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PFI banned for 5 yrs under anti-terror law

Front accused of links with terror groups ISIS, JMB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Police personnel deployed at Popular Front of India (PFI) office building, at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

The Centre on Wednesday banned Popular Front of India (PFI) and several of its associates/fronts for five years under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups like ISIS and Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and involvement in radicalisation.

The move follows pan-India searches against the outfit and several arrests and detentions in the last one week.

Besides the PFI, the associated outfits banned under the UAPA include Rehab India Foundation, Campus Front of India, All India Imams Council, National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation, National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala.

With the ban, the PFI joins a dubious club of 43 proscribed outfits notified by the Union Home Ministry, including Communist Party of India (Maoists), Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, Hizbul Mujahideen, al-Badr; global terror groups al-Qaeda and ISIS, Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, a host of Khalistani terror groups like Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and several insurgent groups of the North-East.

The notification banning the PFI will be followed by a number of actions against the outfit, including seizure of its properties, freezing of bank accounts and a complete prohibition of its activities.

The Centre will also move a tribunal within 30 days from the date of the publication of the notification for adjudication of whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring the association unlawful.

The ban on the 16-year-old outfit came after over 300 persons allegedly linked with PFI were detained or arrested in raids across seven States on Thursday and Tuesday. The crackdown against the group had led to the seizure of several dozen properties and digital records among others.

In a Gazette notification late on Tuesday night, the Union Home Ministry said some PFI founding members are leaders of the SIMI and the PFI has linkages with Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

It said there had been many instances of international linkages of PFI with global terrorist groups such as the ISIS.

PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts have been working covertly to increase the radicalisation of one community by promoting a sense of insecurity in the country, which is substantiated by the fact that some PFI cadres have joined international terrorist organisations, the notification said.

"Whereas, the Central Government, having regard to the above circumstances, is of the firm opinion that it is necessary to declare PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts association outlawed with immediate effect, and accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of section 3 of the said Act, declares it as outlawed," it said.

The Home Ministry said Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat Governments had also recommended a ban on PFI.

Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Assam welcomed the decision, saying PFI was posing threat to the country's unity and integrity.

The Opposition Congress in Kerala and its coalition partner Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) also welcomed the Centre's move, but said the RSS should also be similarly outlawed.

Strongly condemning the activities of the PFI, senior IUML leader M K Muneer said the radical outfit had misinterpreted the Quran and persuaded the community members to adopt the path of violence. PFI not only tried to mislead the young generation but also tried to create division and hatred in society, he said.

Continued on Page 9

Yogi inaugurates Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya

Ayodhya: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday dedicated a road junction here to the memory of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, saying people experienced Lord Ram through her songs. Modi described the deity, for whom a grand temple is coming up in the city, as a symbol of the country.

On the occasion, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said his party's double-engine government is determined to develop every place having religious and spiritual significance.

Lata Mangeshkar's family members Adinath and Krishna Mangeshkar, who were also special guests, got emotional at the event.

■ **Details on Page 2**

Tharoor-Digvijaya bout likely

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The election to the office of the Congress president could boil down to a contest between Shashi Tharoor and Digvijaya Singh unless there is a last-minute reconciliation between the Gandhis and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot or a wild card entry at the behest of the party high command.

While Tharoor has gone on record saying he would contest the poll, Digvijaya is reaching Delhi and may file his nomination papers in a day or two. The last date for filing of nomination is Friday.

Another senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge is also ready to throw his hat in the ring, subject to endorsement by party chief Sonia Gandhi.

In an interesting twist to the entire saga, a Congress MP has suggested Priyanka Gandhi to contest the election as she is no more a family member of Gandhi as she is married to a Vadra family.

Digvijaya, who is part of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, has been asked to reach Delhi. Singh said he would "file nomination if the high command asked me to do so". "I have not discussed (the matter) with anybody. I have not sought permission from the high command. Leave it to me whether I will contest or not," Singh added days after rejecting any possibility of contesting the poll.

Gehlot, meanwhile, has sought time from party chief Sonia Gandhi to discuss the crisis in Rajasthan Congress. He reached Delhi by a chartered flight around 10.15 pm. After refusing to accept Sachin Pilot as his successor, Gehlot has fallen from the grace of the Gandhis. Several senior leaders have advised the party high command to pull him out of the race for the party chief.

Ever since the Rajasthan crisis on Sunday, Sonia has been meeting senior party leaders. On Wednesday, she met senior party leader AK Antony.

Meanwhile, Congress MP Abdul Khaleque batted for Priyanka Gandhi to take on the mantle of party presidency, saying, "Being daughter-in-law of the Vadra family, she is no longer a member of the Gandhi family as per Indian tradition."

Even as the Congress high command is smarting over the humiliation heaped on it by Gehlot and his loyalists, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal on Wednesday said, "There is no drama in Rajasthan. Everything will be clear in a day or two. Media may see this as a drama but at least you are discussing the INC president election... we are doing it in a very democratic manner, it will end in two days smoothly."

US visitor visa wait time for Indians 833 days, China 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar shakes hands with Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a press conference at the State Department in Washington on Tuesday AP I PTI

Compared to those living in China and Pakistan, the wait time at the US Embassy in New Delhi for a Visitor Visa is as high as 833 days and from Mumbai it is still higher at 848 days. This means it could take about 2 years and 4 months for visas under this category to be issued.

Effectively, a person applying for a visitor visa now is expected to get an appointment in January 2025.

For China, the US Visitor Visa could, however, be collected within two calendar days straight!

Indians who apply in the US Embassy in New Delhi in visitor, student/exchange visitor, and all other non-immigrant visa categories will have to wait for 833, 430 and 390 days respectively.

From Mumbai the wait is 848, 430, 392 days, and from Kolkata, the visa wait in the three categories is 767,444 and 360 days respectively. From Chennai the visa delay is to the extent of 780 days, 29 days and 415 days respectively.

The US Embassy in India on Tuesday announced it has opened the appointments for all categories of visas.

However, the Embassy clarified that the wait time remains high due to high demand.

Continued on Page 9

Centre extends free rations by 3 months

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday extended by three months its programme to provide free rations to the poor at a cost of ₹44,762 crore as it looked to ease pain from high inflation.

The scheme to provide five kilogram of wheat and rice free of cost to 80 crore poor every month, which was ending on Friday, will now run through December 31, 2022, I&B Minister Anurag Thakur said.

The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was started in April 2020 to help the poor whose livelihoods were shattered by a nationwide lockdown aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus. The scheme has been extended multiple times and was to end on Friday.

"At a time when the world is battling with the effects of Covid on its decline and insecurity due to various reasons, India has been successfully maintaining food security for its vulnerable sections while taking necessary steps to keep availability and affordability for common man," an official statement said.

Continued on Page 9

Diwali gift: Govt hikes DA by 4%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Diwali festival, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday increased the dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief by 4 per cent effective July 1, benefiting 41.85 lakh Central Government employees and 69.76 lakh pensioners.

Cabinet OK's ₹10K cr to upgrade Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad rly stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday approved ₹10,000 crore for the redevelopment of the New Delhi Railway Station, Ahmedabad station and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

The design will include a spacious roof plaza with all passenger amenities at one place along with spaces for retail, cafeterias, and recreational facilities.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday. The stations will be connected on both sides of railway tracks. Facilities like food court, waiting lounge, playing area for children and a place to sell local products will be made available.

"New Delhi Railway Station will integrate train services with buses, auto and metro rail services. Ahmedabad railway station redesign is inspired by Modera's Sun temple. CSMT's heritage building won't be touched but buildings nearby will be redeveloped," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the media.

To make the stations comfortable, there will be proper illumination, wayfinding/signages, acoustics, lifts/escalators/travelators.

Master plans have been prepared for smooth movement of traffic with adequate parking facilities, a statement from the ministry said.

There will be integration with other modes of transportation like metro, bus and other modes of transport, the statement said.

Green building techniques will be used, with solar energy, water conservation and recycling and improved tree cover, it added.

Continued on Page 9

R Venkataramani named Attorney General of India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior advocate R Venkataramani was appointed as the Attorney General of India on Wednesday for a term of three years, according to a notification.

He will succeed KK Venugopal, whose term will end on September 30.

Venugopal, 91, was appointed to the post in July 2017. He was reappointed as the top law officer of the country for three months on June 29.

Venugopal had expressed his unwillingness to continue in the constitutional post due to his advanced age.

Another senior advocate, Mukul Rohatgi, had a few days ago declined the offer to be the attorney general.

Rohatgi had been the attorney general in the first Narendra Modi government between June 2014 and June 2017. Venugopal had succeeded him.

Ravi Kishan duped of ₹3.25 crore, builder booked

IANS ■ GORAKHPUR

Actor-cum-politician Ravi Kishan has allegedly been duped of ₹3.25 crore, police said. Kishan, who is the MP from Gorakhpur Sadar and a film actor, has filed a complaint at Gorakhpur Cantonment police station against a builder for duping him of ₹3.25 crore.

The police have said that a complaint has been registered and appropriate action will be taken after the investigation. The case has been filed under Section 406 of the Indian Penal Code.

Continued on Page 9

Anil Chauhan picked as CDS, Military Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday appointed Lt General (retired) Anil Chauhan as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The decision came nearly ten months after the first CDS, General Bipin Rawat, died in a helicopter crash on December 8 last year. Both Rawat and Chauhan belong to the Gorkha Rifles.

The Defence Ministry said the CDS will also function as Secretary to Government of India, Department of Military Affairs, with effect from the date of his assumption of charge and until further orders.

In a career spanning over nearly 40 years, Chauhan held several command, staff and instrumental appointments and had extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and North-East India.

Born on May 18, 1961, Chauhan was commissioned into the 11 Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army in 1981. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Military Academy.

In the rank of Major General, the officer commanded an Infantry Division in the critical Baramula sector in the Northern Command.

Continued on Page 9

Tejashwi asked to appear in person in IRCTC scam hearing in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday directed Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav to personally appear before it on the CBI's plea seeking cancellation of his bail in the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) scam.

Granting time to Yadav's counsel to file a response, Special Judge (CBI) Geetanjali Goel directed the personal appearance of the RJD leader on October 18. Earlier on September 17, the court had issued a notice to Yadav on the application moved by the probe agency and sought his reply.

Continued on Page 9

2nd century Buddhist caves, Vishnu sculptures found in Bandhavgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has stumbled upon a historically-rich treasure trove in Bandhavgarh, Madhya Pradesh. The ASI team has found 26 caves, mostly Buddhist, ranging from the 2nd century to 5th century, of the Mahayana sect and remains of Buddhist structures and mural inscriptions bearing names of cities like Mathura and Kaushambi in old scripts.

During the exercise held from May 20-June 27 in an area sprawling around 170 sq km at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, the ASI's Jabalpur circle found many ancient sculptures, including large monolithic sculptures of various avatars of Vishnu like "Varaha" and "Matsya", and "board games made in natural caves."

"This is for the first time since the 1938 exploration by archaeologist NP Chakravarti that ASI has explored Bandhavgah. Many structures of the area had already been documented, we reported and documented many more structures now, including ancient caves, temples, Buddhist remains, maths, sculptures, water bodies, mural inscriptions in old scripts like Brahmi and Nagari etc," said SK Bakpai, the ASI's Jabalpur Superintending Archaeologist.

One of the many historical finds is a large Varaha sculpture measuring 6.4 x 5.03 x 2.77 meters datable to (9th - 13th century CE). It appears to be the world's largest sculpture, the official said, adding that in the old inscriptions, names of the kings — Maharaja Shri Bhimsena, Maharaja Pothasiri and Maharaja Bhattadeva — have been engraved. Nineteen water bodies of different periods (2nd-15thCE) were part of the exploration findings.

Continued on Page 9

Yogi inaugurates Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Declaring that the government was committed to honouring every individual who had contributed to the nation's development in any manner, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, inaugurated the Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya.

Paying rich tributes to the Bharat Ratna awardee and legendary singer on her 93rd birth anniversary, Yogi Adityanath said that the great Lata didi dedicated her entire life to art and music and sang most 'bhajans' of Lord Rama.

"I am honoured to inaugurate the Lata Mangeshkar Chowk leading to the grand Ram Temple Road in Ayodhya today. It is a fitting tribute to one of the greatest Indian icons," Yogi said on Wednesday.

The chief minister, in the presence of Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, UP Tourism Minister Jaiveer Singh and other dignitaries, inaugurated the spectacular intersection on the banks of the Saryu river, featuring a 40-foot-long and 12-metre-high 'Veena' weighing 14 tonnes, 92 lotuses depicting Lata Mangeshkar's 92 years of existence and seven pillars representing the seven notes (saat sur).

The chief minister said: "Under the inspiration of respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lata didi's first memorial has been built in the holy city of Lord Ram to whom she devoted her entire life. Just like this intersection, every road in Ayodhya, every corner should be developed as grandly to present the city as the most beautiful one before the entire world."

Stating that the double-engine government was determined to develop every place in Uttar Pradesh having religious and spiritual significance, Yogi Adityanath said, "The government will continue to develop our religious places, however, public participation is a must to fulfill the vision. Everyone must contribute towards a clean, hygienic, plastic-free and beautiful Ayodhya."

The chief minister continued, "We must take forward the beautification work of Ayodhya in a time-bound manner so that as the under-construction grand Ram temple gets ready, the world witnesses Ayodhya as the most well-planned and beautiful city as it was during 'Tretayuga."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath releasing a book 'Sakshi' published by Ayodhya Shodh Sansthan in Ayodhya on Wednesday

Yogi Adityanath went on to say that this 'Deepotsava', along with the grand celebrations by the government, every house in Ayodhya must light a 'diya' and add to the grandeur of the holy festival.

Maintaining that Ayodhya underwent massive transformation in the span of the last five and half years, the chief minister said that the developed and widened roads, beautified 'ghats' and other places in Ayodhya had impressed everyone coming to the city lately.

"We must take forward our responsibility with commitment," he added.

"Prime Minister Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission and today our villages and cities are cleaner, whereas eight years ago, the first thing people witnessed on visiting villages and cities was filth and garbage," Yogi said.

Furthermore, Yogi said that not just Ayodhya, the entire state was being developed. He said the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, had been revamped and it witnessed crores of devotees during the holy month of Shravan.

"Development of religious and spiritual places by the government is not only a means of respecting the religious faith of the public but also a medium of generating employment opportunities for the youth in the state," the chief minister said.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said that Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar was a magician and her music touched souls. "Classics like 'Ae mere watan ke logo…' will continue to inspire generations and will fill them with patriotism. Lata didi's life is no less than an inspiration for all," Reddy said.

The Union minister added that being a Telugu speaker, he also remembered Lataji's songs in Telugu language and said that the legendary singer mastered the art of conveying emotions through her voice in different languages.

He also expressed happiness over the efforts being made by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with the inspiration of Prime Minister Modi for the overall development of Ayodhya. Ayodhya special issue magazine published by Ayodhya Shodh Sansthan and 10 volumes of Global Encyclopedia of Ramayana were also released on the occasion.

Lata Mangeshkar's family members Adinath and Krishna Mangeshkar, who were special guests, were seen getting emotional during the inauguration of the 'chowk'.

Sharing his memories, Adinath said that Lata didi's day started with worshipping Lord Ram, and that he was overwhelmed to see her divine and grand memorial built in the holy city of Ayodhya.

It will inspire the art world: PM Modi

Lucknow (PNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the Lata Mangeshkar Square in Ayodhya would inspire the art world with its spectacular veena and 92 lotuses made of marble, depicting her life journey.

In a video message on the occasion of the inauguration of Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya, he said that it would remind us of our responsibility to stay connected to the roots of India while India moves towards modernity, and take the art and culture of the country to every corner of the world. The PM said that as Lord Ram was coming to the grand temple in Ayodhya, the opening of a memorial of Lata Mangeshkar, who kindled love and reverence for Lord Ram in crores of people was significant.

Appreciating the Yogi Government and conveying his best wishes on the occasion, the PM said that there was a reason for the inauguration of the Lata Mangeshkar memorial square ahead of the grand Ram temple, which lies in Ram Charit Manas. Quoting a couplet from the epic, Modi explained that devotees come before Lord Ram and that's why Lata Didi's memorial comes before the temple.

The prime minister said that Lata Mangeshkar was a devotee of Mother Saraswati, who enthralled the whole with her divine voice, adding that purity, faith and spirituality resonateed through the voice of India's nightingale.

Expressing happiness over the development of the square, he said that the place was connected with major cultural sites in Ayodhya such as Ram ki Paidi and the holy stream of Saryu.

PM Modi said that besides taking pride in India's thousands of years old heritage, "it is our responsibility to pass on the culture of India to the new generation. For this, dedication like Lata didi and immense love for our culture is essential. Every seeker of the art world of India will get to learn a lot from this square. Lata didi's voice will keep the connection alive for ages."

PM Modi also recalled several songs of Lata Mangeshkar on the occasion like 'Shri Ramchandra Kripalu Bhaj Mana, Haran Bhava Bhaya Darunam', Meerabai's 'Payo Ji Maine Ram Ratan Dhan Payo' and Mahatma Gandhi's favourite 'Vaishnav Jan', and 'Tum Asha Vishwas Hamare Ram'. The Prime Minister said that just as "Ayodhya has kept Lord Ram alive in our mind even after ages; the songs of Lata didi have kept our conscience alive."

The Prime Minister also shared how he got a call from late Lata Mangeshkar after the bhoomi pujan was completed for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, saying "She was very emotional, very happy, filled with joy and blessings."

Speaking on the construction of Ram temple, PM Modi said that it was progressing fast and its pictures were bringing excitement to the whole country. The Prime Minister added: "Lord Ram is the symbol of our civilization, the living ideal of our morality, our values, our dignity and our duty. From Ayodhya to Rameshwaram, Ram is absorbed in every particle of India."The PM urged people to start preparing Ayodhya for future by ensuring cleanliness and beautifying the town as many people would be visiting it, boosting the hospitality sector.

6-year-old raped by 60 year man

Lucknow (PNS): A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 60-year-old man in Shamli district, police said on Wednesday.

The accused, who is the victim's neighbour, was arrested on Tuesday and a case was registered against him, Additional Superintendent of Police OP Singh said. According to a complaint filed by the girl's uncle, on Monday night the accused called the minor to his house on the pretext of giving her a toffee and allegedly raped her.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

आवश्यकता है

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आवश्यकता है

प्राचार्य– 15 वर्षो का शैक्षिक अनुभव+ पी.एच.डी.
सहायक आचार्य– विधि त्रिवर्षीय पाठ्यक्रम हेतु 5 सहायक आचार्य योग्यता नेट पी.एच.डी.
योग्यता– NTA नेट या पी.एच.डी. वेतन यू.जी.सी. एवं राजाज्ञानुसार।
फोटो युक्त बायोडाटा उपरोक्त कालेज पते पर 15 दिन में भेजे तथा वि०वि० के पोर्टल पर आनलाइन भी करें।
प्रबंधक

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चौ0 हुकुम सिंह देव कुंवर महाविद्यालय इकदिल, इटावा

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प्राचार्य– 15 वर्षो का शैक्षिक अनुभव तथा पी.एच.डी.
कलासंकाय स्नातक स्तर पर– हिन्दी साहित्य, अंग्रेजी, साहित्य, गृहविज्ञान, शिक्षाशास्त्र, चित्रकला, भूगोल, संस्कृत हेतु सहायक आचार्य, प्रत्येक एक पद
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प्रबंधक

आवश्यकता है

चौ0 गंगा सिंह, गोदावली महाविद्यालय, कन्नौज

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कलासंकाय परास्नातक स्तर पर– गृहविज्ञान एवं अंग्रेजी विषयों में सहायक आचार्य प्रत्येक एक पद
विज्ञान संकाय स्नातक स्तर– भौतिक, रसायन, जन्तु तथा वनस्पति विज्ञान एवं गणित हेतु सहायक आचार्य प्रत्येक एक पद
योग्यता– NTA नेट या पी.एच.डी. वेतन यू.जी.सी. एवं राजाज्ञानुसार।
फोटो युक्त बायोडाटा उपरोक्त कालेज पते पर 15 दिन में भेजें तथा वि०वि० के पोर्टल पर आनलाइन भी करें।
प्रबंधक

आवश्यकता है

रणवीर नीलम, महाविद्यालय भरथना, इटावा

आवश्यकता है

प्राचार्य –15 वर्षो का शैक्षिक अनुभव तथा पी.एच.डी.
कलासंकाय स्नातक स्तर पर– हिन्दी साहित्य, अंग्रेजी साहित्य, समाजशास्त्र, शिक्षाशास्त्र, अर्थशास्त्र, राजनीति विज्ञान, संस्कृत हेतु सहायक आचार्य, प्रत्येक एक पद
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प्रबंधक

Only SP can defeat BJP in UP: Akhilesh Yadav

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Wednesday, said only the SP had the grit and the determination to defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh.

Akhilesh Yadav said though election results in the recent past had not been favourable, it had been proved that only his party could defeat the BJP in UP. He said the Samajwadi Party worked for a big victory but "the people in power used every trick and misused official machinery and we failed to succeed".

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the samajwadis had tried hard for a historic result. They tried to realise the dream of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and Dr BR Ambedkar to bring the bahujan forces on one platform, the SP chief said this after inaugurating the state-level convention of the party here on Wednesday.

"In the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, the SP formed an alliance in an attempt to take along with it all those struggling to remove the BJP from power. But we could not win," he said.

"But I can say one thing that despite the experiments of 2019 and 2022, the manner in which our leaders and workers worked, the samajwadis have come to know that despite not getting success if there is anyone who can compete and defeat the BJP, it is the SP," Yadav said.

Exhorting the party cadres to close their ranks for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Akhilesh Yadav said, "We increased our strength in terms of vote share and number of seats in UP Assembly as compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, still we have miles to go to realise our true place in the political structure of Uttar Pradesh."

"Whenever the people of UP voted for the SP, enabling it to form the government, the state surged ahead in all spheres of development. Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) congratulated us that the SP has done a lot of work for the development of the state. During SP government projects like Lohia Park, Janeshwar Mishra Park, JP Centre, Lucknow metro rail, and Agra- Lucknow Expressway were completed. The BJP has done nothing except claiming credit for the work done by the SP government and changing the names of the projects," Akhilesh Yadav said.

The SP had contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election with the Bahujan Samaj Party and the 2022 assembly polls in alliance with smaller parties but lost.

At the party's convention, Naresh Uttam Patel was declared elected as SP state president again. Congratulating Naresh Uttam, SP general secretary and returning officer Ram Gopal Yadav announced that Naresh Uttam had been elected as the state president of the party. He said two sets of nomination papers were filed by Naresh Uttam.

Akhilesh Yadav is set to be elected as the national president of the party on Thursday.

Welcoming Naresh Uttam on his re-election as SP state president, Akhilesh Yadav said, "We will together face the challenges that come up. All of us will work together towards taking the socialist movement ahead. This is a big struggle. We will work together to remove from power those who are bent upon dividing the society."

Yadav alleged that the ruling BJP had failed on all fronts and said that once the SP came to power it would work towards the betterment of the people.

The state and national convention of the SP is politically significant as the elections to urban local bodies are due in October. SP is also likely to finalise its strategy for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections scheduled to be held in April /May 2024.

The state convention of the party also adopted political and economic resolutions. The political resolution said the conduct of the BJP posed a huge challenge for the democratic polity of the country. The resolution said the BJP had systematically sabotaged and weakened the democratic institutions. The failure of the BJP to abide by its election manifesto called Sankalp Patra was also criticised in the political resolution.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have change my name from Sayed Taha Ahmad to Syed Taha Ahmad, S/o Ghayas Asif, R/o 90/172, Iftikharbad Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I have change my name from Mohammad Riyaz Haidar to Mohammad Riyaz Haider, S/o Mohammad Raees, R/o, 101/255, Colonelganj Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Menka Sharma to Menka Joshi D/o Anil Sharma R/o Flat No. 101, Ratan Majestic, 7/151, Swaroop Nagar, Kanpur for all future purpose.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was Nitin Kumar Kesarwani which is now changed to Nitin Kesarwani. In future I shall be known as Nitin Kesarwani. Nitin Kesarwani S/o Vinod Kesarwani, 728, Colonelganj, Allahabad.

NOTICE

Possession and Allotment letter of my residence No. C-1/38, Barra World Bank Kanpur has been lost somewhere. If it is used by someone else would be an offense. Mrs. Nisha Dubey W/o Mr. Jai Jai Ram Dubey, R/o C-1/38, Barra World Bank Kanpur.

NOTICE

I, Prem Sagar Tripathi aged about 60 years, S/o Shri Prithvi Pal Tripathi, R/o 4/137, Vishal Khand, Gomtinagar, Lucknow have changed my old name Prem Sagar (which is wrongly mentioned in my High School Marksheet) to Prem Sagar Tripathi for all future purposes.

SP criticises govt for restructuring State Planning Commission

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party has criticised the Yogi Adityanath government for restructuring the UP State Planning Commission on the lines of the NITI Aayog at the Centre.

The new body will be called the UP State Transformation Commission.

"In its nearly last six years tenure in office, the Yogi Adityanath government has made a name for itself only by changing names of cities and districts and renaming the existing schemes and projects. The change in the name of the State Planning Commission will make no difference in the lives of the common people at the ground level. The government is indulging in such acts only to hide its all-round failure to deliver to the people," said SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary here on Wednesday.

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet on Tuesday cleared the proposal for restructuring of the Uttar Pradesh State Planning Commission on the lines of NITI Aayog at the Centre. Renamed as the State Transformation Commission, the government body will act as a think tank for development and economic progress of the state with the chief minister as its chairperson and ministers, officials and intellectuals from different fields as members.

It will also have a vice-chairperson and chief executive officer. The term of the members will be for three years, which can be extended for another two years under special circumstances.

The Uttar Pradesh State Planning Commission was set up in August 1972. While the chief minister will be its chairperson, of the State Transformation Commission, the deputy chief ministers along with ministers of Agriculture, Finance, Social Welfare, Panchayati Raj, Industrial Development, Jal Shakti, Urban Development departments and the minister of state for planning will be members.

The restructured commission will identify the "hurdles" in the implementation of social development schemes and suggest ways to remove them, arranging financial resources through public private partnership (PPP).

4 held for forcing youth to take 'bhoo samadhi'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In the greed of making quick money, a man buried his 23-year-old nephew with the hope of getting donations by exploiting the religious sentiments of the local people during Navratri by claiming that the youth was a saint and took `samadhi'.

Interestingly, three associates of the man also helped him in his plan but they all ran out of their luck when the local police arrested them for making an attempt to kill the youth. The incident took place at Tajpur village in the Bangarmau area of Unnao district. Reports said that the police rescued Shubham Goswami, a devout and later arrested his uncle Munna Lal Pandey along with three others, identified as Prabhashankar Shukla, Satish Chandra and Shivkesh Dixit. The action was taken on the eve of the start of Navratri festival last Sunday evening.

Goswami, during questioning by police, alleged that his uncle had told him that he would be given 'bhoo samadhi', a funeral usually reserved for saints, in which they are buried and not cremated. The grave then becomes a shrine regularly visited by followers and disciples of the saint.

Pandey had allegedly tried to bury Goswami in order to attract people, in the hope that they would start offering money, flowers and prasad. Goswami accused his uncle and the three others of an attempt to kill him. A case was registered under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code.

COURT NOTICE
CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT)
(Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 94 OF 2022
IN THE MATTER OF
THE GOODS 0F
Late Krishna Chandra Tripathi, Son of Late Shiv Harsh Tiwari, Resident of House No. 279, New Mehdauri Teliyarganj, Allahabad Post- Civil Lines, Cavellary Lines, Allahabad, Uttar Prasad.....Deceased.
Abhishek Tripathi..... Petitioner.

WHEREAS an application has been made by Abhishek Tripathi son of Late Krishna Chandra Tripathi, Resident of House No. 279, New Mehdauri Teliyarganj, Allahabad Civil Lines,Cavellary Lines, Allahabad Uttar Pradesh for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of **Late Krishna Chandra Tripathi deceased, who died at North CentralRailway Zonal Hospital, Allahabad Uttar Pradesh on 14.05.2021 AND WHEREAS, the 02nd 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 14th day of September, 2022.
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD
Kuldeep Kumar Mishra
Advocate
Counsel for the Petitioner.

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Cyber thugs bid to dupe judge

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Cyber-thugs attempted to dupe a senior district judge and member secretary of UP State Legal Service Authority by making a call to him from a WhatsApp number having the display picture (DP) of a senior judge of the Supreme Court.

The administrative officer of UP State Legal Service Authority at Jawahar Bhawan filed a complaint in this regard to the Hazratganj police.

In the complaint, the official, Sandeep Kumar Kaushik, said the miscreant called on the official mobile number of the senior district judge and demanded Google recharge code from him.

"The miscreant had put the DP of a senior judge of the Supreme Court to play tricks with the judge. He made two WhatsApp calls but only one was received but it could not be recorded by the judge," the complainant said.

The official apprehended that the miscreants aimed to dupe the senior district judge to take some advantage from him and asked the police to register a case in this connection.

Police registered a case of forgery and a case under relevant sections of the IT Act and started the investigation. A spokesman said the teams assigned the task were yet to get any clue about the miscreant.

Meanwhile, a resident of Ashiyana was duped of Rs 58,000 by the cyber thugs in two different deals. He lodged a complaint in this regard.

The complainant, Dr Manish Sharma of Sector K, Ashiyana, said he registered his mobile number on the website of a company providing details of service providers on its website for his need of container transport.

Following the advertisement, Manish got a call from a man who introduced himself as Krishkant Verma and sought details of vehicles Manish had. He also sent the details of drivers (names, driving licence copy, phone numbers) for transport work and the pictures of the vehicles. After going through the details, Krishkant demanded Rs 18,000 for a trailer and hydra vehicles but did not send the same saying the vehicle had broken down on the way.

Manish was later contacted by another service provider and charged Rs 20,000 for the service in the same way but was denied the services. When Manish insisted on the refund of the payment made by him, he was duped of another Rs 20,000 by the miscreants.

"This way, I was duped of Rs 58,000 in both the deals. I apprehend that a big gang of fraudsters is active who trap people looking for services," he said.

WOMAN ROBBED OF RS 73,000

A miscreant duped a woman of Rs 73,000 by promising to send her ornaments through parcel for their marriage, in Gomti Nagar Extension police station area.

As per reports, the parents of the woman were looking for a match for her and had got her profile registered at a matrimonial website. A few months back, the family approved a match with one Sonu Singh and started talks to finalise the marriage. Later Sonu started talking to the girl also. During their conversation, Sonu claimed to be working with a multi-national company and claimed that he was presently deployed in New York.

On June 26, Sonu made a WhatsApp call to the woman and told her that he was visiting India and wished to solemnise their engagement ceremony. A little later he told the woman that he could not bring ornaments to India by flight and was sending them to her by parcel.

"He sent me pictures of ornaments on WhatsApp and asked me to receive the parcel. A few days later I got a call from an unidentified mobile number and the caller introduced himself as an employee of the cargo company.

He asked me to deposit Rs 73,000 charges for the parcel which contained ornaments. I deposited the money but I did not get the parcel. I later contacted Sonu but his phone was switched off. The phone of the parcel company's employee was also switched off," the victim said.

Police registered a case in this connection on Wednesday and started Investigation.

THEFT

Thieves made off with ornaments worth several lakh rupees and Rs 18,000 in cash from a house in BBD University police station area on the intervening night on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The house owner, Krishna Kumar Shukla of Vigyan Khand, said he and other members of his family were at a hospital where his wife was admitted and the house was locked.

"We admitted her to the hospital in the night on Tuesday and all of us stayed at the hospital. In the morning I returned home and found the house burgled. The thieves collected all the precious items and rummaged through all the rooms and left nothing for us," he said. Police are investigating the case.

'BTech student ended his life'

Lucknow (PNS): The Gomti Nagar police suspect that the 19-year-old BTech student, whose body was recovered from the river Gomti on Tuesday, was probably suffering from some mental pressure.

The deceased was identified as Shreyansh Singh of Viraj Khand of Gomti Nagar. He was missing since Saturday.

The police said the youth committed suicide by jumping into the river and are trying to find out the reason for his taking the extreme step. His family is also unaware what led the youth to end his life.

Shreyansh was a second-year student at a private university in Vellore district of Andhra Pradesh and had come to the city recently. The family had noticed that Shreyansh was not normal since he returned from Vellore but presumed that it was due to pressure of study.

On Saturday he had picked up his bag and left the house on his two-wheeler. After this he went missing.

The locals had spotted the body in the river on Tuesday and informed the police control room about it. The body was fished out by the divers and later the family had identified the body in the morgue.

Several new releases at National Book Fair

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

There are several new releases of publications at the National Book Fair being organised at the Balrampur Gardens.

Ashok Shukla from Rajpal and Sons publications at the National Book Fair said the visitors were picking up both new and old releases on display but new releases were always looked forward to.

Amongst the new releases Rajpal and Sons have this year is 'Duniya Mein Aurat' written by Sujata, 'Mahabharta Ke Yodha' by Devdutt Patnaik, 'Nirbhay' penned by Acharya Prashant and 'Azadi Ka Kya Matlab' written by Lal Bahadur Verma.

Shukla said 'Duniya Mein Aurat' tells us the fact that the struggles of womankind in the world are both similar and different. "From the east to the west the women have to fight for their rights starting from wearing their size of shoes to getting educated and even choosing their own career. The author has given an insight into the struggles of contemporary women," he said.

He said that 'Azadi Ka Matlab Kya' written by Lal Bahadur Verma gave a philosophical meaning of freedom. "From political freedom to the problems faced by a person in his daily life are given in the book that they include freedom from hunger to freedom from fear as well as death," he said.

Regarding 'Mahabharta Ke Yodha' written by Devdutt Patnaik, Shukla said that the epic was popular for a long time and it was the story of the five Pandavas and the war between the Kauravas and Pandavas.

"The story of Mahabharta has been written in a very interesting style by the author and what makes the book more attractive is the pictures which have been made by him as illustrations. His illustrations have always been his strength. Devdutt Patnaik has been writing Puranic stories and about customs since 1996 and has written over 50 books whose 1,000 editions have been published till now. He is also acting as a consultant in various television channels and leadership programmes," he added.

Talking about yet another new release 'Nirbhay' by Prashant Acharya, Shukla said that the author had focused on one thing -- that if we look at our lives and what we want to get out of it we find that it is mainly fear which is guiding our lives in whatever we do. "The book helps us understand fear and the perception which is attached to it. We are always in fear of society and all the temporary items of life but we are not afraid that life will go to waste. The author has tried to stress that we should be aligned towards our central fear which is essential and apart from that there is no reason to fear."

Jaiveer: Tourism to play an important role in making India a 5-trillion-dollar economy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh, under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will contribute 1 trillion dollars in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of making India a 5-trillion-dollar economy. The Tourism Department of Uttar Pradesh is also going to play an important role in this. While the COVID-19 epidemic had brought all countries of the world on their knees, India, which was considered to be a country of snake charmers, established its brilliance in the fields of science, education, technology, medicine and other disciplines. India not only made the Covid vaccine but also distributed it to the whole world.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has emerged as an area of immense potential. Tourism is also an important area for revenue earning, and Kashi is a perfect example of this.

After the construction of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, a 10-fold increase has been recorded in the arrival of tourists in Varanasi. The business of the traders there has also increased by 10 times.

These views were expressed by UP's Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh while addressing the inaugural session of 'Anugachhatu Pravah', the national conference on tourism organised by Amity School of Languages at the Lucknow campus of Amity University.

Addressing the students, chief guest Jaiveer Singh said that law and order, infrastructure and branding-marketing were essential aspects for tourism.

He said law and order had vastly improved in UP under leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the 'Bulldozer Baba' had instilled fear of law among the criminals in the state.

He said on the infrastructure front, excellent expressways for road connectivity, world class new airports for air connectivity and waterways connectivity were being strengthened in the state.

Speaking about branding and marketing, Jaiveer Singh said that all the intellectuals and citizens of the state had to become the brand ambassadors of Uttar Pradesh tourism. "Wherever you go, discuss the tourist places of the state," he said.

The minister called upon the students of Amity University to work closely with the Tourism Department and make plans and contribute towards making UP the first choice of world tourists.

Earlier, Jaiveer Singh, UPSTDC Director (Tourism and Management) Ashwini Pandey, CEO and president of FICCI Prateek Hira, and Director of Amity School of Languages Prof Kumkum Ray inaugurated the conference by lighting the lamp.

Welcoming the guests, Prof Kumkum Ray said that after the COVID-19 period, the influence of spirituality had increased in the thinking of the people. "

Today, when people see tourism as the renaissance of tourism, then it is not just tourism of any dham but it is tourism in search of spiritual peace,' she added.

In his address, Prateek Hira said that after COVID-19 pandemic, the need was to re-think about the tourism sector.

"We have tried to give this field a bigger look than ever before. The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, the grand form of Ayodhya and the development of Vindhyachal are examples of this. We are making Uttar Pradesh a world class spiritual tourism hub," he added.

10 killed in road mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, 10 persons were killed and over 25 injured when a private bus collided with a truck in Lakhimpur Kheri district early Wednesday morning.

Some of the grievously injured were referred to Lucknow for treatment, local officials who rushed to the spot confirmed.

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have expressed grief at the loss of lives and directed officials to provide treatment to the injured.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was distressed by the accident and announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased. Those injured would receive a compensation of Rs 50,000 each, his office said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, as soon as the incident was reported, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief and directed senior officers to reach the spot and provide proper care and treatment to the injured.

"Chief Minister Shri @myogiadityanath Ji Maharaj has condoled the loss of lives due to road accident in the Lakhimpur Kheri district. Maharaj ji has directed the senior officers to immediately go to the spot and conduct relief and rescue operations and make proper arrangements for the treatment of the injured," the CMO tweeted in Hindi.

"Expressing his condolences to the bereaved family members, Maharaj ji (Yogi Adityanath) has wished for the speedy recovery of the injured," the tweet further read.

Reports said that the bus carrying about 60 passengers was heading from Dhaurahra in Lakhimpur Kheri district to Lucknow when the accident occurred. All the injured were rushed to a district hospital while some others were referred to Lucknow for further treatment, said Lakhimpur Kheri's Additional District Magistrate Sanjay Kumar.

The bus was on its way to Lucknow from Dhaurhara when it collided with a mini truck coming from the opposite direction on Aira bridge on National Highway 730, Deputy Superintendent of Police Pritam Pal Singh said.

The toll was likely to rise, he added. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and rescued the injured after cutting the bus with a gas cutter, he said.

The injured were sent to the district hospital and efforts were on to identify the deceased, the DSP added.

Meanwhile, in another incident, three persons, including an innocent girl, were killed and 34 others were injured when the tractor-trolley they were travelling in was hit by a truck on Ayodhya highway in Barabanki district on Wednesday morning, police said.

Six persons with serious injuries were referred to the King George's Medical University Trauma Centre in Lucknow while the rest were undergoing treatment at the district hospital.

The accident occurred near Kotwa overbridge.

A few residents of Katka village were on their way to an event in Ram Sanehi Ghat when the speeding truck hit their tractor-trolley from behind.

Reports said that the 'mundan' ceremony of Bittu, daughter of Ramkaran, a resident of Lambauva village of Ram Sanehi Ghat police station area, was fixed for Wednesday. To attend the ceremony, Ramkaran's in-laws had come on a tractor-trolley from Katka police station Ramnagar and they all left by the same tractor-trolley for Katka on Wednesday morning.

On the way, a truck collided with the tractor-trolley near Kotwa road in Ram Sanehi Ghat police station area on Lucknow-Ayodhya highway.

Ramkaran's mother-in-law Malti Devi (50), Nanku's wife Shanti Devi (35) and Manoj's daughter Shubhi (5) died on the spot while around 34 people were injured in the accident.

Traffic on the highway was also disrupted for some time after the accident. The truck driver fled the scene, leaving his vehicle a little distance away from the accident site, the police added.

In another accident in Hardoi, three people riding a motorcycle died after being hit by a speeding truck.

Police reached the spot on getting information and sent the bodies for post-mortem.

Surprisingly, the police present at the spot parked a backhoe (JCB) on the path to stop the truck but the driver managed to flee with the vehicle after hitting the JCB. The cops, however, chased him and managed to intercept the truck on Gausganj road.

The incident took place near Nanakheda village of Sandila Kotwali area.

The three motorcycle riders were working as labourers and were going back to their homes after work when the speeding truck hit them late Tuesday evening.

CITYBRIEFS

FOUNDATION DAY

The foundation day of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University will be celebrated on October 1. Students of various universities will take part in COSAC - a yearly cultural festival - as part of celebration. During the event, debate, bait bazi, rangoli, mehndi, singing, table-tennis, shotput, ad mad, mime, poster-making, bio fest, short video and photography competitions will be organised.

WALKATHON

To celebrate National Nutrition Month 2022, department of nephrology, society of renal nutrition and metabolism, and department of dietetics of Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in collaboration with faculty club organised a walkathon on Wednesday, which was flagged off by SGPGIMS director RK Dhiman. The aim of the activity is to bring about awareness on developing healthful eating habits. A normal healthy individual weighing 50 kgs needs 1750 calories which is calculated by multiplying 50 weight in kg with 35 energy in kilocalorie. A senior faculty member informed that the diseases of the rich, the heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease and dementia have swept the entire globe with an increasing trend in the developing countries.

RAMLEELA

Tiny tots of Amity International School, Gomtinagar campus staged a Ramleela as part of Dussehra celebration. Bright costumes, real-life props and special light and sound effects enthralled the audience. Students presented a dramatic folk re-enactment of the story of the life of Lord Ram, right from his birth to the abduction of Sita by Ravan through song, narration, recital, and dialogues. The lead roles were played by Kunwar Shivdeep Singh, Meenakshi Singh, Anubhav Sigh, Abhiman Shukla, Antara Barnwal, Advik Kumar Pandey and Satakshi Mishra.

NEW IITR DIRECTOR

Bhaskar Narayan has taken the charge of CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR), Lucknow director. Narayan, who hails from Tumkur in Karnataka, holds a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fisheries Science from College of Fisheries, Mangalore and doctorate degree from Hokkaido University, Japan. He is the recipient of the JSPS Invitation Fellowship (2009, 2015). Bhaskar Narayan has been associated with CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore as a scientist from 1997 to 2016 and then moved to Food Safety & Standards Authority of India, New Delhi as advisor before taking over charge of CSIR-IITR, Lucknow.

IN'TL CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

The 23rd International Conference of Chief Justices of the World is being organised under the aegis of City Montessori School at CMS Kanpur Road auditorium from November 18 to 22. Presidents, prime ministers, speakers of parliament, ministers along with over 120 chief justices, judges and legal luminaries from 50 countries will be participating in the conference. City Montessori School founder Jagdish Gandhi said that that the conference was devoted to safeguarding the future of the world's 2.5 billion children by bringing about world unity and world peace.

ASI complains about 'illegal' construction near Jama Masjid

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An official of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) lodged a report against a man for carrying out a new construction close to a Jama Masjid in Thakurganj.

In his complaint, Rambriksh Yadav said he was informed about a new construction being carried out in the south-west of Jama Masjid and inspected the spot. "One Faraz Ahmad of Thakurganj was getting the new construction done at the site.

The Jama Masjid is one among the centrally protected monuments and a construction within a distance of 100 metres or mining at a place which is within 100 metres distance from the monument is prohibited under the law on protection of monuments," he said.

He asked the police to register the FIR and get the work stopped in light of the provisions of the law on centrally protected monuments.

LAND GRABBING

A group of men grabbed the land of a man and started construction on it in Manas Nagar under Krishna Nagar police station on Wednesday.

The owner of the plot, Mustaq Ahmed of Aminabad, was informed about the construction work on his land by some of his well-wishers and he reached there and found a group of men present there and labourers constructing a building.

"When I asked them how and with whose permission they had started construction they started beating me and abused me. When I called the police control room they fled the scene," he said.

Mustaq identified the miscreants who were trying to grab his land as Rajneesh Tripathi, Aditya Dixit, Kripashanker Shukla, Shanu Singh and Upendra Kumar.

"They broke the lock which I had put at the main gate of the plot which had a boundary wall and started the work to grab the land," he alleged.

Police registered a case and started the investigation.

It surfaced that the accused were named in a case of grabbing the same land in the past also.

'Educational City' to come up in Lucknow

Lucknow (PNS): An `Educational City` has been planned on 600 acres of land on the bank of river Gomti where a township was proposed to be developed by a private developer. The agreement for the proposed township was cancelled in the first week of September this year due to the poor performance of the builders. The contract for the township was signed 16 years ago. The Union government proposes to establish educational cities across the country to tap talent at higher level as well to sharpen the skills of those who desire to appear in competitive examinations. The Union government would grant a subsidy of Rs 1,000 crore to the state government to develop the infrastructure. This will be the first of its kind project in UP. Vocational courses would also be taught in the educational city to develop skills.

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
आन्ध्रा Andhra
Regional Office : 117/H-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur-208005 Ph.: 0512-2217517

Application For Medical Practitioner at Staff Clinic in Union Bank of India, Regional Office Kanpur on Contract Basis

Union Bank of India Invites applications from eligible Medical Practitioners in Kanpur Centre. The detailed information regarding. eligibility norms and application is available on the Bank's Website : www.unionbankofindia.co.in and www.eprocure.gov.in. The last date for submission of application will be 7 days from the publication of this advertisement. More information in this regard can also be collected from Sri Sanjay Kumar, Chief Manager (Operations) on contact no 93041 42874 & e-mail hr.kanpur@unionbankofindia.bank, The Bank reserve the right to reject any or all applications without assigning any reasons whatsoever. Deputy General Manager/ Regional Head

Army jawan held for duping job aspirants

Lucknow (PNS): The Meerut unit of UP Special Task Force (STF) arrested an army havildar for allegedly duping aspirants on the false promises of recruitment under the Agniveer scheme by helping them in passing the strenuous medical examination, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused Naresh, a resident of village Masouta in district Ghaziabad, who happens to be a serving havildar, was arrested by the Meerut STF from Garh Road under Sadar Bazar police station area of the district following inputs by Military Intelligence on Tuesday evening. The trap was laid after tracing the location of the accused with the help of his mobile surveillance.

Brijesh Kumar Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police of STF Meerut, said that an input was received from Military Intelligence that some elements were engaged in recovering huge amounts of money from aspirants of Agniveer recruitment in the Army. He said that the accused demanded Rs 5 lakh from the aspirants on the pretext of recruitment in the Agniveer scheme launched earlier this year by the government for short term recruitment in military services. He added that three members of the gang were still absconding.

"After getting the inputs of the sinister activity taking place in the Agniveer recruitment process that is currently underway in Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, we started the investigation. The input was further developed and a candidate, Prashant Singh, was identified who was supposed to appear for re-medicals at Military Hospital in Meerut on Tuesday," the ASP (STF) said.He was lured by Naresh Kumar for confirmed re-medicals in lieu of Rs 5 lakh. The UP STF was then roped in for the task and he was arrested, according to a source. On the instructions of SP (STF) Kuldeep Narayan, the STF team arrested the accused while a search was going on for his accomplices.

An aspirant was approached by Naresh with the promise to help him clear his re-medicals at Military Hospital Meerut in lieu of Rs 5 lakh. The accused had made a deal with four aspirants and had taken Rs 2.5 lakh from a fifth aspirant, reports said.

Brijesh Kumar Singh said that they put Naresh's mobile on surveillance and managed to arrest him. Naresh Kumar, during the questioning, revealed he had been involved in similar army recruitment scams for the last four years and had duped youths of around Rs 35 lakh," he said. Police have registered a case under relevant sections of law against the accused and the military authorities have also started investigations into the scam. "It was also revealed during questioning that Saurabh, brother of the accused used to pick up the candidates and later introduce them to Havildar Naresh who would pose as serving personnel of Military Hospital, Meerut having contacts with the specialist doctors in the Military Hospital and to help them pass the medical exams he used to take Rs 5 lakh along with the original educational documents of the candidates," the sources confirmed.

Proposal for Lko Mahotsav sent to dist admin

Lucknow (PNS): The Tourism Department has sent a proposal to the district administration regarding organizing Lucknow Mahotsav this year.

Giving this information, a senior official of the department said that decision would soon be taken on this after a meeting to decide the details of the mahotsav which is normally held between November 25 and December 06

He said that the Lucknow Mahotsav was held three years back. "It was announced in 2019 but was not held that year owing to the Defence Expo and later for two years it was not held because of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

केनरा बैंक (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) Canara Bank (A Government of India Undertaking)
सिंडिकेट Syndicate
Regional Office - HIG 1B, Chandra Vihar Lakhanpur, Kanpur - 208002, Ph.: 0512-2583225

POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Canara Bank** under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with the Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Issued a demand notice on the dates mentioned against each account (details of which have been mentioned hereunder) calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general, that the authorised officer has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rules 8 of the said rule. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of **Canara Bank** for an amount and interest thereon.

S. No.	Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Outstanding Amount	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Property
	BRANCH : SWAROOP NAGAR (2650) BRANCH		
1.	**Riyaz Ali S/o Siraj Ali and Niyaz Ali S/o Riyaz Ali** Outstanding Amount: **Rs. 13,20,834.99** + interest + Other Expenses	15.07.2022 / 23.09.2022	All that Part and Parcel of the property in the name of Riyaz Ali S/o Siraj Ali and Niyaz Ali S/o Riyaz Ali Property consisting of House no. 5F-375 Sector 5F, Hanspuram Scheme No. 2 Naubasta Kanpur Nagar Area 128. Sq.mtr. **Boundaries: East-** Plot No. 5F -376, **West-** Plot No. 5F-374, **North-** 09 Meter Road, **South-** Plot No. 5F 300 & 301

Date: 29.09.2022 **Place : Kanpur** **Authorised Officer, Canara Bank**

NSA invoked against June 3 violence accused

PNS ■ KANPUR

National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked against the June 3 Nai Sarak violence accused and builder Hazi Wasi. After the approval of the district magistrate, the summon about invoking NSA has been served on him in the jail late on Tuesday evening. Wasi is the third after the key accused Hayat Zafar Hashmi and Javed who has been implicated under NSA for terror funding and instigating the violence. Earlier, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) had prepared a file for action under NSA against Hazi Wasi and sent it to the DM for approval. Investigations revealed that Hayat Zafar Hashmi had raised funds with builder Hazi Wasi by selling properties worth Rs 1.30 crore. Just a day before the incident on June 3, Wasi had sold two properties worth around Rs 34 lakh and given Rs 4 lakh each to Atteek Khichdi and Sablu of D-2 gang for instigating the violence. Besides, in a bid to cash in on the situation, Wasi had made a deal of Rs 1 crore with owner of Baba Biryani Mukhtar Baba to get Chandreshwar Hata at Parade, majorly occupied by Hindu community, vacated from them. With the help of property dealing business, Hazi Wasi had created an empire of crores of rupees in Muslim-dominated localities during the past two decades.

He was mainly involved in purchasing disputed and enemy properties.

Two youths commit suicide

PNS ■ KANPUR

Two youths committed suicide under the wheels of speeding Tejas Express near Rura railway station in Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday morning.

Prior to committing suicide, one of them had informed his wife and police control room about the proposed step on phone while cause behind another youth's suicide could not be ascertained yet.

Both the youths were seen talking near the railway track before the arrival of the train. Vimal Kumar (30) of Bablapur, Mangalpur (Kanpur dehat) reached Rura railway station on Wednesday morning and was seen talking to a youth there.

Around 8.10 am Tejas Express train passed from there and thereafter the charred bodies of both the youths were found on the railway track within a distance of about 100 metres.

Another youth was identified as Jaswan of Bara village and police have called his kin to ascertain cause of incident.

Deceased Vimal's wife Uma said she was unaware of her husband taking such a step due to family dispute. SHO Rura Pravin Kumar said during prima facie investigation both the youths appeared to have committed suicide under the wheels of the train.

However, it was not clear whether both were known to each other or ended their lives for separate causes. After quizzing Jaswan's kin, cause of his committing suicide would also be ascertained, he said.

Meanwhile the wife of a retired sub-inspector (S-I) was deprived of her chain during morning walk in Kalyanpur police station area on Wednesday.

The incident has been recorded in the CCTV cameras installed in the locality. Pramod Kumar Shukla of Satyam Vihar, Kalyanpur, is a retired S-I.

On Wednesday morning when his wife Geeta went out for a walk two bike-borne youths snatched her chain and fled.

Inspector Ajay Kumar Singh said efforts were on to identify them with the help of CCTV footages.

'Agrometeorology helps in planning cropping patterns'

PNS ■ KANPUR

The noted agricultural meteorologist, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T), Dr SN Sunil Pandey while addressing a workshop at Dileep Nagar on Wednesday informed that agrometeorology studied the behaviour of weather elements that had direct relevance to agriculture and their effect on crop production. He said weather and climate were the factors determining the success or failure of agriculture. He said agrometeorology helped in planning cropping patterns and systems.

He said every farm operation such as ploughing harrowing, land preparation, weeding, irrigation, manuring, spraying, dusting, harvesting, threshing, storage and transport of farm produce were affected by weather. He said for determining crop growing season, solar radiation, air temperature, precipitation, wind, humidity etc. were important climatic factors on which growth, development and yield of a crop depended. Agrometeorology considered and assessed the suitability of these parameters in a given region for maximum crop production and economical benefits.

Dr Pandey said to reduce risk of crop failure on climatic part so as to get stabilised yields even under weather adversity, suitable crops/cropping patterns/contingent cropping planning can be selected by considering water requirements of crop, effective, rainfall and available soil moisture. He said management of crop involved various farm operations such as plant protection, irrigation scheduling, harvesting etc which can be carried out on the basis of specially tailored weather support and for this the use of operational forecasts, available from agro met advisories was made.

He said apart from this it also checked crop health and growth performance of a crop, suitable meteorological tools such as crop growth models water balance technique or remote sensing etc. He added that suitable crop models devised for the purpose can provide information.

He said climatic extremities such a frost floods, droughts, hail storms and high winds can also be forecasted and crop can be protected.

Trivedi :Yoga an effective art of healthy living

PNS ■ KANPUR

Deputy Director, Youth Welfare Department, Ajay Trivedi while addressing the students of Armapore Degree College on the occasion of UP State Level Yogasan Sports contest on Wednesday said yoga was an effective art of healthy living and can be a game changer for a student. He said it was because yoga helped every individual to unite the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of the body. He said practising yoga can be very beneficial to students. He said as one knew unlike earlier days now a student needed to manage several activities along with studies so a student must match the pace of the ever-growing world.

He said a student needed to be healthy. He said students who practice yoga regularly were bound to have a positive effect on both their health and academics. He said parents need to encourage their children to practice yoga from a very early age so that it becomes a part of their life.

Addressing the gathering principal of the college, Dr Mukesh Kumar Singh said the origin of yoga dated back to over 5,000 years in the Indian subcontinent.

He said it can be defined as a spiritual science that helped people in self-realisation. He said it comprised several asanas and different types of breathing exercises commonly known as pranayama. He said yoga had gained popularity not only in India but all across the world as it is an effective way to get a balanced lifestyle. He said if a student practised yoga regularly it will prove to be beneficial for the student in the long run.

He said it was because yoga improved both physical and mental health and provided control of the mind over body.

He said it improved concentration level of a student. He said there was no denying that yoga was an effective stress relief solution. He said it offered a lot of physical benefits for students such as maintaining good blood circulation, blood pressure, pulse rate and will help one to keep away from cardio and gastrointestinal problems with several other health issues.

Students of Armapore Degree College perform yoga asans at the UP State Level Yogasan Sports contest on Wednesday.

14 polluting units sealed

PNS ■ KANPUR

As per the directives of District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer a team comprising Pollution Control Board and Kesco officials carried out a raid and disconnected power connections and sealed around 14 polluting units for storing hazardous chemicals, waste materials and for running air polluting industries around the boundary wall of Air Force, Chakeri for security reasons. The DM informed that the sealing was carried out on the directives of Uttar Pradesh State Pollution Control Board, Lucknow. He said the presence of such units was a threat to the security of the AF.

The officials said these units were not only violating the pollution control norms but also were storing hazardous chemicals and waste materials. A UPSPCB official said AF had taken note of these units and taken up the issue with UP State Pollution Control Board, Lucknow and thus the orders had been issued from Lucknow. Most of the units were running on illegal power connections and the UP government had directed their removal on top priority.

The UPSPCB official also informed that there were umpteen factories running around the boundary. These units were reported to be storing chemicals. Earlier also such drives had been carried out at the behest of AF.

The team of Kesco and UP State Pollution Control Board sealing the units functional around the boundary wall of Air Force Chakeri.

IIVR celebrates its Foundation Day

PNS ■ VARANASI

ICAR-Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR) celebrated its 32nd Foundation Day here on Wednesday. The programme was presided over by Prof Gautam Kallu, former Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University, Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) and former Deputy Director General (Crop and Horticulture). In his presidential address, he appreciated the work of the scientists of the institute and gave advice on the use of new technologies like gene editing, drones, artificial intelligence, geo-tagging etc.

The chief guest and Deputy Director General (Horticulture Science), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, Dr AK Singh stressed the need for the promotion of natural and organic farming. For this the inclusion of science and technology should be the first priority. Along with this, he called upon the scientists to develop export-oriented and quality vegetable varieties so that health security is ensured along with earning foreign exchange in the country.Special guest Dr Major Singh, Member, Indian Scientific Selection Board, said that maximum formation of FPOs and FSCs should be done in this area and farmers of this area should be promoted to states like Maharashtra etc. FPOs and FSCs should be visited and also understand the market system there so that they can be benefited, he added.

On the occasion, former directors of the institute Dr Mathura Rai and Dr PS Naik shared their experiences and appreciated the work being done by the institute. Earlier, IIVR Director Dr Tushar Kanti Behera, while welcoming the guests, highlighted the research and development work being done in the institute.

He also highlighted the benefits being given to the farmers by extension programmes like Farmers First and Scheduled Tribe Sub Plan. In his address, he said that the seeds of varieties of vegetables are being produced by realising the concept of vegetable-village through farmers.

IIVR celebrating its Foundation Day in Varanasi on Wednesday. Pioneer

Smartphones distributed to students

PNS ■ KANPUR

Under the Swami Vivekanand Youth Empowerment Scheme, BJP MP Satyadev Pachauri distributed smartphones to some students at the Harsahai PG College, P Road, here on Wednesday. Conveying his blessing for them, Pachauri highlighted the merits of this ambitious scheme launched by the state government.

On the occasion a free eye camp organised by the ASG Teg Bahadur Hospital was also inaugurated by Pachauri along with the Principal Dr Amar Srivastava.

Apart from hundreds of students, teachers, non-teaching staff and nearby residents, chief guest Pachauri also got his eyes tested in the camp.

Area corporator Rita Paswan was also present on the occasion.

Besides, the college also organised an orientation programme for the fresher students of BCom, BSc and MCom which was attended by them with great enthusiasm. Speaking on the occasion, principal Dr Amar Srivastava, while describing the activities of the college, informed about the admissions done under the NEP 2020, conduct of classes, examinations and their results.

He called upon the students to participate in sports, cultural and all other activities of the college in a great way.

All faculty members, non-teaching staff and students were present at the function.

Dr Sushil Srivastava conducted the proceedings while Dr Swadesh Srivastava proposed the vote of thanks.

BJP MP Satyadev Pachauri (in the middle) with students with smartphones at the Harsahai PG College on Wednesday.

Programmes to be held on World Heart Day today

PNS ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that various awareness programmes would be organised in all the government hospitals of the district on the occasion of World Heart Day on Thursday and through these programmes, the people would be informed about the danger of heart disease and measures to prevent it. "Unhealthy lifestyle, lack of attention to food, alcohol and smoking are increasing the heart diseases not only in the elderly but also in the young people," he said while expressing his views on the eve of World Heart Day here on Wednesday.

Senior cardiologist of Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital Dr Anjan Srivastava said that there was a time when heart diseases were seen only in the elderly, but due to the ill effects of changing lifestyle, a good number of young people are also suffering from the same diseases now. "Now people of all ages are falling prey to heart disease," he said, suggesting that a little precaution can save us from getting heart disease. "For this, we have to pay attention to diet and exercise along with a well-organised routine. Along with staying away from stress, we must take at least seven-eight hours of sleep every day. Fatty food should be avoided as it increases the amount of cholesterol in our body. This cholesterol accumulates in the arteries and prevents blood from reaching the heart, which later becomes a major cause of heart disease," he said.

According to him, we should also avoid the use of junk food, excessive sugar and salt. "One should completely stay away from alcohol and smoking. Despite all our business, we must do light exercise along with walking for at least half an hour. It also includes jumping rope, cycling. Yoga prevents us from becoming a heart patient," he said, adding that the people suffering from blood pressure, sugar, obesity as well as people who smoke more are more prone to heart disease. Along with this, caution should also be taken by those people whose family has had heart disease in the past, he said, highlighting the symptoms of heart diseases like chest pain and heaviness, tightness; heavy sweating and nervousness; heaviness in chest when walking and shortness of breath, chest tightness when climbing stairs.

Dr Anjan Srivastava said that along with paying attention to the early symptoms, if treated at the right time, then the great risk of heart disease can be avoided.

Bhagat Singh remembered

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Backward Cell of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday celebrated the Jayanti of great martyr Bhagat Singh. The activists gathered at Azad Park in Lahurabir here and celebrated the 115th Jayanti of Bhagat Singh and welcomed the decision taken by the Central Government to keep the name of Chandigarh Airport after Bhagat Singh. This is an honour to the great martyr; they said and appealed to the youths to follow the path shown by him. The activists also demanded the government at Centre and in the state as well to install the statues of three martyrs --Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, who gave their supreme sacrifices to liberate the country from British Rule, in Azad Park.The activists recalled the contributions of Bhagat Singh in getting the country free from British Rule. Among those present on the occasion were Anup Jaiswal, Madan Dubey, Girish Srivastava, Dhirendra Sharma and Dinesh Kalara.

Over 53K greetings sent to PM Modi

PNS ■ VARANASI

During the ongoing various programmes being organised under the Seva Pakhwada (Service Fortnight) to celebrate the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, over 53,000 personalities of Kashi, the beneficiaries of the schemes, BJP supporters and well wishers wrote letters to the PM, informed the regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mahesh Chand Srivastava. He said that more than 53,000 beneficiaries from all the 16 organisational districts falling under Kashi region congratulated the PM on his birthday through postcards and other means and the benefits they got from the government's welfare schemes. Expressing gratitude to the PM for the change in life, they have sent their congratulation letters to him.

Srivastava said that more than 2,000 videos and over 5,000 photos of such programmes have been uploaded on NaMo App. On this basis, the best performing districts and divisions will be awarded at the central level. He said that not only this, Kashi's MP and PM Modi was also greeted by many Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri and President's award winners of the city by writing letters, poems and articles to the PM and prominent among them were Padma Shri Chandrashekhar Singh, Padma Shri Shivnath Mishra, Padma Shri Pandit Rajeshwar Acharya, Padma Bhushan Acharya Vashistha Tripathi, President Awardee Prof Ramnarayan Dwivedi, well-known physician Dr Madan Gopal Rai, Dr RK Ojha and Dr Shukdev Tripathi.

In their congratulatory messages, these personalities said that it is a matter of self-respect for them that we get a Prime Minister like Modi under whose able leadership the country's glory is increasing. Today our country is moving towards all-round development due to the implementation of the Panch Prans mentioned by Modi during his speech on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

'Strategies must be quickly adapted to technological advancement'

PNS ■ KANPUR

Digital Marketing expert, Lucknow, Anupriya Agarwal, while addressing the workshop conducted by FICCI Flo at Merchants Chamber Hall on Wednesday informed that marketing meant rapid changes and thus strategies must quickly be adapted to technological advancement, algorithm updates, new regulations and shifting customer expectations. She said as the digital era evolved and competition inevitably increased, UX(User Experience) has become increasingly important in providing that edge and making customers come back.

She said the last five years had taught companies everything, it was that the user experience needed to be front and centre if one was overarching marketing strategy so as to be effective with research backing. She said companies should now be dedicating between 10.4 per cent and 13.7 per cent of their revenue to marketing and managing these limited resources effectively which was key to success in a ferociously competitive marketplace.

Agarwal said cost effectiveness, convenience and results-driven nature of digital marketing goes some way to explaining the continued shift in the landscape away from more traditional marketing channels. She said digital advertising was expected to exceed 60 per cent of total spending for the first time in 2022 and will pass 65 per cent by 2024.

She said the credit went to the number of smart devices and advances in data collection and management technology, the amount of data available to marketers was bigger than ever. She said personal data was now the world's most valuable resource and it can give marketers a level of understanding about their prospects and customers that was unimaginable even a decade ago and enabled them to respond immediately to market changes and drive sales.

She added that around 97.2 per cent of companies were investing in big data and artificial intelligence with analytics software central to how marketers interpret the mind-boggling amount of data at their disposal. She said the ever-increasing proportion of human activity takes place online so has the importance of internet security and privacy. She said the number of national and international data protection laws had grown exponentially over the last five years.

She suggested that as the burden on marketers had only increased over the last five years they had looked to cut costs and increase the efficiency of data mining and communication across the full customer journey by using marketing automation. She said one such useful automation tool was multi-channel or multi-touch attribution, which enabled marketers to simultaneously track all their various channels and to assess their effectiveness at collecting leads that converted into sales. She said another was dark social media tracking which gets its name from the difficulty that comes from gaining insights from privately sent messages and content. She added that today 75 per cent of companies were using at least one marketing automation tool but half only started using one in the last four years.

Agarwal said this rush to automation had been a huge trend in a time of many and will only become more important as marketing budgets continue to shrink. She said marketing strategies had to be completely restructured over the last five years to respond to changes in user expectations. She said there had also been a move towards localised and personalised digital marketing, which needs to be integrated seamlessly into the full customer life cycle to ensure that they get the best service possible.

She said customer preferences had also changed according to new realities and beyond the squeezing of marketing departments that were being forced to do more with less. According to statistics, the growth of the Indian e-commerce market was pushing to Rs 7 trillion by 2023 due to the pandemic and multiple lockdowns. She said this strongly suggested that the growth of digital marketing was on an upward trend and has positively impacted businesses as well as the lives of people.

She said the future of digital marketing in India and the scope of digital marketing in future is going to get brighter in the coming years.

Rush of devotees at Chandraghanta temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Long line of devotees was seen at Chandraghanta Devi temple located at Chandraghanta Gali near Thatheri Bazar in Chowk area on the third day of Sharadiya Navratri here on Wednesday. Right from the morning hours, there was a long line of devotees in the nearby narrow lanes. Braving scorching heat, the devotees waited for a long time to reach the temple and offer prayers.

Heavy rush of devotees was also seen throughout the day at the famous Durga Mandir (Durga Kund) as usual. Rush was also seen at some other temples of goddesses. This holy city is a rare place where there are separate temples of all the nine Gauris and Devis where the devotees reach to offer prayers on different days during Basantik (Chaitya) and Sharadiya Navratri respectively. Besides, hundreds of devotees rushed to Vindhyachal in Mirzapur district by Roadway buses or other vehicles to offer prayer on this auspicious occasion. Rush was also seen at Old Durga Mandir at Ramnagar, Sheetla Mata Mandir at Adalpura (near Chunar, Mirzapur) and others.

Devotees offering prayers at Chandraghanta Devi temple in Varanasi on Wednesday. Pioneer

Meanwhile, hectic activities are being carried out to complete all the preparations for the Durga Puja as in most of the pandals the idols of Maa Durga would be installed on the occasion of Saptami. However, all the five Durga pandals, where nine days long puja is being celebrated, saw a good number of visitors and various religious rituals were performed during the day.

The idols of Goddess Durga have already been installed at five places on the very first day of Navratri and they are Sarvajanik Durgotsav Samiti at Townhall, Maa Durga Pujanotsav Samiti at Daranagar, Maa Durga Puja Navyuvak Samiti at Navapura, Sarda Mandir at Ghai Ghat and SB Durgotsdav Samiti at Sudia.

Security of Kashi Dham to be controlled from new building

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The security of the highly sensitive Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in which the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir is also located, will be controlled and monitored from the new building 'Pinaka' which is equipped with latest security facilities. The Additional Director of General (ADG) Ram Kumar, Inspector General (IG) of Police K Satyanarayan, Commissioner of Police A Satish Ganesh and Chief Executive Officer of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Sunil Kumar Verma jointly inaugurated the new building. Meanwhile, the shops were allotted to as many as 71 eligible persons in Dham premises through auction. The remaining shops would be allotted on October 17.

A new building has been constructed in the premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. This new building has been given the name of 'Pinaka'. The 'Pinaka' is the celestial bow of Lord Shiva. This new building has been equipped with the latest security facilities. The building formally started its functioning after the ADG Ram Kumar, IG K Satyanarayan and CP A Satish Ganesh inaugurated it after performing puja late Tuesday afternoon. The ADCP Vikrant Veer, ADM Bachhu Singh and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Now, the security of the entire Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in which Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir is located, will be controlled and monitored from this new building. There are as many as 36 rooms including auditorium in this building constructed in the shape of G+3 and the personnel of all the wings of security forces including CRPF, PAC, Bomb Disposal Squad, LIU and Police will sit here.

The security of the Dham and temple as well will now be better after this building has started its functioning, the CP Ganesh said. The building is completely air-conditioned and the facilities as per the requirements of the security agencies were kept in mind while constructing this building so that the security of the entire Dham could be made better.

In the meantime, an auction to allot shops in the premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham was held on Tuesday and as many as 71 persons were selected by the selection committee on the eligibility basis and the shops were allotted to them. A total of 82 persons have applied for the shops in the auction, the CEO of the temple Sunil Kumar Verma informed, adding that the shops were allotted to the shopkeepers and tenants who were displaced during the extension and beautification work of the temple. All the persons who had applied for the allotment of shops, were invited and an open auction was made before them at the multipurpose hall in the premises of Dham. The ADM-Protocol Bachhu Singh, nominated by the DM Kaushal Raj Sharma, completed the process of auction with the help of temple officers. The date of October 17 has been fixed as the next day for the auction of the remaining shops, Verma informed.

BAP activists torch effigy of PFI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The activists of Bhartiya Awam Party (BAP) on Wednesday torched the effigy of Popular Front of India, known as PFI in protest against its anti-national activities and demanded the government to impose ban on it forever and not only for five years. It is learnt that the Indian Government banned the PFI and its associate concerns for five years.

The activists gathered at Lamahi here and set the effigy of PFI afire to raise their protest against its national activities. This organisation is conspiring against the country and indulging in instigating the people of the minority community against India. The forces like PFI want to weaken India and divide the nation on the basis of religion, they said, adding that the PFI is an anti-national organisation and the properties of its workers should be seized.

Effigy of PFI being burnt in Varanasi on Wednesday. Pioneer

The people will not remain silent against such anti-national forces which want to create terrorists in each part of the country and the nationalists are on their target, they said, adding that the PFI want to create a sense of terror among nationalist Muslims so that they join its activities against India. The PFI is a threat to the country and demanded a ban on it forever instead of merely for five years. Najama Parveen, Gyan Prakash, Ajay Singh, Afsar Baba and DN Singh were mainly present on the occasion.

2 BLW officers get Rajbhasha medals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Two senior officers of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) got Rajbhasha silver medals and citation from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Railway Board VK Tripathi at Rail Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday for their commendable contributions in the promotion of Rajbhasha. At the meeting of the Rajbhasha Implementation Committee, Chief Design Engineer (Electrical) Pawan Priya Raju and Principal Chief Engineer Hirendra Singh Rana received the silver medals from the Railway Board Chairman for their contributions in Rajbhasha field for the year 2020 when they were posted as Chief Electrical Engineer (Inspection) and Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infra), Agra Division, North Central Railway (NCR) respectively. Earlier, under the Rajbhasha Fortnight in BLW, a Hindi workshop was organised at the Hall of Fame in which Rajbhasha department supervisors, office superintendents and other employees were present. In the workshop, the standard spelling, e-office, Unicode, monthly and quarterly reports were explained in detail. Senior Rajbhasha Officer Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh was the main speaker while the participants were welcomed by the senior translator Vinod Kumar Srivastava, who also conducted the proceedings.

A BLW officer receiving Rajbhasha citation from Railway Board Chairman VK Tripathi in New Delhi on Tuesday. Pioneer

Addressing all the supervisors, Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh appealed to the participants that being the incharges of Rajbhasha in their respective departments, they should be aware of the implementation of Rajbhasha policy and in searching the solutions to the problems faced in it, so that the Hindi should be widely used. In case of any difficulty, he suggested they contact the Department of Rajbhasha. On the occasion, the officers also interacted with all the supervisors one by one, and listened to their problems. They were also assured to organise a workshop to solve them. Apart from this, the difficulties related to e-office and Unicode were resolved through practical discussions. Junior translators Dr Shashi Kant Sharma and S Gururajan explained in detail the subject of standard spelling through power point presentation. In the end, the vote of thanks was given by Vinod Kumar Srivastava.

FIR against more than 200 AU students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The First Information Report (F.I.R.) has been registered against more than 200 students of Allahabad University for creating a ruckus, taking out processions and locking the main gate against the fee hike. A case has been registered at Colonelganj police station. On the complaint of Professor Harsh Kumar, Chief Proctor of the University, the police have taken action to register a report.

In the complaint given to the police on behalf of Professor Harsh Kumar, the Chief Proctor of Allahabad University, it has been said that the students created a ruckus in the university campus in protest against the fee hike. A few days ago, the students had gone to the terrace with a gas cylinder creating a ruckus and threatened to jump by setting it on fire. This had a huge impact on the academic environment and disturbed the peace. In this incident, 150 students including Satyam Kushwaha, Adarsh ??Bhadauria, Ayushi Priyadarshi, Ajay Singh, Ashutosh Patel, Jitendra Kumar were involved.

The proctor alleged that some students had also locked the main gate of Allahabad University. This affected the peaceful classes going on in the campus and caused difficulty for the teachers in commuting.

In this regard, Inspector Colonelganj Rammohan Rai said that two cases have been registered on behalf of Professor Harsh Kumar, Chief Proctor of Allahabad University. On the basis of the first complaint, a case has been registered against 12 named and 150 unknown students and on the second written complaint, case has been filed against five named and 50 unknown students. Legal action will be taken after the investigation, he added.

TALK ORGANISED ON SC'S OBSERVATION ON HATE SPEECH: A talk was organised on "Supreme Court's observation on hate speech in TV debates" in the School of Film and Mass Communication, SHUATS.

The programme started with the word of prayer by Assistant Professor Emmanuel George. Then host of the event Ram Mani Tripathi (Assistant Professor) welcomed the guests and introduced the topic. After that Assistant Professor Anant Kumar Srivastava further elaborated the topic and shared his views over the observation of the Supreme Court issued recently and he also spoke about the reality of the media houses. Then the host asked the students to share their views and thoughts on the respective topic, in response, the first year Yashraj told everyone about his thoughts and also discussed equality and human rights. From the students' side Yashraj and Nasir Naeem shared their views on the topic.

While addressing the gathering Dean, School of Film and Mass Communication, Dr Ashish Alexander concluded the topic and motivated the student with his generous words. In his speech he mentioned bold and fearless reporting and asked students to do justice with their reporting work in their coming future.

The program ended with closing prayer with all faculty members, staff and students present.

Murder case worked out, 3 held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With the arrest of three accused, Phulpur police claimed to have worked out the murder case of Rajnath Yadav, a resident of Baresta Khurd village in Prayagraj. The knife used in the murder was recovered.

During interrogation, the main accused told that he suspected that Rajnath was keeping a wrong eye on his wife. He was also suspected of an illicit relationship. Police are looking for another accused who is absconding.

Rajnath Yadav used to drive a taxi in Mumbai. Along with him, Rajesh Yadav, resident of Nasir Patti village also used to drive the car there. Both were relatives, there was a deep friendship between them. Both came home from Mumbai on Saturday. In the evening, Rajesh called up Rajnath and invited Miyan Ka Pura to attend a liquor party near the village. Rajnath's body was found in the car in Pratappur late at night. He was murdered with a knife. The wife of the deceased had filed a case against many unknowns including Rajesh, his brother Alok.

Police station in-charge Phulpur Amit Rai arrested Rajesh, Alok and Raju Bhartia resident Satar Saraimamrej. The station in-charge said that during interrogation Rajesh Yadav said that he suspected that Rajnath was keeping a wrong eye on his wife. There was a controversy about this in Mumbai as well. He was burning in the fire of revenge. He conspired with his brother Alok, friend Raju Bhartiya and another and invited Rajnath on the pretext of party.

Everyone in the car drank alcohol and then stabbed him to death in front of a dhaba in Phulpur. On his pointing, the police also recovered the knife.

MAN IMMOLATES SELF, DIES: In a shocking incident a 38-year-old youth immolated himself and died on the spot. The reason for the suicide is not yet clear, the police is investigating.

It is said that Upendra Kumar Singh, who lived in Vishnupuri Colony of Dhumanganj police station area, used to do private work earlier. He was upset for the last few days.

He was not even married. On Wednesday, he set himself on fire in a room of the house by pouring kerosene oil on himself.

When Upendra's clothes caught fire, he started screaming and wailing . When the family members reached there, they were stunned to see his condition. Neighbours also gathered. He was rushed to Swarooprani Nehru Hospital (SRN Hospital), where he died during treatment.

In this regard, Inspector Dhumanganj Rajesh Kumar Maurya said that the family members were questioned by the police but they were not able to tell the reason behind his suicide. However, further investigation is going on.

NCR releases new time-table

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

North Central Railway has released its new time-table. It will be implemented from October 1. Five new trains started in NCR have got a place in it. There will be a difference of five to two hours in the timing of many trains. Some trains have also undergone extension and terminal changes. NCR CPRO Himanshu Shekhar Upadhyay said that keeping in mind the passenger amenities, the new timetable will be applicable from October 1.

The new trains are --1. Train No. 20957/20958 Indore - New Delhi Superfast Express (03 days a week). 2. Train No. 01825/01826 Kanpur-Brahmavart MEMU Special (Daily) and Train No. 01827/01828 Kanpur-Brahmavart MEMU Special (Daily). 3. Train No. 20451/20452 New Delhi - Sogaria Superfast Express (Daily). 4. Train No. 04179/04180 Phaphund – Etawah MEMU Special (Daily).

5. Train No. 04119/04120 Khajuraho-Tikamgarh Special (Daily).

THESE TRAINS WILL BE EXTENDED---

1. Train No. 12403/04 Prayagraj - Jaipur Superfast Express (Daily) with Train No. 12403/12404 04 days a week via Sikar - Churu – Ratangarh. Train No. 20403/20404 with extension up to 03 days a week Via Sikar-Jhunjhunu-Loharu-Churu-Ratangarh Bikaner, this extension will be effective from 01.10.22.

2. Extension of Train No.12555/12556 Gorakhpur - Hisar Gorakhdham Express (Daily) up to Bhatinda. 3. Extension of Train No.19435/19436 Ahmedabad-Barauni Express (Weekly) up to Asansol.

CHANGE OF TRAIN TERMINALS---

1. Change of Terminal of Train No. 22431/22432 Prayagraj - Udhampur Superfast Express (02 days a week) This train will depart from Subedarganj instead of Prayagraj with effect from 05.11.22.

change in train number. Train number 14111/14112 Veerangana Lakshmibai Jhansi – Prayagraj Express will run as 11801/11802 Veerangana Lakshmibai Jhansi – Prayagraj Express.

EXPERIMENTAL STAY: Railways have given place to many trains in the new timetable as an experimental stoppage. In this one train belongs to Prayagraj Junction. 14116/14115 Prayagraj - Dr. Ambedkar Nagar Express will now have stoppage at Dabhaura station as well.

Change in arrival and departure times at the terminal station

1 - 12293 Duronto Lokmanya Tilak T.-Prayagraj will now arrive at Prayagraj at 12:40 instead of 12:45. That is, this train will now come five to five minutes earlier.

2 - 22129 Tulsi Express Lokmanya Tilak T.-Prayagraj will now arrive at Prayagraj at 08:40 am instead of 08:45 am. That is, will reach Prayagraj 5 minutes earlier.

3 - 14110 Intercity Kanpur-Chitrakootdham passing through Prayagraj will now leave Kanpur at 11:10. Earlier this train used to leave at 11:05. There has also been a difference of 5 minutes in the time of this train.

4 - 14114 LINK EXPRESS Dehradun - Subedarganj Express used to arrive at 06:00 till now. But now it will come to Subedarganj five minutes before. The new time will be 05:55 am.

PRAYAGRAJ GIRL PARTICIPATES IN PARA JUMP: NCC cadet from Prayagraj participated in Para Jump at Paratroopers Training School (PTS) Agra. Cadet Muskaan Yadav, a Senior Wing Naval NCC Cadet from No.1 UP Naval Unit NCC Prayagraj participated in a Para Jump in September, 2022 in Agra.

She is passionate about joining the Indian Army and dreams of winning Grand Slams for the country as an Army Officer. So when she got an opportunity to represent Prayagraj in the Para Basic Course at PTS Agra, she grabbed it with both hands. The Camp started from 01 September 1 and went on for the next three weeks. This Camp included 40 Cadets from various NCC Directorates and States of the Country. At PTS Agra, she learnt Ground subjects, Aircraft Exit technique as well as Flying and Landing Technique. Jumping from AN-32 was an exhilarating experience. "After 20 seconds, the parachute opened and everything slowed down. We floated gently towards the earth, leaving the clouds behind us." - she sports a beaming smile, as she shares her experiences with other Cadets.

She has also participated in numerous National and International Soft tennis and Lawn Tennis Tournaments. As India No.1 in Soft tennis, she represented the country in the Senior World Championship in China and won two gold medals in 2019. She represented the country in the Junior World Championship in South Korea a year before. In lawn tennis too, she has won many AITA tournaments.

Six caught with 106 kg ganja

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Under the joint operation of RPF and GRP six women smugglers were caught along with 106 kg of ganja on Tuesday. SHO RPF Dinesh Kumar and SO GRP Santosh Singh were carrying out routine inspection along with team when they spotted six suspicious women on platform no 1, intercepted them and during search recovered huge quantity of ganja from their bag. The team nabbed the women identified as Vineeta Mongiya of Lalitpur UP, Injina Baheliya and Pooja Baheliya of Satna MP, Neha Baheliya, Anita Baheliya and Amisha Baheliya of MP.

Meanwhile Halia police arrested three persons on Tuesday and recovered jewellery. Rakesh Agrahri of Halia market was sitting in his jewellery shop when three persons, including two women, entered it. When the shopkeeper started questioning them the man managed to flee. Considering the said customers as suspicious the shopkeeper handed over the women to the police who during interrogation confessed that in the guise of purchasing they used to run away with jewellery. After frisking, police recoverd some jewellery and nabbed the third person too. On the complaint of the shopkeeper police registered a case and sent the accused identified Sheshmani, Dharmasheela and Amarawti of Tenduhani village under Lalganj police station to jail.

Besides Ahraura police on Tuesday arrested three cattle smugglers and recovered 93 head of cattle. Following a tip off by an informer police team led by SO Kumud Shekhar Singh raided the jungle area near Sukrit and found that 93 head of cattle were being taken and nabbed three smugglers. After freeing the cattle, a case was registered and the accused, identified as Ram Sakal and Ajay Kumar of Gulalpur village under Lalganj police station and Kamla Shankar Kol of Uttar Deori village under Lalganj police station, were sent to jail.

On the other hand, City Kotwali police arrested one person who was accused of molestation on Tuesday. One person had lodged a named case on Monday alleging that his minor daughter was molested by the accused. Police arrested the accused on Tuesday.

REVIEWED: DM Divya Mittal warned the agencies involved in the Har Ghar Nal project to expedite the work with expected progress or else remain prepared to face the music. She issued such warning while reviewing the progress under the scheme at Collectorate on Tuesday. The DM directed the working agencies to increase the manpower and get the work as done as soon as possible. The meeting was also attended by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS, Additional District Magistrate (ADM/ Namami Gange) Amarendra Verma and other officials concerned.

DIES: A devotee died at Vindhyachal on Tuesday. Panaru Bind (65) of Kathori Panchpedva village under Alinagar police station had come to Vindhyachal. He became seriously ill while returning from the temple. On information police brought him to Vindhyachal hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Vindhyachal police completed the legal formalities after taking the body in their possession. His daughter and son-in-law said prior to Vindhyachal he had performed rituals at Maihar temple in MP.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Right move

Govt has banned PFI but it must ensure that it is not seen as an anti-Muslim decision

The Narendra Modi Government's ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is not surprising. The PFI has been proscribed for five years by the Ministry of Home Affairs for alleged with terror funding links. Multiple raids were carried out in various parts of the country, leading to hundreds of arrests by the Central agencies. That the PFI is an Islamist outfit is quite evident, but the Government has to justify the ban in the court of law where the decision is likely to be challenged. In fact, the PFI is one of the Islamist organisations all of which have misleading names. The political wing, for instance, is called the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Then there are the Rehab India Foundation, the Campus Front of India (CFI), the National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), the National Women's Front, the Empower India Foundation, etc. All of which have also been banned. One exception is the All India Imams Council. In March 2015, the PFI's public relation officer Mohammed Arif Ahmed had described the body as a "neo-social movement committed to empower people to ensure justice, freedom, and security." That was very clever on its part, for such phraseology is to the liking of liberals and intellectuals. In general too, on the face of it, few would like to have a quarrel with the folks committed to justice, freedom, and security.

Behind the nice-sounding names and nicer (ostensible) objectives lay the real goals—radicalisation of all sections of Muslims by all means, including persuasion. The hijab drive is part of this radicalisation; wearing hijab is more rampant now than it was a generation ago. The CFI's role in instigating girls to insist on wearing Islamic attire in education institutions in Karnataka is well-known. In fact, radical Muslims have convinced or coerced their fellow-religionists to follow the purist version of Islam, which is especially oppressive for women. Quite apart from Talibanising Muslim society, the PFI and sister organisations have been involved in violent activities; for example, over a decade ago, they chopped off the hand of a professor in Kerala for allegedly having said something inappropriate about Prophet Muhammad. The Kerala Government has also acted against the PFI and similar outfits. In short, the Modi Government cannot be said to be called anti-Muslim just because it acted against the PFI. A couple of issues need to be raised here. First, the Government is widely accused of using the agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation for political purposes, so even when they genuinely do what they are mandated to, questions can be raised about the action. Second, while Islamic organisations involved in criminal activities must be dealt with firmly, the outfits claiming to represent other faiths should also be tackled accordingly if they are involved in unlawful activities. The Government must address these issues.

PICTALK

A woman carries her pet cats for vaccination on World Rabies Day in Jakarta, Indonesia PTI

EWS quota must wait

The SC has reserved its decision; the emotive issue must be amicably solved

The reservation is as emotive an issue as it is economic. Nevertheless, it remains unresolved to date as both parties dig their heels in the court. The Supreme Court has reserved its decision on 10 per cent quota to persons from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).The Central Government's decision to give 10 per cent reservation to economically weaker sections over and above 50 per cent already given to other backward castes, and Schedule Castes & Tribes. The petition was filed against the 103rd amendment to the Constitution, which introduced changes to Articles 15 and 16 that deal with the right to equality and provide the basis for reservations. The argument against the amendment is that the 50 per cent limit on reservation cannot be crossed as it would tantamount to violate the basic premise of Constitution, which is equality. The Centre had earlier told the Supreme Court that the EWS quota does not erode the rights of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities as they already enjoy many other benefits.

The Government contention that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been given several benefits under the Constitution, including Article 16(4)(a) (special provision for promotion) and Article 332 (reservation in State Assemblies), may be true but unfortunately despite all these benefits they still remain on the lowest rung of social hierarchy and lag behind on the economic front as well. But having said that, the economic criterion must be at least a factor while giving reservation to any section of society.The Government introduced the EWS quota for those who do not fall in the category of SC/ST and OBCs but have an annual family income of less than ₹8 lakh per annum. The intent was right but the method was not. And this is what is being contested by the petitioners. The criterion is arbitrary and impractical, to say the least. To be fair to the Government, it cannot touch the reservation to SC/ST and OBCs and so it has no choice. Last year, the Supreme Court had said that the criteria seemed arbitrary. Since the income criteria of ₹8 lakh per annum was used to exclude the 'creamy layer' from the OBC quota, the court said it was 'mechanical' and included to distinguish EWS as well. The SC observation holds water as ground realities may be very different. The decision of Supreme Court in this regard would be a landmark in the debate for reservations and could stir a hornet's nest.

Durand faultlines on cricket pitch

BHOPINDER **SINGH**

Power politics has seeped on to the cricket ground, too, and this is not good news either for the game of cricket or for cricket-playing nations

When the former Pakistani speedster and motormouth Shoaib Akhtar railed against the ostensible behaviour of Afghan players and fans in the recent Asia Cup match, the subliminal sense of Pakistani clientelism was unmistakable. Shoaib's patronising tone following the heated exchange by players in the cliffhanger reeked of one-sided entitlement, "Aap hai ki hamare bhai hai, sah mulk hain, hum apse laad bhi karte hai, khyal bhi rakhte hai, and aap kya batameezi bhi karte ho. (Here you are, we consider you our brothers, you are our neighbouring nation, we love and take care of, and here you are showing your brazenness) this is not acceptable yaar." That Shoaib's view was selectively berating, condescending and mocking is one thing - but it was also layered by unsubtle societal faultlines, "Isilye allah ne aapko Saza di, isilye aalah ne ek pathan ko duusre pathan se chakka marwake zaleel kiya, aur rote hui gayi Afghanistan team (That is why the almighty punished you, where the almighty made a Pathan (Pakistani player) hit a six against you, and you were humiliated and Afghanistan team went out crying!). The subtext of a Pakistani Pathan versus Afghan Pathan was loaded, as it militates against the sense of Pashtunistan or common homeland/identity of Pathans across both sides of the Durand Line, separating Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The visibilised animosity besetting the Pakistan-Afghanistan realm is palpable and deep, and the cricket pitch only reflects the same. It is starker and more intense as compared to the outpourings in India-Pakistan matches, today. The historically wounded sentiment along the 2670-kilometer-long border dividing Afghanistan-Pakistan or the Durand Line (vehemently unrecognised by Afghanistan), has metastasized over the years with the perception of constant Pakistani patronage of terror and mayhem in Afghanistan. Islamabad has pandered to Pan-Islamic terror groups like the dreaded Taliban, puritanical Haqqani faction, brutal Hekmatyar faction, etc., to suppress and undercut Pashtun nationalism - all this has led to simmering hate in the minds of average Afghan on the street who justifiably blame Pakistan for decades of bloodshed and violence. Treating Afghanistan as its backyard or 'Strategic Depth' is an institutionalised aspiration in Pakistan and even the revisionist Taliban regime finds itself uncomfortable defending Pakistani interferences, beyond a point. A few months back, the Taliban Foreign Ministry was forced to call the Pakistani Ambassador in Kabul to condemn airstrikes on Afghan soil. Taliban spokesperson had warned, 'not to test that patience of Afghans' and that, 'same mistakes again….will have bad consequences! Even with its own propped Taliban regime in Kabul, the Pakistanis are getting the rough end of the stick, as the blame for the larger Afghan socio-economic misery is attributed squarely of the Pakistanis, and especially to its shadowy agency, ISI. No amount of rote Pakistani spiel of 'co-religiosity cuts ice in Afghanistan.

It's not just 'Taliban Khan' or the former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan who is the poster boy of Pakistani misadventures, but even the coalition of PPP and PML-N are similarly despised in the unforgiving memories of the Pathans. Afghan elders remember Nawaz Sharif's electoral bluster to then rivals PPP in 1993, 'You gave up Dhaka, but we took Kabul' with dismay and hate. Across the political canvass of Pakistani democracy and Military rules, the Pakistanis have sought indebtedness of the Afghans for the harbouring of Pashtun refugees - only the Afghans have found that expectation extremely humiliating, simplistic, and condescending. So, while the war-torn Afghanistan Cricket Team has kept defying the odds with individual performances and heroics of resilience, and heroics, it has sadly lost more matches than it has won. This Asia Cup was no different (win against the much higher-ranked Bangladesh notwithstanding), except that when it came to the Afghanistan-Pakistan match, a lot more was at stake and Afghan emotions were raw. Beyond the on-field fracas amongst players, after the match, the Afghan fans let their fury on Pakistani fans and had them scurrying for safety. The pent-up frustration against the Pakistanis was a lot more than what can be attributed to a simple case of winning or losing a cricket match. The irrepressible Winston Churchill once noted about the Pathans, 'Every family cultivates it's vendetta; every clan, its feud. Today the proud Pathans (who form the majority of Afghanistan) are reeling under unprecedented misery and there is no doubt as to which direction their ire is pointed. Official politics may not be on the side of the average Afghan belief, as its incumbent government is still essentially dependent on Pakistani support for legitimacy, but it is a groundswell of angst that this filling up fast and may tip over the Talibani patience, too. It was ultimately left to the former Afghan captain, Shafiq Stanikzai, to have the last word when he coldly warned Shoaib, 'baat ko nation pe Mat lena' (do not extrapolate your comments to the nation) — implicit in the Stanikzai's warning was the larger sentiment and augury of the future.

> SO, WHILE THE WAR-TORN AFGHANISTAN CRICKET TEAM HAS KEPT DEFYING THE ODDS WITH INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES AND HEROICS OF RESILIENCE AND HEROICS, IT HAS SADLY LOST MORE MATCHES THAN IT HAS WON

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IRAN IN TURMOIL

Sir — The republic of Iran is in turmoil over the recent tragic custodial death of the 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini at the altar of police brutality. She preferred to sacrifice her life rather than succumbing to police atrocities to enforce harsh hijab rules and curb their rights in the name of faith and religion. In fact, never before such extreme acts of dissent have surfaced in Iran on a grand scale. It is the women folk, be it in Iran or Afghanistan, who have borne the brunt of fundamental right-wing Islam curtailing their freedom, dreams, and aspirations.

Hundreds of women across 80 cities in Iran have taken to the streets to oppose this oppressive practice of slavery inflicted on women for centuries. They are not just removing their Head scarves, cutting their hair in public, burning hijabs in public but also burning posters of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatullah Khomeini in 1979. This assumes significance as this is the world's first political revolution totally led by women. In fact, it sends strong signals that every dictatorial regime falls when Mahsa Amini stands up or a Rosa Parks refuses to succumb to a white man. It would be a moral victory of the democratic ethos, and dignity of the human being if every nation across the globe stood by them and support their rightful cause.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | *Nainital*

BETTER SENSE PREVAILS IN PUNJAB

Sir — Punjab Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan said that the Governor has acceded to the government's request for holding the Assembly session. The ongoing face-off between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has ended with the Governor agreeing to summon the State Assembly session on September 27.The Governor should not make his presence felt by blocking the decision of the Council of Ministers that too call for convening the session.

The Governor is only an appointed authority by the Union Government. He is not representing the will of the People. Once a highly dignified post, the governorship now has been reduced to a coercive tool to hinder the smooth working of every non-lotus state government. It is good that the face-off has ended. Otherwise, the bickering between the government and the governor would have led to an ugly situation . Better sense has prevailed.

CK Subramaniam | *Mumbai*

THE GOVT IS RIGHT IN BANNING PFI

Sir — Union Home Ministry has done the right thing by banning the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates, numbering eight for five years, as they are terrorist-based fronts in the country with active cooperation, coordination, and financial transactions with many terrorist organisations to create communal disturbances. Many pan India raids were conducted recently to identify the network of PFI and many arrests were made with a lot of information on their activities and other associated groups.

It is most gratifying that some Islamic organisations welcomed the ban as they feel country first and faith next. The way pro-Pakisthan slogans were raised during the arrest of the PFI cadre shows how they are anti-national. All Muslim political organisations should condemn the terrorist mindset of PFI and while welcoming the ban should advise all its members to keep their distance from PFI and its associate organisations for the peaceful coexistence of all with unity in diversity and should not fall prey to such organisations.

JP Reddy | *Nalgonda*

Congress is a mess

It is saddening to see a senior leader like Ashok Gehlot stooping so low to play politics, a dirty one indeed, particularly when he is being promoted to become President of the INC. Or is he really being cheated by his cabinet ministers? It would have been gracious for him to leave state politics and instead he leaves behind a doubt as to how he will be able to handle politics at the national level if he becomes President. Cornering High Command is demeaning and definitely, something is seriously wrong with the Congress. Is there a bigger game behind the screen Gehlot is playing to dilute the Bharat Jodo Yatra and scuttle even the little effort that Rahul is trying to pump life into the dying party.?

Anything is possible these days. Is INC messing up in the name of a democratic election, unlike the smooth way Nadda was re-elected in BJP.? Nothing seems to be working for Congress the way it wants things to be. Only the die-hard supporters of the party can salvage it from this otherwise stupid situation. The Congress leadership today seems to be running out of ideas and has lacked the mettle to handle the situations which are threatening its existence.

D Nagarjuna | *Hyderabad*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Where we get our military equipment is not a new issue or changed due to geopolitical changes. We exercise a choice that is in our national interest.

External Affairs Minister
—S Jaishankar

Italy has chosen us and we will not betray it. We will govern with the aim of uniting people.

Italy's PM-elect
—Giorgia Meloni

They say if you keep getting the same roles, it means you are very lucky, that people want to keep watching you. However, I feel it's the death of an actor.

Actor
—Archana Puran Singh

Right from Asia Cup, every match where he (Virat) got runs, there was some improvement coming. I think the power game is back

Former cricketer
—Sanjay Manjrekar

As a group, we will invest over $100 billion of capital in the next decade.

Businessman
—Gautam Adani

FIRST COLUMN

FREE WILL IS THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE

We want to be independent, but we are bound by the constraints of the world

AJIT **BISHNOI**

Right and wrong, fair and unfair, ethical and unethical are no longer subjects that have standard definitions. Logic, convenience, personal interests, hedonism are the determining features that influence the judgment or opinion about an action or conduct. Universal benchmarks are missing.

We possess free will, which is defined as the power of desiring and deciding without the restraint of necessity or fate. It is the ability to desire unlimitedly and decide as we choose. But we are not so independent, because being independent will mean that we can achieve what we desire, but we are bound by the constraints of the world. For example, we can desire to be very rich. But can we manage it without following the rules of becoming rich like having the necessary abilities, opportunities, support of the system, etc? No, we are not really independent.

However, our free will does give this false impression that we are independent. Rather there is another serious drawback in doing so, if we get attached with what we desire. Lord Krishna has repeatedly warned against such attachments in the Bhagavad-Geeta. In verse # 2.62, the Lord states, "From attachment lust manifests and from lust anger results." Lord Krishna goes on in the next verse, "From anger foolishness results; from foolishness bewilderment results; from bewilderment, loss of intelligence occurs. And by the loss of intelligence a person is doomed." (2.63)

Yes, it is that serious. Don't we know that desiring is easy but to fulfill is something else. Attachments cause suffering. That is why one is strongly advised to be detached, because absence of attachment delivers one from suffering. (6.23) But if we do desire as we are likely to do, we should take shelter of God, who can fulfill all our legitimate desires. Sanjay of the Mahabharata fame goes to the extent of stating that linked with God, there will be opulence, victory, wealth and morality. (18.78)

As mentioned earlier, we can desire but fulfilling them is not that simple. Because, as stated by Lord Krishna, "We have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining its fruits." (2.47) The Lord warns that we should not try to do so, because those who try are pitiable. (2.49) It makes sense; does it not? If we were given the right to decide the fruits of action, there will be no limits on what we will all desire.

This right of deciding the fruit of action is with God only, as it must be. Imagine a world in which everyone is desiring unlimitedly and surely there will be conflicting desires. For example, there is one prime minister and multiple numbers desire to become one. What happens then?

Similar is the phenomenon of fate or luck as we call it. This is the fruit of our 'karmas' (deeds), and is strictly as per the 'karmaphala principle', which is: "What we sow we reap." This is administered by divine authorities under the superintendence of God. (9.10)

They do so completely in a fair fashion. Are we then stuck if we have done some wrong? The answer is yes, because we can do an act but cannot erase it. Otherwise, all of us will be busy erasing what bad acts we have done in the past. But fortunately, there is a way out, which is to take shelter from God. He can help us in crossing all impediments by His grace. (18.58) But to achieve this privilege, we must develop God consciousness, which can be done by doing spiritual acts, which are simple and easy to do.

In verse #18.65, Lord Krishna guides, "Develop My consciousness; become My devotee; make sacrifices for Me, and offer obeisance to Me."

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

Simple GST structure can check tax evasion

SUBHASH **CHANDRA AGRAWAL**

The existing GST structures, along with the prevailing income tax slabs and exemptions, need urgent revision to rid our nation's tax system of anomalies

The complicated tax system in India with six-decades-old Income Tax Act, 1961, with too many amendments in the form of a lot of confusing patchworks is in force. Likewise, ever since a reformative step of introducing the Goods & Service Tax (GST) Act has been taken with effect from July 1, 2017, there has been a regular practice of changing tax-structure in an ever-confusing GST regime with too many confusing and complicated provisions incorporated in the system.

An altogether new tax-regime should be introduced without patches of useless and largely misused exemptions. Implementation of Raja Chelliah Committee recommendations to fix the highest tax-slab at 30 per cent to be in tune with most countries in the world had largely abolished the practice of converting black money into white money. Gradually increasing this highest slab also through imposing cess and surcharges has undone the good achieved.

Highest tax slab of 30 per cent should be restored so that people may find it advantageous to bring complete income to books. Rather a permanent Voluntary Disclosure Scheme should be introduced whereby provision may be there in tax-return to declare at highest suggested tax-rate of 30 per cent, any income without disclosing source of income. This will make cash transactions in property deals accounted for if registration fees on them are also reduced to just three per cent. Names of all those disclosing incomes under the suggested highest 30 per cent slab should be on the website according to income disclosed so that status conscious persons may race to disclose more incomes.

Basix tax exemption should be fixed at rupees five lakhs paving way for abolishing most tax exemptions, including on charity, donation, contribution to political parties and even agricultural income, which are largely misused. For instance, an ordinary farmer does not earn more than Rs five lakhs, and the provision is grossly misused by ultra-rich persons, including known celebrities, to declare their unaccounted income as agricultural income through some village land purchased only for the purpose without practically having any agricultural produce.

Income Tax slabs should be 10 and 20 per cent for incomes between 5-10 lakhs and 10-15 lakhs respectively and thereafter 30 per cent for rest. LK Jha committee recommendations to make calendar-year as financial-year should be implemented in line with most countries of the world, thus abolishing another British legacy of following April-March presently as Fiscal Year.

It is ridiculous to have different Depreciation-Rules for Tax and Corporate audits. Rather there should be a single and unified Tax and Corporate Audit.

Rather than concentrating more on small cash-transactions like through BhimApp, etc., which results in fraud for illiterate persons, all sale-purchases above Rs 10000 may be compulsorily through bank transactions. For this, transaction-charges on credit-cards should be slashed down to just half a per cent (GST-exempted) that too to be borne by central government with all incentives on purchases made through credit-cards abolished.

> THE 18 PER CENT GST IN THE SERVICE SECTOR IS EXCESSIVELY HIGHER WHERE, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE TAKING PART IN TV PANELS HAVE TO PRACTICALLY PAY ROUGHLY HALF OF THE HONORARIUM IN TAX, INCLUDING GST AND INCOME TAX

(The author is Guinness World Record Holder for writing most letters and RTI Consultant)

Presently, high 2 per cent transaction charges on credit cards make traders charge it separately from customers specially where trade margins are low. Such a system will fetch higher tax-revenue for the government, than through half-percent transaction charges to be borne by Government.

Banks issuing credit cards will get much more earning even with half per cent transaction charge because of manifold use of credit cards. Two sets of credit card swiping machines should be compulsory for every GST-registered dealer dealing also in cash so as to avoid payment receipt through credit cards with the usual excuse that swapping-machine is out of order.

The input tax credit system in GST-regime in manufacturing-sector is biggest corrupt practice of tax-evasion where left-out GST-invoices by ordinary customers are sold by traders to consuming manufacturers or producers to avail false Input-Tax-Credit where cash is paid back by traders to those purchasing left-out GST-invoices of actual consumers bringing more currency in circulation. This is the reason for the basic motive of currency-demonetisation being failed where currency in circulation rapidly increased rather than projected decrease.

Annual forensic audit may be made compulsory on claims made for Input-Tax-Credit by manufacturers/producers to avoid false claims of excessive Input-Tax-Credit in these sectors. Rather study should be made if with abolition of an excessively high 18-per cent GST slab, Input-Tax-Credit can be altogether abolished from manufacturing/producing sectors, retaining it only on tradable commodities.

But such reform in Input-Tax-Credit system can be practically possible with drastic reform in GST tax-structure wherein initially only three tax slabs of 6, 12 and 30 per cent may be there abolishing all presently existing GST-rates. India is the only country which has so many GST-rates. Gradually even slabs of 6 and 12 per cent may also be replaced by a new 10-per cent tax structure.

Zero per cent GST may only be retained on totally unbranded raw materials which cannot be consumed without giving a finishing touch like agricultural-products, fish, meat, cotton-yarn, etc. All items of long term use like cars, air-conditioners, TV sets, refrigerators, etc., may attract 30 per cent GST, while their parts may uniformly attract 12 per cent GST.

Unmindful policy framers brought clutch plate and clutch bearing under different GST slabs of 18 and 28 per cent. Likewise similar items sold by confectioners like sweets, biscuits, napkins, etc., attract different GST-slabs with luxury sweets causing diabetes attracts just 5 per cent GST.

To remove confusion and abnormality, invoices for items like gold-jewellery can be drawn in two parts, one for metal and embodied items and the other for making-charges so that suggested 12 per cent GST may be payable only on making-charges. Cess on extra-luxurious items should be replaced by additional GST slabs in multiples of 60 per cent, also bringing petroleum products under GST regime to ensure uniform pricing of petrol and diesel in all states.

Clubbing lower slabs of three and five per cent into single six per cent slabs will be more than compensated by abolishing slabs of 18 per cent. Input-Tax-Credit (ITC) system should not be applicable on non-tradable commodities and services like has been done, and rightly too, in case of car expenses for non-commercial use.

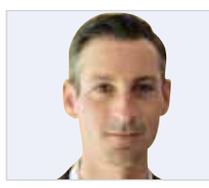
With GST slab of 18 per cent abolished and service sector attracting just 12 per cent GST, those with income of rupees ten lakhs or more (instead of present rupees 20 lakhs) can be brought under GST-regime like was the system before GST-regime. It is totally illogical to keep lawyers out of purview of the GST-regime.

The 18 per cent GST in the service sector is excessively higher where for example those participating in TV panels have to practically pay roughly half of honorarium in tax, including GST and income tax. Useless system of Tax-Deducted-At-Source for GST, which is hardly used in practice, should be altogether abolished. Or otherwise, any such deducted tax should be auto-reflected in GST-accounts of affected ones, abolishing cumbersome and additional practice of filing a new monthly return to get credit for deducted tax. Complete GST structure should be so simplified that small traders/manufacturers/professionals may be able to file their tax-returns by themselves without any need of GST-consultants.

All government payments can be considered to be exempted from GST to avoid unnecessary government-accounting by putting tax from one government pocket to another.

POINT COUNTER POINT

IT'S A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS NEITHER ENDED UP SERVING PAKISTAN WELL NOR SERVING THE AMERICAN INTERESTS.
—EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER
S JAISHANKAR



WE DON'T VIEW OUR TIES WITH PAKISTAN, AND OUR TIES WITH INDIA, IN RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER. THESE ARE BOTH OUR PARTNERS.
—US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON
NED PRICE

PM SHRI schools reimagine education in India

The Cabinet's approval to PM SHRI schools presents a rare opportunity for the country to take a quantum leap in education

ASHOK **PANDEY**

The National Education Policy 2020 recognises schools as places for intellectual development and character building. Preparing students to become responsible citizens and active participants in community development is the original mandate of the policy. The policy envisages a focus on more than academics, fostering whole-child development.

Para 4.43 of the policy elaborates that fostering student agency must begin with self-regulated learning, self-assessment, peer-tutoring, and peer-to-peer assessment. It will help students care more about communicating with each other and the teacher to reflect on their learning and pursue collaboration goals.

Early internship possibilities, job shadowing, building cultural competencies, the spirit of volunteering, micro-credentials in life skills and school-college partnership will take the students on a lifelong learning trajectory.

A policy of the scale of NEP 2020 requires enabling legislation, curriculum framework, inter-ministerial dialogue, and preparing the ground for implementation at multiple levels. The policy is riding its course with the Prime Minister leading from the front, initiating discussions, addressing the nation, theme-based task allocation, and participative implementation strategy. The nation's response is affirmative, and the academia is euphoric —signalling two significant indicators that the buy-in for the change is working.

Once the policy is in place, visualised outcomes recognised, and infrastructural requirements identified, we need strong institutions to foster learning and culture. In the budget speech 2021-22, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced more than 15000 schools will be qualitatively strengthened to include all components of the National Education Policy.

These schools, she added, will emerge as PM SHRI schools in their regions, hand-holding and monitoring other schools to achieve the ideals of the Policy. Consequently, the Union Cabinet has recently approved the launch of a new centrally sponsored scheme for setting up PM SHRI schools (PM schools for Rising India). These schools will influence, inspire, and impact other schools, receive performance-based budgetary allocation and adhere to standard benchmarks.

Of the total project cost of ₹27360 Cr spread over five years, the significant contribution of ₹18128 Cr will come from the centre, and the States and UTs will raise the remaining ₹9232 Cr. UDISE+ code having schools managed by the Centre/State/UT Governments/Local self-governments would be considered for selection under the scheme. Selection of PM SHRI schools will be made through Challenge Mode, where schools compete to become exemplary schools succeeding through a rigorous three-stage process.

The selected schools will undergo intervention, support, and quality assessment from 2022-23 to 2026-27. The entire process will be driven by an Online Challenge Portal, open once every quarter for the first two years. The policy stipulates that a maximum of two schools, one elementary and one secondary/senior secondary, would be selected per block.

The Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N) will service the scheme in geo-tagging and other related tasks. The big question is how PM schools for rising India will differentiate themselves from the rest. The government has an ambitious target for whole-Child education through motivation to learn and succeed, while promoting the relevance of the learning experience for future lives and careers, and instilling a sense of belonging in the school environment, besides adopting a broader approach to knowledge and skill acquisition.

Furthermore, embedding technology must enable personalised and mastery-based learning. Tracking of data, educational outcomes and timely interventions can be done more frequently with the intervention of EdTech, resulting in course correction, remediation, and prompt guidance to each student.

PM SHRI schools will manage teacher talent through a structured approach, involving teachers in decision-making and policy implementation. Treating teachers as valuable assets, intentional investment in their capacity building, career management and promotion will be hallmarks of these schools.

PM SHRI schools will endeavour to invite parents as partners in learning. Their resources, energy and local network can be leveraged to benefit learners. There is also the need for shifts in interactive, participative, experiential pedagogy and empowering learners to change their behaviour and act for sustainable development goals.

(The author is a Delhi-based educationist)

Blinken says no two countries, other than India-US, have a greater ability and opportunity to try to shape the future of this century

I'm very bullish about Indo-US ties, says Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

With ties between the two countries on the upswing, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said he is "very bullish" about the bilateral relationship between India and US. Making this observation, he also said, "I see today a United States very international, very much more open to engaging a country like India, which is actually thinking beyond traditional alliances, which has been very effective at finding common ground with potential or actual partners."

Jaishankar made these observations in his joint press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken after holding talks with him late Tuesday in Washington. Having played a key role in shaping the India-US ties over the past few decades, the External Affairs Minister said "So very frankly, that's a long way of saying that I'm very bullish about that relationship." He said this in reply to his overall sense of the trajectory of the relationship.

"The big change that I have seen in my four decades as a diplomat was actually in the transformation of India-US relations," he said. Giving the example of the Quad combine– the informal grouping of Australia, Japan, India and the US, he said, "I mean, the fact was a Quad was something we tried about two decades – 15 years – ago. It didn't work, and it is working very well today and it's grown remarkably in the course of the last two years." Touching upon the vast expanse of growing ties, Jaishankar said, "So I think for us today the relationship with the US opens up a whole range of possibilities."

US Secretary of State Blinken said no two countries have a greater ability and opportunity and responsibility to try to shape the future of this century than the US and India as the world's two largest democracies.

"What is very gratifying to me is the fact that in all of these meetings, in all of these conversations in this ongoing dialogue we have, we are thinking together and working together in ways that we haven't before," he said.

"That doesn't mean that we don't have differences. We do, and we will. But it also means that because of the depth and quality of the dialogue we have, we talk about everything and work closely together on how we can advance the agenda that we have in common, which – as you've heard, I think, from both of us – extends to virtually every issue that is confronting our own citizens and people around the world," the US Secretary of State said.

Jaishankar said India and the US must not let the current global developments jeopardize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNSC permanent seat a long-standing goal for India: Blinken

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As India has been pushing for reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for many years including status of permanent member, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has underlined the need to "modernise" it by making it more inclusive and increasing the number of permanent seats in the global body. He also said it is a "long -standing" goal of India.

Blinken made these remarks during a joint press conference along with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar after holding talks with him late Tuesday in the US capital. "We recognise that to meet the challenges we face, members of the UN must not only uphold the charter but also modernise the institution, including by making the Security Council more inclusive," the US Secretary of State said.

"That's why, in his address to the General Assembly, President (Joe) Biden expressed his support for increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the Security Council, a long-standing goal of India," he said. "This includes permanent seats for those nations we have long supported, and permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean," he said.

Jaishankar said the reform of the UN is a particularly topical subject adding India appreciates the positive approach of the US to this issue reflected in the position articulated by President Biden himself. "We look forward to working with the US to take this further," he said. At present, the UNSC comprises five permanent members and 10 non-permanent member countries which are elected for a two-year term by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The five permanent members are Russia, the UK, China, France and the United States and these countries can veto any substantive resolution. There has been growing demand to increase the number of permanent members to reflect the contemporary global reality. Jaishankar said India appreciated strong cooperation from the US on the question of tackling international terrorism. "In particular, I refer to the listing of well-known and wanted terrorists by the UN sanction process. In many other formats too, our two countries collaborate to keep the world safer and more secure," he said.

In New York, S Jaishankar on Sunday said terrorism should not be used as a "political tool" and the idea that something is blocked without assigning a reason challenges common sense.

China, a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, has repeatedly put holds on listing proposals by India, the US and other allies to blacklist Pakistan-based terrorists under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions regime of the Council.

Does issue survive now? SC on pleas against demonetisation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Wednesday it will examine if the challenge to the Centre's 2016 demonetisation decision has become a mere "academic exercise", and posted it for consideration on October 12.

As the hearing commenced, a constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer wondered if the matter survives for consideration at this stage.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, submitted that for all practical purposes the matter does not survive for consideration. However, the case can be examined as an academic exercise, he said.

"A five-judge bench for academic exercise when we are already burdened with such a large amount of pendency?" the court wondered. "We will fix it for hearing on October 12. We will examine if it has become academic and if it can be heard at all," the bench, also comprising Justices BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian, and BV Nagarathna said. The top court was hearing a batch of 58 petitions challenging the Centre's November 8, 2016 decision to demonetise currency notes of denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 1000.

On December 16, 2016, a bench headed by then Chief Justice TS Thakur had referred the question of the validity of the decision and other issues to a larger bench of five judges for authoritative pronouncement.

It had framed various questions in the reference order to be adjudicated by the five-judge bench which included whether the notification dated November 8, 2016 is ultra vires provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and does the notification contravene the provisions of Article 300 (A) of the Constitution.

SC slams Centre for delay in deciding Rajoana's mercy plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed dissatisfaction over the Centre's failure to take a decision so far on the plea that Balwant Singh Rajoana's death penalty in the 1995 assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh be commuted to life imprisonment.

The plea by Rajoana has sought commutation of his death sentence to life imprisonment on the ground of his long incarceration of 26 years. The apex court was also unhappy over the submission of the counsel for the Centre that the matter be adjourned.

"The time of two months was granted on May 2 (this year). The time has expired long back. However, as submitted by Additional Solicitor General KM Natraj, no decision has been taken by the concerned authority," a bench comprising Chief Justice UU Lalit and justices S Ravindra Bhat and JB Pardiwala said and asked the Centre to file an affidavit and listed the matter for Friday. "The moment, we pass a direction; they (the authorities) will have to consider the mercy petition (of Rajaona). Who is the responsible officer? Has the note on the issue been prepared...We cannot force you to take a particular decision. But, you have to make a decision," the CJI, speaking for the bench, said.

On the submission seeking adjournment of the proceedings by the counsel for the Central government, it said, "You know what happens with these matters once they get adjourned... This is what happens with the Registry, the moment we push up one matter, it just goes into the cycle and comes after six months."

Earlier, the apex court did not consider the submission of the Centre that the death row convict has been on record in saying that "he has no faith in the Indian judiciary and the Constitution" and these are relevant factors.

Rajoana, a former Punjab Police constable, was convicted for his involvement in an explosion outside the Punjab civil secretariat that killed Beant Singh and 16 others on August 31, 1995. A special court in July 2007 awarded the death sentence to Rajoana in the case.

MEA TOUGH TALK AMID UKRAINE WAR

'India exercises choice in its interest when offered weapons'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

With the Ukraine conflict on for seven months now, India has said it has faced no difficulties in terms of servicing and spare parts supply of military equipment that it received from Russia. It also asserted that New Delhi exercises a choice which it believes is in its national interest when it is offered weapons.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made these remarks during a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington after holding bilateral talks.

"I don't think in recent months we have faced any particular problems in terms of servicing and spare parts supply of (military) equipment that we have got in the past from Russia," the External Affairs minister said.

He was asked about India's plans for military hardware and equipment given the sanctions that the US and others are putting on Russian industry and whether India will look at more purchases of American or Israeli military equipment.

"Where we get our military equipment and platforms from, that's not an issue, honestly, which is a new issue or an issue which has particularly changed because of geopolitical tensions," Jaishankar said.

India, he noted, looks at possibilities across the world. "We look at the quality of technology, the quality of capability, the terms on which that particular equipment is offered, and we exercise a choice which we believe is in our national interest," he said.

In the last 15 years, for example, India has actually procured a lot from the United States, he said. "If you maybe consider, for example, aircraft – the C-17, the C-130, the P-8, or the Apache helicopter or the Chinooks or the Howitzers, the M777 Howitzers – we have done so from France when we recently bought their Rafale aircraft. We have done so from Israel," the minister noted. "So, we have a tradition of multi-sourcing and for us, how to get the optimal deal from a competitive situation is really what this is all about," Jaishankar said.

Russia has been a major supplier of military hardware to India. The two countries have been holding discussions on what kind of payment mechanisms can work between them in view of the Western sanctions on Moscow.

Earlier this month, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov said his country has delivered its most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system S-400 to India on time despite pressure from Washington and the US-led West's sanctions. The S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system. The 'Triumf' interceptor-based missile system can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, missiles and even drones at ranges of up to 400 kms. Russia had started delivery of the first regiment of the missile in December last year.

The missile system has already been deployed in such a way that it can cover parts of the border with China in the northern sector as well as the frontier with Pakistan.

In October 2018, India had signed a five billion dollar deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems, notwithstanding warning from the then Trump administration that going ahead with the contract may trigger US sanctions under CAATSA.

On the eve of World Heart Day

Experts call for stringent tobacco-control law in country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Tobacco consumption not only causes cancer but also breaks hearts by causing cardiovascular diseases, experts warned on Wednesday as they called for a stringent tobacco-control law seeking to ban public designated smoking zones and advertisements at the point of sale among others.

On the eve of World Heart Day which has 'Use Heart for Every Heart,' as a theme this year, noted interventional cardiologist Dr Sekhar Kashyap talked about the multiple heart health risks associated with tobacco like peripheral vascular disease (disease in the vessels that supply blood to the arms and legs) and abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Pointing out that death numbers due to tobacco consumption are just a tip of the iceberg, the doctor said that, in fact, productivity and economic loss due to tobacco usage is enormous. Noting that India is the second largest producer and consumer of tobacco that claims nearly 13 lakhs lives annually, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said that aware of the tobacco burden, the Government under the Prime Minister's guidance has adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy against the hazardous product.

To draw home his point, he enlisted several tobacco-control measures the government has taken in the past few years, imposing ban on e-cigarettes and big pictorial warning on tobacco products to name a few. Now, the Government has proposed amendments in the COTPA which shows that it has intention to strictly fill the gaps to deter tobacco consumption, the Northeast Delhi BJP MP asserted.

Tiwari was speaking at a webinar organized by 'Tobacco Free India', a public health platform, and moderated by senior journalist and writer Arun Anand. Agreeing with Tiwari, who is ex state BJP president, Dr Uma Kumar, reputed public health expert and HoD of Rheumatology, AIIMS, highlighted the link between tobacco and cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). She quoted a global report that says that every year, 1.9 million people die from tobacco-induced heart disease.

This equates to one in five of all deaths from heart disease, warn the report's authors, who urge all tobacco users to quit and avoid a heart attack, stressing that smokers are more likely to experience an acute cardiovascular event at a younger age than non-smokers. "If all the political parties, cutting across their ideologies, make consensus on the progressive COTPA amendments at the earliest, we will be saving millions of youth from falling into the trap of harmful tobacco products," said Kumar.

"In fact, by allowing public smoking zones, we are actually promoting more smoking, It's like their existence is sending the message that it is Ok to smoke. By banning these places, we will also help smokers to curb their habits and thus save his/her heart," Dr Kashyap chipped in.

ED freezes ₹13 cr Bitcoins under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen 77.62710139 Bitcoins, equivalent to $15,73,466 (₹12.83 crore), under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in connection with an investigation against Kolkata-based Aamir Khan and others relating to the mobile gaming application E-nuggets.

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR dated February 15, 2021 filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by Park Street Police Station, Kolkata Police, against Aamir Khan and others, based on complaint filed by Federal Bank authorities, in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Kolkata. Aamir Khan launched a mobile gaming application E-Nuggets, which was designed for the purpose of defrauding public.

Four-day maritime drill of CMF in Seychelles concludes

New Delhi: The four-day international maritime exercise 'Operation Southern Readiness' of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) at Seychelles ended on Tuesday with the Indian Navy participating in it for the first time.

The Indian ship INS Sunayna participated in the annual capacity building exercise and was welcomed to the CMF by Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, United State Naval Forces Central Command (US NAVCENT), Indian Navy officials said here on Wednesday.

A live demonstration on Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations was also conducted onboard HMS Montrose led by the Seychelles Special forces with close support from the Indian Naval team. The event was coordinated as part of the Distinguished Visitor's demonstration and witnessed by Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan and senior officials of member countries of CMF. The participation of the Indian Navy in the joint exercise was highly appreciated.

The Indian ship's participation reinforces the Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region, officials had said here on Monday.

The joint training exercise was attended by representative delegations from the US, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and ship participation from the UK, Spain and India.

SC acquits death-row convict of rape, murder, says can't make someone victim of injustice

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Court cannot make someone a victim of injustice to compensate for the injustice to the victim of a crime", the Supreme Court Wednesday said while acquitting a death row convict for the alleged rape and murder of a six-year-old.

The top court, which pulled up the Uttar Pradesh police for faulty investigation, also said by not conducting the investigation properly, the prosecution has done injustice to the family of the victim. It said that when the offence is heinous, the Court is required to put the material evidence under higher scrutiny but the erroneous approach on the part of the Sessions Court and the High Court has led to the "poor man" being ordained to be dispatched to the gallows.

A bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer, AS Bopanna, and V Ramasubramanian said that it cannot shy away from the fact that it is a ghastly case of rape and murder of a six-year-old child."By not conducting the investigation properly, the prosecution has done injustice to the family of the victim. By fixing culpability upon the appellant without any shred of evidence which will stand the scrutiny, the prosecution has done injustice to the appellant. Court cannot make someone, a victim of injustice, to compensate for the injustice to the victim of a crime", the bench said. The top court passed the verdict on an appeal filed by a man called Chotkau who was convicted for the offences punishable under Sections 302 (murder) and 376 (rape) of the IPC and sentenced to death by the Sessions Court, which was also confirmed by the Allahabad High Court on a reference.

The bench said that this is a case where the convict is "so poor" that he could not afford to engage a lawyer even in the Sessions Court and after his repeated requests to the trial court, the service of an advocate was provided as amicus. "In cases of such nature, the responsibility of the Court becomes more onerous. When we analyse the evidence with such a sense of responsibility, we are not convinced that the guilt of the appellant stood established beyond a reasonable doubt.

Therefore, the appeals are allowed and the conviction and penalty are set aside. The appellant shall be released forthwith if not wanted in connection with any other case", the bench said. The top court was critical of the approach of the High Court and the trial court and said, "Before wrapping up, it is necessary to say something about the approach adopted by the Sessions Court and High Court.

Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region G Kishan Reddy celebrating Bathukamma flower festival at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Tuesday
Archana Jyoti/PNS

Centre empowers States to take action against PFI affiliates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After banning the Popular Front of India (PFI) on Wednesday, the Centre, through another notification, empowered the State Governments to take action against groups affiliated with the PFI and the possible action against them could be seizure of places and arrest of their members. The Home Ministry said these associates or affiliates or fronts have a 'hub and spoke' relationship.

PFI acts as the hub and utilises the mass outreach and fund-raising capacity of its associates or affiliates or fronts to strengthen its capability for unlawful activities and these associates or affiliates or fronts function as "roots and capillaries through which the PFI is fed and strengthened", it said.

The PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts operate openly as socio-economic educational and political organisations. But they have been pursuing a secret agenda to radicalise a particular section of the society, working towards undermining the concept of democracy and showing sheer disrespect towards the constitutional authority and constitutional setup of the country, it further said.

Investigations in various cases have revealed that PFI and its cadre have been repeatedly engaging in violent and subversive acts, the Ministry said. Criminal violent acts carried out by PFI include chopping off the limbs of a college professor, killings of persons associated with organisations espousing other faiths, obtaining explosives to target prominent people and places and destruction of public property, it said.

The notification also mentioned the names of several people who were alleged victims of the PFI's "brutal" violence and most of them belong to Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The home ministry said there had been many instances of PFI's linkages with global terrorist groups and some activists of its PFI have joined ISIS and participated in terror activities in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some of these PFI cadres were killed in these conflict theatres and some have been arrested by state police and Central agencies, the Ministry said.

The Home Ministry claimed the office bearers and cadre of PFI along with others are conspiring and raising funds from within India and abroad through banking channels, hawala and donations among others as part of a "well-crafted criminal conspiracy", and then transferring, layering and integrating these funds through multiple accounts to project them as legitimate and eventually using these for various criminal, unlawful and terrorist activities in India.

The sources of deposits on behalf of PFI with respect to its several bank accounts were not supported by the financial profiles of the account holders and the activities of PFI were not being carried out as per their declared objectives. Therefore, the Income Tax Department cancelled the registration granted to PFI under section 12A or 12AA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), it said. The Income Tax Department also cancelled the registration of Rehab India Foundation.

The ban order will remain in force for five years and it can be further extended by the Government after the expiry of the present tenure of the ban.

According to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), if any member of the banned group has the custody of any funds, securities or credits which are being used or are intended to be used for the unlawful association, the Centre may, by a written order , prohibit such person from paying, delivering, transferring or otherwise dealing in any manner whatsoever with such assets.

Any person aggrieved by a prohibitory order may, within 14 days from the date of the service of such order, make an application to the court of the district judge within the local limits of whose jurisdiction such person voluntarily resides or carries on business or personally works for gain, to establish that the assets are not being used or are not intended to be used for the unlawful association.The court of the district judge is the competent judicial authority to decide such matters.

When an association is declared unlawful, the central government can seize such "place" including a house or building or part thereof, or a tent or vessel.

CBI arrests 2 for cheating foreigners by posing as Interpol officers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested two persons who ran an illegal call centre in west Delhi from where they allegedly cheated and extorted money from foreign nationals by posing as Interpol and Europol officers.

The call centre, located in the narrow bylanes of Shadipur village here, was run by a man named Jaiveer Sharma. The perpetrators impersonated themselves as officers of Interpol and Europol to gullible foreigners, the FIR registered by the CBI said.

During the searches, the CBI found four cryptocurrency wallets having a total of Rs 1.30 crore that included Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies in an e-wallet, the CBI said.

Vijay and Vishal were arrested in the case related to alleged cheating, extortion from foreign nationals and other offences that included running illegal call centres, they said.

"The source has also informed that most of the amounts collected from the victims through cheating by the accused are transferred in the form of Bitcoin (a cryptocurrency) in the crypto-account of accused Vijay maintained in the e-wallet of 'WazirX'," the FIR alleged.

They allegedly conned their victims by telling them that their identities had been stolen and used for crimes like money laundering and drug peddling. They then threatened the victims by claiming that arrest warrants have been issued against them which would lead to their probable arrest, officials said.

The accused compelled their victims into transferring money in bank accounts, crypto wallets or gift card codes to clear their names with an assurance that once the case was closed, they could take their money back.

The accused also asked their victims to disclose the amount of cash they had. Once the victim disclosed the amounts, the accused asked them to prove that it was genuine and actually withdrawn from their bank account, the FIR claimed.

"The accused made the victims believe that they have to prove to the respective government authorities that they have only that much money in their bank accounts," the FIR alleged.

In order to prove it, the accused convinced their victims that they must deposit the money to the government-approved vouchers available in the market, it said. If the victims said they will approach the local police regarding their arrest warrant, the accused would claim that they would be arrested as soon as they reach the police station, it said.

Out of fear, the victims would purchase the gift card/voucher from the market and provide their codes to the accused who then redeemed or transferred the amount into their own accounts, it alleged.

States asked to spare more IAS, IPS, IFoS officers for Central deputation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday asked the States to spare more IAS, IPS, and IFoS officers for central deputation besides seeking their cooperation in weeding out the inefficient and corrupt employees. The request came during the annual conference of Principal Secretaries of states/Union Territories (UTs), held to deliberate on personnel, general administration, and administrative reforms related work here.

Addressing the conference, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said an all India service officer is an important interface of the government, both within the state as well as the Centre. He said there is already a structure laid down for cadre management of all India services and it needs to be followed in letter and spirit.

A particular aspect in this regard is the deployment of the all-India service officers at the Centre, the minister added. He asked the state governments to facilitate the central deputation of IAS and other all India services officers, according to a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

There are three all-India services – Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS). These officers are allocated a cadre, which is either a state or a group of states, or states and Union territories.

The central government has been facing a shortage of all India services officers and has been already seeking officers for central deputation from the states, officials said. To tide over this inadequacy, the Centre had in December last year proposed changes in the service rules that give it overriding power to decide on the central deputation of the IAS, IPS, and IFoS officers, they said.

FROM PAGE 1

PFI BANNED FOR 5 YRS UNDER ANTI-TERROR LAW

The Home Ministry said PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts have been involved in violent terrorist activities with an intent to create a reign of terror in the country, thereby endangering the security and public order of the State.

PFI, the notification alleged, is encouraging and trying to enforce a terror-based regressive regime, continue to propagate anti-national sentiments and radicalising a particular section of society to create disaffection against the country, aggravating activities which are detrimental to the integrity, security and sovereignty of the country.

The Ministry claimed investigations have established clear linkages between PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts.

Rehab India Foundation collects funds through PFI members. Some PFI members are also members of Campus Front of India, Empower India Foundation, and Rehab Foundation, Kerala. The activities of Junior Front, All India Imams Council, National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation and National Women's Front are monitored/coordinated by the PFI leaders, the notification said.

PFI created these associates or affiliates or fronts to enhance its reach among different sections of the society such as the youth, students, women, imams, lawyers or weaker sections of the society to expand its membership, influence and fund-raising capacity, it said.

CENTRE EXTENDS FREE RATIONS BY 3 MONTHS

"Recognising that people have gone through a difficult period of pandemic, Government has decided to extend PMGKAY for a period of three months so that poor and vulnerable sections of society are supported for the forthcoming major festivals," said Thakur detailing the decisions of the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Under this scheme, five kilogram of foodgrains per person per month is provided free of cost for all the beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Thakur said the Government has so far spent Rs 3.45 lakh crore on the PMGKAY scheme since its launch in April 2020. With the additional expenditure of about Rs 44,762 crore for the latest extension, the overall expenditure of the PMGKAY will be about Rs 3.91 lakh crore for all the phases, he said.

Thakur said 122 lakh tonne (12.2 million tonne) of foodgrains will be given out free of cost in the three months from October 1. The total allocation of foodgrains for phases I-VII will reach about 1,121 lakh tonne (112.1 million tonne).

The sixth extension pro-poor scheme comes ahead of Assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and also at a time when food inflation is ruling at a high level.

Consumer price index (CPI) based inflation in the food basket rose to 7.62 per cent in August 2022 against 6.69 per cent in the preceding month, as per the National Statistical Office (NSO) data.

The retail inflation in the food segment was 3.11 per cent in August last year. To reduce their hardship during the Covid-induced lockdown, the Centre had launched the PMGKAY for providing free five kilogram foodgrains per person per month to about 80 crore people covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

The free quota is over and above the normal allocation under the NFSA, which is five kilogram per person per month at a highly subsidised rate of Rs 2-3 per kilogram.

The scheme has been extended amid concerns in some quarters about the Government's buffer stocks of foodgrains, as erratic monsoon rains have led to fear of lower production of rice.

Rice production is estimated to fall by 6 per cent to 104.99 million tonnes in the Kharif season this year. Wheat output had also dropped to 106.84 million tonnes in the 2021-22 crop year ended June from the record 109.59 million tonnes in the previous year due to heat waves early this year.

The procurement of wheat fell by more than 50 per cent to 19 million tonnes in the 2022-23 marketing year (April-March), forcing the Centre to ban wheat exports.

Earlier this month, the exports of broken rice were also banned and a 20 per cent export duty was slapped on non-basmati rice and non-par boiled rice. Initially, the PMGKAY programme was announced only for a period of three months — April, May and June 2020 (phase-I).

Later, the Government extended the scheme from July to November 2020 (Phase II). In the first two phases, the Centre also provided pulses, but later discontinued them.

When the second wave of the pandemic broke out, the Centre in April 2021 re-introduced the scheme for a period of two months of May and June 2021 (phase-III) and then extended it for another five months from July to November 2021 (Phase-IV).

The scheme was again extended from December 2021 to March 2022 (phase-V). On March 26 this year, the Centre again extended the scheme to provide 5 kg of foodgrains free of cost to the poor for six months till September 30 (phase VI) at an estimated cost of over Rs 80,000 crore.

CABINET OK'S ₹10K CR TO UPGRADE DELHI, MUMBAI, AHMEDABAD RLY STATIONS

Vaishnaw also said special care will be taken to provide divyang-friendly facilities and that the stations will be developed on the concept of intelligent building.

There will be segregation of arrival/departures, clutter-free platforms, improved surfaces, fully covered platforms. The stations will be safe with installation of CCTV and access control. Once completed, these will be iconic station buildings, said Vaishnaw.

The Government said tenders for the re-development of NDLS, CSMT and Ahmedabad railway stations will be issued in the next 10 days while the total cost of the re-development of 199 stations including these three major stations is Rs 60,000 crores.

US VISITOR VISA WAIT TIME FOR INDIANS 833 DAYS, CHINA 2

Foreign Minister S Jaishankar who is in Washington said this week that he flagged some visa related challenges for Indians to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in their meeting. Blinken said the issues were largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He also reassured Jaishankar that the United States was aiming to address those concerns.

"It is also in our mutual interest to facilitate the development and mobility of talent. We agreed that impediments over this should be addressed," Jaishankar said.

"Bear with us. This will play out over the next few months, but we're very focused on it," Blinken said.

"We are now building back very determinedly from that surging resource. We have a plan, when it comes to India, to address the backlog of visas that has built up," he assured.

Citing reduced staffing and pandemic-related disruptions in operations since March 2020, the US Embassy said the demand for visas across all categories is high and that wait times may also be longer for most non-immigrant visa appointments at the Embassy in New Delhi and the consulates in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

As the Embassy resumed processing routine in-person B1 and B2 visa appointments from Tuesday, it said the Department of State authorised consular officers to waive the in-person interview requirement for certain categories of visa applicants- F, H-1, H-3, H-4, non-blanket L, M, O, P, Q, and academic J visas-until December 31, 2022.

Indian students comprise nearly 20 per cent of all international students in the United States, with the Open Doors report in 2021 showing there were 167,582 students from India in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The wait times for visa applicants living in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou are significantly shorter compared to Indian mega cities.

The wait times could also be shorter in China due to lack of demand, growing uneasy relations between both nations and China's Covid zero but the significant difference in waiting times from India is still glaring.

Pakistan has much shorter visa times.

From the US Embassy Beijing, the visitor visa and student/exchange visa could be got in two calendar days while all other non-migrant visas will take three days.

From Shanghai, US Embassy visa in these three categories (visitor, student and other non-migrant) the time for receiving visa would take 24, 4 and 2 calendar days. From the Guangzhou US Embassy the time for getting a visa for the same categories would take 28, 2 and 28 days respectively.

The waiting time for visas is also shorter for Islamabad and Karachi compared to Indian cities. From Islamabad, Visitor Visa 450 days, student and all other non-migrant visas will take only one day. From Karachi it is 264 days, 21 and 16 calendar days respectively will take in these three categories.

Only Bangladesh had a large backlog for visitor visas as applicants in Dhaka may have to wait longer than 500 days for an appointment. The waiting time for Dhaka is 511, 183 and 45 days for receiving visas in three categories.

2ND CENTURY BUDDHIST CAVES, VISHNU SCULPTURES FOUND IN BANDHAVGARH

A votive stupa and a Buddhist pillar fragment containing miniature stups carving, which roughly date back to 2nd-3rd century AD have been documented as part of this exploration.

"But what lies more explorative in ancient inscriptions that have been documented are the names of old cities like Mathura and Kaushambi, located presently in Uttar Pradesh," Bajpai told media persons. .

Coins belonging to the Mughal-era and Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur Sultanate have also been found, he said.

ASI officials said a total of 35 temples have been documented, nine found in the earlier and 26 temples or its remains of Kalachuri period in the latest exploration.

26 of the discovered caves- mostly Budhist in nature- are the newly documented ones, dating back to 2nd century BC - 5th century; whereas 50 of them were reported earlier, he added. Two new Shaiva maths of Kalachuri period (9th-11th century AD) and two new stupas have also been documented, officials said. Also, remains of Mahayana sect of Buddhism like chaitya-shaped doors and cells containing stone beds have also come to light, they said.

Besides 46 new sculptures also documented, 10 were already reported earlier prior to this exploration. Twenty-four Brahmi inscriptions (dated 2nd-5th century AD) have been documented, the ASI said. Mathura's name was mentioned in Brahmi script, Bajpai said, adding, inscriptions are also in Nagari and Shankhalipi. Besides, names of Mathura and Kaushambi, Pavata (Parvata), Vejabharada and Sepatanaairikaa are also mentioned in various inscriptions.

ANIL CHAUHAN PICKED AS CDS, MILITARY SECRETARY

Later as Lt General, he commanded a corps in the North East and subsequently went on to become the chief of the Eastern Command. He held that charge from September 2019 until his retirement from the service in May 2021.

In June this year, the Government had changed the service rules for appointment of the CDS allowing retired Service Chiefs and three-star officers (Lt General or equivalent in the Navy and IAF) eligible for consideration for the country's top military post.

The Government, however, had said the CDS should not have attained the age of 62 years thereby making the Service Chiefs more or less eligible as they retire at 62.

The CDS is the single point military adviser to the Government on matters of national security. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the creation of this critical post during his Independence address from the ramparts of Red Fort in 2019.

TEJASHWI ASKED TO APPEAR IN PERSON IN IRCTC SCAM HEARING IN DELHI

The court had in October 2018 granted bail to Yadav after he appeared before it in pursuance to summons issued against him in the matter related to alleged irregularities in granting operational contract of two IRCTC hotels to a private firm.

The court also gave permission to RJD supremo Lalu Prasad to travel to Singapore for treatment.

RAVI KISHAN DUPED OF ₹3.25 CRORE, BUILDER BOOKED

The actor-cum-politician was allegedly duped by a Mumbai-based businessman, said the actor's public relations officer.

The MP had given the amount to accused Jain Jitendra Ramesh in 2012. However, when Kishan demanded his money back, the builder gave him 12 cheques of Rs 34 lakh each, some of which later bounced.

After failing to convince Ramesh to return the favour, Kishan initiated the complaint and filed it with the police.

War of words after BJP says Didi Govt will fall this Dec

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Speculation ran high — about whether Kolkata could go the Mumbai way —after Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar and Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari iterated that the Mamata Banerjee Government would fall anytime in December this year.

Soon war of words ensued between the ruling Trinamool Congress and BJP as the Bengal ruling outfit hit back daring the BJP Government to go ahead with its Mumbai formula — if it so desired — and watch the consequence.

When asked to explain his statement Majumdar said that as no Government could run without a Chief Minister and as there was every possibility of Mamata Banerjee getting arrested by December the Trinamool Congress Government would not survive beyond New Year.

"There are chances that even the Chief Minister and many of her Cabinet colleagues may get arrested … and as a government cannot continue without a Chief Minister this Government will collapse," Majumdar said adding as well that at least 21 TMC MLAs were in touch with him.

Majumdar's views were seconded by Bengal Opposition Suvendu Adhikari who gave the TMC government a little more time saying "Mamata Banerjee's government will not survive the coming Spring season.

"This Government will not survive beyond Spring … in fact this will fall by December as most of its leaders and ministers will go to jail by then," thanks to ED and CBI, Adhikari said.

Almost in tandem with the two leaders cine star-cum-BJP leader Mithun Chakrabrty made a mysterious statement: "kabhi bhi kuch bhi ho sakta hei (anything can happen any time) iterating he was in touch with 21 Trinamool MLAs. Curiously Prime Minister Narendra Modi too had during one of his recent visits to Bengal had said that about 40 Trinamool legislators were in touch with the BJP.

The State ruling outfit was prompt to hit back saying the BJP's hollow claims had already been tested in 2021 Assembly elections when its top leadership had vowed to win more than 200 Assembly seats but ended up winning barely 77.

"The BJP leadership has been exposed before the people of Bengal … their false will no longer be taken by the people of the State … they had given a slogan of abki baar doso paar (this time 200-plus seats … but failed to reach even three digit mark … so their credibility is zero and in the coming elections they will be reduced to zero in Bengal," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said adding on the contrary to what they have been claiming the BJP MLAs would start joining the TMC soon.

"Before the last year's elections they said that the TMC will break and half of the party will go to BJP but after the elections it was seen that several of their leaders were joining the TMC … the situation now is such that if we do not stop our doors then the whole BJP will join the TMC," the leader said.

The TMC Government was presently under intense pressure after the Enforcement Directorate investigating the school level recruitment scam recovered crores of rupees stashed away in the apartments of Arpita Mukherjee a close aide of former number two in the Mamata Banerjee cabinet Partha Chatterjee who is presently in jail. This was followed by the arrest of senior TMC leader and party strongman Anubrata Mondal on charges of cow smuggling.

Meanwhile, the Bengal opposition on Wednesday cried foul after a massive fire broke out inside the Bolpur branch of Axis Bank in Birbhum district. It is the same bank where the CBI made repeated raids in the recent times in search of Mondal's money trail.

In a parallel development the CBI on Wednesday told the Calcutta High Court that the shool level recruitment scam could go beyond Rs 150 crore and that about 1000 fake candidates had got jobs through questionable means. Further investigations were on as the candidates claim that the scam could go beyond several thousand crores.

Biden looks to win over Pacific Island leaders at summit

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is set to host Pacific Island leaders for a two-day summit as the US looks to counter China's military and economic influence in the region.

Pacific Island leaders, meanwhile, see an even more pressing concern: climate change. On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to kick off the summit with a luncheon for the Pacific Island leaders and other senior officials from the region.

US Climate envoy John Kerry will hold a climate roundtable with the leaders, and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan will join them for a dinner hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Biden is set to address the leaders at the State Department on Thursday and will host them for a dinner at the White House.

The leaders also are to meet with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and U.S. Business leaders.

Leaders from Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and New Caledonia are attending.

Vanuatu and Nauru are sending representatives, and Australia, New Zealand and the secretary-general of the Pacific Island Forum are sending observers, according to the White House.

"This is just showing our partnership with the region," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said.

She added that the talks were expected to touch on climate change, coronavirus pandemic and economic recovery, maritime security, environmental protection and the Indo-Pacific.

The first-of-its-kind summit comes as the administration has sought to demonstrate that the U.S. Remains committed to being a enduring player in the region.

While the high-level gathering is welcomed by the region's leaders as a signal of Biden's commitment to the Pacific, there's also a healthy scepticism about whether the United States will remain engaged for the longer term in the Pacific Islands.

The area has received diminished attention from the U.S. In the aftermath of the Cold War, analysts say.

For the Biden administration, stemming the growing influence of China is a high priority.

But for many of the Pacific Island leaders, climate change is the existential crisis that demands attention above all else.

Last week at the U.N. General Assembly, Prime Minister Kausea Natano of the tiny island of Tuvalu described how rising sea levels have impacted everything from the soil that his people rely on to plant crops, to the homes, roads and power lines that get washed away.

The cost of eking out a living, he said, eventually becomes too much to bear, causing families to leave and the nation to disappear.

"This is how our islands will cease to exist," Natano said. In June, Inia Seruiratu, Fiji's minister for defence, said at the Shangri-La Dialogue that "machine guns, fighter jets, gray ships and green battalions are not our primary security concern."

"The single greatest threat to our very existence is climate change," he said.

Plans for the summit were announced earlier this month, just days after the Solomon Islands called on the U.S. And Britain to not send naval vessels to the South Pacific nation until approval processes are overhauled.

The Solomons in April signed a new security pact with China — a moment that analysts say has created increased urgency for the Biden administration to put greater focus on the region.

The United States and Britain are among countries concerned that a new security pact with Beijing could lead to a Chinese naval base being constructed less than 2,000 kilometers off Australia's northeast coast.

Darshana Baruah, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that Beijing has proved to be more present in the region in the last decades.

N Korea test launches missiles on eve of Harris trip to Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Wednesday, its neighbours said, a day before U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris is to visit South Korea.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the North Korean missiles lifted off 10 minutes apart on Wednesday afternoon from its capital region and flew toward the waters off its east coast.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister Toshiro Ino said Japan's military also detected the launches and that the weapons flew in an irregular trajectory.

Ino said that "North Korea's repeated missile firings amid (Russia's) invasion of Ukraine is impermissible."

The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea's provocations would only deepen its international isolation while pushing South Korea and the United States to strengthen their deterrence.

The launches follow a missile test by North Korea earlier this week.

Harris is to arrive in South Korea on Thursday for talks with President Yoon Suk Yeol and other officials.

She also is to visit the tense border with North Korea, in what U.S. Officials call an attempt to underscore the strength of the U.S.-South Korean alliance and the U.S. Commitment to "stand beside" South Korea in the face of any North Korea threats.

U.S. And South Korean navy ships were also conducting drills off South Korea's east coast in a show of force against North Korea. The four-day exercise, which began Monday, involves the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. It is the first training exercise by the allies involving a U.S. Aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula since 2017.

South Korea-U.S. Joint military exercises often draw a furious response from North Korea, which views them as an invasion rehearsal. A short-range North Korean missile launched Sunday was seen as a response to the U.S.-South Korean training.

South Korea and Japan estimated that the North Korean missiles fired Wednesday flew 300-360 kilometers with a maximum altitude of 30-50 kilometers.

The low trajectories resembled the flight of the missile fired on Sunday, which some analysts said was likely a nuclear-capable, highly maneuverable weapon modelled after Russia's Iskander missile.

In recent years, North Korea has been adding Iskander-like missiles and other solid-fuel weapons to its arsenal. Some experts say the weapons are designed to carry battlefield nuclear warheads to counter the stronger conventional forces of South Korea and the United States, which stations about 28,500 troops in the South.

North Korea has dialled up its missile testing activities to a record pace in 2022, launching more than 30 ballistic weapons, including its first intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017.

One Chinese killed, 2 hurt by gunmen in Pak

PTI ■ KARACHI

A Chinese national was shot dead and two others injured on Wednesday when unidentified gunmen opened fire inside a dental clinic in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police said, in what is believed to be the latest targeted attack against them.

SSP (South) Asad Raza said the attackers entered the clinic located in Karachi's Saddar area pretending to be a patient, Dawn news reported.

He said that one person was killed and two injured persons, including a woman, were shifted to a hospital for treatment.

He confirmed that the victims were Chinese people.

Later, police identified the victims as 25-year-old RonilD Raimond Chaw, 72-year-old Margrade and 74-year-old Richard.

The police said that the condition of both the injured foreigners was critical as they had suffered bullet wounds in their abdomen.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has ordered the immediate arrest of the attackers, saying such incidents were not tolerable, according to the official statement.

He has also sought a detailed report from the Karachi Additional IGP. The incident is the latest in the recent spate of attacks on Chinese nationals in the country.

Iran's anti-veil protests draw on long history of resistance

AP ■ TEHRAN

A young woman climbs to the top of a car in the middle of Mashhad, a conservative Iranian city famed for its Islamic shrines.

She takes off her headscarf and starts chanting, "Death to the dictator!" Protesters nearby join in and cars honk in support.

For many Iranian women, it's an image that would have been unthinkable just a decade ago, said Fatemeh Shams, who grew up in Mashhad.

"When you see Mashhad women coming to the streets and burning their veils publicly, this is really a revolutionary change. Iranian women are putting an end to a veiled society and the compulsory veil," she said.

Iran has seen multiple eruptions of protests over the past years, many of them fueled by anger over economic difficulties.

But the new wave is showing fury against something at the heart of the identity of Iran's cleric-led state: the compulsory veil.

Iran's Islamic Republic requires women to cover up in public, including wearing a "hijab" or headscarf that is supposed to completely hide the hair.

Many Iranian women, especially in major cities, have long played a game of cat-and-mouse with authorities, with younger generations wearing loose scarves and outfits that push the boundaries of conservative dress. That game can end in tragedy. A 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, was arrested by morality police in the capital Tehran and died in custody.

Her death has sparked nearly two weeks of widespread unrest that has reached across Iran's provinces and brought students, middle-class professionals and working-class men and women into the streets.

Iranian state TV has suggested that at least 41 protesters and police have been killed. An Associated Press count of official statements by authorities tallied at least 13 dead, with more than 1,400 demonstrators arrested.

A young woman in Tehran, who said she has continually participated in the past week's protests in the capital city, said the violent response of security forces had largely reduced the size of demonstrations.

Thousands rally to demand Czech Govt's resignation

AP ■ PRAGUE

Thousands of protesters rallied again in the Czech capital on Wednesday to condemn the Czech government's handling of the energy crisis and its support for Ukraine.

Despite a national holiday, the protest that united the far right with the far left was smaller than the some 70,000 people who gathered for the same reasons at Prague's central Wenceslas Square on September 3.

Waving Czech national flags, the protesters demanded the resignation of the current pro-Western coalition government led by conservative Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

"Resign, resign," they repeatedly chanted during a demonstration held under the slogan "The Czech Republic first," a reference to former US President Donald Trump's nationalist platform which he called "America first."

They criticised the government on a number of issues, including supporting the European Union's sanctions against Russia, and dismissed as insufficient the government's help for households and businesses affected by soaring energy prices.

The organisers oppose Czech membership in the European Union and NATO and some other international organisations, such as the United nations and the World Health Organisation.

Smaller protests were held in several other major cities.

Although the country's opposition made some gains in the municipal elections last weekend, the five government coalition parties did relatively well in the separate first round of elections for one third of the seats on the Parliament's upper house, the Senate.

Cuba without electricity after hurricane hammers power grid

AP ■ HAVANA

Hurricane Ian knocked out power across all of Cuba and devastated some of the country's most important tobacco farms when it slammed into the island's western tip as a major hurricane.

Cuba's Electric Union on Tuesday said in a statement that work was underway to gradually restore service to the country's 11 million people during the night. Power was initially knocked out to about 1 million people in Cuba's western provinces, but later the entire grid collapsed.

Ian hit a Cuba that has been struggling with an economic crisis and has faced frequent power outages in recent months. It made landfall as a Category 3 storm on the island's western end, devastating Pinar del Río province, where much of the tobacco used for Cuba's iconic cigars is grown.

Tens of thousands of people were evacuated and others fled the area ahead of the arrival of Ian, which caused flooding, damaged houses and toppled trees. Authorities were still assessing the damage, although no fatalities had been reported by Tuesday night.

Ian's winds damaged one of Cuba's most important tobacco farms in La Robaina.

"It was apocalyptic, a real disaster," said Hirochi Robaina, owner of the farm that bears his name and that his grandfather made known internationally.

Satellite images show Eritrea military buildup near Tigray

AP ■ NAIROBI

New satellite imagery of one of the world's most reclusive nations shows a military buildup inside Eritrea near the border with Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, backing up witness accounts of a new, large-scale offensive.

Eritrea has fought alongside Ethiopia against Tigray forces. It rejects allegations that its soldiers committed some of the worst atrocities in the conflict that began in late 2020. Witnesses in Eritrea this month told The Associated Press that people including students and public servants are being rounded up across the nation and sent to fight in the new offensive.

The satellite imagery provided by Maxar Technologies shows what Maxar described as battle tanks, self-propelled howitzers and a M-46 field gun battery in the Eritrean town of Serha, near the border, on Sept. 19. The town is across the border from the Tigray town of Zalambessa, one of the first communities overrun in the war. Eritrea is one of the world's most closed countries to independent journalists, and images from there related to the war in Ethiopia are rare.

Russia prepares to annex occupied Ukraine despite outcry

AP ■ KYIV

Russia is poised to formally annex areas of Ukraine where it has military control after referendums there reportedly endorsed Moscow's rule.

But the ballots were widely discredited and earned the Kremlin no relief Wednesday from international pressure over its assault on its neighbour.

Pro-Moscow administrations of all four occupied regions of southern and eastern Ukraine said Tuesday night that their residents voted to join Russia in five days of Kremlin-orchestrated balloting.

According to Russia-installed election officials, 93% of the ballots cast in the Zaporizhzhia region supported annexation, as did 87% in the Kherson region, 98% in the Luhansk region and 99% in Donetsk. Russian-installed officials in those occupied regions said Wednesday they would ask President Vladimir Putin to incorporate them into Russia.

It wasn't immediately clear how the administrative process would unfold.

Western countries, however, dismissed the ballots as a meaningless pretence staged by Moscow in an attempt to legitimise its invasion of Ukraine launched on Feb. 24.

The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said late Tuesday that Washington would propose a U.N. Security Council resolution to condemn Russia's "sham" vote.

The resolution would also urge member states not to recognise any altered status of Ukraine and demand that Russia withdraws its troops from its neighbour, she tweeted.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, also weighed in on the ballots, on Wednesday calling them "illegal" and describing the results as "falsified." "This is another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty (and) territorial integrity, (amid) systematic abuses of human rights," Borrell tweeted.

In Kyiv, Ukraine's foreign ministry blasted the ballots as "a propaganda show" and "null and worthless."

"Forcing people in these territories to fill out some papers at the barrel of a gun is yet another Russian crime in the course of its aggression against Ukraine," a foreign ministry statement said.

It asked the EU, NATO and the Group of Seven major industrial nations to "immediately and significantly" step up pressure on Russia through new sanctions, and significantly increase their military aid to Ukraine. The Kremlin remained unmoved amid the hail of criticism, however.

Its spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said that at the very least Russia intended to drive Ukrainian forces out of the eastern Donetsk region, where Moscow's troops and separatist forces currently control about 60% of the territory.

The EU also expressed outrage over the suspected sabotage Tuesday of two underwater natural gas pipelines from Russia to Germany and warned of retaliation for any attack on Europe's energy networks.

Borrell said Wednesday that "all available information indicates those leaks are the result of a deliberate act," even though the perpetrators haven't so far been identified.

Palestinians: At least 4 killed in Israeli raid in West Bank

AP ■ JENIN REFUGEE CAMP (WEST BANK)

At least four Palestinians were killed and 44 others wounded during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin on Wednesday, the Palestinian Health Ministry reported, the latest in a series of deadly Israeli operations in the occupied territory.

Israeli forces said they fatally shot two Palestinians they had been sent to arrest in the Jenin refugee camp over their suspected involvement in recent shooting attacks.

When soldiers surrounded a house in the camp, an explosive device detonated, a gunfight ensued and Israeli troops killed the two Palestinians, the military said.

During the raid, armed clashes broke out in the camp as militants hurled rocks and opened fire at arriving troops. The violence killed another two Palestinians and wounded at least 44 others, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party identified one of the men killed in the clashes as a 24-year-old Palestinian intelligence officer named Ahmed Alawneh.

The party called for protests and a general strike in the West Bank over what it described as a "dangerous escalation." Jenin in the northern West Bank — long considered a bastion of Palestinian militancy and frequent flashpoint for violence — is governed by the Palestinian Authority like most other Palestinian urban centers, even though the Israeli military routinely carries out arrest raids in the area.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Abbas, denounced the raid, saying Israel's "policy of escalation" will not deliver "legitimacy, security or stability, whether in the Islamic and Christian holy sites or in Jenin."

Over 194,000 Russians flee to neighbouring countries

AP ■ TALLINN (ESTONIA)

It took Vsevolod four days to drive from Moscow to Russia's southern border with Georgia. He had to abandon his car at one point and continue on foot.

On Tuesday, he finally finished his 1,800-kilometer (1,100-mile) journey and crossed the frontier to escape being called up to fight in Russia's war in Ukraine.

"At 26, I do not want to be carried home in a zinc-lined (coffin) or stain (my) hands with somebody's blood because of the war of one person that wants to build an empire," he told The Associated Press, asking that his last name not be used because he feared retaliation from Russia.

He was one of over 194,000 Russian nationals who have fled to neighboring Georgia, Kazakhstan and Finland — most often by car, bicycle or on foot — in the week since President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization of reservists.

The mass exodus of men — alone or with their families or friends — began Sept. 21, shortly after Putin's address to the nation, and continued all this week. Early on, they snapped up airline tickets, which spiked in price on the few airlines still flying out of Russia. But the rest had to gas up their cars and join the long lines snaking on roads toward the borders.

According to the online service Yandex Maps, the traffic jam leading to Verkhny Lars, a border crossing into Georgia from Russia's North Ossetia region, stretched for about 15 kilometers (over 9 miles) on Tuesday. Social media showed hundreds of pedestrians lining up at the checkpoint after Russian border guards relaxed regulations and allowed people to cross on foot.

Similarly long queues were reported at some crossings into Kazakhstan.

The Interior Ministry of Georgia said over 53,000 Russians have entered the country since last week, while Interior Ministry officials in Kazakhstan said 98,000 crossed into that nation. The Finnish Border Guard agency said over 43,000 arrived in the same period. Media reports also said another 3,000 Russians entered Mongolia, which also shares a border with the country.

Russian authorities sought to stem the flow, barring some men from leaving and citing mobilization laws. The practice did not seem widespread, but rumors persisted that Moscow may soon shut the borders to all men of fighting age.

Police in North Ossetia said a makeshift enlistment office will be set up at the Verkhny Lars crossing, and local officials confirmed to the state news agency Tass that Russian men are being served call-up summonses at crossings into Georgia.

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has said that only about 300,000 men with prior combat or other military service would be mustered, but reports have emerged from various Russian regions that recruiters were rounding up men outside that description. That fueled fears of a much broader call-up, sending droves of men of all ages and backgrounds to airports and borders.

MORATA TAKES SPAIN TO NATIONS LEAGUE SEMIS

AP ■ BRAGA

Alvaro Morata's late goal earned Spain a 1-0 win in Portugal and the last place in the UEFA Nations League finals on Tuesday, while the Czech Republic were relegated from the top tier after losing in Switzerland.

La Roja needed to win to finish top of League A Group 2, but struggled on another difficult night for the Euro 2020 semi-finalists, until Morata's 88th minute breakthrough.

Spain have not been able to hit top form in the internationals leading up to the Qatar 2022 World Cup, but this hard-fought victory provides a welcome morale boost.

Portugal had the better of the game but Spain brightened in the final stages, with the introduction of several substitutes, including Nico Williams, who headed across goal for Morata to gleefully turn in at the back post.

Luis Enrique made wholesale changes to the side that suffered Spain's first home defeat since 2018 against Switzerland on Saturday, retaining only four starters.

Morata was brought in to lead the line, while the Asturian coach rotated his entire midfield trio.

Spain still dominated possession, as their gameplan demands, but to little effect as Portugal created the more dangerous openings in the first half.

Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper Unai Simon made a solid save to deny Ruben Neves and then a brilliant one to keep Liverpool striker Diogo Jota at bay.

Cristiano Ronaldo appealed for a penalty in a race for the ball with Simon but the referee spotted he went to ground without any contact and waved play on.

With Portuguese confidence increasing, Bruno Fernandes lashed an effort narrowly off-target, celebrated prematurely by swathes of the stadium as the ball appeared to settle in the net.

Just as they did against Switzerland, Spain failed to get a single shot on target in the first half, and after Simon made another good save from Ronaldo early in the second half, Luis Enrique took action.

The coach sent on Pedri, Gavi and Yeremy Pino to try and give La Roja more inspiration going forward, although it was the hosts who almost broke the deadlock when Dani Carvajal deflected a strike narrowly over his own crossbar.

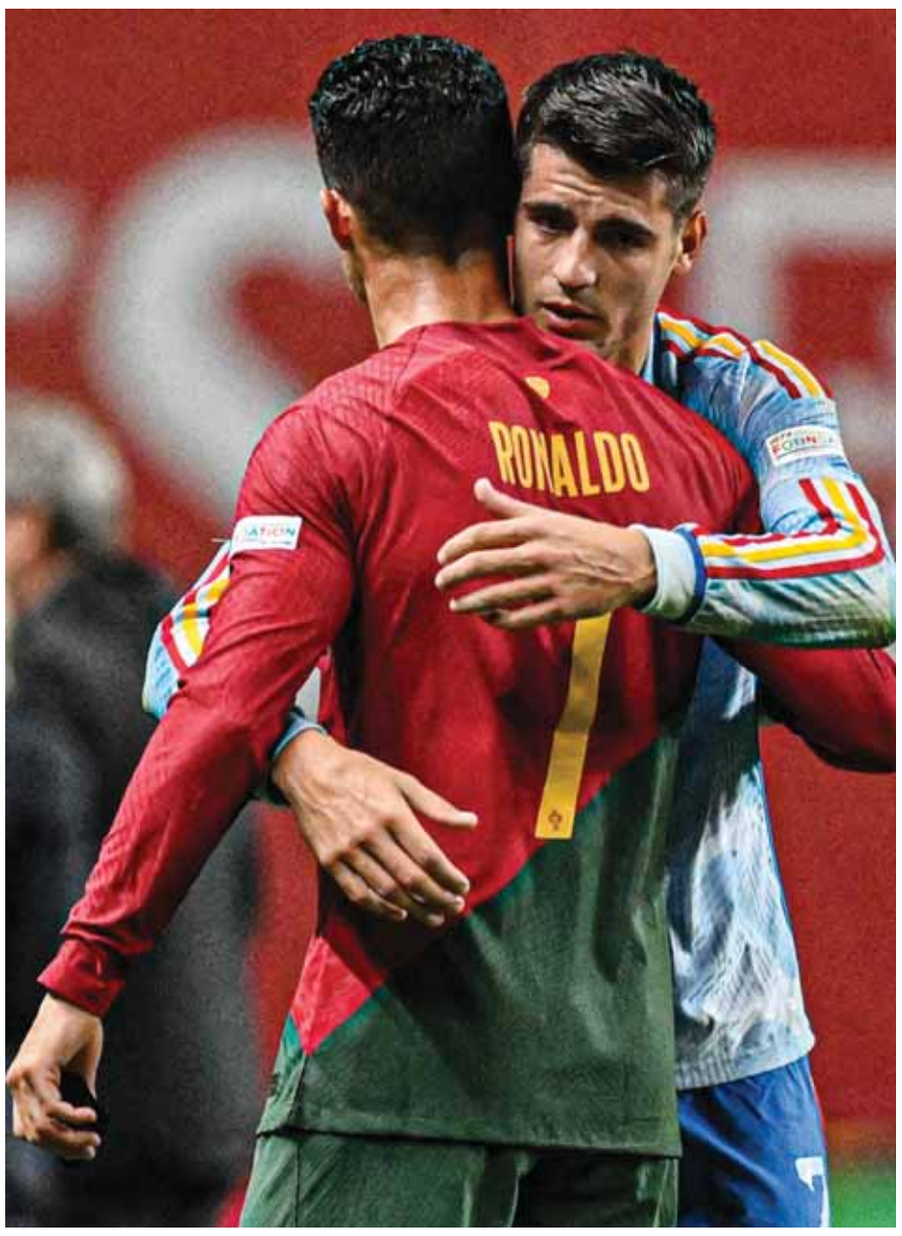
At the other end Morata replied with a tame effort which was easily collected by Diogo Costa, who also thwarted Spain substitute Williams.

The changes livened Luis Enrique's team up and Costa was required again to shovel away a far more emphatic strike from Atletico Madrid striker Morata, before the breakthrough ultimately arrived.

Dani Carvajal launched a crossfield ball into the area, with Williams' header leaving Morata with the simple task of firing into the empty net to put the runners-up of the last edition of the Nations League back into the final four.

Spain join the Netherlands, Italy and Croatia in the finals which are scheduled for June next year.

Switzerland, who beat Spain 2-1 in Zaragoza on Saturday, were indebted to goalkeeper Yann Sommer as he saved a second-half penalty to preserve victory over the Czechs.



Remo Freuler and Breel Embolo scored within a minute of each other in the first half in St Gallen, but Patrik Schick pulled one back before the break. Schick saw his second-half penalty kept out by Sommer as the Swiss won 2-1, condemning the Czech Republic to relegation to League B.

Scotland clinched promotion to League A after a 0-0 draw against Ukraine in Krakow, having beaten the same opponents 3-0 last week in Glasgow.

Robbie Brady's stoppage-time penalty gave the Republic of Ireland a 3-2 victory over Armenia in Dublin in the other game in Group B1.

Irish captain John Egan and Michael Obafemi put the hosts two goals in front but Armenia equalised as Artak Dashyan and Eduard Spertsyan struck in quick succession.

Dashyan and Hovhannes Hambartsumyan were sent off to leave Armenia with nine players as Brady's winner saw the Irish finished third in the section.

Serbia took top spot in Group B above Norway as forward pair Dusan Vlahovic and Aleksandar Mitrovic got the goals in a 2-0 victory in Oslo.

Mitrovic's strike was his 50th at international level. He scored a hat-trick in Saturday's 4-1 win over Sweden.

Sweden will drop into League C after a 1-1 draw with Slovenia in Solna, where Emil Forsberg cancelled out Benjamin Sesko's opener for the visitors.

Greece made it five wins from six in Group C2 as they beat Northern Ireland 3-1 in Athens. Kosovo thrashed Cyprus 5-1 in Pristina.

Neymar edges closer to Pele's goal record

AP ■ PARIS

Richarlison was the target of a banana thrown from the crowd as Brazil thrashed Tunisia 5-1 in a friendly in Paris on Tuesday, while Neymar edged closer to Pele's all-time scoring record for the five-time world champions.

The game at the Parc des Princes was also briefly paused in the first half as the crowd were twice implored not to point laser pens at Brazil players.

"Unfortunately... a banana was thrown on the pitch towards Richarlison, scorer of the second Brazilian goal," the Brazilian football confederation (CBF) said on Twitter.

"The CBF reinforces its position to combat racism and repudiates any prejudiced act."

The Selecao produced a dominant first-half display in their final outing before travelling to Qatar for the World Cup, with Raphinha netting twice and Neymar moving to within two of Pele's record.

Richarlison also found the net, while Pedro scored as a second-half substitute before responding to more boos and missiles from the crowd by bowing in front of them in celebration.

Tite's Brazil will head into their World Cup Group G opener against Serbia on November 24 on a 15-match unbeaten run, dating back to their Copa America final loss to Argentina last year.

Earlier on Tuesday, World Cup hosts Qatar survived a late penalty miss by Alexis Sanchez to hold Chile to a 2-2 draw in Vienna.

Canada, who are preparing for their first World Cup since 1986, lost 2-0 to Uruguay in Bratislava as Liverpool's Darwin Nunez scored his third international goal.

Sardar Azmoun scored as a substitute to earn Iran a 1-1 draw with African champions Senegal.

Indian U-17 team registers 3-1 win over 10-man Oman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The India U-17 boys football team converted a couple of penalties to register a comfortable 3-1 win over a 10-man Oman in a friendly match held in Muscat.

The team played against the hosts on Tuesday as part of its preparations for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers, which is scheduled to begin on October 3 in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Gangte (10th) converted a penalty to open the scoring for the visitors with Thokchom (18th) doubling India's lead eight minutes later.

In the second half, Lalpekhlua (69th) scored the third goal for India by converting converted another penalty.

Alhaitham Alshukaili scored the solitary goal for Oman a couple of minutes before the final whistle.

The first half began with the Indians pressing hard to seize the initiative. In the seventh minute, Lalpekhlua's shot went wide off a Danny through pass.

Three minutes later, India were awarded a penalty.

Gangte stepped up and made no mistake to give India the lead. The Indian gradually found their footing as Thokchom doubled the lead from Guite's pass in the 18th minute.

The second half began on similar lines as Bibiano Fernandes's team got back into attacking mode immediately.

In the 61st minute, Korou Singh was provided with an opportunity to widen the lead off a Lalpekhlua cross from the left flank but the former failed to tap home. Nine minutes later, Tamim Alburaiki tackled Lalpekhlua inside the box and India earned another penalty.

Lalpekhlua shot went straight into the back of the net making it 3-0 for India.

In the 88th minute, Alshukaili scored for Oman from a free kick. They were down to 10 men after Tamim Alburaiki was handed a red card.

Messi scores brace for Argentina

AP ■ HARRISON

Lionel Messi scored twice as Argentina edged closer to Italy's world record unbeaten streak with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Jamaica in a World Cup warm-up friendly in New Jersey on Tuesday.

Paris Saint-Germain superstar Messi took his international goals tally to 90 in 164 appearances after coming on as a second-half substitute at the Red Bull Arena.

Messi's goals capped an emphatic win for the South Americans, who have now gone 35 games unbeaten in a streak stretching back to 2019 – just two shy of Italy's world record unbeaten run of 37 set between 2018 and 2022.

Messi, who also scored twice during a friendly win over Honduras in Miami on Friday, delighted the crowd with an electrifying cameo after coming on in the 56th minute for Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez.

He bagged his first of the night in the 86th minute, darting forward before caressing a shot into the bottom corner past Jamaica goalkeeper Andre Blake.

The 35-year-old seven-time Ballon D'Or winner then produced an impish second goal, craftily curling a low shot underneath the Jamaican wall into the bottom corner from a free-kick.

Messi's presence left the crowd in a frenzy. On three different occasions spectators sprinted onto the pitch in an effort to get close to the Argentinian icon. One shirtless fan attempted to get Messi to autograph his back before he was bundled to the floor by security staff.

Messi's late double crowned another assured performance from Lionel Scaloni's Argentina, who are rapidly emerging as one of the favourites for the World Cup in Qatar in November.

The Argentinians had dominated throughout a one-sided first half, and took the lead on 13 minutes when Martinez jinked past Jamaica's Damion Lowe and cut back for Manchester City's Julian Alvarez, who tucked away a low finish from close range.

USA held by Saudi Arabia

AP ■ MURCIA

The United States wrapped up their World Cup preparations with a 0-0 draw against Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

A low-key friendly between the two World Cup qualified nations played in a virtually empty stadium in Murcia, southern Spain, saw Saudi Arabia carve out the better chances only to be denied by the USA's Arsenal goalkeeper Matt Turner.

United States coach Gregg Berhalter had called on his team to show "personality" after being outplayed in a comprehensive 2-0 defeat to Japan in Germany last Friday.

But once again the US struggled to build attacking momentum against the Saudis, who finished above Japan in their successful World Cup qualifying campaign.

The draw means the USA will head to the World Cup short on confidence as they prepare to face Wales, England and Iran in the first round group stage.

Saudi Arabia, who face Argentina, Poland and Mexico in the first round in Qatar, almost took the lead after just 25 seconds when Sultan Al-Ghanam shot from outside the area to force a good save from Turner.

The US were limited to a handful of half-chances during the opening 45 minutes but despite the return of Chelsea's Christian Pulisic were mostly ineffective in front of goal.

Verstappen on verge of 2nd world title

AP ■ SINGAPORE

Red Bull's dominant Max Verstappen can clinch a second world championship when the Singapore Grand Prix returns this weekend after a three-year absence because of Covid.

The flying Dutchman has a mathematical chance to seal back-to-back world titles under lights around the spectacular and demanding Marina Bay street circuit.

To do so, the 24-year-old must win the race — something he has never done in Singapore — and needs his closest rivals to falter badly.

If that does not happen, the championship fight will move on to the Japanese Grand Prix a week later. It looks a case of when, not if.

"You need a bit of luck for that as well," Verstappen told Sky Sports of retaining his crown in Singapore.

"I don't think about it."

Verstappen opened up a 116-point lead in the drivers' standings over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc following his victory at the Italian Grand Prix. He is 125 clear of third-placed Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.

He needs to extend his lead to 138 points by Sunday's chequered flag to be crowned with five races to spare — the earliest championship win since Michael Schumacher's in 2002 with six GPs remaining.

Monza was Verstappen's 11th victory in 16 races of a potentially record-breaking season. He needs two more wins to equal the single-season mark of 13 jointly held by Schumacher (2004) and Sebastian Vettel (2013).

"I want to go to Singapore and try to win that race as well," Verstappen said.

"We are having a great season, so we should really try and appreciate it and enjoy the moment."

To take the title this weekend, he must win the race with Leclerc finishing no higher than eighth or ninth — depending on who claims the extra point for the fastest lap — and Perez outside the podium places. Much will depend on Saturday night's qualifying for a grand prix that has been won from pole position seven times in its last 11 runnings.

LOCAL EVENTS

ANNU RANI TO BE UP FLAGBEARER

Olympian javelin thrower Annu Rani will be the flag-bearer of Uttar Pradesh's 415-member contingent in the 36th National Games, starting from Thursday in Ahmedabad. Uttar Pradesh athletes will be vying for medals in 26 sport events. UP Olympic Association general secretary Anandeshwar Pandey informed the mediapersons that final list of the players and officials has been released. 307 players (187 men and 120 women) from Uttar Pradesh are taking part in the National Games. In the 35th National Games held in Kerala, UP bagged 68 medals, including seven gold, 31 silver and 30 bronze. UPOA senior vice-president Abhijeet Sarkar was also present.

CPR CAMP ORGANISED

A camp was organised at the KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium to train the players and the coaches about Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). SGPGI's Cardiologist Aditya Kapoor gave a detailed demonstration on giving CPR and to use AED machine. Additional chief secretary (sports) Navneet Sehgal, director (sports) RP Singh and RSO Ajay Sethi were also present.

SHAGUN-JAYA ENTER FINAL

The doubles pair of Shagun Kumari and Jaya Kapoor defeated Rubani Kaur Sindhu and Shakti Mishra 7-6 (6), 6-2 to enter the final of women's doubles in the Asian Junior Tennis Tournament at Vijyant Khand stadium on Wednesday. Shagun also won her singles quarter-final match against Jufisha Khan 6-0, 6-1. Shagun's doubles partner and top seed blanked Parigya Yadav 6-0, 6-0. In the boy's singles, fifth seed Aditya Mor shocked top seed

Namish Sharma 6-2, 6-2 while Daksh Kapoor edged past Rudra Batham 3-6, 6-3, 6-3. Aradya Kshitiz and Aishwarya Mehta also won their respective quarter-final matches to move into last four.

SAN SIRO DEMOLITION ON TABLE

AP ■ MILAN

A crucial step towards the demolition of the iconic San Siro begins on Wednesday when Milan hosts the first of a series of meetings with the public necessary for the new stadium proposed by the city's two footballing giants.

AC Milan and Inter Milan both insist that they can no longer stay in the current, city-owned San Siro and have drawn up plans for a new 60,000-capacity ground flanked by sport and leisure facilities on the same site, which will be completely remodelled.

Should it go ahead the project is scheduled to be completed in 2030, with 1.3 billion euros ($1.24 billion) being jointly invested in the development by both clubs, who say they cannot afford to build separate new grounds and need the increased revenue this project would bring.

Over three years after presenting their initial project the public will now be able to scrutinise it and have their say at 10 meetings held over a month, after which a report will be presented to the city by the meetings' independent organisers in mid-November.

The city can then decide whether to insist on further changes to a project which has had 50,000 square metres of development cut from it since it was first proposed, or proceed with approval.

Pro League tie will give us better understanding of Spain: Manpreet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be hosting Spain in the new season of FIH Pro League next month and captain Manpreet Singh wants to use the opportunity to get a better understanding of their rivals ahead of the 2023 men's hockey World Cup to be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

India will play New Zealand in the first match of Pro League on October 28 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, followed by the second game against Spain on October 30.

Placed in the same pool, India will take on Spain in their World Cup opener at the newly-built Birsa Munda International Stadium in Rourkela on January 13.

"It is great that we will get a chance to play against Spain now in the Pro League matches. It will give us an understanding of their game and what we need to improve upon before we meet them again in the first match of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar-Rourkela 2023," Manpreet said in a Hockey India release.

"In all, these are exciting times for hockey and I hope fans from all over the world will come to Rourkela and Bhubaneswar to support our campaign."

In the World Cup, Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists India, who are currently world No. 5 in the FIH rankings, are clubbed alongside England (6), Spain (8) and debutants Wales (16) in pool D.

After Spain, India will play their second match in Rourkela, against England on January 15, before moving to the capital city of Bhubaneswar, where they will face Wales in their final group match on January 19.

The match against Spain in the World Cup will be the Indian team's first outing at the newly-built Rourkela stadium, touted to become the world's largest hockey venue.

"We have all experienced how electrifying the atmosphere can be in Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Hockey Stadium and from what I have heard from my teammates who are from Sundergarh, the fans from this region are all looking to turn up in huge numbers for all the matches to be played in Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela," Manpreet said.

"I can already feel the goosebumps thinking of the turnout for the opening game. It will be quite incredible to play in the newly built Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium which will be the biggest stadium in the country with more than 20,000 seating capacity," he added.

India win low-scoring thriller

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Arshdeep Singh and Deepak Chahar hit the South Africans hard with some magical swing bowling before Suryakumar Yadav's little gem on a difficult track ensured an easy eight-wicket victory for India in the first T20 International here on Wednesday.

A target of 107 on a pitch with underlying moisture and more than waist high bounce at times was a struggle before Suryakumar (50 not out in 33 balls) released the pressure created by KL Rahul (51 not out, 56 balls) as India won the game in 16.4 overs to go 1-0 up in three-match series.

The pitch that former India head coach Ravi Shastri on air termed "not ideal for T20 cricket" had batters of both teams finding it difficult to cope with both pace and movement.

It was Arshdeep (3/32) and Chahar (2/24), who basically clinched the issue for India within first 15 deliveries of the start after skipper Rohit Sharma called it right at the toss. Once South Africa were reeling at 9/5 in 2.3 overs, the game as a contest was over and 106/8 even on a difficult track was a sub-par score.

The South Africans did bowl their heart out in defence.

Kagiso Rabada bowled an ideal Test match delivery that pitched on length and reared up while moving a shade and all Rohit Sharma (0) could do was to dangle his bat at the corridor of uncertainty.

Virat Kohli (3) got an express delivery from Anrich Nortje that kept climbing as he tried to have a go away from his body and the edge was taken by Quinton de Kock.

Surya, India's best T20 batter by a distance, got a streaky six when his attempted flick turned into an outside edge that flew over third-man for a maximum off Nortje.

The next six was a picture-perfect whip over deep square leg and then an inside out six off Keshav Maharaj indicated that he is India's in-form man.

Rahul's batting at the other end on the same strip became an ordeal as India had their lowest ever Powerplay score on board.

Just that there was no scoreboard pressure, Rahul could once play his waiting game and the only shot worth appreciating was a six off Nortje.

Earlier, Arshdeep and Chahar made the white Kookaburra talk with some incisive swing bowling after Jasprit Bumrah pulling out of the game due to his recurrent back problem which has resurfaced yet again.

The duo moved the ball both ways, making full use of the nip in the air and the bounce off the surface.

Temba Bavuma (0) was nicely set up by Chahar with stock outswingers, which the skipper left alone before a banana inswinger had him bowled through the gate. The deviation into the batter was as big as it could be.

Arshdeep started by taking the ball shade away from the left-hander and Quinton de Kock (1) in his bid to get a move-on dragged one back onto the stumps.

The other left-hander Rilee Rossouw (0) also chased a wide outswinger (inswinger by the bowler) to nick one to Rishabh Pant behind the stumps.

But it was the delivery by Arshdeep to David Miller (0) that will be remembered for a long time to come.

Miller was anticipating an outswinger and had committed on the front-foot only to find that the bowler had got one to bend back into him. His atrocious across-the-line shot would have resulted in only one thing and that was getting castled.

New T20 sensation Tristan Stubbs (0) didn't get enough wood to his slash over deep to a delivery from Chahar that bounced a shade more. The result was Arshdeep taking a well-judged catch diving in-front.

With five wickets gone, there was no coming back for South Africa and predictably there wasn't any change in the script.

Rohit, SKY rise in ICC T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India batter Suryakumar Yadav jumped a place to reach a career-best-equalling second position in the latest ICC men's T20I Player rankings issued on Wednesday.

Suryakumar now has 801 rating points after smashing a match-winning 69 off 36 deliveries in the third match against Australia in Hyderabad on Sunday that helped India clinch the series 2-1.

He had reached the second spot in T20 rankings for the first time in August this year following his exploits against the West Indies.

India captain Rohit Sharma also moved up one place to 13th position after scores of 46 not out and 17 in the second and third T20I against Australia.

Only a couple of rating points separate Suryakumar and Pakistan captain Babar Azam, who also improved a spot to grab the third position.

Babar, who had occupied the No.1 position for 1,155 days before being overtaken by teammate Mohammad Rizwan earlier this month, was named Player of the Match for an unbeaten 110 in the second T20I against England.

He followed it up with scores of eight and 36 in the third and fourth matches, which were also played over the past week.

India spinners Axar Patel (up from 33rd to 18th) and Yuzvendra Chahal (up from 28th to 26th) have moved up the bowlers' list, which continues to be led by Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood.

Among others, Matthew Wade (up six places to 62nd), Cameron Green (up 31 places to 67th) and Tim David (up 202 places to 109th) are the Australian players to move up the batting rankings.

Green and David had notched up half-centuries in the final match of the series.

England batter Harry Brook's scores of 31, 81 not out and 34 in Pakistan have lifted him 118 places to 29th position, while Ben Ducket has soared 1,070 places to 32nd position after scoring 43, 70 not out and 33 in those three matches.

In the latest weekly update, Reece Topley is up 14 places to 23rd and is the third third-highest ranked England bowler after Adil Rashid and Chris Jordan.

Pakistan speedster Haris Rauf is up seven places to 14th position after taking five wickets in the last three matches. Mark Wood (up 29 places to 40th) and Sam Curran (up five places to 47th) have also progressed.

Umesh, Iyer & Shahbaz added to India squad for SA T20s

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The trio of pacer Umesh Yadav, batter Shreyas Iyer and all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed was on Wednesday added to India's squad for the three-match T20 series against South Africa, starting here.

Senior pacer Mohammad Shami, who had missed the recently-concluded T20 series against Australia after contracting COVID-19 infection, is yet to recover completely and thus won't be a part of the T20 matches against the Proteas.

Deepak Hooda has also been ruled out of the series owing to a back injury. The all-rounder is at the NCA for "further management of his injury".

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named Umesh Yadav as Shami's replacement and Shreyas Iyer as a replacement for Hooda," a BCCI release stated.

"Shahbaz Ahmed has also been added to the T20I squad," it added.

Umesh was brought in as Shami's replacement in the series against Australia. He has competed in the series-opener but did not play the second and third T20Is.

On the other hand, left-arm spin-all-rounder Shahbaz is still uncapped. He was picked in the Indian ODI squad as Washington Sundar's replacement for the Zimbabwe series in August but did not get a game.

Rookie pacer Arshdeep Singh, who was rested for the series against Australia, has linked up with the squad for the three T20Is.

The series against South Africa will serve as a final dress rehearsal for both side ahead of the marquee event in Australia next month.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya and senior seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who have been rested for the series ahead of the T20 World Cup next month, have also reported to the NCA for "conditioning-related work".

Revised India squad: Rohit Sharma (C), KL Rahul (vc), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav, Shreyas Iyer and Shahbaz Ahmed.

Mohammed Shami tests negative for COVID-19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India pacer Mohammed Shami on Wednesday tested negative for COVID-19, over 10 days after he had been infected by the virus.

The 32-year-old posted his negative report on his Instagram account, hours after the BCCI named veteran pacer Umesh Yadav as his replacement for the three-match T20I series against South Africa, beginning on Wednesday in Thiruvananthapuram.

"Negative," Shami wrote along with a picture of his COVID test report.

The senior India pacer had tested positive for the virus on September 17.

He was subsequently ruled out of the recently-concluded three-match series against Australia.

Earlier in the day, the pacer had been ruled out of the T20s against South Africa with the BCCI saying he is "yet to attain full recovery from COVID-19."

Shami, who hasn't played any cricket after England series in July, had been brought back into the T20 mix when he was picked for the games against Australia and South Africa.

He has been named as a stand-by for the T20 World Cup in Australia next month.

Bumrah in Waugh's top-five for T20 WC

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

World Cup winning former Australia opener Mark Waugh has picked Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah as one of his top five picks for the T20I showpiece Down Under.

Bumrah recently returned to action after recovering from a back injury in the three-match T20 series against Australia that India won 2-1.

The 28-year-old, who underwent rehab at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore, looked fully fit but he's yet to get back to his old rhythm.

"I think he's a fantastic bowler in all formats, actually. His ability to get wickets in T20 cricket is key. He can bowl at the death and he can bowl up front," Waugh told the ICC website.

Waugh picked Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi as Bumrah's new-ball partner as they were the only two pacers in his top-five which also featured Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan, Aussie allrounder Glenn Maxwell and England's Jos Buttler.

"To open the bowling at the other end we'll go with another great opening bowler, Shaheen Afridi from Pakistan, who is a tremendous left-arm fast bowler," Waugh said.

Terming Shaheen as wicket-taker, Waugh said: "He sort of lifts the team. He's a guy that other players follow.

"He is a left-armer so that's another point of difference. He can swing the ball back into the right-hander, he's quick as well, so I've got him number two."

On picking Rashid, Waugh said: "In all competitions he plays in, he's just the one guy who you know is going to bowl four overs.

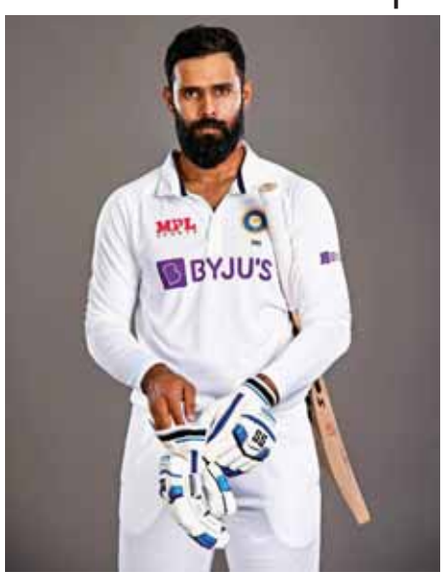
"He'll probably get two or three wickets and go for 20 runs, and he can bat. He can also whack the ball over the fence."

On his rationale behind picking Buttler, the Australian said: "I think he's probably the number one batsman in world cricket in the T20 format. He's just a clean striker of the ball."

The T20 World Cup will get underway on October 16.

Hanuma to lead ROI in Irani Cup

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Prolific batter Hanuma Vihari will lead the Rest of India side against 2019-20 Ranji Trophy champions Saurashtra in the Irani Cup clash, which is returning to the calender after three years.

The BCCI announced a 16-man squad for the red-ball tournament, which is set to be held in Rajkot from October 1-5.

The Irani Cup could not be played in the previous two seasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team has a good batting unit with talented red-ball specialist Mayank Agarwal and young Priyank Panchal, who recently led India A against New Zealand A and was also part of the Duleep Trophy winning West Zone squad.

The squad also has talented youngsters in Yash Dhull and Yashaswi Jaiswal, who had scored a double hundred in Duleep Trophy in the Ajinkya Rahane-led West Zone.

Emerging fast bowler Umran Malik, big-hitting Sarfaraaz Khan are also part of the ROI squad.

Test batter Cheteshwar Pujara is likely to appear for Saurashtra in the match.

ROI squad: Hanuma Vihari (Captain), Mayank Agarwal, Priyank Panchal, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Yash Dhull, Sarfaraaz Khan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, K.S.Bharat, Upendra Yadav, Jayant Yadav, Saurabh Kumar, R Sai Kishore, Mukesh Kumar, Umran Malik, Kuldeep Sen, Arzan Nagwaswalla.

Vietnam Open: Praneeth bows out; Meiraba & Ruthvika in last 16

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH

Tokyo Olympian B Sai Praneeth suffered a shock defeat at the hands of fellow Indian Rithvik Sanjeevi Satish Kumar in the men's singles second round at the Vietnam Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Wednesday.

A former World Championships Bronze medallist, Praneeth, who has been struggling for form for the last one year, lost 21-17, 18-21, 13-21 to Satish Kumar to make another early exit from a tournament.

Satish Kumar, who had finished runner-up at Bangladesh International Challenge in December last year, will now face Malaysia's Ong Ken Yon next.

In other results in the men's singles, Meiraba Luwang Maisnam eked out a thrilling 21-16, 18-21, 21-14 win over Malaysia's Kok Jing Hong to set up a fight with Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu Jen, who beat India's eighth seed Mithun Manjunath 21-17, 21-7 in another match.

S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian also notched up an sensational win over Indonesian veteran Tommy Sugiarto 14-21, 22-20, 21-12 in the second round.

He will next meet Chinese Chia Hao, who defeated India's Raghu Mariswamy 21-16, 21-15 in a lop-sided contest.

Harshit Aggarwal defeated Mongolia's Batdavaa Munkhbat 21-15, 21-13 to be pitted against Japan's third seed Kodai Naraoka in the third round.

Kiran Kumar Mekala saw off Myanmar's Phone Pyae Naing 16-21, 21-14, 21-19 and will face Malaysia's Cheam June Wei next.

In the women's singles, Ruthvika Shivani Gadde progressed to the pre-quarterfinals after getting a walkover from his opponent and will face Vietnam's Thi Trang (B) Vu next.

Prerana Neeluri will meet top seed Aya Ohori of Japan in the second round after she opened her campaign with a 21-16, 21-14 win over local player Thi Ngoc Lan Nguyen.

Ira Sharma and Rituparna Das also made it to the second round with straight game wins.

While Ira beat Vietnam's Thi Anh Tran 21-13, 21-14, Rituparna defeated another Vietnamese in Bich Phuong Bhi 21-12, 21-17.

Mixed doubles pair of N Sikki Reddy and Rohan Kapoor advanced to the second round after beating compatriots Hariharan Amsakarunan and SS Lakshmi Priyanka Subramanian 14-21, 21-9, 21-12.

Another Indian pair of Bokka Navaneeth and Priya Konjengbam also progressed to the second round.

Sports Ministry extends last date of submission of application for National Sports Awards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Wednesday extended the last date of submission of applications for this year's National Sports Awards by three days to October 1.

Earlier, the ministry had set September 27 as the last date for online submission of applications.

This year onwards, applications are being invited only in online mode through a dedicated portal.

"The last date for receipt of applications has been extended from 27th September, 2022 to 1st October 2022 (Saturday)," the ministry said in a statement.

"The applications from the eligible sportspersons /coaches/entities/universities are invited for the award. They are required to self apply online at dedicated Portal dbtyas-sports.Gov.In.

"Indian Olympics Association/Sports Authority of India/recognised National Sports Federations/Sports Promotion Boards/State and UTs Governments etc are also intimated accordingly. Nominations received after 1st October, 2022 (Saturday) will not be considered," it added.

Sports Awards are given every year to recognise and reward excellence in sports.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four years, while Arjuna Award is bestowed for consistent outstanding performance for four years.

Warner, Marsh, Stoinis & Starc return for WI T20Is

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Veteran opener Dave Warner and three other top players will return to the Australian Twenty20 squad for a two-match series against the West Indies as the hosts continue to prepare for their defense of the T20 World Cup title.

Warner will be joined by all-rounders Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis and fast bowler Mitchell Starc in the 16-man squad after missing the three-match T20 series in India which India won 2-1.

Warner was rested from that series to manage his preparation for the World Cup in Australia starting next month, while Marsh (ankle), Stoinis (side strain) and Starc (knee) have overcome injuries.

Allrounder Cameron Green, who opened the batting with captain Aaron Finch in India, has been retained in the squad despite not being included in Australia's lineup for the World Cup which is being played from October 16 to November 13.

Cricket Australia said in a statement on Wednesday that pace bowler Kane Richardson and spin-bowling all-rounder Ashton Agar won't take part in the West Indies series on the Gold Coast on October 5 and at the Gabba in Brisbane two days later to ensure they are n peak shape for the World Cup.

Australia plays its first World Cup match against New Zealand at the Sydney Cricket Ground on October 22.

"We have and are taking a cautious approach with the World Cup on the near horizon," national selection panel chair George Bailey said.

"To have four key players return gives us the ability to take a conservative path with any minor issues and resolve those well in time for the World Cup."

Bailey said he expects Agar and Richardson to return for the following series against England. That three-match T20 series will be held in Perth and Canberra from October 9-14.

T20I squad: Aaron Finch (captain), Sean Abbott, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Daniel Sams, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa.