

CITY 3
BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY TOWARDS
NATURE, ANIMAL PROTECTION: CM**OPINION 6**
DON'T MESS WITH
THE RUSSIANS**WORLD 10**
N KOREA FLIES WARPLANES NEAR
S KOREA AFTER MISSILE LAUNCHES

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY OCTOBER 7, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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INDIA TO FACE
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ASIA CUP T20
12 SPORT

36 dead, mostly kids, in Thai day-care carnage

Ex-cop on shooting spree rushes home, shoots wife, child, then kills himself

AP ■ BANGKOK

A former police officer facing a drug charge burst into a day care centre on Thursday in Thailand, killing dozens of preschoolers and teachers and then shooting more people as he fled. At least 36 people, including at least 24 children, were slain in the deadliest rampage in the nation's history.

The assailant, who was fired earlier this year, took his own life after killing his wife and child at home.

Photos taken by first responders showed the school's floor littered with the tiny bodies of children still on their blankets, where they had been taking an afternoon nap. The images showed slashes to their faces and gunshots to their heads and pools of blood.

A teacher told ThaiPBS public broadcaster that the assailant got out of a car and immediately shot a man eating lunch outside, then fired more shots. When the attacker paused to reload, the teacher had an opportunity to run inside.

"I ran to the back, the children were asleep," said the young woman, who did not



In this image taken from video, a distraught woman is comforted outside the site of an attack at a daycare centre in the town of Nongbua Lamphu, north eastern Thailand on Thursday

give her name, choking back her words. "The children were two or three years old."

The attack took place in the rural town of Nongbua Lamphu in northeastern Thailand, in one of the country's poorest regions.

Another witness said staff at the day care had locked the door, but the suspect shot his way in. "The teacher who died, she had a child in her arms," the witness, whose name wasn't given, told Thailand's Kom Chad Luek television. "I didn't think he would kill children, but he shot at the door and shot right through it."

At least 10 people were

wounded, including six critically, police spokesman Archayon Kraithong said.

A video taken by a first responder arriving at the scene showed rescuers rushing into the single-story building past a shattered glass front door, with drops of blood visible on the ground in the entryway.

In footage posted online after the attack, frantic family members could be heard weeping outside the building. One image showed the floor smeared with blood where sleeping mats were scattered around the room. Pictures of the alphabet and other colorful decorations adorned the walls.

Police identified the suspect as 34-year-old former police officer Panya Kamrap. Police Major General Paisal Luesomboon told PPTV in an interview that he was fired from the force earlier this year because of the drug charge.

In a Facebook posting, Thai police chief Gen. Dumrongrak Kittiprasad said the man, who had been a sergeant, was due in court on Friday for a hearing in the case involving methamphetamine, and speculated that he may have chosen the day care because it was close to his home.

Continued on Page 9

Infant among 4 abducted Sikhs found dead in US

Punjab CM urges MEA to ask US to conduct foolproof probe into murder of Hoshiarpur family

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

All four Sikh family members, including an eight-month-old baby girl, who were kidnapped in the US State of California earlier this week, have been found dead in an orchard, US authorities said on Wednesday.

The family, originally from Harsi Pind in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, was kidnapped from their newly-opened trucking business in Merced County, California, on Monday.

Merced County (California) Sheriff Vern Warnke said the bodies of 36-year-old Jasdeep Singh, 27-year-old Jasleen Kaur, their eight-month-old child Aroohi Dheri and the baby's uncle, 39-year-old Amandeep Singh were found on Wednesday evening in an orchard near Indiana Road & Hutchinson Road.

The murder of four members of a Punjabi-Sikh family has sent shockwaves in Punjab compelling Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to seek the Union External Affairs



Images are displayed of 8-month-old Aroohi Dheri with her mother Jasleen Kaur, her father Jasdeep Singh, and her uncle Amandeep Singh, at a news conference in Merced, California, on Wednesday. (Right) Accused Jesus Salgado

AP/PTI

Minister's intervention. He has urged the Union Minister Dr S Jaishankar to impress upon the US Government to conduct through probe into the "gruesome" murder.

A pall of gloom descended on the native village of 36-year-old Jasdeep Singh, and his 39-year-old brother Amandeep Singh — Harsi Pind in Tanda block of Hoshiarpur district in Punjab — as soon the news broke. After receiving the news of their abduction on Monday, Jasdeep's parents had returned

to the US on Tuesday night. Settled in the US, Jasdeep's parents were on India visit for a spiritual trip to Uttarakhand when they received the news.

At 27-year-old Jasleen Kaur's village Jandir in Jalandhar, the family is shocked with relatives and villagers thronging their house, expressing shock at the "unbelievable" incident.

Shaken, Jasleen's parents were not in a mental state to speak. After tying the nuptial knot with Jasdeep in January



2019, Jasleen went to the US in October 2020; and was planning to visit her parents in January next year.

Continued on Page 9

Gambia cough syrup deaths: DCGI probes; Haryana sends syrup samples to WB lab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's drug regulator, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), has begun a probe into charges that the use of a domestic cough syrup could potentially be linked to death of children in Gambia.

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday warned that four "contaminated" and "substandard" cough syrups allegedly produced by Maiden Pharmaceuticals Limited based in Haryana's Sonapat could be the reason for the deaths in the West African nation.

The Haryana Government is sending the samples of the syrups to the Central Drug Lab in Kolkata for testing and affirming any possible "contamination". Its results will guide further course of action.

Details on Page 8



South Africans celebrate the dismissal of another Indian wicket in the first One-Day International at the Atal Bihari stadium in city on Thursday. South Africa won the match by 9 runs.

Report on Page 12

Uttarkashi avalanche: 12 more bodies recovered

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The authorities recovered twelve more bodies of mountaineers on Thursday after a team from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) was trapped in an avalanche at Draupadi Ka Danda in Uttarkashi on Tuesday.

A total of 61 people were trapped in the avalanche out of which, 32 have been rescued safely, 16 are dead and 13 are still missing.

A team of experts from Gulmarg in Jammu & Kashmir, High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) joined the rescue operation with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and NIM.

The officials said more teams have also been sent to the advanced base camp from ITBP Matli in Uttarkashi.

PFI ban: Justice Dinesh appointed presiding officer of UAPA Tribunal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has appointed Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma of the Delhi High Court as the presiding officer of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal in the matter of recently-banned

Popular Front of India (PFI) and its affiliates.

Once an organisation is banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a tribunal is set up by the Government to adjudicate whether or not there is sufficient cause or ground for

declaring it an unlawful association.

According to an office memorandum issued by the Department of Justice, Justice Sharma's time as head of the tribunal will count as "actual service".

Continued on Page 9

Sonia joins Rahul, adds sparkle to Bharat Jodo Yatra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Drums, trumpets, and slogans greeted Congress president Sonia Gandhi as she briefly joined her son Rahul Gandhi and a teeming multitude of party workers and aam admi during the Bharat Jodo padyatra in Mandya in south Karnataka on Thursday.

This is the first time that Sonia joined a public event after recovering from Covid-19 earlier this year. The Congress leader has not been keeping well and she recently visited the USA for treatment.

She joined the yatra twice for brief periods and in between took a car ride. Rahul remained by her side throughout. At one point, he was seen persuading her to end her walk.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra resumed from Pandavapura in Mandya on Thursday after a two-day break. Sonia joined the padyatra after it left Bellale village on Thursday morning.

Due to the massive



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his mother and party interim president Sonia Gandhi during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Mandya district on Thursday

PTI

response from public and party workers, Sonia also tweaked her programme schedule to stay with the yatis for two hours as against the 30 minutes planned earlier. The party tweeted a photo of Rahul tying his mother's shoelaces during the walk, captioning it "Ma (mother)".

The picture went viral on social media during the day. Congress also posted a picture of the two on Twitter, and said, "Those shielded by love fear nothing! On the road, marching ahead."

Continued on Page 9

Acting on Rahul's jumbo advice: Karnataka CM

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday said he will respond to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's letter, seeking his intervention for providing timely treatment to a "severely injured" elephant calf at the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, on humanitarian grounds.



Minor gang-raped, 2 more sexually assaulted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stern action and various measures taken by the government under Mission Shakti seem to have failed to curb crime against women as several more cases of rape poured in during the last 24 hours.

In the first case reported from Sultanpur, a 13-year-old minor girl returning from her coaching class was gang-raped by three persons. The three accused allegedly caught hold of the minor girl, gang-raped her, and then fled.

The victim, a Class 8 student of Kadipur, was returning home late on Tuesday evening when the three gang-raped her in a deserted area. The family of the victim has filed a complaint against the accused.

According to police officials, two of the accused have been arrested while the third one is still absconding.

Superintendent of Police Somen Verma reached Kadipur late in the night and enquired about the incident from the family members of the victim and the police officials. The SP assured strict action against the accused.

In another incident reported from Hapur, a teenager was present alone in her house in a village in Hafizpur area and taking advantage of the situation late on Wednesday

College girl raped, murdered, hanged

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, a 19-year-old BSc student was allegedly raped inside her house and then murdered and her body was hanged by the rapist before fleeing the spot in Mainpuri.

The incident took place in Bhogain area of Mainpuri. A heavy police force was deployed in the village and the body was sent for autopsy. The student was strangled to death after being raped.

As soon as the information about the incident was received, the superintendent of police reached the spot with a heavy police force. A

dog squad and forensic experts were also called. The accused escaped from the village after the incident.

According to information, the 19-year-old undergraduate student, a native of Sheesham village of Mainpuri, was alone in the house at the time of the incident. Her father had gone to the city and her mother to Agra for work, while her younger 13-year-old sister had gone to attend coaching classes.

Taking advantage of the situation, the accused, Pushpendra Lodhi of the same village, entered the house. He took the girl hostage and allegedly raped

her. As per information, when the girl threatened to complain, Pushpendra strangled her to death. After the murder, he hanged her body on the noose and escaped after closing the door of the house from outside.

When the younger sister reached home, she saw the victim hanging her sister with a scarf in an "objectionable" condition and informed the people about the incident. She also claimed to have seen the accused fleeing from the house.

The people of the village gathered at the house of the deceased. On receiving the information, SP Kamlesh Dixit reached the spot with a

heavy police force. Senior police officials said that several teams were on the lookout for the accused and he would be nabbed soon.

Earlier on September 15, two teenage Dalit sisters were found hanging from a tree in Lakhimpur Kheri after being allegedly raped and murdered. The police had arrested six people in connection with the case. The girls were lured to the farm and raped by Sohail and Junaid. After the girls asked the accused to marry them, Sohail, Hafizul, and Junaid killed them. They then called Karimuddin and Arif and hanged the girls from a tree to make it look a suicide case.

Reports said that Arif, on promise of a job in the Railways, allegedly called the victim and took her to a hotel and raped her. The girl alleged that Arif even threatened to upload her compromising videos on social media and issued life threats if she did not convert to Islam and marry him

On the basis of the complaint, police registered a case against four accused and have started an investigation.

As per reports, the girl is a BSc student and Nahar Ghati Miyan Ganj resident Arif befriended her by giving his name as Amit about six months back. They then started talking on the phone. During this time, he also shot her video in a compromising position. In her complaint, the girl alleged that Arif and his family members came to her house and threatened her and exerted pressure on her to change her religion. They also tried to force her to have nikah (Islamic wedding) with Arif.

Superintendent of Police Kunwar Anupam Singh said that the accused had been arrested and sent to jail and a case had been registered against Arif alias Tanveer Mirza, his cousin Noor Alam, brother Shehnaz and sister-in-law Baby and further investigation was underway.

Imposter duping widows, divorced women on promise of marriage held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An imposter pretending to be a civil judge allegedly sexually exploited several widows and divorced women after promising to marry them and duped them of lakhs of rupees. He would trap women by going through advertisements in newspapers. He ran out of luck on Wednesday after the cyber cell team of Lucknow police laid a trap by publishing an advertisement in a newspaper and also mentioned a mobile number. He fell in the trap and was nabbed. He was identified as Vishnu Shanker Gupta of Kanpur, a law graduate who practised for a while.

He singled out women who were either divorced or widows and looking for partners. As per police, his biggest target was a woman from whom he took Rs 43.50 lakh in cash, ornaments worth Rs 5 lakh and two high-end mobile devices worth Rs 3.3 lakh. He also sexually exploited her.

A case in this connection was registered at Hazratganj police station. The cyber officials worked on the case and it surfaced that the accused was an imposter, cops said, adding Vishnu confessed to have duped 15-20 women.

"His targets have been affluent widows and divorced women. He used to contact them through advertisements published in newspapers. He would call the women and introduce himself as a judge. In his profile details, he had mentioned his occupation as judge," the cops said.

In his confession, Vishnu

said he was passing through a hard time while practising law when he conceived the idea to dupe widows and divorced women from well-off families.

He said he initially targeted some upper middle class women and duped them. As his crime remained unreported in view of his profile, he continued to target women.

He further confessed that he was aware of hierarchy in courts and would pretend to be a judge posted in remote districts. He added that he used to change his mobile number after duping a woman.

The police recovered Rs 4 lakh in cash, ornaments worth several lakh, four mobile phones and six rubber stamps. The police said the accused was arrested by use of cyber surveillance.

Meanwhile, a woman was sent her morphed photos and threatened with dire consequences. Later, her mobile number was added to a group in which porn videos were shared. In her complaint, the woman said her photo was taken from her social media profile and video and voice calls were also made to her.

"I called him back to demand an explanation but he lost his cool. He threatened to defame me by sending my morphed photo to different WhatsApp groups if I blocked his number," the victim said.

She said the accused later added her mobile number to a group in which porn videos were shared. "The name of the group is a collection of cuss words. He is constantly defaming me," she alleged.



NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Kallu to Kallu Ahmad S/O Banne for future purpose. Jadariyan Tola Kara Kaushambi.

NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Shahzan to Shahzan Ali S/O Barkat Ali for future purpose. 130/567-A Babupurwa Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Shanu to Shanu Ahmad S/O Naseem Ahamad for future purpose. 132/527 Munshipurwa Babupurwa Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Amarjeet Singh Bhatiya To Amarjeet Singh for all future purpose, Amarjeet Singh S/O Amrik Singh R/O 109/153 Jawahar Nagar Kanpur

सूचना

सूचित हो कि मेरा नाम विशाल वर्मा है। लेकिन मेरे पिता के आफिस रिकार्ड में मेरा नाम विशाल अंकित है। जबकि यह दोनों नाम एक ही व्यक्ति यानी कि मेरे हैं। विशाल वर्मा पुत्र रघो विक्रम कुमार निवासी 356/340/1227 अशोक विहार आलमनगर, लखनऊ।

NOTICE

Correct date of birth of My daughter Anika Gupta is 03.08.2007 as recorded in Aadhar Card, whereas in Seth Anandram Jaipuria School , Cantt, Kanpur record her date of birth has been wrongly recorded 03.10.2007. Akhilesh Gupta S/o Shri Satish Chandra Gupta R/o - 4/7,Navsheel Apartment, Cantt, Kanpur.

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Police inaction forces rape victim to end life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A rape survivor in Ambedkar Nagar district ended her life by allegedly committing suicide after the police did not act on her complaint and even reprimanded her for pursuing her case.

The father of the deceased victim alleged that his daughter had even gone to the office of the superintendent of police where she was scolded and asked to return home. "After this, she took the extreme step of ending her life," he told reporters.

"On September 16, my daughter had gone to school but did not return home. We filed a missing complaint with the police but no action was taken.

She came back after two days and told us that she had been taken to Lucknow by two youths who raped her in a hotel room," the victim's father told reporters.

The father alleged that the police were exerting pressure on his daughter to go for a compromise in the case. He said the girl had even told the Malipur police that she would commit suicide if they did not take action.

Superintendent of Police Ajit Sinha, said, "Medical examination of the girl was done in this case. On the basis of the statement, rape by two people has been confirmed. Action will be taken by registering a case against the unknown persons. Senior police officials visited her home after we learnt of

the suicide. We will take action in the matter with promptness," the SP said.

Sinha said that a departmental inquiry had been ordered against Malipur Station House Officer Chandrabhan Yadav for 'closing' the case file.

Meanwhile, the district magistrate admitted that there was negligence in dealing with the case and a team had been formed under the chief development officer (CDO) for investigation.

Earlier, District Magistrate Samuel Paul N met the victim's family members and assured them of strict action against the accused. He also promised to provide them with financial assistance.

Meanwhile in Jhansi, a 17-year-old girl immolated herself, police said on Wednesday. The police also found a suicide note left behind by the girl, based on which they registered a case of abetment to suicide. According to the police, the incident was reported from Garwa village which falls under Lahchura police station of the district. Police said that the girl, identified as Shilpi, left behind a suicide note in which she said that the reason for her taking the extreme step was that she was having an affair with a boy and their affair had gone wrong.

The girl was heartbroken and in a state of depression she killed herself last Monday night.

Fiscal activities in UP on upswing: Khanna

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, on Thursday, said that the state's revenue collection had increased to Rs 14,661.89 crore in September this fiscal, which showed that the fiscal activities in the state were on the upswing amid talks of recession across the world.

"There has been a huge increase in non-tax revenue collection in the state as there has been an increase of Rs 3,123.73 crore in the non-tax revenue items of the state. Thus, the total revenue collection in September was Rs 14,661.89 crore," the finance minister said while addressing reporters here. He said this increase seemed to be huge as in the month of September 2021-22 only Rs 11,538.16 crore revenue was collected.

"Different departments have been able to collect more revenue than the set target. This shows that the policies of the government are on the right track," he said.

The minister said that there was an increase in revenue receipt in all non-tax items while the revenue receipt decreased only in the Excise Department.

"There is a big increase in the collection of goods and services tax (GST) and value-added tax (VAT). There is a bumper collection of revenue in the Stamps and Registration Department. This month the revenue in the Transport Department increased by Rs 73.20 crore. Revenue receipts also increased in the Geology and Mining Department," the minister said. Khanna said that the rate of VAT per litre petrol and diesel in Uttar Pradesh was less compared to other states. At present, VAT on petrol is Rs 15.08 per litre and on diesel it is Rs 12.76 per litre.

"Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and talks of recession, economic activities are on the upswing which is reflected in the revenue collection," the minister said.



Women participating in 'sindoor khela' ahead of Durga idol immersion in Lucknow

Pioneer

Man found murdered, two others dead in mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man was found murdered while two died in separate incidents of road mishaps in PGI police station area during the last 24 hours.

A 32-year-old man, identified as Chandan Yadav of Chiraiyabagh locality, was found murdered in a graveyard in the area on Thursday. He had injuries on the ear and private parts, according to his family. His brother Sunil Kumar Yadav said Chandan used to stay in the graveyard and had not visited home for quite some time. On Thursday, some of the locals found him lying in a pool of blood. As the news reached his family members, they reached the scene and identified the body. Sunil said Chandan had injury marks on one of the ears and private parts. The police said Chandan was a drug addict and he spent his days at the graveyard with alcoholics. The police suspected Chandan was killed during a brawl with his mates. However, the police could not explain why the attackers targeted his private parts.

Meanwhile, a fruit vendor, identified as Inspector Singh (40) of Aseewan in Unnao, was fatally mowed down by a speeding car in Telibagh locality under PGI police station area around 11 pm on Wednesday.

Reports said Singh was returning home in Sheetal Khara when the speeding car hit him from behind. He went flying while his cart was also damaged. He was rushed to the SGPGI trauma centre where he was pronounced dead. His friend Manoj Singh lodged a complaint in this regard.

In another accident, an auto driver, identified as Ramesh Chand aka Pappu (36) of Mohanlanjan, was fatally knocked down by a speeding car near Kali Gujram Dharamkanta on Thursday. Reports said Ramesh, along with his family, was coming to Lucknow for some work. On the way, Ramesh parked the auto on the roadside and was crossed the road divider to buy peanuts. When he was returning, he was mowed down by a speeding car. He sustained grave injuries and was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre

where he was pronounced dead. His wife Rubi Shukla lodged a complaint in this regard.

MAN CRUSHED TO DEATH

Reckless driving by a tractor-trolley driver claimed the life of a 45-year-old man, employed as an electrician in Eco Garden. He was crushed to death in Manak Nagar police station area around noon on Thursday. The victim was identified as Amit Kumar of Indrapuri Colony in Krishna Nagar. He was cycling his way to his house when tragedy struck on the road connecting Puran Nagar crossing and Manak Nagar railway station road. He is survived by wife Urmila and daughter Anushka. Eyewitnesses said the man died on the spot. They said the tractor-trolley was being driven recklessly and some of the commuters slapped the errant driver when he was trying to flee the scene. He was identified as Atul Dixit of Krishna Nagar. Earlier, eight women were recently killed in a mishap involving tractor-trolley.

CITYBRIEFS

TWO WOMEN HURT AS DURGA PUJA PANDAL COMES CRASHING DOWN

Two women were injured as a Durga Puja pandal in Eldeco Udayan in SGPGI area collapsed amidst incessant rains on Wednesday. There was panic in the area as the pandal came down crashing, trapping devotees. Locals informed police and also started the rescue operation. Fortunately though, only two women suffered minor injuries and were rushed to SGPGI. They were identified as P Dey (47) and Madhulika (42), both of SGPGI area. The incident occurred place when the devotees were preparing for a ritual. Police, fire tenders and senior officials of district administration rushed to the spot. The police said all those trapped under the pandal were rescued. Dey sustained injuries in the fore-

head while Madhulika in the leg.

CMS CONFERRED 'BEST SCHOOL OF UP' TITLE

City Montessori School has been conferred the title of 'Best School of UP' by India Spelling Bee, an educational organisation, for providing the best education to its students, as well as encouraging and guiding them to perform their best in various fields on the basis of their interest and inherent natural talent. CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi congratulated the principals and teachers of all campuses for this honour. Chief PRO Hari Om Sharma said because of its unique education system, CMS is ranked among the best schools of the country. "It is the result of these achievements that Lucknow has become the centre of quality education in the country," he added.

COURT NOTICE
(BY ADVERTISEMENT)
(Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTERSTATE JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 97 OF 2022
IN THE MATTER OF
THE GOODS OF
Late Vikas Srivastava son of
Jawahar Lal Srivastava Resident of
219/81/13 Tilak Nagar Allahabad, Prayagraj
.....Deceased.
Jawahar Lal SrivastavaPetitioner.
WHEREAS an application has
been made by Jawahar Lal Srivastava
Son of Late Kedar Nath Srivastava,
Resident of 219/81/13 Tilak Nagar
Allahpur, Prayagraj for the probate of the
will (or Letters of Administration to the
estate) of Late Vikas Srivastava
deceased, who died at Lotus
Hospital, Faridabad Haryana on
06.05.2021 AND WHEREAS, the 11th
day of November, 2022 has been fixed
for hearing of the said application.
THIS CITATION is issued calling
upon all persons claiming to have any
interest to come and see the proceedings
if they think fit before the grant of
probate (or Letters of Administration).
Given under my hand and the seal
of the Court this 30th day of September
2022.

DEPUTY REGISTRAR
HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD
Shri Narendra Mohan, Advocate
Counsel for the Petitioner.

Behave responsibly towards nature, animal protection: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

It was a treat to watch Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath holding a leopard cub in his arms and feeding it milk from a bottle during his visit to the Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur on Wednesday afternoon.

The chief minister visited the zoological park on the occasion of National Dolphin Day held as part of Wild Animals Week 2022.

Within minutes, the chief minister made friends with the seemingly reluctant cub as he tolerated its tantrums smilingly, but insisted quietly on feeding it. The chief minister named the two leopard cubs, one of which was rescued three months ago, as Bhavani and Chandni. The chief minister also interacted with the zoo officials, including doctors, to enquire about the health of the animals.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said that animals were friendly with him because they had the instinct to understand who could harm them and who would not. He said that vulture conservation centres would be developed in Maharajganj, Chitrakoot and Gorakhpur as this species was on the verge of extinction. "Life cycle must follow the laws of nature," he remarked, emphasising the need for people to behave responsibly towards nature and protection of animals. "In Ramayana there is Aranya kand,

which encapsulates the entire story of the epic. Monkeys, bears, rivers, trees and stones become Lord Ram's friend, when he is clueless about the whereabouts of Maa Sita after she is abducted by Ravan," he said. The chief minister also honoured several forest officers on the occasion for their commendable work in saving and conserving wild animals. He talked about his experience with 15-month-old tigress Gita that was released to an enclosure from the cage and the rhinos brought from Assam which were rescued from Maharajganj.

Referring to the efforts of the state government for wildlife conservation and eco-tourism, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the process of starting the state's first night safari in Lucknow was being expedited.

"It will promote eco-tourism, inculcate a sense of respect for wildlife, and provide entertainment," he said, adding that the knowledge of children would also increase.

The chief minister said that the government had already announced plans to develop a tiger reserve at Ranipur in Chitrakoot district where Lord Ram spent most of his time in exile while proposals related to eco-tourism had been approved in Bijnor and Ramnagar.

Besides, he said the government was setting up rescue centres for wildlife at places like Maharajganj, Meerut, Chitrakoot, Pilibhit.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath feeds a leopard cub at Gorakhpur zoo

Within minutes, the chief minister made friends with the seemingly reluctant cub as he tolerated its tantrums smilingly, but insisted quietly on feeding it. The chief minister named the two leopard cubs, one of which was rescued three months ago, as Bhavani and Chandni

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the government was also sensitive about the conservation of aquatic life and the Namami Gange project was helping a lot in this. He said that earlier 14 crore litres of sewage used to be released into the river Ganga in Sisamau of Kanpur Nagar every day, whereas now not even a drop was falling in the river from there due to the Namami Gange project.

"Now the place where the sewage fell (in the river) has become a selfie point. Similarly, due to the discharge of leather industry waste in Jajmau, aquatic creatures had become almost extinct. However, now a large number of aquatic creatures have started appearing in the river," he said.

Speaking about dolphins in the river Ganga, the chief minister said that the government had selected the area of

Nishadraj, a dear friend of Lord Shri Ram, for its conservation. He said that now dolphins had started appearing in the Ganga in Kashi also and assured of all possible steps for the conservation of dolphins.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also directed the Forest Department to set up a separate cadre of veterinary officers for the treatment and protection of wildlife.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Forest, Environment, Zoological Park and Climate Change, Dr Arun Kumar Saxena and Gorakhpur's Member of Parliament Ravikishan were also present on the occasion.

Saxena said the government would soon start the facility of jungle safari in Sohagi Barwa area of Maharajganj.

It is worth mentioning here that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Gorakhpur Zoo on March 27, 2021.

Adityanath lauds Shri Panchkhand Peeth

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stating that Shri Panchkhand Peeth always played a leading role in all social and religious movements, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said, "The Peeth has a significant contribution in the movement led by the revered saints of the country to protest against the partition of India."

Addressing a programme at Shri Panchkhand Peeth, Rajasthan, Yogi said, "Mahatma Ramchandra Veer Ji Maharaj and Swami Acharya Dharmendra Ji Maharaj were the ones who contributed selflessly towards the country. The 'Peeth' also played a crucial role in ensuring public participation in various campaigns led by the saints for the welfare of the country." During the 'Chadarposhi' ceremony of Swami Somendra Sharma, Gorakshpeethadhishwar Yogi Adityanath said that Acharya Dharmendra had a deep connection with Gorakshpeeth for three generations. "Acharya ji always had a sense of belonging, my deepest respect to him," he said.

While addressing the Sant Samagam, the chief minister said that India's Sanatan Dharm gave the utmost importance to the protection of 'Gau Matas' (cows). Believing in 'Karmanyevadhikaraste, maa phaleshu kadachana' pronounced by Lord Shri Krishna, Yogi said, "Dedicated efforts were made to realise the dream of Ram Mandir for which the movement started in 1949.

... holds Janata Darshan in Gkp

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during the Janata Darshan organised at Gorakhpur, assured visitors that all the issues raised by them would be resolved in a time-bound manner.

Yogi Adityanath met nearly 350 visitors at the Janata Darshan and approached patients who were seated in chairs outside Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan one by one. The chief minister accepted applications from the public, listened to their issues and then forwarded the applications along with pertinent instructions to the appropriate personnel, assuring people of all help.

During the interaction, the chief minister also informed visitors about the free Abhyudaya coaching to a woman looking to prepare her daughter for competitive examinations.

The chief minister also assured of all assistance through the Ministry of External Affairs to a woman who came from Deoria seeking repatriation of one of her family members from Saudi

Resultantly, today, over 50 per cent of work on the Ram Mandir, which was also a dream of Acharya ji, has neared completion." The chief minister



Arabia.

Moreover, the chief minister gave the officers specific orders to ensure stern action against criminals and mafia who were found guilty

of crimes against complainants.

"Abuse of any type in this situation won't be tolerated," Yogi said. The chief minister also referred the application

to the administrative and police officers concerned and directed them to resolve all the problems in an appropriate, fair and transparent manner.

He also extended his best wishes and greetings to Swami Somendra Maharaj for taking a vow to carry the tradition of Acharya ji forward.

Constable of Delhi police held for murder of two cousins

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bulandshahr police worked out the murder of two cousins whose headless bodies were recovered from different localities of Sambhal district last week.

The cops said that the sensational killing was executed by a constable of Delhi police and his family members as one of the victims was having illicit relations with the constable's widowed mother.

Interestingly, to misguide the family, the accused also demanded a ransom of Rs 5 crore from the family members of the victims and threatened to kill them if the money was not paid.

Reports said that the two cousins, Bhupendra and

Jagdish, were found murdered in Bulandshahr. The killers had thrown the bodies in Rajpura police station area of Sambhal district and the head in the river Ganga.

The main accused in the incident is Delhi Police constable Tushar. The accused constable, along with his brother, mother and an accomplice, executed the double murder plan. Police have arrested the mother and brother of the main accused and search is on for Tushar. The police have announced a reward of Rs 25,000 on his arrest.

Police said that 21-year-old Bhupendra and his 18-year-old cousin Jagdish alias Bhura of Kailawan in Bulandshahr, were missing since October 1. According to family members,

both went to see Goddess Kali's procession after which they did not return home. Subsequently, Bhupendra's father Naresh informed the police about the disappearance of his son and nephew.

When Bhupendra's father was filing a complaint at the police station, he got a call from the accused. The caller demanded five crore rupees for the release of Bhupendra and his cousin.

The cops immediately launched a hunt for both.

During investigation, the police and the Special Operation Group team searched the call details of Bhupendra and questioned about 40 people. Some of these people were also from the village. During this, the police

came to know that Bhupendra and Jagdish were last seen with one Durgesh.

After this, late on Tuesday night, the police picked up two suspected accused, Lata Sharma and Mukul, from the village. At the same time, Durgesh was also taken into custody later in the night.

During interrogation of the accused, the police came to know that Bhupendra had a relationship with Lata so her sons Tushar and Durgesh killed Bhupendra and Jagdish, who had come out of the house to see the Goddess Kali procession. On the fateful day, the accused took both the cousins to their home and had a liquor party and when both got drunk, they killed and beheaded them.

Terminated army man seeking re-entry as Agniveer held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A terminated Army personnel has been arrested for allegedly seeking re-entry into the Army using fake documents, police said on Thursday.

The accused, identified as Kamal Singh, had earlier been terminated from the Army when it was found that he had gained entry using fake documents and a fake name -- Rahul Singh.

Singh, now 25 years old

and overage for the Agniveer scheme, was recognised by Military Intelligence personnel and arrested and handed over to the Muzaffarnagar police.



His interrogation led to the arrest of another former Army personnel, Mehkar Singh from Meerut, who is an expert in preparing fake documents.

According to Muzaffarnagar's Senior Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal, "Agniveer recruitment is taking place in

Muzaffarnagar and a joint team of Military Intelligence and Muzaffarnagar police identified Kamal Singh and he was arrested on Wednesday. He had participated in the running on September 21 representing Moradabad and now he was again here with another set of documents on Tuesday. This time his documents showed he belonged to Bulandshahr. He has been booked under sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security) of

the Indian Penal Code.

According to sources in the Army, intense questioning revealed the name of an individual from Baghat Road, Meerut, who had made the fake documents in lieu of money. He was identified as Mehkar Singh, 48, a former Army officer, and a number of fake documents and medical slips of the candidates were recovered from his possession. He was also arrested on Wednesday from Meerut.

 ARYAVART BANK Regional Office, Mirzapur		 possession Notice For Immovable Property	
<p>Where as The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aryavart Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section13(2) & 13 (3)(2) read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Entercaiment) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the borrower (detailed below) to repay the amount mentioned in the Demand Notice within 60 days from the date of the receipt of the said notice.</p> <p>The Borrower having failed to repay the amount notice is hereby given to the borrower and public in general that the under- signed has taken the possession of the properties detailed herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under sec- tion 13 (4) of the said act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.</p> <p>The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with property will be subject to the charge of Aryavart Bank for an amount plus interest and other charges there on as mentioned.</p>			
S.No.	Name of Branch/ Borrower/s Name & Address Name of Guarantor/s & Address	Description of movable & Immovable Property	Outstanding Amount
			Demand Notice date possession Date
1	Branch- Seekhar, Mirzapur Borrower- Shri Krishan Kumar Singh S/o Ram Hriday Singh Address- Mishrapura, Pargana - Kriyat, Tehsil- Chunar,Distt.-Mirzapur.	Details of Property- Smt. Shashikala Singh W/o Sri Krishna Kumar Singh, R/o Village- Mishrapura, Pargana Kriyat, Tehsil- Chunar, District. -Mirzapur Situated at- Arazi No. 134., Mauza- Ishwarpatti, Pargana-Kriyat, Tehsil- Chunar, Distt.-Mirzapur. Measurement- Total Area-0.121hect., i.e. 09 Biswas 11 Dhooors. Sale Deed No.2802 Dt.28.8.2002 Registered at book No.1, zild No 610, Pages 233/252 on 28.08.2002. Bounded by- East- Land Of Chet Narayan Singh and Others. West- Land Of Amrej Singh. North- Chak Marg. South- Land Of Gauri Shankar Singh and Others.	Rs. 11,55,234.17 + Interest + Other Charges 12.07.2022 30.09.2022
	Guarantor- Smt. Shashikala Singh W/o Krishan Kumar Singh Address- Mishrapura, Pargana- Kriyat, Tehsil - Chunar, Distt.-Mirzapur		
2	Branch- Mukeri Bazar, Mirzapur. Borrower- Smt. Anuradha Devi W/o Shri Rupchand, Address- Katwaru ka Pura, Post- Sadar, Mirzapur, Distt.-Mirzapur.	Details of Property Mrs Anuradha Devi W/o Shri RupchandKasera, Address-Katwaru ka Pura, Angarh Road, Distt.-Mirzapur. Situated at- Arazi No. 653/3 mi., Tarkapur, Tappa-84, Pargana - Kantit, Tahsil- Sadar, Distt.- Mirzapur. Measurement- East to West-44 ft., North to South 15 ft. Total Area 660 Sq.ft. i.e. 61.338 sq.mtr. Bahi No. 1, Zild No.4920, Page No. 1 to 22 Sale Deed No. 241 dated:15.01.2013. Bounded by- East- Land, Dakku Yadav, West- kachcha Rasta, North-Land of Seller which is pur- chasing by Rani devi, South - Land, Kiran singh.	Rs. 4,19,928.45 + Interest + Other Charges 01.07.2022 30.09.2022
	Guarantors- 1-Shri Shivanshu Kashera S/o Rupchand Kashera Address- Anghad Road, Katvaru Ka Pura, Post- Sadar, Mirzapur, Distt.- Mirzapur. 2. Shri Om Chand S/o Late Ram Shankar, Address-Nayi Basti, Post- Sadar, Mirzapur, Distt.- Mirzapur.		
Date : 06.10.2022			Authorised Officer

Drowning case: Bodies of 5 children recovered

PNS ■ KANPUR

The bodies of all the five children, including four adolescent girls, have been recovered from Ganga during the 40-hour long rescue operation which ended on Thursday. They had drowned while taking a bath at Kothi Ghat in Araul village under Bilhaur police station area on Tuesday afternoon.

Six persons, including four adolescent girls, drowned into Ganga when they had gone there for a bath with their maternal uncle at Kothi Ghat in Araul (Bilhaur) on Tuesday afternoon. Immediately with the help of divers, police had recovered the body of the maternal uncle Saurabh of Barandapur village who was later declared dead by the doctors at the CHC. Since then a search was on to recover the

other five children. They were identified as Anushka (15), Anshika (12), daughters of late Vinay Kumar of Bairi, Kalyanpur, Abhay (20), son of Ram Babu of Habbapurwa, Farrukhabad, Tanushka (17) and Anushka (13), daughters of Vansh Pradip.

Apart from local divers, police had also pressed the teams of SDRF and PAC into service to carry out the rescue operation but failed to recover them till late in the evening on Tuesday. On Wednesday SDM Rashmi Lamba, tehsildar Laxmi Narain Bajpai and CO Rajesh Kumar pressed five teams to resume search operation from 4 am. At 9 am District Magistrate Vishakh G Iyer, ADM Finance Rajesh Kumar and SP (Outer) Tej Swarup Singh also reached the spot. Around 1.30 pm the body of Anushka was found entangled in the bush along the river

near Sanjti Badshahpur village. Police took the body to Nanamau ghat and after getting it identified from her kin sent it for an autopsy. Thereafter, around 7.30 pm SDRF team found the bodies of Anshika, another daughter of late Vinay Kumar and Anushka, daughter of Vansh Pradip of Habbapur, Farrukhabad, floating near Nanamau ghat. Meanwhile, by late Wednesday night, the body of Abhay, son of Ram Babu of Habbapurwa village was recovered near Akbarpur Seng ghat while the body of Tanushka, the second daughter of Vansh Pradip was recovered near Nanamau ghat on Thursday morning.

On seeing the bodies, kin of the deceased fell unconscious. Circle Officer Rajesh Kumar said after identification of bodies and panchnama, they were sent to Kanpur for an autopsy.

Mishap: Tractor driver arrested

PNS ■ KANPUR

Police have arrested the tractor driver responsible for the killing of 27 persons, including women and children, in a road mishap which took place in Ghatampur's Sadh police station area late on Saturday evening.

On the complaint of one of the injured women, the police had registered an FIR against him in the case under relevant sections of unintentional murder.

Thereafter tractor driver Raju Nishad, a resident of Kortha village was found absconding. Police arrested him from Kortha village late on Wednesday night.

The woman in her complaint had alleged that the driver, Raju Nishad, was driving the tractor-trolley in a drunken state.

After he lost control over the vehicle, it overturned in a pond and led to the killing of 27 persons.

1.50 lakh major carp to be released today

PNS ■ KANPUR

Assistant Director, Fisheries, ANK Agarwal, addressing a meeting at Collectorate informed that under the Fisheries Estates Project the National Fisheries Board, Hyderabad, and the National Fisheries Genetics Bureau, Lucknow, will release 1.50 lakh major carp at Ganga Barrage near Atal Ghat on Friday. He said this programme for fish transcription accumulation was being conducted on the directive of Government of India. He said this will be carried out in the presence of elected representatives, scientists and top officials and also beneficiaries of Fisheries department.

He said fishing conservation policy and fish conservation practices attempted to maintain both quality fishing and a sustainable harvest production of each fishery and thus the state had to strictly implement regulations. He said this will be help in restocking of overfished waters as restocking

‘Fishing conservation policy, fish conservation practices are attempted to maintain both quality fishing and a sustainable harvest production of each fishery, thus state had to strictly implement regulations, which will be help in restocking of overfished waters as restocking of such areas was necessary to avoid complete disappearance of fishes from some areas’

of such areas was necessary to avoid complete disappearance of fishes from these areas. He said as per the guidelines this must be enforced strictly for specific fish conservation practices.

Agarwal said another critical part of a fishing conservation policy was gathering water quality and fisheries data. This helped managers have a better chance of determining trends on fish populations. He said the

goal was to learn key information about factors such as growth rate, forage base and spawning habitat not only to determine trends but to try to forecast and stay ahead of any aspect that was detrimental to fish conservation. He said it also maintained both quality fishing and a sustainable harvest production of each fishery. He said by increasing fishing capacity subsidies provide short-term benefits, but threat-

en the long-term sustainability of ecosystems and coastal communities. He said the responsible use of fishery and aquaculture resources must be recognised as a priority for food security and nutrition as well as for local development opportunities. Agarwal informed that fish farming was the most common type of aquaculture which involved the selective breeding of fish, Ganga water or freshwater with the purpose of producing a food source for consumption. He said fish farming was highly exploited as it allowed for the production of a cheap source of protein. He said fish farming was easier to do than other kinds of farming as fish were not care-intensive but only required food and proper water conditions as well as temperatures. He said the process was also less land-intensive as the size of ponds required to grow some fish species was much smaller than the space required to grow the same amount of protein from other sources.

AAC team visits new airport terminal building

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) held a detailed meet-cum-discussion and then carried out a field visit to the new airport terminal building on Thursday. The meeting was chaired by MP Devendra Singh Bhole, MP Satyadev Pachauri, Commissioner Kanpur, Dr Raj Shekhar, DM Visakh G Iyer, Director Kanpur Airport, Apar Nagar Ayukt, Apar Sachiv KDA, SE PWD, Raj Kumar Lohia, Sanjeev Jhunjhunwala and Sudhindra Jain and several officials of Rajkiya Nirman Nigam. Umpteen issues were raised in the meeting and it finally emerged that the total progress of the physical work



Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) holding a meeting under the chairmanship of MPs Devendra Singh Bhole and Satyadev Pachauri on Thursday.

done was only around 85 per cent. However, the main building work was 90 per cent completed and it was expected that it will be completed by November end. Similarly the runway and taxi link was 35 per cent completed and this will also be completed by

November end. It was also informed that the new 2.7 km link road from Prayagraj Highway to New Terminal building was 60 per cent complete but it had got delayed by one month because of continuous rains. The PWD officials informed that they will try to

complete it by November or at the most December 15. The Airport Authority had completed all electrical works and had obtained NOC from Electrical Safety department but the NOC from Fire department was pending which was likely to be obtained in a month or so. It was informed that the aviation security check of the whole set up will be completed in November.

Group Captain Akash Gupta from Air Force apprised the committee that AF HQ had taken up the work of night landing and other facilities under the Modernisation of Airforce Airfield Infrastructure (MAAI). He said it will be completed by March 2023 and then the night landing can be

done at Kanpur Airport also. He said that Air Force was also trying to get the CAT 2 facilities status for this air strip but it will take some more time as it involved land acquisition also. For ensuring smooth and timely travel to new airport building, Dr Shekhar suggested to deploy 5 to 10 ‘Express Airport E-Buses (electric buses)’ services once a request from Airport Authority was made. It was also decided to send proposal for two aero bridges at new airport terminal building and to add another proposal for one extra runway taxi link on the other end of the terminal so that it can act as standby link so that more flights can land at a given point of time.

Educationist’s new book released

PNS ■ KANPUR

The new book of noted educationist and social worker Dr Paramjeet Kaur Chhabra ‘Yaad Bahut Aate Ho Tum’ was released by the famous poetess and litterateur Dr Kamal Musaddi at the Kanpur Journalists Club, Ashok Nagar, on Thursday.

The programme was anchored by Ranjana Yadav. Dr Paramjeet Kaur Chhabra wrote the book in memory of her father Sardar Joginder Singh beautifully describing the sentiments of love and affection between a father and his daughter. Dr Paramjeet Kaur is presently the principal of Seth MR Jaipuria School, Pratapgarh. Among many



other books written by her, the last one ‘Virtual Se Vastav Tak’ narrates about the creation of an artificial world with the growing use of mobile phones. The new book was available for sale at different centres

and websites since August. President of Kanpur Bar Association Anoop Kumar Dwivedi, Brijbhushan Singh, Bhagwant Anmol, Dr Rakesh Shukla and Mridul Kapil were present at the function.

Need to create awareness among fairer sex on skill development: Mishra

PNS ■ KANPUR

In the present times it was highly essential that under ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ (BBBP) the parents need to provide vocational courses to their daughters. The Uttar Pradesh Government was making every effort for skill development of girls so that they can become independent. The Women and Child Development department had launched umpteen schemes for the girls and the marginalised women. However, there was a need to create awareness among girls and women.

This was stated by the WCDD district programme officer Rama Mishra while addressing a workshop on skill development at Arya Kanya Inter College on Thursday. She said through skill upgradation training programme, girls and women of the targeted group will be trained in umpteen areas so that they can become economically independent.

She said across the country, women were less likely to work for pay and when they do they earn less. She said this gender ‘job gap’ was driven by many factors,

both on the demand and supply side and one way to close the gap was through skills training such as technical training as well as entrepreneurial or business training programmes.

Mishra said girls and women normally face umpteen issues like social norms, childcare and mobility which kept women from accessing and successfully completing such programmes.

She said training programmes should not overlook these constraints in their design.

She mooted they need to pursue training as well as earning and said women typically face more financial constraints than men and this affected their ability to pay for training or related costs, such as transportation. She said women also had less access to finance to support expanding their businesses after receiving training.

She said the government needs to ensure end to sexual harassment and said skills training programmes need mechanisms to prevent, respond to and report cases of sexual harassment and abuse. She

said sexual harassment was a leading cause of high job turnover and school and work absenteeism. She said addressing it was not only moral but also smart in terms of programme success. She also suggested that there was a need for an anti-sexual harassment policy and code of conduct, a complaints mechanism, training, and awareness raising for students, instructors and other programme staff.

Mishra said childcare was a leading barrier preventing women from participating in skills training.

She said there should be safe transportation as mobility limitations decreased women’s ability to participate in training and income-generating opportunities. She said it was also true that women benefit from crossing into traditional male occupations which paid better.

She said one way to facilitate this shift was to provide women with information about male-dominated industries.

She said these methods if adopted in the right earnest will help increase the likelihood that women find more employment in sectors with higher returns.

done at Kanpur Airport also. He said that Air Force was also trying to get the CAT 2 facilities status for this air strip but it will take some more time as it involved land acquisition also. For ensuring smooth and timely travel to new airport building, Dr Shekhar suggested to deploy 5 to 10 ‘Express Airport E-Buses (electric buses)’ services once a request from Airport Authority was made. It was also decided to send proposal for two aero bridges at new airport terminal building and to add another proposal for one extra runway taxi link on the other end of the terminal so that it can act as standby link so that more flights can land at a given point of time.

‘Oct best month for growing potato crop’

PNS ■ KANPUR

Noted scientist, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T), Dr RB Singh while addressing a workshop on ‘Defending potato crop from diseases and improving yield’ at Kailash Bhawan on Thursday advised farmers that the best month for growing potato crop was October.

He also advised them to allow seed tubers to ‘warm up’ three to seven days before cutting or planting. He suggested if the farmers followed advisory then this will helped in minimising the seed decay and which in turn will reduce the amount of blackleg which caused the tubers to soft rot rendering it a near waste or fetched very bad returns.

He said potato was vulnerable to a wide range of pathogenic organisms all of which can cause severe quality and yield losses.



The new variety of potato grown by CSA University of Agriculture and Technology.

He said as a consequence, potato production was highly reliant on pesticide use. He said to mitigate these problems effective and evidence based crop protection recommendations need to be provided by farm universities to the farmers.

Dr Singh said potato was susceptible to a wide range of pathogenic organisms, which

all can cause severe quality and yield losses.

Dr Singh said the relative importance of a disease vary between production markets and between growing regions according to the pathogen distribution and local climatic conditions.

He said late blight can cause severe crop damage within a week. He said fungi-

cide use was still the most common control management strategy because of a dominance of varieties with low or moderate resistance to late blight due to low marketability and acceptance of resistant cultivars.

He said increasing concerns about the health and environmental consequences of pesticide use had led to strict regulations on pesticide use and a decrease in the number of fungicides approved for potato disease management.

He said farmers need to understand that nitrogen was important for leaf and tuber growth.

He said like potassium a lot of nitrogen was recycled from the leaf to the tuber during bulking.

He said phosphate was also needed in relatively large quantities, particularly during early growth, to encourage rooting and tuber set, and then again during late season for bulking.

NCR General Manager conducts meeting

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

General Manager North Central Railway conducted the weekly safety and punctuality meeting at NCR Headquarters.

The meeting was attended by all the PHODs at the NCR/headquarter office while DRMs/ADRs along with senior divisional officers joined through video conference.

During the meeting it was informed that, as the first half of the economy ends, North Central Railway (NCR) registered 12.24 per cent growth in originating freight loading. NCR loaded 9.90 million tonnes of cargo during April-September 2022 surpassing previous year loading.

Freight loading of 8.82 million tonnes was achieved in the corresponding period of the previous year.

1.63 MT of loading was achieved in the month of September 2022 which is an improvement of 2.52 per cent over the same period last year.

Originating freight revenue during these six months came to be Rs 1011.25 crore, which is 13.40 per cent more than the origi-

inating freight earning of 891.72 crore in the first six months of previous financial year. NCR, which spans through the states of UP, MP, Rajasthan and Haryana, is an important constituent of Indian Railways and contributes in loading of containers from Dadri, Kanpur, Agra and Malanpur; fertilizers from Panki near Kanpur; cement from Parichha (near Jhansi) and Chunar; Petroleum Oil Lubricants from BAD refinery Mathura, BPTR near Kanpur and BPCL Panki; foodgrain loading from various places like Etah, Kanpur, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Shankargarh and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh and Tikamgarh, Datia, Dabra and Newari of Madhya Pradesh among other locations.

All the commodities have shown a surge in the loading except cement and fertilizers which registers a slight dip as compared to the previous year.

In addition to it, parcel traffic also registered a significant surge as compared to the previous year.

Rs 15.66 crore of total parcel earnings have been achieved by NCR during the

New electronic interlocking commissioned

Prayagraj (PNS): New electronic interlocking has been commissioned at Iradatganj station of North Central Railway which is connected with Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) line. Goods trains coming from the direction of Manikpur will be able to go directly to the DFCCIL line. North Central Railway has always been ready to provide time bound and safe train travel to the passengers. With the expansion of infrastructure for capacity enhancement, working on the basic mantra of safety as a priority, new technologies are being adopted continuously. In this sequence, the work of commissioning of new electronic interlocking at various stations is also being done continuously.

Commissioning of electronic interlocking ensures ease of operation on the one hand and enhanced safety on the other.

Prayagraj Division of North Central Railway has always been a capacity constraint ridden division. In order to improve and streamline its operations, goods trains are being progressively shifted to the newly constructed sections of Eastern DFC. For this, the work of connecting the newly constructed sections with the routes of Indian Railways is being done on priority. A new electronic interlocking M/s Hitachi Rail STS make has been commissioned in place of existing Westres VLM-6 at Iradatganj station on Howrah-

Mumbai route. With this, provision has been made for junction arrangement at Iradatganj station. This has resulted in a single line connection between Iradatganj station and New Karchana (DFCCIL station) towards the link junction on the up side for efficient handling of traffic between DFCCIL and Indian Railways. After this, the system of absolute block working was established between Iradatganj to New Karchana Junction. Block Proving by Axle Counter using UFSBI system is provided in the DFC single line section of Iradatganj-New Karchana (DFCCIL station). Apart from this, a new data logger has also been installed to strengthen the safety in operation.

and concerned officers of headquarters to conduct regular freight customer meets and facilitate merchants to use Railway as a preferred mode of transport.

‘Achievements are laudable, but we have to work harder to sustain the momentum and surpass the targets set by the Railway Board,’ said the GM.

dip in cement and fertilizer loading.

He instructed the officers to put all efforts to pull these two commodities and sustain the momentum throughout the remaining year so that the target set by the Railway Board could be surpassed.

GM instructed the DRMs of the three divisions

PNS ■ KANPUR

The National Mental Health Survey of India has reported that 4.1 per cent of India’s youth had experienced a major depressive episode but many more will experience emotional distress with symptoms of anxiety and depression in the times to come unless proper and effective methods of controls were not adopted. The Anxiety Disorders (ADs) impacted the quality of life and productivity at an individual level and resulted in substantial national loss.

This was informed by noted psychiatrist Dr (Maj) Shashank Raikwar while addressing pressperson on Anxiety Disorder at his clinic on Thursday.

He said October was observed as Mental Health Month and October 6 focused on the increasing anxiety among youth.

He said in addition Indian women in the age group of 40-59 especially urban dwellers suffered from anxiety over 60 per cent.

He said it was a matter of great concern that Indians were apathetic to anxiety and consulted a psychiatrist as the last resort.

He said AD was among the most common psychiatric illnesses that impacted the quality of life and functioning and productivity of an individual and thereby loss of national income.

He said it was essential to understand the epidemiology of psychiatric disorders to plan and implement effective mental health policy and programmes and added that such epidemiological surveys were very limited in India. He the three major categories were generalised AD, panic disorder (PD) and specific phobia.

Dr Raikwar said it was normal to feel anxious about moving to a new place, starting a new job or taking a test as this type of anxiety was unpleasant, but it may motivate one to work harder and do a better job.

He said ordinary anxiety was a feeling that came and went but did not interfere with everyday life. He said anxiety disorder, the feeling of fear may be all the time and it was intense and sometimes debilitating.

He said anxiety disorders were the most common form of emotional disorder and can affect anyone. He added that according to the

Indian Psychiatric Association women were more likely than men to receive a diagnosis of an anxiety disorder.

He said anxiety felt different depending on the person experiencing it and feelings can range from butterflies in one’s stomach to a racing heart and one might feel out of control like there was a disconnect between mind and body.

He said the major symptoms were anxious thoughts or beliefs that were difficult to control, restlessness, trouble concentrating, difficulty falling asleep, fatigue, irritability and unexplained aches and pains.

Dr Raikwar said stress, other medical issues such as depression or diabetes, child abuse, substance abuse or occupational hazard were some major reasons also.

He said a single test can never diagnose anxiety and said instead, an anxiety diagnosis required a lengthy process of physical examinations, mental health tests, and psychological questionnaires.

He said once one had received a diagnosis of anxiety, one can explore treatment options with a doctor.

Bharat Milap held with traditional gaiety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Braving incessant rains, thousands of people thronged Nati Imli and adjoining areas to watch the internationally famous Bharat Milap event held here on Thursday evening with all traditional gaiety and religious fervour. Right from afternoon hours, the people started gathering there to have a glimpse of the reunion of Lord Rama with his brother Bharat. It is a famous event which even attracted Bollywood to make a movie on the event. Despite heavy weather and spells of rains, there was no decline in the spirit of people as thousands of them stayed there braving rains.

Former Kashi Naresh Kumwar Anant Narayan Singh reached the venue as per tradition. The event was also watched by many dignitaries. After the reunion of Lord Rama with his brothers, chief of Banaras royal family Kunwar gifted coins to members of the committee as per tradition. As per tradition, children playing the roles of divine characters were brought to the grounds of Nati Imli for public viewing of their reunion. Then the devotees paid their respect by putting a tilak on their forehead and garlanding Lord Rama,



Famous Bharat Milap of Nati Imli being held in Varanasi on Thursday

Photo: Pramod Gupta

Bharat, Lakshman and Shatrughan.

Later, Kunwar returned to Bada Ganesh with the same route through which he had reached and in a similar procession. Earlier, to attend the event Kunwar left his Ramnagar Fort along with his sons along with traditional fort security personnel. The event was presented by the Ramayani Dal of Shri Chitrakoot

Ramleela Samiti. The tight security arrangements were made at the venue of Bharat Milap to avoid any untoward incident. To avoid the rush, the areas were barricaded.

Earlier, the Ramlila of Jaipura started with the Mukut Puja and Ram Janam on the occasion of Dussehra on Wednesday under the auspices of Shri Adarsh Prachin Ramlila Committee. Under the leader-

ship of Pt Sudarshan Vyas, Mukut Puja and Aarti were performed by the chairman of the committee Rameshwar Prasad Gupta. On the occasion, the committee's general secretary Ravi Shankar Mishra, treasurer Subhash Pasi, Om Prakash Gaur, Vineet Jaiswal, Pradeep Jaiswal, Priyanshu Gupta, Shubham, Sagar, Amit, Himanshu and others were also present.

Thousands watch Ravan Dahan at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After a gap of two years when Ramlila and Ravan Dahan events were organised in a symbolic manner due to coronavirus pandemic, Dussehra festival was celebrated with great pomp and its traditional fervour at Central Sports Grounds in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on Wednesday evening. It was watched by thousands of people. In the recent decades, the event has become very popular as a huge number of people turned out there. When the effigies of Demon King Ravana, his brother Kumbhakaran and son Meghnad which were 75,70 and 65 feet high respectively were burnt, the mood of the people turned electrified and the slogans of Jai Siya Ram echoed the atmosphere. The grounds as well as roads in its surrounding areas were packed with thousands of people. A total of 150 firecrackers were set in all the three effigies.

The event marked the triumph of good over evil and prior to that, the artistes performed Ramlila. The audience was mesmerised by the dialogue of Angad and Ravana and wars between Lord Ram and Ravana as well as Lakshman and Meghnath. After defeating Ravana by Lord Ram, the event of burning of effigies began. Prior to effigy



Effigy of Ravana being burnt at BLW in Varanasi on Wednesday evening.

Pioneer

burning, the firecrackers were lit, changing the mood of the people. Earlier, the Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) SK Srivastava performed the aarti of Lord Ram and Mata Sita. Then the artistes performed Lila of Ram Van Gaman to Ravana Vadh based on Ramcharitmanas. The Lila performed by the students of BLW Inter College for two and a half hours was highly appreciated.

There was a ban on carrying bags, tiffins, water bottles and any kind of inflammable material in the fair premises. Even after 12 noon, all types of vehicles including two wheel-

ers were stopped from entering the Mela areas. General Manager Anjali Goyal constantly instructed the officials to make the Vijayadashami fair well organised. District administration, Uttar Pradesh Police, Railway Protection Force, St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Civil Defense, District Scouts and Guides and members of Vijayadashami Committee played an important role in conducting the fair smoothly and peacefully.

To deal with any untoward incident, the medical team of BLW Central Hospital was present there, setting up its first aid posts there. PCPO Pradeep

Kumar Singh, PCE Hirendra Singh Rana, PCSC RS Chouhan, CVO Pramod Kumar Chaudhary, CDE (Electric) PP Raju, ACMS Dr Sunil Kumar, DCME MP Singh, DMO Dr SK. Maurya, PRO Rajesh Kumar, safety officer Anoop Singh Vats and secretary of BLW Women's Welfare Committee Priya Raj, treasurer Anulata and many others were also present. Besides, the Ravan Dahan event was also organised at many other places including Maldaia crossing, Mahavir Mandir crossing (Orderly Bazar) and dozens of other places.

Idols of Maa Durga immersed in ponds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Amidst tight security Arrangements, a large number of idols of Goddess Durga and others were immersed in various ponds in different parts of the city here on the occasion of Vijayadashami on Wednesday. Right from the afternoon, the processions of idols were carried out from different parts of the city and later, they were immersed in the ponds as there was a ban on the immersion of idols in river Ganga as per the instructions of the High Court. Majority of idols were immersed during the day and a few others will be immersed in the coming days as per the plans of their puja committees.

Dozens of idols were immersed in ponds at Sankuldihara, Maidagin, Ishwarganji, Ramkatora and many others. With the immersion of idols of Goddess Durga at different ponds, the Durga Puja came to an end and at all the puja pandals of Bangiya Samaj, the women of Bengali families did the traditional rituals of Sindur Khela with religious fervour and then the women gave an emotional Vidai (farewell) to Maa Durga. There was enthusiasm among the Bengali women during Sindur Khela at various pandals of Bhelupura, Shivala,



Sonarapura, Godowlia, Ramkrishna Mission, Bharat Seva Sangh. This is an old tradition among the Bengalis to seek the blessings of Goddess Durga for the long life of their husbands.

During the immersion, elaborate security arrangements were made at different ponds. The Shastra Puja programmes were also organised at some places on the occasion of Vijayadashami. The local jewelers performed the traditional puja at Swarnkar Karmshala at Daranagar under

the auspices of Swarnkar Kshtriya Samaj which has been organising the programme since 1954.

The activists of Namami Gange launched a cleanliness campaign at Ramghat with a call for victory of cleanliness over dirt. Every corner was cleaned at the mythical Ram Ghat. Many materials were removed from the foothills of the Ganges and carried to the dustbin. People were appealed to maintain cleanliness. Regional convener (Kashi unit) Rajesh Shukla said that the holy

festival of Vijayadashami is associated with the victory celebration of Maryada Purushottam Lord Ram. "This festival reminds us that the people who follow the path of truth, righteousness and justice always win. Falsehood, unrighteousness and injustice can never be eternal. Let us take a pledge that we will cooperate in making the victory of cleanliness over filth," he appealed to the people. Gunja Devi, Geeta Devi, Sita Devi, Bharat, Jitendra Yadav and many others were also present.

Two youths drown during Durga idol immersion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

During the immersion of Durga idols on Vijayadashami, two youths were drowned in the river while two were rescued at different places in Prayagraj district. During the immersion of the idol in Koraon of Yamunapur, a youth died due to drowning in water, while the other one was saved. At the same time, a young man had drowned in the Varuna Bazar of Phulpur in Gangapur, he died, and another youth was saved from drowning into the deep water of Ganga.

During idol immersion in Varuna river in Phulpur, two youths went into deep water on Wednesday evening and started drowning. Seeing this, the accompanying people took them out after hard work. Both have been admitted to the hospital, where a young man died. While the condition of the other remains critical.

In the Shardiya Navratri, worship was done by installing an idol of Maa Durga in the Puja pandal in Varuna Bazar of Phulpur Kotwali area. On the occasion of Vijayadashami on Wednesday, devotees dancing and singing to the tune of DJ

music reached Varuna river for idol immersion at around 4 pm. During the idol immersion in Varuna river, Amresh Tiwari son of Ram Abhilash Tiwari and Anand Gaur son of Munna Lal Gaur resident of Mohammadabad alias Malvan started drowning in deep water. Seeing this, the people who came along somehow pulled them out of the river.

Both were brought to the Community Health Center Phulpur. Their family members also reached there after getting information. Amresh Tiwari was referred to SRN Hospital as his condition was critical. At

the same time, the family members of Anand Gaur have admitted him to a private hospital in Phulpur for treatment. Amresh Tiwari died during treatment.

Two youths were swept away with Ganga water during idol immersion in Chandapura of Koraon police station area. The villagers managed to save one of them but could not find the other.

Divers were called, after which the drowned youth was pulled out. However, by then he was already dead. He has been identified as Shiv Shankar.

Devotees bid farewell to Goddess Durga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

After worshipping the nine forms of Goddess Durga for nine days, on Vijayadashami, the devotees and authorities of Durga Puja pandals bid adieu to the Goddess. Before the immersion of the idols, women organized a vermilion festival and offered vermilion to the mother and sought the blessings of being 'akhanda saubhagyavati'. In the vermilion festival organized in the pandals, married women danced on the songs of the goddess. The whole atmosphere turned devotional with the reverberating sound of conches.

The idols of the Goddess Durga were immersed amid intermittent rains. Devotees reached with the idols in Gaughat of Shringverpur in Gangapur in the morning to immerse the idols. Due to lack of adequate arrangements, the several vehicles of the devotees could not reach the idol immersion pond. Devotees remained troubled throughout the day in mud and swamps due to intermittent rain. The DM, who reached there for inspection, was unhappy to see the condition



there. He directed the officials to fix the arrangements immediately.

Hundreds of people from nearby villages including Tapgarh border reached Gaughat on Wednesday for the immersion of other idols including the idol of Durga

Maa. Prayagraj DM Sanjay Khatri, IG Rakesh Singh and Prayagraj Senior Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey reached Gaughat to inspect the spot. SDM Soraon Dr. Kanchan, CO Soraon Sudhir Kumar and Nawabganj police

station in-charge Rakesh Kumar Rai also reached there about the arrival of higher officials of the district. The arrangements made for the preparations for immersion of the idol were not sufficient.

After the rain, the vehicles of the devotees who immersed the idol got stuck in the swamp. It became difficult for the devotees to walk in the mud. DM Sanjay Khatri inquired about all the arrangements including electricity and directed the officers. When BDO Praveenand of Shringverpur block did not appear on the spot, the DM inquired about him. The DM, who returned after inspecting the pond where the idols were immersed, had smeared mud everywhere.

It is worth noting that for the last several days, adequate arrangements were not made here. Within half an hour after getting the information of the higher officials of the district reaching Gaughat, the work of pelting soil etc. on the path of the devotees started. During this, the office-bearers of Durga Puja Committee complained to DM Sanjay Khatri about the turning of Kathouapal to Bijlipur connectivity road into a pit.

Vijayadashami celebrated with religious fervour

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Vijayadashami was celebrated in several parts of the Sangam city to commemorate the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. The festival, which marks the end of nine-day festivities of Navratri, was celebrated in full swing, by burning the effigies of Ravana – the demon king – along with that of Meghnad and Kumbhakarna.

After two years of low-key celebrations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Sangam city's famous Patharchatti Ramlila committee organised the famous Dussehra event with full pomp and glory.

On the occasion of Dussehra i.e. Vijayadashami, Shri Ram ended Dashanan. In Ramlila, Ravana was killed by the arrow of Lord Rama. Before this there was a fierce battle between Rama and Ravana. When Dashanan was killed by Shri Ram's arrow, there was an atmosphere of joy in the Ramlila Maidan. The atmosphere became devotional due to the announcement of Shri Ram, Lakshmana. Ravana dahan was done on behalf of Shripajawa Ramlila Committee at the Banyan Ghat ground located in Meerapur in Prayagraj city. Dashanan's effigy was burnt on behalf of Sri Daraganj Ramlila Committee at Ramlila Maidan in

Alopibagh. For this, preparations were also made by the Shri Ram Leela Committees. A fair was also organized. On behalf of the committees, the effigy of Ravana was burnt through fireworks. Ravana's effigy was also burnt in Maharishi Yogi Ashram at Naini. After the slaughter of Ravana, a joint Ram Dal of Sripatharchatti Committee and Sripajawa Ramlila Committee was taken out in the city of Vijayadashami.

The effigy of Ravana was burnt on the occasion of Vijayadashami at Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Ashram in Naini. Common people were present along with the people of the ashram on this occasion.

One of the ancient Ramlilas of Prayagraj is the Ramlila of Sripathchatti. On the occasion of Vijayadashami, Ravana slaughter was staged in Ramlila on a grand stage by the Ramlila Committee. In the presence of thousands of devotees, the battle of Shri Ram Ravana took place. After that Shri Ram shot an arrow to Ravana. After the slaughter of Ravana, there was shouting of Shri Ram.

Due to the incessant rain since this morning, the Dussehra fair was a little less dazzling. Nevertheless, thousands of people were present to enjoy the Ravana slaughter and the Dussehra fair, the attractive tableaux.

AU VC assures full fee reimbursement for students with financial constraints

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): Amidst the ongoing controversy over fee hike in Allahabad University, the Vice Chancellor has decided to provide relief to the students of economically weaker families. Students unable to pay the fees will be able to take the form from the

Dean Student Welfare Office and submit it within 15 days. Vice Chancellor Prof. Sangeeta Srivastava has released the letter of this decision on the official website of Allahabad University. V-Chancellor while addressing all the students, made it clear that Allahabad

University is marching towards new heights. All talented students are welcome here and fees and hostels cannot become a hindrance in their admission and studies. The Vice Chancellor clarified that the student whose admission will be on the basis of merit in the

university, for them the simple increase in fees will not be a hindrance. According to the Vice Chancellor, the Ministry of Social Welfare and other Ministries of the State Governments completely refund all the fees of all the economically backward classes.

140 litres of liquor recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Under the joint operation of Excise department and police to check the illegal trade in liquor, Lalganj police arrested four persons, including two women, and recovered 140 litres of liquor on Wednesday. After registering a case the police completed the legal formalities. The accused were identified as Shivlekha, Rajkumari, Raj Singh and

Rahul Kumar of Khajuri Colony under Lalganj police station.

INSPECTED: SP Santosh Kumar Mishra inspected the operation being carried out by NDRF/SDRF, PAC, flood team and police to search for the missing woman in Ganga river under Kachhawaan police station on Wednesday. A case of a woman going missing was registered at Kachhawaan police station on October 1.

Police had submitted the final report. In the case a so-called letter of the missing woman was found near Ganga and taking cognisance of it SP formed a SIT comprising three inspectors and a woman inspector and investigation started again. Despite efforts of police teams the woman could not be recovered, last reports received here said.

VIJAYADASHMI UTSAV PROGRAMME: Veteran RSS

leader in a Vijayadashmi Utsav programme organised on Wednesday said we were observing our foundation day keeping Maryada Purushottam Ram as ideal of society. He made it clear that only India could work for the betterment of the world.

The programme was conducted by Lakhan Agrawal and presided over by principal medical college Mirzapur Dr RB Kamal.

Hurt & offended

Saffron sentiments have been hurt for the nth time, now over the teaser of *Adipurush*

In the saffron community, sanctimony scales a new peak every day. Members indulge in a variety of theatrics to score brownie points; the easiest one is to attack the Hindi film industry, its stars, directors, etc., on some pretext or the other. And even if there is no pretext, they create one. The latest one they have found in *Adipurush*, an upcoming mythological film based on the Ramayana. Directed by Om Raut and shot simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu, it stars Prabhas as Raghava, Kriti Sanon as Janaki, and Saif Ali Khan as Lankesh. In fact, such is the level of tetchiness that even a teaser of the film has incensed Hindutva hotheads, including Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Ministers Kesav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak and Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra. Mishra has even warned of legal action if the objectionable scenes are not removed. Satyendra Das, Ram Temple head priest of Ayodhya, has demanded an outright ban on the movie. Das told a newspaper that the portrayal of Lord Ram, Hanuman and Ravana does not conform with the epic and thus is against their dignity. Pathak is against the movie because saints are opposed to it: "Whatever saints have said needs attention." The other UP Deputy Chief Minister, Keshav Maurya, hasn't even seen the teaser but is against it nonetheless. In this me-too game, nobody wants to be seen as less offended: the claim of hurt sentiments is the claim of being a bona fide Hindutva warrior.

And what, pray, has hurt Hindu sentiments? Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Malavika Avinash enlightened us about it: "The Ravana in the photograph that I see floating around is a guy who looks nothing Indian, has blue eye makeup and is wearing leather jackets. This is our history they are representing; they cannot do it in the guise of creative liberty." MP Minister Mishra is hurt because "Hanumanji is shown wearing leather, whereas the description [in the scriptures] of the deity's costume is different... These are scenes that hurt religious sentiments." That such arguments can be made in this day and age against a work of art speaks volumes about the plight of freedom of expression in our country. To begin with, art is not a Photostat representation of reality. Which implies that an artist or filmmaker need not be accurate in everything they create. The portrayal of deities is always a creative endeavour; the creativity of conventional portrayal cannot be privileged over that of the contemporary one. Besides, if every filmmaker listens to the views of every politician and pontiff, and is forced to adhere to their views, it will become impossible for him or her to direct any movie. But that, unfortunately, has been going on for quite some time. Today the Hindi filmmaker feels so constrained that they seem unwilling to take up interesting subjects. This also explains the staleness of story ideas and resultant flops.



KCR on national stage

With his eyes set on pan-India presence, the CM relaunches TRS in new avatar

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao who has shown a strong inclination to be a serious player in national politics has taken the first step towards it. He has launched Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) which would be fighting the 2024 general election and catapult KCR onto the national stage. The new party is a rip-off of the Telangana Rashtira Samithi (TRS). But before the TRS aka BRS becomes a 'national party' it must pass the litmus test of the Election Commission which decides upon the credentials of a party for national stature. The 'name-change' of course has been conveyed to the Election Commission. To be a national party, it must be recognized as a state party in at least four states or has to have won six per cent of the votes in any four states and four Lok Sabha seats. Or the party must win two per cent Lok Sabha seats (11 seats) in at least three states. Right now TRS is one state party. It rules Telangana but has hardly any presence outside the state, though KCR, thanks to his forays to Delhi and presence on the dais in various public meetings is a known name nationwide. He has also established his strong credentials as a strong anti-BJP chief minister who is willing to take on the BJP in his state and elsewhere. This brings him to the national stage and is in line with the opposition parties which are trying to cobble up an anti-BJP alliance.

KCR has made his intentions clear from day one that he means business and will take on Prime Minister Modi in the 2024 elections. He is also meeting with a lot of opposition leaders and is said to have a good rapport with them. The Chief Minister Rao, before the relaunch of his party, met with several political leaders including his counterparts in other states - Mamata Banerjee, Nitish Kumar, Arvind Kejriwal and MK Stalin. Besides, Former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy attended the BRS launch party. So far KCR is not trying to forge a united front against the BJP but talking to like-minded parties to come together for a common cause. As an astute politician, he knows making a front would not be easy so he seems to be avoiding it and focusing on presenting his Telangana Model of development to the rest of the country, something that Prime Minister did in his run-up to Delhi. Do we have another PM in making? We shall see.

Don't mess with the Russians

The Ukraine-Russia conflict is snowballing into a serious crisis which could have far-reaching ramifications for world peace and economy

Trouble was brewing in the Balkans, and yet on Europe's eastern front was gearing up for war. The partial mobilisation was ordered. The Russian army and reservists were called up, trains began to load soldiers and supplies for imminent war. Diplomatic cables out of St Petersburg claimed that "partial mobilisation" was only word-play, as the Russian military was deploying on the German and Austro-Hungarian fronts as per the "general mobilisation plan".

With little time left, the Germans ordered the counter-mobilisation and declared war. What could have been a war between two belligerents Serbia and Austro-Hungarians and a regional local affair escalated into World War I? Serbia took a back seat and the other Great powers - Britain, France, the US, and the minor powers Italy and Ottomans began the bloodiest power play, the world had ever seen. Habsburgs and Ottomans lost empires, the Germans their Kaiser and Russians their Czar. The French were still reeling, as Britain and America emerged as supreme powers. Lord Edward Grey's game worked, all the continental powers fought and bled dry. And as continental empires died, Russia transformed itself into the Fatherland and became the world's first communist nation and a force to reckon with.

Once again there is trouble brewing in the Balkan Kosovo, the NATO commanders in Kosovo are on 'high alert' and "ready to move more troops". Serbia and Albania both stake claim to Kosovo, while it's under NATO protection currently and an independent country, formed after the breakup of erstwhile Yugoslavia. But a larger game is at play on the Eastern front between NATO, Ukraine, and Russia. The Ukraine crisis is being used to bleed the EU and Russia dry. And as the war escalates, humanity is again at the precipice of doom. This could very well be the start of another long and embittered conflict that will affect all of us. And has only



one winner - the US foreign policy pundits and the rising dollar.

At this point, it doesn't matter who and why the special military operation (SMO) started. As billions of dollars and 300,000 reservists are added to the mix, the situation is almost nuclear. Russia has been pushed into a corner, and the bear is in the mood to back down. Forget what Modi said. Putin's demeanour during the meeting clearly indicated why he thought of the Indian PM and his advice. Putin understands Indian double-speak and PR stunts knowing fairly well our choke points - Indian dependence on Russian arms and cheaper fossil fuels. So he continues to fight for the Russian motherland and the rights of Russian-speaking people beyond Russian borders. The referendum in the liberated areas of Donbas and support for the Serbian claim over Kosovo are both parts of new Pan-Slavism. But back to Ukraine, Russia is hell-bent on achieving SMO's goals - demilitarisation, de-Nazification, and liberation of the Donbas region. With voting in progress in the liberated areas, the last

SPECULATION IS ALSO GETTING HIGH ON THE STOCK MARKETS AND RUMOURS OF IMMINENT RECESSION ARE ALREADY DOING THE ROUNDS. THE ENERGY AND FOOD CRISES ARE GOING TO BURST THE ARTIFICIAL FISCAL BUBBLE SOONER THAN LATER

goal is more or less complete. Now the military power comes in.

Despite Zelensky's optics and broadcasts, there is no way Russia can be defeated militarily. Ukraine has already used its entire military might. The terms of engagement under SMO were quite different from their war or invasion doctrine. EU and NATO both know they cannot have regular troops fighting for Ukraine, and that means Ukraine will be given arms and money, but no muscle to use them. The International Legion operating in Ukraine bolsters the tired Ukrainian army, but won't be enough to turn the tide. And the money pouring from the EU will soon begin to dry as winter comes and the gas prices sky rocket. EU will be forced to re-divert money and leave Ukraine in the cold.

Speculation is also getting high on the stock markets and rumours of imminent recession are already doing the rounds. The energy and food crisis is going to burst the artificial fiscal bubble sooner than later. Eventually, the Biden administration would have to make a deal with Putin and put

the matter at rest. One shouldn't be surprised if Zelensky becomes the fall guy for the West.

But if the deal comes late, the EU's economy and Euro would plummet, whereas the Russians will be emboldened and recover faster than Germany, because they have the food and fossil fuels to outlast the EU.

But if the deal is not made, the portents of a European war are visible. There is no stopping the Russian war machine either. An escalation of war from the Ukrainian side will be worse for Europe and their armies. Without nuclear weapons, NATO nor the EU cannot match the Russian army's full strength. Eastern Europe could be devastated, and Ukraine could be reduced to ruins over this winter. And god forbid, nuclear weapons are used, then our planet and humanity at large will risk a nuclear Christmas this year.

(The author writes on agriculture & environment, and is a former Director — Policy & Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BITTER FIGHT IN MAHARASHTRA

Sir — The battle line between good and evil runs through the heart of every man. Life is neither good nor evil, but only a place for good and evil. It was not just a place for good and evil as the two factions of Shiv Sena battled in open and that too with the war of words. And the big brother BJP is watching the proceedings silently from the sideline. Maharashtra politics turned into turmoil because of the betrayal after the ultimate winner was pushed out for vested interests and MVA was formed as politics for convenience. It is unfortunate how a constitutionally elected government could be nudged by money power and rob people of their mandate.

The pre-poll alliance was mocked despite the posters carrying Balasaheb Thackeray on one side and Narendra Modi on the other side. And the fight is going in a threatening way. A traitor stamp was given to Eknath Shinde at the same time Sena's legacy was sold in haste by the real Sena. Thus, the burning of Ravan ended in a war of words and the action aftermath of all allegations and counter-allegations turned out to be in sour taste and not the original ideology of Babasaheb Thackeray.

CK Ramanathan | Ghaziabad

PERFECT TEN FOR PONNIYIN SELVAN

Sir — Lovely narrative and the problem with the writer is the enlarged pre-conceived notions. But comparisons are inevitable and inferences are drawn as per an individual's wealth of knowledge. But calling Kalki a failure as a writer is surprising. We can but limit it to the intrigues, mysteries, rivalries, and rampages and beyond that, well difficult to say and conclude. A marvelous cinematic experience after *Bahubali*. Supported by a rousing music score by the master AR Rahman. The Chola empire was brought up in all its glory.

The ethereal Aishwarya Rai and the beautiful Trisha light up the screen with

Death in the mountains



Ten climbers were killed after being hit by an avalanche in Uttarakhand. This is not the first incident of an avalanche. Even before this people have lost their lives in such incidents in the Himalayan region. Yes, the incidence of avalanches has definitely increased over the years. Incidents of avalanches worry

because they are causing great damage to human life. Unfortunately, no such mechanism has been developed so far, by which these events can be accurately predicted.

The problem is that people's awareness of avalanches is very low compared to other disasters. One reason for this is the occurrence of these disasters in remote, high mountainous areas. Therefore, it is difficult to gather much information about them. At the same time, it has to be understood that the cutting of trees and increasing pollution have increased this problem. Due to climate change, nature keeps showing its fierce form from time to time. Therefore, attention will also have to be paid to stop the felling of trees and controlling pollution.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

their presence and performance. And in the scene where they are together, the screen is so luminous. All in all, it has been worth waiting for the movie and I just cannot wait for the second part which will release in 2023. Just a word of caution: Tamil is not conventional colloquial. It is Tamil spoken in those days. But you will get the gist of it.

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Coimbatore

CONG IN DISARRAY IN KARNATAKA

Sir — The Bharat Jodo Yatra is in Karnataka to unite the country, but it is evident that not much of 'Jodo' is happening in the state Congress unit due to constant one-upmanship between former chief minister Siddaramaiah and state party chief DK Shivakumar. The Karnataka Congress is faced with a conundrum with the continuing internal strife between the duo. This may affect their chances in the upcoming state elections. Despite best efforts of Rahul Gandhi the benefits of Bharat Jodo yatra may not translate into votes. The party high command has sent several messages to the state leadership to

ensure that fissures between the two seniors that have often crept up do not implode just ahead of the 2023 polls. Even during the Padyatra, one could see Rahul Gandhi being flanked by both leaders on either side or in deep discussion while walking at a slower pace. The idea is to ensure that the national walkathon undertaken by Gandhi should be a success and not hindered by the friction that the state unit may have.

Even though both the top party leaders have overtly expressed unity in the party and between themselves, their respective loyalists have left no stone unturned to showcase their support for their respective favourites, which has turned the situation even more fragile. That has led many leaders to believe that even if the Congress's chances in the assembly polls turn in their favour, the race to occupy the chief minister's chair could turn out to be a major hurdle.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Why should good roads, education and health institutions exist only in big cities?

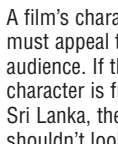


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



US Secretary of State — Antony Blinken

What we're seeing is that if they (N Korea) continue down this road, it will only increase the condemnation.



Actor — Dipika Chikhlia



Olympic champion — E Kipchoge

Why should we talk to Pakistan? We will talk to the people of Baramulla, the people of Kashmir.



Union Home Minister — Amit Shah

FIRST COLUMN

COVID EFFECTS MAY BE RESULTING IN DEATHS

Covid after-effects could be the reason for spurt in sudden cardiac arrests



LK JHA

Doctors have reported seeing a significant surge in cases of heart attack and heart failure in the post-Covid period. Their incidence has gone up by more than one-fourth in the last one year, according to our experience at Sarvodaya Hospital, Faridabad.

After the pandemic, the incidence of heart attacks and heart failure has increased by 25-30 per cent in people who got infected with Covid. Patients who had to be hospitalized or put on a ventilator due to Covid are now much more vulnerable to heart complications, and we are seeing a considerable surge in such cases.

There are two ways by which Covid affects the heart. First is direct infection of the heart muscle, due to which it gets weakened, leading to heart failure. The second is that after Covid, a mild form of the infection persists in the body for many months. The arteries remain inflamed, leading to the tendency of clotting inside the heart. This results in heart attack and other complications. Many incidents have come to light in recent months of sudden heart attack in people after doing vigorous exercise. In these cases, the heart muscle may still be inflamed due to Long Covid, triggering a heart attack.

The social media platforms are abuzz these days with videos of artists on stage suddenly collapsing and dying, with the spectators watching the incidents with disbelief. Even some of the celebrities have succumbed to this phenomenon of becoming victims of cardiac arrests after exercise in gym or state performance. There are scopes for the people to speculate when incidents of similar nature appear on the social media platforms with short videos. There is a need to understand that we are still in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.



The people who had a severe form of Covid need to take precautions. It is difficult to predict heart problems in recovered Covid patients. But there are blood tests that measure inflammatory markers like ESR and High-sensitivity C-reactive Protein (hs-CRP). These can tell whether any form of infection still exists in the body, and how much is the risk. It is advisable not to do any vigorous exercise for the next six months after getting Covid infection. Only light exercises in the form of brisk walking or mild jogging are OK. Don't indulge in any kind of strength training exercises like weight-lifting or extreme treadmill because your heart may still be weak.

We have seen an increase of 30 per cent over the last five years in the number of young patients with heart attacks coming to the hospital. They are also showing up with more extensive heart complications, with multiple blockages. Our advice is not to ignore any kind of symptoms, especially pain in the chest or upper part of the stomach. If you do activities like brisk walking or climbing the stairs and feel any kind of stiffness or heaviness in the chest, you should be very mindful. Many people attribute heart-related symptoms to acidity or arthritis, but any gastritis that persists for 2-3 days is unusual.

It is important in these cases to get tests done to rule out heart problems. Diabetes and tobacco are the top two risk factors for heart disease in India. Diabetic people have three times higher chances of having a heart attack than non-diabetic individuals. Smoking is also very dangerous for the heart, due to which we are seeing many young patients with heart attacks.

(The author is a cardiologist at Sarvodaya Hospital, Sector 8, Faridabad)

Pity that women don't understand manpower



MANOJE NATH

From behind the desktop, wife can be seen indulging her pleasure of doing much pointless work

After I have undertaken my mandatory walk or stint on the treadmill, I do not undertake any wasteful expeditions. My wife is no "mechanical bride". She is as complete a human being as ever there was, and inordinately humane at that, but she is tidying up this, minding that apart from the regular chores all the time. Like planets, she is in a state of perpetual motion. Her living room is her pride, her bedroom her work of art. Having done my quota of physical activity, why should I waste man-power on frivolous movements? Parked in front of my desktop or sprawled on the bed, it gives me the vertigo to watch my wife indulging her pleasure of doing such pointless work. But women, I guess, do not understand much about man-power!

I had told my wife very early during our marriage that it takes many to solve a problem and there are various steps to solving it. My job was to reflect on the nature of the problem, so she could do the solving. That is division of labour. My wife gave me that look which she perfected in a short time living with me. The translation would run in volumes but I get it in an instant. Ever since she has gone about doing her things; I have learnt to manage to cope up with my vertigo reasonably well. But now that domestic helps are becoming a little unpredictable she expects me to join her in these mad pursuits.

I have some rule of thumb excuses to dodge the draft. "Is it necessary, we will be leaving in a couple of days, anyway?" "Is it legal?" I escaped the edict to locate the source of a leak (my version of investigating the source of Oxus) from somewhere behind the geyser. I said the municipality will have to be notified, the power supply company will have to be informed. "So the government has now entered our bathroom? And in the next move they will be sprawled right in our bedroom?" She said facetiously. But she let it pass; she was just testing me. She knew that my intervention would have resulted in flooding the bathroom anyway and a call to the National Disaster Management Authority.

During the course of the same week I was asked to go up to the terrace to see whether the help was malingering or tending to the many plants and pots. I pleaded that I had lost my cap and standing in the sun for long made me feel giddy and nauseated. My Ray Ban aviator glasses were missing. Maybe this was also just a dry run and she let me get away with this one as well. Now I know why; she was laying a perfect ambush, she trapped me on an S-bend!

My books—poor me in my untidy environment of books—are her greatest eyesore. There was a time when we could dedicate one big hall to my books, neatly displayed, easily accessible. Even in the



MAYBE THIS WAS ALSO JUST A DRY RUN AND SHE LET ME GET AWAY WITH THIS ONE AS WELL. NOW I KNOW WHY; SHE WAS LAYING A PERFECT AMBUSH, SHE TRAPPED ME ON AN S-BEND!

(The author is a former IPS officer)



middle of the night if I was seized by an urge to look up a reference or browse a few pages it was no problem.

But gone are days and in the more frugal circumstances, in the brutal struggle for existence my books have lost out to the many shelves and almirahs which according to my wife contain objects of absolute necessity. The rest of my books have been dispatched to a room on the first floor. I argued with my wife that I and my books had co-evolved. It is like my environment for me, you can't destroy my habitat. "Don't you have any concern for the sole member of that rare species called husband?" My wife said that you could survive with your thousand books and the rest of it is an indulgence." I said these are not a thousand but only six hundred. She threatened to count each one of them so I climbed down and it was agreed that if I imported some books from upstairs an equal number would have to be deported.

Now my wife has a suspicion that some illegal immigrants from the first floor are hiding in the pile. Of course my children have sent me a few hundred in the last few years, but they are all legal. I told her, "I have papers from Amazon, even for the imported ones. Don't

husbands have human rights?" "So long as they don't create a pigsty in the bedroom," she said. The clutter and the pile are intruding into alien territory of her nicely curated corner. "Don't you quote all the time "I would rather be an unsatisfied Socrates than a satisfied pig?" "So, Mr. Socrates of the slums, don't be a pig."

My wife has served me notice that either I do the needful or she will take things in her own hand. And in matters like these she is an extremist. Either I find a way to somehow accommodate these books on the uppermost shelves by weeding out some for extinction or see them deported en masse. I am a human being not an uncaring cruel natural agency like evolution!

I have avoided the task so far by pointing out that the aluminium ladder has become a little unstable and by generally playing on her insecurity that her aging sixty six plus husband might take a bump. This has worked so far, but for how long? Aluminium ladders can be mended! Our departure from Patna has earned me a reprieve but how long can I be an exile?

I had asked my wife, sometime back, to buy me a pair of walking shoes and a couple of track pants. Normally I am pressured into

accompanying her on these missions because of size issues but over the years I have managed to find comprehensive strategies to evade the demand. But this time she did not say a word. I got my pair of shoes and track pants from Decathlon but the inventory included an un-indented trekking backpack, a pair of mountain trekking shoes, a rucksack, trekking gloves, trek zip off pants, a solid looking harness, and waterproof all weather multilayer peel off jacket. She sat down triumphantly. "When we get back to Patna you are going to go on your climbing expedition and plant the books in proper order, tidy up the clutter on the lower reaches and leave no waste on the top. You are equipped for every season and every eventuality, the activity is perfectly legal and does not violate any of your human rights. I checked up with our family lawyer."

It has steeled my resolution. I shall arise and go now and go to the Arctic tundra, report triumphantly for Facebook, wearing all that gear, petting a caribou or riding a sled. Chase the lions chasing antelopes and gazelles for lunch in the Serengeti Savannas in the darkest Africa. At least I would earn some admiring oohs and aahs from known and unknown women friends!

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THERE ARE TWO MODELS: ONE OF PM MODI WHICH GIVES EMPLOYMENT AND PEACE; THE OTHER IS THE GUPKAR MODEL WHICH LED TO PULWAMA.

—UNION HOME MINISTER

AMIT SHAH



IF THE GUPKAR MODEL GAVE GUNS AND STONES TO KASHMIRI YOUTH, WHY IS THE PM INVITING THESE LEADERS TO MEETINGS IN DELHI?

—NATIONAL CONFERENCE VICE-PRESIDENT

OMAR ABDULLAH

Ukraine war: Grain trade disruption and India's role

Russia and Ukraine were breadbaskets of the world, but they have now created a global shortage of wheat

Since the war broke out in Ukraine, the international order of trading has experienced a severe jolt in terms of grain trade. Food production and export supply have rapidly decreased due to crop failures and supply chain disruptions which have failed to meet the growing global demand, further adding to global food insecurity, particularly in Africa and West Asia.

In recent years, Ukraine, along with Russia, have emerged as major players in the world grain market and are commonly considered the breadbasket of the world. Prior to the war, Ukraine and Russia accounted for 14 per cent of world wheat production and around 25 per cent of world export of wheat.



RITUPARNA KAUSHIK



ARPAN GANGULY



YASHOBANTA PARIDA

(Authors are Assistant Professors in Economics at FLAME University, Pune)

Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb 24, 2022, grain exports rose by 8.5 per cent between 2021 and 2022. Thereafter, grain exports are estimated (as of July 29, 2022) to have decreased by 53.2 per cent for 2022-23.

The ongoing war continues to reshape geo-political relations between nations, exposes fissures in the global supply chain, and the dominance of nations strategically situated to take advantage of the food crisis.

Continuous imposition of new Western sanction packages, blockade of Black Sea ports, loss of human life and destruction of Ukrainian agricultural fields have severely disrupted the global wheat supply.

Nations in Africa, West

Asia and Southeast Asia, sourcing their wheat from Ukraine or Russia, are facing dire shortages of grain and are in urgent need of finding alternative sources to meet their grain requirements.

On the other hand, grain shortages have also led to an increase in the price of wheat in the international market. Given this growing shortage in the world supply of wheat and rising prices (which further adds to food insecurity in developing countries), to what extent can India fill the growing void in grain trade?

India is the second largest producer of wheat in the world economy, with a share of around 13.5 per cent (107.59 MT) of total world production in 2020. However,

it accounts for a very small proportion of total world exports of wheat (1-2 per cent) with its share increasing from 0.14 per cent in 2016 to 0.54 per cent in 2020.

Nearly the bulk of wheat production is either for domestic consumption or for storage. More recently, based on a notification dated May 13, 2022, India imposed a temporary ban on wheat export due to the destruction of wheat crops caused by unprecedented heat waves in the country.

The ban was intended to ward off domestic farmers and consumers from the global grain shortage, enhance food security, and thwart inflationary pressures. This was met with criticisms from several advanced

nations who urged India to contribute to addressing growing food insecurity and fulfil its responsibility as a G20 nation. However, India has sought to maintain its trade ties with neighboring nations as it continues to export wheat to countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.

To export more wheat or not is a dual-edged sword. In terms of benefits, firstly, India can enter new and potential markets by filling the void left by Ukraine and Russia in Africa and West Asia. Secondly, greater wheat exports can potentially increase the prices wheat traders or farmers receive. Thirdly, wheat exports can help stem the

massive volume of grain wastage every year.

However, even if the Government seeks to fill the void, it should plan the move in such a way that it does not hamper local consumption but also, more importantly, ensure that wheat farmers are protected from the vagaries of global competition. The extent to which gains from wheat exports will trickle down to farmers in terms of higher MSP or higher profitability remains unclear.

Outcomes will significantly vary for farmers from richer agricultural states like Punjab (who benefited from access to large-scale production technologies during the Green Revolution) vis-à-vis those from poorer agricultural states where agricultural

networks (in terms of access to markets, input costs, irrigation facilities, or technology) remain disjointed and weak.

The equitable distribution of gains from wheat exports to the farming community will remain a potent challenge moving forward.

Moreover, the role and intervention of FCI (Food Corporation of India) add an additional layer of complication, as an increase in exports might end up drawing out stocks from the FCI (in the absence of a bumper season), which would lead to conflict with other developed nations at the World Trade Organisation stage (as FCI stocks are meant for domestic consumption and welfare programs only).

Gambia deaths: Probe begins, samples sent to Kolkata lab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has initiated an "urgent investigation" and sought for more details from the World Health Organization (WHO), which has warned that four "contaminated" and "substandard" cough syrups, allegedly produced by Maiden Pharmaceuticals Limited based in Haryana's Sonapat, could be the reason for 66 deaths in the West African nation of Gambia.

The samples of the cough syrups have been sent to the Central Drug Lab in Kolkata for testing and affirming any possible "contamination". Government sources said the exact "one-to-one causal relation of death" has neither been



provided by the UN health agency nor the details of labels and products shared by it with the CDSCO, enabling it to confirm the identity or source of the manufacturing of the products. "Based on available information, the CDSCO has already taken up an urgent investigation into the matter with regulatory authorities in Haryana.

While all required steps will be taken, as a robust regulatory authority, the WHO has been requested to share with CDSCO at the earliest the report on the establishment of a causal relation to the deaths with the medical products in question, photographs of labels/products etc," sources said. Sources said the Union Health ministry would take all "required steps".

"WHO has been requested to share with CDSCO at the earliest the report on the establishment of a causal relation to the deaths with the medical products in question, photographs of labels/products etc," sources said. WHO has also informed India that it will share the certificate of analysis soon, they pointed out.

Haryana Home Minister Anil Viz said, "The Central government officials are gathering complete information. Samples have been sent to the Central Drug Lab in Kolkata. After reports come, stern action will be taken if anything wrong is found."

Vij said the cough syrups manufactured by the pharma company were approved for export. "It is not available for sale or marketing in the coun-

try. Whatever action has to be taken will be taken once the CDL report comes. Only after the report is in, we can arrive at any conclusion," he said. According to the sources, the WHO had on September 29 informed the Drugs Controller General of India that it was providing technical assistance and advice to The Gambia.

It had highlighted that a significant contributing factor to the deaths was suspected to be the use of medicines which may have been contaminated with Diethylene Glycol/Ethylene Glycol, and said its presence had been confirmed in some of the samples it tested.

The CDSCO said it responded to the WHO within an hour-and-a-half after receiving intimation, by taking

up the matter with the state regulatory authority. Further, a detailed investigation was launched to ascertain the facts and details into the matter in collaboration with Haryana State Drugs Controller, the source explained.

"From the preliminary inquiry, it has been made out that Maiden Pharmaceutical Limited, Sonapat, Haryana, is the manufacturer licensed by the state drug controller for the products under reference, and holds manufacturing permission for these products.

"The company has manufactured and exported these products only to The Gambia so far," sources said. It is a practice that the importing country tests the products for quality before sanctioning their usage there. According to the

tentative results received by the WHO, four out of the 23 samples tested have been found to contain either Diethylene Glycol/Ethylene Glycol.

Gambia initiates door-to-door search for medicine removal

NEW DELHI: Reports, meanwhile, stated Gambia has launched an urgent door-to-door campaign to remove the medicines from each house. The Ministry of Health has teamed up with the Gambia Red Cross Society and dispatched hundreds of young people to collect the suspect syrups through a house-to-house campaign. **PNS**

NCW issues notice to Uditraj for his remark on Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has summoned Congress leader Udit Raj over his "sympathy" remark against President Droupadi Murmu even as the BJP termed the Congress anti-tribal and demanded the opposition party's apology for his remarks. In a notice issued on Thursday, the Commission asked him to appear before it on October 10 and explain his "extremely condemnable and shameful" comments.

"No country should get a president like Droupadi Murmu. This is height of sympathy. She says 70 per cent of people eat Gujarat's salt. Spend your life eating salt, then you will know the truth," he had remarked.

At a function recently, Murmu had noted that Gujarat manufactures 76 per cent of salt produced in the country. "It can be said that all countrymen eat Gujarat's salt," she had said. "It



is a matter of surprise and pain that Congress leaders are regularly using such undignified expressions. This exposes the party's anti-tribal mindset. The Congress should apologise," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said. Another BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla hit out at the Congress leader tweeting, "Udit Raj uses unacceptable language for the 1st woman Adivasi President! Does the Congress endorse this insult of Adivasi samaj?" "After Ajay Kumar called President Droupadi Murmu as evil & then Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary used the term 'Rashtrapatni'

now Congress stoops to a new low!" the BJP spokesperson tweeted. In the notice, the NCW said, "The Commission has taken cognisance of his remark. The comments made are extremely condemnable and shameful. The Commission has sent a notice to Shri Udit Raj. NCW has scheduled a hearing and asked Shri Raj to appear before the Commission in person on October 10, 2022 at 3 pm."

Facing backlash from the BJP and other quarters over social media, the Congress leader put out a clarification on Twitter, saying his statement on President Murmu was his only and "nothing to do with the Congress".

"Her candidature & campaign were in the name adivasi, it doesn't mean she is no longer adivasi. My heart cries that when SC/ST reach to higher position, they ditch their communities & become mum," he said. But Poonawalla said nei-

ther Udit Raj nor the Congress can wash the hands off by this issuing a statement. Raj comes from the Scheduled Caste community and was elected to Lok Sabha on a BJP ticket in 2014. He joined the Congress before the 2019 polls after the BJP denied him a ticket.

"By merely tweeting this is a personal statement won't do! Congress must tell us if they will ACT ON Udit Raj or not for his Adivasi Virodhi statement. This is the third strike after Ajay Kumar & Adhir Ranjan statements on Murmu ji! This is not a Sanyog ! It is INC mindset," Poonawalla wrote.

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma tweeted, "Highly objectionable statement against the Supreme power of the country and a woman who with her sheer hard work reached this position. @Dr_Uditraj must apologise for his derogatory and insulting statement. @NCWIndia is sending him a notice."

Shinde faction to meet EC to claim Sena symbol

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Eknath Shinde faction of Shiv Sena will meet the Election Commission on Friday to stake claim to the party's 'bow and arrow' poll symbol ahead of the Andheri East Assembly bypoll in Maharashtra. The move is seen as the Shinde faction's bid to deny the 'bow and arrow' election symbol to the Uddhav Thackeray group which has decided to field Rutuja Latke, widow of MLA Ramesh Latke, for the November 3 bypoll.

"We are meeting the Election Commission on Friday in connection with the party election symbol," Rahul Shewale, leader of the Shinde faction of Shiv Sena in the Lok Sabha, said. BJP, an ally of Shinde faction, has decided to field Murji Patel, a corporator in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, for the bypoll necessitated due to

the death of Ramesh Latke. Congress and the NCP have decided to support the candidate of the Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena, their coalition partner in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA). Shinde had raised a banner of revolt against Thackeray for entering into an "unnatural alliance" with the Congress and NCP. Over 40 of the Shiv Sena's 55 MLAs had supported Shinde, leading to the resignation of Thackeray from the post of Maharashtra Chief Minister.

Twelve of the 18 Lok Sabha members of the Sena also came out in support of Shinde, who later claimed to be the leader of original Sena. The Andheri East bypoll is the first after Shinde and the BJP unseated the MVA Government in June, and is considered as a precursor to settling of claims by Shinde and Thackeray to be the "real Shiv Sena".

Operation Chakra: 26 cyber criminals held in 115 CBI raids

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 26 alleged cyber criminals have been arrested so far under 'Operation Chakra' of the CBI to dismantle cyber crime gangs operating in the country.

The operation has been launched in coordination with State police, Interpol and agencies of other countries, officials said on Thursday.

The CBI said 16 people were arrested by Karnataka Police, seven by Delhi Police, two by Punjab Police and one by Andaman and Nicobar Police.

The central probe agency, in coordination with state police, conducted searches under the operation at 115

locations across the country on inputs provided by Interpol, FBI, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Australian Federal Police, the officials said.

The CBI registered 11 cases against cyber criminals involved in financial fraud using the internet. While the agency conducted searches at 87 locations, 28 places were raided by the state police, they added.

"The operation intends to dismantle the infrastructure of these international cyber crime gangs in India and bring these perpetrators to justice. India's fight against transnational organised cyber crime has thus achieved a major milestone," a statement from the agency said.

SC to examine minority status for edu institutes run by minorities



New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to examine whether an educational institution administered by members of a minority community would result in it being conferred the status of a minority institution.

A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and BV Nagarathna issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh Government, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, National Medical Commission and others while seeking their replies. The top court was hearing an appeal filed by Mahayana Theravada Vajrayana Buddhist Religious and Charitable Trust challenging the Allahabad High Court order which observed that mere administration of an educational institution by a minority would not confer on it status of a minority institution.

The high court was dealing with the petition against the Uttar Pradesh government order, where the state government refused to treat the institution as a minority institution.

"Thus for an institution to qualify as minority institution within the meaning of Uttar Pradesh Private Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Fixation of Fee) Act, 2006, it should be an institution not only being administered by a minority but it also ought to have been established by the minority and it should also be notified by the State as such," the high court had said. The petitioner trust had established a medical college in 2001 and the members of the trust later converted to Buddhism in 2015 and kept on running the administration of the institution.

In its order, the high court had said that it does not find any illegality in the decision of the state government in not treating the educational institution of the trust as a minority institution so as to exclude it from the purview of the 2006 Act. **PTI**

SC directs States, UTs to submit report on welfare schemes for elderly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed all States and Union Territories to submit information on welfare schemes for the elderly with respect to pension, old age homes in each district and level of geriatric care.

A bench of Justices Anirudhha Bose and Sudhanshu Dhulia said the report of the States shall also disclose the present status as regards implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act.

"We direct that schemes operating for the welfare of the elderly with respect of (i) pension for the elderly, (ii) old age homes in each district and (iii) level of geriatric care ought to be produced before us.

"Let the respective States and Union Territories furnish

the information on their existing schemes on the aforesaid three heads to the advocate-on-record of the Union of India.

After collecting information from all the respective States and the Union Territories within a period of two months, a revised status report shall be filed one month thereafter by the Union of India," the bench said.

The apex court will take up the matter for hearing in January, 2023. The top court was hearing a plea filed by former Union Law Minister Ashwani Kumar seeking setting up of old age homes with basic healthcare facilities across the country.

Kumar, in his PIL, had said there was a large number of aged people which has been increasing, with most of them living in poverty, without any roof over their heads or proper clothes and food.

SC to hear plea raising safety concerns over production of undertrial prisoners in courts

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on October 11 a plea which has raised the issue of safety at trial courts across country and said production of undertrial prisoners before court should not be ordered as a "matter of routine" on every date. According to cause list uploaded on apex court website, the petition will come up for hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice Uday Umesh Lalit on Tuesday.

The petition, filed by advocate Rishi Malhotra, said even if trial court deems fit physical presence of an undertrial prisoner before it, the same can be ordered through video-conference from jails, especially in cases of gangsters, so public safety and security of judicial officers remain unaffected and the rights of accused are balanced. **PTI**

Birla: India calls for multilateralism as it supports rules-based global order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has reiterated that India has always supported a rules-based international order.

"It is in this spirit that India has called for supporting multilateralism for global peace and stability so that we can unite to address the challenges facing the world and find solutions in accordance with the aspirations of the people," Birla said, addressing Presiding Officers of G-20 Parliaments on the theme "Effective Parliament, Vibrant Democracy" during the 8th Summit of Speakers of G-20 Parliaments (P20) held in Jakarta.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh is also part of the same delegation. The Lok Sabha Speaker stressed that during the glorious journey of 75 years of democracy, India's democracy has become more empowered



and vibrant and our Parliament is making continuous and consistent efforts to pave the way for inclusive social and economic development of the people.

On the sidelines of the event, Harivansh had a meeting with Deputy Speaker, National Assembly, Republic of Korea.

Speaking about the bilateral cultural ties and people-to-people contacts, Harivansh said that Buddhism played an

important role in keeping a close connect for millennia between the two countries.

On India's proposed candidature of Aparajita Sarangi, MP, for IPU Executive Committee from Asia Pacific Group which will be filled during the meeting of the Group on the sideline of the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali Rwanda during 11-15 October, 2022, Harivansh sought the valuable support of Korea in this regard.

OPEC output cut: Fuel price freeze gets longer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The record six-month-long freeze in petrol and diesel price revision in all likelihood will be extended after international oil prices rose on the announcement of deep production cuts by OPEC+.

Some of the world's top oil-producing countries on Wednesday agreed to slash production by two million barrels per day to spur recovery in oil prices that had dropped to pre-Ukraine war levels.

For India, this is bad news as a fall in oil prices in recent weeks had helped it cut down on its import bill as well as limit losses that state-owned fuel retailers were incurring on selling petrol and diesel.

Prior to the decision of OPEC+, losses on diesel had come down to about Rs 5 per litre from a peak of around Rs 30 a litre while oil companies had started making a small profit on petrol, industry sources said.

But the rise in prices of crude oil, which is refined to produce petrol, diesel and other products, and the weakening of the rupee against the US dollar would mean losses on diesel widen and margins on petrol erode, they said.

India imports 85 per cent of its oil needs and international oil prices directly dictate domestic pricing.

State-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -- have changed the retail selling price of petrol and diesel in line with the international costs for a record six months now to help the government manage runaway inflation.

This prize freeze led to the firms booking losses on fuel sales as oil prices rose to a multi-year high of around USD 120 per barrel during May/June. Prices had started to ease in August and dropped to

January levels last month.

The basket of crude oil that India imports had dropped to USD 84.75 per barrel on September 27 but the spurt in international oil prices following the OPEC+ decision led to rates rising to USD 92.17 on October 5. Oil firms were hoping to recoup the losses they had booked since April if the declining trend was to continue but the reversal means they are back to square one, sources said.

IOC, BPCL and HPCL are supposed to revise the retail price of petrol and diesel daily in line with cost. But they froze rates for a record 137 days beginning November 4, 2021, just as states like Uttar Pradesh went to polls. That freeze ended on March 22 this year and rates went up by Rs 10 per litre each in just over a fortnight before a new freeze came into effect from April 7. Petrol currently costs Rs 96.72 a litre and diesel Rs 89.62 in the national capital.

Vande Bharat meets with accident; passengers safe

Railway officer: It was a case of skidding wheels due to cattle being run over

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

The newly-launched Mumbai Central-Gandhinagar Vande Bharat Express train flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi suffered minor damages after hitting a herd of buffaloes in Gujarat on Thursday. No passenger was, however, injured in the incident that occurred between Gairatpur and Vatva stations around 11.15 AM.

Coincidentally, the first Vande Bharat Express too had met with the same fate when cattle was hit affecting the services just a day after it was flagged off by the PM in February 2019.



Vande Bharat Express train, running between Mumbai Central and Gandhinagar, suffers damages after a collision with a herd of buffaloes, on the railway line between the Gairatpur and Vatva station, in Ahmedabad district, on Thursday **PTI Photo**

The Varanasi Vande Bharat had hit cattle near Tundla in Uttar Pradesh when the train was heading back to Delhi from Varanasi. The rail officials maintained that it was

a case of "skidding wheels" due to a cattle run over by the train. "Vande Bharat express running between Mumbai Central and Gandhinagar Capital stations had left Mumbai this morning.

The front portion of the train's engine got damaged after it hit some buffaloes that came on track around 11.15 am. The incident took place between Vatva and Maninagar areas of

Ahmedabad," Western Railway spokesperson Jitendra Kumar Jayant said.

"The damaged portion was repaired and the train was sent to Gandhinagar station. The train departed for Mumbai from the Gandhinagar Capital station at its scheduled time. No passenger was injured in the incident," he added.

Another railway spokesperson said the front portion of the engine was damaged, but no functional part of the train was harmed.

"Three-four buffaloes suddenly came on the way of Mumbai-Gandhinagar Vande Bharat, damaging the nose made up of FRP (fibre-reinforced plastic).

The train moved just after removing carcasses (within eight minutes) and reached Gandhinagar on time," he said, adding that the railway authorities were trying to counsel nearby villagers not to leave cattle near the track.

The semi-high speed train was flagged off by Modi on September 30 from Gandhinagar Capital station. This is the third Vande Bharat express train in the country.

Cong, NPF slam Centre for extending AFSPA in parts of Nagaland

PTI ■ KOHIMA

The Congress and the Naga People's Front on Thursday denounced the Centre's decision to extend the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in parts of Nagaland.

Criticising the Central government for extending the AFSPA for another six months in the northeastern state, Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee (NPCC) president K Therie said since there was a complete ceasefire with all the Naga political groups and talks were on to find a solution to the Naga political issue, there was no requirement for

a "draconian" law like AFSPA.

On October 1, the AFSPA was extended in nine districts of Nagaland – Dimapur, Nuland, Chumoukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek, Peren, and Zunheboto and 16 police station areas in four other districts – Kohima, Mokokchung, Longleng, and Wokha.

"They (the Central government and Naga negotiators) should settle the Naga issue and not keep the solution in cold storage," Therie said, adding that enforcement of AFSPA is a "meaningless provocation".

The Centre has been holding separate talks with the

NSCN(IM) since 1997 and the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) since 2017. It signed the framework agreement with the NSCN(IM) in 2015 and an Agreed Position with NNPG in 2017.

However, no final solution has been achieved to date with the NSCN(IM) remaining firm on its demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas.

Denouncing the extension of the Act in parts of Nagaland, NSF president Kegwayhun Tep and general secretary Siipuni Ng. Philo said, "We condemn the over-arching approach of the central government in extending

the draconian AFSPA for another six months under the pretext of law and order problem in major parts of Nagaland."

Describing the extension of the Act in parts of Nagaland as "uncalled for", NPF Legislature Party leader Kuzholuzo Nienu alias Azo said, "AFSPA is imposed only when there is lawlessness and insurgency problem but now the law and order situation in Nagaland is peaceful... by and large everything is so good. Therefore the extension of the Act in Nagaland is uncalled for".

Naga civil societies, including Naga Hoho, also

condemned the decision to extend the Act in parts of Nagaland.

The AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone without any prior warrant besides giving immunity from arrest and prosecution to the security forces if they shoot someone dead.

Asserting that the "draconian law must go away from our land", Naga Hoho general secretary K Elu Ndong said there cannot be true peace and mutual respect through the barrel of a gun.

"We look forward with hope for a peaceful resolution to the Naga political issue.

However, with AFSPA in place, there cannot be a true spirit of peace and tranquility," Ndong said.

Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) advisor Dr Rosemary Dziivichii said that for sustainable peace there was no place for AFSPA.

"As mothers, we are very disappointed with the extension of the AFSPA in the state and other Naga areas, in the midst of peace negotiations and despite appeals for the repeal of this Act".

By extending the AFSPA in parts of the northeastern state, an attempt has been made to "paint the state as a land of lawlessness and chaos",



the Naga Students' Federation had alleged.

Following the December 4 incident in Oting village of Mon district where security forces had gunned down 13 civilians, the Naga civil societies and the state government

had been demanding revocation of AFSPA from Nagaland. For the first time since the imposition of the Act on Nagaland, the Centre on March 31 announced to withdraw AFSPA from seven of its 16 districts.

TMC accuses Centre of revenge as it loses House Panel chair

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after he lost the chairmanship of the parliamentary standing committee on Food and Consumer Affairs, senior Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandopadhyay on Thursday slammed the BJP Government for its "dictatorial attitude" saying the saffron party was being run on totalitarian principles.

Apparently referring to the Trinamool Congress Government's denial to the BJP the chairmanship of Public Accounts Committee in Bengal Assembly the senior TMC MP said the Central Government functioned on the sole motto of "revenge."

Earlier his party colleague and Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien said that despite the

TMC being the third-largest party in Parliament and the second-biggest Opposition group it was robbed off the chairmanship of a standing committee.

"The third-largest party in Parliament, also the second-biggest Opposition party does not get a single chairmanship.... This is start reality of New India," he said.

Bengal BJP MP Locket Chatterjee who was given the chairmanship of the standing committee earlier chaired by Bandopadhyay earlier thanked the BJP leadership for "giving me the responsibility and considering me capable of discharging it." She attacked the TMC saying a "party that has destroyed democracy in Bengal had no right to lecture others on how democracy should



run."

Bandopadhyay on his part said, "I am not only the senior most MP from Bengal but also the one who has at present won most number of times from my State," adding he had a discussion with Union Minister Prahlad Joshi regarding the issue and was told that the step was a quid pro quo for the TMC's denial of the PAC chair-

manship in Bengal Assembly.

Offering apology for the BJP being denied the PAC in Bengal Bandopadhyay said that "the two cases are not the same as in Bengal the BJP was offered chairmanship of other committees but they refused them but there in Delhi I was removed from the only standing committee where the TMC had chairmanship."

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Nine people including five school students were killed as two overspeeding buses had a head-on collision on the Thrissur-Palakkad highway late on Wednesday night. The school students were part of a school excursion team to Nilgiris when the accident occurred. The teacher accompanying them and three passengers of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation bus, too, died on the spot in the accident. All the dead students were Plus Two students in a Church-run public school in Ernakulam suburb.

The incident shocked the President of India Draupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi who condoled

the deaths. The Prime Minister declared a cash assistance of Rs 2,00,000 to the families of the deceased while those injured were allocated Rs 50,000 each.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, leading a team of ministers to Norway expressed shock over the incident and has ordered a probe. Transport Commissioner S Sreejith told reporters at Thiruvananthapuram that the bus carrying the students was being driven as a speed of 97 km per hour and it was also found that the operator had altered the speed governor that limited the speed limit to 80 km per hour.

The driver of the tourist bus escaped from the accident site but was held at Kollam by the police making use of CCTV images and mobile phone calls. He has been charged with cul-



pable homicide for the death of nine persons. Owner of the bus too was arrested by the Police.

Accidents involving tourist buses that have incorporated a lot of changes like flash lights, woofers, high-decibel music which are not in compatible with the rules specified by the Motor Vehicles Department have become regular events in the State. There is widespread

complain against the KSRTC from former staff who allege that drivers with no experience in ferrying passengers were being chartered on contract basis. "Most of the drivers working with the KSRTC do not have sufficient experience in driving buses," said PV Kuriakose, a former driver with the KSRTC who has put in 30 years of service.

Mumbai cops arrest man from Bihar for threat to Ambanis

PTI ■ DARBHANGA/MUMBAI

Calls received by a hospital run by the Reliance Foundation threatening to kill Mukesh Ambani and his family members were the latest of the threats received by the billionaire industrialist.

Mumbai Police on Thursday arrested Rakesh Kumar Mishra (30) from Darbhanga in Bihar for allegedly making calls to Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital here in the last two days, threatening to blow up the hospital and kill Ambani, his wife Nita and sons Akash and Anant.

The caller had also threat-

ened to blow up Antilia, the famous south Mumbai residence of the Ambani family on Altamont Road in South Mumbai .

According to the city police, this is the second instance of Ambani family getting threats on the hospital headline number.

On August 15 this year, the hospital had received at least nine calls threatening the Reliance Industries chairman and his family members, said an official. Bishnu Vidu Bhoumik (56) was arrested in connection with the calls.

In November 2021, Mumbai Police increased the security outside Antilia fol-

lowing a tip given by a taxi driver about a possible threat, but investigation found there was no such threat.

But an incident involving threat to the Ambani family earlier that year made national headlines and shook the state government.

On February 25, 2021, an explosive-laden SUV was found parked on Carmichael Road in South Mumbai, near the Ambani residence.

Police recovered a printed threat note inside along with gelatin sticks. The note this was only a "trailer" and there would be assembled explosives next time instead of just loose sticks.

Mansukh Hiran, a Thane-based businessman, told police the SUV had been stolen from his possession.

But the matter took a grim turn when Hiran was found dead in a creek in Thane a few days later, and an Assistant Inspector of Mumbai crime branch, Sachin Waze was arrested for alleged involvement in parking the SUV near Antilia and also for Hiran's murder.

The affair also led to Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh being shunted out. An angry Singh then accused then home minister Anil Deshmukh of asking police to

collect money from bars in Mumbai; Deshmukh subsequently resigned and the CBI registered a corruption case against him.

Mukesh Ambani currently has a Z-Plus security cover, provided by the Central government. The Central Industrial Security Force provides security to his residence.

In 2013, a letter sent in the name of terror outfit Indian Mujahidin was delivered to Ambani's Maker Chambers office in Nariman Point area. It threatened him for supporting then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.



Mukesh Ambani's younger brother and industrialist Anil Ambani was in

news for reason related to security in 2009 when pebbles were discovered in the fuel

tank of his chopper. It was suspected that it was a sabotage attempt.

FROM PAGE 1

36 DEAD, MOSTLY KIDS, IN THAI DAY-CARE CARNAGE

Earlier, Dumrongsak told reporters that the main weapon used was a 9mm pistol that the man had purchased himself. Paisal said he also had a shotgun and a knife.

Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, who planned to travel to the scene on Friday, told reporters that initial reports were that the former officer was having personal problems. "This shouldn't happen," he said. "I feel deep sadness toward the victims and their relatives."

Police have not given a full breakdown of the death toll, but they have said at least 22 children and two adults were killed at the day care. At least two more children were killed elsewhere.

Firearm-related deaths in Thailand are much lower than in countries such as the United States and Brazil, but higher than in Japan and Singapore, which have strict gun-control laws. The rate of firearms related deaths in 2019 was about 4 per 100,000, compared with about 11 per 100,000 in the US, and nearly 23 per 100,000 in Brazil.

Mass shootings are rare but not unheard of in Thailand, which has one of the highest civilian gun ownership rates in Asia, with 15.1 weapons per 100 population compared to only 0.3 in Singapore and 0.25 in Japan. That's still far lower than the US rate of 120.5 per 100 people, according to a 2017 survey by Australia's GunPolicy.Org non-profit organisation.

The country's previous worst mass shooting involved a disgruntled soldier who opened fire in and around a mall in the northeastern city of Nakhon Ratchasima in 2020, killing 29 people and holding off security forces for some 16 hours before eventually being killed by them.

Nearly 60 others were wounded in that attack. Its death toll surpassed that of the previously worst attack on civilians, a 2015 bombing at a shrine in Bangkok that killed 20 people. It was allegedly carried out by human traffickers in retaliation for a crackdown on their network.

Last month, a clerk shot co-workers at Thailand's Army War College in Bangkok, killing two and wounding another before he was arrested.

INFANT AMONG 4 ABDUCTED SIKHS FOUND DEAD IN US

Expressing shock and condemning the incident which has shocked everyone especially the Punjab living across the globe, Mann on Thursday said the brutal murder has raised questions on the security of Punjabis, even in advanced nations like US.

Seeking the intervention of the Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he urged him to impress upon the national Government of the United States to thoroughly conduct a probe into the matter. "It is the need of hour to instill a sense of security amongst the Punjabis living abroad. The Government of India must flag the issue of security of Punjabis living in the US with their counterpart in America," said Mann, adding that top most priority must be accorded to this for ensuring safety of the Punjabis living there.

Expressing deep anguish over the incident, Punjab NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal on Thursday demanded exemplary punishment for the killers. He demanded from the Governor of California and mayor of Merced County in the US that the killers should be arrested at the earliest. He has also appealed that exemplary punishment should be given to the killers so that no one can commit such heinous crimes in the future.

Dhaliwal said the Punjab Government stands with the family in this hour of grief. He also assured that the Punjab Government would take up the matter with full vigour at all levels to ensure that the culprits are brought to book.

PFI BAN: CETRE APPOINTS JUSTICE DINESH PRESIDING OFFICER OF UAPA TRIBUNAL

He will not be entitled to any extra remuneration for his services as the head of the tribunal except for travelling allowance and daily allowance as admissible under the High Court Judges (Travelling Allowance) Rules 1956.

Justice Sharma was nominated by Delhi High Court Chief Justice S C Sharma following a request from the Union Home Ministry. According to the procedures, the Union

Home Ministry requests the Law Ministry to name a sitting judge of the High Court as Presiding Officer of the UAPA tribunal. The Law Minister then requests the Chief Justice of the concerned high court to recommend a judge to head the tribunal.

The PFI's affiliates include Rehab India Foundation (RIF), Campus Front of India (CFI) All India Imams Council (AIC), National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala.

SONIA JOINS RAHUL, ADDS SPARKLE TO BHARAT JODO YATRA

"We have sailed through storms in the past and today too we will break the limits of all challenges and will together unite India," Rahul tweeted as the yatra continued to traverse Karnataka, where he will stay for another 15 days before moving into Telangana.

"We have weathered many storms and will overcome all challenges. Together we will unite India," he said in another tweet in Hindi and posted a photograph of him walking with his mother, his arm around her.

Priyanka Gandhi too was supposed to accompany Sonia to join Rahul during his padyatra. Her visit has been rescheduled due to her other commitments, and she will be joining anytime now, said an AICC source.

Congress' nationwide campaign, which began in Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari on September 7, entered Karnataka on September 30. Karnataka's top party leaders, former Chief Minister K Siddaramaiah and State unit chief DK Shivakumar, were also part of the convoy that walked alongside the Gandhis.

"After Vijayadashami, there will be Vijaya (victory) in Karnataka. We are proud that Sonia has come to walk on the streets of Karnataka. We are coming to power in the State, and BJP is on its way to shutting its shop," Shivakumar said, targeting the ruling party over allegations of corruption and bribery.

Sonia's presence appeared to galvanise the participants and bystanders alike. The security personnel had a tough time taming the crowds that jostled to get a glimpse of the Congress president.

India's service sector activity falls to 6-month low in Sept amid inflationary pressures: PMI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian services sector activity fell to a six-month low in September, as new business inflows rose at the slowest rates since March, amid inflationary pressures and competitive conditions, a monthly survey said.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell to 54.3 in September, from 57.2 in August, highlighting the weakest rate of expansion since March.

For the fourteenth straight month, the services sector witnessed an expansion in output. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes con-



traction.

"The Indian service sector has overcome many adversities in recent months, with the latest PMI data continuing to show a strong performance despite some loss of growth momentum in September," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

The upturn was reportedly restricted by price pressures, an increasingly competitive environment

and unfavourable public policies, the survey said.

Lima further noted that the steep depreciation of the rupee seen towards the end of the month due to interest rate hikes in the US present additional challenges to the Indian economy.

"Currency instability poses renewed inflation worries as imported items become more costly, and undoubtedly means that the RBI will continue hiking interest rates to protect the rupee and contain price pressures," Lima said.

On September 30, the monetary policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised the key lending rate or the repo rate to 5.90 per cent — the highest since April 2019.



Tourists take camel safari in the deserts of Pushkar on Thursday.

Biden to mark IBM investment with Democrats in tough races

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is ready to celebrate a new USD 20 billion investment by IBM in New York's Hudson River Valley with two House Democrats running in competitive races in next month's critical mid-term elections.

Biden is taking part in a Thursday afternoon announcement at the IBM facility in Poughkeepsie, New York.

He is expected to hold out the company's plans as part of what the White House says is a manufacturing "boom" spurred by this summer's passage of a USD 280 billion legislative package intended to boost the US semiconductor industry and scientific research.

Democrats facing tough mid-terms races have largely avoided appearing with Biden in the leadup to November's elections.

But Biden, whose approval ratings remain underwater, will be joined by two House incumbents in competitive New York races who are bucking the trend: Reps. Sean Patrick Maloney and Pat Ryan.

"When I heard @POTUS was looking to see the benefits of the CHIPS & Science Act first-hand, I told him that the Hudson Valley was the perfect place," Maloney wrote on



Twitter on Wednesday.

"I'm thrilled to host him in Poughkeepsie this week to celebrate the major wins and good-paying jobs we are delivering here in NY."

The CHIPS and Science Act, which Biden signed into law in August, was a rare piece of legislation for which the president was able to win bipartisan support.

IBM's USD 20 billion investment over the next decade is intended to bolster research and development and manufacturing of semiconductors, mainframe technology, artificial intelligence and

quantum computing in New York's Hudson River Valley, according to the White House.

"As we tackle large-scale technological challenges in climate, energy, transportation and more, we must continue to invest in innovation and discovery — because advanced technologies are key to solving these problems and driving economic prosperity, including better jobs, for millions of Americans," said Arvind Krishna, IBM's chairman and CEO.

The IBM investment comes on the heels of chip-maker Micron announcing

earlier this week an investment of up to USD 100 billion over the next 20-plus years to build a plant in upstate New York that could create 9,000 factory jobs. Maloney, chairman of the powerful Democratic congressional campaign fundraising arm, is running against Republican state Assemblyman Mike Lawler in New York's 17th District. Ryan is up against state Assemblyman Colin Schmitt in the 18th District.

The boundaries of most New York districts, including Maloney's and Ryan's, have been affected by redistricting. Ryan in August won a close special election to serve out the term of Democrat Antonio Delgado, who vacated his 19th District seat after he was appointed lieutenant governor by Democratic Gov Kathy Hochul. Ryan is running to serve a full term in the 18th District, where he lives.

Maloney, who had served New York's 18th District since 2013, decided to run in the 17th District. His Hudson Valley home fell inside the new boundaries after redistricting. Hochul, who took office last year after Democrat Andrew Cuomo resigned amid sexual harassment allegations, is also scheduled to attend.

She's looking to win a full term in next month's election against Republican Rep. Lee Zeldin.

Lanka's Parliament defers debate on 22nd constitutional amendment

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The much-anticipated debate for the adoption of the 22nd Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution aimed at empowering Parliament over the executive president was deferred on Thursday as Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena told the House that the government will have more discussions to seek views of the opposition to make it a "meaningful" exercise.

The parliamentary debate was fixed for October 6 and 7. However, it was speculated that due to disagreements in the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party coalition the debate would not take place.



"We have decided to have more discussions to seek views of the opposition as they raised some concerns", Prime Minister Gunawardena told Parliament. "We are willing to have talks to make sure that this amendment would be meaningful. At the moment it is a useless exercise", the main opposition leader Sajith

Premadasa said in response. New dates are yet to be fixed.

The government sources said a section of the ruling coalition was in disagreement with the amendment. They do not want any pruning of presidential powers.

Some members of the SLPP went public with their opposition to 22A.

CDC, WHO, Uganda to host regional meeting as Ebola spreads

AP ■ NAIROBI

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention says Uganda next week will host a ministerial meeting on the outbreak of the Sudan strain of the Ebola virus which has no proven vaccine and has caused alarm in the East Africa region.

Acting director Ahmed Ogwell told journalists on Thursday the three countries that suffered the devastating West Africa outbreak of Ebola in 2014-16, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, also are invited to the October 12 meeting.

The current Ebola outbreak in central Uganda has a 69 per cent case fatality rate, which Ogwell called "very high".

French writer Annie gets Nobel Prize

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

French author Annie Ernaux, who mined her own biography to explore life in France since the 1940s, was awarded this year's Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday for work that illuminates murky corners of memory, family and society.



Ernaux, 82, was recognised for "the courage and clinical acuity with which she

uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory".

She is the first French literature laureate since Patrick Modiano in 2014.

Ernaux told Swedish broadcaster SVT by telephone that the award was "a great honor" and "a very great responsibility".

Ernaux started out writing autobiographical novels, but quickly abandoned fiction in favour of memoirs.

Her most recent 20 books, most of them very short, chronicle events in her life and the lives of those around her. They present uncompromising portraits of sexual encounters, abortion, illness and the deaths of her parents.

Solomon Islands leader rules out China base in his country

AP ■ CANBERRA

The Solomon Islands prime minister assured Australia on Thursday that he would not "endanger his country" by allowing China to establish a naval base in the South Pacific.

Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare made his first visit to the Australian capital Canberra since his counterpart Anthony Albanese's centre-left Labour Party came to power at elections in May.

"Prime minister, I reiterate again that Solomon Islands will never be used for foreign military installations or institutions of foreign countries, because this will not be in the interest of Solomon Islands and its people," Sogavare told Albanese in front of reporters before their meeting began in Parliament House.

A bilateral security agreement between China and the Solomons signed early this year raised concerns of a Chinese naval base being established in the South Pacific. China has denied seeking a military foothold in the Solomons.

"My government's legacy is to safeguard the future of Solomon Islands and its people, and not to endanger the country and its citizens or the security of any forum country," Sogavare added, referring to the Pacific Islands Forum, a bloc of 18 regional neighbours that includes Australia.

The pair released a joint statement after their meeting rather than hold a customary joint press conference. The leaders "reaffirmed mutual security commitments and the Pacific family first approach to



regional peace and security", the statement said.

Australia wants the Solomons to turn to its neighbours to support its security needs rather than China.

Australia already has a bilateral security treaty with the Solomons signed in 2017. It provides a legal basis for the rapid deployment of Australian police, troops and associated civilians in the event of a major security challenge.

Australian police have been in the Solomons' capital Honiara since November to maintain peace after rioting.

Australia had led a force of Pacific Islands police and troops under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands from 2003 to 2017. It included 2,300 police and troops from 17 nations, invited by the Solomons' government. The deployment successfully ended the conflict that killed 200 people.

In the five years of ethnic and civil unrest before RAMSI arrived, the Solomons was close to becoming a failed state.

Sogavare and Albanese embraced when they met at a Pacific Islands Forum summit in July in Fiji, in a sign that bilateral relations were mending after Australia's nine years of conservative rule.

But relations remain tense. Sogavare accused Australia of interfering in domestic politics last month by offering to pay for Solomons' elections next year.

Sogavare had argued that his country could not afford to hold elections and host the regional Pacific Games next year.

Solomons lawmakers last month voted to delay the election until 2024, which critics condemned as a power grab. Sogavare accused Australia of attempting to influence that vote with its offer to help with elections.

In the joint statement on Thursday, Sogavare welcomed Australia's commitment of 16.68 million Australian dollars (USD 10.86 million) to pay for the games and its offer of support for the 2024 elections.

China's vast Xinjiang hit with Covid travel restrictions

AP ■ BEIJING

The sprawling Xinjiang region in western China has been hit with sweeping COVID-19 travel restrictions as the government ratchets up control measures across the country ahead of a key Communist Party congress later this month.

Trains and buses in and out of the region of 22 million people have been suspended, and passenger numbers on flights have been reduced to 75 per cent of capacity in recent days, according to Chinese media reports. A notice from the regional government on Tuesday said the measures were enacted to "strictly prevent the risk of spillover" of the virus.



A Xinjiang official apologized for the spread of the epidemic to other regions and provinces in China, particularly in recent days. As is often the case with China's draconian "zero-COVID" policy, the measures seemed out of proportion to the number of cases detected. The National Health Commission announced on Thursday that 97 cases had been recorded in Xinjiang in

the latest 24-hour period, after 91 cases were reported the previous day. All of them were asymptomatic.

Officials are desperate not to be called out for new outbreaks in their regions and Xinjiang has been under special scrutiny over the government's establishment of a series of prison-like re-education centres in which Muslim minorities have been taught to renounce their religion and allegedly subjected to a range of human rights abuses.

Xinjiang's vast surveillance system, relying on ubiquitous checkpoints, facial and even voice recognition software, and universal cell phone monitoring has made controlling travel among the population especially easy.

Gambia recalls syrups blamed for 66 child deaths

AP ■ BANJUL (GAMBIA)

Gambia has launched an urgent door-to-door campaign to remove cough and cold syrups blamed for the deaths of more than 60 children from kidney injury in the tiny West African country.

Speaking to The Associated Press, the Director of Health Dr Mustapha Bittaye confirmed the wave of child deaths from acute kidney injury, sending shockwaves across the country of 2.4 million people and around the world.

The World Health Organisation has issued an alarm in response to the deaths. "WHO has issued a medical product alert for four

contaminated medicines identified in The Gambia that have been potentially linked to acute kidney injuries and 66 deaths among children," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

"The loss of young lives is beyond heartbreaking for their families," he said. The four

medicines are cough and cold syrups produced in India, said the WHO statement.

While the contaminated products have so far only been detected in Gambia, they may have been distributed to other countries, said the statement.

The WHO is pursuing investigations with the company and regulatory authorities in India, it said.

"WHO recommends all countries detect and remove these products from circulation to prevent further harm to patients," it said.

Teaming up with the Gambia Red Cross Society, the Ministry of Health has dispatched hundreds of young people to collect the suspect syrups through a house-to-house campaign.

N Korea flies warplanes near S Korea after missile launches

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea says North Korea flew 12 warplanes near their mutual border on Thursday, prompting South Korea to launch 30 military planes in response. South Korea's military says eight North Korean fighter jets and four bombers flew in formation. It says the North Korean planes were believed to have conducted air-to-surface firing drills. It says South Korea responded by scrambling 30 warplanes. Earlier, North Korea fired two ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters, and South Korea conducted naval drills with the United States and Japan off the Korean Peninsula's east coast in response.

North Korea launched two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Thursday after the United States redeployed an aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula in response to Pyongyang's previous launch of a nuclear-capable missile over Japan.

The latest missile launches suggest North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is determined to continue with weapons tests aimed at boosting his nuclear arsenal in defiance of international

sanctions.

Many experts say Kim's goal is to eventually win US recognition as a legitimate nuclear state and the lifting of those sanctions, though the US and its allies have shown no sign of allowing that to happen. The latest missiles were launched 22 minutes apart from the North's capital region and landed between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The first missile flew 350 kilometres and reached a maximum altitude of 80 kilometres and the second flew 800 kilometres on an apogee of 60 kilometres. The flight details were similar to Japanese assessments announced by Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada, who confirmed that the missiles didn't reach Japan's exclusive economic zone. He added that the second missile was possibly launched on an "irregular" trajectory. It is a term that has been used to describe the flight characteristics of a North Korean weapon modelled after Russia's Iskander missile, which travels at low altitudes and is designed to be maneuverable in flight to improve its chances of evading missile defenses.

Near nuke plant

AP ■ KYIV

Seven Russian rockets slammed into residential buildings in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia before dawn Thursday, killing one person and trapping at least five in the city close to Europe's biggest nuclear power plant, the governor of the mostly Russian-occupied region said. The strikes came just hours after Ukraine's president announced that the country's military had retaken three more villages in one of the regions illegally annexed by Russia, the latest battlefield reversal for Moscow.

Governor Oleksandr Starukh wrote on his Telegram channel that many people were rescued from the multi-story buildings, including a 3-year-old girl who was taken to a hospital for treatment. He initially reported two people were killed but later said that one woman initially thought to have died was saved by doctors.

Photos provided by emergency services showed rescuers scrambling through rubble in the wreckage of a devastated building.

Regional authorities reported another rocket attack

later in the morning, but there were no immediate details of casualties or what was struck.

The deputy head of the Ukraine president's office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said 10 people had been killed in the latest Russian attacks in the Dnipro, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions.

Zaporizhzhia is one of four regions that Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed in violation of international laws on Wednesday, and is home to a nuclear plant that is under Russian occupation. The city of the same name remains under Ukrainian control.

The head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog is expected to visit Kyiv this week to discuss the situation at the Zaporizhzhia facility after Putin signed a decree Wednesday declaring that Russia was taking over the six-reactor plant. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry called it a criminal act and said it considered Putin's decree "null and void." The state nuclear operator, Energoatom, said it would continue to operate the plant.

Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, plans to talk with Ukrainian officials about the Russian move. He will also discuss efforts to set

up a secure protection zone around the facility, which has been damaged in the fighting and seen staff including its director abducted by Russian troops.

Grossi will travel to Moscow for talks with Russian officials after a stop in Kyiv.

The U.S. Sent its international development chief to Kyiv on Thursday, the highest-ranking American official to visit Ukraine since Russia illegally annexed the four regions.

The head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Samantha Power, was holding meetings with government officials and residents. She said the U.S. Would provide an additional \$55 million to repair heating pipes and other equipment.

USAID said the United States has delivered \$9.89 billion in aid to Ukraine since February. A spending bill signed by U.S. President Joe Biden last week promises another \$12.3 billion directed both at military and public services needs. Power said Washington plans to release the first \$4.5 billion of that funding in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, leaders from more than 40 countries are meeting in Prague on Thursday to launch a "European Political Community" aimed at boost-

ing security and prosperity across the continent, a day after the Kremlin held the door open for further land grabs in Ukraine. Speaking in a conference call with reporters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that "certain territories will be reclaimed, and we will keep consulting residents who would be eager to embrace Russia."

The precise borders of the areas Moscow is claiming remain unclear, but Putin has vowed to defend Russia's territory — including the annexed regions — with any means at his military's disposal, including nuclear weapons.

In his nightly video address Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the Ukrainian army recaptured three more villages in the Kherson region. Novohryhorivka, and Petropavlivka are all situated northeast of Kherson.

Ukrainian forces are seizing back villages in Kherson in humiliating battlefield defeats for Russian forces that have badly dented the image of a powerful Russian military and added to the tensions surrounding an ill-planned mobilization. They have also fueled fighting among Kremlin insiders and left Putin increasingly cornered.

On Wednesday, the

Ukrainian military said the Ukrainian flag had been raised above seven Kherson region villages previously occupied by the Russians. The closest of the liberated villages to the city of Kherson is Davydiv Brid, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) away. The deputy head of the Ukrainian regional government, Yuri Sobolevskyi, said military hospitals were full of wounded Ukrainian soldiers and that Russian military medics lacked supplies. Once they are stabilized, Russian soldiers are being sent to Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. When Russian troops pulled back from the Donetsk city of Lyman over the weekend, they retreated so rapidly that they left behind the bodies of their comrades. Some were still lying by the side of the road leading into the city on Wednesday.

Ukrain's presidential office said 10 more bodies of people killed during the Russian occupation were recovered over the past 24 hours in Lyman and Sviatohirsk following their recapture. Lyman sustained heavy damage both during the occupation and as Ukrainian soldiers fought to retake it. Mykola, a 71-year-old man who gave only his first name, was among about 100 residents who lined up for aid on Wednesday.



AP ■ PARIS

Erling Haaland continued his remarkable goalscoring form by netting twice as Manchester City thrashed FC Copenhagen 5-0 in the Champions League on Wednesday, while Chelsea saw off AC Milan to revive their hopes of reaching the last 16.

Holders Real Madrid survived a spirited challenge from Ukrainians Shakhtar Donetsk at the Santiago Bernabeu to win 2-1 and extend their advantage in Group F.

Lionel Messi scored but Paris Saint-Germain were held to a 1-1 draw by Benfica in Lisbon. Haaland went into City's game against Copenhagen at the Etihad Stadium having becoming the first player in Premier League history to score three successive home hat-tricks in Sunday's demolition of Manchester United.

The Norwegian slammed in the opening goal on seven minutes with his weaker right foot before prodding in a rebound for his second 25 minutes later.

The 22-year-old has now scored 28 times in his 22 Champions League appearances, already breaking Ruud van Nistelrooy's record for most goals in a player's first 30 games in the competition.

"I've never witnessed anything like it in my life," City's Jack Grealish told BT Sport.

"For the first and second goals I was just laughing. He is always there."

"The keeper said something to me as I was walking back. He said 'He's not human!' I said 'You're telling me?' Hopefully he can carry on this form and take us to glory."

Visiting centre-back Davit Khocholava put through his own net, with Haaland waiting behind him, to make it three before half-time.

Haaland was denied a fourth City treble as he was replaced at the interval, but a Riyad Mahrez penalty and Julian Alvarez's fourth goal for the club completed the rout.



Pep Guardiola's men remain three points clear of second-placed Borussia Dortmund in Group G and will qualify for the knockout phase with a victory in the Danish capital next week.

Jude Bellingham scored for the third time in as many Champions League outings as Dortmund romped to a 4-1 victory at Sevilla.

The Spanish club responded to the defeat -- and a desperately poor start to the season which has left them 17th in La Liga -- by sacking coach Julen Lopetegui shortly after the final whistle.

CHELSEA EASE TO 1ST WIN

Chelsea ended their wait for a win in Group E as goals from Wesley Fofana, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Reece James sealed an impressive 3-0 triumph over Italian champions AC Milan at Stamford Bridge.

The Blues made it back-to-back victories under new boss

Graham Potter to set up a crucial clash at the San Siro in six days' time.

Chelsea are second in Group E, level on points with third-placed Milan, one point behind leaders Salzburg who edged out Dinamo Zagreb 1-0.

"It's easier when you win games," said Aubameyang. "The mood is very good at the moment. We'll try to keep it up."

Shakhtar put on a battling display in Madrid, with goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin making 11 saves, but could not overcome a two-goal deficit against Real.

Goals in the first half-hour from Rodrygo and Vinicius Junior put Real in control and the 14-time champions made it three wins from three in Group F despite Oleksandr Zubkov's effort for Shakhtar.

Madrid will be sure of a last-16 spot if they can beat second-placed Shakhtar next time out.

RB Leipzig are just a point

behind Shakhtar after Joe Hart's error helped the Germans down Celtic 3-1.

The former England goalkeeper's poor pass led to Andre Silva restoring Leipzig's lead in the second half before the Portugal striker netted again late on.

BENFICA HOLD PSG

Benfica remain level on points with leaders PSG at the Group H summit after a hard-fought draw against one of the tournament favourites.

Messi produced a trademark left-footed finish into the top corner after a neat exchange of passes also involving Neymar and Kylian Mbappe to score his 127th Champions League goal in the 22nd minute.

Benfica levelled four minutes before the break as Danilo Pereira scored an own goal and both sides spurned chances to win in the second half.

Messi only scored 11 goals

Walker in WC fitness race after groin surgery

AP ■ MANCHESTER

England defender Kyle Walker faces a race to be fit for the World Cup after Manchester City revealed he had undergone groin surgery.

Walker suffered the injury in the first half of City's 6-3 victory against Manchester United at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

No timescale has been put on his return but it is understood City believe he still has a chance of playing at the World Cup, which gets under way for England against Iran in Qatar on



November 21.

"Kyle Walker has undergone surgery after suffering a groin injury to his left leg during the first half of our 6-3 win over Manchester United on Sunday," a City statement said on Thursday.

in 34 games in his first season for PSG last term, but already has eight in 13 this time around.

"It's normal, it takes a little time," PSG skipper Marquinhos told Canal Plus. "Now he feels a little more comfortable... I hope Leo Messi has a great season until the end to win this title."

Kyrgios reaches Japan Open quarter-finals

AP ■ TOKYO

Nick Kyrgios roared back from a "frustrating" first set on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the Japan Open, defeating Polish player Kamil Majchrzak 3-6, 6-2, 6-2.

Despite his slow start, the maverick Australian emerged victorious in typical crowd-pleasing style, showing off with aggressive aces and some exaggeratedly effortless points.

The 27-year-old, who was knocked out in the last eight at the US Open, said that despite Majchrzak breaking his serve, there was "never really doubt in my mind that I was going to win".

Kyrgios, whose lawyer appeared for him at a court hearing in Australia this week for a charge of common assault, will face either third-seeded US player Taylor Fritz or Japan's Hiroki Moriya in the quarter-finals.

Fritz has had a "breakthrough year", fifth-seeded Kyrgios said, while the crowd in Tokyo is bound to get behind home favourite Moriya.

"Either way, it's going to be a tough match."

"I wanna win for me"

Earlier in the day, Frances Tiafoe came through a second set battle to secure a spot in the quarter-finals, saying he wasn't bothered by rising expectations.

The 24-year-old American, who has been in the spotlight since beating Rafael Nadal on the way to a first Grand Slam semi-final at the US Open last month, beat Spaniard Bernabe Zapata Miralles 6-1, 7-6 (9/7).



The American breezed through the first set before Miralles fought back to take the second to a tie-break that saw some of the best rallies of the 1hr 32min encounter.

"Good match today, tough second set," said Tiafoe, who has won his last 13 tie-breaks.

"Sometimes it tips well your way. I'm playing very aggressive, I'm serving well in the tie-breaks, always a couple of aces."

He will face Miomir Kecmanovic in the last eight, after the Serb beat Britain's Dan Evans 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

After stunning Nadal at Flushing Meadows, Tiafoe played a starring role at the Laver Cup in London where his Rest of the World Team beat Europe for the first time in the competition's history.

But the fourth-seeded player, currently world

Swiatek wins first match since US Open

AP ■ OSTRAVA

Iga Swiatek won her first match since clinching the US Open title on Wednesday as Ajla Tomljanovic retired injured from their second-round tie in Ostrava.

The world number one was leading 7-5, 2-2 in a tight encounter when the Australian quit, shortly after clutching her knee in pain.

"It was a great match and it's unfortunate that something happened -- I hope she's going to recover quickly," said Swiatek.

number 19, said he was comfortable with all the attention he is receiving.

"I don't really care about what other people think I should be doing because I've had recent success. 'You know: 'Oh, is he going to be the next...?'" he said.

"I've been on tour for seven or eight years now, none of that really moves me. I wanna win for me, I'm not trying to achieve anybody else's goals



Xabi Alonso replaces Seoane as Bayer Leverkusen coach

AP ■ LEVERKUSEN

Former Liverpool and Real Madrid midfielder Xabi Alonso has been named as Bayer Leverkusen's new coach, replacing Gerardo Seoane after he was dismissed by the Bundesliga club on Wednesday.

"Bayer and Gerardo Seoane go their separate ways. World and European Champion Xabi Alonso becomes new head coach of the Werkself," the club said on their Twitter account.

Leverkusen confirmed the departure of the Swiss coach in the wake of Tuesday's 2-0 loss at Porto in the Champions League.

As a player, Alonso won the 2010 World Cup and two European Championships with Spain. He also lifted the Champions League trophy with both Liverpool and Madrid.

He managed Real Sociedad's reserve team in his home Basque region for three years until May, seeing them promoted to Spain's second tier



for the first time in 60 years, before they were relegated at the end of last season.

2ND INNINGS

Jorge Sampaoli is set to begin his second stint as Sevilla's coach after the Spanish club announced his hiring on Thursday.

Sevilla said the 62-year-old Argentine agreed to a contract for the remainder of this season plus one more.

Sampaoli already coached Sevilla in 2016-17 before leaving to take over Argentina.

Reid & Schopman voted FIH coaches of year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's and women's hockey team coaches Graham Reid and Janneke Schopman were on Thursday voted as FIH Coaches of the Year in their respective categories.

This is the second consecutive time Reid won the award, while India coach Sjoerd Marijne was the winner of the FIH women's coach of the year award last season.

Under Australian Reid, India has reached many new highs, which includes winning its first Olympic medal (bronze) at the Tokyo Games in 2021, after a gap of 41 years. India also won a silver medal at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games, climbing back onto the podium after missing out in the previous edition in Australia.

India played its first full season of FIH Hockey Pro League in 2021-22, and earned a well-deserved place on the podium, finishing in the third



position behind Netherlands and Belgium.

Reid's team managed to score 62 goals, the highest tally of goals scored by a team, not just in this season, but in the history of the Pro League.

Reid, who took charge in April 2019, was also the coach of the Indian men's hockey team that won the inaugural

FIH Hockey5s in Lausanne this year, winning every single game along the way.

He got 31.4 points in the online voting, followed by Netherlands coach Jeroen Delmee (26.9 points) and Belgium coach Michel van den Heuvel (20.2 points). Schopman, on the other hand, got 38.2 points in the voting as she beat Netherlands coach Jamilon Mulders (28.2) and Australia coach Katrina Powell (19.5) in the coveted award.

After India's remarkable run in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021, where they missed out on a bronze medal by a whisker, the tough task of replicating similar success fell to Schopman.

The Indian team under Schopman made its debut in the FIH Hockey Pro League in the 2021-22 season and produced incredible results, including wins over Germany, Netherlands, Spain and eventual champions Argentina (in a shoot-out) to finish in the third position.

TT World C'ships: Indian men's team bows out

PTI ■ CHENGDU

India's campaign at the World Table Tennis Championships ended on Thursday following the men's team's pre-quarterfinal defeat against formidable China, here on Thursday.

The mighty China toyed with the Indian team for an easy 3-0 win that secured their passage into the quarterfinals. Left-handed Manush Shah replaced Manav Thakkar in India's lineup. Harmeet Desai opened the tie against Fan Zhendong but his challenge fizzled out in just 15 minutes against world number one Chinese, who emerged a 11-2, 11-9, 11-5 winner.

Next on the Chinese firing line was G. Sathiyam, ranked 37th, facing Ma Long. The multiple Olympic and World Championships medallist Chuqin finished the contest rather quickly, allowing just five points in the second and none in the third to post a 14-12, 11-5, 11-0 win. India's misery ended when Wang Chuqin beat Manush Shah 11-4, 11-5, 11-6.

Verstappen looks for 'perfect weekend' in Japan to retain title

AP ■ TOKYO

Max Verstappen on Thursday said that he needs "a perfect weekend" to clinch his second straight Formula One championship at this weekend's Japanese Grand Prix.

Red Bull's runaway championship leader can secure the title at Suzuka if he gains eight points on nearest rival Charles Leclerc of Ferrari and six on team-mate Sergio Perez.

That would happen if Verstappen wins the race and claims the fastest lap, or if he finishes first and Leclerc finishes lower than second place.

The flying Dutchman is trying not to think too hard about wrapping up the title, despite 12 previous Formula One world championships having been crowned at the Japanese Grand Prix.

"It would be very nice if it was here, but if it doesn't happen here I will be even more in favour the next race," said the



25-year-old, who missed the chance to clinch the championship at last week's Singapore Grand Prix after a seventh-

place finish.

"It doesn't really change anything, you just want to have a good weekend and maximise

everything you can.

"I need a perfect weekend to be able to clinch the title here but to be honest I'm not really thinking about it too much."

Verstappen would become only the third driver after Michael Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel to clinch the title with four races to spare if he gets the job done in Suzuka.

The Japanese Grand Prix returns after a three-year absence because of Covid and Verstappen is excited to be competing in front of the "crazy" Japanese fans again. "They're very passionate -- crazy but in a good way, and they really dress up," said Verstappen, who has won 11 of 17 races so far this season. "You could see quite a few people walking around with a DRS rear wing on their heads. It shows you how popular motor sport is in Japan." Verstappen's Red Bull car will carry a Honda logo at this weekend's race as part of a "strengthened relationship" with the Japanese company.

PROTEAS BEAT INDIA IN 1ST ODI

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Below-par death bowling coupled with ordinary fielding and batting, except for Sanju Samson and Shreyas Iyer, hurt a second-string Indian team as it slumped to a nine-run defeat against South Africa in the rain-truncated first ODI of the three-match series here on Thursday.

Opting to bowl in the rain-hit 40-over-a-side game, India started on the right note reducing South Africa to 110 for 4 in 22.4 overs before David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen hit strokeful half-centuries to guide South Africa to 249 for 4.

Down at 110 for four, Miller (75 not out off 63 balls) and Klaasen (74 not out off 65 balls) added 139 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket to take the visitors to close to 250-run mark.

Shardul Thakur was the pick of the bowlers for India with figures of 2/35 from eight overs.

The Indian bowlers struggled in the death overs, conceding 54 runs in the last five overs.

If that was not enough, the Indian fielders dropped as many as four catches in the outfield to help South Africa's cause.

Chasing a stiff target of 250, Samson (86 not out off 63 balls) and Iyer (50 off 37 balls) struck fifties, while Shardul Thakur (33 off 31 balls) used the long handle to good effect towards the end but it was not enough in the end.

India endured a disastrous start to their chase, losing both Shubman Gill (3) and skipper Shikhar Dhawan (4) cheaply to be reduced to 8 for 2 inside six overs.

While Kagiso Rabada cleaned up Gill in the third over, Dhawan inside-edged one on to his stumps from a Wayne Parnell delivery in the sixth over.

Ishan Kishan and debutant Ruturaj Gaikwad then tried to sta-



bilise the innings with a 48-run partnership for the third wicket before the latter was stumped by Quinton de Kock off the bowling of Tabraiz Shamsi as India slumped to 48 for 3 in 16.4 overs.

In the reserves for the T20 World Cup squad, Iyer helped his cause with a 37-ball 50 and together with Sanju Samson shared 67

runs for the fifth wicket to keep India in the hunt.

Iyer decorated his innings with eight hits to the fence before handing a simple catch to Rabada at mid-on off Lungi Ngidi's bowling.

But Samson and Thakur kept India in the hunt with an attacking 93-run partnership of just 64 balls for the sixth wicket.

With India needing 45 off the last three overs, Ngidi struck twin blows, dismissing Thakur and Kuldeep Yadav in successive balls to hand South Africa the upper hand.

Needing 30 off the last over, Samson tried his best, smashing one six and three fours but to no avail.

Earlier sent into bat, South Africa made a relatively slow start,

reaching 41 for no loss after 10 overs.

India skipper Shikhar Dhawan's decision to bowl was justified by new ball bowlers Mohammed Siraj and Avesh Khan.

Siraj, in particular, was brilliant as he swung the ball both ways to trouble the Proteas batters initially but without any luck.

Dhawan introduced Shardul Thakur in the ninth over and in two balls the pacer gave his team the first chance, inducing an edge from Janneman Malan but Shubman Gill dropped a sitter at the first slip.

But Shardul got his man four overs later as Malan flicked one straight to Shreyas Iyer at short mid-wicket.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi was taken to task by South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma (8) as he conceded 31 runs from his first three overs.

Bavuma, who was struggling for runs in the preceding T20I series, reverse-swept and drove Bishnoi for two boundaries in the 14th over.

But Bavuma's short and attacking innings was cut short by Thakur, who went through his defence as the batter registered another single digit score in the tour.

Kuldeep Yadav gave India another breakthrough soon, cleaning up Aiden Markram for a duck with a sharp leg-spin.

Quinton de Kock went about his business in quiet fashion and held one end together before perishing in the 23rd over.

De Kock scored 48 off 54 balls with the help of five boundaries before he was trapped in front of the wicket by Bishnoi as South Africa slumped to 110 for 4 in the 23rd over.

Two overs later, Miller effortlessly struck the visitors' first six of the innings, straight over long-on boundary off the bowling of Bishnoi.

Miller and Klaasen then took the attack to the opposition. Miller played sensibly and dispatched the loose balls to the boundary to record his 18th half-century off 50 balls with the help of four boundaries and one hit over the fence.

Klaasen soon followed suit and registered his fourth ODI fifty in 52 balls. Death over bowling continued to haunt India as Miller and Klaasen brought up their century partnership in just 84 balls.

To add to that, India dropped as many as four catches, displaying poor outfield fielding standards.

Pretorius ruled out of T20 World Cup



PTI ■ LUCKNOW

South African allrounder Dwaine Pretorius has been ruled out of the ongoing ODI series in India and the upcoming T20 World Cup due to a fractured left thumb, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said on Thursday. The pace bowling all-rounder, who was the joint-highest wicket-taker for South Africa in the T20 World Cup last

Playing in IPL helps in passing information easily: Rabada

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Playing in the IPL helps gather information on Indian cricketers which can be easily passed on for analysis during national duty, says South African pace ace Kagiso Rabada.

The South African quick, who is currently in India for a white-ball series, has gained a lot of popularity in the country due to his impressive stints with Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings in the IPL.

"It is something we have prepared before going into the series. Lucky enough with leagues like the IPL, we play a lot with these players and

against them as well, so information can be easily passed around," Rabada told the broadcaster ahead of the first ODI.

"Analysis has been done and has to be done," he added.

The right-arm, who will lead the South African pace attack at the T20 World Cup later this month in Australia, sees ODIs as an extension of the game. "I think T20 and One-Day cricket are kind of similar, it is just a longer version of it. "You have similar game-plans and obviously it is less pressure than T20s, I would say the processes are pretty similar."

year, sustained the injury during the third T20I against India in Indore -- the only match he played in the series.

He had returned with figures of 3 for 26 as South Africa won the match by 49 runs for a 1-2 result in favour of India.

"The nature of the injury requires surgical intervention and Dwaine will consult the Cricket South Africa designated hand surgeon on arrival in

South Africa," CSA chief medical officer Dr Shuaib Manjra said.

Pretorius has featured in eight T20Is so far in 2022, taking 12 wickets at an average of 20.66 and most importantly, scoring quick runs with the bat down the order.

"Normal rehabilitation procedures will follow to ensure he speedily returns to playing cricket," Manjra said.

PTI ■ SYLHET

India would expect that opener Shafali Verma comes out of the lean patch she has been enduring for some time and the team extends its domination of Pakistan when the two arch-rivals clash in their women's Asia Cup T20 match, here Friday. The Indian team gave ample game time to its fringe players, making as many as eight changes in the last two games, but against Pakistan -- one of title contenders -- the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side is expected to have full strength team on the field.

Pakistan are coming into the contest after suffering a shock four-wicket defeat at the hands of minnows Thailand on Thursday.

The two sides currently occupy the top two spot in the points table with India, who have won three games on the trot, leading the table.

While an India-Pakistan tie always generates hype, the recent two matches between the two sides failed to produce a close game with India winning comfortably. India were at their ruthless best as they brushed aside Pakistan at the Commonwealth Games in July. In fact, India have won the last five meeting against the neighbours in the format easily.

After being rested for a game each, the star openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana will be expected to provide a strong start.

The big-hitting Shafali will be feeling the pressure as she still looks low on confidence. She was able to spend some time in the middle in the match against Malaysia but looked scratchy and far from her best.

The teenager will be eager to shake

India to face Pakistan in women's Asia Cup today



off the rust and play some dominant knocks with the T20 World Cup fast approaching.

On the other hand, Mandhana and skipper Kaur are coming off stellar performances in the white-ball series against England. Jemimah Rodrigues, who returned to the side after a wrist injury, is in imperious touch.

After notching up her career-best score in the opener, she brought her second consecutive half-century of the tournament and along with all-rounder with Deepti Sharma inspired a win against UAE.

The bowlers have continued to be clinical in all three games.

On the other hand, Pakistan batters, who were hardly tested in the wins over Malaysia and Bangladesh, had the perfect opportunity to get some runs under their belts. But, barring opener Sidra Ameen who scored a fifty, they failed to impress, failing to breach the 120-run mark against Thailand.

Their bowling attack, which has been clinical in the tournament, had few runs to defend. Their batters will have their task cut out against a confident and firing India bowling attack.

TEAMS (FROM)

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Sabbineni Meghana, Richa Ghosh (wk), Sneha Rana, Dayalan Hemalatha, Meghna Singh, Renuka Thakur, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Radha Yadav and KP Navgire.

Pakistan: Bismah Maroof (c), Aiman Anwer, Aliya Riaz, Aysha Naseem, Diana Baig, Kainat Imtiaz, Muneeba Ali, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Ameen, Sidra Nawaz.

Paine out cheaply on return from sexting scandal

AP ■ BRISBANE

Former Australia captain Tim Paine was out cheaply on Thursday in his first match since a sexting scandal ended his international career, with his return failing to inspire his state side Tasmania.

The 37-year-old quit as Test skipper last November on the eve of the Ashes campaign against England when lewd text messages he sent to a female colleague in 2017 were about to be made public.

A week later he took leave from all forms of cricket for the "foreseeable future" as the scandal took its toll. But he never retired and Tasmania coach Jeff Vaughan declared him physically and emotionally ready to return this week.

"Physically he is probably in the greatest spot of his physical career," said Vaughan. Emotionally he is sound."

Paine strode to the crease at the Allan Border Field against Queensland in the Sheffield Shield to a warm welcome from a modest crowd.

But batting at seven, the veteran wicketkeeper lasted just 19 balls for his six runs, edging a short-pitched delivery from Gurinder Sandhu to Matthew Renshaw at slip as Tasmania slumped to 74-6.



Pretorius ruled out of T20 World Cup

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

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The pace bowling all-rounder, who was the joint-highest wicket-taker for South Africa in the T20 World Cup last year, sustained the injury during the third T20I against India in Indore -- the only match he played in the series. He had returned with figures of 3 for 26 as South Africa won the match by 49 runs for a 1-2 result in favour of India.

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ing 12 wickets at an average of 20.66 and most importantly, scoring quick runs with the bat down the order.

"Normal rehabilitation procedures will follow to ensure he speedily returns to

playing cricket," Manjra said.

Marco Jansen, who also features in their T20 World Cup reserves list, was added to the South African ODI squad and it remains to be seen whether he also makes the cut

for the showpiece in Australia beginning October 16.

Middle-order batter Rassie van der Dussen was earlier ruled out of the T20 World Cup with a broken finger.

Gambhir-led India Capitals wins LLC title



PTI ■ JAIPUR

India Capitals made a stunning recovery after stumbling early to defeat Bhilwara Kings by 104 runs and lift the Legends League Cricket trophy here.

Former New Zealand skipper Ross Taylor sizzled with a fiery 41-ball 82. He slammed eight sixes and four boundaries and along with Aussie veteran Mitchell Johnson (62 off 35), led the Capitals' stunning revival to post a daunting 211/7 after being sent in at the Saiwasi Mansingh Stadium on Wednesday.

The Gautam Gambhir-led side was rattled to be 21/4 inside the first five overs with Rahul Sharma (4/30) and

Monty Panesar (3-0-13-2) inflicting early blows. But Taylor held the fort in the duos' 126-run stand that came off just 60 balls.

Later, Windies powerhitter Ashley Nurse finished off in style with a 19-ball 42 not out with one six and six boundaries.

In reply, the Kings' openers, Morne van Wyk (5) and William Porterfield (12), were out inside the first four overs.

A lot depended on the broad shoulders of Yusuf Pathan (6), but he did not last long. Shreyas Iyer (27) was unfortunate to be run out, while Jesal Karia (22) showed promise but could not carry on for long.