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LUCKNOW, TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Parliament Opens up to a Warm Winter

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of a massive BJP surge in three states of the Hindi heartland, the Winter Session of Parliament started smoothly on Monday. While the much-anticipated tabling of the Ethics Panel report regarding the alleged disqualification of TMC member Mahua Moitra from the Lok Sabha over the cash for query case was deferred, AAP Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha received reprieve as his suspension was revoked by the Upper House chairman, Jagdeep Dhankar.

Chadha, who was under suspension for violating procedures by recommending names of MPs to a Select Committee without their consent, thanked Dhankar, members of the House and above all the Supreme Court which had advised him to 'talk' to the chairman in this regard.

Echoes of the BJP's recent victory in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan also resounded through the Session as the ruling party Members of the Lower House began the Session with shouts of "Modi sarkaar, teesri baar" (Modi Government for the third time).

Members of Opposition parties showing allegiance to the INDIA Bloc, including TMC member Mahua Moitra, alleged a breach of

MPS CONGREGATE IN NEW PARLIAMENT



BJP MPs flash victory sign on the first day of the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Monday

Parliamentary rules after a media report cited Ethics Committee findings.

"TMC MP alleged a very serious breach of Rule 275(2) contained in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha. The draft report by the Committee on Ethics regarding the Unethical Conduct by Mahua Moitra,

MP, was accessed by a media channel on November 8, a day before it was to be placed before the Committee," the TMC MP alleged.

The report was listed for presentation after the Question Hour. But it was not tabled till around 1 pm when the House was adjourned for lunch.

As soon as the House

reassembled at 12 noon after an adjournment, Ministers laid papers, and the three reports on Bills seeking to replace criminal laws were presented. However, Kirit Solanki, who was presiding over the proceedings, skipped mentioning the report listed as item number five in Monday's list of business.

TMC leader Sudip

Bandyopadhyaya asked the Chair in the Lower House as to why the item was not taken up. Congress' K Suresh and the RSP's N K Premchandran also raised the same question but there was no reply.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said later that for reasons best known to the committee, the report has not

been tabled. He said there would have been some reason which 'forced them' not to table the report on Monday.

"I think today or tomorrow, someday it will be tabled," he said outside the Parliament House.

On day one of the proceedings, the Rajya Sabha passed the Post Office Bill, 2023, while the Lok Sabha cleared the Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2023. The Post Office Bill, 2023 seeks to repeal the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act and consolidate and amend the law relating to post offices in the country. According to the proposed legislation, "the Central Government may, by notification, empower any officer to intercept, open or detain any item in the interest of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, emergency or public safety, or upon the occurrence of any contravention of any of the provisions of any law for the time being in force".

Replying to the discussion for the consideration of the Bill in the Upper House of Parliament, Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw explained the provision for interception.

The Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2023, which aims at regulating the legal profession by a single Act and seeks to target "touts", after an elaborate discussion.

Continued on Page 5

Election after effect Sensex on record high



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty soared more than 2 per cent to settle at record high levels on Monday, marking the fifth straight day of gains as the BJP's victory in Assembly polls in three States boosted investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,383.93 points, or 2.05 per cent, to close at a lifetime high of 68,865.12. The index touched an intraday record peak of 68,918.22. The barometer logged its biggest single-day jump since May 20, 2022. The total market capitalisation of BSE listed companies surged by ₹5.81 lakh crore to ₹343.48 lakh crore.

The broader Nifty also climbed 418.90 points, or 2.07 per cent, to hit its all-time

closing high of 20,686.80. On the 50-stock benchmark Nifty, 44 closed with gains.

Analysts said the BJP's clear majority in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh State polls strengthened the positive sentiment built up last week following robust

acroeconomic numbers and nabated foreign fund inflows. Besides, crude oil prices hovering below USD 80 per barrel fuelled investors sentiment, they said.

Among the Sensex firms, ICICI Bank and SBI led the index with the maximum gains of 4.68 per cent and 3.99 per cent, respectively. Other major gainers were Larsen & Toubro, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank.

On the other hand, Wipro and Tata Motors defied the trend and traded in negative.

Modi asks Opposition to end negativity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Buoyed by the massive success in the just-concluded Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday, asked the Opposition not to vent its frustration over the defeat in the Assembly polls inside Parliament during the ensuing Winter Session. Instead, he urged them to move forward, leaving behind 'negativity,' and sought cooperation in meaningful debates.

"The country has rejected negativity. We always have dialogue with Opposition friends at the start of Session, we always seek cooperation of everyone. This time also all such processes have been completed," said Modi, addressing media outside Parliament building ahead of beginning of the Winter Session.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media on the first day of the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Monday

This 'temple of democracy' is a very important platform for people's aspirations and strengthening foundation of a

developed India, Modi said and urged all members to come well prepared and hold thorough discussions on Bills

so that good suggestions come to the fore. But if discussion does not take place, the country misses those things, Modi said.

"If I speak on basis of the Assembly poll results, this is a golden opportunity for friends in Opposition. Instead of making plans for venting frustration over defeat, they should learn from this defeat, leaving behind the habit of negativity of the last nine years, if they move forward with positivity this Session, the country will change its perspective towards them. A new door could open for them," he said, adding that "they are in the Opposition but still I am giving them good advice." The Prime Minister urged the Opposition to come forward with a positive mindset.

"I say on the basis of my experience, I would say

Continued on Page 5

Cyclone Michaung unleashes fury in Chennai

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW
DELHI/CHENNAI

Life was thrown out of gear in Chennai and its neighbouring districts due to heavy rainfall caused by the severe cyclone Michaung, inundating the city, causing disruptions in flights and trains. Residents were startled when a video surfaced of a crocodile crossing a submerged road. The relentless downpour, reminiscent of the 2015 deluge, paralysed daily life, prompting authorities to declare a public holiday and dispatch rescue teams to aid a city besieged by torrential rains.

As many as five people have died due to rain related incidents, including falling of trees and electrocution here. Local trains have been cancelled and operations at Chennai airport have been suspended till Tuesday morning.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has temporarily denied permission for devotees to take holy bath at



Sri Kapilathirtham waterfalls. In view of the cyclone, the Tamil Nadu Government has declared a public holiday on Tuesday for all educational institutions, Government and private offices, financial institutions and banks in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu districts. Commuters found themselves stranded as suburban train and bus services remained affected. Heavily inundated roads posed a challenge to road users who were few and far. Power and internet disruptions compounded the city's challenges.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry on the situation arising due to Cyclone Michaung and assured them of all necessary Central help. Shah also said adequate deployment of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel has already been made and additional teams are ready for further assistance.

In a post on X, Shah said he had spoken to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and his counterparts in Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and N

Rangaswamy, respectively. "...Took stock of the measures taken to tackle the challenging weather conditions caused by the Cyclone Michaung. Assured them of all the necessary assistance from the Modi Government to secure lives," Shah said in the post. "Adequate deployment of the NDRF has already been made and additional teams are ready for further assistance," he further said.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), cyclone Michaung over west-central and coastal south Andhra Pradesh has intensified into a 'severe' cyclonic storm and is expected to make landfall near the State's Bapatla district on Tuesday morning accompanied by winds reaching up to 100 km per hour. The weather system is expected to persist until December 7 and thereafter become a deep depression. The storm has led to heavy rainfall in several parts of Andhra Pradesh, in most parts of Tamil Nadu, and southern Odisha.



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Fire breaks out at cancer institute

Close shave for patients, attendants

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A fire broke out at the Kalyan Singh Super Specialty Cancer Institute & Hospital in Sushant Golf City area on Monday afternoon, giving firemen a tough time in rain. Though no casualty was reported in the incident and the fire was extinguished quickly, the firemen had to work for hours to vent out the smoke which had filled the hospital wards and was causing inconvenience to patients.

As per reports, the SGPGI fire station received information about a blaze in the KSSS Hospital around 12:43 pm on Monday. Lucknow's chief fire officer Mangesh Kumar directed SGPGI fire officer to reach the scene. Three fire tenders from the SGPGI fire station were despatched to the site.

The CFO also reached the spot to oversee the rescue operation. He said the fire broke out in the server and battery room



Smoke billowing out of Kalyan Singh Super Specialty Cancer Institute & Hospital, which caught fire on Monday

Pioneer

near the operation theater on the second floor.

"The flames engulfed the inflammable material, which

further stoked the fire and it took a monstrous form," the CFO said. The patients and attendants were trapped, with

poisonous smoke filling the hospitals wards.

As the situation worsened, the CFO directed the control

room in Hazratganj to send more fire officers, fire tenders and smoke exhausters to the hospital. In the meantime, the firemen rescued dozens of patients and attendants.

In the final leg of rescue operation, the SGPGI fire officer, his Gomti Nagar counterpart and dozens of personnel present at the site extinguished the flames on a war footing and also pressed into service two smoke exhausters. It took two hours to bring the situation under control.

The hospital administration said the information about fire was received through the staff in the OT block around 12 pm. The fire brigade immediately reached the spot and as a precautionary measure, the patients, attendants and personnel in the OT block were shifted to the IPD.

"Four fire tenders immediately reached the spot and started the rescue operation. The fire broke out due to a short-circuit in the UPS room on the third floor of the OT building. The fire has been doused and there no disruption was caused to the medical services. A team has been formed to find out the cause of fire," according to the hospital administration.

CM: Remarkable sports culture established under PM Modi



PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided a remarkable boost to the culture of sports by launching relevant schemes and establishing sports centres in the country, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday. The results of various sporting events shows India's rapid progress at the international sporting events such as the Olympics, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games, with athletes securing numerous medals, Adityanath said.

Addressing a gathering on commencement of the UP Rural Sports League and the concluding ceremony of Brahmamaleen Mahant

Avaidyanath Smriti All-India Prize Money Kabaddi Competition, the UP chief minister said initiatives like 'Khelo India,' 'Fit India Movement' and Saansad Khel Mahakumbh (MP sports competition) have significantly motivated sports and athletes.

To further boost this momentum, sports centres are being established in every district, he added. "Under PM Modi's leadership, remarkable sports culture has been established in the country. Results of various sporting events shows India is rapidly progressing at the international level in sports events such as the Olympics, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games, with athletes securing numerous

medals," he said.

Adityanath said the UP government has taken various steps to enhance sports resources and activities in the state. UP has two international cricket stadiums and the construction of an International Cricket Stadium in Varanasi is underway, he said.

Fifteen synthetic hockey tracks, three synthetic running tracks, 67 multi-purpose sports halls, 15 indoor basketball halls, two judo halls, and six shooting ranges have already been constructed in the state, he said. Emphasising the government's commitment to encourage athletes, the chief minister highlighted the financial rewards and government jobs being provided to them.

Woman killed, body dumped in garbage in Sultanpur district

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a suspected case of rape and murder, a woman was killed by slitting her throat and her body was dumped in a garbage heap on the Ayodhya-Prayagraj highway in Sultanpur.

Marks of cigarette burns were found on the body of the woman, who was wearing a red saree and had applied vermillion on her maang and a bindi on the forehead. There was also bleeding from the ears of the deceased woman.

It seems that someone sexually exploited her, killed her and later dumped the body to conceal the crime. The passersby, who saw the body on Monday morning, informed the police about it after which the local cops along with senior officers visited the spot.

The police sent the body for autopsy and were making efforts to ascertain her identity with the help of cops from neighbouring districts.

In another shocking incident, a man killed his 10-year-old daughter as she pressed him to give her Rs 10.

This sensational disclosure was made by the accused after he was arrested by the Jaunpur police on Sunday evening. The accused confessed that he was depressed as he had no money left with him and his daughter was pressing him to give her Rs 10 and in sheer frustration, he killed

her and also tried to burn her body.

Rinku Sonkar, a resident of Sidhari Narauli police station area of Azamgarh, along with his wife, Madhu Sonkar, and daughter, Ragini Sonkar (10), had come to his in-laws' house for the wedding ceremony of brother-in-law Jhabbu Sonkar's daughter, Pooja, in Khanpur Akbarpur village under Saraikhwaja police station on Jaunpur. On Wednesday night, the marriage procession came from Karanjakala village under Saraikhwaja police station. After the marriage was solemnised, the baraat left with the bride on Thursday morning. After some time passed, the family started searching for Ragini Sonkar. At a distance of 50 metres from the house, Ragini's 70 per cent burnt body was found lying at the side of a plot. The family members immediately called the police.

After seeing burn marks at one place in the house, the police along with the forensic team collected some pieces of clothes and took them to the lab for testing.

The cops, while taking the statements of the family, suspected the hand of Rinku Sonkar in the killing. On Sunday evening, the cops grilled him after which he broke down. The cops, after his confession, took him in custody and sent him to jail on Monday.

Traffic cop hit by car moving on wrong side of road, hurt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A speeding car knocked down a traffic police constable on duty from behind near Bara Birwa crossing in Krishna Nagar police station area on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

The incident occurred around 1:30 am when Amit Kumar was manning heavy vehicles at the crossing.

In a video statement, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vineet Jaiswal said the speeding car was moving on the wrong side of the road and hit the constable, who suffered injuries.

The DCP said other cops on duty ran behind the car but the errant driver stepped on the gas and disappeared in no time. However, he was arrested on Monday. The injured cop was rushed to a hospital where his condition is said to be improving.

"We launched a manhunt for the errant driver by obtaining its registration number and CCTV footage. The errant driver was arrested and the vehicle was impounded," the DCP said. The accused was identified as Abhishek Das (31), a resident of Alambagh working as a salesman in an automobile show-

room. He was arrested from near his house in Vishweshwar Nagar on Monday afternoon," the DCP said.

Das was booked under IPC sections 186 (obstructing public servant), 333 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter public servant from duty), 307 (attempt to murder), and 427 (mischief).

During police interrogation, Das admitted that he was moving in the wrong direction and ran away from the spot fearing his arrest. He said he had parked his vehicle near the bus stand to avoid its seizure.

Man held for wife's murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Gomti Nagar police on Monday arrested the man, who was accused of having killed his wife for dowry at his house in Ujariaon locality on Sunday. His parents and other family members allegedly egged him on and helped him in executing the crime and destroying the evidence. The police also booked them for culpable homicide and under Dowry Prohibition Act.

The police said that the woman was killed over dowry demand by her husband, who strangled her and ran away, leaving the body in the courtyard. The accused was identified as Farhan aka Niyaz Ahmed of Ujariaon (near Vijay Khand-2) in Gomti Nagar.

The incident came to light when the neighbours informed her parents. The victim's mother filed a case against six people, including her husband. She alleged that her daughter was murdered when their demand for a car and a house was not met. The post-mortem report also confirmed murder by strangulation.

Maryam (21), of Bhimnagar in Gomti Nagar had married auto driver Farhan of Ujariaon one-and-a-half years ago. She is survived by a four-month-old child.

According to Maryam's maternal uncle, they were informed by her neighbours on Saturday night that she had died. "When we reached her house, we found her lying dead in the courtyard. There was no

one else in the house. We took Maryam to Ram Manohar Lohia hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Maryam's mother Mehar Jahan had filed a case against her son-in-law Farhan, his father Ayaz Ahmed and others. She had alleged that Maryam's husband and in-laws had been harassing her over the demand of a four-wheeler and a house as dowry.

ADCP (East) Syed Ali Abbas said the investigation revealed that the couple had a love marriage. Farhan's family was angry and had ousted him from the house. Farhan was living separately with Maryam.

On Saturday night, the police had received information that Maryam had fallen off the terrace.

Upcoming RS, Council polls crucial for BJP, SP

Lucknow (PNS): The tenure of 10 Rajya Sabha seats from Uttar Pradesh is set to conclude on April 2, 2024, while the tenure of 13 seats of the UP Legislative Council will end on May 5, 2024. A fierce political contest is anticipated between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Samajwadi Party for these seats, prompting veterans from both parties to strategically plan their moves.

To secure a position in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Parishad, an MLC requires the votes of 29 MLAs. The political landscape shifted after the 2022 assembly elections in UP, with the SP boasting of 118 MLAs, including 109 from SP and nine from Rashtriya Lok Dal. On the other hand, the National Democratic Alliance has 279 MLAs –254 from the BJP, 13 from Apna Dal (Sonelal), six from the NISHAD Party and six from Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP).

The Congress has two MLAs, the Bahujan Samaj Party one, and the Jansatta Dal two, potentially influencing the outcome based on their support.

As per the current projections, the BJP is poised to secure at least nine seats in the legislative council while the SP alliance could win four seats. Notably, this positions the SP to claim the post of leader of opposition in the legislative council as it

requires just one more seat to meet the standard of 1/10th members of the House.

In the Rajya Sabha's UP quota, the BJP currently holds 9 out of 10 seats. Its Rajya Sabha members include Anil Aggarwal, Ashok Bajpayee, Anil Jain, Kanta Kardam, Sakaldeep Rajbhar, GVL Narasimha Rao, Vijay Pal Tomar, Sudhanshu Trivedi and Harnath Singh Yadav. The Samajwadi Party has a single member in the Rajya Sabha from UP, Jaya Bachchan, whose tenure is concluding.

With 13 seats in the UP Legislative Council set to become vacant on May 5, political efforts are underway to secure the MLCs. The BJP holds 10 of these seats, Apna Dal (Sonelal), SP and BSP one seat each. Elections for these seats are scheduled to take place before the specified date.

Noteworthy among the departing legislative council members are Yashwant Singh, Vijay Bahadur Pathak, Vidya Sagar Sonkar, Sarojini Aggarwal, Ashok Kataria, Ashok Dhawan, Bukkal Nawab, Mahendra Kumar Singh, Mohsin Raza, and Nirmala Paswan from the BJP. Additionally, the tenures of Ashish Patel from Apna Dal (S) and Naresh Uttam from SP will also conclude, adding intensity to the impending political dynamics.

Buildings occupied by musclemen demolished

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow Development Authority's anti-encroachment squad, headed by Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi, bulldozed unauthorised structures forcibly occupied by local muscle men near Shaheed Path. After engineers reported encroachment, the VC and senior officials acted swiftly, pasting notices on the structures and cautioning locals to vacate voluntarily. The operation, involving four bulldozers, took five hours to conclude. The LDA plans to fence the area, deploying security guards and PAC jawans. Four big-houses in Alambagh, grabbed for a housing society, will also be reclaimed for low-cost houses, with the proposed scheme currently in progress.

Meanwhile, Rashtriya Prerna Sthal is scheduled to open to the public in March next year, as announced by Lucknow Development Authority Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi during a review meeting with engineers and officials on Sunday. Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob, accompanied by the VC, experts, and officials from the chief town planning department, also conducted an inspection on Sunday to ensure that the civil work was progressing according to the updated plan.



NOTICE

Be it known to all that names of my daughter and son are wrongly mention in Adhar card as Suhana Kushwaha and Vibhor Kushwaha, while their correct names Nishi Kushwaha and Himanshu Kushwaha are registered in their convent school records. They should be known as Nishi Kushwaha and Himanshu Kushwaha for future purposes. Vishnu Kumar Kushwaha, s/o Amrit Lal Kushwaha, r/o 16/1 North Lokpur, Naini, Prayagraj.

NOTICE

I, JC-702251P SUB/SKT SANTOSH KUMAR PATEL OF AFMSD, LUCKNOW-02 RESIDING AT VILL-KURRAM, POST-SATHI, TEH-BABERU, DIST-BANDA (UP) PIN-210121. TO BE INFORMED THAT MY SPOUSE NAME SANGEETA IS WRONGLY MENTIONED IN MY SERVICE DOCUMENT. I HAVE CHANGED MY SPOUSE NAME FROM SANGEETA TO SANGEETA PATEL IN MY SERVICE RECORD DOCUMENTS. WHERE OF MY SPOUSE NAME SANGEETA PATEL RECORDED IN HIS ALL CIVIL DOCUMENT.

Integrated public health labs to be set up in all districts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of its ongoing drive to improve health infrastructure, the Uttar Pradesh government is setting up integrated public health laboratories in all the 75 district hospitals of the state. "The laboratories will be equipped to conduct over 150 types of tests and save the time and money of patients as they would not have to visit Lucknow and private labs to get these tests done. Each lab will have a lab technician, a microbiologist, a biochemist and a pathologist," a government spokesman said here.

He said the Yogi Adityanath government was working on a war footing to implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision on the ground. He said significant

strides were being made through the Prime Minister Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM ABHIM) to fortify the health-care infrastructure of UP.

Under the scheme, 50-bed critical care hospital blocks are being constructed in block public health units, district integrated public health labs in district hospitals and medical colleges in the state. Apart from this, a 100-bed critical care hospital block and health sub-centre is being established in the district hospitals.

Under the PM ABHIM scheme, 515 block public health units, 75 district integrated public health labs, 50-bed critical care hospital blocks in 22 district hospitals and 22 medical colleges will be set up by the fiscal

year 2025-26. Additionally, 100-bed critical care hospital blocks will be established in 30 district hospitals. Apart from this, 1,670 health sub-centres and health wellness centres will be constructed in the state while 674 health sub-centres will be shifted to their own buildings. For this, the Central government has approved Rs 4,892.53 crore.

Integrated public health laboratories (IPHILs) are being established in all 75 district hospitals of the state. The state-of-the-art lab will facilitate microbiology-related tests, including virology, bacteriology, protistology, micrology, immunology and parasitology in every district hospital, reducing the need for patients to visit larger private hospitals for diagnostic examinations.

CITYBRIEFS

ANNUAL FESTIVAL

In the annual festival of Excellia School, organised in coordination with Excellia School principal Priyanka Dubey, students Shalini Pathak and Roli Pandey dished out patriotic songs while children dressed in colorful costumes enthralled the audience by Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Bihu dances.



Choose right path to reach right destination: CM Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Monday, said that all paths lead to the same destination and it was essential to choose the right path for the right destination. “At present, 142 crore citizens aim to make the country developed. The path to a developed and self-reliant India has been outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, where he has provided Panch Pran,” he said while inaugurating the 91st Foundation Week celebrations of Maharana Pratap Education Council at Maharana Pratap Inter College campus in Gorakhpur.

Yogi said that Maharana Pratap embodied courage, self-respect and self-reliance.

“Connecting the country with such sentiments, Prime Minister Modi has set the goal of walking on the path of Panch Pran, which signifies liberation from the mentality of slavery, respect for heritage, pride in great men, traditional arts and cultures, resolution for unity, and the fulfillment of civic duties,” he said.

“If we follow the spirit of Panch Pran, no one can stop India from achieving the goal of becoming a developed nation and the world’s biggest power,” he said. The chief minister emphasised that if all individuals fulfill their responsibilities in their respective fields with honesty, the country will progress rapidly towards the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the 91st Foundation Week celebrations of Maharana Pratap Education Council at Maharana Pratap Inter College in Gorakhpur on Monday

goals of Panch Pran.

Union Minister of State and former chief of the Indian Army, General (Retired) VK Singh was the chief guest at the function.

During the programme, the chief minister praised the military career and subsequent political success of General (Retired) VK Singh, stating that the symbol of public trust is formed when one’s actions and words are coherent. “When there is harmony between speech and action, the trust of

the people is gained,” he said.

In his address, General (Retired) Singh inspired the students, saying, “When we work for our name, success is undoubtedly achieved with the dedication to our name. The desire for a name is, in itself, a source of inspiration.”

He said today’s youth must be disciplined, intellectually vibrant and passionate about their goals. “The country requires such young individuals,” he said, adding that he had full confidence that the stu-

dents and youth studying in the institutions of the Maharana Pratap Education Council were progressing on this standard.

In his welcome address, Maharana Pratap Education Council’s president Prof YP Singh highlighted the journey of progress of the school.

Member of Parliament Ravi Kishan Shukla, Mayor Dr Manglesh Srivastava, vice-chancellor of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University and teachers and students were present.

Solve people’s issues with utmost seriousness: Yogi



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath meeting people for redressal of their issues at Janata Darshan in Gorakhpur on Monday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Monday, instructed the administration and police officials to address the issues of people with utmost seriousness, sensitivity and attention and ensure satisfactory solutions.

“The government will ensure effective solutions to every problem faced by the people. Negligence on the part of officials to resolve them will not be tolerated,” the chief minister said during Janata Darshan in Gorakhpur on Monday.

The chief minister met about 300 people at the Janata Darshan held in front of Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan on the premises of Gorakhnath temple. He heard their problems one by one and passed on their applications to the officials concerned with clear instructions to ensure prompt and satisfactory resolution of all the issues.

Chief Minister Yogi also assured people that no injustice would be done to anyone during his rule.

He also directed officials to take strict legal action against those encroaching upon peo-

ple’s land and properties and exploiting the weak people.

Yogi Adityanath assured people seeking financial help for treatment that the government will meet their treatment costs and handed over their applications to the officials concerned. He directed the officials to prepare estimates of their treatment costs and make it available to the government as soon as possible so that the required funds could be released.

He also directed officials to ensure transparent and impartial disposal of matters related to revenue and police.

Teenage lovers consume poison, girl succumbs

Lucknow (PNS): Facing objections from their family members, two young lovers, who wanted to get married, consumed poison to die together in Kushinagar. Both were found lying unconscious and were shifted to hospital where the girl was pronounced dead while the youth were referred to the district hospital where he is battling for his life.

According to reports, Rahul (20) of Pipramafi hamlet of Kaptanganj in Kushinagar, was having an affair with Anjali (18) from Patkhauri hamlet of Tole Diwahi also in Kushinagar.

The family members of both were against their affair and the girl’s family had fixed her marriage with another youth. She was to be married on April 23, 2024.

After Anjali disclosed her family members’ move to Rahul, they both eloped last Friday to get married. Vimla Devi, mother of Anjali, lodged a report against Rahul, accusing him of kidnapping her daughter. The family members launched a search for both but failed to trace them out. CO Kundan Singh claimed that on Monday morning both were found lying unconscious in a field in Pipramafi. They were rushed to a nearby community health centre where the doctors pronounced the girl dead and referred Rahul to district hospital. He said both seem to have consumed poison after finding that Anjali’s family had lodged a report against Rahul.

Not disappointed by party’s defeat in assembly elections: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after his party’s crushing defeat and the resounding victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in three of the four assembly elections, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said he was not disappointed and expressed the hope that the saffron party would face a tough challenge in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Accepting the electoral results as a democratic reality, Yadav emphasised the importance of confronting the BJP with discipline in any future challenges.

“In a democracy, such outcomes are inevitable. It does not always imply that ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas’ has been achieved. To confront a party like the BJP, we must be disciplined. I am hoping for a different outcome in the future,” the SP chief said, reflecting on the BJP’s victories in three states and the prospects of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

“The fight is big. To fight a big party like BJP we will have to make a lot of preparations. We have to be under strict discipline and have to fight the strategy with which they (BJP) are getting the majority. I hope the results will be different in future,” Yadav said.

A saffron wave swept across the Hindi heartland in the assembly polls, leading to the BJP’s overwhelming successes in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan that stunned not only its political adversaries but also contradicted predictions by several pollsters, who anticipated close contests.

The election results, particularly the losses in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, dealt a significant blow to the aspirations of Congress for the 2024 parliamentary elections, throwing the party out of power across a substantial portion of the Hindi heartland.

The clash between Kamal Nath and Akhilesh Yadav is

Tough to digest one-sided results, says Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the opposition parties having already blamed electronic voting machines for the Bharatiya Janata Party’s victories in three of the four assembly elections, Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati, on Monday, said the “one-sided results” in the four states had made people “apprehensive, astonished and worried”.

She said that the election results in favour of one party were not acceptable to the public. “This is a mysterious matter on which there is a need for contemplation,” she added.

In a series of tweets on Monday, Mayawati appealed to the party cadre not to be disappointed and exhorted them to prepare vigorously for the Lok Sabha elections.

She said, “It is natural for all the people to be doubtful,

surprised and worried because the results of the recently held assembly elections in four states of the country were one-sided in favour of one party, because considering the entire atmosphere of the elections, such a strange result is very shocking to the people and very difficult to get down the throat.”

The BSP chief said, “The atmosphere during the entire election was completely different and interesting, like a close fight, but the election result being completely different from it and becoming completely one-sided, is such a mysterious matter that requires serious thinking and its solution. A terrible ‘mistake’ in sensing people’s pulse is a new topic of election discussion.”

She said, “All the people of BSP fought this election with full strength, mind and money, which brought a new

life to the atmosphere, but they should not be disappointed by the surprising results but should keep trying to move forward by taking inspiration from the life struggles of the most respected Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar.”

“The Ambedkarite movement will never lose the courage to move forward without being disturbed by the election results,” she added. In the election results declared on Sunday, the Bharatiya Janata Party succeeded in saving its government in Madhya Pradesh and regained power in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan after defeating Congress. The Congress won in Telangana.

Mayawati has convened a meeting of her party leaders to discuss the 2024 Lok Sabha polls strategy. The meeting will be held in Lucknow on December 10.

share of 1.9 per cent in 2008, and one seat in 2018 with a 1.3 per cent vote share. Even when it did not win any seat in 2013, its poll percentage was 1.2 per cent. Akhilesh Yadav and his party created a lot of hype and launched an intense campaign in Madhya Pradesh, but the party failed to win any seat and ended up with its worst-ever vote share – a mere 0.46 per cent.

On 43 of the 69 seats that the SP contested in MP, it bagged less than 1,000 votes. In four assembly constituencies – Bahoriband, Chandla, Jataara and Niwari – it spoiled the game for the Congress. The BJP went on to win all these four seats. Apart from these four seats, the SP performance was insignificant despite the party carrying out its best-ever campaign in the central India

state. Akhilesh Yadav campaigned in Madhya Pradesh for six days with 24 rallies and roadshows, including rath yatras, in 20 constituencies. His wife and Mainpuri’s Member of Parliament Dimple Yadav also addressed a few rallies and roadshows.

With the defeat in Madhya Pradesh assembly elections, the SP’s poll losses have continued ever since Akhilesh Yadav took over the party reins in 2017. First, the SP lost the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly polls in alliance with the Congress. Two years later, the SP’s headline grabbing tie-up with arch-rival, the Bahujan Samaj Party, in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls failed to deliver. Then, the party lost the 2022 UP assembly polls, and now it has bitten the dust in Madhya Pradesh.

Woman lynched to death while trying to save son

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heart-wrenching incident reported from Gorakhpur district, a woman was lynched when she tried to rescue her 10-year-old son from the assailants. The woman’s father-in-law, who came to her rescue, was also attacked and is now battling for his life in the BRD Medical College Hospital. Reports said one Kusum was living with her father-in-law Ramji, 10-year-old son Sachin and other family members in Barrohi village of Sikrikanj in Gorakhpur. Her husband Harishchandra lives and works in Delhi.

According to Ramji, his grandson, Sachin, was playing with mobile phone on Saturday night when Mukesh, who lives in the neighbourhood, came and started abusing, beating and strangling him. Hearing the noise, when Kusum went to save Sachin, Mukesh and Dayashankar started beating her. When he went to save his grandson and daughter-in-law,

both along with their associates brutally assaulted them. When local villagers came to their rescue, the assailants absconded.

He claimed that the villagers informed the police and the cops reached the spot and took them to the primary health centre in Uruva from where they were referred to Sadar Hospital. The doctors there pronounced Kusum dead. Ramji was referred to BRD Medical College Hospital.

Later on the complaint, the Sikrikanj police registered a case against Mukesh, Dayashankar, Rambujh, Akash, Vikas, Pushpa Devi and Pawan Kumar and are conducting raids to arrest them. The cops on Sunday evening, claimed to have arrested Mukesh, Dayashankar and Pushpa.

In another incident, a woman, Mani Jain (58), was killed by slitting her throat by some unknown miscreants who later looted jewellery and cash worth lakhs of rupees and escaped. The incident took

place in a 3 BHK flat of Srinath Apartment on Ganesha Road under the Highway police station of Mathura. The killers cut the woman’s nose for the gold nose pin and her ears for the earrings.

The woman’s son Shivam, his wife and father-in-law Santosh Chand Jain also live in the same flat. Her husband, Pankaj Jain, runs a plastic goods shop in Dori Bazar. Pankaj and Shivam were at the shop on Sunday. At around 5:30 p.m., Pankaj called his wife but the phone was not received. He then called his brother Sunil Jain, who lives in an adjacent house. When Sunil’s daughter Shweta reached the flat, she was shocked to see the body of Mani Jain lying in a pool of blood.

SSP Shailesh Kumar Pandey said that the police were investigating the case from all angles. He said the CCTVs of the apartment were being checked and soon the crime would be worked out and the killers would be arrested.

Brother-sister duo killed in accident

Lucknow (PTI): A brother-sister duo was killed after their motorcycle was hit by an unidentified vehicle on the Khatauli-Miranpur road in Muzaffarnagar on Monday, police said. The incident took place near Ramnagar village when Ilma (17) and her brother Sadat (18) were returning to their house in Tisang village after attending a wedding in Khatauli, CO Ravishankar said. Efforts are underway to identify the driver of the erring vehicle who fled from the spot after the accident, police said.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and three others injured after a car hit a stationary truck from behind in Samvara village in Ballia, police said on Monday. The accident happened on the Rasra-Ballia highway on Sunday night. The injured were rushed to a local government hospital where doctors declared Beur village residents Sandeep Singh (32) and Shailesh Singh (40) dead, Kotwali SHO Ramayan Singh said. The other three injured have been admitted to the district hospital in a critical condition, he said.

Ram Lalla temple consecration to strengthen Ayodhya-Kashi ties

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant spiritual convergence, the sacred city of Ayodhya is set to strengthen its ties with Kashi, the abode of Lord Shiva, as the upcoming consecration ceremony of the idol of Ram Lalla in the new Ram temple on January 22 will see the active participation of 21 Vedic Brahmins from Varanasi, enhancing the spiritual bond between the two cities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who represents Varanasi in the Lok Sabha, is slated to perform the consecration ceremony on January 22, under the auspicious Mrigashira nakshatra. The responsibility for the sacred installation of Ram Lalla in his new temple has been entrusted to the 21 Vedic Brahmins of Kashi, Pt Deepak Malviya, a member of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple

Trust said. The week-long celebration is scheduled to commence on January 18. The consecration rituals will begin with the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, incorporating Ganesh puja, Ambika puja, Varun puja, Matrika puja, Brahmin puja and Vastu puja. Led by Vedic pandit Laxmikant Dixit of Kashi, a group of Vedic Brahmins will embark on their journey to Ayodhya on January 17. On the same day, the idol of Ram Lalla will embark on a city tour in Ayodhya, engaging the devotees in the auspicious atmosphere. The consecration rituals will include the symbolic use of water from the holy river Saryu, with 81 urns to wash the sanctum sanctorum. Subsequently, Vastu shanti and Annadhivas rituals will be performed.



According to Pandit Deepak Malviya, the consecra-

The consecration rituals will begin with the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, incorporating Ganesh puja, Ambika puja, Varun puja, Matrika puja, Brahmin puja and Vastu puja

tion ceremony will feature several important rituals, including Annadhivas, Jaladhivas and Ghrithadhivas for Ram Lalla. On January 21, a divine bath with 125 urns will precede the installation of the idol. The following day, after the daily morning puja, a grand mahapuja of Pran Pratishtha will take place in the afternoon, followed by

the Shodashopachara puja and the first maha aarti, in which Ram Lalla will be presented before to the devotees.

The Ram Mandir Trust has initiated the invitation process for the grand ceremony, extending invites to saints of Kashi, including those from the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust and Kashi Vidvat Parishad. The departure from Kashi to Ayodhya is scheduled to commence from January 15, with devotees eagerly anticipating the Pran Pratishtha ceremony. Pt Laxmikant Dixit will lead the group of 21 Vedic Brahmins from Kashi, who will be present during the entire consecration ceremony. This symbolic convergence of knowledge and spirituality from both cities is expected to create a lasting bond and a momentous occasion for devotees of Lord Ram.

	Aryavart Bank, Regional Office, Mirzapur		Possession Notice (For Immovable Property)
Where as The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aryavart Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section13(2) & 13 (12) read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the borrower (detailed below) to repay the amount mentioned in the Demand Notice within 60 days from the date of the receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount notice is hereby given to the borrower and public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the properties detailed herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with property will be subject to the charge of Aryavart Bank for an amount plus interest and other charges there on as mentioned			
Name of Branch-Mukeri Bazar Mirzapur			
Borrower Name & Address - M/s. Yadav Garment (Prop. - Nand Lal Yadav) R/O - Bhatwa Ki Pokhari, Post - Sadar, Distt - Mirzapur.			
Name of Guarantor/s & Address 1. Shri Chandra Shekhar S/o Shri Nand Lal, 2. Smt. Tripta Yadav W/o Shri Sanjay Yadav, 3. Smt. Seema Yadav W/o Shri Amit Kumar, 4. Shri Amit Kumar S/o Shri Nand Lal Yadav (All above R/O Bhatwa Ki Pokhari, Post - Sadar, Distt. - Mirzapur 5. Shri Manish Kumar Vishwakarma S/o Shri Om Prakash Vishwakarma, R/O - Nai Colony, Mahuariya, Post - Sadar, Distt. Mirzapur			
Description of Immovable Property -Details of Property- Smt. Laxmi Devi W/o Shri Nand Lal Yadav, R/o Mohalla Bhatwa ki Pokhari, Mahuariya, Tappa- 84, Pargana - Kantit, Tehsil - Sadar, District- Mirzapur. Sale Deed Details - Bahi No. 1, Jild No. 6225, Page No. 329 to 376, Serial No. 8779 dated: 29.10.2015. Situated at- Part of House No. 1397/1, Bhatwa Ki Pokhari, Ward No. 8, District Mirzapur Measurement - East to West- 12 ft., North To South - 24 ft., Total Area- 288 Sq.Ft. i.e. 26.765 Sq. Mtr. Bounded by- East- House, Akbal Ahmad Ansari. West - House, Kamal Nayan Maurya, North - Road Sarkari 8 meter wide. South - Land, Nand Lal Yadav			
Outstanding Amt. - Rs. 9,50,783.09 + Interest + Other Exp.		Demand Notice Date 05.09.2023	
Date: 05.12.2023		Possession Date 29.11.2023	
			Authorised Officer

45-yr-old farmer killed under mysterious circumstances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A farmer was killed under mysterious circumstances in the Shivrajpur police station area on Sunday night. He was identified as Prakash Pal (45) of Gadariyanpurwa, Birachamanu, Shivrajpur (Kanpur). His family members accused a youth of killing the farmer. Lalu, son of the victim, Prakash, informed the police that a youth had come to the house asking about his father who was in the field at that time. According to the police, a liquor bottle was recovered beside the body and blood was coming out from his mouth. Besides, there were marks of minor injury on his face and throat. The police have taken the youth into custody in a drunken state. "During prima facie investigation, it was observed that the deceased and the youth had consumed liquor. Thereafter, they had an argument. There were no seri-

ous marks of injury on his body. On the basis of the forensic probe and autopsy report, further action will be initiated in the matter", DCP (Kanpur West) Vijay Dhul said. In another incident a woman was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in her house in Ranikheda village under Auras police station area of Unnao on Sunday evening. On the complaint of her nephew, the police lodged an FIR against four persons, including the husband of the deceased and carried out a probe. Reports said that Kanchan (25), daughter of Parmeshwar of Drigpalkheda, Auras, was married to Arun Kumar, son of Indrapal of Mirzapur Ajigaon, Ranikheda, about five years ago. Arun had gone to Mumbai four days ago for job. On Sunday afternoon Kanchan was in the house with her son Vansh (3). Her

mother-in-law and brother-in-law were out of home and father-in-law Indrapal was in the field. After some time when her mother-in-law returned she found Kanchan hanging and raised an alarm. Kanchan's cousin brother Sonu accused her in-laws of killing her and hanging her body. Station House Officer (SHO) Rekha Singh said on the complaint of the nephew of the deceased an FIR had been lodged and a probe has been started. **ARRESTED:** The Deorahat (Kanpur Dehat) police arrested two criminals in an encounter near Nagina village turn late on Sunday night. During the exchange of fire, one of them sustained bullet injury. Circle Officer (CO) Bhognipur sent the injured criminal to the district hospital. The forensic team rushed to the spot and collected evidence. Deorahat Station Officer (SO) Monu

Shakya was carrying out checking near the Nagina village turn late on Sunday night. On seeing the checking drive two criminals tried to escape from there. When the police cornered them, they opened fire on the cops. During the exchange of fire one of them identified as Chandra Shekhar alias Shekhar of Barauli Ghat, Deorahat, sustained bullet injury on his limb. Later, the police also arrested his accomplice Pranshu of Ghatampur, Kanpur. Bhognipur CO Ravi Kant Gaud along with forensic team rushed to the spot and sent the injured Chandra Shekhar to the district hospital. He said another accused Pranshu was being quizzed. Many criminal cases were lodged against the injured Chandra Shekhar at several police stations, including Sajeti and Ghatampur. A first information report (FIR) will be lodged against both the criminals, he said.

3 children die as hut catches fire

PTI ■ FIROZABAD

Three children were killed in a fire in Khadit village in the Jasrana police station area, the police said on Monday. The children were sleeping in their hut in the Dera Banjara area when it caught fire late on Saturday night. Shakil, their father, tried to save the children but lost two of them to fire. The third succumbed in a hospital later. Shakil, who too received critical burn injuries, is under treatment in a hospital in Agra, SP (Rural) Ranvijay Singh said. The three siblings were Saamna (7), Anees (4) and two-year-old Reshma. Anees and Reshma died on the spot, while Saamna died in a Firozabad hospital, Singh said. SDM (Jasrana) Adesh Kumar Sagar said according to a report given by the BDO Shakil's wife was allotted a house under Prime Minister Awas Yojna in the 2022-23 fiscal, but since the house was unfinished, the family was staying in a hut. Shakil and his wife Mamjadi were sleeping in the hut when they woke up to find it in flames and tried to save the children.

Bus conductor dies in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR



the injured were sent to a hospital. Raids were on to nail the absconding truck driver, he said.

In another incident a youth going to see Hatia Mela was killed when he was hit by a train in Achalganj police station area of Unnao. His brother came to know about the incident on Sunday morning and informed the police. His kin said the youth was suffering from mental illness. Uttam Raidas (35) of Dariyaikheda, Achalganj, had gone to see Hatia Mela in the village on Saturday night. He did not return home at night and his family members also failed to trace him. On Sunday morning his elder brother Raju received information about the body of Uttam Raidas lying near pole No 120 of Ghanshyam Kheda railway crossing. He along with other family members rushed to the spot and

informed the police. Raju told the police that Uttam was suffering from mental illness. He had left the house on the pretext of seeing the Hatia Mela. As the kin did not blame anybody in the killing of the youth, the police sent the body for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a bike-borne youth was killed and his brother-in-law was injured when in a bid to save a cattle they collided with a truck near Bahurajmau village on the Unnao-Rae Bareilly Road under Bighapur police station of Unnao. The police took both the injured to the Achalganj community health centre (CHC) where one of them was declared dead by the doctors. The injured after the first aid, was discharged from the CHC. Arvind Tharu (28) of Ummedkheda Korarikalan, Achalganj, along with brother-in-law Shivraj (17) of Shivpur village had gone to attend the marriage of Ajay, son of Nandu of the village, on the bike. When they were returning their bike collided head on with the truck as a result of which Arvind was killed. He is survived by wife and two children.

Girl killed in leopard attack

PTI ■ BALRAMPUR

A leopard took away an eight-year-old girl and left behind her mutilated body near the Suhelwa forest of Bhagwanpur Kodar village, a forest official said on Monday. District Magistrate Arvind Kumar Singh sent SDM Tulsipur and a Forest Department team to the spot and ordered the capture of the leopard. Chandra Prakash's daughter Anushka had gone out to play in the village under the Pachperwa development block on Sunday when the leopard, hiding in the bushes, took her away. Their attention drawn by screaming children,

the villagers tried to catch up with the beast but it disappeared with the child. Forest department's Sub-Divisional Officer Manoj Kumar said. The girl's mutilated body was found during a search by the forest department. The DM said instructions have been given to set up cages and the family will be compensated for the loss after the post mortem. DFO Dr Sam Maran M said the department is searching for the leopard with the help of villagers in and around the sugarcane fields and has been installing cameras to trap the animal. In the last one month, five people, including two girls, have been killed in leopard

attacks in the area. Four teams, composed of experts from Jaunpur, Siddharthnagar, and Barabanki, are constantly visiting villages, but the big cat remains at large.

ACCIDENT: Two brothers were killed here after their motorcycle collided with an unidentified vehicle on the Balrampur-Bairach National Highway, police said on Monday. Satendra Rai Srivastava (32) and his brother Rajendra Harshit Srivastava (30) of Lakhaura Majga village here, were returning home on Sunday night when the accident took place near M L K College in the Nagar Kotwali area.

11-year-old boy run over by train

PTI ■ SAHARANPUR

An 11-year-old boy was run over by a train here while he was picking fruits from a bush near the tracks, police said on Monday.

Shah Alam, a resident of Paragpur village, had on Sunday evening, gone with his friends to pick fruits from the bushes along the railway tracks when the incident occurred, Superintendent of Police (Dehat) Sagar Jain told PTI.

The body has been sent for post-mortem examination, he added.

35-year-old man meets tragic end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 35-year-old man was killed after being hit by a speeding car in the Naini Kotwali area. Reports said that Prashant Tiwari (35) of Ramgarh Amilo in the Karchana police station area, used to work as a contractor in the Railways. On Monday he had gone to his sister's house in Arail and a collision took place with a bike coming from front near BPC Company and he was run over by the speeding car coming from behind. Prashant was admitted to a private hospital where he died during treatment. The police sent the body for the post-mortem examination after 'panchnama'. Prashant was not married yet. Police have registered a case and are searching for the errant driver.

Meanwhile two members of a family were killed and five others sustained injuries when the car carrying them was hit by a speeding Roadways bus near Sarayanadev road in Pratapgarh, the police said. The deceased were identified as Imran (40) and his daughter Ayesha (6), residents of Sultanpur. The police said the incident took place when Imran along with his family members was on their way to Jethwara. On being alerted senior police officials along with forces rushed to the spot and carried out rescue operation. The injured were referred to the SRN Hospital for treatment.

POLICE FACED WITH DILEMMA: A day after police in Kaushambi received an online FIR from a technician of a private firm about the "unbelievable" theft of a 50-metre-

high mobile tower, police were faced with another dilemma - how to find an article that wasn't ever stolen. Kaushambi Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Srivastava told the media, "The company authorities concerned had themselves removed their entire set up in early January this year through proper documentation after the contract between the company authorities concerned and landowner expired." The police have collected all the records and evidence. However, it remains a mystery why the firm's technician, Rajesh Kumar Yadav, filed an online FIR in this regard, eight months after the incident. In his online complaint, Yadav had said when he visited the spot for inspection on March 31, 2023, the entire tower, along with other equipment, was gone without a trace. He, however, inexplicably waited for another eight months before lodging the first information report (FIR) on November 29. The police conducted searches at Yadav's residence but he was found missing. Police conducted searches at Yadav's residence in Pratapgarh but he was found missing.

CYBER CELL: Now every police station will have a cyber cell to deal with virtual criminals. The victims will directly go to there and lodge a complaint. The cyber cell will first take preliminary action and then send the case to the cyber police station as per requirement where further action will be taken after registering a report. An important change is going to happen that the range level cyber police station is

now going to be converted into district cyber police station. After this complaints of cyber crime related cases will be registered in this police station. Besides specially trained policemen will be deployed in the cyber police station, who will take prompt and effective action in these cases. Preparations for this have also been done.

Currently, 235 policemen in the district have been trained under the CyTrain project of the Central Government. These also include 25 inspectors. Besides 17 other inspectors are also to be trained soon. Sources say that if everything goes well, the system will be implemented by the end of December. ADCP (Crime) Satish Chandra said under the CyTrain project policemen have been made proficient in various aspects of cyber crime and methods of investigation etc. Most of the policemen have been trained. Inspector will be in charge of the district cyber police station. Two sub-inspectors, one computer operator, four head constables, 12 constables and four women constables will be deployed in this police station. If necessary, the numerical strength deployed in the police station can also be increased. How big a challenge cyber crime cases are for the police can be gauged from the fact that in the current year alone, more than a 1,000 cases have been reported in the district. This is the situation when there is still about a month left for the year to end. On the other hand, 18 cases have been registered so far in the range level cyber police station.

485 jobs offered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K) kicked off phase 1 of placement session to a flying start with 485 jobs being offered to students at the end of day one of campus placements. The placement statistics highlight the outstanding success of IIT-K students with 428 students securing coveted positions through a combination of campus placements and Pre-Placement Offers (PPOs). Notably, 216 students have surpassed traditional hiring methods, securing PPOs from both national and international companies. Another impressive feat is the recognition of 12 students receiving enticing international job offers. Talking about the achievement on day 1, Prof S Ganesh, Director, IIT-K said, "The Institute takes immense pride in its steadfast commitment to providing high-quality education and forging pathways to successful career opportunities for its students". He said IIT-K remains dedicated to nurturing excellence and cultivating an environment that empowered our students to excel in their chosen fields. He said the Institute wishes success to the selected students and all those who had secured jobs and those who were appearing for placements in coming days. Industry leaders such as Microsoft, Navi, Texas Instruments, Qualcomm, and Deutsche Bank have emerged as the top recruiters underscoring the exceptional quality of talent fostered at IIT-K.

Stress on campaign for eye donation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The three-day-long 57th annual conference of Uttar Pradesh Ophthalmological Society concluded here.

Dr Abhishek Chandra from Varanasi stressed on running a campaign regarding eye donation. He said currently 30 lakh people in the country need cornea out of which only 10 lakh are children. On an average we get only 50,000 corneas every year through eye donation. There is a need to create awareness in the society, he added.

On the last day country's well-known eye specialist Dr KPS Malik and special guests, eye specialists Dr BP Gupta, Dr Dharmendranath and Dr Shilpa Taneja were present as chief guest. The eye experts mainly discussed in detail the modern treatment of cataract,

pupil problems, retina disease and new methods of treating dry eye.

Organising Chairman Dr SP Singh, Principal of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College (MNLMC) and renowned ophthalmologist spoke about treatment of serious eye diseases. He informed about modern available medical methods. Dr KPS Malik from New Delhi focused on the use of new types of intraocular lenses (IOLs).

Dr Shilpa Taneja explained treatment of dry eye and Dr Dharmendra Nath different types of lenses implanted in cataract surgery. Dr Sahiban Sabharwal spoke at length about treatment of glaucoma, Dr TP Lahane on complex types of cataract operations, Dr Ragini Pareek on cataract operation by special method while Dr VP Gupta on operation and treatment of eye cancer. Besides

Dr RP Maurya gave a lecture on treatment of eyelid surgery.

HOCKEY MATCHES: Taking a huge leap forward in the field of hockey, the first astro turf hockey ground, constructed by the Smart City Mission at the Science faculty of Allahabad University (opposite JK Institute) of the Sangam city is ready to hold hockey matches of international level. The AU is the first educational institution in the state to have the facility of an astro turf hockey ground capable of hosting international matches, officials said. The astro turf hockey field, constructed at the science faculty of AU has met the standards of Global Category Class II, a category mandatory for organising national and international level matches. The Federation Internationale de Hockey (International Hockey Federation) (FIH) team after

inspecting the ground and testing the same on several parameters has declared that the astro turf has also been found to be in compliance with international standards and has been approved for conducting national and international matches after meeting all the standards. FIH inspected the field on a total of nine points, including the ability of the turf to withstand the pressure of the ball, the bouncing ability of the ball and the racing ability of the turf etc. The turf also tested on the balance and fiction of the players feet and the ability of the turf to hold water. The sprinkle system and the ground have been tested for levelling and the water harvesting facility in the ground has been found to be as per the standards. The astro turf has been brought from New Zealand and it costs ₹5.37 crore.

Emphasis on HIV testing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Alok Ranjan while inaugurating the integrated STI, HIV, TB and Hepatitis campaign said the objective was to make India healthy and disease free and thus the ministry had decided to launch a special campaign. He said this special screening campaign will be conducted to screen and test for tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis B and C and sexually transmitted infections in jails across the state. He said the department laid greater emphasis on HIV testing because the immunity of infected patients was very low and they were more likely to suffer from tuberculosis. He said the campaign will be monitored and reviewed by the State Prison Department, Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Tuberculosis Department and Communicable Disease Department. Dr Ranjan said the sooner people start HIV treatment after diagnosis, the more they benefit. He said HIV treatment reduced the amount of HIV in the blood (called viral load), reduced HIV-related illness and prevented transmission to others. He said regardless of how healthy one felt it was vital to get tested to ascertain one's HIV status. He said the knowledge obtained from test results can be a crucial step towards receiving treatment and preventing the further spread of the disease. He said by priori-

tising regular HIV tests, one were taking an essential step toward safeguarding one's health and well-being. ADM (Judiciary) Suraj Yadav, Jail Superintendent BD Pandey, TB official Dr Rajeshwar Singh and others were present.

KRISHI SHIKSHA DIWAS: Vice-Chancellor of the Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T) Dr Anand Kumar Singh while addressing the students on 'Krishi Shiksha Diwas' celebrated in memory of the First President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad said the goal of farm universities was to attract best brains and excellent faculty towards new research and better agricultural education. He said the New Education Policy 2020 had been formed with complete focus on agriculture students and farmers and this will lead to agricultural entrepreneurship. He said this will also lead to adequate employment opportunities and make farmers self-reliant. He said agriculture education should be made compulsory at the primary level so that students may develop interest. He said all students of Agriculture in the final year do internship and take practical experience in biodiversity, higher production and food security. He said efforts need to be made to attract students towards this in UP as well. He said this will help them to establish their own industry and become self-reliant. He

said top concerns of management were choice of farming system, degree of specialisation chosen, size of operation and method of financing. He said elements of emerging stream of technology based products promise to improve yield of crop and livestock at low cost, increase availability of products at relative low prices and costs change and attract employment opportunities to acquire farm labour. He said major management concerns include increasing crop and livestock yields, reducing production costs with emphasis on levels of pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser procured, determining optimal size of collectives, improving labour incentives, conservation of water and soil in crop production.

YATRA: The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in collaboration with the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will present the National IP Yatra a two-day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) scheduled on December 5 and 6 in Kanpur. This yatra is a critical project aiming at creating an IP culture in India, with a focus on increasing awareness of IPRs among MSMEs. Given that MSMEs account for 90 per cent of all businesses in India, the workshop aimed to inspire creative intellectual endeavours that drive innovation, contribute to economic progress, and foster employment.

Students told about rich cultural & historical tapestry of Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) marked its illustrious 40th annual day, 'Padmanjali - Kanpur Ek Khoj', at the school. The chief guest was Monika S Garg, Additional Chief Secretary of the Department of Minority Welfare and Waqf, Government of Uttar Pradesh. While lighting the ceremonial lamp along with chairperson, Manorama Govind Hari Singhania she commended the assembly expressing admiration for students, teachers and management for orchestrating a profoundly message-driven programme.

She made a special mention of endeavour of the institution which inspired both students and the faculty through awards and recognition. She apprised the students about the rich cultural and historical tapestry of Kanpur and emphasising on its pivotal role in witnessing crucial events and movements that had indelibly shaped India's history. Chairperson Manorama Singhania blessed the students for their future endeavours. She enlightened the audience about school's notable accomplishments and its ambitious aspirations.

School prefect Vaibhav Mishra welcomed the digni-



The students of SPSEC taking part in cultural programme 'Padmanjali'

taries, parents and other invitees. Avika Singh, Rudraksh Singh, Vaibhav Mishra and Vaibhavi Singh skillfully showcased the accomplishments of Singhanians and school activities throughout the academic session 2023-24. The prize distribution ceremony a long-standing tradition acknowledged the top five scorers in all three streams with a total scholarship of ₹4,50,000. Scholars were also recognised for qualifying in the entrance examinations such as IIT, NEET, IISER and AILET. The city toppers, Satwik Wadhawan and Shikhar Agarwal, were felicitated for clearing the Chartered Accountancy intermediate exam. The fellowship for aspiring authors was awarded to three authors of the school. In

the category of special awards, the Lady Anusuiya Singhania Memorial Award was conferred on two students, Sampurna Rastogi and Kratika Singh, the outstanding student of the year went to Abhigya Singh and the Founder Chairman's Gold Medal Award, was bagged by Vaibhav Mishra. The teachers, Puneet Saluja, Reema Bhatia and Harneet Kaur, were also felicitated for completing 10 years of service. The Best Teacher Award was conferred on Vibha Dwivedi. The motivational school anthem, 'Saahas Dheeraaj Ke Hum Saathi', resonated through the school choir. Arindam Naha and Avni Dua paid tribute to the founder chairman late Govind Hari Singhania in 'Shraddhanjali'. Tanmay Shukla

and Yashi Pandey were the overall comperees while cultural anchors included Aviral Agarwal, Vedanshi Hemrajani, Drishti Rajput and Arjun Rajawat. The cultural programme started with the traditional 'Vandana Krishnam Vande Jagatgurun'. Kanpur's evolution was portrayed through a well-synchronised choir, 'Kanpur Ki Gaurav Gaatha', highlighting the city's institutions, religious sites and historical places. 'Brahmavart Ghat', one of Kanpur's holiest ghats, was depicted in a captivating dance drama, 'Brahmavart Gaatha', narrating its religious and historical significance. A play on the Mutiny of 1857, 'Kranti Ki Jwala', showcased the conscious beginning of the independence struggle with Kanpur being the first town to break free from British clutches. The cultural extravaganza continued with the vibrant ensemble of dances themed 'Retro to Metro - Rangan Ka Safar' by the tiny tots of Root, Bud and Bloom, capturing the essence of Holi with classic songs. Musical ecstasy ensued with the school choir and orchestra mesmerising everyone with melodious compositions by RD Burman in 'Pancham Geet'. The celebration extended to the rhythmic dance of students, 'Chandra Vijayotsav' to com-

memorate Chandrayaan-3's moon landing creating a sense of pride. Varied fillers, violin and guitar presentations and soulful vocal performances by students added to the brilliance of the function.

Vaibhavi Singh of class XII proposed the vote of thanks. The programme concluded with the national anthem.

SPSEC's adeptness in managing diverse events shone through the grand stage set up for the annual function. The exhibition showcasing creations of students in Science, Social Science, Mathematics, Vedic Mathematics, Robotics, Art and Sculpture earned a commendation. A literary gem, 'Kanpur-Ek Khoj', was unveiled. This book is a collective endeavour intricately detailing the religious and historical gems explored by the Singhanians in their vibrant city, Kanpur. Principal Bhawna Gupta, Manager of Accounts Ashish Bhargava, Manager of Administration Surendra Yadav, Vice-Principal Kavita Chadha and Headmistress Vandana Trivedi, spearheaded the event. Among the dignitaries were Chairperson Manorama Govind Hari Singhania, Vice-Chairman Abhishek Singhania, Vice-Chairperson, Varsha Singhania, and Vice-Chairman and Director Partho P Kar.

2 IAF pilots killed in trainer aircraft crash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Two IAF pilots died on Monday in a Pilatus PC-7 Mk II trainer aircraft crash during a routine training sortie from Air Force Academy, Hyderabad. The mandatory court of inquiry was instituted to ascertain the cause of accident. It was the first accident involving the Swiss-origin aircraft in IAF service.

The aircraft met with an accident on Monday morning during a routine training sortie from AFA, Hyderabad, the IAF said in a statement.

"It is with deep regret that the IAF confirms both pilots onboard the aircraft sustained fatal injuries. No damage to any civil life or property has been reported. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," it added.

India bought 75 trainers from Pilatus Aircraft for ₹2,900 crore under a 2012 contract. It is a turboprop, tandem seating, basic trainer aircraft of IAF.

Initial training of all pilots is carried out on Pilatus PC-7 Mk II planes and Kiran Mk-1/1A trainers. Those training to



become fighter pilots further train on the British-origin Hawk advanced jet trainers before they can fly supersonic fighter jets.

India is now building its own basic trainer aircraft. In March, the defence ministry awarded a ₹6,838-crore contract to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for 70 HTT-40 basic trainers. HAL will start rolling out the aircraft in 2025-26.

In July 2019, the defence ministry suspended business dealings with Pilatus Aircraft Ltd for one year for violation of a pre-contract integrity pact in the 2012 contract, while also factoring in Indian investiga-

tions against the plane maker for alleged corruption and irregularities. The contract with Pilatus Aircraft Ltd included a clause for the follow-on purchase of 38 more planes.

Monday's crash comes six months after an ageing Kiran trainer aircraft, flown by one of India's finest test pilots and with a woman flight test engineer onboard, crashed on the outskirts of Karnataka's Chamarajanagar on June 1, putting the spotlight on the decades-old plane and the pressing need to replace it with a modern aircraft.

Both survived the crash. The air force plans to retire the Kiran trainers by 2025.

Jaishankar, US deputy NSA Finer hold talks



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday met Principal Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) of the United States Jon Finer and discussed various bilateral and global issues.

The meeting came the backdrop of a case filed in a US court by American prosecutors against an Indian national for his alleged involvement in a plot to kill a Khalistani leader on American soil.

It is understood that the issue figured in the meeting between Jaishankar and Finer, though there is no official confirmation on it.

"Good to meet Principal Deputy NSA of the US Jon Finer this afternoon. Useful exchange of views on the glob-

al situation. Discussed taking our bilateral cooperation forward," Jaishankar said on X.

India on Thursday last week described as a "matter of concern" the US linking an Indian official to a man charged with conspiring to kill Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, a Sikh extremist, and asserted that follow up action will be taken based on findings of an inquiry panel investigating the allegations.

India has already constituted a probe team to investigate allegations relating to the foiled plot. On Wednesday last, US federal prosecutors charged Nikhil Gupta, 52, of working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun. The US prosecutors informed a Manhattan court that authorities in the Czech Republic arrested and detained Gupta.

Number of women MLAs remains low in newly elected Assemblies in 4 States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The number of women MLAs in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh Assemblies remains much below the one-third mark, as provided under the women's reservation bill passed by Parliament recently, data compiled by think tank PRS Legislative Research said.

Their number in Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh assemblies has gone up marginally, while it has gone down in Rajasthan, the data said.

Chhattisgarh scores the highest among all four states with 21 per cent of its newly elected lawmakers women. In 2018, Chhattisgarh had 13 women MLAs, 14 per cent of the total, which has gone up to 19 women now.

In Telangana, the number of women MLAs went up to 10, or 8 per cent of the total. In 2018, the state sent six women to its assembly. In Rajasthan, the number of women MLAs was 24 in 2018, which came down to 20 this time. Their number in Rajasthan assembly has never exceeded 15 per cent, the report said.

In Madhya Pradesh, 30 women were elected to the assembly in 2013, while in



2018, only 21 women could find a place in the House. This time, the state has elected 27 women.

The number of older MLAs also remains high in all assemblies, with Chhattisgarh, MP, and Telangana seeing their assemblies grow older.

In Chhattisgarh, the proportion of MLAs above the age of 55 years is 41 per cent in the new assembly.

In 2008, the state had 16 per cent of MLAs above this mark, with the number going up to 29 per cent in 2013, and to 40 per cent in 2018.

In MP, 50 per cent of MLAs are above the age of 55 this time. This proportion was 38 per cent in 2018, 30 per cent in 2013, and 21 per cent in 2008.

In Rajasthan, in 2018, 48 per cent of the elected members (95 out of 200), were above 55. The proportion has marginally decreased in the new Assembly,

settling at 46 per cent.

In Telangana, the average age of the newly elected MLAs is 56. The proportion of MLAs above 55 there has increased from 39 per cent in 2018 to 60 per cent in 2023.

When it comes to education, in Chhattisgarh, the proportion of MLAs with at least a graduate degree has reduced from 69 per cent in 2018 to 59 per cent in 2023. In MP, the proportion of MLAs with graduation degree was 44 per cent in 2018. It has come down to 36 per cent in the latest assembly, while the number of post-graduates has gone up from 27 per cent to 35 per cent.

A majority of the MLAs in Rajasthan have a graduate degree. In 2018 more than half of the elected women and about a quarter of the elected men were post-graduates. The proportion remains similar in 2023.

Winter Session: Silkariya mishap, acid attacks on women among issues discussed on day 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Silkyara tunnel mishap, acid attack on women and small children engaging in excessive screentime thereby impacting their overall growth figured on the first day of Winter Session of the Rajya Sabha. CPI (M) P V Sivadasan raised the issue of collapse of Silkyara tunnel and demanded an inquiry into the incident

alleging that safety measures were not implemented by the company concerned.

A part of the Uttarkashi tunnel -- around 200 metres from the entrance -- had collapsed on November 12 trapping 41 workers.

A rescue team pulled out all trapped workers on November 28 in a multi-agency operation that hovered between hope and despair for almost 17 days.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the House, Sivadasan termed the incident very painful and accused the tunnelling company of violating all security measures, rules and norms.

"...Transparent and fair inquiry is very necessary," said the MP. Silkyara was the not the sole incident and such events have happened before in the area, he said.

Ajay Pratap Singh(BJP)said



Sivadasan may have his own views on the incident, but the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the wellbeing of the poor.

He expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami, Union Minister V K Singh, and all those involved in the rescue operation, including rat miners, for successfully evacuating

the workers.

Expressing concern over the incident of acid attacks, Sangeta Yadav(BJP)called for effective steps to stop these crimes. She also favoured adequate compensation to the victims, impacting them skill development and an overall change in the attitude of society towards them. She also said nearly 1,500 incidents took place in the last five years.

Raising the issue of exces-

sive screentime on mobile amongst children, Fauzia Khan(NCP)said it could impact their mental and physical development. She also cautioned against online predators. Sant Balbir Singh(AAP)raised the issue of air pollution.

He said about 21 lakh deaths take place every year due to air pollution. The air was clean for only one day in Delhi, five days in Mumbai,

and 15 days in Chennai in a year, Singh said.

He further said whenever there are talks about air pollution, it is attributed to stubble burning by farmers of Punjab.

He said no farmer of Punjab wants to burn stubble and urged the Centre to grant financial assistance to farmers so that they don't have to burn their crop to clean the field before fresh sowing.

Visiting Saudi Arabian Minister to hold talks to firm up comprehensive Hajj plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to streamline hosting of Indian pilgrims for Haj and Umrah performers, Saudi Arabia's Minister for Hajj and Umrah Tawfig bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah has embarked on a visit to India to firm up comprehensive plans.

A readout released by the Saudi embassy in Delhi said Al-Rabiah will engage in high-level discussions with Indian leaders and prominent figures in the Hajj and Umrah services sector, with a focus on strengthening coordination and collaboration.

It said the collective aim is to bring about a qualitative and unique transformation in the experience of the pilgrims, further underscoring Saudi Arabia's enduring dedication to serving them and visitors with "unparalleled" hospitality.

Al-Rabiah's visit to India is an important part of a series of



international tours aimed at showcasing Saudi Arabia's unwavering commitment to serving Umrah performers and visitors, it said.

"This visit aims to achieve significant advancements in streamlining procedures, enhancing services, and outlining comprehensive plans for hosting pilgrims and Umrah performers, aligning closely with the outlined objectives of 'Saudi Vision 2030'," it said.

It said Al-Rabiah will engage in high-level discussions with Indian leaders and prominent figures in the Hajj and Umrah services sector, primarily to strengthen coordination and

collaboration.

"Specifically, the discussions will focus on facilitating the smooth travel of Indian guests to the revered two Holy Mosques, underscoring the commitment to providing convenient and efficient services," it said.

"To further streamline processes for Indian Umrah seekers, an inaugural exhibition for the Nusuk platform and the Tasheer e-visa-issuing centre will be organised during the visit," it said.

The Saudi government said this initiative highlights the "dedication" to providing seamless and user-friendly services for Umrah performers from India.

The minister is accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior officials and representatives from the private sector and associated entities.

"The visit aims to introduce an array of facilities available to the guests of Allah from

India, emphasising the distinctive benefits of the electronic Umrah visa and the Nusuk platform, reinforcing the commitment to providing exceptional services," it said.

It further said these international visits reflect the Ministry's continuous efforts in the Hajj ecosystem to establish robust communication channels and foster cooperation with countries worldwide.

"The primary objective of these trips is to showcase the exceptional services provided by the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Umrah seekers and visitors coming to the Kingdom," the readout said.

"Moreover, the initiatives seek to facilitate and enhance the procedures for those travelling to Makkah and Madinah, aligning with the government's steadfast commitment to creating the best possible experience for the guests of Allah," it said.

ZPM dethrones MNF in Mizoram

PTI ■ AIZAWL

The Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) stormed to power in Mizoram by dethroning the Mizo National Front (MNF) bagging 27 seats in the 40-member House on Monday.

The MNF won 10 seats, BJP (2) and Congress (1), Election Commission officials said.

Prominent ZPM winners include the party's CM face Lalduhoma, who secured the Serchhip seat defeating his MNF rival J Malsawmzuala Vanchhawng by 2,982 votes.

Chief Minister and MNF chief Zoramthanga lost to ZPM's Lalthansanga by 2,101 votes, the Election Commission said. He later called on Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and submitted his resignation, officials said.

In the 2018 Assembly elections, the MNF had won

26 seats. This will be the first time in the history of Mizoram that the northeastern State will be ruled by a non-Congress and non-MNF Government since its creation in 1987.

Nine out of 11 MNF Ministers who contested the polls lost. Home Minister Lalchamlana did not contest the elections.

Prominent among them are Deputy Chief Minister and MNF candidate Tawnluia who lost to ZPM candidate in Tuichang, Health Minister and MNF candidate R Lalhangliana who was defeated by ZPM's Jeje Lalpekhluia in South Tuipui and Rural Development Minister Laruatkima who lost to ZPM nominee Lalngthinglova Hmar in Aizawl West II, according to the Election Commission.

The 73-year-old ZPM chief Lalduhoma first contested the

Mizoram assembly polls on a Congress ticket in 1984, but lost to People's Conference party nominee Lalhmingthanga by a margin of 846 votes. The same year, he contested the Lok Sabha polls as a Congress candidate and was elected unopposed.

The ZPM leader resigned as State Congress president and withdrew his primary membership from the party in 1986, after he was accused of conspiring against then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla and some cabinet Ministers. Lalduhoma, an ex-IPS officer who served as the in-charge of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's security, had earned the dubious distinction of being the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law.

He was also disqualified by Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo in 2020, after

12 Mizo National Front (MNF) legislators filed complaints, alleging he defected to the ZPM by actively participating in party activities, though being elected as an independent in the 2018 polls. Besides the Congress, he was also once part of the MNF. He had floated his own party, the Zoram Nationalist Party, and was also instrumental in the formation of the ZPM. Meanwhile, ZPM working president K Sapdanga said it will stake claim to form the Government after holding a consultative meeting of newly elected MLAs and senior party leaders on Tuesday. "A meeting of newly elected MLAs and Val Uya Council, the decision-making body of the party, will be held most likely on Tuesday to decide on claiming stake to form the government in Mizoram," Sapdanga told PTI.

FROM PAGE 1

PARLIAMENT OPENS UP TO A WARM WINTER

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal while speaking in the Lower House of Parliament said there should be no role of the touts in the country's courts. The Bill seeks to amend the Advocates Act 1961. The Bill has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha on August 3 and will now be given to the President for her assent.

Trinamool Congress members claimed in the Lok Sabha that the Centre had imposed an "economic blockade" against West Bengal by "blocking" funds to key schemes, drawing a sharp retort from Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Trinamool leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay said ₹18,000 crore was due to the State towards Central schemes such as MGNREGA, PM Awas Yojana, and National Health Mission.

The Government has presented a heavy legislative agenda for the 15 sittings of the Winter Session with key Bills to replace the colonial era criminal laws, a draft legislation to provide for a framework for appointment of the election commissioners.

Some of the Bills that are likely to be taken up during the Winter Session are the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023.

The Opposition leaders in both the Houses also sought discussion in Parliament on issues such as the situation in Manipur, rising inflation, "misuse" of the Enforcement Directorate and the

Central Bureau of Investigation, the "imposition" of Hindi through the names of laws, particularly in reference to the three bills to replace the criminal laws. In the all-party meeting of the INDIA Bloc in the morning the leaders of the Opposition parties decided to raise the issue related to the alleged leak of the ethics committee report to the media before it was tabled in Parliament.

The all-party meeting of the parliamentary party leaders of the INDIA Bloc took place at the office of the LoP in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, ahead of the commencement of the Winter Session of Parliament on Monday.

The leaders of the block discussed their floor strategy in Parliament. Kharge is the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

MODI ASKS OPPOSITION TO END NEGATIVITY

change your (Opposition) direction a bit, leave the habit of opposing for the sake of opposing. Support constructive things that are in country's interest, debate the shortcomings that are there and you will see that the hatred among the people over such things, that may change into love," he said.

The Prime Minister said, "In 2047, the country does not want to wait long for becoming developed. This is the feeling in every section of the society. Respecting this sentiment, all members should take forward Parliament proceedings, this is my request to them".

In his remarks to the media, Modi said

winters may be coming late but the political heat is increasing very fast. "Only yesterday the election results of four States have come, the results are very encouraging. These are encouraging for those who are committed to the welfare of the common person of the country, who are dedicated to the bright future of the country," Modi said.

He asserted that those who move forward on the principles of empowering the four castes — women, youth, farmers and the poor — ensure concrete policies for their future and last-mile delivery, receive full support of the people.

"And when there is good governance, complete support for people's interest, then the word anti-incumbency becomes irrelevant. And we are continuously seeing that... Some people call it pro-incumbency, some call it good governance, some transparency, while some call it concrete schemes in national interest, but this is being experienced constantly," he said.

When the new complex of Parliament was inaugurated, there was a small session and a historic decision was taken but this time there will be an opportunity to work in this House for a longer period, he said.

"It is a new House, perhaps some minor shortcomings in facilities may still be felt. When work goes on for long, the MPs, visitors and media people will also realise that it would be good if some things need to be fixed. And I am sure that under the leadership of the vice president and the speaker, those things are being monitored," Modi said. The Winter session of Parliament is scheduled to have 15 sittings till December 22.

Bill aimed at regulating legal profession, curbing touts passed by Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, a Bill which aims at regulating the legal profession by a single Act and seeks to target "touts", Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said that there should be no role of touts in the country's courts. The Rajya Sabha had passed the Bill, during the Monsoon session.

The Bill provides that every High Court and District Judge can frame and publish lists of touts (those who procure clients for legal practitioners in return for any payment). According to the provisions, people named in the list of touts will be excluded from entering the court premises. Any violation of this provision will entail punishment with imprisonment of up to three months and a fine.

"The legal profession is a noble profession. The law commission was given a mandate to bring judicial reforms as per new circumstances. There should be no role of touts in the court premises in the country. Hence, it was felt that in the amendment there should be provisions related to touts," Meghwal said.

Initiating the debate, Karti Chidambaram of the Congress said, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice and touts thrive because of the com-



plexity in dealing with our legal system. "Because of the asymmetry in our society in terms of education, access to people in authority and wealth, sometimes people do not know how to navigate the legal system. This is what is being exploited and some people step in

as touts. Touts thrive because of the complexity in dealing with our legal system," the Sivaganga MP said. "We largely welcome the amendment...However, I urge the government to focus on the big fish rather than targeting the touts in the small courts," he added.

Battle lines drawn

Stormy debates set the tone for the winter session of Parliament as key Bills await passage



The BJP, buoyed by recent triumphs in Assembly elections, is up against a resolute Congress in the hallowed Houses of Parliament with the commencement of the winter session. The session's importance, especially for the Congress, is that it finds its dominance even within the Opposition's INDIA bloc challenged following the electoral setback and needs to restore its image. And since it is the penultimate Parliament session before the general elections, the Government wants to push as many Bills through as possible. The last session would be the budget session, with focus mainly on the Lok Sabha elections and the budget. This session has set the stage for crucial discussions and debates that will shape the nation's legislative landscape ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Concluding on December 22, the session is poised to be eventful, with a comprehensive agenda comprising 21 Bills and a charged political atmosphere. Adding to the expected drama, the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee has recommended the expulsion of TMC MP Mahua Moitra over a 'cash-for-query' complaint and the report is scheduled to be tabled in this session. But the report was surprisingly not tabled at least till lunch time Monday though it was item number five on the day's agenda, leading to speculation from the Opposition benches. This led the Congress to raise concerns about the functioning of parliamentary committees, urging a review of rules and processes. It would be interesting to observe what happens next.

One of the focal points of the session is the introduction of three Bills seeking to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act. This move signifies a overhaul of the legal framework and is likely to spark intense debates in both Houses. Another contentious move includes the Bill regarding the appointment of the CEC and Election Commissioners. The Opposition parties are expected to staunchly oppose this Bill. The list comprises 19 legislative business and two financial business Bills. The latter segment will involve the presentation, discussion and voting on the first batch of supplementary demands for grants for 2023-24. Simultaneously, attention will be given to demands for excess grants for 2020-21, accompanied by the introduction, consideration and passing of the related appropriation Bill. With a host of Bills on the agenda and political dynamics at play, the session is likely to be a litmus test for the NDA Government's legislative agenda and the Opposition's resilience. The nation will keenly observe the proceedings as the lawmakers navigate through a range of issues that will shape the nation's legal and political landscape. But the biggest question is, will Parliament function smoothly or be marred by walkouts and pandemonium? If its functioning is disrupted, it could be a big loss to the nation in general and our democracy in particular.

PICTALK



Tourists visit the Marina Beach as high tidal waves lash the shore owing to Cyclone Michaung, in Chennai

PTI

No rationale for giving subsidies to Tesla

Concession given to import of Tesla cars would could hamper the efforts being made by other car companies operating in India

Once again the issue of reducing import duty for importing their cars is in discussion for American electric car company Tesla. Till now, a 60 per cent import duty has been imposed on any car whose price is less than \$ 40,000 and a 100 per cent import duty is imposed on cars costing more than \$ 40,000. This is done to protect the Indian automobile industry from unfair foreign competition. India's automobile industry has made remarkable progress in the last few decades. The share of the automobile sector in the total manufacturing output of the country is about 49 per cent and it constitutes 7.1 per cent of the total GDP. Most of the vehicles plying in the country are manufactured in India and very few vehicles are imported. Not only this, India's automobile exports were worth \$21.2 billion. Tesla company has put up the condition of duty cut on the import of its cars to 18 per cent, for setting up a plant of car manufacturing in the country. The company says it is ready to invest \$2 billion in the country, provided the



import duty on its cars is reduced. Its request is under consideration. Today almost all the automobile companies in India have started producing electric and hybrid cars. In such a situation, customers already have options to buy electric cars. In India, nearly one lakh electric cars are sold monthly and the number is expected to rise rapidly. Keeping in mind the growing market of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the country, Tesla company has come up with a proposal to set up its plant in India, about which there is no opposition per se. To encourage the production of electric cars in the country, the import duty on components has already been reduced significantly. Today, spare parts for electric cars are being imported at only 10 to 15 per cent import duty. These are much lower than the import duty on conventional automobile parts. Due to low import

duty on electric car components, established automobile companies and startups in the country have started adding value to a large extent in the country. Given the incentives being given to electric cars by the Government of India, it seems that soon India will start meeting its requirement of electric vehicles. Till now, the key to the development of the automobile industry in the country has been the protection given to this industry by the government. Concession given to import of Tesla cars would not be right, as it could hamper the efforts being made by the companies already operating in the country. But more importantly, Tesla company manufactures luxury cars. In 2019-20, only 40637 luxury cars were sold in the country, which was reduced to only 19700 in 2020-21 during the Covid-19 period. The reason for this is that only a very small section of the country can buy luxury cars more expensive than 16 to 17 lakh rupees i.e. \$20000 US and even a smaller section can buy a car worth \$40000 i.e. 32-33 lakh rupees. In such a situation, if Tesla company is given an

exemption in import duty, then rich people who can buy expensive cars will naturally buy imported Tesla cars. This will affect the manufacturing of luxury electric cars in the country. Not only this, many other companies, including Volkswagen, who are also in the queue, will also demand lower import duty. We also have to understand that domestic companies are already putting a lot of effort into research and development in manufacturing electric cars. An Indian company 'Ola', with the help of investors, has made significant progress in manufacturing electric scooters in the country. Similar efforts can be made in cars, but the concession in import duty will hamper these efforts. We have to understand that Tesla's business model is such that it does not encourage domestic manufacturers of components, and only uses internal manufacturing technology. The expectation that the downstream value chain will develop with the arrival of Tesla company is not correct.

(The writer is a Professor, at PGDAV College, DU, views are personal)



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Searching for the right CM candidate

After the state assembly poll results, speculation about who the new chief ministers will be, is rife

The exit polls had predicted a neck-to-neck battle in these states, with a tied result of 2-2 for both Congress and the BJP. However, despite a close fight in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, the Party could only win Telangana. Despite the stringent anti-defection laws, MLAs are tempted with large sums of money to change sides, often resulting in the winning Party's government's collapse has strengthened itself in the North, but it has yet to find a foothold in the South. The BJP's successful poll strategy united its supporters and minimised internal conflicts. Fielding Parliament members as candidates helped the Party reduce internal sabotage.

Congress gained an advantage in Telangana due to its strong local leadership. The Party also benefited greatly from the defections of many leaders who began to see it as a viable contender, especially after its success in Karnataka. Voters shifted towards the Congress once it became evident that it posed a severe challenge to the ruling BRS, BJP and Congress did not announce chief ministerial candidates before the polls. Both parties must decide whether to continue with established leaders or search for new leadership. Congress must decide whether to appoint Revanth Reddy or a new face.

The Party has many potential candidates, so the main question is how to implement the new rules. The BJP favours phasing out old guards like Vasundhara Raje, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Raman Singh, who have had their innings. Another crucial factor when selecting new candidates is their caste. A diverse mix of castes is essential, not limiting it to Rajputs or forward castes. Additionally, their performance will also be taken into consideration. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants a suitable candidate to deliver the States in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. This is his top priority for performing a hat trick.

Let's take a look at Madhya Pradesh as an example. Shivraj Singh Chouhan, one of the



longest-serving Chief Ministers, is ready to continue. During an event in Madhya Pradesh, Chouhan even asked the public for their opinion on whether he should run for Chief Minister again if elected. There are many potential candidates for the top post in Madhya Pradesh. They include three Union Ministers, Narendra Singh Tomar, Fagga Singh Kulaste, and Prahlad Patel, who provide a range of options. Kailash Vijayvargiya, the Party's General Secretary and Jyotiraditya Scindia, the Union Minister who helped bring down the Kamal Nath government, are also on the list of potential candidates. The prominent candidate in the State of Rajasthan would be the former chief minister Vasundhara Raje. Union ministers Bhupendra Yadav and Ashwini Vaishnav, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Minister Arjun Meghwal, and Mahant Balaknath are also in the race. Rajyavardhan Rathore is a Rajput and a multiple-time cabinet minister. Satish Poonia served as the Rajasthan BJP president when the Party was out of power. In early 2023, C P Joshi, a Brahmin and two-

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DESPITE THE STRINGENT ANTI-DEFECTION LAWS, MLAS ARE TEMPTED WITH LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO CHANGE SIDES, OFTEN RESULTING IN THE WINNING PARTY'S GOVERNMENT'S COLLAPSE

time MP, replaced Poonia as the state BJP president. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, a new-generation BJP leader, is also a potential candidate for the CM of Rajasthan. In Chhattisgarh, too, former chief minister Raman Singh is a front-runner. Raman Singh, the BAMS doctor who ruled Chhattisgarh for 15 years till 2018, is the most recognisable face of the Party in the State. He was a union minister before he became the chief minister of Chhattisgarh in 2003. However, he has been sidelined in the past five years. Vishnu Dev Sao is also a contender for CM. He has a clean image, comes from an RSS family and has risen. Union Minister Renuka Singh, a prominent tribal leader, from the Bharatpur-Sonhat constituency is yet another option. Congress, on its part, must choose a leader to keep the Party united in Telangana. The leader of BRS., K Chandrashekhara Rao is known for his talent in luring away members from other parties. Historically, Congress has lost its ability to protect its flock. This was visible in

Goa, Karnataka, and other states. Revanth Reddy is the most likely candidate in Telangana. He belongs to the robust Redd and had the full support of Congress leadership despite criticisms from within the Party for his style of functioning. Starting with ABVP as a student, he has ended up at the top. Reddy faces various challenges, including winning more seats in the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. However, it's more crucial for him to keep his Party united. Of late, the instability kicks off with horse trading, commencing immediately after the government's formation. Despite the stringent anti-defection laws, MLAs are tempted with large sums of money to change sides, often resulting in the winning Party's government's collapse. Political parties use tricks to buy the required M.L.A.s to snatch the government. The BJP is upbeat about its success and is already strategising for the 2024 polls. The opposition group INDIA's future is still being determined after the huge BJP win.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)



KALYANI SHANKAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOAX EMAILS

Sir—Around 48 schools in Bengaluru received such hoax e-mails about the Bombay threat that had troubled the entire state machinery in Karnataka. The point of contention is that hoax mail had been targeting the school children. To understand the peculiarity of the matter, the school authorities immediately alerted the police as well as the parents of the children and ensured the immediate vacant school premises. The probe is being conducted by the police authorities, meanwhile, the question is who could be the actor doing so? The mail raised eyebrows among parents, about how such a cyber loop arises in the metro city of Bengaluru.

The matter is of urgent importance, as it is concerned with the safety and security of children. The police and the cyber cell must reach the top of the matter and must unearth all the facts and intentions of all those who are planning such acts of unrest, fear and chaos in society. Until and unless the situation is normal, it is the right time for the government too, to think about an appropriate plan of action and measures via which the security of school children can be ensured.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

PROTECTION FOR JOURNALIST

Sir—The Supreme Court on Friday extended the interim protection from arrest it had granted to four journalists against whom the Gujarat Police had issued summonses in connection with an article published on the Adani Group. The top court was hearing the pleas filed by Ravi Nair, Anand Mangnale, Benjamin Nicholas Brooke Parkin and Chloe Nina Cornish against the summonses. Nair and Mangnale have challenged the summonses issued by the Ahmedabad crime branch asking them to appear for questioning with respect to the preliminary enquiry (PE) into their article published on the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) website. Nair and Mangnale received notices from the

Saffron surge



The BJP's surge in the northern states with a 3-1 victory against the 'INDIA' bloc, again proved Modi is the heartland's hero. The saffron party stormed and accomplished the much-needed victory just a few months before the national elections. The BJP's star campaigner PM Modi led the party's campaign single-handedly in the elections proved himself as a popular vote-catcher and remained a towering figure in the national political arena.

The Telangana's victory of Congress in the bi-

terly fought contest is the only solace to the oldest party which miserably failed to retain Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh while facing a humiliating debacle in MP, which it hoped for a comfortable win. While the Telangana Congress could demolish the KCR's BR's fort, which was seen as a corrupt and familial outfit, the credit for the party's handsome victory in the state mainly goes to its firebrand and flamboyant state Congress Chief A Revanth Reddy. The Telangana's victory also implies that A Revanth Reddy is emerging as Telangana's YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the AP CM.

But, these results are a rude shock and fodder for thought for the Opposition's 'INDIA' bloc, yearning to trounce the BJP. Should this be a pointer to the next Parliament elections, the faultless among INDIA Constituents such as DMK's antagonist comments on Sanatana Dharma and Rahul Gandhi's distasteful remarks on Modi are proving costly and merit corrective steps.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

crime branch in October directing them to appear in person in connection with the PE launched on the complaint by an investor Yogeshbhai Mafatlal Bhansali. The other pleas have been filed by Parkin and Cornish, who were summoned by the Gujarat Police for a preliminary enquiry on a complaint filed by an investor in the Adani group companies.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

ED OFFICERS INDULGING IN CORRUPTION

Sir—Remember, during the two years before 2014, what did those in power complain about today's opposition? How were the Central Bureau of Investigation agencies accused of misuse? The Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation were called caged parrots. When the same allegations are being levelled against the ruling party, those allegations are being rejected outright. The world is watching how one by one the opposition, critics, leaders, writers, journalists and

activists who have raised their voices against government policies are being raided by the CBI, ED or Income Tax Department every day. The question here arises is whether only opposition leaders are thieves and indulge in illegal affairs. Are the ruling parties saints? There is no corruption happening during today's rule? They never answer this. Now the people of the Enforcement Directorate appointed by them are themselves infiltrating and getting arrested red-handed. A few days ago, it was reported that the Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau had arrested two Enforcement Directorate officers, Naval Kishore Meena and his associate Babul Meena, for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹ 15 lakh to settle a case related to the chit fund case. The central government officers are turning out to be a robber!

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

BECOME AN OBSERVER

After having done what we could, we must leave it to God, and become an observer



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

How is this word defined in English? An observer is a person who watches or notices something. But in Sanskrit, it has wider meaning. To understand it, let us refer to the verse # 2.47 of the Bhagavad-Geeta. What does this very famous verse teach us? “You have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining its fruits (results). You should not try to speculate about the fruit of action.” What do we normally do? We are habituated to speculate, predetermine, get attached to results, etc. Unfortunately, we have not been given this right. So, what happens? We suffer. This article is to dissuade us from acting in this fashion, because of ‘gahana karmano faith’ (the intricacy of action is very difficult to understand).

The following example will clarify. We apply for a job, as do so many. We have certain qualifications. Do they match with what the job requirements are in the eyes of those deciding? They ask certain questions, for which we are not well prepared, but someone else is. How do they formulate these questions? As we go deeper into it, complications compound. Because what will ultimately happen is what was destined. This is the eternal truth. We all get what is destined, no more or no less.



Another example will shed more light on the subject. A golf player reaches the top of the world standing, but then his form dives. What happened? Good karmaphalas took him to the top, but when bad karmaphalas manifested, his fortune suffered greatly. This we do not accept and keep on struggling. What should we do? Do we have an option to overturn our luck? We do and we don't. First, we cannot do anything about it, even if God doesn't intervene. Why? Because the creation functions based on the 'Karmaphala Principle', which is: “What we sow we reap.” Every act by body, mind and words results in a fruit good or bad. These must come to fruition. Then, are we stuck? No, we are not. God is very kind; we are never condemned. We have to approach God for help. Why? Because God can help us come out of our bad karmaphalas. It is not easy, though we have to start doing what yogis do, which is, “karmayogis, giving up attachment, perform acts by body, mind, intelligence and by senses also for self-purification only.” God is very generous; He begins to help us as we get started. Let us go into further details about what happens and can happen, if we approach God. There is just not one type of help available. In verse #7.16, Lord Krishna has commended four kinds of people, out of which two are distressed and seekers of wealth. In the last verse of the Geeta, Sanjay has spoken about being blessed with opulence, victory, wealth and morality, if one makes a connection with God. (18.78) These are the other types of our desires. But what we will ultimately get will be decided by God only. Therefore, after having done what we could we must leave it to God, i.e. become an observer. If we wish to further secure ourselves, then, we must become devotees of God.

In the second part of this verse, Lord Krishna mentions that His devotees become special. What happens? God takes charge of their lives. What does it mean? (11.33) Some famous examples besides of Arjuna are Adi Shankaracharya, who established four ‘mathas’ in Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Sringeri. God used Swami Vivekananda to spread Sanatana dharma across the world. These are very famous examples, but, those placed in the lower levels of devotion, are used for doing good to people around them. We, souls, expected to do two roles? One is to do our duties, and the other is to constantly evaluate what we are doing. This is what being an observer is. In the case of non-devotees, God is an observer, and in the case of devotees, they become observers. Because God takes the role of ‘Karta’ (doer) in their lives. They have reached the third level while doing karma (duties) and having taken ‘sharan’ (shelter). They can well and truly become observers fully assured about their future. How else?

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Balochistan: An undeclared war zone- II

Human rights violations are rampant in Balochistan. The Pakistan is waging an undeclared war on Baloch people, writes Mir Khan Baloch



Anwarul Haq Kakar was a senator in the Balochistan assembly before resuming office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. ISI has given him special instructions to pursue the narrative of Islamabad to counter the ongoing Balochistan freedom movement. His NGO, ‘Voice of Balochistan’ publishes content on social media and YouTube. He is head of well-known state-sponsored death squads whose prime objectives are to facilitate Pakistan ISI, MI (Military Intelligence) and the army to locate the Baloch activists and freedom-loving patriots and later kill them in fake encounters. He often can be seen with Sarfaraz Bugti who is another cabinet member of the current government but he runs dozens of death squads in Sui, Dera Bugti, Pirkoh, Loti, Sibi and adjoining areas of Dera Bugti. His most active death squad militia is the Bugti Aman Force which openly confesses to killing patriot Baloch fighting against Pakistani illegal occupation of Balochistan. Sarfaraz Bugti had countless meetings with another notorious radical death squad Shafiq Mengal involved in the abductions, and killings of Baloch in district Khuzdar, Wadh, Sorab, and Kalat areas. His proxy militia is also involved in sectarian violence such as targeting Shia communities living in Balochistan, he enjoys the full support of the Pakistan army. Pakistan army distributed ministries to all of its proxy assets, one of them is Jamal Raisani 20 years 20-year-old boy, who is the son of Siraj Raisani who openly advocated assassinations of pro-independent seeking leadership and activists. He was killed in a suicide attack in Mastung along with his 100+ party members. Islamabad had given them ministries as compensation to acknowledge their contribution to facilitating the army and the ISI. Pakistan is repeating the Bangladesh style of Baloch genocide and hiring death squads like Al Shams and Al Badr who were used against Mukti Bahini the freedom fighters of Bangladesh in 1971. It is very sad that on 27 March 1948, Jinnah

BALUCH PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING A PEACEFUL FUTURE FREE OF FEAR; THEY WANT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA

ordered its army to invade Balochistan in a similar fashion Russia invaded Ukraine. They attacked the Palace of Balochistan's King, they fired artillery shells and opened indiscriminate firing. The mosque of the King of Kalat still bears the marks of bombing. Hence the instrument of annexation was signed by force with the Prince of Balochistan. The people of Balochistan did not join Pakistan willingly and they reserve the right to regain their independence. After the invasion of Pakistan, they kept resisting on various occasions but unfortunately, none gave any heed to their suffering and problems. China is exploiting the resources of Balochistan For many decades China made entry into Balochistan and extracted minerals of Balochistan such as Gold, Copper, Silver, and Uranium from Balochistan's Rekodet, Saindak and other areas. Pakistan is brutally suppressing the voices of ordinary Baloch people. Baloch people are demanding a peaceful future free of fear, they want complete independence and good relations with India and the rest of the world. Reports are emerging that Pakistan and China are abducting Baloch civilians, among them are women being raped, children being terrorized, and students being made victims of enforced disappearances. Pakistan under the nose of the United Nations and civilized world, is repeating the atrocities its army perpetrated against Bengalis in 1971. Baloch people are being butchered and bombed which must be a matter of worry for the civilized world. How can we sleep when humanity in Balochistan is under constant threat and Baloch people

are facing heinous crimes by the Pakistan army? To quell their liberation movement, the Pakistan establishment is using air force to bomb ordinary unarmed Baloch people which is against the international laws. About 30,000 Baloch prisoners are being kept in secret detention centers and 2 lakh Baloch have been killed since 1948. This is a huge ratio of ethnic cleansing and it must be recognized genocide of Baloch people. Pakistan is repeating the same cruelty that its army did in Bangladesh in 1971. Today Baloch people are being butchered, their land is being occupied and their resources are being exploited. If Balochistan becomes independent I believe there will be peace because they are not radicals, they are not against India, they are not against peace, and they are not pursuing any sort of policy to invade any country. I urge the government of India to speak about the massive scale of the Baloch genocide taking place and how people over there are deprived of fundamental rights to independence. There is no harm in inviting pro-independent Baloch leadership to India because Balochistan historically is not part of Pakistan and they don't accept Pakistan's occupation. We must listen to them and accept the genuine stance of the Baloch people rather than relying on Pakistan's fabricated lies and illegal rule of Balochistan. Our leadership of both countries must sit together and help their cause so we can have a friendly country of Balochistan to end Pakistan's day-to-day border infiltration, terrorism, proxy wars, and use of other anti-India elements. Balochistan is not an internal issue of Pakistan and we have the right to talk about

Balochistan in the open, in parliament, in the media and globally. India is a strong country it has the guts to take a strong position to help Balochistan get its liberation. Liberating Balochistan is tantamount to solving many problems internally and internationally at a time. The situation in occupied Balochistan is pathetic and deserves international attention. The aspiration of 1.4 billion Indians echoes the current government to make appropriate decisions by giving a helping hand to support the aspirations of millions of Baloch people. Who Leads the Balochistan Movement? In the world liberation movements are led by one leader who has the vision, and background of not compromising on a national cause and people trust him/her. Balochistan liberation movement is led by Baloch nationalist leader Hyrbayir Marri who from his childhood is attached to Balochistan cause. He is the son of Baloch veteran leader late Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. He enjoys the full support of his people from Balochistan and the overseas population. He had never accepted the slavery of Pakistan. His determination and commitment to his people are adorable. Marri is an international calibre leader and the world community has always given him immense respect and space. He urged the Baloch community to join hands and work for the independence of united Balochistan. *(The writer is a Baloch human rights activist covering Balochistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. Views are personal)* This is the second part of the two-part series on Balochistan . Concluded

Climate change: Challenges and COP28

India's unique and novel initiative– Mission LiFE and Green Credit Program (GCP) can be replicated by other countries

The whole world is concerned about climate change and its ill effects. Climate Change concerns have attained centre stage in all environmental, social and economic deliberations at the National as well as Global levels. In this sequence, again during the 28th session of the COP (Conference of Parties) related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which started November 30 in Dubai, UAE, more than 190 countries are deliberating on various issues. In this conference, countries around the world are discussing the challenges related to climate change and reviewing the progress made in the decisions taken in previous conferences as well as global brainstorming.



VIVEK SAXENA

India has taken several concrete initiatives at the national and international levels in recent years to address the challenges of climate change. To take this movement forward, the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Government of India has notified the Green Credit Scheme (GCP) and rules in October 2023. Its objective is to encourage every individual and community to promote a healthy and environment-friendly lifestyle. The concept of the Green Credit Scheme will be based on a very simple process to benefit from environmentally favourable conditions. Therefore, common people, community organizations, industries and corporations will be encouraged to adopt

and support environment-positive actions under the Green Credit Program (GCP), proposed at the National Level. The program will also enable India to meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), submitted to UNFCCC. The program envisages incentives for voluntary environmental actions of various stakeholders. Presently the guidelines and rules have been notified for tree planting and water conservation-related activities. Sustainable Agriculture, Waste Management, Air Pollution Reduction, Mangrove Conservation and Restoration, Ecomark-based trading by manufacturers, Sustainable Building and Infrastructure are the other sectors that will also be covered under the

Green Credit Program (GCP) for financial incentives. Under this scheme, various stakeholders will be encouraged to voluntarily adopt environment-friendly activities by encouraging competitive market-based trading for availing benefits of green credits. The main objective of this scheme is to encourage environmentally positive actions so that the challenges of environmental protection and climate change can be faced at the individual and community levels. It aims to allocate credit as per the activity and also to encourage the process of measuring and verifying the progress of the activity and also to encourage environment-positive actions to raise awareness at the grassroots level on a large scale and fulfil the vision of Mission LiFE.

This will also support the adoption of environment-friendly lifestyles and meeting sustainable development goals (SDGs), based on values and policies. GCP will also encourage individuals, farmer producer associations, environment-friendly agriculture, industries, urban and rural local bodies, private sector, industries, NGOs and community organizations etc. to adopt environment-friendly positive actions in the form of tradable 'Green Credits', for which market-based system is being envisaged under the program. Green credits, certified as per the notified format of the Green Credit Program will be verified by the Program Administrator as a unit, the benefits of which will be determined as per market-based

assessment. The eligible entity has to register to generate green credit units. There will be a system of third-party certification to certify the activities of the registered units as units of green credit. Under this, any activity by the consumer or community to obtain or spend green credit is subject to market-based verification. The quantum and value of green credit will be determined by the authorized agency and will be determined on the environmental positive benefits associated with the activity. The quantity and value of green credit will be determined by the authorized agency as per the rules and norms approved by the Central Government. The promotion of green credit will have many benefits, such as the

promotion of green industries, and pollution control which will ensure improvement in air and water quality and protection of biodiversity. The pace of community and individual-driven planting of trees will increase. Challenges of climate change will also be addressed. The Green Credit Scheme is a novel and unique initiative to achieve the goals and objectives of Mission LiFE, launched by Prime Minister Modi. This unique initiative can be adopted by other nations at the global level by adjusting environment-friendly lifestyles. *(The author is Dy Director General in the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Views are personal)*

BJP breaches BSP, Congress bastions, gets Dalit votes

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The BJP inflicted a blow to the Congress and the BSP in Rajasthan by breaking into their traditional Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes community vote bank as it swept the Assembly elections in the state, winning 115 of the 199 where polling took place.

Of the 34 SC reserved seats that went to the polls, the BJP won 22 and the Congress 11. An Independent candidate won the other seat. Among the 25 seats reserved for ST candidates, the BJP won 12, the Congress 10 and the Bhartiya Adivasi Party three. The BJP emerged victorious in Naddai, Nagar, Karauli and Tijara which were won by the BSP in 2018. The Congress won Udaipurwati and Kishangarh Bas. All these seats were won by the Mayawati-led party in 2018 but the MLAs later joined the Congress.

During the election campaign, the BJP had made "atrocities against Dalits" one of the rallying points against the Ashok Gehlot government.

lying points against the Ashok Gehlot government.

A little over two percentage points separated the vote share of the BJP and the Congress. In 2018, less than one percentage point separated the winner from the loser.

The BJP received 41.69 per cent of the total votes polled this time, an improvement of 2.41 percentage points over 2018, while the Congress and the BSP's vote share declined by 0.29 percentage points and 2.26 percentage points respectively. The BSP's vote share which was 4.08 per cent in 2018, reduced to 1.82 per cent this time. The Congress got 39.53 per cent of the total votes polled in 2023.

The vote share of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) remained almost intact. The RLP's vote share was recorded at 2.39 per cent though it won only one constituency with Hanuman Beniwal managing to secure his seat. The party had won three seats in 2018 with a 2.4 per cent



vote share.

Like in 2018, the AAP could not win any seat in Rajasthan this time too as it received just 0.38 per cent of the total votes polled.

Dalit support had come as a breather for the Congress in the 2018 Assembly elections, as it had won 19 out of the 34 SC reserved seats. The BJP had won 12 of these seats, the RLP got two, while one was won by a Congress rebel as an Independent. The BJP had won nine ST category seats in 2018 while 12 such seats were won by the Congress. In the 2013 Assembly elections, the SC community had largely voted for the BJP, making it victorious in 32 of the 34 SC-reserved seats. At that time, the BJP had won 163 seats while the Congress' tally had plunged to just 21.

Rajasthan Assembly has 200 seats of which 199 of them went to poll on November 25. Election to the Karanpur seat of Sriganaganagar was postponed following the death of the Congress candidate.

Lalduhoma, man who guarded Indira, set to be Mizoram CM

PTI ■ AIZAWL

From earning the dubious distinction of the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law to being all set to becoming the chief minister of Mizoram, 73-year-old Lalduhoma's political journey has been all about battling against odds.

Lalduhoma, an ex-IPS officer who served as the in-charge of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's security, is the Chief Ministerial face of the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM).

The ZPM which was registered as a political party only in 2019 secured a majority in the Mizoram assembly on Monday, winning 27 of the 40 seats and leading in one other, as votes were being counted, according to the Election Commission (EC). Lalduhoma himself bagged the Serchhip seat by defeating his nearest MNF rival J Malsawmzuala Vanchhawng by 2,982 votes.

For over three decades, chief ministership in the northeastern state has been a see-saw



affair between two senior politicians - Lal Thanhawla of the Congress and MNF's Zoramthanga. Lalduhoma first contested the Mizoram assembly polls on a Congress ticket in 1984, but lost to People's Conference party nominee Lalthmingthanga by a margin of 846 votes.

The same year, he contested the Lok Sabha polls as a Congress candidate and was elected unopposed.

The ZPM leader resigned as

state Congress president and withdrew his primary membership from the party in 1986, after he was accused of conspiring against then chief minister Lal Thanhawla and some cabinet ministers.

Lalduhoma became the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law after he quit the Congress in 1988.

He was also disqualified by Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo in 2020, after 12 Mizo National Front (MNF)

legislators filed complaints, alleging he defected to the ZPM by actively participating in party activities, though being elected as an independent in the 2018 polls.

Lalduhoma was the first legislator to have been disqualified under the anti-defection law in Mizoram, but he managed to win the by-election to the Serchhip seat in 2021.

Besides the Congress, he was once part of the MNF. He had floated his own party, the Zoram Nationalist Party, and was also instrumental in the formation of the ZPM.

In the 2018 assembly polls, Lalduhoma won two seats - Serchhip and Aizawl West-I. He had defeated incumbent legislator and five-time chief minister Lal Thanhawla from Serchhip by a margin of 410 votes.

Lalduhoma subsequently vacated the Aizawl West-I seat to retain Serchhip. Prior to the 2018 elections, Lalduhoma had successfully contested polls as a ZNP candidate from the Ratu seat in 2003 and Aizawl West-I seat in 2008.

Narrow 2 per cent swing helps Congress win Telengana

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

A slim two per cent shift in votes toward the Congress led to K Chandrasekhar Rao-led BRS losing power to the grand old party in the assembly polls. According to the Election Commission's data, the Congress secured victory by claiming 64 seats in the 119-member assembly, attaining a 39.40% vote share, surpassing BRS, which won 39 segments with a 37.35% vote share.

The BRS witnessed a drop in its vote share by over 10%, declining from 47% in the 2018 assembly elections, while the Congress gained slightly more than what the BRS lost, amounting to an 11% increase. In 2018, the BRS secured a significant 88 seats, whereas the Congress managed to win only 19 segments, garnering 28.4% of the votes.

The BJP, initially emerging as a primary challenger to the BRS after winning a few by-polls and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, ultimately doubled its vote share and improved its tally to eight seats. In the 2018 polls, the saffron party secured just



one seat with a seven per cent vote share. Krishna Sagar Rao, BJP's chief spokesperson, stated that the party believes it gained votes and seats due to its promises of appointing a BC leader as Chief Minister and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to forming a committee on SC categorisation.

The BJP leader expressed the opinion that Congress could have gained more if there had-

n't been an aggressive campaign by the BJP on these two issues. Political analyst and senior journalist Telakapalli Ravi noted that the BJP successfully diverted the vote share of BRS in its favor.

According to some observers, the Congress gained ground by attracting votes from Telugu Desam Party sympathisers after the TDP opted out of the race due to its own reasons. The TDP secured 3.5% of the votes

and two seats in the 2018 assembly elections.

The AIMIM party led by Asaduddin Owaisi retained its seat tally while almost maintaining its vote share. The Hyderabad-centric party secured seven seats, obtaining 2.22% of the votes compared to 2.7% in 2018. The elections for the Telangana assembly were conducted on November 30, and the vote counting was done on December 3.

Over-confidence cost us Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh: Assam Congress chief

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Factors such as anti-incumbency, voter fatigue, and dissatisfaction among the youth contributed mainly to the poor showing of BRS in the Telangana Legislative Assembly election on Sunday.

Despite the towering image of BRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, along with the party's extensive grassroots network and welfare programmes, the perceived inaccessibility of its leaders contributed to the growing anti-incumbency sentiments.

Additionally, the opposition projection of what they called the BRS family rule in the state further exacerbated this sentiment. The party's decision to renominate most of the 119 MLAs did not yield the desired results either.

The BRS has dominated Telangana politics since the



state's formation in 2014 and had a significant presence even in undivided Andhra Pradesh since 2001.

While the BRS government introduced various welfare schemes, its alleged failure to fulfill key election promises, including providing housing for the poor, ensuring significant job creation, doling out

unemployment relief, as well as the delayed implementation of farmers' loan waivers and the leak of recruitment test question papers worked against them. The BJP was initially considered the main opposition to BRS, but the scenario changed after the Congress gained momentum following the Karnataka elections in May.

Allegations of an implicit understanding between BRS and BJP particularly regarding the Delhi excise policy case involving Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter Kavitha, weakened the BJP, leading anti-establishment votes to consolidate in favour of the Congress. Unlike previous elections where sentiments for sep-

arate statehood played a crucial role, emotional issues did not significantly sway this election.

In 2018, the Congress and TDP formed an alliance, with BRS accusing TDP Chief N Chandrababu Naidu of being anti-Telangana. However, TDP chose not to contest the recent Telangana assembly election due to ongoing legal issues and Naidu's imprisonment in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) led by Y S Sharmila, daughter of former undivided Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, withdrew from the contest, declaring support for the Congress. Congress ran an assertive campaign centered on the theme of change, encapsulated in the slogan 'marpu kavali - Congress ravali' (there should be change - Congress should come), which effectively resonated with the electorate.

GRSE delivers India's largest-ever survey vessel to navy: Official

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd on Monday delivered the "largest-ever" survey vessel to be built in the country - INS Sandhayak - to the Indian Navy, an official said.

INS Sandhayak, the first in a series of four survey vessels being made by GRSE for the navy, was launched on December 5, 2021, and was undergoing fitting out and trials thereafter.

The 110-metre-long ship was delivered on December 4, which is observed as Navy Day, the GRSE official said.

The protocol of delivery and acceptance was signed between GRSE Chairman and MD, Commodore (ret'd) P R Hari, and commanding officer of the vessel, Commodore R M Thomas.

INS Sandhayak is the reincarnation of another ship by the same name, which was also a



survey vessel. That ship had been commissioned into the navy in 1981 and decommissioned in 2021, the official said.

Fully designed by the GRSE, the survey ships are capable of full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of port and harbour approaches, as well as determination of navigation channels and routes, he said.

The Sandhayak-class vessels can also undertake surveys of

maritime limits and collection of oceanographic and geographical data for defence applications, which add muscle to India's maritime capabilities, he said.

These ships can also carry a helicopter each, participate in low-intensity combat and function as hospital ships, apart from the capacity to be used for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, the official added.

MES-Shiv Sena (UBT) protest at K'taka-Maha border demanding merger of Marathi-speaking areas

PTI ■ BELAGAVI

Members of the Maharashtra Eklakar Samiti in association with Shiv Sena (UBT) held a protest at Shinoli in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra on the opening day of the Karnataka Assembly's winter session being held in this border district headquarters town on Monday, according to an MES leader.

MES has been demanding merger of several Marathi speaking areas and villages of the state with Maharashtra.

"We could not hold a demonstration at Belagavi because the police denied us permission but we did stage a protest at

Shinoli in Maharashtra," MES convener Suraj Kanbarkar said.

The protesters raised pro-Maharashtra slogans at the protest site and demanded that the ongoing Assembly session at the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha' in Belagavi, where the government holds winter sessions, bordering Maharashtra be stopped immediately.

They also appealed to the Centre to intervene and take steps for merger of Belagavi district and certain regions in its neighbouring districts in Karnataka with substantial Marathi population with Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, various organi-

sations are staging protests here including Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha led by Kodihalli Chandrashekar, Safai Karmachari, Mundargi Horata Samithi and a teachers' association to highlight their demands.

In view of the session in progress, section 144 of the CrPC has been clamped at least one kilometre around the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha'. At least 5,000 policemen have been deployed in and around 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha'.

The border issue dates back to 1957 when States were reorganised on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi, which was part of the

erstwhile Bombay Presidency, as it has a significant Marathi-speaking population. It also laid claim to over 800 Marathi-speaking border villages which are currently a part of Karnataka.

Karnataka maintains that the demarcation done on linguistic lines as per the States Reorganisation Act and the 1967 Mahajan Commission Report is final.

In an assertion about Belagavi being an integral part of the State, Karnataka built the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha here, modelled on the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of the State Legislature and Secretariat, in Bengaluru.

School students, teachers stranded in Kerala forest during trekking, rescued

PTI ■ KOLLAM

A team of 35 people including 32 school students were rescued from Achankovil forest area in Kollam district early on Monday after they got lost in the dense jungle during an impromptu trekking expedition undertaken without the knowledge of forest officials.

A group of students from a school near Karunagappally in the coastal part of the district was camping near the Kumbhavurutti Waterfalls as part of a three-day scout and guides tour.

Forest officials said the group ventured into the forest area without their permission on



Sunday at around 11 am but got lost for several hours.

"A massive operation was launched yesterday by the Forest Department. We had the assistance of the Punalur police and Fire Force Department. We located them and brought them back safely at around 3:30 am

today," a senior forest official told PTI.

The officials said permission was given to the group which comprised 15 male students, 17 female students and three teachers for camping and scouting the locality of the ecotourism centre near there.

However, without taking our permission, they went almost around 4.5 km inside the forest and got stranded, the official added.

The official added that they lost their way while coming back due to heavy fog and rain.

"They also said they felt the presence of elephants and decided to stay together on a nearby rock for hours until help

arrived," the official said.

Forest officials from nearby Ranni, Konni, Punalur, Pathanapuram, Kollam, Achankovil, and other regions participated in the search and rescue operations.

Even though many had their mobile phones with them, they were unable to contact the outside world due to lack of service, the official added.

The students were unharmed and all have reached their respective homes, the official added.

Sources said a report in this regard will be filed to the higher officials of the forest department and a decision on registering a case will be taken only after that.

Israel orders evacuations as it widens offensive

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's military renewed calls on Monday for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombed targets across the Gaza Strip. The expanded operations, following the expiration of a weeklong cease-fire, are aimed at eliminating Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose October 7 attack into Israel triggered the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades.

The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of the territory's population of 2.3 million people, who are running out of safe places to go.

Already under mounting pressure from its top ally, the United States, Israel appears to be racing to strike a death blow against Hamas — if that's possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society — before any new cease-fire. But the mounting toll of the fight-

ing, which Palestinian health officials say has killed several hundred civilians since the truce ended on Friday, is likely to further increase international pressure to return to the negotiating table.

It could also render even larger parts of the isolated territory uninhabitable.

The ground offensive has transformed much of the north, including large areas in Gaza City, into a rubble-filled wasteland. Hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in the south, parts of which could meet the same fate, and both Israel and neighbouring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

FIGHTING IN GAZA

Residents said on Monday they heard airstrikes and explosions in and around Khan Younis overnight after the military dropped leaflets warning people to relocate farther south toward the border with Egypt. The military has ordered the evacuation of nearly two dozen neighbourhoods in and around the town. Later in the day, the



Owat Suriyasri a Thai hostage who was freed from Hamas, center, hugs his wife Kanyarat Suriyasri on the arrival at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Samut Prakam Province, Thailand on Monday. Twenty-three Thai hostages kidnapped by Hamas in its attack on southern Israel have been freed so far, and Thailand's foreign ministry says nine remain in captivity in Gaza. There were about 30,000 Thai overseas workers in Israel, mostly in the agricultural sector, but more than 8,000 have returned home since the attack.

military warned civilians to avoid the main north-south highway between Khan Younis and the central town of Deir al-Balah, saying the road had become a "battlefield" and was "extremely dangerous." That

indicated Israeli troops were approaching Khan Younis from the northeast, possibly with plans to cut central Gaza off from the south.

Al-Jazeera television aired footage of medics rescuing

people wounded by what appeared to have been a strike on a car on that stretch of highway. An Israeli tank could be seen just up the road.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, said the army is pursuing Hamas with "maximum force" in the north and south, and said it was trying to minimise harm to civilians.

He pointed to a map that divides southern Gaza into dozens of blocks in order to give "precise instructions" to residents on where to evacuate.

Many Palestinians, however, have ignored past evacuation orders, saying they do not feel any safer in the areas where they are told to seek refuge — which have also been repeatedly bombed. The military has meanwhile barred those who fled the north from returning, even during the cease-fire. "The level of human suffering is intolerable," Mirjana Spoljaric, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said during a rare visit to Gaza. She also called for the immediate release

of scores of hostages captured by Palestinian militants during the October 7 attack.

"It is unacceptable that civilians have no safe place to go in Gaza, and with a military siege in place there is also no adequate humanitarian response currently possible."

RISING TOLL

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since October 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70 per cent of the dead were women and children. A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since the cease-fire ended early on Friday.

"The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received 32 bodies overnight after Israeli strikes across central Gaza, said Omar al-Darawi,

an administrative employee. Associated Press footage showed women in tears, kneeling over the bodies of loved ones and kissing them.

The military said aircraft struck some 200 Hamas targets overnight, with ground troops operating "in parallel", without elaborating. It said troops in northern Gaza uncovered a militant hideout in a school after coming under attack.

Inside, they found two tunnel shafts, one of which had been booby-trapped, as well as explosives and weapons, the military said.

It is not possible to independently confirm battlefield reports from either side.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives, not civilians, and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighbourhoods.

It adds that it takes measures to protect civilians. In addition to leaflets dropped over Gaza, the military has used phone calls and radio and TV broadcasts to urge people to move from specific areas.

Netanyahu's trial in corruption case to resume

Jerusalem (PTI): A district court here will resume hearing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption case on Tuesday after a more than two-month hiatus due to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

Israel launched relentless air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip following a cross-border attack by Palestinian group Hamas on October 7.

Under the so-called Case 4000 or the Bezeq-Walla bribery case, Netanyahu allegedly took regulatory steps beneficial to Bezeq Telecommunications in exchange for favourable media coverage on the Walla website, earlier owned by Bezeq.

The Jerusalem District Court will resume hearing on 74-year-old Netanyahu's corruption case on Tuesday. In June, the three judges in the case recommended that the prosecution withdraw the bribery charge. The prosecution, however, declined to withdraw the charge and decided to continue the trial as planned, after which the court heard the testimonies of the people concerned.

The last hearing in the bribery case was held on September 20, after which the court adjourned for a holiday break, which got extended due to Hamas' brutal attack on Israel on October 7 and the subsequent war.

The courts had since shifted to an emergency schedule, during which only urgent hearings were held. The trial in Netanyahu's corruption cases was halted as they were not considered urgent.

Last week, Justice Minister Yariv Levin signed regulations allowing the courts to resume normal operations.

Under the directives, courts have resumed activity with exceptions for attorneys and litigants now serving in the army reserves or who have been evacuated from their homes under government orders.

In addition, legal procedures have been "frozen" in connection with lawyers and litigants who have been taken hostage or deemed missing, as well as parents, spouses, children, and siblings of hostages and missing persons and other family members who qualify for government assistance, under the Law for the Funding of Prisoner, Hostage and Missing Person Families.

Dutch lawyers seek court order to halt export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel

The Hague (AP): Human rights lawyers went to court in the Netherlands on Monday to call for a halt to the export of fighter jet parts to Israel that could be used in attacks on Gaza.

The organisations allege that delivery of parts for F-35 jets makes the Netherlands complicit in possible war crimes being committed by Israel in its war with Hamas.

The civil case in The Hague opened as the Israeli military renewed calls for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombed targets across the Gaza Strip.

The rights lawyers want The Hague District Court to issue an injunction banning the exports of F-35 parts that are stored in a warehouse in the town of Woensdrecht.

"The state must immediately stop the delivery of F-35 parts to Israel," lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld told the court.

Citing government documents, Zegveld said that Dutch customs asked the government if it wanted to continue exports after the October 7 attacks by Hamas that triggered the Israel-Hamas war.

"The warning that the fighter jets can contribute to serious breaches of the laws of war does not, for the (Dutch) state, outweigh its economic interests and diplomatic reputation."

Government lawyer Reimer Veldhuis urged the court's single judge to reject the injunction, saying that even if it were to uphold the rights lawyers' legal arguments and ban exports, "the United States would deliver these parts to Israel from another place." He added that Israel has the right to self-defence.

Global warming could cost poor countries trillions

AP ■ DUBAI

A prominent developing-world leader on the issue of climate change said on Monday that global taxes on the financial services, oil and gas, and shipping industries could drum up hundreds of billions of dollars for poorer countries to adapt and cope with global warming.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley focused on how poorer countries, with help from richer countries and international finance, could shoulder the astronomical costs to adapt to climate change, reduce its future impact, and pay for losses and damage caused as climate trouble like floods, forest fires and heat waves rip through communities.

The UN climate summit known as COP28, which is being presided over by the head of the United Arab Emirates' biggest oil company, put its attention on Monday on how developing countries could possibly pay trillions of dollars that experts say they will need to cope with global warming.

"This has probably been the most progress we've seen in the last 12 months on finance," Mottley told reporters about pledges to fund the transition to clean energy, adapt to climate change and respond to extreme weather events.

"But we're not where we need to be yet," she said.

World Bank President Ajay Banga laid out five target areas in climate finance. His bank wants to lower methane emissions from waste management and farming; help Africa with greener energies; support "voluntary" carbon markets such as for forest projects; and allow developing countries hit by natural disasters to pause debt repayments.

The multilateral development bank, above all, wants to boost its role in climate finance in short order. "Forty-five per cent of our financing will go to climate by 2025," Banga said, with have going to adapting to the warming climate and the other half on slashing emissions.

"We cannot make climate only be about emissions. It has

to be about the downstream impact that the Global South is facing from the emission-heavy growth that we have enjoyed in other parts of the world."

That alluded to a major theme in climate talks: Developing nations are especially vulnerable to climate catastrophes, but far less responsible for global warming than industrialised countries, which have been belching carbon into the atmosphere for generations as they grew richer — and that excess greenhouse gas in the air has trapped heat near the Earth.

Small island nations have been pushing for climate finance in the negotiations, saying it's vital for countries to be able to adapt to rising seas encroaching onto their land.

Cedric Schuster, the minister for natural resources of Samoa, said he's optimistic that the climate talks could make headway on the finance issue, but urged that countries are still a long way off where they need to be.

Schuster, who's also chair of the Alliance of Small Island

states, said Samoans "want to be assured that they will survive ... Their trust in us is to be here, to amplify their voices and for the world to understand the outcome of their concerns and for us to make sure the right global decisions are made."

Climate activists chimed in on the issue at the two-week conference in Dubai, by staging a protest at the sprawling venue that's taking in tens of thousands of leaders, economists, business leaders, philanthropists and others to find a way to revamp the way the world generates and uses energy in the 21st century.

"Billions, not millions! Fill the fund now!" they chanted, referring to the loss and damage fund for countries impacted by climate harm. Countries, including Germany and UAE, have been pledging hundreds of millions into the fund. But Eric Njuguna, an activist from Kenya, said, "we need the rich countries to pay into the loss and damage fund on the scale of hundreds of billions." Mottley praised the formal launch of a "loss and damage" fund at COP28 that organ-

isers say has already drawn some USD 720 million in commitments, but said that a far cry of the USD 420 billion — with a "B" — needed.

Mottley said a tax on global financial services, set at a 0.1 per cent rate, could raise USD 420 billion for it, "not USD 720 million where we are today". "If we took 5 per cent of oil and gas profits last year — oil and gas profits were USD 4 trillion — that would give us USD 200 billion," Mottley said.

"If we had a 1 per cent tax on the value of shipping — that, last year, the value of that was USD 7 trillion — that would give us USD 70 billion."

The G20, a group of key developing and industrialised countries that are responsible for four-fifths of all greenhouse gases, said in New Delhi earlier this year that developing countries will need USD 5.9 trillion by 2030 to meet their climate goals. They say another USD 4 trillion is needed if they're to get on track to have net-zero emissions by 2050. The Secretary-General of the Climate

Vulnerable Forum said he didn't think that amount of funding would be pledged any time soon. "We are stuck in millions," Mohamed Nasheed, who's also the former president of the Maldives, said. "So, I cannot see it going up to trillions."

The United States, the world's richest country, has never adopted a global tax and Republicans in the US Congress are loth to adopt new taxes and are especially hesitant to fund many multilateral institutions and programmes. "It's not easy to levy an international tax. It needs countries agreeing to make those taxes," said Lord Nicolas Stern, a co-chair of a panel of experts looking into the cost of financing the fight against climate change. And poorer countries need money up-front to make investments in renewables possible.

"Where we're talking about climate change, I think the maritime, and oil and gas, and travel are of particular relevance to this issue," Stern said. "And that means countries getting together."

'Wreckage and remains found from Osprey aircraft that crashed off Japan'

AP ■ TOKYO

US and Japanese divers discovered wreckage and remains of five crew members from a US Air Force Osprey aircraft that crashed last week off southwestern Japan, the Air Force announced on Monday. The CV-22 Osprey carrying eight American personnel crashed last Wednesday off Yakushima island during a training mission. The body of one victim was recovered and identified earlier.

The Air Force Special Operations Command said two of the five newly located remains have been recovered but their identities have yet to be determined. The joint US-Japanese search operation is still working to recover the remains of three other crew members from the wreckage, it

said. The search is continuing for the two people who are still missing, it said.

"The main priority is bringing the Airmen home and taking care of their family members. Support to, and the privacy of, the families and loved ones impacted by this incident remains AFSOC's top priority," it said in a statement. The US military identified the one confirmed victim as Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob Galliher of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on Saturday. On Monday, divers from the Japanese navy and US military spotted what appeared to be the front section of the Osprey, along with possibly five of the missing crew members, Japan's NHK public television and other media reported. Japanese navy officials declined to confirm the reports, saying they could not release details without

consent from the US

The US-made Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster, like an airplane, during flight.

Ospreys have had a number of crashes, including in Japan, where they are used at US and Japanese military bases, and the latest accident rekindled safety concerns.

Japan has suspended all flights of its own fleet of 14 Ospreys. Japanese officials say they have asked the US military to resume Osprey flights only after ensuring their safety. The Pentagon said no such formal request has been made and that the US military is continuing to fly 24 MV-22s, the Marine version of Ospreys, deployed on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.



In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, the third test flight of solid-fuel space rocket is launched from a barge in waters near Jeju Island, South Korea, Monday. AP/PTI

Indian-origin Dev Sharma sworn in as Aus Senator

Melbourne (PTI): Dave Sharma, who became the first Indian-origin lawmaker in Australia's Parliament in 2019, was sworn in as a Senator on Monday after his victory in the New South Wales Liberal Senate race. Sharma, who represented the Sydney seat of Wentworth until his defeat at the 2022 election, beat former New South Wales (NSW) minister Andrew Constance, a frontrunner backed by Opposition Leader Peter Dutton.

The 47-year-old leader will replace ex-foreign minister Marise Payne, who has retired from the Senate, the Canberra Times reported.

"An honour to escort our newest Senator, Dave Sharma, for his swearing-in today. Congratulations Senator Sharma," Senator Maria Kovacic wrote on X. Sussan

Ley, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, said Sharma is a "welcome addition" to the federal Liberal team.

"He has strong experience in Parliament and senior diplomatic postings. Dave's keen foreign policy intellect will be particularly welcome given we are in the most dangerous set of geopolitical circumstances since WWII," Ley wrote on X.

In a vote by the New South Wales Liberal Party members, Sharma defeated Constance 251-206 in the final ballot.

Sharma, who served as Australia's ambassador to Israel from 2013 to 2017, was backed by the moderates within the party.

Senator Sharma will reportedly set up his office in Sydney's west as the Liberals look to claw back support and win predominantly Labor-held seats.

North Korean leader calls for women to have more children

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said it is a duty of women to halt a fall in the country's births in order to strengthen national power, state media said Monday, as his government steps up the call for the people to have more children.

While getting a detailed read on North Korea's population trends is extremely difficult because of the limited statistics it discloses, South Korea's government assesses that the North's fertility rate has declined steadily for the past 10 years. That is a concerning development for a country that depends on mobilized labor to help keep its broken, heavily sanctioned economy afloat.

Kim's latest appeal for women to have more children was made Sunday during the country's National Mothers Meeting, the first of its kind in 11

years.

"Stopping the decline in birthrates and providing good child care and education are all our family affairs that we should solve together with our mothers," Kim said in his opening speech.

According to South Korea's government statistics agency, North Korea's total fertility rate, or the average number of babies expected to be born to a woman over her lifetime, was at 1.79 in 2022, down from 1.88 in 2014. The decline is still slower than its wealthier rival South Korea, whose fertility rate last year was 0.78, down from 1.20 in 2014. South Korea's fertility rate, the lowest in the developed world, is believed to be due to a potent cocktail of reasons discouraging people from having babies, including a decaying job market, a brutally competitive school environment for children, traditionally weak child care assistance and a male-centered corporate

culture where many women find it impossible to combine careers and family. While North Korea is one of the poorest nations in the world, the change in its demographic structure is similar to that of rich countries, some observers say.

"Many families in North Korea also don't intend to have more than one child these days as they know they need lots of money to raise their kids, send them to school and help them get jobs," said Ahn Kyung-su, head of DPRKHEALTH.ORG, a website focusing on health issues in North Korea.

Ahn, who has interviewed many North Korean defectors, said the smuggling of a vast amount of South Korean TV dramas and movies in the past 20 years that showed an elevated social status for women has also likely influenced women in North Korea not to have many children.

Guinea-Bissau's Prez dissolves nation's Parl

Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) : Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embaló has dissolved the West African nation's parliament, according to a presidential decree issued on Monday that cited last week's shootout which the government said was a failed coup. "The date for holding the next legislative elections will be set in due time in accordance with the provisions of ... the Constitution," the decree stated. "This Presidential Decree comes into force immediately." The order referred to the "seriousness" of the shootout which started in the capital, Bissau, between members of the Presidential Palace Battalion and the National Guard as the former tried to rearrest two ministers released from custody while being investigated for alleged corruption.

At least 47 killed in Tanzania landslides

AP ■ NAIROBI

At least 47 people are dead and 85 others injured following heavy flooding and landslides in northern Tanzania, authorities said on Monday. The government has deployed the military to help rescue hundreds of people trapped by the flooding which has been described as the worst in years in the East African nation.

The flooding occurred near Mount Hanang in the north. Houses, roads and bridges have been destroyed, complicating ongoing rescue efforts.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is attending the UN climate summit in Dubai, said she was cutting short her trip to return to Tanzania due to the tragedy.

"I send my sincere condolences to the affected families and have directed all our



Zambian Army special forces officers follow the rescue operation of miners on Sunday in Chingola, around 400 kilometres (248 miles) north of the capital Lusaka, Zambia. AP/PTI

security forces to deploy to the area and help those affected," she said in a video message.

Other East African coun-

tries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan have been hit by raging floods made worse by the El Niño phenomenon.

Hundreds have died across the region and millions have been displaced since the heavy rains began in late October.

‘India to become \$5 trillion economy’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will become a USD 5 trillion economy early in the ‘Amrit Kaal’ on the path to achieve the goal of becoming an advanced economy by 2047, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India to become a USD 5 trillion economy with the third largest GDP in 2027-28. The USD 5 trillion milestone will be crossed with the help of a strong rupee which will result from macro-economic stability, he said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. “The government has set the goal of becoming an advanced



economy by 2047. In the process, it will become a USD 5 trillion economy early in the Amrit Kaal,” Chaudhary said.

At the end of 2022-23, the Indian GDP stood at USD 3.7 trillion.

In 1980-81, size of the Indian economy was USD 189 billion, which increased to USD 326 billion after a decade. In 2000-01, the size of the GDP rose to USD 476 billion.

In 2010-11, India’s GDP jumped to USD 1.71 trillion, and further increased to USD 2.67 trillion in 2020-21.

Chaudhary said the exchange rate is not an overlooked factor as it ranks India’s GDP size in the world. “India is a market economy, and the government monitors economic progress through market-determined GDP and exchange rate,” Chaudhary said.

He further said both domestic and international markets are the mechanisms that determine India’s GDP, exchange rate and contribution of various sectors to GDP.

Contribution of agriculture, industry and services to nominal GDP in 2022-23 stood at 18.4 per cent, 28.3 per cent, and 53.3

per cent, respectively.

Chaudhary said the government also contributes to economic progress through policy interventions, including the measures announced in annual budgets.

Major initiatives taken by the government in the last 9 years for directly increasing the GDP include, implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (IBC) Code, recapitalisation of public sector banks, rollout of Goods and Services Tax (GST), reduction in corporate tax, boost in effective capital expenditure, introduction of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in 14 sectors, continuous liberalisation of the FDI regime, and building of digital infrastructure.

Indian Oil opens its first EV battery swapping station

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Monday opened its first battery-swapping station in Kolkata for electric vehicles (EV).

The oil marketing PSU opened the facility at its retail outlet in New Town on the eastern outskirts of the city in collaboration with Sun Mobility, the company said in a statement, adding that this marks a significant step forward in promoting sustainable and accessible electric mobility solutions across the city.

Battery-swapping technology for two and three-wheeler EVs has proven to be a game-changer across India.

IOC director (marketing) V Satish Kumar said, “The battery-swapping technology presents a significant opportunity for promoting sustainable electric mobility solutions. This facility is expected to play a pivotal role in the adoption of EVs and spearhead energy transition in eastern India.”

In the coming months, IOC, in association with Sun Mobility, will install more battery-swapping facilities at its retail outlets, allowing drivers to access its convenient and efficient solution to quickly swap depleted batteries for fully charged ones.

This enables faster turn-around times, making EVs more convenient for users.

Avg monthly GST mop-up at ₹1.66 lakh cr so far this fiscal: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST collection has been showing an upward trend on an annual basis since its rollout on July 1, 2017, and the average gross monthly mop-up in the current fiscal so far is ₹1.66 lakh crore, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, she said the GST collection crossed ₹1.50 lakh crore mark in every month of the current fiscal and had touched a record high of ₹1.87 lakh crore in April 2023. “GST collection has been showing an upward trend on year-on-year basis since the implementation of GST w.e.f. 1st July, 2017... The average gross monthly GST collection in FY 2023-24 now stands at ₹1.66 lakh crore and is 11 per cent more than that in the same period in the previous financial year,” Sitharaman said.

The average monthly Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in 2022-23 was over ₹1.50 lakh crore, higher than ₹1.23 lakh crore in 2021-22. In 2020-21, the average monthly mop-up was ₹94,734 crore.

In reply to a separate question, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the monthly average gross GST collection for 2021-22 and 2022-23 have shown 30 per cent and 22 per cent year-on-year growth respectively.

“GST is paid on self-assessment basis and tax administration at Central and State level

is empowered to take action against cases where GST is not paid and short paid. Detection of such cases and recovery of taxes not paid or short paid is a continuous process,” Chaudhary said.

He said the government, on the recommendation of the GST Council, has been bringing several reforms in GST and these measures would improve the GST compliance and increase the GST collection.

These include structural changes like calibration of GST rates for correcting inverted duty structure and pruning of exemptions; measures for improving tax compliance such as mandating e-way bill, ITC matching, mandating e-invoice, deployment of artificial intelligence and machine-based analytics, aadhaar authentication for registration, calibrated action on non-filers, stop filers.

Also, system-based analytical tools and system-generated red flag reports are being shared with central as well as state tax authorities to take action against tax evaders.

In reply to another question, Chaudhary said the central government, on the recommendation of GST Council, has constituted State Benches of GST Appellate Tribunal.

Giving details of the number of pending appeals over tax demands raised by Central GST authorities, Chaudhary said 14,897 appeals are pending as on October 31, 2023. This is higher than 11,899 appeals pending as of March 31, 2023.

Disbursement of ₹79 crore incentives under PLI for white goods expected

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is expected to disburse ₹79 crore fiscal incentives under PLI for white goods in the last quarter of this financial year as certain selected beneficiary firms have started production, a senior official said.

The production linked incentive (PLI) scheme on white goods seeks to encourage domestic manufacturing of air conditioners and LED light components.

The official also said that the target of ₹11,000 crore incentive disbursement for different sectors under the scheme during the current fiscal may fall short. “Lot of the disbursement will come in the last fiscal. Lot of projects are in gestation period. In the white goods sector, we are expecting about ₹79 crore disbursement in the last quarter,” the official said.

Of the 64 selected beneficiaries of the PLI scheme under the white goods segment, 15 have started production. These 15 beneficiaries had opted for a gestation period of up to March 31, 2022. Rest of the beneficiaries who opted for gestation period of up to March 31, 2023 are at different stages of implementation.

The scheme is to be implemented over a seven-year period, from 2021-22 to 2028-29, and has an outlay of ₹6,238 crore.

When asked about the plan to extend the scheme for sectors like toys, the official said: “It will



be decided after a review of the scheme. We are taking stock and what is the progress so far. The progress is better in some, and in some sectors, changes are required. So an inter-ministerial consultation is on.”

Till March this year, incentives worth ₹2,900 crore have been disbursed under the ₹1.98 lakh crore PLI scheme.

An additional ₹1,000 crore incentives for this year has been granted for companies engaged in electronics manufacturing.

PLI schemes for sectors such as electronics, mobile manufacturing, pharma and food processing are doing well while in some sectors like textiles, certain course correction is expected.

The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors such as telecommunications, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, speciality steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones and pharma with an outlay of ₹1.97 lakh crore.

Gold surges ₹450 to hit record high of ₹64,300 per 10 gm

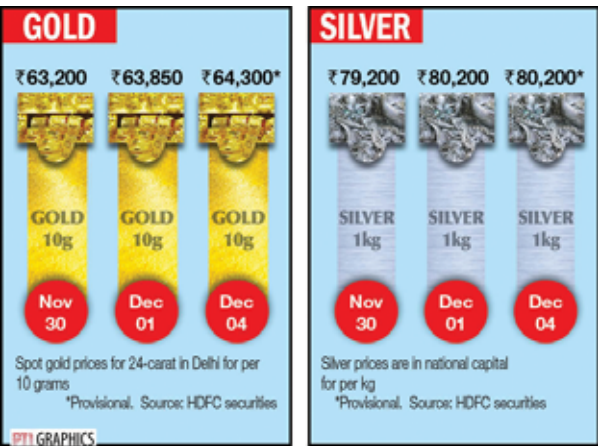
NEW DELHI, DEC 4 (PTI)

Gold prices on Monday increased ₹450 to hit a fresh record high of ₹64,300 per 10 grams in the national capital amid strong global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at ₹63,850 per 10 grams.

However, silver remained flat at ₹80,200 per kilogram.

“Gold prices extended gains on Monday, trading at a record high of ₹64,300/10 gram, up by ₹450 following a bullish trend



in the overseas markets,” HDFC Securities’ Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi said. In the international markets, gold was trading higher at USD 2,077 per ounce while silver was down at USD 25.40 per ounce. Spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,077 per ounce, up USD 6 from its previous close.

Comex gold reached a new all-time high on Monday, hitting an intra-day high of USD 2,146 per ounce in Asian trading hours due to increased geopolitical tension in the Middle East, Gandhi said.

8 crore ITRs filed till December 2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 7.76 crore tax returns for income earned in 2022-23 have been filed till December 2 and more are expected to be filed by this month end, Parliament was informed on Monday. In 2022-23 financial year, 10.09 crore PAN holders paid taxes for income earned in 2021-22.

“For the corresponding period, 7.76 crore returns have been filed till December 2, 2023, and more returns are expected to be filed till the last date, i.e. December 31, 2023,” Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

The last date for filing income tax returns (ITRs) for income earned in 2022-23 was July 31, 2023. Assessors who wish to file return after the due date can do so by December 31 upon payment of a penalty.

The total net direct tax collection during 2022-23 is ₹16.63 lakh crore out of which income tax collection is ₹8.08 lakh crore.

Govt says 28 virtual digital assets service providers registered with FIU-India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 28 Virtual Digital Assets (VDA) service providers, including WazirX, Coin DCX and Coinswitch, have registered themselves with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND), Finance Ministry said on Monday.

The Finance Ministry in March had said entities dealing in VDAs, crypto exchanges and intermediaries would be considered “reporting entity” under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Accordingly, crypto exchanges and intermediaries dealing with VDAs were required to perform KYC of their clients and users of the platform.

To a question on whether these guidelines and reporting requirements are applicable to Offshore Crypto Exchanges servicing the Indian market, Minister of State for Finance



Pankaj Chaudhary replied in the affirmative.

“The guidelines and reporting requirements are applicable to offshore crypto exchanges servicing the Indian

Market. The process of registration for the said VDA service providers has been initiated,” Chaudhary said in the Lok Sabha. Appropriate action under PMLA shall be initiated in cases of non-compliance by offshore platforms, he added.

The minister further said 28 entities have registered themselves for providing services related to VDAs.

These include Neblio Technologies Pvt Ltd operating trading platform Coin DCX, Zanmai Labs Pvt Ltd (WazirX), Bitcipher Labs LLP (Coinswitch), Nextgendev Solutions Pvt Ltd (CoinswitchX), Awlencan Innovations India Ltd (Zebpay).

Under the anti-money laundering law, reporting entities are required to maintain KYC details or records of documents evidencing the identity of its clients and beneficial owners as well as account files and business correspondence relating to its clients.

Spotify axes 17 per cent of workforce in third round of layoffs

AP ■ LONDON

Spotify says it’s axing 17 per cent of its global workforce, the music streaming service’s third round of layoffs this year as it moves to slash costs while focusing on becoming profitable.

In a message to employees posted on the company’s blog on Monday, CEO Daniel Ek said the jobs were being cut as part of a “strategic reorientation.” The post didn’t specify how many employees would lose their jobs, but a spokesperson confirmed that it amounts to about 1,500 people.

Spotify had used cheap financing to expand the business and “invested significantly” in employees, content and marketing in 2020 and 2021, the blog post said. But Ek indicated that the company was caught out as central banks started hiking interest rates last year.

“We now find ourselves in a very different environment. And despite our efforts to reduce costs this past year, our cost structure for where we need to be is still too big,” he said.

Ek said the “leaner structure” of the company will ensure “Spotify’s continued profitability.”

Stockholm-based Spotify posted a net loss of 462 million euros (about USD 500 million) for the nine months to September.

The company announced in January that it was axing 6 per cent of total staff. In June, it cut staff by another 2 per cent, or about 200 workers, mainly in its podcast division.

Tech companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta and IBM have announced hundreds of thousands of job cuts this year.

ReNew inks pact with Asian Development Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy firm ReNew Energy Global Plc has inked an initial pact with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a funding of USD 5.3 billion.

“The MoU was signed at COP28, Dubai by ReNew’s Founder, Chairman and CEO, Sumant Sinha and Suzanne Gaboury, Director General, Private Sector Operations Department, ADB,” a company statement said.

According to the statement, the MoU identified potential investments in renewable energy projects, manufacturing, carbon offset projects, green hydrogen, to jointly support sustainable energy transition.

ReNew Energy Global Plc and ADB will also collaborate on climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, it said. The initial pact covers lending of more than USD 5.3 billion between 2023 and 2028, it informed.

The MoU, a first of its kind in the Indian Renewable Energy sector, is expected to draw interest from additional international investors to participate in financing long-term debt for significant Renewable Energy infrastructure projects, it stated.

In addition, it will help ADB achieve its funding ambition of USD 100 billion in green energy projects by 2030.

Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 83.36 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled lower by 3 paise at 83.36 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday amid a recovery in the greenback in overseas markets.

Forex traders said the rupee gained earlier in the day as domestic equity indices surged to record highs after the ruling BJP scored a spectacular win in three Hindi heartland states. Moreover, sustained foreign fund inflows also supported the local currency. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.28 and touched a low of 83.37 against the greenback. It finally settled at 83.36 (provisional) against the dollar, down by 3 paise from its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee settled at 83.33 against the American currency.

“The Indian rupee eked out opening gains and headed lower following the weaker Chinese currency. The

market ignored the positive political news and lower crude oil prices as traders worried about the central bank’s two-way interventions,” said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Looking at the price actions, the rupee is facing resilience in crossing the 83.10 to 83.50 range, he said.

“However, the seasonality patterns and expectations of year-end dollar inflows may support the rupee in limiting losses in case of short covering bounce in the greenback,” Parmar said.

According to traders markets now await for RBI Monetary policy on December 8, and non-farm payroll data from the US on the same day in the evening for further cues.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 103.32.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.51 per cent to USD 78.48 per barrel.

Adani group firms rally in afternoon trade

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani group firms continued to attract heavy demand in the afternoon trade on Monday, with Adani Green Energy trading higher by 8 per cent.

The rally in all the 10 listed group companies mirrored the broader upswing in the domestic markets, fuelled by optimism regarding the BJP government’s returning to power in 2024 after the party’s

victory in three heartland states’ assembly elections.

The combined market capitalisation of all the listed firms of Adani Group hit the ₹12 lakh crore-mark.

This is the first time that the group stocks have hit the ₹12 lakh crore mark after facing a rout early this year following a report by US short seller Hindenburg Research that alleged financial wrongdoing and stock manipulation by the conglomerate.

However, the company denied all the allegations.

On the BSE, the scrip of Adani Green Energy surged 8 per cent to ₹1,108.65 apiece, flagship firm Adani Enterprises rallied 6.61 per cent to ₹2,518.55, and ACC bounced 6.35 per cent to ₹2,021 per share.

Adani Energy Solutions advanced 6.16 per cent to ₹908.65 per scrip and Ambuja Cements rose 6.06 per cent to ₹468.90 per piece. While

Adani Power went up by 5.59 per cent to ₹464.80 apiece, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) gained 5.58 per cent to ₹873.75 per piece.

Also, shares of Adani Total Gas jumped 4.38 per cent to ₹731.95, NDTV climbed 4.13 per cent to ₹228.10 and Adani Wilmar moved 2.50 per cent higher to ₹348.95 per piece on the bourse.

Meanwhile, the BSE Sensex

was trading 975.84 points or 1.45 per cent higher at its all-time peak of 68,457.03 and NSE Nifty gained 1.52 per cent to hit the record level of 20,575.75 points.

Stock prices of Adani group companies have been on the rise since last week after the Supreme Court on November 24 reserved its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking examination of allegations of fraud against the conglomerate.



Tata Power-DDL distributes aids and appliances on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

MEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP OPENER

India start favourites against Korea

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Two-time champions India will look to make a winning start against Asian rivals Korea in their pursuit of another podium finish in the FIH men's Junior World Cup hockey tournament starting here on Tuesday. India have won the tournament twice, in 2001 in Hobart and 2016 in Lucknow, besides finishing runners-up once in Milton Keynes, England in 1997.

In the last edition of the event in Bhubaneswar two years back, the Indians finished fourth and they would be hoping to clinch their fourth podium at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil here.

India are placed in a relatively easy Pool comprising Canada and Spain besides Korea.

After Korea, India will play Spain on Thursday and Canada on Saturday.

Pool A consists of defending champions Argentina, Australia, Chile, and Malaysia, while Pool B has Egypt, France, Germany and South Africa. Pool D is the toughest of the lot as Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand and Pakistan will be vying for a quarterfinal berth.

The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the quarterfinals.

The quarterfinals, semifinals and final are scheduled for December 12, 14 and 16 respectively.

Under forward Uttam Singh's captaincy, the Indians would be brimming with confidence as they have a better head-



to-head record against Korea. Out of the six matches played between the two teams, India have won three, Korea two and one match ended in a draw.

The last time both the teams faced each other was during the semifinal of the men's Junior Asia Cup earlier this year, where India registered a massive 9-1 win over Korea.

India skipper Uttam too sounded confident ahead of their campaign opener. "The wait is finally over for the World Cup, and we are very much confident of a good start. We recently played against Korea, so we are aware of the challenge but the focus will be on us, on executing our plans and playing good hockey," he said.

Uttam has the experience of the big stage as he was part of the Indian team that finished fourth in the last edition of the tournament in Bhubaneswar.

"As always, our focus has been to go match by match, and our priority is to get a winning start and then focus on the following matches to proceed to the next stage of the tournament," he said.

India coach C R Kumar said they are fully prepared but won't take things for granted.

"The players have worked hard, and are fully prepared for the tournament. Korea are a quality side, you can't take them lightly.

"We have to respect every opponent, it is a bigger stage, so we will have to be cautious and back our strengths to get a good start in the tournament," he said.

JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Amisha, Prachi, Hardik sign off with silver



9 Indian boxers to fight for gold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers Hardik Panwar, Amisha Keretta and Prachi Tokas signed off with silver medals after suffering defeats in their respective finals at the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships in Yerevan, Armenia. Asian junior champion Hardik (80kg) conceded a narrow 2-3 loss to Ashurov Bairamkhan of Russia in a closely-fought contest on Sunday.

Both the boxers looked aggressive in the bout, grabbing every opportunity to score points and keeping the spectators on the edge of their seats. However, the Russian did enough to tilt the result in his favour. Meanwhile, Amisha (54kg) and Prachi (+80kg) suffered identical 0-5 losses in

their respective final bouts.

While Amisha lost to Ayazhan Sydyk of Kazakhstan, Prachi gave her all against two-time Asian junior champion Sobirakhon Shakhobiddinova from Uzbekistan but fell short.

India have already secured 17 medals, including five bronze, in the ongoing tournament.

Payal (48kg), Nisha (52kg), Vini (57kg), Shrushti (63kg), Akansha (70kg), Megha (80kg), Jatin (54kg), Sahil (75kg) and Hemant (80+kg) are the country's nine pugilists who will fight for gold medals on the final day of the competition on Monday. Neha (46kg), Nidhi (66kg), Pari (50kg), Kritika (75kg) and Sikandar (48kg) had secured bronze medals earlier after concluding their campaigns in the semifinals.



Leverkusen stays unbeaten in Bundesliga

AP ■ LEVERKUSEN (GERMANY)

Victor Boniface kept German league leader Bayer Leverkusen's unbeaten start to the season intact with a goal to rescue a 1-1 draw with Borussia Dortmund.

Leverkusen and coach Xabi Alonso looked on course to lose for the first time since May after Julian Ryerson's early goal for Dortmund.

That all changed in the 79th minute when Patrik Schick, seconds after coming off the bench, found space to receive a pass from Odilon Kossounou in the penalty area and cross low for Boniface to score.

It was Boniface's 13th goal of the season in all competitions but his first in the Bundesliga for nearly two months. Niclas Fullkrug tried a diving header to win the game for Dortmund deep into stoppage time but sent the ball over the bar.

On a freezing and snowy evening, Dortmund defended for most of the game after full back Ryerson scored in the fifth minute off a pass from Fullkrug. It was the first time Leverkusen had conceded the opening goal since Harry Kane scored for Bayern Munich in a 2-2 draw in September - the only other time Alonso's team dropped points this season. Leverkusen had won all 14 of its games in all competitions since then.

Leverkusen celebrated leveling the score when Florian Wirtz lashed a shot in off the crossbar just before halftime, but

a video review found a tight off-side - Boniface's heel - much earlier in the move.

Leverkusen kept Dortmund under pressure for almost all of the game but its attacking moves frequently broke down thanks to either poor crossing or wayward long-range shots hit out of apparent frustration. Leverkusen finished the game with 22 shots to Dortmund's six — though only a few were genuinely dangerous — and 16 corners to Dortmund's one.

"It obviously wasn't easy after we conceded the goal. We tried, tried, tried," Alonso said. "In the end I think we did enough to win. A point isn't bad but it could be better."

Leverkusen stays top of the Bundesliga by three points from Bayern Munich, but Bayern has an extra game to play after a postponement Saturday. Dortmund is fifth and has just five points from its last five Bundesliga games - a stark contrast to Edin Terzic's team's table-topping form in its Champions League group. Dortmund is 10 points off Leverkusen after 13 games, which Terzic admitted was "a big gap."

Augsburg missed a penalty and had a goal ruled out on video review but still won 2-1 in the snow against Eintracht Frankfurt. Fredrik Jensen and Iago scored for Augsburg before Finn Dahmen's own-goal gave Frankfurt hope of a comeback. Frankfurt is seventh and Augsburg ninth.

Mourinho makes right moves in Roma comeback win

AP ■ ROME

Jose Mourinho's pre-match accusations aimed at the referee and Sassuolo's standout winger Domenico Berardi created plenty of controversy - and will likely result in another suspension for the veteran Portuguese coach.

There was no questioning Mourinho's choices off the bench, though, as Roma earned its sixth win in its last eight Serie A matches on Sunday.

Substitute Rasmus Kristensen earned a penalty that Paulo Dybala converted and then the Denmark right back scored to give Roma a 2-1 comeback win at 10-man Sassuolo.

On Saturday, Mourinho had labeled referee Matteo Marchenaro unstable.

"We had him three times as a fourth official and I don't think he has the emotional stability for games of this level," Mourinho

said, prompting the Italian soccer federation to open a disciplinary case against the coach.

And Mourinho wasn't done. He then said Berardi "exaggerates fouls to draw yellow cards," adding that "if he was my player I wouldn't like that at all."

So perhaps it was no coincidence that Berardi set up the first goal, threading a pass through the area that Matheus Henrique tapped in at the far post.

Mourinho brought on Kristensen for Rick Karsdorp after halftime and the match changed when Daniel Boloca was sent off for a foul on Roma midfielder Leandro Paredes - after Marcenaro consulted the VAR.

Kristensen was then taken down between two defenders and Dybala's penalty was accurate enough even though goalkeeper Andrea Consigli leaped in the opposite direction.

Six minutes later, Kristensen



produced a shot that took a big deflection off a defender and looped into the goal.

Roma moved up to fourth, level on points but ahead of fifth-place Napoli, which lost 3-0 at home to Italian leader Inter Milan.

Afterward, Mourinho made a statement in Portuguese and said that his Italian wasn't proficient enough to explain certain concepts in terms of his comments about the referee.

Mourinho was suspended for two matches at the start of this season for comments about a referee at the end of last season. He was also banned for four matches by UEFA in June for verbally abusing the Europa League final referee in a stadium garage after Roma lost to Sevilla.

BARELLA'S SLALOM: Inter moved back into first place and made a statement about its title intentions with the 3-0 win at

Napoli.

Hakan Calhanoglu scored with a powerful long-range shot at the end of the first half. Nicolò Barella slalomed through the defense midway through the second half for a score that could vie for goal of the season honors. And Marcus Thuram tapped in to seal it.

Also, Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer made a series of spectacular saves. Inter moved two points ahead of Juventus, which beat Monza 2-1 on Friday.

Napoli winger Matteo Politano hit the crossbar in the first half.

Barella's goal started with a cross from Lautaro Martinez. Then the midfielder went past Napoli center backs Leo Ostigard and Natan before shifting his weight again to prod the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Alex Meret.

It was Napoli's fourth home loss this season after losing only

twice at the Stadio Diego Maradona during its title run.

102 GOALS: Fiorentina is sixth with a 3-0 win over last-place Salernitana.

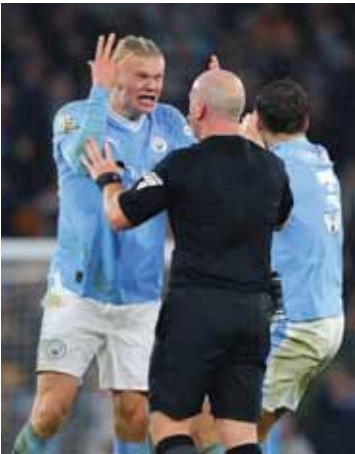
Lucas Beltran converted a penalty kick for his first Serie A goal after his own backheel pass set up a foul on Arthur Melo. Riccardo Sottil scored with a long-range shot that bounced in off both the crossbar and the post. After the break, Giacomo Raspadori finished off a full team move.

With 102 goals in 2023, Fiorentina set a team record for a year in which it reached the Conference League and Italian Cup finals. The Tuscan club beat Genk on Thursday to advance in this season's Conference League.

Bologna is seventh following a 1-1 draw at Lecce. Rocks were thrown at a bus carrying Bologna supporters to the match.

Haaland furious with referee

As Man City draws with Tottenham in 6-goal Premier League thriller



Guardiola was asked to comment on the referee's decision in his post-game news conference and was more careful with his response.

"I don't want to criticize him (the referee)," Guardiola said. "On the touchline sometimes I lose my mind and my gestures are not proper ... But I would say we didn't draw for that (reason)."

City had twice been ahead in the match and looked to have scored a winner when Grealish came off the bench to make it 3-2 in the 81st.

Kulusevski's header earned Tottenham a point and consigned City to a third straight draw in the league, leaving Guardiola's team three points off league leader Arsenal in third. Liverpool, which beat Fulham 4-3, is a point ahead of City in second place. Son Heung-min had put Tottenham ahead in the sixth, but put through his own net three minutes later and Phil Foden struck in the 31st.

Giovani Lo Celso leveled the score in the 69th before strikes from Grealish and Kulusevski.

City's recent winless run in the league has seen it concede eight goals in three games, following a 4-4 draw with Chelsea and 1-1 against Liverpool.

"Football is about mistakes sometimes, but still we are there," Guardiola said. "After many years we still have the feeling that we want it (the title)."

Tottenham ended its recent three-game losing run, which had seen it drop from first to sixth in the standings.

"We weren't at our usual standard first half - Man City could have blown us away during that period," manager Ange Postecoglou said. "They missed

a few chances, a lot like us last week to be honest.

"We hung in there and second half was a lot better. We had more belief and conviction and we made it more uncomfortable for them. Massive effort from the players, it would have been very easy to get blown away, but I thought they showed great character and it is important they get a reward. A point is a good reward."

HOME RUN: Liverpool hasn't lost at Anfield since being routed 5-2 by Real Madrid in the Champions League in February. But a run that now stretches to 19 games looked on the verge of being broken when Bobby De Cordova-Reid put Fulham 3-2 ahead in the 80th on Sunday.

The visitors had twice come from behind and De Cordova-Reid's goal looked like ending Liverpool's 100% winning record at home this season.

That was until goals from Wataru Endo and Trent Alexander-Arnold in the 87th and 88th minutes completed a dramatic 4-3 win for Jurgen Klopp's team. Victory moved Liverpool to within two points of leader Arsenal and maintained its proud home record.

CHELSEA PREVAILS: Chelsea

didn't spend a British record of more than \$130 million on Enzo Fernandez for his scoring prowess. But the Argentina international struck twice to secure a battling 3-2 win against Brighton to help Mauricio Pochettino's side quickly put last week's 4-1 rout by Newcastle behind it.

Fernandez scored his first Premier League goal to put Chelsea ahead in the 17th and converted from the penalty spot for what turned out to be the winner. Chelsea had to show resolve after going down to 10 men just before halftime when Conor Gallagher was sent off. Brighton threatened a comeback with a goal from Joao Pedro in stoppage time to make it 3-2 and then had a penalty overturned on video review.

VILLA HELD: After four straight wins in all competitions, Aston Villa needed a 90th-minute equalizer to rescue a point at Bournemouth.

Ollie Watkins scored his 13th goal of the season as fourth-place Villa came from behind for a second time in the match to draw 2-2.

Antoine Semenyo put Bournemouth ahead in the 10th and Leon Bailey evened the score in the 20th.

Dominic Solanke's goal in the 52nd put 16th-place Bournemouth on the brink of a surprise win until Watkins struck. West Ham missed out on the chance to move above Brighton in eighth when Odsonne Edouard earned Crystal Palace a 1-1 draw with an equalizer in the 53rd.

Mbappe scores and PSG overcomes Le Havre

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain had no problem beating Le Havre 2-0 to extend its lead at the top of the French league standings despite playing for more than 80 minutes with 10 men after goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was sent off for a reckless tackle.

Goals from Kylian Mbappe and Vitinha ensured a seventh consecutive league win for Luis Enrique's team. PSG has a four-point cushion at the top after second-place Nice was handed its first loss this season on Saturday, a 1-0 defeat at Nantes.

Le Havre got off to a strong start with several good moves but lacked accuracy to inflict any damage. The hosts produced 22

shots, but only seven of them were on target.

Donnarumma was sent off following a reckless foul outside his box. The Italy goalkeeper came out of the area as he tried to clear a long ball with a very high tackle, but instead made contact with Le Havre forward Josue Casimir's face.

Referee Bastien Dechepy showed him a red card and Bradley Barcola made way for substitute goalie Arnau Tenas, who was happy to keep a clean sheet on his debut.

"It's wonderful," he said. "I'd like to thank everyone for this opportunity, it's an incredible day today. The team was strong for every minute played, and I was able to stop the opposition's shots."

PSG broke the deadlock on the break after Lee Kang-in set up Ousmane Dembele down the right side. The winger then crossed the ball for Mbappe, who controlled with his right foot and curled a shot into the net from the edge of the box in the 22nd minute. It was Mbappe's 15th league goal this season.

Vitinha completed PSG's win in the 88th minute from Manuel Ugarte's assist.

MONACO IN THE HUNT: Goals from Takumi Minamino and Wissam Ben Yedder gave Monaco a hard-fought 2-0 win against Montpellier.

Monaco moved within two points of its Cote d'Azur rival Nice. Minamino put the hosts in

MARSEILLE BEATS RENNES 2-0



front in the ninth minute against a gritty Montpellier side which was later reduced to 10 players following Boubakar Kouyate's dismissal after a VAR check with 21 minutes left to play. Ben Yedder made it 2-0 in stoppage time.

LILLE KEEPS THE PACE: Just one point behind Monaco, Lille remained in fourth place after beating Metz 2-0 with goals from Yusuf Yazici and Jonathan David.

The northern side scored both goals in first-half stoppage time and stayed in control after the interval.

MARSEILLE BACK TO WINNING WAYS: Marseille snapped a four-game winless run in the league with a 2-0 win against Rennes. Pierre-Emerick

Aubameyang scored from the spot to put the nine-time champions in the lead and Azzedine Ounahi completed the scoring at the Stade Velodrome.

Marseille moved up to ninth place, 16 points behind PSG.

Elsewhere, Romain Del Castillo scored a brace as Brest beat Clermont 3-0, while Toulouse and Lorient drew 1-1.

Also Sunday, the French league (LFP) mourned the death of a Nantes supporter who was killed before the match between Nantes and Nice on Saturday in the latest incident to mar French soccer this season.

"The LFP would like to express its most sincere condolences to the victim's family and friends, and to the FC Nantes club," the league said.

BISHNOI EMERGES AS INDIA'S THIRD SPIN OPTION

PTI ■ BENGALURU

When Ravi Bishnoi was named in India's T20I squad for the away series against South Africa, it, perhaps, was the clearest indication about his place in the think tank's long-term plans with the next year's T20 World Cup in mind.

With only six T20Is remaining for India ahead of the showpiece, it can be assumed that the 23-year-old leg-spinner has moved ahead of veteran Yuzvendra Chahal in the pecking order, for now at least. Chahal is not a part of India's T20I side to face the Proteas.

Chahal is 33 and Bishnoi is 23, but the latter getting as much or more game time in T20Is is not just about a natural generational transition. Chahal has played nine T20Is this year, grabbing as many wickets whereas Bishnoi appeared in 11 matches and picked up 18 wickets. The difference is there for everyone to see.

In the just-concluded series against Australia, Bishnoi was India's go-to bowler and he rewarded the faith reposed on him by emerging as the 'Player of the Series, taking nine wickets from

five matches.

It was not just about the wickets but the whole attitude shown by him to bowl under any condition or situation was praiseworthy.

In fact, Bishnoi had an eminently forgettable first match at Visakhapatnam, leaking 54 runs in four overs and his fielding too was in a shambles marred by a dropped catch and a few misfields.

But he fought back with gusto and his run-rate never exceeded eight thereafter.

Out of the 20 overs he bowled against the Aussies, seven were in the Power Play segment (1-6 overs). In this phase, he took five wickets at a fine economy rate of 6.45, besides bowling 20 dot balls.

Australian skipper Matthew Wade admitted that facing Bishnoi even on some of the batting-friendly tracks here was not an easy job.

"Their spinners bowled well. They got us tied down and we couldn't really break away in that middle period. So, that was probably the biggest difference in the game.

"Bishnoi, obviously, has been great throughout the four games. He has been quite hard to get a



hold of. Some of our guys with less experience will learn a lot from facing him," said Wade.

But if one watches from outside, Bishnoi's bowling has this pattern wherein he tries to purchase wickets with a series of googlies. He is not a huge turner of the ball either, and hardly ever tries to outfox the batters like Chahal does with wide of the off-stump bowling. But Bishnoi is quick off the surface, making the ball skid to the batters to catch them napping. Legendary Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan underlined this part of Bishnoi's game.

"Bishnoi is different from any other leg spinner out there. He bowls quicker and he slides the ball a lot, and it is tough to face him on helpful wickets," Muralitharan said on Jio Cinema.

The young Indian spinner showed precisely through the dismissal of Travis Head. The Australian opener has been nothing less than a thorn in the flesh for India this year, crushing them at the WTC and World Cup finals with hundreds. The left-hander looked dangerous in Bengaluru as well en route his 18-ball 28 that

contained five fours and a six. Indian skipper Suryakumar gave the ball to Bishnoi in the fifth over. Head had initial success, slog sweeping the spinner for a six over mid-wicket. But in the very next ball, Bishnoi skidded the ball at a fair clip to beat a tentative prod by Head to rattle his timber. Australia's early momentum was snapped. However, Bishnoi will face harder challenges from within the team itself to find a place in the 11 when senior pros like Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja return to take the mantle of lead spinners. But Bishnoi has made a strong impression for himself in the run-up to the marquee event next year. "Bishnoi has given this Indian side the option of a solid third spinner now. It is not easy to come in for someone like Chahal. But Bishnoi has made it look easy, and I hope he continues that," a former India spinner told PTI. "The T20 World Cup is going to be played in the West Indies and the USA and the pitches there might offer some assistance to the spinners. Having three quality players in that department will give the team a certain edge," he added.

England won't deviate from Bazball against India: McCullum



PTI ■ BENGALURU

'Bazball' has changed the dynamics of England's batting approach in Test cricket and their Kiwi coach Brendon McCullum is very clear that irrespective of outcome, his team won't deviate from its aggressive tactics against India in the five-Test series, where most tracks will offer substantial turn.

The term 'Bazball', coined after McCullum's nickname 'Baz' and the attacking philosophy that he endorses, has also found its pride of place in 'Collins dictionary'.

The meaning of 'Bazball' is "a style of test cricket in which the batting side attempts to gain the initiative by playing in a highly aggressive manner."

England will face India in five Tests at Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Rajkot, Ranchi and Dharamsala, starting January 25. "We have got a huge challenge against a very good Indian team in five Tests in India," McCullum said at the Royal Challengers Bangalore Innovation Lab's Leaders Meet India.

"I am excited about it because you want to test yourself against the best side and I genuinely believe that India is the best in their own condition. It is going to be a good challenge for us. If we have success then fabulous, if we don't, then I know we will go down in the style that we want to go down," McCullum used the platform, signal his and

his team's clear attacking intent for the marquee series.

In his address, McCullum also expressed his thoughts on the essence of 'Bazball' and what it stands for.

"We are playing the game, because we love cricket and we want to try and be as good at cricket as we possibly can. During the time that you are in the chair, you want to make sure you enjoy it and you shouldn't wait till the end of your career to do so. We are very lucky that we have had some immediate success but I don't think it is the ceiling for us." The style of cricket has also allowed England to check the real potential of some of its younger players.

"I think we have seen some guys who have unlocked their potential in the last 18 months or so and that's what the job is as a leader; to get the most out of the people that you're in charge of," he added.

The 42-year-old also recalled his fearless and unbeaten knock of 158 off 73 balls in the very first IPL game.

He credited the knock as the inspiration for the Bazball phenomenon.

"The reason why I daydream about that moment is because it literally changed my life. I was just a cricketer for New Zealand, where no one really knew what you did where you're from, or what you're capable of. But that day provided the platform, the forum, and the opportunity to change my life," he said.

PTI ■ LONDON

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has instructed Jofra Archer to skip next year's Indian Premier League (IPL) in order to manage the injury-prone pacer's workload in the run up to the 2024 T20 World Cup, according to a report.

Archer, who was bought by Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2022 IPL for a whopping INR 8 crore, was released by the franchise last week. His name doesn't figure in the list of players who have registered for the IPL auction, set to be held on December 19 in Dubai.

Archer, who has been

ECB tells Archer to skip 2024 IPL

To manage workload ahead of T20 World Cup



plagued by multiple injuries, suffered a recurrence of his elbow stress fracture while playing for MI during the IPL in May. The 28-year-old Barbados born cricketer hasn't played any professional cricket since then and also missed the ODI World Cup.

"... The ECB believes that it will be easier to manage Archer's comeback if he is in the UK in April and May under its supervision than if he is in India on the books of an IPL team looking to get their money's worth from him," ESPNcricinfo reported.



Bavuma, Rabada rested for white ball series against India

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma and pace ace Kagiso Rabada have been rested for the white-ball leg of this month's home series against India with the duo set to return for the two Tests.

The Proteas host India for a full series, which includes three T20Is, as many ODIs and two Tests, beginning with the shortest format on December 10 in Durban. "Captain Temba Bavuma and Kagiso Rabada are amongst a group of players that have been omitted for the white-ball leg of the tour in order to play red-ball cricket as emphasis is placed on the Test series for which both will return," Cricket South Africa said on Monday.

Both India and South Africa are gearing up for the new World Test Championships cycle, starting with the Boxing Day Test in Centurion on December 26.

In Bavuma's absence, Aiden Markram will lead South Africa in the white-ball fixtures.

Wicketkeeper batter Tristan Stubbs, who has played 1 ODI and 16 T20Is, has been included in the Test side for the first time while Heinrich Klaasen has been left out of the red ball squad. Pacers Gerald Coetzee, Marco Jansen and Lungi Ngidi have also been left out of the ODIs, which is low priority after the conclusion of the 50-over World Cup.

The trio is a part of the squad for the opening two T20Is and subsequently, the two Test

matches. With valuable WTC points at stake and next year's T20 World Cup looming large, South Africa like India have named several new faces in their ODI squads, including uncapped duo of medium pacer Otttniel Baartman and all-rounder Mhlali Mpongwana. Batter David Bedingham (Test) and pacer Nandre Burger (all three) — have also earned maiden national call-ups.

SQUADS:

South Africa T20I squad: Aiden Markram (captain), Otttniel Baartman, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee (1st and 2nd T20Is), Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen (1st and 2nd T20Is), Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi (1st and 2nd T20Is), Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, and Lizaad Williams

South Africa ODI squad: Aiden Markram (captain), Otttniel Baartman, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Mhlali Mpongwana, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne and Lizaad Williams

South Africa Test squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), David Bedingham, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee, Tony de Zorzi, Dean Elgar, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Keegan Petersen, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs and Kyle Verreynne.

'You always have a lot more time than you think', Hope reveals inspirational chat with Dhoni

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Master chaser MS Dhoni's advice to "take the game deep" inspired Shai Hope to lead his side to a thrilling victory against England in the opening ODI, the West Indies skipper revealed.

Former Indian captain Dhoni is known for his calm demeanour and match-winning abilities, as he always looks to take the chase deep when the target is massive.

And after West Indies were reduced to 213/5 in pursuit of 326 here on Sunday, Hope, a wicketkeeper batter just like Dhoni, recalled a chat with one of the best finishers in the game.

"A very, very famous person, MS Dhoni — we had a chat a while ago, and he was saying, 'You always have a lot more time than you think.' Hope said at the post-match presentation.

"That's one thing that has stuck with me throughout the years I've been playing ODI cricket," Hope added.

West Indies faced the uphill task of scor-



ing 106 in the last 10 overs. But along side Romario Shephard (48; 28b), Hope smashed an unbeaten 109 off 83 balls, that included four hits to the fence and seven maximums, to take eke out a memorable win here on Sunday.

The 30-year-old struck three sixes in four balls off Sam Curran in the penultimate over of the chase to give West Indies a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

In the process, he also recorded his 16th ODI and fastest century of his career.

Once I got wicket of Wade, belief came in that we can win match: Singh

PTI ■ BENGALURU

After leaking 37 runs in his first three wayward overs on a languid Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch, Arshdeep Singh's night was seemingly doomed. But then the left-arm pacer found a chance to redeem himself in the dying moments of the fifth T20I against Australia to seal a 4-1 series win.

Arshdeep grabbed it with both hands, defending 10 runs in the final over to give India a six-run win, nailing a bouncer and yorkers that he looked so incapable of bowling during that horror start.

So, what was going through his mind when captain Suryakumar Yadav tossed the ball to him ahead of the 20th over. "I did not feel that it was bowling-friendly conditions as I bowled a lot of loose deliveries," Arshdeep began his post-match press meet, even allowing himself the luxury of a relieved chuckle.

The 24-year-old had in front of him an in-touch Matthew Wade and Arshdeep surprised him with a bouncer outside the off-stump and to be fair to the



Aussies captain that ball ought to have been called a wide for the height. The second ball was an inch-perfect yorker on the off-stump as Wade could only squirt it back to the bowler. Arshdeep missed a yorker again off the third delivery, but the low full-toss was enough for him to get the wicket of Wade through a catch in the deep by Shreyas Iyer.

Arshdeep thought the match turned in India's favour at that

moment.

"I was just thinking that I have nothing to lose as I have already given away a lot of runs. Surya bhai was also saying the same thing that 'let's see how it goes'.

"My gut feeling was to bowl a bouncer off the first ball to put some doubt in Wade's mind and once I got his wicket the belief came (in me) that we can win this match," said Arshdeep.

The pacer was effusive in his

praise for the way Suryakumar led the side during this series.

"Surya bhai gives a lot of freedom. We had played in a few batting-friendly pitches earlier in the series but he said wherever there are challenges opportunities too will be there.

"He was telling us not to worry about the results but to focus on the process and force the batsmen to score runs off good deliveries. He never put us under pressure," he said.

Arshdeep emphasised his point while giving context to it with the example of the last over here. "He told me to bowl whatever you want to in the death overs and his full support will be there. Sometimes, he gives a bit of input, you know, this kind of ball will be good at this stage," he added.

Arshdeep was not yet ready to think deeper into India's tour to South Africa, beginning in a week's time.

"Right now, we are focusing on this series. We are not looking too far ahead (in terms of South Africa tour) and once we go there and see the conditions, we will take a call accordingly," he said.