 Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand, in my service record Wife's name wrongly mentioned as LELEVATHI PANDEY while her true name is LILAWATI PANDEY. Please mention her true name in service records.

## NOTICE

I, Army No:JC-704142-F, SUB/AA Umesh Kumar Pandey, R/o-DT-2217 Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand in my service record Daughter's name wrongly mentioned as DIVYA while her true name is DIVYA KUMARI PANDEY. Please mention her true name in service records.

## NOTICE

I, Army No:JC-704142-F, SUB/AA Umesh Kumar Pandey, R/o-DT-2217 Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand, in my service record Daughter's name wrongly mentioned as DEPALI while her true name is DEEPAI PANDEY. Please mention her true name in service records.

## NOTICE

I, Hawaldar Asdullah Ansari Walig S/o Usman Ansari, Vill. & Post Nauli Distt. Ghazipur UP. The DOB my wife Mushrrat Jahan is wrongly mentioned in my service record (Army No. 2691104W) as 7.1.1984 instead of correct DOB as 01.01.1984. kindly register it.

## NOTICE

I, Army No:JC-704142-F, SUB/AA Umesh Kumar Pandey, R/o-DT-2217 Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand, in my service record Daughter's name wrongly mentioned as KHUSHI PANDEY while her true name is KUMARI KHUSHI PANDEY. Please mention her true name in service records.

area of Moradabad district.

SSP (Moradabad) Hemraj Meena, said: "Vishal Valmiki was shot by one Bilal on the instructions of Atul Sharma Pandit, a history-sheeter, and his aide Golu. An FIR has been registered on the complaint of the victim's family. Five teams have been tasked with arresting the accused."

Atul Sharma, Bilal and Golu have been booked under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 120b (criminal conspiracy) along with the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Vishal's father Mukesh Valmiki said: "My son had recently joined a right-wing outfit and his popularity was increasing among the youngsters of all communities. Sharma could not accept the fact that a Dalit was becoming popular." Sanitation workers in the area decided to go on a strike from Tuesday itself in protest against the incident.

Circle Officer of Thakurdwara Arpit Kapoor, who is investigating the case, said: "The situation here is tense. All the accused named in the case are history-sheeters and we are trying to arrest them at the earliest."

Meanwhile, a man was

beaten to death while his brother sustained injuries at Gorai village in Aligarh allegedly over a dispute between him and the village pradhan following allegations of poor-quality construction work, the police said.

A case was registered against the attackers for murder and rioting.

The deceased, Devjit Singh (32), and his brother were assaulted by a group of eight men, allegedly including the village pradhan and his son wielding sticks and sharp-edged weapons, police said.

The victim's family alleged that the issue stemmed from RTI applications filed by the slain activist.

According to DSP (Iglas tehsil, Aligarh) Raghavendra Singh, the incident happened in a field on Saturday evening. The victim's brother is currently stable. He had sustained injuries in the arm.

The police said that there was a conflict between the two parties over some issues, including construction of a pond. The DSP said the case was being investigated. Regarding allegations that the family had filed complaints earlier regarding threats, the DSP said no such complaint had been found so far.

# My workers will provide security to me: Shivpal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the security of Pragatisheel Samaj Party (Lohia) president Shivpal Yadav was downgraded by the Uttar Pradesh government, he said his workers would now provide him security.

Shivpal's security was downgraded on Monday from 'Z' to 'Y' category, days after he mended fences with nephew Akhilesh Yadav.

"This was expected of the BJP. Now, my workers and people will provide me security. Dimple Yadav's victory and BJP candidate's loss in Mainpuri will now be even bigger," Shivpal said.

Earlier, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had termed the move "objectionable". He had also hit out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for likening his uncle to a 'pendulum' and a 'football'.

In a tweet in Hindi, Akhilesh said: "It is objectionable to reduce the security cover of Shivpal Singh Yadav. It is also to be noted that a pendulum is a symbol of movement of time and indicates the change of time for everyone. It



says that there is nothing stable on which one could be proud of."

"He has become something like a pendulum, or a football that gets kicked by both teams. We saw how he was insulted on stage last time through denial of a chair, and he had to sit on the arm of a chair," Adityanath had said at an election rally in bypoll-bound Mainpuri.

The SP made Shivpal its star campaigner for the Mainpuri bypoll. The development came after Akhilesh and Shivpal buried the hatchet and joined hands to campaign for Mainpuri as a tribute to Mulayam Singh Yadav.

# 4 killed in separate mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Four people were killed in as many road mishaps in different parts of the city in the last 24 hours. In Itaunja police station area, the motorcycle of a 41-year-old man, identified as Rakesh Gautam of Barabanki, was hit by a speeding unidentified vehicle in Mahogawan locality on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. Rakesh was going towards Kumarawan village for some work. He suffered head injuries and died on the spot.

In Bakshi-Ka-Talab police station area, a 50-year-old man, identified as Shanker Gupta of Navikot Nandna village, died after an unidentified speeding vehicle knocked the bike he was riding pillion at Chandrika Devi temple turning point around 10:50 pm on Monday. He was returning home from a 'Tilak' ceremony and was accompanying his relative Sanjay Gupta. He died on the spot.

In Chinhat, a 33-year-old truck driver was killed when a speeding truck mowed him down on Monday night. Reports said Rajesh of Hathras was going towards Barabanki and stopped on the way.

When he bent down to check the air pressure, another

speeding truck knocked the stationary vehicle and Rajesh was crushed between both the trucks. He died on the spot. His brother Prashant said police rushed Rajesh to RML hospital where he was pronounced dead.

In another incident, a 19-year-old truck cleaner was killed when he was checking the snag in the vehicle in Bakshi-Ka-Talab police station area on Tuesday morning. The youth was identified as Mohammed Asir of Moradabad. He was with his father Asim when the truck developed a snag near Fauji Dhaba in the area. Asir got down to check the snag when a speeding truck knocked the stationary vehicle from behind. Asir was crushed under the wheels of his own truck and died on the spot. He was rushed to a nearby government hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

## WOMAN FOUND HANGING

A woman was found hanging at her house in Banthra on Tuesday morning. Police suspect that torture over dowry demand or family discord made the woman take the extreme step. However, police said they were yet to get a complaint. As per reports,

Swati (24) of Pipahari village was all alone in the house as her family members, including husband Kuldeep, had gone to the house of a relative for a wedding function. On Tuesday morning, Kuldeep and others family members found her hanging when they returned home. She was found hanging from the ceiling with a bed-sheet tied around her neck. Her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter was found sleeping in another room. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

Meanwhile, a 28-year-old man was found hanging from a tree inside a farm house, where he worked as the caretaker, in Mall police station area on Tuesday. Reports said the man, identified as Vijay Maurya of Atari village in the area, was found hanging from a mango tree with a rope tied around his neck. No suicide note was recovered though. Police said he committed suicide but failed to explain the reason. The body was sent for autopsy while further probe was underway. His brother Gangaram said he went to the orchard when Vijay did not return home in the morning and found him hanging. He suspected foul play in the death of Vijay Maurya.

# 'Abdul' will mop floor for BJP after Dec 8: Azam

Rampur (PTI): In a jibe against people leaving his side and joining the ruling party, senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan has said that after the declaration of the results of the Rampur Assembly bypolls, the Muslim community will mop the floor for the BJP.

Referring to the Muslim community, Azam said 'Abdul' is no longer with him and has joined hands with the BJP. So, now when the December 8 results come out, 'Abdul' will mop the floor for the BJP.

He made these comments while addressing an election meeting in the Nalapar area of the Rampur Assembly constituency on Monday night without taking names.

"All the contractors and the rich could not give an account of their property and so they all left. All those who were traitors have left and now only loyalists

are left," he continued.

Recently, people close to Khan, including his media in-charge, Fasahat Ali Khan, alias Shanu joined BJP on Monday with his supporters. Rampur Assembly seat has fallen vacant due to the disqualification of Azam after being sentenced to three years imprisonment in a hate speech case.

Voting will be held on December 5 and the result will be declared on December 8. Samajwadi Party (SP) has nominated Azam's confidant Asim Raja while BJP has fielded Akash Saxena. Targeting people belonging to the Qureshi community being seen on BJP's forums, the former minister alleged, "Those who have 50-50 cases of cow slaughter pending against them are sitting on the BJP's platform today. Where has BJP's love for cows gone?"



Khan also expressed his displeasure at the crowd present and said "What I have not done for you people, but you cheated by defeating our candidate Asim Raja in the Lok Sabha by-election."

The bypoll for Lok Sabha was held earlier this year after Azam had resigned following

his election to the state assembly. "Rampur is going through the worst phase of politics at the moment and is standing at such a point where one mistake of yours will destroy my 50 years of hard work. On December 5, you will have two paths before you. First, elect Asim Raja by giving your

vote and choose the path of progress and prosperity or defeat him and get drowned in darkness. He also cautioned the voters not to get misled, stressing that "A huge conspiracy is going on. You don't know the outcome."

Making an emotional appeal, the former minister said, "What have I not done for you? Don't know how many atrocities I have suffered just for you... Is this my only fault? Can politics be so dirty? The condition is such that I could not prove my innocence in court despite having everything (all evidence). Jail is waiting for me." Reminding that in 1980 there was only a palace and a fort in Rampur, he said that whatever progress has been made in Rampur since then till today is his hard work be it paved roads, streets, parks or factories.

# Mutilated body recovered from railway tracks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Body of a 40-year-old man was recovered from railway tracks at Sahjanpur railway level crossing in Banthra on Tuesday morning. Police said the man died after he fell down from the moving train. Reports said some commuters spotted the mutilated body and informed police. A platform ticket issued from the Kanpur railway station was recovered.

The police tried to ascertain the identity of the deceased but villagers could not identify him. Police sent

the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

## ARRESTED

A team of Indira Nagar police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a person on the charges of selling vehicles after preparing forged contract deeds. The accused, identified as Harish Sharma of Rae Bareilly, had sold the car of a man and hidden it in the forest cover in Indira Nagar. He committed the crime allegedly in cahoots with his aide, who was identified as Manish.

# Two youths held with fake Indian, Nepalese currencies, press IDs

Bahraich (PTI): A joint team of the Uttar Pradesh Police's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) posted at the India-Nepal border and officers from the local police station seized fake Indian currency worth Rs 3.5 lakh and arrested two youths, an official said.

Another Rs 60,000 in Indian tender and Rs 4.4 lakh in fake Nepalese rupee, a country-made pistol, ammunition and identity cards of media outlets from the duo were also seized from them, he said. One of the youths arrested is a known criminal, who had used

three different identities, the official said.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Ashok Kumar on Tuesday said the police received a tip-off about smuggling of fake Indian and Nepalese currencies. It was also learnt that the criminal activities were carried out in the garb of journalism.

Acting on the tip-off, a joint team of the ATS and the police searched two persons in Murtiha police station limits and seized Rs 3.5 lakh in fake Indian currency, Rs 4.4 lakh in fake Nepalese rupee, Rs 60,000

in Indian tender, a country-made pistol, ammunition, three identity cards of media outlets, four mobile phones and a motorcycle. The two men were also arrested. One of the arrested accused has been identified as Pritam Singh alias Sonu alias Doctor Singh, son of Arun Singh alias Roda Singh alias Gurbux Singh, of Lakhimpur Kheri district. The other accused is Gonda district native Awadhesh Tiwari. Kumar said the ATS and the police are looking into the contacts of the arrested accused.

# Woman locks minor stepdaughter in box, booked for attempt to murder

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

A woman has been booked for allegedly locking her nine-year-old stepdaughter in a box, police said in Muzaffarnagar on Tuesday. A case under section 307 (attempt to murder) of the

Indian Penal Code has been registered against the accused Shilpi, they said. According to police, the accused is pregnant and has not yet been arrested. Radhika was reported missing on Monday evening. When police rushed to her house, they found her

inside a box in an unconscious condition, Deputy Superintendent of Police Ayush Vikram Singh said. The girl later told police that her stepmother had locked her inside the box, he said. The minor's father, Sonu Sharma married Shilpi after

getting a divorce from his first wife. Radhika was living with them, police said.

Meanwhile in Gonda, a five-year-old boy was allegedly sodomised by a teenager. The incident took place at a village on Monday when the boy was taken to the field by

the 15-year-old suspect. The teenager has been detained and a probe is on, Katra Bazar police station inspector Chitwan Kumar said.

The boy has been sent for the medical examination and an FIR has been lodged, the official said.

## CITYBRIEFS

### COFAS-2020

The four-day International Computer Olympiad, 'Cofas-2022', organised by City Montessori School, Rajendra Nagar Campus I, concluded at the Kanpur Road auditorium on Tuesday.

Participating students and winners of various competitions from Nepal, Thailand and various states of India were given away shields, medals and certificates at the closing-cum-prize distribution ceremony. The overall championship was bagged by Sunbeam English School (Bhagwanpur, Varanasi) while the runners-up trophy went to BCM Arya Model Senior Secondary School (Ludhiana).

### QUIZ CONTEST



A quiz competition was organised by the department of physics, Navyug Girls' Degree College, on general physics. Students of BSc participated in the contest. After four rounds, Bhavya Shukla, Pooja Gupta & Anusha Singh grabbed the first prize while Anisha Pandey, Anushka Tiwari & Shaheen grabbed the second. The third prize went to Divyanshi, Yashi & Khushi Bajpai.



A presentation called 'Shradha Ardhra' was organised under auspices of Nikhil Bharat Bongol Sahitya Sammelan, Lucknow on November 27.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, CUTTACK**

No. Tender Online RWC -31/22 Letter No.-4837 Date :- 23.11.2022

**e-Procurement NOTICE**

1. Name of the work : Building Work

2. Class of Contractor : A Class contractor

3. Time for Completion : As specified in the Column-5 of the Annexure.

4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached

5. Other Details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From To	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack	Tender Online RWC - 31/22	02.12.2022 at 11.30 A.M.	20.12.2022 to 05.00 P.M.	20.12.2022 up to 01.00 P.M.	21.12.2022 at 11.30 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the website <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a>					Will be intimated later

OIPR: 2509711/0039/2223

**Sd/-Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Cuttack**



# Yogi hits out at Cong, AAP in poll-bound Gujarat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress, calling it a ‘barrier’ to the country’s development. Besides, taking a jibe at Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Yogi said that the ‘namoona’ from Delhi would use his ‘jhaadu’ (AAP election symbol) to ‘sweep away’ everything the country has.

Holding three rallies in Mahisagar, Anand and Vadodara districts in the poll-bound Gujarat on Tuesday, Yogi said: “While the BJP provides a guarantee of security, prosperity, progress, and public welfare, Congress acts as a barrier to the nation’s prosperity.”

Hitting out at the Congress further, Yogi said, “Before 2014, the Congress had spread mistrust, anarchy, and corruption in the country. People had lost faith in governance and administration. In such a situation, Gujarat, which was always a ‘companion in times of crisis’, gave politics a new identity by sending Narendra Modi to Delhi.”

Criticising previous governments, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister stated that business and religious programmes could not be held in Gujarat 20 years ago, there were riots all around and the youth were unemployed. “However, as soon as the government was formed under Modi’s leadership, Gujarat became a model for the country. The Gujarat model moves on from being riot-free and curfew-free to attaining the dream of a terrorism-free and naxalism-free India,” he added.

He pointed out that India’s global prestige has shot up under Modi’s leadership and that the country has defeated the UK, which ruled India for nearly 200 years, to become the fifth largest economy, and is also leading G20, the group of 20 most powerful nations that control 80 per cent of the world’s resources.

Attacking the Congress for giving shelter to rioters, Yogi stated, “The BJP views 135 crore people as a family whereas the Congress is concerned about the uplift of its own family alone.”

Yogi remarked: “The water of Narmada was taken to every house and village. If the BJP government comes back to power in Gujarat, a free health insurance cover of Rs 10 lakh will be available. The double-engine government is working in your interest,” Yogi remarked.

Invoking Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the Umreth assembly of Anand, Yogi



## ...holds grand roadshow in Godhra

**Lucknow (PNS):** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a grand roadshow in Godhra on Tuesday to support BJP candidate Chandra Singh Raul. Massive gathering of people showed up for the roadshow while the song “Mandir ab banne laga hai, bhagwa rang sajne laga hai” played throughout the event.

The UP CM was greeted at every step throughout the roadshow with slogans, saffron flowers, balloons and caps. At the outset, Yogi paid floral tributes to the statue of ‘Iron Man’ Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

said, “Anand was the ‘karmbhoomi’ of Sardar Patel. He is the architect of present-day India. It was a challenge to merge 563 princely states into the Republic of India. Sardar Patel was the man who took the responsibility and successfully executed it. The nawabs wanted either independence or accession to Pakistan.”

Yogi continued: “When Sardar Patel took action, the Nawab of Junagadh fled so quickly that he forgot his wife and child in this location. Junagadh and Hyderabad are now a part of a unified India, which is the result of his great resolve. The strong resolve of Sardar Patel forced the

Yogi greeted people with ‘Jai Shri Ram’ and said that the holy Shaktipeeth Pavagadh in the district is a symbol of the faith of Sanatan Hindu dharma.

Yogi extended gratitude to the people of Godhra for the massive roadshow. He said Gujarat has moved forward from adverse circumstances and has given leadership to the country.

“During the Congress regime, terror attacks used to take place every day. In Godhra ‘Ram bhakts’ were sacrificed 20 years ago. But today, everyone is safe in Gujarat. The Ram tem-

ple in Ayodhya respects the feelings of the ‘Ram bhakts’ of Godhra, which is a land of transformation. The BJP’s win is not enough, the victory must be unique,” Yogi said. The crowd, which consisted of workers and locals, including women, stood on rooftops, atop vehicles and walls to catch a glimpse of Yogi. They were seen capturing every moment of the roadshow through their mobile phone cameras. Yogi did not disappoint them either and greeted everyone with a smile. The local police had a tough time controlling the enthusiastic crowd.

stage instead of the national anthem. This is a party that insults soldiers and martyrs,” Yogi further said that the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are a threat to security.

“In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress has two MLAs while the AAP has none. At the time of independence, Babu had mentioned the Congress’s ‘visarjan’. Time has come to carry it out. The BJP’s arrival is quite evident as the Congress’s brother-sister duo are nowhere to be seen. Had there been any possibilities for the Congress, the brother-sister duo would be seen offering prayers in temples just as they offer ‘namaz,’” he added.

# Property worth ₹130 cr of former SP MLA seized

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Property worth around Rs 130 crore of former Samajwadi Party MLA Deep Narayan Singh Yadav was seized under the Gangsters Act in Jhansi district on Monday. Yadav is considered close to SP president Akhilesh Yadav.

The former MLA has been in prison for the last two months on the charges of conspiring to release notorious criminal Lekhranj Singh Yadav from jail. According to police, more than 50 cases have been filed against him.

Meanwhile, immovable property worth Rs 10.92 crore of former MLA Vijay Mishra was attached by police on Tuesday. The action was taken in the Lalganj

## Haji Yakub Qureshi’s son arrested by Meerut police

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Meerut police on Tuesday arrested former minister Haji Yakub Qureshi’s son Firoz. He was being interrogated at the Kharkhoda police station to get details of other absconding accused.

On March 31, a case was registered against Yakub Qureshi’s sons Imran & Firoz and wife

Shamjida at the Kharkhoda police station. It was alleged that the business of packaging and processing was going on illegally in the meat factory at Alipur Kharkhoda. Shamjida is out on bail in this case, while a reward of Rs 25,000 each has been declared on Yakub, Firoz and Imran.

Firoz, who was going to Meerut, was arrested by the police. A case has been registered

against Yakub, Imran, Shamjida, Mohit Tyagi, Faizab and Mujeeb under Gangster Act while an STF team has also been pressed into service to nab the accused.

All the locations were being investigated by the police. Also, preparations were on to book Haji Yakub Qureshi under the National Security Act (NSA) because of his involvement in operating an interstate and even overseas gang.

his son, daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law’s father. The action was taken on the orders of Bhadohi District Magistrate under

the Gangster Act. Many criminal cases are registered against Vijay Mishra who is in jail.

Meanwhile, five people were

arrested for violating traffic norms as all of them were seen in a viral video riding on a single motorcycle, police said on Tuesday. According to police, a challan of Rs 6,500 was issued against the accused under the Motor Vehicles Act. Police also charged them with disturbing the peace. They were produced in court and sent to jail.

SP (Traffic) Ashoke Kumar said, “A video went viral on social media in which five people were seen riding a motorcycle in Kotwali police station limits. The number plate of the motorcycle was visible. The identification was done and action taken. The motorcycle was impounded and the accused arrested.”

लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण				
(ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001-2008 प्रमाणित संस्था)				
प्राधिकरण भवन, विभिन्न खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-226010 (उ.प्र.)				
दूरभाष : 0522-2302586, वेबसाइट : <a href="http://www.ldaonline.co.in">http://www.ldaonline.co.in</a>				
@LkoDevAuthority @LkoDevAuthority Ida_online				
संख्या: 85/ई-निविदा/मुआ/2022-23 :- निविदा सूचना :- दिनांक: 29.11.2022				
लखनऊ विकास क्षेत्र में निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण या अन्य विकास प्राधिकरणों में पंजीकृत अथवा आवास एवं विकास परिषद में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। कार्य से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत निविदा-नोटिस तथा ड्राफ्ट निविदा-प्रपत्र लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट "http://www.ldaonline.co.in" पर देखा जा सकता है तथा अपलोड किया जा सकता है, जिसमें धरोहर धनराशि, निविदा डालने की तिथि, श्रेणी, कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि एवं निविदा लागत तथा अन्य नियम व शर्तों का उल्लेख है।				
क्र.	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत (₹00 लाख)	अभियंत्रण जोना/मोबाइल नम्बर	ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि
1	प्राधिकरण क्षेत्रान्तर्गत आने वाले विभिन्न पार्कों में मेक इन इण्डिया प्रोग्राम के अंतर्गत अनुपयोगी कार खंभे मेटेडरियल से बने आकर्षक/उपयोगी सैलफी वाइट एवं सितिंग बेयर क्रय किये जाने का कार्य।	8.30	जोन-1 730955111	05.12.2022
2	डाा राम मनोहर लोहिया पार्क, गोमती नगर के मध्य से गुजर रहे नाले पर प्रकाश व्यवस्था का कार्य।	7.83	विद्युतायांत्रिक 9918001535	09.12.2022
निविदाओं के सम्बन्ध में कोई बदलाव अथवा अतिरिक्त सूचना मात्र उपरोक्त वेबसाइट पर ही उपलब्ध कराई जायेगी, अतः इच्छुक निविदादाता नियमित रूप से उक्त वेबसाइट देखते रहें।				
उपरोक्त समस्त कार्यों हेतु सामान्य निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं, जिनके निविदा प्रपत्र वेबसाइट <a href="http://www.ldaonline.co.in">http://www.ldaonline.co.in</a> से डाउनलोड किये जा सकेंगे।				
मुख्य अभियन्ता				

# Agra, Ghaziabad, Prayagraj get police commissioners

**Lucknow (PNS):** In a late-night major reshuffle on Monday, the Uttar Pradesh government appointed new police commissioners for the three newly-formed commissionerates and also transferred the police commissioners of Noida and Varanasi.

The state government appointed Inspector-General of Police, Lucknow Range, Laxmi Singh as the first woman police commissioner of the state, giving her the charge of Noida. She will replace Alok Singh, who has been sent to the Director General of Police (DGP) headquarters in Lucknow.

Varanasi Police Commissioner Satish Ganesh has been posted to the DGP headquarters while Additional Director General of Police (ADG) Ashok Mutha Jain, who was on waiting, has replaced him.

IG Ajay Mishra, who was also on waiting, will be the first police commissioner of Ghaziabad while IG (Prisons) Preetinder Singh will be the police commissioner of Agra.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Bareilly, Ramit Sharma was made the first police commissioner of Prayagraj while Secretary (Home)

Tarun Gaba was shifted as the IG, Lucknow Range.

Ayodhya Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prashant Verma will take over as Bahraich Superintendent of Police (SP), replacing Keshav Kumar, who will take over as additional police commissioner, Agra.

Ghaziabad SSP Muniraj will be the new Ayodhya SSP. Prayagraj SSP Shailesh Pandey will go to Mathura in the same capacity, replacing Abhishek Yadav, who will take over as the SP (Intelligence). Agra SSP Prabhakar Chaudhary was sent to Sitapur as the PAC commandant.

## AKY slams BJP on ‘dynasty’ charge with collage of pictures

**Lucknow (PNS):** Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday tweeted a collage of photographs in response to the Bharatiya Janata Party’s ‘parivarwad’ (dynasty) charge against him. The collage includes photographs of all the BJP leaders whose sons and daughters are also leaders in the party. The response came days ahead of bypoll to the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh, which fell vacant after the death of Samajwadi Party founder and Akhilesh’s father Mulayam Singh Yadav. The Samajwadi Party has chosen Dimple Yadav, wife of Akhilesh Yadav, as its candidate in

Mainpuri while the BJP’s pick is former SP MP Raghuraj Singh Shakya.

The BJP leaders campaigning in Mainpuri have been accusing the Yadav clan of practising dynastic politics. Akhilesh’s Twitter post lists veteran BJP leaders BS Yediyurappa, Rajnath Singh, Raman Singh, Kailash Vijayvargiya and several others whose relatives are holding posts in the party organisation.

He captioned the collage ‘Picture abhi baki hai (The picture is not over yet)’.

“Why are such questions about the dynasty not put to the BJP leaders with equal force?” Akhilesh exclaimed.

## UP tops in vaccination of cattle for Lumpy Virus

**Lucknow (PNS):** In a major achievement, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the first state in the country to have administered 1.58 crore vaccine doses to the cattle of the state for the Lumpy Virus disease in less than two months.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s initiative has also controlled the spread of the virus successfully, setting the state almost free of the virus, even though it continues to claim lives of cattle in different parts of the country.

It is worth mentioning here that Yogi formed Team-9 in the first week of August, taking a serious note of the symptoms of lumpy skin disease in cattle in other states, for effective monitoring of vaccination.

Senior nodal officers of the team visited Bareilly, Moradabad, Meerut, Saharanpur, Agra and Aligarh divisions and issued instructions regarding the vaccination campaign. To make the campaign meaningful, a hybrid model was adopted for online/offline training.

Besides, active cooperation of students of veterinary science colleges and private vaccination workers was taken in the vaccination campaign. First of all, the process of ring vaccination was started in 25 affected districts of Paschimanchal of the state. It was followed by creation of a 320-km-long and 10-km-wide vaccination belt between Pilibhit and Etawah to contain the spread of the virus from Paschimanchal (Western UP) to Central and Eastern UP. A 155-km vaccination belt was also set up from Etawah to Auraiya. Initially, a target of 2 lakh vaccines per day was set, which was increased to 3-4 lakh. The government deployed 2,000 teams and set up 89 dedicated cow medical centres in 26 districts to carry out 1.58 crore vaccinations in the state in less than two months.

Furthermore, priority was given to vaccination of cattle on inter-district and inter-state borders while vaccinating protected cattle in all cow shelters and cowsheds on a large scale. First the districts of Western Uttar Pradesh and then Central, Bundelkhand and finally Eastern Uttar Pradesh were taken up. The focus was on the border blocks of all the districts and the villages around the metropolitan cities.

## KP Maurya takes a dig at Akhilesh-Shivpal reunion



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Tuesday hit out at the Samajwadi Party over Shivpal Yadav’s reunion with his nephew Akhilesh Yadav ahead of the Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll, saying the Yadav family knows best how long the unity would last. The BJP leader claimed that people have made up their minds to end dynastic politics.

Batting for BJP candidate Raghuraj Singh Shakya, Maurya said people have sympathy for Mulayam Singh Yadav but they would not vote for the Samajwadi Party in the bypoll.

The Samajwadi Party has fielded Dimple Yadav, the wife of party chief Akhilesh Yadav, for the December 5 Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll, necessitated following the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav.

To a question whether he felt that the Yadav family would remain united after the elections, Maurya said, “It is their matter. But, it’s clear that the people of Mainpuri have made up their minds to set aside dynastic politics.”

The uncle-nephew relations had gone sour in 2016 with the sacking of Shivpal, who was then a cabinet minister, by Akhilesh Yadav when he was the CM. They parted ways in 2017 when Akhilesh became the SP president. Shivpal formed Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohiya) in 2018.

The duo joined hands before the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. However, the relations went sour again as Shivpal alleged that he was neglected within the party.

Since Shivpal parted ways with the SP, there were

rumours that he might be joining the BJP. Though he denied it every time, the allotment of a bungalow for his party by the BJP government fuelled speculations.

After Mulayam Singh Yadav’s younger daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav, considered close to the Shivpal Singh Yadav camp, joined BJP, speculations went rife about his closeness to the ruling party. Even after the Mainpuri bypoll was declared, some reports suggested that it was Shivpal who ensured a BJP ticket for his one-time close associate Raghuraj Singh Shakya.

The reunion process began after Shivpal’s name was declared by the SP as one of the star campaigners in Mainpuri and the latter asked his party workers to ensure a victory for Dimple Yadav.

It was followed by a meeting of Shivpal with both Akhilesh and Dimple. “There is a feeling of sympathy towards ‘Netaji’ (Mulayam Singh Yadav) and people have paid glowing tributes to him after his demise. However, they are not ready to vote for Akhilesh Yadav’s party or its candidate,” Maurya said in Mainpuri.

Maurya exuded confidence in BJP’s victory in the bypoll with a big margin.

The Mainpuri parliamentary constituency has five assembly segments — Mainpuri, Bhogaon, Kishni, Karhal and Jaswant Nagar. In the 2022 assembly elections, the SP won the Karhal, Kishni and Jaswant Nagar seats while the BJP won Mainpuri and Bhogaon seats.

Akhilesh’s Karhal assembly seat is part of the Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency and so is Jaswant Nagar, which is represented by Shivpal Yadav.



Ministers Arun Kumar and KP Malik at the 101st Foundation Day of Lucknow zoo on Tuesday

Pioneer



# Driver killed in mishap

PNS ■ KANPUR

A mini-truck driver was killed while its cleaner seriously injured when his vehicle rrammed into a stationary truck on Mughal Road in front of Block Development Office in Ghatampur Kotwali police station area on Tuesday morning. Police had to toil for about one hour to rescue the driver badly entangled in the truck's cabin. A truck was standing near Block Development Office on Mughal Road on Tuesday morning. Meanwhile, a speeding mini-truck coming from Moosanagar rrammed into it. Due to powerful collision the cabin of mini-truck got badly damaged and the driver Achchhe Lal (24) of Asothar (Fatehpur) and cleaner Awadhesh of Thariyaon Bilanda (Fatehpur) were trapped. Police rushed to the spot and got the mini-truck separated from the truck with the help of a crane. Thereafter, after toiling for about one hour, police rescued the driver and cleaner trapped in mini-truck's

cabin. They were taken to Ghatampur Community Health Centre (CHC) where Achchhe Lal was declared dead by doctors. Seriously injured Awadhesh was referred to the LLR Hospital, Kanpur. After getting both the damaged vehicles removed from the Mughal Road, the movement of traffic was restored. Inspector Ram Babu Singh said along with restoring the traffic movement the injured cleaner was sent to LLR Hospital in Kanpur.

**M E M O R A N D U M :** General secretary of Pensioners' Forum Anand Awasthi in a memorandum sent to Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Lal Mandaviya, has urged to cancel the transfer of doctors from CGHS dispensaries of Kanpur region in view of their present shortage here. He said there were 10 dispensaries operating under the Additional Director, CGHS, Kanpur, with approved number of doctors as 41. But due to their frequent transfers only nine doctors were left here after

the recent shifting of the lone diabetic expert and psychiatrist. Now with the transfer of four pharmacists it appeared as if there was a move to shut down the CGHS facility in Kanpur, he alleged. He said there were around 90,000 CGHS beneficiaries in Kanpur region, including over 45,000 suffering from diabetes and 5,000 from mental disorder.

The AD (CGHS) be immediately be directed to cancel the transfer of these doctors from Kanpur forthwith, he urged the union minister. Meanwhile, at a meeting of Forum's central executive body all office-bearers expressed concern over shortage of medicos in CGHS dispensaries of Kanpur region and threatened to launch a movement if the decision for their transfers was not withdrawn soon. Rajesh Shukla, Satya Narain, Sahabdin Yadav, Subhash Chandra Bhatia, Vinod Yadav, BP Srivastava, KK Srivastava, BP Bajpai, Vinay Upadhyaya and RP Mishra were present at the meeting.

# Woman consumes poisonous substance

PNS ■ KANPUR

Panic prevailed in Collectorate compound when a woman suddenly swallowed poisonous substance there on Tuesday morning. On getting information about the incident, district magistrate sent the woman to UHM hospital in his car for treatment. After informing the kin of the woman, police have started investigating the matter. Around 11 am on Tuesday when the condition of a woman suddenly deteriorated security personnel rushed to the spot and recovered insecticide from her possession. Panic prevailed in collectorate compound and DM Vishakh G Iyer sent the woman to UHM hospital in his car for treatment.

ACM (VI) Vanya Singh quizzed the woman identified as Rukhsana of Babupurwa. During preliminary investigation it came to light that she had taken Rs 2 lakh from some woman on interest. Despite paying off the entire loan amount, the lender was still insisting on paying more. She



ACM (VI) Vanya Singh rushed to UHM Hospital on Tuesday to inquire about the woman who had suddenly swallowed poisonous substance in Collectorate compound

claimed that she had lodged a complaint with the local police and district administration several times in the past but nothing was done in the matter. The victim said she had attempted

suicide as she was upset with the humiliation by the money-lender. Police have called family members of the woman for details. Meanwhile, Rukhsana is undergoing treatment in the

ICU of UHM Hospital. District Magistrate Vishakh G Iyer directed the hospital administration to provide better treatment to the woman.

## Legal advocacy workshop organised

PNS ■ KANPUR

Noted lawyer Karim Ahmad Siddiqui while addressing the legal advocacy workshop organised jointly by Sakhi Kendra and National Alliance of Women said the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, clearly mentions the state can make special provisions for women and children towards realising the right to equality. He said India had several laws but they were not implemented and to be precise lack of mechanism was the major problem. He said the irony was that women had little knowledge of law and lack of access to courts thus it was necessary not only to enact a law but to provide necessary infrastructural tools with which to access the law. He said Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, was a civil law and while the objective of criminal laws was to punish the offender, a civil law was directed towards providing relief to the aggrieved party; in this case, the woman who faced violence at home. He said the Act recognised domestic violence as a human rights violation and also recognised a woman's right to live in a violence-free home. He said thus this Act recognised a woman's right to residence and her right to obtain protection orders under the law.Siddiqui said relief provided in the Act were meant to provide immediate relief in emergency situations. He said the Act did not make any changes in the existing personal law regime on family matters. He said relief under the Act were in addition to existing laws and had been recognised with the objective of empowering a woman to tide over an emergency situation. He said having obtained relief under the law, a woman can still go for relief under other laws later. He said as per the provisions of the Act any aggrieved woman who was in a domestic relationship with the respondent act of domestic violence by the respondent can seek help.

# Theft mastermind arrested

PNS ■ KANPUR

The mastermind of a theft case carrying a cash reward of Rs 25,000, involved in stealing police uniform, service pistol, cartridges and mobile phone from the out-post, was arrested in Fatehpur. During exchange of fire with the police on Monday midnight, the criminal sustained bullet injury in his limb. The joint police team of Jahanabad SHO Vinod Mishra and SWAT (I) incharge Anirudh Dubey arrested the wanted criminal Taufiq Qureshi of Waris Nagar, Chakeri (Kanpur) after an encounter near Abdulahepur village on Monday midnight. After sustaining bullet injury in his left limb during the exchange of fire the criminal fell unconscious on the floor and



Injured criminal Taufiq Qureshi arrested by Fatehpur police

was admitted to a hospital. About a week ago the

accused had stolen a box from New Azad Nagar out-

post of Vidhnu police station area containing the service pistol, Rs 8,000 cash, live cartridges and uniform of its incharge.

After the incident police had arrested two thieves and sent them to jail while raids were on to arrest the mastermind of the case Taufiq Qureshi who also carried a cash reward of Rs 25,000 on his head. SP Rajesh Kumar Singh visited the spot and said the injured criminal was wanted by Kanpur police.

He said the police team was awarded an additional reward of Rs 20,000. Efforts were on to know criminal history of the arrested accused. Police have recovered a bike of without number, three live cartridges of 9 mm pistol, a .315 bore countrymade pistol and an empty cartridge from his possession, SP said.

PNS ■ KANPUR

Director of National Sugar Institute (NSI) Prof Narendra Mohan while addressing participants of the meditation workshop on Tuesday called upon students to practise meditation regularly as it can bring a significant improvement in their IQ levels. He said as intelligence and creativity gradually improved anxiety simultaneously diminished. He said meditating regularly helped students to improve their creativity and grasping power.

Shailendra Kumar Trivedi, Assistant Professor and Welfare Officer, Heartfulness organisation said this maiden workshop stressed upon making meditation as a part of daily life as it assisted in designing a calming ambience where one can easily feel relaxed and destressed. He said this relaxation of nerve

cells, calming of the mind translated into healing effects on the body. He added that overall benefits of meditation in this stressful and materialistic life were enormous and can help ultimately in building a beautiful society.

Dr Archita Khaitan, Kanpur zonal incharge of Heartfulness organisation, made a presentation about the salient features of the book which offered nine principles which were considered important references for parents, parents-to-be, grandparents and caregivers to create fulfilling and happy lives. She said meditation can be generally defined as mind and body techniques intended to bring about a heightened state of awareness and focused attention.

She said depending upon type of meditation these heightened states were aimed at

creating changes in consciousness that led to outcomes, including deep relaxation, reduced stress, a calm mind, insight into nature of reality, liberation from suffering, awakening physical and spiritual energies and communing with God, the universe and nature. She said there were hundreds of types of meditation which had been practised for thousands of years in cultures all over the world.

Dr Khaitan said meditative practices were part of every major religion, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism. She said to help one to find the type of meditation that's right for one a closer look had to be taken at these nine popular styles including- mindfulness, Vipassana, Metta, Mantra meditation, transcendental meditation, visualisation and gratitude meditation.

# 3 killed in road mishap

PNS ■ VARANASI

In a major road mishap, three were killed when a speeding truck collided with a two-wheeler, on which they were riding, head on in early morning on Tuesday. The police sent bodies for postmortem examination and took the truck driver into their custody along with the ill-fated heavy vehicle. According to the information, one Manju Devi (40) along with one of her relatives Vijay

and his wife Shanti Devi, all of the residents of Saliwahanpur village under Badagaon police station was going to take welfare of her uncle in her maternal house in Bhairav Talab, Rohaniya by moped early Tuesday morning around 6 am. Vijay was driving the two-wheeler. It was said that when they were passing through Panchkoshi Marg under Jans police station and Vijay took over an autorickshaw near

Brahm Baba Mandir, moped collided with a speeding truck, coming from Jansa side, head on. Vijay died on the spot.

Seeing this, the local villagers rushed to the spot and also informed the police about this. On being informed, the police reached the site and rushed the injured to the district government hospital where Manju and Shanti succumbed to their serious injuries.

PNS ■ KANPUR

Member, Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, State Advisory Committee, Social Welfare Department, Uttar Pradesh, Ravi Shankar Havelkar while talking to presspersons at Circuit House on Tuesday after his tour to the district said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were

materialising the dreams of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. He said all projects and welfare schemes were majorly for Dalits and people from marginalised sections of the society. He said objective of the government is to reach the last person at the grass-roots level and ensure emancipation and social justice.

He said the scheme had been renamed and in future

Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana will be known as Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) so that the fate of the marginalised people can be improved.

He said the Uttar Pradesh government is keen to ensure they provide better opportunities to the Dalits and weaker sections to become entrepreneurs and industrialists. He

said leather clusters through various promotional schemes will soon be provided the facility of loans. He said students belonging to the SC and ST will be provided free coachings and free hostel facilities and the government was making every effort for decentralisation.

He said Dr Ambedkar Memorial was coming up in Lucknow and crores of rupees

had been funded for the project. He said a statue over 30 feet will be erected and an auditorium of 700 seating capacity was also coming up along with library and museum. He said for ST poor the government was providing Rs 1 lakh for marriage.

He earlier visited areas like Rambag, Jhakarkati, Juhi and several other slum areas of the city.

## Startup showcase held

PNS ■ KANPUR

Startups mentored under the Social Innovation Lab by Citi, a collaborative initiative among Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, Citi and T-Hub, presented their disruptive AgriTech, HealthTech and FinTech solutions to over 100 industry stakeholders at a startup showcase held in New Delhi, in a bid to accelerate their social sustainable development solutions to the market.More than 30 business discussions and over 20 investment discussions had been initiated as a result of the first "Social Innovation Lab Startup Showcase", attended by prominent corporate and government stakeholders, angel investors and venture capitalists. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, Founder and Executive Chairman, Info Edge (Naukri.com) who was the chief guest, said he was overwhelmed by the quality of the startups at the Social Innovation Lab - Startups Showcase. He added the interactions with startups and IIT Kanpur and Citi teams were enriching and wish them all success in this event and in future.

Prof Abhay Karandikar, Director IIT Kanpur, said Citi India, IIT Kanpur and T-Hub selected 29 social impact startups in healthcare, agriculture, finance domains under the Social Innovation Lab by Citi. He said the programme had supported this stellar cohort through their product development journey and accessing market. He said during the programme period startups

raised more than INR 60 cr from private investors and INR 6 cr from government and public grants approximately. He said it was indicative of the quality mentoring and support offered under the programme.

The startups presented their indigenous disruptive technologies catering to critical contemporary challenges in agriculture, healthcare and finance to the attendees. These investments were over and above the INR 3.5 cr that the 29 startups received after they were selected by Citi India, IIT Kanpur and T-Hub through a rigorous selection process from over 300 applications towards Social Innovation Lab by Citi, which was launched on December 6, 2021, and this consisted of INR 10 lakh kick-off grants for each of the 23 early-stage startups and INR 20 lakh for each of the six growth-stage startups.Srinivas Rao Mahankali (MSR), CEO, T-Hub, addressing the session said partnership with Citi and IIT Kanpur will be a platform to showcase the talent and growing network of tech innovators and capital resources to collaborate for sustainable businesses. He said over the years T-Hub's robust vision had enabled multiple startups, corporates and investors to get together for mutual benefits. He said the partnership with Citi was one of such milestones that will repeat history of empowering the innovation ecosystem, solving an industry challenge with tech solutions and this time making the fintech ecosystem in the country stronger.

# SP opposes Nagar Nigam move

PNS ■ VARANASI

A group of SP corporators under the leadership of outgoing city chief of Samajwadi Party (SP) Vishnu Sharma met the Nagar Swasthya Adhikari (city health officer) Dr NP Singh at Nagar Nigam here on Tuesday and submitted a memorandum to the latter. During their meeting with Dr Singh, SP leaders strongly objected to the decision of Nagar Nigam to impose heavy fines on the private companies in the name of garbage collection. They said that the building owners of the city have been paying house and sewer taxes to the Nagar Nigam but even after that, they are being deprived of the basic facilities.

The SP leaders said that due to lack of employees, the streets are not being cleaned



SP workers submitting memorandum to Nagar Nigam officer in Varanasi on Tuesday.

properly and even in the name of door-to-door garbage collection, the employees are only busy in recovery. They said that first the Nagar Nigam should increase the staff and provide resource facilities, only then decide about the imposition of fine. Vishnu Sharma said that according to the population of the city, there should be 11,000

safai employees but only 700 employees are there in the Nagar Nigam.

SP leader claimed that during their meeting, Nagar Swasthya Adhikari accepted that there are not sufficient safai employees as per the population but Nagar Nigam is trying to increase the number of employees in the Health

under Operation Sadbhavna by the Indian Army.

On one hand, Kashi Tamil Sangamam is being organised in Kashi while on the other hand, the team of 25 women from Leh-Ladakh visited this cultural capital of the country.

During the tour, these women first took on a visit to Delhi where they met President Draupati Murmu. After this, the group of women reached Lucknow where Governor Anandi Ben Patel welcomed them.

The team reached Varanasi at the last stop of the tour.



Buddhist women from Leh-Ladakh watching Ganga-aarti in Varanasi on Monday.

## March-past, drills mark Annual Sports Day

**Prayagraj (PNS):** Spectacular display of March-past, drills and races marked the Annual Sports and Athletic Meet of Holy Trinity School annexe of Boys' High School and College held on the sprawling lush green field of the school. Badal Chatterjee, former Commissioner of Prayagraj Division was the Chief Guest.

On arrival, the Chief Guest and his better half, S Chatterjee were received by the Principal, DA Luke, Academic Supervisor, CB Luke and Headmistress of HTS, Mrs RS Mandal. The programme commenced with the March Past of the four Houses led by Sports Captain, Vaidik Singh followed by the lighting of the torch. The Sports Captain took the oath on behalf of the athletes. The

Chief Guest took the salute of the marching contingents and declared the Sports Meet open.

A number of drills namely, 'Cling the rings', by Class IV, 'Save nature, save future' by Class V, 'Ebony and Ivory' by Class VII and VIII drew great applause from the audience. The girls from Class IV to VIII performed the drill, 'Express and Impress' to showcase zumba which is a great way to exercise while having fun.

In his brief address, the Chief Guest, emphasised the importance of sports and games and added that the Holy Trinity School was moulding the students in the best possible way.

He praised the discipline and outstanding performances of the students.

## IRAS Day celebrated

**Prayagraj (PNS):** The Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) Day 2022 was celebrated by IRAS officers of North Central Railway (NCR) and Central Organization for Railway Electrification (CORE) on 28.11.2022 at NCR/HQ/Subedarganj/ Prayagraj. A technical seminar was organized by IRAS Prayagraj Chapter during the day. Garrgi Umrao, Dy FA&CAO/G welcomed all IRAS officers. Yogesh Kumar Srivastava/PFA/NCR, delivered the keynote address mentioning the active role played by Accounts

Department during COVID period and stressing upon the motto of our service in three key words :- Propriety ,Proficiency and Productivity.

He also shared interesting anecdotes on the history of Railways and IRAS, and the milestones achieved by IRAS officers since inception of the service, through a power-point presentation. FA&CAO/F&B Shri Hamim Ahmed discussed current year's trend of earnings & expenditure, elaborating on the role and expectations from IRAS officers in compiling accounts correctly, completely and timely.



# PM praised for strengthening old Tamil, Kashi relations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Minister of State (Independent charge) for Excise and Prohibition Nitin Agarwal praised the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is also a parliamentarian of the city, for strengthening the old cultural relations between Tamil and Kashi. He said that the ongoing Kashi Tamil Sangamam is the result of the PM's vision to improve the cultural relations between Tamil Nadu and UP. The Tamil delegations, who are coming to the city, are also visiting Prayagraj and Ayodhya as part of their tour itinerary.

Addressing as the chief guest in the cultural evening programme at Amphi-theatre grounds in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Monday evening, Agarwal also emphasised that the only purpose of the Sangamam is to know and understand the culture of both the states. Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and President of Sri Thyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha GK Vasan also attended the programme as guest of honour. Speaking on the occasion, Vasan congratulated the organisers for the grand event.

Later, a group of talented guest artistes from Tamil Nadu participated in the cultural evening organised at the Kashi Tamil Sangamam by the North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Prayagraj and South Zone Cultural Centre and union ministries of Education and Culture at Amphitheatre grounds. The artistes presented beautiful songs, impressive



MLA Saurabh Srivastava greeting Tamil delegation at Varanasi Junction railway station on Monday night.

Pioneer

dance and drama for the audience.

The cultural evening began with a shehnai recital, which was presented by Ustad Fateh Ali Khan of Kashi. The second programme was performed by BHU's Kumar Sarang who with santoor recital mesmerised the audience.

Then Velu Naachiyar was presented by the artistes from Tamil Nadu and it was a presentation of Indian culture from ancient to modern times. It was followed by Kolattam and Kummil Attam (Kummi) presentations by the artistes from Tamil Nadu and the last performance of the day was Thappattam by artistes from Tamil Nadu led by Karumbayiram.

Besides, a quiz competition was also organised during the day on the theme of Azadi Ka

Amrit Mahotsav followed by a photo exhibition organised by the Central Bureau of Communications (CBC). In the quiz, questions based on the photo exhibitions were asked and the 10 participating winners who answered them correctly were awarded prizes.

Meanwhile, the fifth batch of business delegation from Tamil Nadu arrived in the city to participate in the month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam. The delegation comprising 216 people were accorded a ceremonial welcome on Monday night at Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station. The guests were seen to be at ease and were delighted at the grand reception amidst playing of 'Damru' and showering of flower petals. Local MLA Saurabh Srivastava, district BJP

president Hansraj Vishwakarma and others reached the station to welcome the delegate. Apart from people of Tamil Nadu, the delegation also had people from Puducherry and other adjoining areas.

The members of the delegation were overwhelmed with warm welcome on reaching Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. After offering prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple, the guests were taken on a tour of the temple premises and served food in 'Maa Annapurna Rasoi'. Later on, they also visited other heritage sites of Banaras in and around the temple area, and nearby markets. They also visited Sant Ravidas Ghat on a cruise and attended the Ganga Aarti followed by a visit to other adjoining ghats on Tuesday.

# Seers, officers pray to Maa Ganga for peaceful Magh Mela

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Seers-saints, pilgrims and Officers prayed for fair and peaceful Magh Mela-2023 by worshipping the Ganga on the banks of the Sangam of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati on Monday with ritual chanting. Simultaneously, the preparations were intensified for the Sant Samagam to be held at the bank of Sangam. The setting up of the camps was also started.

Ganga Pujan took place on the banks of the Sangam at 11 a.m. in the presence of saints and officers. Acharya Hari Pandey, Krishna Dutt Tiwari, Bharat Mishra and Utsav performed the worship. After this, Aarti was performed after anointing Ma Ganga. During this, Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, Mela Adhikari Arvind Chauhan performed the aarti. Ma Ganga prayed for a peaceful Magh Mela.

During the worship, Mahant Balbir Giri of Baghambari Math, Swami Vimal Dev, President of All



India Dandi Sanyasi Management Committee, besides Acharyabada as well as pilgrims also worshipped.

After the worship, the Divisional Commissioner said that the preparations for the fair would be completed in time. The work has been expedited. He instructed the officers to

develop infrastructure facilities in the Mela area at a rapid pace. On this occasion, Superintendent of Police (Mela) Aditya Prasad Shukla, SDM Mela Sant Kumar, Ashutosh Kumar Rai, besides many officers and saints were present. Along with Ganga Pujan, the work of setting up

camps for setting up a fair on the sands of Sangam started. The work for leveling has been expedited. Camp offices of PWD, Jal Nigam and other departments have started coming up. Land allotment will start soon. First of all, land will be allotted to the spiritual institutions that settle in groups.

# Spirituality leads us towards humanity: Bhagwat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Rashtriya SwyamSevak Sangh's sanchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat while inaugurating the Aradhana Mahotsav organized at Shankaracharya Ashram said that religion does not exist without spirituality. Spirituality only gives inspiration to take everyone along. All the great men who have been there so far, their name and work may have been different, but their base was spirituality. Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar are also involved in the same.

Dr. Bhagwat said that spiritual life leads us towards

humanity. This gives proper guidance, otherwise the person starts wandering. They understand their intellect, their thoughts and their actions to be the best. There are also those who mislead such people, which should be avoided.

Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati, a member of the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust, is coordinating the Aradhana Mahotsav going on at the Shankaracharya Ashram.

Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat reached Prayagraj Junction on Tuesday morning by Swatantrata Senani Express

to attend the ceremony where DM Sanjay Kumar Khatri and other police-administrative officers were already present. Sangh and BJP office-bearers received RSS chief Bhagwat at the junction. From there, Bhagwat left for the RSS office at Civil Lines. From there, he went to attend the program in the afternoon. Bhagwat will leave for Delhi today.

Rashtriya SwyamSevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat reached Prayagraj on Tuesday to participate in the Aradhana Mahotsav. The Sangh chief inaugurated the Aradhana Mahotsav organized at Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati's

ashram in Alopibagh. During this, many issues were also discussed.

This program was organized on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Brahmalin Shaktacharya Brahmanand Saraswati of Jyotishpeeth.

On this occasion, Mohan Bhagwat said that spirituality takes us towards humanity. Spirituality is very important in life. Human development can happen only through spiritual progress. Spirituality gives the power to take everyone along. He said that without spirituality there is no existence of religion.

# DGP's Commendation Disc for Varanasi police team

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a great achievement, the joint teams of Crime Branch, surveillance cell and Badagaon police which had registered a major breakthrough by gunning down two hardcore criminals in an encounter on November 21 last, will be awarded with the prestigious DGP's Commendation Disc (Platinum, Gold and Silver). The DGP has made a recommendation regarding this. He also recommended the citation to the outgoing Police Commissioner of Varanasi. Meanwhile, the district administration has started magisterial inquiry of the encounter and the inquiry officer has sought evidence and other documents relating to the encounter by December 10.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Devendra Singh Chauhan has made a recommendation for the reward of DGP's Commendation Disc (Platinum, Gold and Silver) to the joint teams of Crime Branch and Badagaon police to

eliminate two notorious criminals in an encounter on November 21. Another criminal Lallan Singh, also brother of slain criminals, had managed to escape from the scene. Both criminals Rajneesh Singh and Manish Singh were brothers and residents of Samastipur in Bihar and had absconded from judicial custody. These all three criminals were wanted by Varanasi. Police Commissionerate for their involvement in making murderous attack on a sub inspector Ajay Yadav, posted at Luxa police station and looting his pistol. The police has announced a cash reward of Rs 1 lakh on the head of absconding criminal Lallan Singh.

The incharge of Badagaon police station Ashwani Kumar Dwivedi will be awarded with commendation disc (Platinum), while the incharge of Crime Branch Anjani Kumar Pandey and constables of surveillance cell Diwakar Vats & Santosh Yadav will be awarded with the commendation disc (Gold). The SIs Brijesh Mishra,

Raj Kumar Pandey, Prashant Pandey & Satyam Yadav, head constables Umesh Singh & Rakesh Singh and constables Suraj Singh, Neeraj Maurya, Virendra Yadav, Shiv Babu, Mrityunjay Singh, Balmukund Maurya, Ashish Singh, Kamal Kumar Prajapati, Mohit Gupta & Sangam Yadav will be awarded with the commendation disc (Silver). The outgoing CP A Ganesh Satish will also be honoured with citation.

Meanwhile, the district administration has started the magisterial inquiry of the encounter and the ADM, Protocol has been nominated as the inquiry officer. The inquiry officer has sought the evidence and documents related to the encounter if any by December 10 by being physically present in his office either oral or in writing.

It is learnt that the sub-inspector Ajay Yadav, posted in Luxa police station, was shot at by three criminals on November 8 last when he was at Darekhu village under Badagaon police station in the

evening. The criminals had also looted his service pistol. The joint teams of Crime Branch and Badagaon police station early on Monday morning gunned down two criminals Rajnish aka Barua and Manish Singh, said to be brothers and residents of Golwa in Samastipur district of Bihar. A criminal Lallan Singh, also brother of slain criminals, had managed to escape from the scene.

In the encounter, a constable of Crime Branch Shiv Babu had also sustained bullet injury and had been admitted to a private hospital where his condition had been stated to be out of danger. The police had also succeeded in recovering the looted pistol of the S-I. The absconding criminal has eight criminal cases in Bihar. The slain criminals had managed to flee away from judicial custody in Bihar and the Bihar police was searching them besides Lallan Singh. These criminals had taken shelter in Varanasi after the Bihar police started searching for them.

# Work boycott by power employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The engineers and employees of the Electricity department on Tuesday remained absent from the official work in favour of their demands and threatened to continue the work boycott programme until their demands are met. Though, they kept the emergency services separate from the agitation.

The engineers and employees boycotted their official work barring emergency services and staged a demonstration at the MD, PVVNL office in Bhikharipur here under the banner of Vidyut Karmachari Sanayukt Sangharsh Samiti, UP.

They blamed the top management of the department for making high-handedness and paying no heed towards their demands pending for a long-time. They blamed the top management of power corporations for forcing the employees to work beyond the service rules, labour rules and human rights rules. They blamed the top management for adopting an attitude of dictatorship and demanded that the management's undemocratic attempts to breach the industrial peace should be stopped immediately.



Power employees staging a protest in Varanasi on Tuesday.

Pioneer

The engineers and employees should be given time bound pay scale of promoted post after the service of 9, 14 and 19 years like it was given earlier, they demanded, adding that the working and retired power employees should be given the facility of cashless treatment. The order regarding the privatisation of the transformer workshop should be withdrawn, they demanded further.

The order regarding the operation of 220 kv, 400 kv and 765 kv power substations through outsourcing should

be cancelled, they demanded, adding that all the orders regarding the privatisation of construction, operation and maintenance of power substations and transmission lines should be cancelled. The old pension system should be restored, they demanded further.

The power sector employees protection act should be implemented for the safety of employees, the UPSEB Limited should be constituted by integrating all the power corporations of the state, the production increment pending since

2020 should be released, the facility of electricity should be given to the employees as per earlier, the pending bonus of regular & contractual basis employees should be paid immediately, the employees on ad-hoc basis should be made regular, the irregularities in pay scale of engineers and employees should be removed and the FIR lodged against the office-bearers of various associations of the department and employees should be withdrawn with the immediate effect as per the agreement with Samiti on April, 2 last.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Three days after the implementation of the Police Commissionerate system, the names of the police commissioners of three police commissionerates, including the newly formed Prayagraj, were finally announced. IG Bareilly Range Ramit Sharma has been appointed as the first Police Commissioner of Prayagraj.

On the other hand, Ajay Mishra has been made the Police Commissioner of Ghaziabad and Dr. Pritinder Singh of Agra. Ramit is an IPS officer of 1999 batch and is counted among the flamboyant officers. He is originally from Hapur. He was posted as IG in Prayagraj four years ago. On the other hand, Dr. Rakesh Singh, posted as IG Range Prayagraj, has been appointed IG of Bareilly Range. Chandraprakash-II has been made IG Range Prayagraj and SSP Prayagraj Shailesh Kumar Pandey has been made SSP Mathura. Ashok Mutha Jain, the new Police Commissioner of Varanasi and Lakshmi Singh,

Police Commissioner of Gautam Budh Nagar has been made in the transfer list released late on Monday night.

**MAN RUN OVER BY TRAIN WHILE TRYING TO HELP DRIVER:** In the noble intention of helping to rescue a tempo stuck at an unmanned railway crossing in Kunda area, a man lost his life after being run over by a train. After getting the news about this, the railway police started the exercise to close the unmanned railway crossing.

The people gathered there came to know that while trying to help the tempo driver, the person lost his life and everyone was taken aback. Then the family members came wailing and weeping. The local police took the body into custody and sent it for postmortem.

45-year-old Rammurat son of Brijlal Patel was a resident of Purva Barai village of Mian of Kunda. Around 10:30 am on Tuesday morning, he saw a tempo stuck at an unmanned railway crossing. The driver was trying very hard to pull out that tempo. Even after all the

efforts, the tempo remained stuck in the railway crossing. Seeing such a situation, Rammurat left the house and reached there to help the tempo driver who was in trouble.

He along with the driver started pushing the tempo stuck on the railway track. An attempt was being made to push the tempo out of the track when Rammurat collided with the Unchahar Express train coming from Rae Bareilly. Due to the tremendous collision, Rammurat died instantaneously. The strange thing is that the helper Rammurat was killed in a train collision while the driver ran away with the tempo. On coming to know, the railway police went to the spot and informed the local police. The GRP police started the exercise of closing the unmanned railway crossing. Rammurat is survived by four sons Deepu Patel, Manilal Patel, Neeraj Patel, Vivek Patel. The condition of son and wife Rani Devi became deplorable by crying.

**IAF OFFICIAL VISITS MANURI AFS:** Air Marshal Vibhas Pande, Air Officer

Commanding-in-Chief, Headquarters Maintenance Command, Indian Air Force and Ruchira Pande, President Air Force Wives Welfare Association (Regional) visited Air Force Station, Manauri from November 27 to 29, 2022. They were received by Air Commodore Kada Srinivasa Rao, Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station Manauri and Mrs K Sujatha Rao, President AFWWA (Local). The Air Marshal was presented a Guard of Honour on his arrival and briefed by the Air Officer Commanding, regarding the role and tasks undertaken by the Depot. The AOC-in-C reviewed the logistics infrastructure of the Depot and addressed air warriors of the station. He motivated the Depot personnel to continue their efforts towards providing techno-logistics support to sustain operations of various fleets including new inductions. Ruchira Pande visited various AFWWA (Local) ventures including AFWWA Play School and interacted with the Sanguinis.

# Three accused of theft arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The Jigna police arrested three accused of theft and recovered Rs 1.58 lakh cash, 3.5 bags of fertiliser, one motorcycle and equipment for breaking the lock on Monday. ASP (Operation) Mahesh Singh Attri said secretary Sadhan Sahkari Samiti Jigna Ram Bihari Singh had lodged a case at police station about the theft of cash Rs 1.58 lakh and four bags of DAP fertiliser from Sadhan Sahkari Samiti Khaira. Taking the matter seriously, the police team was formed under the leadership of CO Lalganj Parmanand Kushwaha and it started the investigation. Following raids police nabbed all the three accused and recovered the total stolen money, the

ASP said. During interrogation the main accused said he was working as a helper at the centre and was well aware about the activities, including the place where cash was kept. They were identified as Shivam Yadav and Mohit Dubey of Khaira village under Jigna police station and Lavkush Yadav of Biraure Teliyani village under Jigna police station. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the accused to jail.

**FAREWELL PARTY:** The series of programmes organised by Gyananda Law College on Constitution Day concluded with a farewell party of the third batch of LLB students on Monday. Extending her best wishes its Director Dr Sheela Singh exhorted the students to

become the voice of the oppressed. She said law practitioners were very important part of judicial system so one should work with ethics. She said the institution was providing placement facilities as well as opportunity for LLM degree. Yogesh Chauhan Chauhan also spoke on the occasion. The programme was jointly conducted by Saurabh Singh and Shubhranshu Dwivedi. Vansh Raj Singh, Gyan Prakash Pathak, Aneesh Prajapati, Rama Singh, Poonam Srivastawa and others were present.

**DEDICATED:** Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel while dedicating the second entry gate of railway station to the people on Monday said

work to make available modern facilities at railway stations Mirzapur as well as Vindhyachal was in process. She said at a cost of Rs 3.24 crore second entry gate having an area of 400 square metres was equipped with ticket counters and other passenger amenities. Addressing the programme Member Rajya Sabha Ram Shakal thanked the minister for fulfilling the long-awaited demand of the people. The minister was accorded a rousing reception by railway staff led by DRM Mohit Chandra. MLA Majhawaan Dr Vinod Bind, BJP leaders Dhanendra Pandey, Manoj Srivastawa, Uttar Maurya, Nirmala Rai, Rajkumari Khatri, Apna Dal leader Lamlotan Bind and others were present.



## Culture wars

Israel's Ambassador's comment can save bilateral ties but can't make *The Kashmir Files* look good

Israel's Ambassador to India Naor Gilon's comments on the movie *The Kashmir Files* must have come as a soothing balm to the filmmaker, the Government, and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders. The movie is part of the culture wars that the saffron establishment has launched. Written and directed by Vivek Agnihotri, its ostensible objective was to show the horrendous treatment meted out to and the ethnic cleansing of the Kashmiris Pandits; the real purpose, however, was to promote the BJP's agenda. Agnihotri was so busy with the propaganda that he didn't even bother to tell the real story: decades of Islamization of the populace in Kashmir, the process which prepared the ground for separatism, jihad, the atrocities on Pandits, leading to their exodus. Anyone watching the film gets the impression that Muslims were a deplorable role in the late 1980s and 1990s; the ones who were depicted were treacherous, cowardly, and cruel. This was the reason that the movie was widely condemned as tendentious, inflammatory, and misleading. This is also the reason that International Film Festival of India 2022 jury head Nadav Lapid said that *The Kashmir Files* was like a "propaganda, vulgar movie, inappropriate for an artistic competitive section" of a prestigious film festival. Jury member Sudipto Sen made it clear that Lapid's remark about *The Kashmir Files* "was completely his personal opinion." He went on to claim that jury members didn't mention anything about their likes or dislikes. Also, they "don't indulge in any kind of political comments."

These words may comfort Agnihotri and his fans, but the damage has been done. Envoy Gilon's intervention can certainly ring-fence the bilateral ties getting scalded from the controversy erupting from a bad film. In a tweet in English "because I wanted our Indian brothers and sisters to be able to understand," he exhorted Lapid, saying that "should be ashamed." In Indian culture, a guest is treated like God. You have abused in the worst way the Indian invitation to chair the panel of judges as well as the trust, respect, and warm hospitality they have bestowed on you, the envoy added. Not unexpectedly, the most misleading and ludicrous reaction came from the BJP's IT Cell boss Amit Malviya. "For the longest time, people even denied the Holocaust and called 'Schindler's List' propaganda, just like some are doing to Kashmir Files." There are some people in the West who deny the Holocaust, but they are in a microscopic minority. Besides, it is a crime against art to compare the classy *Schindler's List* with the crappy *The Kashmir Files*. At the heart of the issue is the Sangh Parivar's ardent desire to have a school of cinema that projects its ideas and ideals. The problem is that any cinema—or, for that matter, any form of art—can flower only if there is freedom of expression. This freedom, among others, the saffronites want to curtail. Hence the calamities like *Kashmir Files*.

### PICTALK



Two-wheeler riders cross on a bamboo bridge constructed over the River Brahmaputra, in Guwahati PTI

## Who are Hindus?

Mohan Bhagwat's definition of a Hindu may not go down well with many

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat has reiterated that all people living in India were by definition Hindus. He further added that anybody who agrees to sing Sanskrit verses in praise of Bharat Mata and is committed to the preservation of the culture of the land is a Hindu. Bhagwat said this while addressing RSS workers before concluding his four-day tour of Bihar. While his stand is welcome in that he sees Hindus in a larger context and does not limit his definition of a Hindu to a religious identity but on the other hand it is an unnecessary classification that is neither required nor warranted. True, Arabs gave this name to all people residing across Hindukush Mountain and it meant a geopolitical identity rather than a religious one but that time has long gone and now a Hindu is a religious identity, legally. Moreover, calling everyone Hindu without their consent is not a bright idea. Labeling anyone as per your convenience is fraught with dangers. Many religious groups would have reservations about being called Hindu. "Hindu" does not denote Indian and that is a fact. There is a difference between 'Hindu' and 'Hindustani', (of course the word Hindustani is now obsolete). And we are not even talking about 'Hindutva' which has political connotations.

Besides, even many Hindus would have objections to somebody branding them and giving them a certificate of being a Hindu. There must be millions of people who call themselves Hindus but cannot recite a single verse in Sanskrit so it is utterly insolent to test people for their identity on the basis of your own preconceived notions. Though his statement deserves merit when he says that identities have been made possible because of the Hindu ethos of acceptance. India has been an assimilating culture and its mighty diversity is living proof of it. Categorizing it and labeling it kills every nuance of Indian culture which made India that is Bharat what it is today - a bouquet of different identities, religions, languages, and creeds living as neighbours and working shoulder to shoulder to build a country that has seen some worst periods in history but with its resilience came over it. The contention that those whose ancestors happened to be Hindus is debatable. There may be people who had the same ancestors but now they have branched out as different groups and we should respect their divergences, no matter what.

# Jointness Mantra: CDS Chauhan, patience

There is an urgent need to have a Joint Procurement Agency without which synchronized capability building of armed forces is next to impossible



ASHOK K MEHTA

Almost 3 months after his appointment as CDS, Gen Anil Chauhan has maintained silence. He travelled to Def-Expo in Gujrat and along with three service Chiefs to NDA Khadakvasla, the cradle of jointness - symbolically a deft move. Initial briefings and scrutiny of feedback from Services on theatrisation are over. Integrated capability development requires a Joint Procurement Agency which was produced by Defence Planning Staff in 1988. The absence of institutional memory causes time and cost overruns.

CDS has become synonymous with integration and theatrisation, the task given originally to late Gen Rawat. Jointness was to be achieved in 3 years but no timeline was set for Integrated Theatre Commands. Not surprisingly, days after Gen Chauhan's appointment as CDS, Air Force Chief, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, in the run-up to IAF Day on 8 October, admitted that inter-service differences had not been reconciled and a discussion was warranted to find a solution to take theatrisation forward. He reiterated the traditional objections of IAF: the paucity of resources, just 30 fighter squadrons today and best case of 35 to 36 squadrons by 2035; 24X7 AD cover required concentration of resources and separating the two (AD Command and Theatre Command) will affect joint strategy.

Gen Rawat, not averse to shooting from the hip, had stirred a hornet's nest by suggesting IAF was an extension of Artillery and essentially a combat support arm. ACM Chaudhari's recent comments included a 'future ready IAF to include space and cyber-space, abridged decision-making chain of command and need for a joint strategy' while each service had its own doctrine. As a precautionary, he added: "IAF is not opposed to integrated theatre commands (theatrisation)". He also advocated the need for an equivalent national security strategy. NSS is a vital document on integrating the whole of government effort that every



President in the US is mandated to produce once in his term. Biden issued an interim NSS in March 2022 and on 12 October, a final one. The Biden strategy talks of 'strategic competition with China, the US's 'most pressing challenge'. "We will effectively compete with PRC which is the only competitor with both the intent and increase the capability to reshape the international order while constraining a dangerous Russia". On India, it says "as it is, the world's largest democracy and a Major Defence Partner, the US, and India will work together bilaterally and multilaterally to support our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific". For a long time India used to define its military challenge as: while Pakistan is the immediate threat, China remains the long-term challenge. That was dramatically reversed by China's incursions in Ladakh. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganisation Act in the US brought about sweeping changes, especially on integration and jointness; almost simultaneously in the UK, the Heseltine reforms introduced the CDS legislation. India is allergic to the idea of a written document outlining national security objectives, their orientation,



GEN RAWAT, NOT AVERSE TO SHOOTING FROM THE HIP, HAD STIRRED A HORNET'S NEST BY SUGGESTING IAF WAS AN EXTENSION OF ARTILLERY AND ESSENTIALLY A COMBAT SUPPORT ARM

and their pursuit. No White Paper has seen the light of day even though India had a CDS for nearly three years. India is defiantly proud of its strategic autonomy and that it is among the world's leading economies with the third largest military.

India feels that not articulating NSS is a strategy, though there is one. The Raksha Mantri's Operational directive with 8 contingencies to three Service Chiefs is considered good enough. A Joint Services Doctrine 2017 on release was found with many loopholes. The Breaking News is that NSS is being scripted by NSA.

The current debate on theatrisation has turned into prioritising structures, strategies, and capability building. Movement on capabilities has been tardy due to insufficient funding and somewhat retarded by Atmanirbharta in absence of quality R&D and a developed military-industrial complex. The IAF is stuck at 30 squadrons for two decades and an RFP for 114 MRCA stagnates for 5 years. Legislation mandating conceptual and structural transformation through the CDS system instead of amendments to Service Acts must become the path to integration. NSA Ajit Doval who heads DPC is working on NSS from an integrated review of defence, for-

eign, and development - in other words, the Strategic and Technology Environment meshed with fiscal allocation.

Gen Chauhan is determined to press on with Eastern Land Command (China); Western Land Command (Pakistan); Air Defence Command; and Maritime Theatre Command. Northern Command dealing with LAC and LOC will be merged later with ELC and WLC. Air Space Command and Cyberspace Command commissioned in 2017 are likely to be operational shortly though there are teething problems with ASC. One other entity will also be operationalized shortly - the Special Operations Division consisting of Battalion Special Forces, Garud, and Marcos squadrons. This will later upgrade to Special Operations Command. Gen Chauhan must invite ACM Chaudhari for talks to smoothen wrinkles in establishing ITCs with as little difference as possible. Political oversight is essential to prevent irreconcilable differences. A periodic review will be useful.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, & founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CORONA SCARE IN CHINA

Sir — Even as the frightening Coronavirus appears to have hit China again, the country's hardline Covid-19 lockdown measures are stoking public frustration, with many growing weary of snap lockdowns, lengthy quarantines, and mass testing campaigns. The anti-lockdown protests on a scale unseen for decades in China, appear to be posing a major challenge for President Xi Jinping, just over a month into his third term in power. ("Protests against Covid lockdowns intensify in China", Nov. 28). Political protests opposing the ruling Communist Party and its leadership are rare in China even as the country witnesses sporadic agitations over various other issues.

But this time around the protesters are braving harshest measures the Chinese government takes to crush such protests. Indeed it shows how jittery the people are of Chinese measures to curb the pandemic. The Chinese people suffered immensely during the pandemic, not only from the deadly virus but also at the hand of Chinese government draconian rules which made life miserable for an ordinary Chinese citizen. Nearly three years since the pandemic originated in China, the world's most populous country is still battling hard to stop transmission of the Coronavirus. Is China a curse upon the world to embrace the deadly virus?

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### YOGA GURU APOLOGIZES

Sir — Yoga Guru Ramdev has expressed his regret and apologized for his reckless comment in poor taste on women. But the controversy shows no sign of abating with public outrage growing. Questions are also being asked why the National Commission of Women and the union minister for women and child welfare, Smriti Irani, usually quick to condemn transgressions when it suits them, have been quiet on Baba Ramdev.

Ramdev was last week addressing a large audience of mostly women at Thane with the wife of deputy chief

### PT USHA RIGHT CHOICE



It will be a proud moment for the Indian Olympic Association PT Usha is set to get IOA chief post then she will be the first woman occupant of

the top job. Usha, a top sprinter in her heyday, has also been elected as one of the eight Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOM) by the Athletes Commission of the IOA, making her an Electoral College member. The legendary PT Usha is set to become the first woman president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as she emerged as the lone candidate for the top post for the December 10 elections.

The 58-year-old Usha, a multiple Asian Games gold medalist and a fourth-place finisher in the 1984 Olympics 400m hurdles final, filed her nomination papers for the top job along with her team for the various posts. Usha's school attracts young talents from across the country. Her contribution to Indian sports is immense.

CK Subramaniam | Chennai

minister Devendra Fadnavis sitting by his side on the stage. While he began by complimenting Amruta Fadnavis and women in general for being graceful and looking good in whatever attire they chose to wear, he crossed the line and added that women looked good even without clothes. His audience, among them the very young and the very old, did not seem to be amused. There were soon howls of protest and civil society in Maharashtra and elsewhere who felt the comment was inappropriate, sexist, and objectionable.

It is indeed unfortunate that a yoga guru who is regarded as epitome of virtue and held in high esteem by the people should have made such a sexist remark. It not only puts him in bad light but also gives a bad name to all the guru's and swami's for no fault of their's as people start doubting their credentials. Yoga guru Ramdev has created an economic empire by teaching yoga and popularising it. The people's trust has helped him make a economic empire which is ahead of many multi national companies. Now if he makes such comments it would not only make people question his credentials but also harm his Patanjali products

which are mostly bought by the people who have lot of reverence for Ramdev Baba. As they say with power comes responsibility and so the yoga guru must not shoot from the hip and be careful with what he says.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### FOB SLAB FALLS IN CHANDRAPUR

Sir — The faulty design and poor maintenance of foot-over bridges in Maharashtra saw a number of them collapsing and leading to fatalities and injuring many people. A FOB collapsed at Balharshah Junction railway station in Chandrapur causing casualties.

The station is in Ballarpur town, 150 km from Nagpur. The incident took place at around 5 pm causing many casualties. The FOB connected to platforms 1 and platform 2 at the station in Central Railway's Nagpur division. As usual compensation. A large number of passengers were using FOB to catch a Pune-bound train when a part of it caved in causing extensive damage.

CK Ramanathan | Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

I am going to make a prediction in writing in front of you all...Note down the prediction that the AAP is going to form government in Gujarat. After 27 years of misgovernance, the citizens of Gujarat will get relief from these people (BJP).

Delhi CM

— Arvind Kejriwal



US President

— Joe Biden

It is with any film...things go wrong, you feel devastated obviously. But you have to live with it and you move on. It is a tricky business and I think Ananya is aware of this.

ssActor

— Chunky Pandey



The way he (Suryakumar Yadav) is playing right now, there was no need to have any conversation with him out in the middle as he was batting so good. But yes, It's great fun to bat alongside him.

Indian opener

— Shubman Gill

All people living in India were by definition Hindus and diversity had flourished in the country because of the cultural ethos of the land.

RSS Chief

— Mohan Bhagwat



FIRST COLUMN

PLASTIC PART OF LIFE BUT CAUTION NEEDED

Industries have to find viable alternatives to plastic



SAKSHI SETHI

Plastic remains one of the best inventions. However, human greed ended up in its excessive production, leaving piles of heaps, which need to be mended now. Plastic's reputation fell as anxiety about waste increased in the 1970s and 1980s. Plastic waste besides contaminating land, water and soil with harmful chemicals is also responsible for the death of thousands of animals on land, water and sea due to ingestion. Just as ivory is demonised, so is plastic pollution now harming wildlife.

The invention of plastic was initially praised for its ability to create multiple benefits but with time terms like 'cheap' became synonymous with 'replaceable' or 'throwaway', resulting in deterioration of the reputation of plastic.

Plastic pollutes every corner of the earth, causing a direct and deadly effect on wildlife. The larger the plastic items, say plastic bags and straws, can choke and starve marine life, while the smaller fragments can cause liver and gastrointestinal damage in animals which can ultimately affect the human life.

Today, we need supermarkets and grocery stores to stop using plastic bags, especially the ones that are to be disposed of as soon as the packet gets opened. It has become a target for activists looking to ban single use disposable plastics.



Paper on the other hand is easy to shape, while being lightweight, but is neither strong, nor does it last for long. It consumes a large amount of wood which is important for the environment. So, scientists started looking for various alternatives, which could be lightweight, strong, durable, inexpensive and something not entirely dependent upon natural resources.

The word 'plastic' originally meant pliable and easily shaped. In 1862, Alexander Parkes—the man behind the world's first ever man-made plastic, PARKESINE—at the London International Exhibition developed it as a synthetic substitute for shellac for waterproofing. Soon after the success, synthetic polymers, later known as 'plastics' were discovered and developed. Plastic was originally created as a solution to maintain the availability of natural resources on earth. Plastic is a versatile material which has afforded us with many benefits in regard to helping us live a clean, healthy, and efficient lifestyle. It has proven to be useful in many ways for being lighter, besides superior aesthetic appeal and excellent thermal and electrical insulation properties.

It has a unique ability to combine with other materials like adhesives, paper, aluminium foils, while also being used for food packaging, besides also having a lesser production cost. Moreover, the need for plastic exists in several fields such as health and medicare. Patients with severe neural conditions, or toddlers learning to train their motor skills, or elders with movement problems need a flexible, lightweight and a durable material in their daily life, which can only be fulfilled with plastic.

Recycling plastic means reduced quantum of plastic waste. This in turn reduces pollution and saves a lot of animal species crucial to the food chain. If the problem was created by the industry, it should also give the solution. Plastic industry offered recycling of plastic as a solution. In 1980, the plastic industry started with a drive wherein they encouraged the municipalities to collect and process recyclable materials as part of their waste management system. Also, with technical advancements in waste management for recycling plastic, the scenario started to improve gradually.

With intelligent design and thoughtful development, there is a chance to address the greedy mentality of take and make which fuels plastic pollution and implement a circular economy. Despite so much growing mistrust, plastic remains to be a critical part of modern life.

*(The author is a teacher at a reputed school in Delhi)*

# Biden, Trump contest looms over 2024 Prez poll

## If neither contests, the chances of a fresh face becoming the next tenant of the White House is possible in 2024

Will a potential Joe Biden versus Donald Trump residential race happen in 2024 in the United States? It is the question after the two current and former presidents have thrown themselves in the presidential ring two years in advance.

Democrats and republicans are already preparing for the 2024 presidential polls. Polls show that though Biden remains unpopular, he still enjoys more support than Trump. According to a recent Emerson College survey, the Democrats have held an edge of four percentage points. However, there are no cheers from the voters for a re-run of the Biden versus Trump match. According to recent polls, nearly 60 per cent of Americans do not want Trump



KALYANI SHANKAR

*(The author is a senior journalist)*

# Waste disposal needs all hands on deck

## But AAP knows no governance, so municipal bodies have cut garbage hills without Delhi Govt's help

In between 2011 and 2021, Delhi added over 32 lakh people to its population, besides adding about eight lakh households. This is a projected figure for 2021, and official data is still awaited. Delhi has steadily been attracting migrant population, for lack of opportunities in some of the states such as Bihar for the youth.

Indore in Madhya Pradesh, a few years ago, was faced with eyesores of landfill sites, rising like a mountain, as the city garbage gathered, while the population steadily grew on account of the thriving economy of the city and rise of the IT, pharmaceutical sectors following a benign policy regime of the state government. Within a short span of time, the municipal waste in Indore tested the administrative strength of the corporation.

But all changed with the Madhya Pradesh government taking the task to eliminate the garbage mountain eyesore. The municipal corporation was strongly backed by the state government with financial support to acquire men and machines for a turnaround. The state government liberally supported the Indore municipal corporation. The result was elimination of dhalao, segregation of waste at homes, processing of waste took place in several areas, stringent fines were imposed against littering, which included charges of even Rs 1 crore on hotels, hospital and restaurants, disciplined the stakeholders, and the landfill site mountain disappeared to give space for shopping centres and office complexes.

It has been wondered in several quarters why Delhi cannot replicate the Indore model and eliminate the garbage eyesores at Ghazipur, Okhla and Bhalswa. The answer is that Delhi is not blessed with a Madhya Pradesh administration, as the city government in the national capital works at cross purposes with the municipal corporations. The advertisement budget of the Delhi government alone could have helped the municipal corporations to substantially speed up elimination of the landfill sites. But the Delhi government since 2013 after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) came to power with Arvind Kejriwal as Chief Minister has shown rank betrayal of the governance norms. The Delhi government has worked to financially starve the municipal corporations. Still, the civic bodies have been steadfast in their commitment to improve the life of the people, and worked within the constrained capacities to cut down legacy garbage dumped at the landfill sites.

Data speaks for themselves that the municipal corporations have been battling against all odds to cut down Garbage Mountains. Legacy waste at the three landfills at Ghazipur, Bhalswa and Okhla stood at 229.1 lakh tonnes in May, 2022



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THE NGT DIRECTED THE DELHI GOVERNMENT TO PAY RS 900 CRORE AS ENVIRONMENTAL COMPENSATION FOR IMPROPER MANAGEMENT OF SOLID MUNICIPAL WASTE IN 2022. IN AUGUST 2022, DELHI GOVERNMENT WITHHELD RS 900 CRORE OF PAYMENTS TO MCDS

*(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)*

and has come down to 203 lakh tonnes in September, 2022. It implies that around 26.1 lakh tonnes have been disposed of in four months, at the rate of 6.52 lakh tonnes per month. The total legacy waste at the three sites of Ghazipur, Bhalswa and Okhla stood at 280 lakh tonnes in mid-2019. The processing of waste brought this down to 229.1 lakh tonnes in May 2022, which means that 50.9 lakh tonnes were disposed of in three years, at the rate of 1.41 lakh tonnes per month.

There are as many as 44 trommel machines which are processing 9,000 to 10,000 tonnes of waste daily at Bhalswa. They have processed 25 lakh tonnes till July, 2022. Besides, 26 trommel machines are working at Okhla landfill which processes 7,000 tonnes of waste every day. They have processed 17 lakh tonnes of legacy waste till July, 2022. Also, 10 trommel machines are working at Ghazipur landfill which process 4,000 tonnes of waste every day. Soon, 50 additional trommel machines are to be deployed for the processing of waste at Ghazipur, Narela and Okhla landfills.

It may also be known that 'Waste to Energy Plant' has a total capacity of processing 5,250 tonnes of waste, which generates 52 MW electricity. The Tehkhand Waste to Energy Plant became operational recently, which brings the total number of waste to energy plants in the national capital to four. After the inauguration of the Tehkhand plant, the capacity for disposal of garbage per day in Delhi has increased by 2,000 metric tonnes and this plant will also generate up to 25 MW of Green Energy.

Additionally, 12,300 MT Bio CNG Plant, three Bio Gas Plants of 200 MT per day capacity and eight Metal Recovery Facilities of 175 MT per day capacity are about to come up at Okhla landfill site. Construction of the 3,000 metric ton waste to energy plant at Narela is to be completed by August 2025.

The NGT directed the Delhi government to pay Rs 900 crore as environmental compensation for improper management of solid municipal waste in 2022. But, in August 2022, the Delhi government withheld Rs 900 crore of payments to MCDS. This shows that the Delhi government has been apathetic to the needs of people, while serving its own interests by costly advertisements.

This shows that the municipal corporations on its own have been at the forefront in finding sustainable solutions to the solid waste generated in the national capital. It is also to be underlined that the strictness of the Indore model could not be deployed in the national capital due to the multiplicity of authority and also because of the Delhi government working at cross purposes.

If all hands were on board, the task of the municipal corporations would have gained the necessary speed and scale to eliminate the garbage mountains at three of the sites. But the Delhi government in the last nine years has worked with the single agenda to shame the national capital by making the civic bodies beg for their rightful share of finances which are sent by the Central government. This has caused delays in acquiring men and machines to deal with the issue of solid waste management.



Still, the municipal corporations worked through their revenue models by creating tourism spots to beef up their earnings. The Wonder of the World Park is one such example which has been created from the waste and has become one of the key tourist destinations in the national capital. Similar attractions have come in all parts of the country. In contrast, the Delhi government, which has the tourism department, has not created a single asset which can attract the tourists to the national capital.

This calls for the people to weigh the political leadership in the national capital on the basis of the tangible outcomes on promises they make. Fifteen years of the governance models of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the municipal corporations and nine years of the AAP rule in the national capital are study in contrast.

It begs attention if even a fraction of the advertisement budget, which the AAP government splurges in states where the Kejriwal-led party contests elections, was spent in improving the civic amenities the national capital would have sported a brighter look. Why should the money of the people of Delhi be spent to promote AAP in Goa, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat? Why should that money not be spent in boosting the capacities of the municipal corporations to improve the quality of life of the people in the national capital. Delhi wants accountability, not laments of the work shirkers.

WE WANTED THE SIXTH BOWLER TO COME IN, SO SANJU SAMSON MISSED OUT AND HOODA CAME IN. AND CHAHAR WAS PICKED BECAUSE HE CAN SWING THE BALL REALLY WELL.

— INDIAN SKIPPER SHIKHAR DHAWAN




EVEN IF YOU SEE SANJU SAMSON, I WOULD HAVE PLAYED HOODA AHEAD OF SAMSON BECAUSE HE WAS PART OF THE WORLD CUP SQUAD AND SUDDENLY HE IS NOWHERE. SO IT'S DIFFICULT FOR HOODA AS WELL AS THAKUR.

— FORMER CRICKETER ASHISH NEHRA

Will a potential Joe Biden versus Donald Trump residential race happen in 2024 in the United States? It is the question after the two current and former presidents have thrown themselves in the presidential ring two years in advance.

Democrats and republicans are already preparing for the 2024 presidential polls. Polls show that though Biden remains unpopular, he still enjoys more support than Trump. According to a recent Emerson College survey, the Democrats have held an edge of four percentage points. However, there are no cheers from the voters for a re-run of the Biden versus Trump match. According to recent polls, nearly 60 per cent of Americans do not want Trump



KALYANI SHANKAR

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back in the White House. A Biden-Trump contest would also mean the chances of a woman president fading away.

Trump announced his candidature on November 15 in Florida. Facing several court cases and investigations, the former President is keen to take up the White House challenge to protect against legal challenges. He showed his intention of a re-run right from when Biden defeated him in 2020. "To make America great and glorious again, I am announcing tonight my candidacy for president of the United States," Trump said at his Florida headquarters. His announcement has dashed the hopes of GOP leaders to find a fresh face.

With his sustained support base and his "white supremacy" concept, Trump is confident of an easy path to the White House. The latest opinion polls indicate Trump remains the front-runner for the GOP nomination and other aspirants being in the single digits. The polls also showed that Trump received 55 per cent of Republican registered voters' support. In contrast, his potential Republican rival De Santis got just 25 per cent of the votes. De Santis won a second four-year term as governor this month with a solid political base and war chest behind him.

President Biden celebrated his 80th birthday quietly on November 20. He is buoyant after the unexpected Midterm poll results from this month, where Democrats held onto the Senate. Not deterred by his age, Biden said, "I have not made that formal decision, but it's my intention – my intention to run again."

There are other hopefuls in both parties. Come 2023, more aspirants might emerge, more might withdraw, and the competition will be tough. Vice President Kamala Harris, aspiring to succeed Biden, is one of them. Biden might repeat his running mate, but Kamala has not revealed her plans.

Biden's Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, is yet another probable. He has overseen the passage of significant infrastructure investments. He would be the first openly gay President if elected. California Governor Gavin Newsom has a massive campaign war chest and the backing of major Democratic donors.

After emerging second to Hillary Clinton in the 2016 Democratic primary and second again to Joe Biden in 2020, Bernie Sanders has yet to rule out running again in 2024 if the field opens up. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts has become a leading political voice on economic and human rights issues. She did well in her 2020 presidential campaign. Some speculate that if Biden were to withdraw from the race, she might reconsider.

Trump's Vice president, Mike Pence, could be a potential challenger to his one-time boss Trump. He changed his loyalty after January 6, 2021, Capitol riots. Trump has clarified that Pence will not join him on the ticket again if he runs a third time.

The other probable face is Nikki Haley—US ambassador to the United Nations under President Trump. Though she called Trump her friend, following the January 6 Capitol riots, she delivered mixed messages on her support for Trump.

Republican Texas Governor Greg Abbott, 64, who won a third term this month, is another aspirant. He has pursued increasingly conservative policies, opposing COVID-19 vaccines and mask mandates during his second term. Representing Wyoming in the House of Representatives since 2017, former Vice President Dick Cheney's daughter Liz Cheney is also a potential aspirant.

Though it is customary in America that a potential presidential race begins two years in advance, the final picture emerges only after the primaries and the party conventions. With the election expenses increasing, candidates must sustain the momentum and build a massive war chest.

Biden can set the agenda on significant issues like gun control, the economy, abortion, immigration, and climate change, if he wins. A Trump win would only mean going back to Trumpism. If neither contests, the chances of a fresh face becoming the next tenant of the White House is possible in 2024.



# Ulemas’ role vital in deradicalisation: Doval

Religion should be source of peace, not reason for discord, conflict, or violence, says NSA

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

With cross-border terrorism and ISIS-inspired terrorism posing a threat to peace and security, the Ulemas have a vital role to play in countering radicalisation and extremism by propagating progressive ideas and thought, National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval said here on Tuesday.

Underlining these points at a dialogue between the Indonesian and Indian delegation of Ulema, Islamic scholars and leaders of other faiths, Doval said the cooperation of the civil society is essential in countering the threat from ISIS-inspired individual terror cells and returnees from theatres like Syria and Afghanistan.

The Indonesian delegation of Ulema is accompanying Mohammad Mahfud MD, coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs, who is on a visit to India on the



invitation of Doval who had attended the second India-Indonesia Security Dialogue on March 17 in Jakarta.

Emphasising the important role of Ulema in Islamic society, Doval said the aim of the discussion is to bring together Indian and Indonesian Ulema and scholars to promote tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence which will bolster the fight against violent extremism, terrorism and radicalisation.

Urging the need to develop a common narrative on

deradicalisation, Doval said in a democracy there is no place for hate speech, prejudice, propaganda, demonisation, violence, conflict and misuse of religion for narrow ends.

Drawing attention towards youths who are becoming the "primary target" of radicalisation, the NSA said if their energies are nurtured in the right direction, they can become "harbingers of change" and building blocks of progress in any society.He said we also need to counter disinformation and propaganda that can

"impede peaceful co-existence" among the followers of different faiths.

Doval said the essence lies in disseminating positive discourse far and wide, and not merely reacting to the agenda set by inimical forces.

While technology is a blessing for humanity, it is also being misused by anti-social elements to spread hatred and for disruptive purposes, he cautioned.

He said the Ulema must also be adept at using technology and utilizing various technological solutions to thwart propaganda and hate.

Doval said Islam had emerged as a rallying point for the disadvantaged and tolerant outlook. Fissures emerged among the caliphs after the death of the Prophet on the question of legitimate heir with each faction attempting to outdo each other by espousing a more radical interpretation of Hadiths, he said."It is here that the Ulema have a pivotal role to play.

They have a leading role in educating the people on the original tolerant and moderate principles of Islam and countering radicalisation and extremism with progressive ideas and thought," he said.

Mahfud said discussions such as this give us the opportunity to learn from each other and be inspired by the best practices in preserving a peaceful and harmonious society.

"Many a time we have witnessed people who use their religion as a doctrine of absolute truth and readily blame others. We have to go out of this and improve.

"Religion, I think should be a source of peace, not the reason for discord, conflict, or violence. Religion should be a unifying tool, not a divisive instrument," he said. He said world is facing difficult challenges, ranging from poverty, climate change, food insecurity, pandemic, corruption, unemployment, armed conflicts, income inequality, and human rights abuses to name a few.

## Modular terror a new challenge for NIA, security forces in J&K

**RAKESH K SINGH ■** NEW DELHI

Hybrid or modular terror model has emerged as a new challenge for the security forces in Jammu & Kashmir as the terrorists involved in attacks are not known to each other and tasks are assigned among many unconnected ultras over social media platforms like Telegram.

Such modular mechanism even adds to the woes of investigative agencies like NIA in cracking terror-related cases.

Recent trends in the Valley suggest terror groups are resorting to operations through modules comprising hybrid terrorists who are difficult to trace in the face of invisibility and involvement of multiple players.

Such modules also recruit part time terrorists to execute a cer-

tain task the individual then carries on with his normal chores, officials in the security agencies said. Mushrooming of women over ground workers (OGWs) has also emerged as a discernible feature of the latest terror tactic, they said.

The other challenges include use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for sending weapons, explosives, drugs and fake currency, issuance of online threat and hartal calls by the terror groups via Telegram channels, circulation of fake news and propaganda through Pakistani online portal Kashmir Fight.

The terror groups have also been hitting soft targets like labourers from other States and minorities especially Kashmiri Pandits The Pakistani handlers of the terror modules are using

Ankara for terrorism as many close combat weapons like pistols of Turkiye origin like Canik TP9 have been recovered in searches after encounters, they said.

In 2022 so far, as many as 29 civilians have been killed in Valley by terrorists including three Kashmiri Pandits, three other Hindus, 15 Muslims besides six outsider Hindus and two Muslims.

However, casualties of the security forces have shown a declining trend from a peak of 86 in 2018 to 77 in 2019, 58 in 2020, 29 in 2021 and 26 so far this year, according to official data.The civilian casualties have also recorded a declining trend from a high of 80 loss of lives in 2018 to 46 in 2019 followed by 37 in 2020, 35 in 2021 and 29 till so far this year.

# NIA raids organised criminal syndicates in 13 locations



**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday conducted a third round of crackdown against organised criminal syndicates and networks besides top gangsters at 13 locations in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Chandigarh and Delhi-NCR.

The districts covered in the search operation are Fazilka, Taran Taran, Ludhiana, Sangrur and Mohali districts of Punjab, Yamuna Nagar district

of Haryana, Sikar district of Rajasthan and Outer North District of Delhi/ NCR to dismantle and disrupt the emerging nexus between terrorists, gangsters and drug smugglers/traffickers based in India and abroad in connection with two cases registered in August.

"This 3rd round of raids and searches is part of the NIA crackdown against organised criminal syndicates and networks, top gangsters, their criminal and business associates based in Punjab, Haryana

and Rajasthan and arms suppliers based in Rajasthan and Delhi," the NIA said in a statement. Searches were conducted at the houses/premises of Kaushal Chaudhary of Gurugram (Haryana), Vishal Maan of Prahalpur (Delhi), Binny Gurjar of Sangroor (Punjab), Ravi Rajgarh of Ludhiana (Punjab) and their associates, it said.

During the searches, incriminating materials, including various types of contraband, have been seized,

along with ammunition. Investigations will continue to dismantle such terror networks as well as their funding and support infrastructure, it further said. Preliminary investigations have revealed that these gangs were carrying out targeted killings and were also raising funds to carry out such criminal activities through smuggling of drugs and weapons.

The recent sensational crimes and extortion calls by criminal syndicates and gang-

sters to businessmen, professionals, including doctors, had created a widespread scare among the people.

These gangs were using cyber-space to publicise these crimes to create terror among the public at large, according to the NIA FIRs.

"Investigations have also revealed that such criminal acts were not isolated local incidents but there was a deep rooted conspiracy amongst terrorists, gangsters and drug smuggling cartels and net-

works, which were operating from both within and outside the country," the agency said in its statement.

Most of these conspiracies were being hatched from inside jails of different States and were being executed by an organized network of operatives based abroad.

Many gang leaders and members had fled from India and were operating from foreign countries, including Pakistan, Canada, Malaysia and Australia, it added.

# ‘Moral duty of citizens to ensure welfare of soldiers’



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said here that it is the moral duty of every citizen to ensure the welfare of soldiers and their families and that industries and businesses can never flourish in a country where the national security is not strong.

In his address at the Armed Forces Flag Day Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Conclave, he also asserted that the "welfare of soldiers, who ensure our national security, should not be the responsibility of only the government but it should be the duty of all".

Rajnath emphasised that industries and businesses can never flourish in a country where national security is not strong. Appreciating the support of big corporate donors in the last few years which has led to a substantial increase in the fund, he exhorted the fraternity to contribute even more for the well-being of soldiers and the nation at large. The event

was organised by the department of ex-servicemen welfare, the Ministry of Defence.

The defence minister expressed gratitude to the retired as well as serving armed forces personnel whose valour and sacrifice safeguarded the sovereignty and integrity of the country. He made special mention of a soldier's message enshrined on the Kohima War Memorial in Nagaland, which reads: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."

Reiterating the government's commitment towards the welfare of the soldiers, he said a number of initiatives were taken in this direction.

Rajnath urged the private sector to provide employment opportunities to about 60,000 soldiers who retire at a very young age every year, saying that these disciplined ex-servicemen are capable of understanding the most complex technology and using it profitably.

The defence minister also launched a new website for the

Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. The portal is an interactive and user-friendly portal developed to promote online contribution

to the fund. He also released the anthem for this year's promotional campaign for the Armed Forces Flag Day.

## We cannot be agnostic about technology: EAM

**New Delhi:** India has to give due weightage to technology for its geopolitical positioning as it will play a crucial role in striking alliances in a multipolar world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here on Tuesday while stressing the point that the country cannot remain "agnostic" to developments in this sector.

Making this assertion at the Global Technology Summit, he said India would like to use its G-20 Presidency to reflect the interests and concerns of the global south that have been sidelined over the years. India will assume presidency on December one.

Elaborating upon the role of technology, Jaishankar said the rise of India was deeply linked with the rise of Indian technology. "We cannot be agnostic about technology. We have to stop thinking that there is something neutral about technology...more and more things are technology driven and we need to understand that there is a very strong political connotation in-built into technology," the minister said. He said the principle of econom-



ic strategic autonomy will hold the key to global rebalancing and big players will constantly strive to be more capable technologically.

"We, especially in India in the last two years, have woken up to the fact, where does our data reside? Who processes and harvests our data and what do they do with it? That is a very very key question," Jaishankar said.

He said it was important to look at the quality of partners and the sociology partners that India has in the arena of technological and strategic spheres.

Recounting his interaction with his counterparts in Africa and Latin America, Jaishankar said there has been a lot of interest in the digitally-enabled delivery platforms developed by India in the global south.

# SC allows MMRCL plea for felling 84 trees at Mumbai's Aarey Colony



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday permitted the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd to pursue its plea with the relevant authority for felling 84 trees at Mumbai's Aarey Colony for constructing train ramps at its car shed project.

This significant order would enable the MMRCL to seek felling of 84 trees from the Tree Authority to start its construction work which has been stalled for quite some time now and, according to Mumbai Metro, the project cost has escalated from Rs 23,000 crore to Rs 37,000 crore.

The apex court observed that it cannot be "oblivious of serious dislocation" which may be caused in projects involving "large public funds". "The MMRCL should be permitted to pursue its application before the tree authority for felling of 84 trees. Let the tree authority take a decision independently," a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha said. "Undoubtedly issues per-

taining to the environment are important. The State Government which had taken a decision in the first place to accept the technical committee report, later on changed its view while deciding upon realignment," said the court. The top court fixed the batch of petitions, including the suo motu (on its own) one, for final hearing and disposal in the first week of February next year.

The Court took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the MMRCL, that almost 95 per cent work on the project has been completed.

"It would not be possible for the court to stay the decision.

"Moreover, it must be noted that substantial no of trees have already been felled...As already noted earlier 2144 trees were fell in executing work for the car depot. What is now sought is a permission to apply to tree authorities for felling of trees for ramp. Without the ramp, work done would be of no use," the CJ said in its order.

The top law officer said the plea of the MMRCL was pending with the Tree Authority which is not proceeding due to the pendency of the petitions here in the Supreme Court.

"The original total cost of the project was Rs 23,000 crore. The MMRCL has already invested Rs 22000 crores. Because of the delay caused by the litigation, the cost has escalated to Rs 37000 crores,"

## SC transfers trial in murder of YSV Reddy to Hyd CBI court

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday transferred the trial in the murder case of YS Vivekananda Reddy - former Lok Sabha MP and uncle of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy - to a Special CBI Court in Hyderabad.

A Bench of Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna was hearing a plea filed by the daughter of Reddy seeking directions to the CBI to expedite the probe into the murder case and citing delays at trial court in Kadapa.

"It cannot be said that apprehension of the petitioner that there may not be fair trial or that there is larger conspiracy is imaginary. Petitioner has the fundamental right to get justice. This is a fit case to

Mehta said. He then listed out the benefits and the impact of the metro rail project saying the carbon emission, due to less vehicular traffic, would come down. Above 13 lakh passengers may travel through the metro and may lead to ease in traffic situation, fuel consumption and air pollution, he said, adding that every day, nine persons die in train accidents in Mumbai.

transfer to a State other than the State of Andhra Pradesh, as justice need not only be done but also seen to be done. Criminal trial, if biased, criminal justice will be at stake," said the apex court.

Reddy was stabbed to death at his residence in Kadapa in March 2019. In 2020, the Andhra Pradesh High Court had transferred the investigation into the murder to the CBI.

## IN SHORT

### CONG RAPS PM OVER AIIMS SERVER HACKING

**New Delhi:** The Congress on Tuesday hit out at the Modi Government over the hacking of the AIIMS server and said it raises "serious questions" about cyber security in the country. AICC general secretary, organisation, K C Venugopal asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of a new cyber security policy which he announced two years ago. It is feared that data of around 3-4 crore patients could have been compromised due to breach detected on November 23.

### SENA SYMBOLS DISPUTE 1ST HEARING ON DEC 12

**New Delhi:** The first hearing of Shiv Sena symbols dispute case will be held on December 12 by Election Commission of India. The EC has also directed both parties to submit any further statements/documents by 5 PM on December 9.

### MEA TO HOLD LUSOPHONE FEST IN GOA ON DEC 3-6

**New Delhi:** The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in partnership with Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Goa Government will organise the International Lusophone Festival in Goa from December 3-6.

### SC AXES PIL ON HIKE IN NUMBER OF HC JUDGES

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to entertain a PIL that sought a direction to Centre and all States to double number of judges in subordinate judiciary and High Courts to effectively tackle pendency of cases, saying such "populist" and "simplistic" measures cannot be solution.

# New HIV infections in kids down 52% in 2010-21

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Due to Covid-induced disruptions, around 110,000 children and adolescents (0-19 years) died from AIDS-related causes during 2021 while another 310,000 were newly infected, bringing the total number of young people living with HIV to 2.7 million, according to the latest UNICEF global snapshot on children and HIV/AIDS, which was released recently.

These disruptions put the lives of newborn babies at increased risk. In 2021, more than 75,000 new child infections occurred because pregnant women were not diag-

nosed and initiated on treatment, as per the snapshot.

Taking serious note of the gloomy scenario, ahead of World Aids Day on December 1, UNICEF has warned that progress in HIV prevention and treatment for children, adolescents, and pregnant women has nearly flatlined over the past three years, with many regions still not at pre-Covid service coverage.

This stagnation comes on top of an existing and growing gap in treatment between children and adults. Unless the drivers of inequities are addressed, ending AIDS in children and adolescents will continue to be a distant dream, warned UNICEF.

"Though children have long lagged behind adults in the AIDS response, the stagnation seen in the last three years is unprecedented, putting too many young lives at risk of sickness and death," said Anurita Bains, Unicef associate chief of HIV/AIDS. "Children are falling through the cracks because we are collectively failing to find and test them and get them on life-saving treatment. Every day that goes by without progress, over 300 children and adolescents lose their fight against AIDS."

Despite accounting for only 7 per cent of overall people living with HIV, children and adolescents comprised 17 per cent of all AIDS-related

deaths and 21 per cent of new HIV infections in 2021. However, the snapshot shows that longer-term trends remain positive.

New HIV infections among younger children (0-14 years) dropped by 52 per cent from 2010 to 2021, and new infections among adolescents (15-19 years) also dropped by 40 per cent. Similarly, coverage of life-long antiretroviral treatment (ART) among pregnant women living with HIV increased from 46 per cent to 81 per cent in a single decade. While the total number of children living with HIV is on the decline, the treatment gap between children and adults continues to grow.



# SC asks States to give details of undertrials to NALSA in 15 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the emotional speech of the President Droupadi Murmu flagging the plight of poor tribals languishing in jails in petty offences despite bail, the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed State Governments across the country to provide details of such prisoners within 15 days to NALSA for formulating a national scheme for their release.

"NALSA (National Legal Services Authority) in collaboration with the Home Ministry will collect the data relating to number and status of pending applications of premature release filed by life convicts," ordered the Bench of

Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Abhay S Oka, adding that the entire process to be finished in two months.

The Bench directed the jail authorities to submit the details of such prisoners to the respective State Governments which will forward the documents to the National Legal Service Authority within 15 days. The bench said the jail authorities will have to submit such details as the names of undertrial prisoners, charges against them, date of the bail order, what bail conditions were not met and how much time they have spent in jail after the bail order.

"At the inception, we flagged the issue of detainees/Undertrial prisoners, who continue to be in custody

despite being granted bail but could not fulfill the bail conditions. Each jail authority of the country has to convey to their state government the details which will be forwarded to NALSA for formulation of a national level scheme to provide assistance to such prisoners," it said in its order.

Advocate Devansh A Mohta, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae, said the Delhi State Legal Service Authority (DSLSA) has a scheme to assist such undertrial prisoners languishing in jail despite being granted bail. The bench said, "In Delhi, these kinds of cases may be less but could be more where financial means become a challenge." Judges asked advocate Gaurav Agrawal, appearing for NALSA,

to explore all possibilities for formulating a national scheme and suggest ways for dealing with this situation and execution of the bail orders.

The top court was hearing a plea by a life convict named Sonadhar, who has been in custody for 18 years and sought premature release. On September 15, the top court had said convicts who have completed 10 years of their life sentence and whose appeals would not be heard in the near future by the high courts should be enlarged on bail unless there exist cogent reasons to deny the relief.

The apex court said it needs to keep the objective of decongesting the jails in mind in the case of convicts whose appeals have been pending for

years against conviction and are not likely to be heard in the near future by the high courts due to pendency of cases. It had said its endeavour is two-fold --first, convicts having undergone more than 10 years imprisonment, unless there exist cogent reasons to deny them the relief, they should be enlarged on bail. Second, identification of cases where convicts have completed 14 years of custody, in which event, a case can be referred to the government for considering premature release within a fixed time period irrespective of pendency of their appeals.

The top court had said if a detainee has already served 14 years of sentence in a murder case, then there are norms prevalent in each state for

examination of such cases for premature release. "However, it appears that legal assistance to do so after expiry of 14 years has not been forthcoming in many cases, including the present one (of petitioner Sonadhar). We do feel that this aspect needs attention and the respondent State and for that matter other States must put their house in order in respect of this aspect," the bench had said and sought the assistance of NALSA.

The President Murmu had, in her maiden Constitution Day address on November 26 at the Supreme Court, highlighted the plight of poor tribals of her home state Odisha besides Jharkhand, saying they remain incarcerated despite getting bail for lack of money to



furnish the bail amount or arrange sureties. Departing from her written speech in English, Murmu had spoken in Hindi to urge the judiciary to do something for the poor tribals, noting those accused of serious offences walk out free but these poor inmates, who may have gone to jail for slapping someone, have to spend

years on end before they are released.

Justice Kaul was among those seated on the dais with Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, when the President narrated her experience of meeting several undertrial prisoners as an MLA in her native Odisha and later as the Governor of Jharkhand.

## Didi chides DM in public for ignoring 'blanket order'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a development that opposition parties promptly dismissed as "scripted and aimed at re-building an image, sullied by multiple exposes on state-sponsored corruption," Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday stalled a public programme for good 20 minutes and rebuked the District Magistrate and Block Development Officer in front of thousands of people for failing to comply with government orders.

The order thus being spoken of was on procurement and bringing on the stage 15,000 blankets, shawls and sweaters to be distributed by the Chief Minister among the public.

When she found out that only sweaters had been brought at the venue, a furious Chief Minister rebuked the DM with

the microphone on, asking why the blankets had not been brought on stage.

Banerjee told the DM, "Whenever there are any lapses by the police or any other department everyone blames me ... why will I have to take it every time ... where are the blankets for me to be distributed?"

When the DM informed that they had been kept at the BDO office she thundered: "I will take strong action against you." When requested to continue with her speech as there were other programmes too the Chief Minister said "I had come for distributing the blankets ... so there is no point continuing the meeting ... first bring the blankets then I will speak ... till then I am sitting here and so does the crowd."

The Chief Minister stalled the meeting for a good 20

minutes after which the blankets were rushed to the venue. Banerjee distributed 1,000 blankets from the Tuesday rally.

Hours later Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari called it a "model example of how the Mamata Banerjee Government functions ... the incident itself proves that there is no coordination in the administration ... the whole bureaucracy is demoralised in the face of government-sponsored corruption ... everyone is thinking of saving one's job ... this demoralisation will further go up if the officers are rebuked in public in this manner."

CPI(M) leadership said that the incident pointed at the poor condition of the State. "We wanted to bring industry so that the people can lead a better life but Mamata Banerjee



drove them away ... now she has to distribute blankets as the people don't even have that money," party State committee member Kaustav Chatterjee said adding the Tuesday's "histrionics" was a scripted before to give a lift to the Chief Minister's sagging image.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister on Tuesday announced the formation of a separate Sunderbans district. The district will be carved out of existing two districts of

North and South 24 Parganas.

The formation of the new district majorly comprising the Royal Bengal Tiger zone of the Sundrabans would help the administration to concentrate more on the development of the swampy area crisscrossed by scores of backwater rivers and many more creeks plagued by steady erosion and advancing sea. Several river islands have already disappeared into the sea since 1967 and many are on the verge of extinction.

### FROM PAGE 1

## LAPID'S JIBE AT KASHMIR FILES DRAWS FIRE, ISRAELI SAYS SORRY

The jury has distanced itself from his remarks, calling them his "personal opinion," after severe backlash. The Israeli Ambassador said his countrymen should be humble as Indians are consuming a lot of Israeli content, including the 'Fauda' TV series.

"I'm no film expert but I do know that it's insensitive and presumptuous to speak about historic events before deeply studying them and which are an open wound in India because many of the involved are still around and still paying a price," he said. Gilon said he was "extremely hurt" to see the reactions in India that Lapid was doubting 'Schindler's List', a movie based on the Holocaust.

"I unequivocally condemn such statements. There is no justification. It does show the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue here," he said.

The diplomat said, "As a son of a Holocaust survivor, I was extremely hurt to see reactions in India to you that are doubting Schindler's List, the Holocaust and worse."

"From your interview to Ynet the connection you make between your criticism of #KashmirFiles and your dislike to what is happening in Israeli politics was quite evident," the envoy said. Lapid reportedly is viewed as an anti-establishment filmmaker. Citing the interview, Gilon said the connection the filmmaker makes between his criticism of 'The Kashmir Files' and his dislike to what is happening in Israeli politics was quite evident. "My suggestion. As you vocally did in the past, feel free to use the liberty to sound your criticism of what you dislike in Israel but no need to reflect your frustration on other countries. I'm not sure that you have enough factual basis to make such comparisons," he said.

"You will go back to Israel thinking that you are bold and 'made a statement'. We, the representatives of Israel, would stay here. You should see our DM boxes following your 'bravery' and what implications it may have on the team under my responsibility." Gilon said. India-Israel ties are very strong and will survive the "damages" inflicted by his remarks, Gilon said in his tweets addressed to Lapid. "As a human being I feel ashamed and want to apologize to our hosts for the bad manner in which we repaid them for their generosity and friendship," said the envoy.

Kher, who played a protagonist in the movie, called the criticism of "The Kashmir Files" at the film festival "pre-planned" and accused Lapid of being insensitive towards the suffering of Kashmiri Pandits. Kher, addressing the media with Israel's consul general Kobbi Shoshani — who also condemned Lapid's remarks, said, "If you are a jury member you cannot use words like 'vulgar or propaganda'. I think it is a vulgar remark by that person, who himself is vulgar and opportunist."

"To use the platform of IFFI for your own agenda is not only unfortunate, it's disgusting."

The actor blamed what he called the "toolkit gang" for the whole controversy. "A reliable source informed me that he was missing from his room throughout the night. This was not the statement he was to give at the closing ceremony of the film festival. What he said was entirely different. This is pre-planned as immediately after his remarks the toolkit gang became active on social media," he said. The actor said it is shameful for a person from a community (Jews) that suffered the horrors of the Holocaust to make such offensive remarks on a movie based on the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits.

"The one who does not understand the pain of people of holocaust victims in his country, can't understand the pain of Kashmiri Pandits," Kher said. "I as a Kashmiri Pandit reject his remarks," he said. The actor said Kobbi Shoshani called him up

to apologise for Lapid's remarks and then came to meet him. "That was Lapid's personal opinion, it has nothing to do with State of Israel. We don't accept it," Shoshani told media. Kher on Monday night shared images from "The Kashmir Files" and the movie "Schindler's List" on Twitter. "Schindler List" is a movie based on the holocaust.

Without mentioning Lapid's name, Kher wrote, "No matter how big the lie is, it's always small in comparison to the truth."

The Kashmir Files' was screened at IFFI on November 22 as a part of the Indian Panorama Section.

## ADANI WINS BID TO REDEVELOP LARGEST SLUM DHARAVI

The Government has sought a consolidated net worth of a minimum of Rs 20,000 crore to choose the winning bid and is likely to evaluate both technical and financial eligibility before awarding the project to the highest bidder.

The winning bidder is required to form a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for executing the project, and a staggered timeline of investments has also been stipulated by the Government.

The developer has to take care of rehabilitation, renewal, amenities, and infrastructure components.

## FETED DIRECTOR LAPID'S RUN-IN NOT ONE-OFF CASE

He moved from his home country to Paris to study literature after receiving a degree in philosophy at Tel Aviv University and mandatory military service. He later studied cinema at the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem.

His films — four features and several shorts — are all in Hebrew, and all deeply political.

Lapid's debut feature was the 2011 "Policeman" about the head of a counter terrorist organisation. The feature, described as a "discomforting and despairing" look at the Israeli society, won the Special Jury Prize at Locarno Film Festival.

It was written and directed shortly before demonstrations across Israel in 2011, when thousands of people took to the streets to protest the rising cost of living.

In a 2014 interview with US-based website Film Comment, Lapid described "Policeman" as a "pesimistic film about social immobility and incapacity to change reality." "I identified a huge elephant in the Israeli living room: social injustice and inequality. Unlike historians or sociologists, a filmmaker has the privilege of imagination. I wrote a story about an imagined group shortly before similar groups came to life. In that sense it is an interesting case of the relationship between fiction and reality." When the feature was released in Israel in August the same year, the government film rating authority, equivalent to India's CBFC, declared it suitable for 18-year-olds and above. Lapid called the decision an attempt to censor the film's troubling depiction of economic inequity leading to civic uprising. Following the outrage, the age limit was revised from 18 to 14.

The next feature project was "The Kindergarten Teacher", the story of a teacher and her obsession with her little student. It was part of the competition section of the 45th IFFI in 2014 and won him the best director award. Besides, Sarit Larry received the IFFI Best Actor Award (Female) for the film.

An Israeli-French co-production, "The Kindergarten Teacher" won more than 20 international awards.

Five years later in 2019 came his third film, "Synonyms" about a former Israel Defense Forces soldier who flees to Paris and tries to escape

his past. It took the FIPRESCI prize for the best title in competition at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival.

The festival jury described the feature as a "stunningly original, shaking the boundaries of narrations... A powerful piece of work with a sharp sense of humour and a subtle political message". Lapid's short film "From the Diary of a Wedding Photographer", had a special screening at the 55th Semaine de la Critique, the parallel non-competition section at Cannes.

In 2016, he was named member of the jury of the International Critics' Week section of the Cannes Film Festival. He is a recipient of the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, conferred on personalities who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the field of art, culture and literature or for their contribution to the influence of arts in France.

His latest feature, "Ahed's Knee", was selected to compete for the Palme d'Or at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival. The film shared the Jury Prize with English-Spanish fantasy drama "Memoria" by Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

Lapid's co-jury members at IFFI Goa this year were Spanish documentary filmmaker Javier Angulo Borturen, French film editor Pascale Chavance, American film producer Jinko Gotoh and Indian film director Sudipto Sen.

As controversy raged over Lapid's remarks on "The Kashmir Files", Sen said the views were completely his personal opinion. None of the others made any mention of their likes and dislikes at a public platform, he said.

Lapid, whose remark attracted ire from Israel's diplomats in India, could not be contacted for his comments. One phone was off, the other unreachable.

"Interviews can be very difficult, mostly because I'm afraid to try to speak about a film's political context, to place it in whatever other context (it may have)," he said in an interview earlier this year.

## BJP TERMS FILM DIG HOLOCAUST DENIAL; CONG SAYS HATE GETS CALLED OUT FINALLY

On its part, the main opposition Congress attacked the Government and said "hate gets called out, eventually".

"PM Modi, his Govt, BJP, the RW ecosystem feverishly promoted 'The Kashmir Files'. A movie rejected by International Film Festival Of India. Jury Head Nadav Lapid called it 'propaganda, vulgar movie - inappropriate for the film festival'," said Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete.

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi shared a video link of the Israeli filmmaker's speech where he criticised "The Kashmir Files".

"A sensitive issue of justice for Kashmiri Pandits was sacrificed at the altar of propaganda. This is a must listen segment at the #IFFIGOa2022," Chaturvedi said.

Her party colleague Sanjay Raut supported Lapid's and said the film has been politicised after its release and has caused more Kashmiri Pandits to suffer. "It's true about the Kashmir Files. There was propaganda by one party against another. A party and Government were busy with publicity. But a maximum number of killings in Kashmir occurred after this film. Kashmiri Pandits, security personnel were killed," Raut said.

Actor Swara Bhasker, known for her views against the Government, shared a link to the news story about Lapid's remarks at the closing ceremony of the film gala.

"Apparently it's pretty clear to the world .." Bhasker who is also known as AAP backer wrote in the caption.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina

said Israeli director Lapid's remarks on 'The Kashmir Files' reflected his lack of knowledge about the ground situation in the Union Territory while filmmaker Ashok Pandit demanded a probe into his appointment.

"He (Lapid) should first visit the camps of displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir. Such remarks are only expected from a person who does not know the ground situation and how people, irrespective of their religion, have suffered because of terrorism," Raina said in Jammu.

"Most likely, he (Lapid) made such a statement on the instigation of someone. He should visit the victims of terror -- both Pandits and Muslims -- and feel their pain," Raina said, welcoming the statement of Naor Gilon, Israel's envoy to India.

## VISTARA TO MERGE IN AI; SINGAPORE AIRLINES TO BUY 25.1% STAKE

Teams are working on various aspects of the merger, including those related to frequent flyer programmes. It will take time before the specifics are finalised. The required changes and announcements will be made in due course, two officials in the know said. Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said the merger of Vistara and Air India is an important milestone in the journey to make Air India a truly world-class airline.

"As part of the transformation, Air India is focusing on growing both its network and fleet, revamping its customer proposition, enhancing safety, reliability, and on-time performance. We are excited with the opportunity of creating a strong Air India which would offer both full-service and low-cost service across domestic and international routes," he said.

Currently, Air India offers economy, business and first class seats while Vistara offers economy, premium economy and business classes. Once the consolidation is complete, passengers are expected to have more choices in terms of domestic and international flights in a seamless manner under the Tata group umbrella.

In a release on Tuesday, Tata group said that with the consolidation, Air India would be the country's leading domestic and international carrier with a combined fleet of 218 aircraft.

At present, Tata group has four airlines under its wings -- Air India, Vistara, AirAsia India and Air India Express, which is focused on low-cost international services.

## 3-DAY DRIVE TO MAKE UP CLEANER, GREENER

will be made available by the civic bodies on the email of the State Mission Directorate, Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).

The government has also directed the officials to ensure videography of the activities undertaken under the 'Pratibaddh 75 Districts, 75 Hours, 750 Bodies' campaign.

The district coordinators and district programme managers will play an important role in the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) along with the officers/officials of the cleanliness cadre for editing the campaign. The public will be made aware through community participation.

All the GVPs will also be beautified and turned into either selfie points with space for senior citizens, or the place will be allotted to street vendors.

The best performing bodies in the campaign will be rewarded at the state level under five sub-categories based on population in three main categories namely Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat. The winning bodies in each category will be presented as 'models' for others.

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition filed by the Government of Kerala questioning the appointment of Dr Ciza Thomas as the vice-chancellor of the Kerala Technical University by the Chancellor (Governor Arif Mohammed Khan).

"Ciza Thomas is fully qualified going by the University Grants Commission Regulations since it permit experience in both teaching and research. The choice is justified," said Justice Devan Ramachandran while dismissing the petition.

The Governor appointed Ciza Thomas as vice chancellor following the October 21 verdict



by the Supreme Court that declared the appointment of M S Rajasree, the incumbent, as void and null ab initio (from the date she was appointed).

The Justice pointed out that although the first person found qualified in the list had been offered the vice chancellor's post by the Chancellor following the disqualification of Rajasree, the same was politely refused. That left Ciza Thomas as the only candidate available since others in the list too were involved in various professions. "The Chancellor's choice

can never be found to be at fault and there is not even a whisper or an assertion sotto voce (in a quiet voice) even by the Government that he has acted with bias or mala fide in having appointed Ciza Thomas," said the Justice.

Tuesday's verdict is yet another set back to the Government of Kerala in the on going tussle with the Governor over appointments of vice-chancellors and faculty members in the State's universities. The Kerala High Court had declared as null and void the appointment of the Vice Chancellor of the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (KUFOS) as well as the selection of the spouse of the Chief Minister's private secretary as associate professor in Kannur University.

## Massive row erupts as Kharage compares Modi to 'Ravana'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI

In a stark reminder to the 'Maut Ka Saudagar' remarks against Narendra Modi by the then party chief Sonia Gandhi in 2007, a massive row erupted in poll bound Gujarat on Tuesday after the newly elected Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage compared the Prime Minister with 'Ravana' during a rally. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel lost no time in claiming the remark reflects the opposition party's hatred for Gujaratis.

Elections for the 182-member Assembly in the BJP-ruled Gujarat are scheduled to be held in two phases on December 1 and 5.

Addressing people in Behrampura area under the Congress-held Dhanilimda seat on Monday night, Kharage said in every election, votes are sought in the name of Modi instead of local candidates or the performance of government.

"Modi asks people to ignore everything and vote (for BJP) by keeping his face in front of the eyes. I wonder on how many occasions we have to see your face? People have to see your face during municipal corporation polls, then in the Assembly polls and also during polls to elect MPs," he said.

"Everywhere you want us to see your face. Why? How many faces do you have? Are you 100-headed like Ravan? I don't understand this," the Congress president said. He further said instead of doing his work as India's PM, Modi canvasses for various elections, be it local bodies or Assembly polls.

"The BJP believes in telling lies only. I recently said Modi is 'badshah' of telling lies, because he keeps on telling lies. What happened to two crore jobs every year? He used to say he will give Rs 15 lakh to each citizen after bringing black money from abroad," Kharage said.

Taking a strong exception to the remarks, CM Patel in a tweet said, "Beret of any development agenda and support from the people, the Congress is out to abuse Gujarat and Gujaratis." The statement made by Kharage ji against PM Narendra Modi is a testimony to their hate for Gujaratis. The people of Gujarat will reject them this time too for such behaviour," Patel added.

## 'Assam-Meghalaya border talks have become bit complicated after violence'

PTI ■ GUWAHATI/ SHILLONG/ SILCHAR

The process for the second round of talks between Assam and Meghalaya for resolving the border dispute has become 'slightly complicated', following the killing of six people in the November 22 violence at Mukroh village, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said on Tuesday. Assam and Meghalaya have identified 12 disputed areas along the interstate border. These two northeastern states, which started the first round of discussions in July 2021, signed an MoU in March this year to resolve differences in six areas.

"The situation (for border talks) is slightly complicated and we may not be able to go forward immediately. It could get delayed," Sangma said here.

Sangma's remarks came on a day when Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Tuesday said that he does not approve of police firing on civilians, which should be resorted to only against terrorists and criminals.



# US rejects China objections to South China Sea mission

AP ■ BEIJING

The US Navy on Tuesday dismissed Beijing's protests over a "freedom of navigation operation" conducted near a Chinese-held island in the South China Sea, in the latest incident drawing new attention to one of the world's potential military flashpoints.

In an unusual move, the Navy's 7th Fleet issued a rebuttal to China's objections to Tuesday's mission, calling it "the latest in a long string of (Chinese) actions to misrepresent lawful U.S. Maritime operations and assert its excessive and illegitimate maritime claims" in the South China Sea. China claims the area virtually in its entirety.

The Navy said that China's sweeping maritime claims pose a serious threat to the freedom of navigation and overflight, free trade and unimpeded commerce, and freedom of economic opportunity for South China Sea littoral nations. "As long as some countries continue to claim and assert limits on rights that exceed their authority under international law, the United States will continue to defend the rights and freedoms of the sea guaranteed to all," it said.

The Navy said its guided



missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville on Tuesday "asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the South China Sea near the Spratly Islands, consistent with international law."

China called the action illegal and said it mobilized naval and air assets to issue warnings and drive off the ship.

"The U.S. Military's actions have seriously violated China's sovereignty and security, which is further ironclad evidence of its pursuit of navigational hegemony and militarisation of the South China Sea," spokesperson for the Southern Theater Command, Air Force Col. Tian Junli, was quoted as saying.

"China has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea islands and their

adjacent waters," Tian said.

The long-seething South China Sea territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have long been regarded as a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

While the U.S. Lays no claims to the strategic waterway, where an estimated USD 5 trillion in global trade transits each year, it has said that freedom of navigation and overflight is in America's national interest. The sea is also home to rich fishing stocks and a potential wealth of energy and mineral resources.

In March, U.S. Indo-Pacific commander Adm. John C. Aquilino told The Associated Press that China has fully militarised at least three of sever-

al islands it built in the disputed waters with anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, laser and jamming equipment. He described it as an increasingly aggressive move that threatens all nations operating nearby.

Then in July, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on China to comply with a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated Beijing's vast claims on historical grounds in the South China Sea.

On a visit to the area earlier this month, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris reaffirmed Washington's commitment to defend the Philippines under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. She also announced an additional aid of USD 7.5 million to Philippine maritime law enforcement agencies.

# Nepal elections: Half dozen PM aspirants emerge in Nepali Cong

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

About half a dozen leaders of the Nepali Congress, which has emerged as the single largest party in Nepal's parliamentary polls, have expressed their desire to become the country's next prime minister, amidst growing pressure on the party to transfer the leadership to the younger generation.

Even as the leaders of the ruling five-party alliance intensified efforts to form a new government, it will take a few more days before the final results of the House of Representatives and seven provincial assembly elections held on November 20 are announced.

Half a dozen leaders within the Nepali Congress (NC), which has so far won 53 seats under the direct voting system, have expressed their aspirations to become the next prime minister, My Republica newspaper reported.

So far results of 158 seats have been declared. The ruling alliance led by the NC is moving towards a clear majority, allowing them to form a new government. The counting of votes is almost complete, with the results of six seats yet to be announced.

A party needs at least 138 seats to form a majority government in the 275-member House of Representatives.

The five-party ruling



alliance, which includes the NC, CPN-Maoist Centre, CPN-Unified Socialist, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janamorchha has a combined strength of 85 seats in the HoR under direct election, followed by the Opposition CPN-UML alliance with 57 seats.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is also the NC's president, discussed the issue of the government formation with Maoist Center Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" and Unified Socialist Chairman Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Following discussions with Prachanda and Nepal, Deuba agreed to continue the current alliance and move forward for the economic development and prosperity of the country by including other parties in the process.

Sources claim that the top leaders of the three parties concluded that the electoral

coordination was partially successful in the recently held elections. They also claimed that the leaders are unanimous that after the results of the election, they will discuss the formation of the government at the centre and provincial level as well as other issues and move forward by forging an agreement.

With the continuation of the current coalition, it is estimated that there is a strong possibility that 76-year-old Deuba can become the Prime Minister again and that he will be elected as the leader of the NC parliamentary party.

However, NC's Ram Chandra Paudel (78), Prakash Man Singh (66), Shashank Koirala (64), and 46-year-old General Secretary Gagan Kumar Thapa are likely to challenge Deuba's bid to become Prime Minister for the sixth time.

# Census: Christians minority in England



AP ■ LONDON

Fewer than half the people in England and Wales consider themselves Christian, according to the most recent census — the first time the country's official religion has been followed by a minority of the population.

Britain has become less religious — and less white — in the decade since the last census, figures from the 2021 census released Tuesday by the Office for National Statistics revealed.

Some 46.2% of the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian on the day of the 2021 census, down from 59.3% a decade earlier. The Muslim population grew from 4.9% to 6.5% of the population, while 1.7% identified as Hindu, up from 1.5%.

More than 1 in 3 people — 37% — said they had no religion, up from 25% in 2011.

The other parts of the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland, report their census results separately.

# GOP prepares blitz of probes

AP ■ WASHINGTON

House Republicans are promising aggressive oversight of the Biden administration once they assume the majority next year, with a particular focus on the business dealings of presidential son Hunter Biden, illegal immigration at the US-Mexico border and the origins of COVID-19.

Republicans won't have enough votes to advance key legislative priorities if there is no Democratic buy-in, but their oversight of government agencies could put Democrats on the defensive and dampen support for the Biden administration going into the 2024 presidential elections.

Some of the lawmakers expected to lead those investigations once House Republicans select their new committee chairs:

## JUDICIARY'S BIG ROLE

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, is expected to serve as the next chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Jordan helped form and then lead the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus and voted on Jan. 6, 2021, to object to counting Pennsylvania's electoral vote.

President Donald Trump

thought so highly of Jordan that he presented the congressman with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Judiciary Committee handles oversight of the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security and issues such as crime, immigration and protection of civil liberties.

It's typically one of the most partisan committees on Capitol Hill, yet Jordan's combative style stands out even there. The committee would be the place where any effort would begin to impeach a member of the Biden administration, as some Republicans have been proposing for Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Jordan's inquiries to the administration in recent months make clear the committee will investigate the FBI's execution of a search warrant at Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence. He has also advocated for a wide-ranging look at the Biden administration's immigration policies and the origins of COVID-19.

"All those things need to be investigated just so you have the truth," Jordan told conservative activists last summer at a conference. "Plus that will frame up the 2024 race when I hope and



I think President Trump is going to run again and we need to make sure that he wins."

## OVERSIGHT'S LONG LIST

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., is expected to serve as the next chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee and has made clear that investigating President Joe Biden's son Hunter will be one of his top priorities. The Republicans say their investigation of Hunter Biden's business dealings is to "determine whether these activities compromise U.S. National security and President Biden's ability to lead with impartiality."

Comer has also been laying the groundwork for investigating the situation on the U.S.-

Mexico border. He sent a letter to Mayorkas seeking an array of documents and communications pertaining to the administration's border policy. "We cannot endure another year of the Biden Administration's failed border policies," the letter said.

But that's just a slice the committee's focus.

"We're going to investigate between 40 and 50 different things," Comer said Sunday on NBC's "Meet The Press." "We have the capacity. We'll have 25 members on the committee, and we're going to have a staff close to 70. So we have the ability to investigate a lot of things."

The federal government's spending in response to COVID-19 will also be scruti-

nised.

"We believe that there have been hundreds of billions, if not trillions of dollars wasted over the past three years, so that spans two administrations, in the name of COVID."

"We want to have hearings on that. We want to try to determine what happened with the fraudulent unemployment insurance funds, the fraudulent PPP loan funds, some of this money that's being spent for state and local governments in the COVID stimulus money," Comer said.

## AFGHANISTAN IN FOCUS

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, is expected to serve as the next chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee,

which will be investigating the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan. McCaul reiterated a request in mid-October for various documents and directed the State Department to preserve all records related to the chaotic withdrawal, which included the loss of 13 U.S. Service members killed during a suicide bombing attack.

"The way it was done was such a disaster and such a disgrace to our veterans that served in Afghanistan. They deserve answers to the many questions we have," McCaul said on ABC's "This Week." He added: "Why wasn't there a plan to evacuate? How did it go so wrong?"

## SPOTLIGHT ON ENERGY AND TAXES

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., is expected to serve as the next chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has the broadest jurisdiction of any authorizing committee in Congress, from health care to environmental protection to national energy policy. Republicans on the committee have already spent months investigating the origins of COVID-19 and are expected to continue that work in the next Congress.



# China lockdown stir pauses as police flood city streets

AP ■ HONG KONG

With police out in force, there was no word of additional protests against strict government anti-pandemic measures Tuesday in Beijing, as temperatures fell well below freezing. Shanghai, Nanjing and other cities where online calls to gather had been issued were also reportedly quiet.

Rallies against China's unusually strict anti-virus measures spread to several cities over the weekend in the biggest show of opposition to the ruling Communist Party in decades. Authorities eased some regulations, apparently to try to quell public anger, but the government showed no sign of backing down on its larger coronavirus strategy, and analysts expect authorities to quickly silence the dissent.

In Hong Kong on Monday, about 50 students from mainland China sang at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and

some lit candles in a show of support for those in mainland cities who demonstrated against restrictions that have confined millions to their homes.

Hiding their faces to avoid official retaliation, the students chanted, "No PCR tests but freedom!" and "Oppose dictatorship, don't be slaves!"

The gathering and a similar one elsewhere in Hong Kong were the biggest protests there in more than a year under rules imposed to crush a pro-democracy movement in the territory, which is Chinese but has a separate legal system from the mainland.

"I've wanted to speak up for a long time, but I did not get the chance to," said James Cai, a 29-year-old from Shanghai who attended a Hong Kong protest and held up a piece of white paper, a symbol of defiance against the ruling party's pervasive censorship. "If people in the mainland can't tolerate it anymore, then I cannot as well."

# 4 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in occupied West Bank

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A Palestinian man on Tuesday rammed his car into an Israeli soldier, seriously injuring her, before he was shot dead by Israeli police in the occupied West Bank. He was the fourth Palestinian killed in a series of violent incidents throughout the day.

It was the latest bloodshed in a mounting surge of Israeli-Palestinian violence in the wake of a Jerusalem bombing last week that killed two Israelis. The violence began overnight near

the city of Hebron, where fighting erupted between Israeli forces and residents.

The Israeli army said clashes erupted after two army vehicles got stuck due to mechanical issues. It said soldiers opened fire after Palestinians hurled rocks and explosives. It said Palestinian gunmen also opened fire. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Mufid Khalil, 44, was killed and at least eight other people were wounded by Israeli fire.

In a separate incident, two brothers were killed by Israeli



fire during clashes with troops near the village of Kafr Ein, west of Ramallah in the northern West Bank early Tuesday. The Palestinian news agency Wafa identified them as Jawad and Dhafir Rimawi, 22 and 21.

The Israeli military said troops operating in the village

came under attack from suspects throwing rocks and fire-bombs, and soldiers responded with live fire.

Later on Tuesday, a Palestinian driver rammed his car into an Israeli pedestrian near a West Bank settlement north of Jerusalem in what the army said was a deliberate attack. Security camera footage showed the vehicle turning around and slowing in front of the woman, before accelerating and running her over. She was thrown into the air as the driver sped away.

# Ethiopia offers no date for end to blackout in Tigray region

AP ■ NAIROBI

There is "no timeline" for restoring internet access to Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, a senior government official said Tuesday.

The restoration of Tigray's internet service will be carried alongside the resumption of its phone and electricity services, though no date has been set for those goals, Ethiopia's Minister for Innovation and Technology Belete Molla said.

He was speaking at the UN's annual Internet Governance Forum being held this



week in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

"The government of Ethiopia is designing a package that is not only about internet resumption but the resumption of everything, because this is what we need as a people, as a government," Belete said of the

internet shutdown in Tigray. "There is no timeline."

Tigray, home to more than 5 million people, has been mostly without internet, telecommunications and banking since war broke out between federal government troops and forces led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front in November 2020.

A ceasefire deal signed between the warring sides in South Africa earlier this month commits the government to restoring Tigray's basic services, but the communications blackout has not yet been lifted.

## Houston lifts boil-water order affecting more than 2 million

AP ■ HOUSTON

Houston officials lifted an order Tuesday that had called for more than 2 million people in the nation's fourth-largest city to boil their tap water before drinking or using it. The boil order had been in effect since Sunday, when a power outage at a purification plant caused pressure to drop.

The order led to the closure of businesses and schools, including the Houston Independent School District, which cancelled classes Monday and Tuesday.

# Religious extremists desecrate Ahmadi graves in Pakistan

PTI ■ LAHORE

Several graves belonging to the minority Ahmadi community have been desecrated allegedly by religious extremists in Pakistan's Punjab province, an official said on Tuesday, the second such incident against them in over three months.

Jamaat Ahmadiya Pakistan official Amir Mahmood told PTI that the tombstones of the graves were desecrated at Prem Kot graveyard in Hafizabad district, some 100 kilometres from Lahore. He said that those who damaged the graves also wrote "Ahmadi dog" on them, which is very distressing for the families.

"The Ahmadis living in Pakistan are not at peace even after their demise. The

Ahmadis are not safe in their graves," he said.

Mahmood demanded the arrest of those involved in the desecration of graves of the minority community.

In the past also, such incidents have taken place in other Ahmadi graveyards in Punjab but not a single culprit was arrested or put on trial. On August 24, 16 graves of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan's Punjab province were allegedly desecrated by religious extremists for using Islamic symbols on gravestones at a cemetery in Chak 203 RB Manawala, Faisalabad district, some 150 kilometres from Lahore.

Minorities, especially Ahmadis, are vulnerable in Pakistan and they are often targeted by religious extremists.



# THE SUN & PLAY: DESPERATE INDIA HOPE FOR FULL GAME IN FINAL ODI

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Frustrated by the fickle weather, a desperate Indian team would pray for a rain-free final ODI against New Zealand in its bid to finish on an even keel in a series that neither had context nor any major take-aways.

There is forecast of scattered showers in Christchurch and nothing can be more irritating than playing a series where the Gen-Next of Indian cricket hardly got any game time to show their prowess.

Out of five white-ball games that also includes three-match T20I series, two matches (one T20I and one ODI) didn't yield any result and one game (T20I) was curtailed significantly and ended in a tie due to Duckworth-Lewis method.

With the series in line, Shikhar Dhawan and his men would aim to put up an impactful performance at the picturesque Hagley Oval ground, which has traditionally helped the seam bowlers and has an average score in the 230 range in the past few years.

The Indian batting in first Powerplay (first 10 overs) has been much talked about and even though skipper Dhawan has been a prolific ODI opener

over the years, even he understands that to secure his place for the next World Cup, his approach needs a sea change.

His young opening partner Shubman Gill, however, has shown more intent in shot selection with scores of 50 and 45 not out in the two games.

So has Indian cricket's current blue-eyed boy Suryakumar Yadav, whose three sixes in a short 12.5 overs of play at the Seddon Park, did send the Indian supporters into raptures.

But the bigger challenge for Indian batting line-up will be to put up an above par score against New Zealand on a ground where swing bowlers have ruled the roost in the past few ODI games.

And for that, not just the openers or Surya but the likes of Rishabh Pant also needs to step up and be counted.

Rishabh's ODI record is pretty impressive but currently, the runs have dried up since the tour of England (primarily in 20 over cricket) and he is one player, who needs to fire in order to ensure that Indian middle-order looks competitive against a quality Black Caps attack.

Rishabh's presence and lack of bowling options among the specialist batters also effectively mean that Sanju Samson has



to once again sit out, like the last game where Deepak Hooda, because of his all-round skills, was preferred over the immensely popular cricketer from Kerala.

Since the last match was a wash-out, it will be interesting if interim head coach VVS Laxman decides to shuffle with the playing XI, especially the

bowling attack where Kuldeep Yadav is yet to get an opportunity. But to leave out either Yuzvendra Chahal or Washington Sundar will be doing them a dis-

service.

Shardul Thakur looked pedestrian in the opening ODI in Auckland and, in all likelihood, Arshdeep Singh, Deepak Chahal and the fiery Umran Malik will continue to lead the pace attack.

For the New Zealand pacers Matt Henry, Tim Southee and Lockie Ferguson, there couldn't be a better venue to exploit the frailties in India's batting to the fullest. Similarly, the Indian bowling attack would get a conducive bowling track to ask some probing questions to the likes of Tom Latham and Kane Williamson, who have proved to be the thorn in flesh during the last game.

**TEAMS**

**India:** Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Deepak Hooda, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Deepak Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Shardul Thakur and 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 and Lockie Ferguson.



## Umran's speed helps me to deceive batters with lesser pace: Arshdeep

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Their bowling styles are like chalk and cheese but Arshdeep Singh finds Umran Malik's frightening pace beneficial as the batters are always struggling to adjust due to the marked difference in their respective speed.

The Jammu pace sensation is one of the fastest bowlers in world cricket alongside South African Anrich Nortje, Englishman Mark Wood to name a few, who regularly hit 150 clicks.

Arshdeep is more of a swing bowler, who normally when in rhythm, hits around early 130 kmph mark.

Both the IPL players made their ODI debut against New Zealand in the opening game in Auckland and the Punjab man wants the partnership to continue forever.

"It is always good to bowl alongside Umran and he is also fun-loving so the dressing room atmosphere remains nice," Arshdeep said ahead of the third and final ODI against New Zealand, here on Wednesday.

"As far as bowling is concerned, I get a lot of benefit from Umran's bowling as batters need to adjust heavily from 155 kmph to 135 kmph. And they get deceived by pace and we enjoy bowling with each other. I expect we are able to continue this partnership for longest time," he said.

Having made a name in T20Is, Arshdeep doesn't want to change too much while playing the 50-over format.

"My way of bowling is attack at the start and defensive at the end in T20Is. Not very different in ODIs for me and wherever I get a chance, I will try to do well."

Fans have a right to criticise

Arshdeep in his short career has already seen the ugly side of fandom when he was mercilessly trolled on social media after India's loss to Pakistan in an Asia Cup game in Dubai. A drunk fan had also abused him while he was getting into the team bus.

But showing maturity beyond years, the 23-year-old said that he has learnt to take everything in his stride.

"If you do well, you get love and praise and when you don't, the fans have the right to criticise us. They also love the game and the team. You will get love and brickbats both along the way but key is to accept both with equal humility," Arshdeep said.

Recently in Australia, he got a lot of support and there were quite a number of devoted Arshdeep fans, who would have his photographs printed on their T-shirts.

"It feels great to see (people wearing T-shirt with his photo) and pen lyrics dedicated to him but focus is always on the game, good or bad, one needs to conduct one's self well," he said.

For him staying in the moment is the most important thing.

"When you play the game, you want to enjoy rather than think that I want to be the main bowler of the side. You want to stay in the moment rather than think where I will be one year down the line. If you stay in present, it helps you as a player," said Arshdeep, who has 33 wickets in 21 T20Is.

About the rain-affected series, he said that some things are beyond anyone's control.

"Weather is not in our control and even during breaks one needs to be mentally prepared. We need to follow the process and there should be no let up in preparation," he concluded.

# Unbeaten West Indies upbeat before 2-test Australian series

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The West Indies have had little success in the shortest form of cricket lately but veteran Jason Holder says that won't diminish the test team's ambitions for the two-match series against Australia beginning Wednesday.

The Caribbean side lost in the preliminary stage of the Twenty20 World Cup in late October in Australia, beaten by both Ireland and Scotland. Those losses meant the team which won the T20 World Cup in 2012 and 2016 didn't qualify for the main tournament.

Coach Phil Simmons has quit and the two tests in Australia — the second a day-night match beginning Dec. 8 in Adelaide — will be his last in charge.

Holder says the test team is going in the opposite direction — unbeaten this year with series wins at home against Bangladesh and England.

"If you look at the nucleus of this test team it's been together for the last five or six years, which is really important," Holder told Australian Associated Press from Perth, Western Australia, site of the first test. "In comparison to the other (West Indies) sides, there is probably a little bit more chopping and changing.

"Our focus right now is test cricket. We put the Twenty20 World Cup behind us and we are just trying to focus on that."

Five players are in the test squad that played on the T20 team, including fast bowler Alzarri Joseph. As a 19-year-old, Joseph impressed Australian players during a 2016 net session in the Caribbean. Joseph will be



making his first test appearance in Australia — the Caribbean side hasn't play for the Frank Worrell Trophy for seven years Down Under.

"We saw him just bowling thunderbolts," Australia opener David Warner said of the 2016 net session. "On those wickets. . . It was a bit daunting. We just didn't know where he'd come from."

Joseph debuted for the West

Indies two months later and has since taken 62 wickets in 22 tests.

"He was young back then. It's good to see him evolve from then," Warner told AAP. "He's a fantastic bowler, he's got a good record. I faced him in the IPL when he first came in and took (six wickets) against us.

"That's what West Indies cricket needs, they need guys coming in bowling at high speeds. . . . Back to what they

were in the '80s and '90s."

Both the new stadium in Perth and the Adelaide Oval are expected to favor fast bowlers.

Holder confirmed that Tagenarine Chanderpaul, son of West Indies legend Shivnarine, would debut for the visitors.

Meanwhile, Warner said he will reassess his future at the end of the test summer in Australia, with the opener likely to be the first of the current team to retire from red-ball cricket.

Warner indicated earlier this month he could retire from test cricket within a year and play on until the 2024 T20 World Cup. The 50-over World Cup is also scheduled for next year in India.

"They're the whisperers," Warner said when asked if this might be his last test season in Australia. "I did make some comments but these legs are still fresh. I'm still scoring runs. I'll have to assess again at the end of the season and speak to the family."

## There are no cowards in Australian team: Cummins hits back at Langer

PTI ■ PERTH

Test captain Pat Cummins on Tuesday strongly hit back at former coach Justin Langer, saying there are "no cowards" in the Australian team and added that his unsavoury comments won't distract them ahead of their Test series against West Indies.

Last week, Langer had lashed out at the "cowards" in the national team, saying he "hated"

that some players were going behind his back and leaking details from inside the dressing room.

"There's no cowards in an Australian cricket team, not ever," Cummins told reporters on Tuesday ahead of their opening Test here.

"I'd probably never disclose private conversations. I think it's disappointing sometimes the focus gets drawn to off-field issues but it hasn't really affected our team."

Langer had stepped down as chief coach in February after he was not offered a long-term contract extension by Cricket Australia.

The 52-year-old had faced complaints about his "rigid" coaching style from senior players such as Aaron Finch, Pat Cummins and former Test captain Tim Paine.

However, Langer later retracted from his comments, saying "they're like my little brothers!"

## Focus on defence as Indian men's hockey team faces formidable Australia in 3rd Test

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The Indian men's hockey team will look to address its defensive woes when it takes on world's number one side Australia in the third Test here on Wednesday, hoping to bounce back from back-to-back defeats in the five-match series here on Wednesday.

A series of defensive lapses saw world number five India go down in the first two Tests despite taking early lead and this will be area which the team will need to improve in the third match. India conceded a last-minute goal to lose the opening Test 4-5. In the second game, they were leading through skipper Harmanpreet Singh's third-minute goal but were blown away in the final quarter to go down 4-7.

This series is crucial for both the teams as it's a part of preparations for the World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela in Odisha, starting January 13.

"We have gone through the



errors we have made in the first two matches. Australia is so quick in converting from the set plays even if they find the slightest of gaps, hence we must structure our defence better," Harmanpreet said.

Both matches were fiercely fought with India and Australia going full throttle in their attack. They have utilized speed to their advantage and have scored a total of 20 goals in just two matches. The two matches also saw many penalty corners being traded between both teams.

"When it is high-scoring matches and both teams are going full steam in their attack,

one too many penalty corners are created," Harmanpreet said. "While we have managed to create penalty corners and also score from it, we have given away quite a few PCs as well which need to be curtailed in the upcoming matches."

The series is the first meeting between the two teams after Australia thrashed India 7-0 in the CWG final in Birmingham.

Talking about the takeaways from the two games, Harmanpreet said, "Good interception and counter attacks continue to be our plus point. We have also been on par with Australia in terms of speed and fitness.

# All-round India A take opening-day honours against Bangladesh A

PTI ■ COX'S BAZAR (BANGLADESH)

The pace-spin combo of Navdeep Saini and Saurabh Kumar impressed the most as India A grabbed the opening-day honours after a commanding performance against Bangladesh A in the first unofficial Test here on Tuesday.

Opting to field after winning the toss, Saini (3/21), Saurabh (4/23) and Mukesh Kumar (2/25) helped India A bundle out their opponents for a paltry 112 in only 45 overs.

In reply, the visitors finished strongly at 120 for no loss to go ahead by eight runs by the time stumpers were drawn. Yashasvi Jaiswal and India A skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran were looking good at 61 and 53, respectively, when play ended on the first day.

After Saini and Mukesh picked up five of the top six with just 63 runs on the board, the hosts recovered somewhat to cross three figures owing to Mosaddek Hossain's 63.

Hossain struck six fours and three sixes after Bangladesh were reeling at 26 for five one stage. However, the problem with the home team was that it's batters also struggled against spin, with left-arm spinner Saurabh running through the lower-order



to finish with excellent figures.

The 29-year-old Saurabh's performance assumes significance as he could be drafted into the Indian Test team for the upcoming two-match series in Bangladesh if star all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is ruled out.

When their time to bat came, India A were served well by the duo of young Jaiswal and Easwaran as the pair not only added 120

runs but also scored them at a good rate.

While Jaiswal struck eight fours in his 106-ball knock, Easwaran found the fence six times while facing 111 deliveries at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium.

Even as veteran Easwaran led from the front, Jaiswal will resume his quest to bring up a sixth hundred in only his eighth first-class match and consolidate the visitors' position in the opener.

Earlier in the day, Delhi pacer Saini struck the first blow when he bowled Mahmudul Hasan Joy, who was beaten by late swing.

Mukesh had the other opener, Zakir Hasan caught behind before distorting Mominul Haque's stumps.

Saini then had Najmul Hossain Shanto caught at third slip, before skipper Mohammad Mithun went for a wide one to leave Bangladesh A tottering at 26 for five.

Mosaddek sought to revive the innings but there was no support at the other end.

However, the Indian openers quickly managed to get the measure of the Bangladesh bowling attack, as the likes of Khaled Ahmed, Rejaur Rahman Raja and Tajjul Islam failed to either get a breakthrough or contain.

Uttar Pradesh team for the National Road Cycling Championship, to be held at Nashik from January 7, was announced on Tuesday.

**The team: (Senior girl's)** Anushka Sharma, Ashita Dhawan, Kusumlata Rathore, Ratna Sen; **(Junior girl's)** Tanu Bharti; **(Junior boy's)** Amritansh, Santosh Singh; **(Sub-Junior boy's)** Ashutosh Kumar Singh.

### ANNUAL ATHLETICS MEET



Ranjeet Pathak, Pankaj Nath, Shivam Sharma, and Shubham Mishra bagged gold medals in 800m, shotput throw, high jump and 1500m respectively, on the opening day of the 52nd Annual Athletics Meet of BSNV PG College on Tuesday. Shakshi Singh bagged a gold in girl's shotput throw while Suman Pal won the 1500m gold. Earlier, BJP leader Dinesh Sharma inaugurated the event.

## Lakshya regains career-best sixth spot, Gayatri-Treesa breaks into top 20 in BWF rankings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen on Tuesday jumped two spots to regain his career-best sixth position in the latest BWF World Rankings.

The 21-year-old from Almora, who had a stellar run this season, has 75,024 points from 23 tournaments.

Kidambi Srikanth and H S Prannoy remained static at world number 11 and 12 respectively. Women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand broke into the top 20 by jumping two places to world number 19. The pair, winner of bronze medal in Birmingham Commonwealth Games, has 46,020 points from 17 tournaments.

French Open and Commonwealth Games champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty remained in the seventh spot in men's doubles.



